WebProfessionals.org
Community Education Certification

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15th Annual Web Design Contest slated for Louisville in June

Prepares Students for both College and Career

By Tinka Davi

When seeking products and services, hunting for health advice or pursuing potential clients most people turn to the Web.

And those companies and individuals who are the most successful in gaining new business and finding clients have websites that are attractive, attention-getting and trustworthy.

Winning Gold, Silver and Bronze teams

That's why Web design is so important and is a key class in many high schools and colleges. The successful student creates sites that entice the viewer to hire someone, buy their services or product or pay attention to the news and views offered.

They also incorporate compo-nents to ensure that Web sites are secure and privacy is protected.

For the past 15 years, over 3,000 students have utilized their Web design skills and accepted a challenge to compete in a week-long competition for Gold, Silver or Bronze prizes.

They've participated in the National Web Design Contest, established and sponsored by the member supported organization WebProfessionals.org (aka World Organization of Webmasters). It challenges high school and college students to work in teams and build functional and secure Web sites for non-profit agencies.

This year's contest will be held June 22-25 in Louisville, KY.

Web Design students participate in training in design, development and Web security

Each participating team is required to meet a series of challenges that focus on several areas.

They include layout, storyboard and design, team work, project management and Web site accessibility issues. There's also an emphasis on creative aspects, CSS and coding and client side scripting and web security.

The purpose of the Web Design Contest is to evaluate each contestant's preparation for employment and to recognize outstanding students for excellence and professionalism in the field of Web design, Web development and Webmastering, said Bill Cullifer, who served as executive director of WebProfessionals.org for 20 years before retiring in 2015.

The contest includes project management, interview and presentation and promotes professionalism.

"It's not just about good looks and design; it's also about user experience, functionality and security," said Mark DuBois, the current Executive Director of WebProfessionals.org.

Teams invited to the Nationals in Louisville consist of individuals who fill the roles of Web Designer, Webmaster and Web Developer.

Winning teams compete for prizes and scholarships

Past Winner from Nevada

Clark Milholland was a contest participant in 2006 and 2007. He won a "Spirit Award" his first year with a teammate he still is in contact with. In 2007, he and another teammate who were 11th graders at Carson High School in Nevada, won a Gold Medal.

Clark Milholland, 2007 Gold Medal Winner

"The national competition was timed, with rules limiting us to creating everything from scratch based off of a scope of work that we were provided on the day of the competition," Milholland said.
"I don't remember the exact amount of time we were allowed to work but I imagine it was in the range of six hours or so."

Clark also added, "The Web design contest not only allowed me a facet to push myself to success but also provided me with an internship working in technology."

"I built my very first website when I was 14 or so. Its purpose was to showcase prank calls that my friends and I had spent the summer making and recording. Probably not the best use of a summer but it laid the foundation to what turned into a career in Technology," he said.

Later, in high school, a class he wanted was dropped and he was randomly relocated into a Web Design class.

"I am not one for superstition or fate, but still to this date I look back on it as a very odd and specifically perfect occurrence," he said. "I ended up taking all four Web Design classes through high school" said Clark.

He currently works for a government agency in Carson City, Nevada. as an IT Systems Technician. He also serves as a freelance Web designer in his spare time and supported the Webprofessionals.org as a volunteer Web adminsistrater providng back-end support and Web design and devlopment support.

Winner at Vanderbilt

Derek Roberts, member of the class of 2016 at Vanderbilt University, was a participant

Derek Roberts, 2007 Participating Student

in the 2012 contest just after he graduated from high school.

Here's an excerpt from his conclusions about the contest:

"The preparation for the Web Design Contest definitely taught me what real practice, or studying, actually means. On the day before the contest, we spent eight hours in a hotel room creating a website from a prompt our faculty advisor had given us. And that wasn't the first time we'd done a trial run! The actual competition was incredibly intense," Roberts said.

"The most valuable thing I took away from the competition was definitely confidence. I had never been pushed with such an immediate deadline, but our team actually came through.

"Although we didn't win the competition, we finished the project and never gave up out of frustration. The focus that required was immense, and I'm proud to know that I have that capability."
He hopes to work for a major company as a consultant.

For Web design newbies, he recommends finding a fantastic teacher and learning everything from him or her.

"The work ethic and standard of excellence that my teacher/mentor instilled in me is what I still use for every project I do today," he said.

"Web design competitions gave me intangible skills that I will use

for the rest of my life. I would definitely not have gotten to where I am today if I had given up early or not participated at all."

Contest benefits

Students and contest organizers cite several benefits to participating in the contest, including:

- Preparation for Employment in the IT and Creative industries
- Recognition and Personal Satisfaction
- Professionalism and Skills
- Demonstration of Industry Best Practices
- Growing your Network and Linkages
- To Have Fun

Who supports the contest?

- Leading Web and technology companies
- Hundreds of high schools and colleges in most of the 50 states
- The not-for-profit membership supported WebProfessionals.org, the contest's biggest supporter.
- The SchoolofWeb.org, a training resource for students and those that teach.
- Dozens of volunteer Web professionals who serve as contest experts, coordinators and judges.

Why is this important to Business, Industry and Teachers?

"The National Web design contest supports business and

industry and teachers meet industry standards that supports career pathways to jobs " said Sheri Kelly, teacher Carson High School, Carson City, NV.

Scholarships

The contest has raised $1.4 million dollars in college scholarships for participating winning students.

The role of education

"The goal of Web design classes in schools and colleges is to meet the growing demand and the skills gap through education and delivering to industry and to those that hire Web professionals," Cullifer said. And the goal of the contest is to emphasize those skills by putting them into practice in a competition that recognizes the top students in the country.

Mark DuBois (left) and Bill Cullifer (right)

Changing of the guard

Before his retirement, Bill Cullifer served Director of Webprofessionals.org. He established the Web Design Contest to support the Web professional community with the goal of leaving behind a legacy of

something meaningful for both students and those that hire.

The all-volunteer, not- for-profit organization is now headed up by Mark DuBois, the current Executive Director and Webprofessionals.org Community Evangelist. He also holds title as Professor, Business & Information Systems Department, Illinois Central College, East Peoria.

About the supporting organization

The Webprofessionals.org aka World Organization of Webmasters is a non-profit professional association dedicated to the support of individuals and organizations that create, manage or market Web sites. The organization provides education as well as certification, technical, employment and member advantage services to thousands of aspiring and practicing Web professionals worldwide.

For more information, visit http://www.WebProfessionals.org.

Example Challenge

If you are curious, this is an example of one of the challenges from a prior national web design contest.

Challenge - Design Process and Communication

Purpose: Demonstrate your understanding of the design process and communicate what you are intending to create and develop with your team mate.

Instructions:

- Create and design storyboard including wireframe based on input from the client as outlined by the work order.
- Create your storyboard and wireframe on a sheet of 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper.
- Your storyboard should include your form of navigation, illustrations or images sequence for the purpose of pre-visualizing your work.
- You will bring and present your completed storyboard to your interview with the contest judges during the interview phase.
- You will be asked to present your Web design and development company to the review team. In short, why should we hire your team.
- You will share your scaffolding of process including storyboard and wireframe.
- Present your resume.
- You will be allowed to ask questions of the contest organizers and the client.

Contents

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