

Michael Saunders

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Profile

I'm Michael Saunders, an award winning designer and front-end developer based in Oxfordshire. I have over 13 years' experience in web design, web development and traditional print based graphic design. I have a real passion for web design and development, I love nothing more than getting my hands dirty in code!

My career started out as a designer and then moved swiftly onto designing and building email newsletters. The designing and building of email newsletters then led me to get involved in the building and development of websites as a natural evolution of my role as a front-end developer within this digital era. I am able to build responsive websites from scratch with the ability to hand-code HTML5 and CSS3 mark-up combined with jQuery and JavaScript. So nowadays not only do I have a great wealth of experience as a designer, I also have equally as good experience (if not better!) as a coder and front-end developer which is very much at the forefront of what I do.

Skills

Web Design & Front-End Development: I have over 10 years' experience with advanced HTML5 and CSS3 hand-coding skills combined with jQuery and JavaScript to design and build websites, landing webpages, apps and email newsletters from scratch, wireframing, prototypes, user testing, validation, speed and performance improvements, changes, style guides, responsive web design (RWD) techniques, user experience (UX), front-end modules, modern frameworks such as Bootstrap and Jekyll, JavaScript technologies such as Node.js, npm, working within the command line, commercial and eCommerce website experience, web coding standards and best practices, browser and device compatibility, W3C validation, testing, usability, accessibility, Agile methodologies, experience in working within SCRUM development teams, Kanban software development, centralised workflow, version control, source code management, CMS systems, a bit of Sass knowledge (mostly research and experimental purposes at home), web analytics and reporting, web banners and website advertising.

Programs & Platforms: Excellent working knowledge of all industry standard design, development and video editing packages including Adobe Creative Cloud applications (Dreamweaver, Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Premiere Pro and Acrobat Pro), text/code editors such as Sublime Text, Visual Studio Code and Notepad++, wireframing tools such as Balsamiq Mockups, Agile processes and centralised workflow software such as Countersoft Gemini, version control and source code management software such as Microsoft Visual Studio Team Foundation Server (TFS), Git and GitHub, SourceGear DiffMerge, mobile device and browser testing with BrowserStack, speed and performance improvements with WebPagetest, Speed checklist, GTmetrix, Dareboost, Google Lighthouse Report and Chrome Developer Tools, CMS systems, marketing automation tools such as MailChimp and CheetahMail, New Relic, Google Analytics, bot management with Distil Networks, Uploading and publishing videos on YouTube and Microsoft Office products on both Apple Mac and Windows PC platforms.

Print Design: Page layout design, adverts, leaflets, flyers, posters, banners, billboards, exhibition and events material, brochures, annual reports, letterheads, compliment slips, business cards, stationary design, signage, branded merchandise, artworking, print processes, print management and print production.

Corporate Identity: Logos, branding, originate brand guidelines and adhere to brand guidelines previously set out.

Current & Previous Roles

I am employed as the lead designer and front-end developer for AFerry: The World's Leading Ferry Website. A comparison site where you can search, compare and book ferry routes offered by ferry operators all over the world with its very own bespoke online search engine and web-reservation booking technology.

I am responsible for the front-end build of all the various panel and page template types that get fed into the AFerry eCommerce website CMS. The AFerry website was completely redesigned and rebuilt with a mobile first approach and given a fully-responsive layout where the website scales to fit whichever browser or device a customer is using. The website draws from the one code base and was designed and built from scratch using hand-coded HTML5 and CSS3 mark-up combined with jQuery and JavaScript.

The website is constantly evolving and being improved as user experience is everything. Continual updating of panel designs and page types within the build process are key. As are testing and measuring to make sure the customer journeys are as pleasing an experience as possible from start to finish.

Speed and performance is also at the forefront of my role using tools such as WebPagetest, Speed checklist, GTmetrix, Dareboost, Google Lighthouse Report and Chrome Developer Tools. I have been looking into waterfall diagrams of how the website loads and targeting areas that block the first paint. I have been experimenting with removing render blocking resources such as CSS and JavaScript.

I'm also involved in the designing and building of HTML email newsletters using old fashioned table mark-up with inline CSS which get sent out with email automation tool CheetahMail.

I am also responsible for the overall look and feel of the AFerry brand, designing the corporate identity, designing website concepts or wireframes plus the designing and producing all the traditional print-based material. Some examples include originate brand guidelines and style guides, merchandise design, brochure design, advert design, billboard design, exhibition stand design, web banner design, email newsletter design and development, landing webpage design and development, responsive website design and development.

As well as working on the AFerry brand I also do work for other in-house brands plus other external companies and clients that we work closely with. Some of these companies include: P&O Ferries, LD Lines, DFDS Seaways, Stena Line, Travel Supermarket and Disneyland Paris among others.

I was the sole graphic designer for Minoli Tiles producing a vast range of literature, including adverts, brochures and other promotional material, high end specifications for housing developers and high calibre vehicle showrooms for companies such as Ferrari and Alfa Romeo. As a junior graphic designer for the design agency Cre8, I designed and produced a wide range of football and rugby clubs promotional literature, including adverts, posters, corporate brochures, photo books and matchday programmes for teams such as London Wasps, Watford FC and Scotland RFU among others.

“ Sales have increased dramatically since the arrival of the website redesign and that's down to you. ”

Group CEO, AFerry Ltd.

Experience

21/01/2019 – Present	Wiley Marketing Automation Specialist
26/08/2008 – 18/01/2019	AFerry Ltd Designer and Front-End Developer
29/10/2007 – 08/08/2008	Minoli & Co. Ltd Sole Graphic Designer
13/06/2005 – 23/10/2007	Cre8 [UK] Ltd Junior Graphic Designer
15/09/2004 – 30/04/2005	Abingdon and Witney College Part-Time Lecturer in Art and Graphic Design
05/07/1999 – 14/09/2004	Research Machines Plc Part-Time Production Operative [Summer employment]
18/04/2002 – 25/05/2003	The Spread Eagle Public House [Part-time bar work while in education]
1998 – 1999	Burgesses Litho Printers [Secondary school work experience]

Awards, Qualifications & Education

2010 – 2018	Winner of 'World's Leading Ferry Website' awarded to aferry.com at the World Travel Awards for the ninth year in a row.
2012 – 2018	Winner of 'Europe's Leading Ferry Website' awarded to aferry.com at the World Travel Awards for the seventh year in a row.
2004 – 2005	Winner of 'The Swindon College Award' at Swindon College: School of Art & Design.
2003 – 2004	Winner of 'The Cranfield University Prize' awarded to: The final year student [BA Hons Degree in Design] who demonstrates outstanding academic and research abilities.
2001 – 2004	Swindon College: School of Art & Design in conjunction with Cranfield University FIRST Class BA [Hons] Degree in DESIGN
1999 – 2001	Abingdon and Witney College Advanced General National Vocational Qualification [GNVQ] in Art & Design: DISTINCTION 2 GCE Advanced Levels [A Levels]: Art & Design: Graphics and Photography National Open College Network [NOCN]: 9 Credits at level 2
1994 – 1999	John Mason School 10 GCSEs