

Project 3.

Book to Website

Instructions

1. Choose a book from the examples provided or propose your own.

Your chosen book should be 1) *indexical* or *systematic* in some way, 2) *visual* either literally or through writing, and 3) *polyphonic*, *conversational*, or *multi-authored* in nature; which is why I've proposed some already for this project.

If you would like to propose your own book, please make a case for it on these levels and also make sure to provide: the title, year, author, brief synopsis, cover photo, and a full PDF scan of the book; and then run it by me for approval. Please avoid most novels and children's books.

2. Read or thoroughly look through the book. Then create at three visual diagrams / maps of the book to understand its overall structure, themes, and ethos. Pay attention to aspects of the book that might especially be relevant to an interactive or website version, which include: systems, taxonomies, links, footnotes, etc.

- Map 1 — A textual outline. Think bullet points and nested items, a list or lists. Print this on 8.5" x 11" (letter) to share in class.
- Map 2 — A visual diagram of the book's structure, themes, etc. Print this map out on 11" x 17" (tabloid) to share in class.
- Map 3 — A palette of found visual material that directly or indirectly relates to the book. Can be book covers, fonts, colors, images, etc. Print this out on 11" x 17" (tabloid) to share in class.

3. Then, create a website version of this book.

Your website translation will be based on your holistic understanding of the book's structure, content, and themes and also what you know about the web as a medium. To do this, you will create a design system that manifests as a website. Note that you don't need to add any content to the book; rather, this project is about translating that content in a way that honors the spirit and ethos of the original book, while also utilizing the unique

materiality of the web and what it's especially good at.

Your website translation should...

- Share the full* contents of the book
- Be organized and paced out thoughtfully
- Feel memorable to experience
- Feel cohesive and considered throughout via a thoughtful design system
- Have a considered and easy-to-use navigation
- Be easy to read (legible, readable)
- Honor the ethos and spirit of the original in some way
- Be usable on mobile devices
- Contain a clear "About" page with credits and stated intentions

** In general, the website should aim to be a translation of the printed book but for the new medium of the web. That said, if there are sections of the book that are not essential to its primary message for whatever reason (like some front or back matter), you can leave them out. Also, for certain books that are longer, you will likely need to curate or select sections of the book rather than including the whole thing.*

4. (Extra Credit / Optional)

Design and produce a single physical item related to your website which takes its design system and extends it back to the physical realm. This could be: A tote bag, a poster, a shirt, a set of postcards, etc. Just as the website circulates the book further through translation into a new medium, the goal in making the book physical again is circulation of the book's ethos and building of its lore.

Timeline

Book Selection — *By end of day on Friday, Oct. 3*

Choose your book. Email me (laurels@wustl.edu) with your choice.

Mapping Your Book — *Week 1 — Oct. 8*

Create and share maps to understand your book's structure and themes. Print them out and also add them to your project Are.na Channel.

Website: Variations & Iterations — *Weeks 2-4 — Oct. 13, 15, 20, 22*

Create multiple design directions for your website, develop wireframes and

flows, iterate multiple times on your chosen design direction, develop responsive versions.

Website: Finalizing & Prototyping — *Weeks 5-6* — Oct. 27, 29, Nov. 3, 5
Finalize design, develop coded prototypes.

Website: Presenting — *Week 7* — Nov. 10, 12
Present final website and (optional) physical item.

Tools

We will use a combination of pen/paper, Figma, and HTML/CSS to map, sketch, wireframe, and visually prototype our websites. The final website should feel as real and complete as possible and published on the world wide web. Any other sketches (that can't be realized in HTML/CSS for whatever reason) should be created and presented alongside in Figma.

Examples

This class began in sharing a few websites that are translations from books:

(1) Pattern Language Index

<https://www.patternlanguageindex.com>

Based on the book *A Pattern Language*
by Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa, and Murray Silverstein, 1976.

Website (designed & developed) by Jenn Sheer, 2024.

More links:

- <https://jennscheer.com> — Jenn Sheer's portfolio
- <https://www.instagram.com/p/DGmuZyUMPXH> — IG post about project
- <https://github.com/singleportrait/a-pattern-language> — Source code

(2) Wada Sanzo

<https://sanzo-wada.dmbk.io>

Based on the book *A Dictionary of Color Combinations*
by Sanzo Wada, 1918.

Website (designed & developed) by Dain Blodorn Kim, 2018–present.

More links:

- <https://dain.kim> — Dain Blodorn Kim's portfolio
- <https://github.com/dblodorn/sanzo-wada> — Source code

(3) Whole Earth Index

<https://wholeearth.info>

Based on the periodical “The Whole Earth Catalogue”
published by Stuart Brand and the POINT Foundation, 1968–2002.

Website executively produced by Barry Threw, with sponsorship and facilitation from Gray Area. Content digitization and hosting by the Internet Archive. Site design and development by Jon Gacnik, in collaboration with Mindy Seu. Publications donated by Fred Collopy, Kevin Kelly, Danica Remy, Howard Rheingold, and the Long Now Foundation, 2023.

More links:

- <https://longnow.org/ideas/the-lasting-whole-earth-catalog/> — About
- <https://grayarea.org/initiative/whole-earth-redux> — About forthcoming book
- https://www.instagram.com/p/CyWST2yLRm_ — IG post about project
- https://ia802307.us.archive.org/9/items/Index_20180423/Index.html — More

You can find more books that have become or started as websites in this Are.na Channel for our class. Please also feel free to add any that are relevant by contributing the (1) link of the website and (2) an image of the book:

<https://are.na/visual-principles-for-screen-fall-2025-washu/books-websites>

Guidelines & Goals

Translation

This project is about translation. Much of design is about translating some essential content and spirit into a new form. That said, no new content needs to be added to create meaning in this project; rather, it's about honoring the existing content and spirit of the original while also harnessing the powers of this new medium (the world wide web) to the best of its abilities.

Mediums

Websites evolved from books. The original books were long scrolls, similar to websites today. Eventually though, books turned into paginated codexes. Both books and websites can contain footnotes and links, whether explicit or implicit. Let's examine both mediums (books and websites), how they're similar and how they're different, and how to organize and design a book on the web to enable the best reading and navigation experiences on both desktop and mobile devices.

Intention

The intention of this project is to create a working design system for a website that is full, considered, and honors the original material of the book. The aim of this project isn't to disobey copyright; so please make sure to clearly state the intention and goals on the "About" page of your website.

Possible books to use for Project 3.

1)

Invisible Cities

by Italo Calvino

1972

Invisible Cities is a series of descriptions of mythical, impossible cities, as told through a dialogue between Marco Polo and Kublai Kahn. Each city is a prose pocket world: brief yet completely whole and unique.

PDF:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HcrGvgX0cROoqTsHLxTCTdsb8UZa_msL/view?usp=drive_link

Text:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KbDgpWH8QFgRpBOeoJ0dQzOq6C1Jy6WJ/view?usp=drive_link

2)

I Ching

1000-750 BC

The *I Ching* 易經, often translated *Book of Changes*, is an ancient Chinese divination text. It has been the basis for divination practice for centuries. Between the 18th and 20th centuries, it took on an influential role in Western understanding of East Asian philosophical thought.

PDF:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xZnYTl_UBr_SO5cEF43qR72xFbg9GWWG6/view?usp=drive_link

Text:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nSHfqrlrjC8wH77-Fs2f56CelNH5SR-6f1/view?usp=drive_link

Note: The above PDF and text version are very abbreviated version of the *I Ching*. You can translate this version and/or find another one if you'd like to include more text or context. I would recommend researching the *I Ching* as a whole as well, and finding different versions of it to best understand it.

3)

Super Normal

by Jasper Morrison and Naoto Fukasawa

2007

Designers Jasper Morrison and Naoto Fukasawa have compiled 204 everyday objects in search of what they call "super normal design." Alongside examples of anonymous design like the Swiss Rex vegetable peeler or a simple plastic bag, there are design classics like Marcel Breuer's tubular steel side table, Dieter Ram's 606 shelving system, or Joe Colombo's Optic alarm clock of 1970. The phenomenon of the super normal is located, as it were, beyond space and time; the past and present of product design both point to a future that has long since begun.

PDF:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RH4LzyUF8-KyMtlHcbKSWlGMBcHUceCk/view?usp=drive_link

Text:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pqMNGOTLOCecYgvfhPJJBhQ9xQL0zKMB3vHqCt2TmZM/edit?usp=sharing>

4)

Enquire Within Upon Everything

Published by Houlston and Sons of Paternoster Square in London

Edited by Robert Kemp Philp

1856

A short encyclopedia for domestic life, a how-to book of the Victorian age. This book intended to provide information on topics as diverse as etiquette, parlor games, cake recipes, laundry tips, holiday preparation, and first aid. Tim Berners Lee, the inventor of the world wide web, named the web's precursor "Enquire" after this work. Berners Lee mentions, "With its title suggestive of magic, it served a portal to a world of information, everything from how to remove clothing stains to tips on investing money."

PDF:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iFufOf2U8JjI-NiIHCulKfFlyVmKsAbt9/view?usp=drive_link

Note: This is a long and encyclopedic book. I would recommend curating or choosing specific parts from it for your website translation, and making note somehow that you're publishing just part of it to the web. Also, this PDF is from the Internet

Archive: https://archive.org/details/enquirewithinupo00phil_1/mode/2up.

5)

Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice

Pauline Oliveros

2005

Pauline Oliveros was a pioneer in electronic music as a composer, performer, educator and author. This book serves as a guide, both for Oliveros and anyone who wants to learn from her, to enhance their own listening and sonic attunement skills.

PDF:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xkIepGkZKkgV6ArsOr7QmKx2A61NZyBK/view?usp=drive_link

Note: You can learn more about Pauline Oliveros on Monoskop:

https://monoskop.org/Pauline_Oliveros.

6)

Six Memos for the Next Millennium

Italo Calvino

1988

This book is based on a series of lectures written by Italo Calvino for Harvard, to be given in the fall of 1985; although Calvino died before delivering them. Each lecture is a "memo" on certain literary qualities whose virtues Calvino wished to recommend to the then-approaching millennium. He intended to devote one lecture to each of six qualities: lightness, quickness, exactitude, visibility, multiplicity, and consistency. Though he completed the first five, he died before writing the last.

PDF:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/10jgdSqs_wK10HSeo78vqUooQ_JKFsyIy/view?usp=drive_link

7)

In Praise of Shadows

Jun'ichirō Tanizaki

1933

In Praise of Shadows (陰翳礼讃, In'ei Raisan) is a 1933 essay on Japanese aesthetics by the Japanese author Jun'ichirō Tanizaki. It was translated into English in 1977. The essay consists of 16 sections that discuss traditional Japanese aesthetics in contrast with change. Comparisons of light with darkness are used to contrast Western and Asian cultures. The West, in its striving for progress, is presented as continuously searching for light and clarity, while the subtle and subdued forms of East Asian art and literature are seen by Tanizaki to represent an appreciation of shadow and subtlety.

PDF:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TsELsnbnw7ZjgPLXxMiBuig8sRkZbakQ/view?usp=drive_link

All of the above books are somehow:

(1)

indexical
systematic

(2)

visual
(whether literally via images/diagrams or through imagistic writing)

(3)

polyphonic
conversational
multi-authored

To propose your own book that meets the above criteria, please provide:

Title
Author(s)
Year
Brief Synopsis
Cover Image
PDF Scan of Book's Contents

And run it by Professor Laurel Schwulst (laurels@wustl.edu) for approval.

Please avoid most novels and children's books, thanks.

Places to find suitable books:

WashU Libraries

Good online archives such as <https://monoskop.org>

(...)