



Movers & Shakers

Digital recruitment agency Become helped George Clark find his new role as web developer at Selfridges. George gives Figaro Digital a guided tour of his world

What does your new role at Selfridges involve and what do you hope to achieve?

It involves taking artwork and mock-ups from the designers and building out standards-compliant HTML and CSS web pages, whilst wrestling with the intricacies of the content management system that Selfridges has in place. Which, shall we say, is interesting! The system is built on IBM webshpere e-commerce running the Accelerator CMS on top of that. If just actually explaining the system is complicated, try grappling with it on a daily basis! Counter-intuitive would be an understatement, but hey, we make it work in the end! I'm always looking to refine my code and learn more. Experimenting with CSS3 and jquery to improve user experience is a top priority for me.

What qualities make for a successful web developer?

You've got to enjoy bringing projects to life. I still get a kick out of building a page that will render correctly across browsers and will be seen by thousands of people. Attention to detail and problem solving are also qualities that any developer will need. Sending out pages to be QAd by the department will often result in tweaks, so patience and an easygoing attitude help.

What site or app could you not live without?

This may sound silly but, here goes - the interweb! Tahdah! As a developer there is just so much out there on the web to inspire and help you when coding. The developer community is just so open and

welcoming, you can always find the answer or piece of advice you need to help with that thorny IE6 float issue. Seriously though, I couldn't be without Firebug and the web developer toolbar for Firefox. Safari and Chrome have versions of debugging plug-ins, but I like the simplicity of Firebug, and the functionality of web developer toolbar.

What was your first job in the digital industry and how have things changed since then?

I got into digital in the late 1990s but then had a long period of doing other things, like running a watersports business in Spain. Back then the dotcom boom was happening so I guess I missed out! Now though, I'm loving getting back into digital. Things have got to a point where print design and digital design have merged, and there's no excuse for having an 'old school' style website with formulaic navigation, menus and unformatted text or poor typography. Websites and web apps are now rich with interaction and functionality and very often beautiful to look at. It's a great time to be involved in web development as it feels like we're moving on to a better place visually and functionally.

Who would you invite to your fantasy dinner party and why?

It's gotta be Sean Locke, he is just hilarious and a good dinner party needs laughter. I don't think I'd invite anyone from the digital sphere as we'd bore the socks off everyone else talking about web fonts, APIs or jquery and manipulating the DOM! Come on, dinner parties are supposed to be fun!

What do you think is the most significant issue facing web developers using social media?

I have to hold my hands up and say, I haven't had the pleasure of getting into mobile development yet. I think responsive web design is going to be a massive issue for creative developers today. It's relatively straightforward in setting up your CSS media queries for different viewport widths and whatnot, but the added time needed to test for all of this is HUGE. With more and more users viewing web content on mobile devices and tablets, this is an area we can't afford to ignore and are going to have to evolve speedier ways of prototyping for all these different devices.

What do you think will be the most significant innovation in web development 2012?

I think the imminent death of Flash, and the rise of applications like Adobe Edge, to basically do the same job, but serve up animations or content incorporating HTML5 and the canvas element, will be big in 2012. Although Edge currently spits out a lot of rather heavy Javascript at the moment, I'm sure this will improve, and providing rich user interface designs with beautiful multimedia content from video to simple transitions, with faster development time and supported across all devices will be technology impossible to ignore in 2012. ■

George Clark
Web developer
Selfridges

www.becomeuk.com

