

Reflective Commentary
Improvement in Web Development Skills and
Observations in Page Development Techniques

One area in which I was fairly confident upon starting my internship was web development. In the past three years I had already launched a web development business in my hometown and held a trainee position with the United States Defense Information Systems Agency. The combination of academic and independent study with those experiences had strengthened my skills to a point where I felt comfortable with any potential web tasks with the 76ers. As Information Technology is such a fickle and ever-growing field, however, there is always much to learn in order to continually sharpen your skills. I certainly did so through the course of my internship, and I believe the result is a much more marketable set of skills as I look to enter the work force.

The area in which I gained the most valuable experience is undoubtedly graphic development using Adobe Photoshop 7.0. I had used a similar software package for graphic development in the past, Jasc's Paint Shop Pro, but the power and feature set for Photoshop is undeniably the best on the market. Web graphics, edited photos, and desktop wallpaper became so much easier to create and manage. It is one thing to pick up a book and attempt to learn a piece of software, but firsthand experience through actual projects is an unparalleled method of learning. I worked closely with the New Media Coordinator, Mr. Michael Lieberman, with graphics projects and some of my desktop wallpaper work is presented in this portfolio.

Mr. Lieberman also taught me some great techniques in HTML page development as well. I believe these techniques have made me a better web developer, as I have replaced a few old methods of development with new, more efficient strategies. When I had desired a black-bordered HTML table in the past, for example, I achieved the effect by placing a table within an outside, otherwise empty, black table. Mr. Lieberman informed me that I can achieve the same effect, cutting down on the page load time and amount of code, by simply using the DIV tag. In

fact, the capabilities of the DIV tag are much greater, but a bordered table is a simple example of its capacity.

Mr. Lieberman, although coming from a communications background instead of a technical one, actually taught me a lot about web development. I believe that, many times, you can learn a lot by simply observing the way someone else performs a task, even if it is something you think you know how to do well. From a technical perspective, that is what I am taking from my internship. I have not necessarily learned how to do anything new, but I have learned better and faster methods of achieving what I previously could do.

Although the new media position, in general, was not overly technical, it did keep me involved with the web and gave me a chance to continue using my web development skills. I was given the opportunity to design, from scratch, a few pages, and I found myself frequently using the new techniques that I had learned. As I do not really desire to end up working in a very technical position, such as computer programming, I was satisfied with the technical level of this internship and with the new techniques I learned, and I believe my résumé will be stronger as a result.