



Web Resources FOR THE Graphic *Designer*

Instructional report.

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Introduction

In this lesson, you will learn about four Web sites that can provide you with the tools, information, and inspiration you need to work as a professional graphic designer.

Why Use the Web?

The advent of digital technology has changed the way graphic designers approach their craft. The computer is now an essential tool for the designer that can be used in many ways. Designers use computers daily to arrange type and imagery, to alter photographs, and even to draw and paint. The Internet has expanded the reach of this already powerful tool and has made it possible for designers everywhere to gather information, learn new techniques, monitor trends, and even share their work with colleagues all over the world. Countless Web sites exist that are connected in some way to graphic design. In fact, a recent Google search of the term “graphic design” returned a result of 13,400,000 sites! The four Web sites examined here offer a wide range of information for graphic designers. You might use the sites daily or only when you need a creative jolt, but all of them will be good resources for you now and in your professional future.

Stock Photography

<http://creative.gettyimages.com>

Graphic design, by definition, is visual, and most of your clients will prefer that you incorporate some sort of imagery into their designs. Some clients will set aside a sizeable portion of their design budget for imagery, but most will not. You need a source for good quality, reasonably-priced imagery that you can access quickly and easily. That source is Getty Images' Photodisc.

About the Site

In 1991, a company called Photodisc, based in Seattle, Washington, began offering digital imagery to the graphic design industry. The company was successful because it provided imagery that was **royalty-free*** and high in quality.¹

In 1998, Photodisc was purchased by Getty Images, a company that offers the industry **rights-managed** images and film footage.² When these companies merged, Photodisc's Web site became a link on the Getty site.

Welcome to Photodisc

The first time you access this Web site, you should complete a registration form. Though registering is not required, your registration will provide the company with your name, address, professional information, and billing information, and will create an account for your use. Registering is free and open to anyone — professional or not — and registered users are able to download **comping images** that are free of **watermarks**. You can use these images when you are **brainstorming** ideas or presenting concepts to your clients. *Remember! Once your client approves your concept, you must BUY the images in order to use them legally.*

*Check the glossary that starts on page 3 for the definition of the words in bold.

FIGURE 1

The Photodisc link of the Getty Images Web site. Remember to register to download comping images without watermarks!

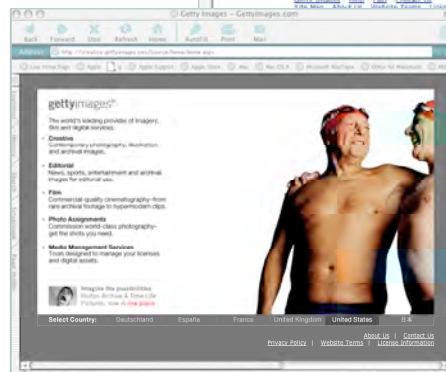
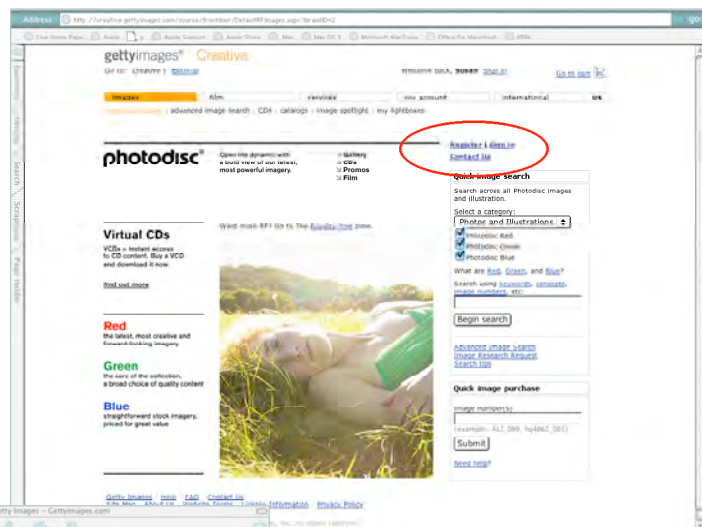


FIGURE 2

The Getty Images home page. If you log-on to this page, click on the word "Creative" to jump over to Photodisc.

Searching for an Image

Photodisc offers two methods to help you find your perfect image — a Quick Search and an Advanced Search. In a Quick Search, you choose the type of image you want to see (photographs, illustrations, or both), and designate the library to search (royalty-free or rights-managed). Then you type in a keyword or a concept phrase and click the “Begin Search” button. Photodisc returns all the images that match your search criteria as a series of **thumbnails** for you to evaluate. Additional information about each image, such as **resolution**, price, and availability, can be accessed from links under its thumbnail.

The Advanced Search allows you to become more discriminating in your search criteria by offering you filters for your search. In an Advanced Search you can decide

- which stock companies to search
- whether to search for color images or black and white
- which image orientation to return (horizontal, vertical, panoramic, square)
- whether to return all images or only those that are part of a CD collection

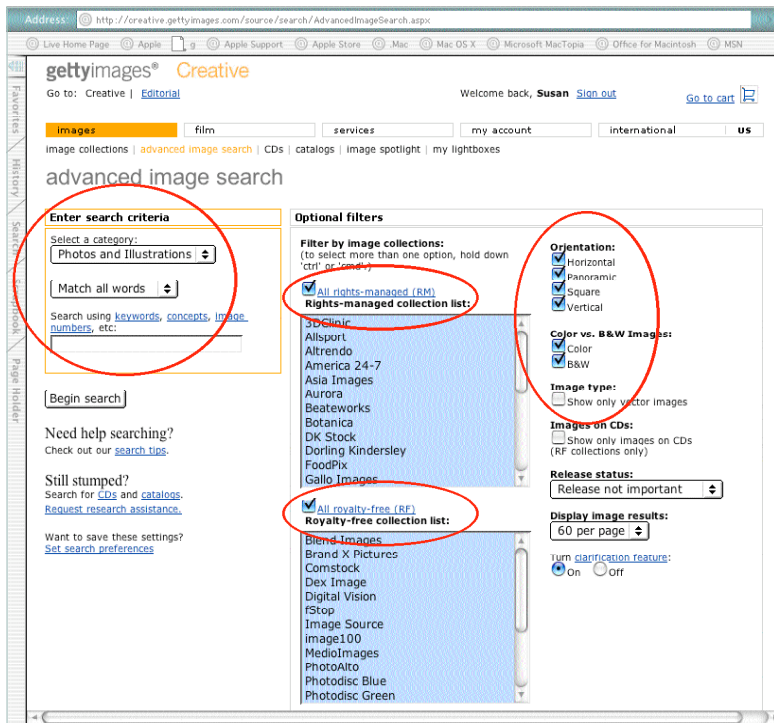


FIGURE 3

The Advanced Search page. Notice the filters available to help you narrow your search.

Terms to Learn

Ascender

the part of a lower case letter that rises above the base line or body of a letter, seen in letters like b, d, or h

Brainstorming

attacking problems or creating ideas using spontaneous group discussion

Bowl

the round part of a lower case letter, seen in letters like b, d or p

CMYK

Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black — the four colors used in offset printing; also used for inkjet printers and color copiers

Comp

a preliminary layout of a design (also mock-up). A *comping image* refers to a low-resolution image used as a placeholder in a developing design.

Descender

the part of a lower case letter that extends below the base line or body of a letter, seen in letters like g, y, or q

dpi (dots-per-inch)

the amount of dots that make up a one-inch area of a printed image. The higher the number of dots-per-inch, the sharper a printed image appears; often used interchangeably with ppi, which stands for pixels-per-inch and refers to the sharpness or resolution of a digital image.

Choosing an Image

Once you find your perfect image, you'll want to download a **comp**. A comp is a picture at a resolution adequate for **mock-ups** or presentations, but not at an acceptable resolution for offset printing or other high-end output. (Don't be tempted to download the thumbnail. Its resolution is not acceptable for much more than viewing the thumbnail!) The links under the thumbnail contain a line that reads "Download Comp." When you click on that link, a new window opens revealing a larger image. Directions for downloading the comp are outlined in that window.


Save your comping image to your hard drive without changing the name assigned by Photodisc. Keeping the original name will make it easier for you to find your image again when you're ready to purchase it.

Photodisc offers each of its images with a choice of resolutions and sizes. Click on the "calculate price" link beneath the thumbnail to find the size and price you need. After you choose the appropriate resolution, follow the easy purchasing instructions. You can pay by credit card or have the company bill you. If you're buying a single image, you can download it immediately at the chosen resolution. If you're purchasing a CD of images, you can choose to download the entire CD or have Photodisc send one to you.

Download instructions for

1. Ctrl+Click on the image.
2. Select the Download Image to Disk option from the pull-down menu that appears.
3. Choose the destination file where you want to save the image.
4. Click Save and the image will begin to download to the chosen location.

Note: If prompted to save as format Source or Text, select Source.



AA033575
Photodisc Green (Royalty-free)

Getty Images' Comping File and Film Preview License Agreement

THIS IS A LEGAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN YOU ("LICENSEE") AND A SUBSIDIARY OF GETTY IMAGES, INC. ("GETTY IMAGES"). THIS AGREEMENT APPLIES TO LICENSES ISSUED VIA THE WEB AND VIA LOCAL SALES REPRESENTATIVES, AND IS APPLICABLE TO ONLINE, DIGITAL AND ANALOGUE (PHYSICAL) DELIVERY OF LICENSED MATERIAL (THE "AGREEMENT").

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The Photodisc section of the Getty Images Web site is, by far, the most popular royalty-free image site used today. The quality of the images is good, the selection is frequently updated, and the prices are reasonable. It probably will be your first and most reliable choice for images when you need to add that visual punch to your designs.

FIGURE 4

Instructions for downloading a comp

Terms to Learn

Grayscale

term for an image containing blacks, whites and shades of gray

.jpeg (also .jpg)

a format for saving digital images that compresses the digital information, making the file size smaller; stands for Joint Photographic Experts Group.

Mock-up

a preliminary layout of printed matter, folded and finished, submitted for client approval

Pantone Matching System

premier ink matching system for the printing industry. PMS is used as a prefix to numbers that specify particular ink colors; standard color matching system in the design industry.

Resolution

the measure a digital image's detail and quality; also a measure of the quality of a scanner or the output of a printer; often used with dpi or ppi. Images with high resolution have a high dpi or ppi.

RGB

Red, Green, Blue. The three colors seen by the eye and used in monitors and scanners to reproduce color

Check out these other image sites too!

www.corbis.com
www.punchstock.com
www.veer.com
www.rubberball.com

Fonts

<http://www.identifont.com>

When you design a piece, your font choice is more important than you might think. It conveys the tone of your message even before the words are read. But with thousands and thousands of fonts available, how do you choose one that's right for your project? A good way to narrow down your font choices is to study your favorite designs. You'll see the font in use and will be able to judge its level of elegance, power, or whimsy. Unfortunately, designers don't include font information in their finished pieces. Eventually, you'll begin to recognize many common fonts, but when you're stumped, log on to *Identifont.com*.

About the Site

Identifont.com went on-line in the year 2000. It was developed by a company called Human-Computer Interface, which designs documentation and information especially for high tech products. The company was formed in 1986 and is based in Cambridge, England.³

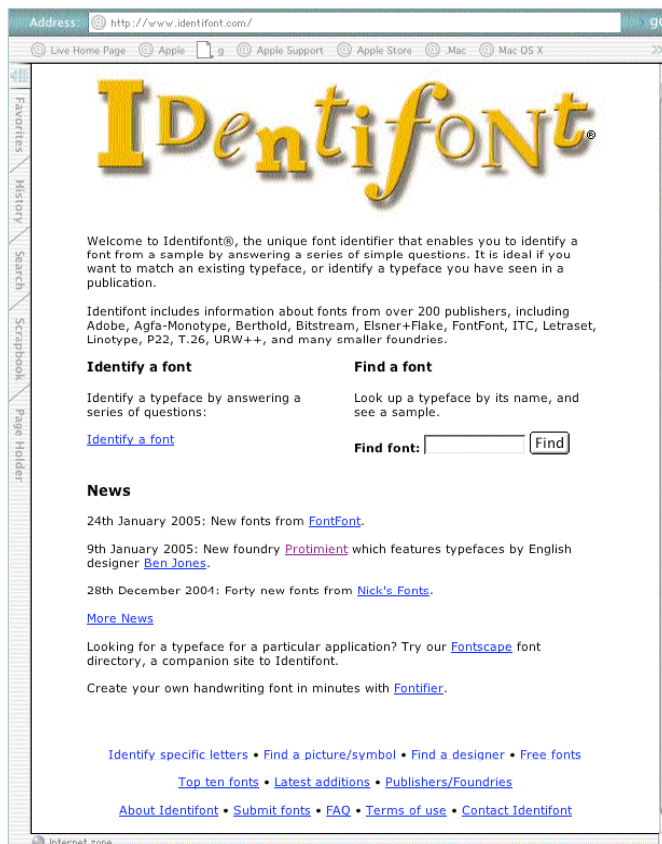


FIGURE 5

Identifont.com's homepage

Terms to Learn

Rights-managed

imagery that is licensed for use by the photographer or image supplier. Fees for rights-managed imagery are based on when, where, why and how the image will be used.

Royalty-free

imagery that is purchased for a one-time fee. Royalty-free imagery can be used again and again for no additional cost. (Limitations may exist for usage on items for resale, such as T-shirts.)

San-Serif

a typeface without a line finishing off the main stroke of a letter (*Helvetica* is a san-serif typeface.)

Serif

a line finishing off the main stroke of a letter, as at the top and bottom of an M or the cross stroke of a T (*Palatino* is a serif typeface.)

.tiff (also .tif)

a format for digital imagery that supports black and white, grayscale, and color images. Stands for Tagged Image File Format.

Thumbnail

a small, rough sketch of a concept; a small image that represents a larger, more detailed one

Watermark

a translucent design (usually a company logo) impressed on a digital image to prevent theft. (Also a design woven or printed into paper, usually indicating a higher quality sheet.)

Using the Site

Identifont.com is a Web site that does what its name implies — helps you identify the name of a font. It works by asking you a series of questions about the characteristics of certain letters, numbers and punctuation marks. As you work through the questions, it narrows down the font choices by excluding those that don't match your answers. When you've answered all the questions, the matching fonts are listed for you. The site asks you questions about things like the look of a Q's tail, the shape an *i*'s dot, or the shape of a *d*'s **bowl**. Before the birth of Web sites like *Identifont.com*, designers looked at these same font characteristics manually to identify fonts, which usually involved scanning pages and pages and pages of type books filled with tiny samples. A designer easily could spend hours at this task. *Identifont.com* may not find your exact font, but it can radically narrow down your choices.

Though the font identity system is the main focus of *Identifont.com*, you can also go there to purchase fonts, research new font designers and trends, and download free typefaces.

Don't underestimate the power of a font. It can pull a design together, or destroy it completely. *Identifont.com* is a great tool for graphic designers at all levels of expertise because its questions force the designer to become sensitive to a font's special characteristics, which results in font choices that are more appropriate for the design.

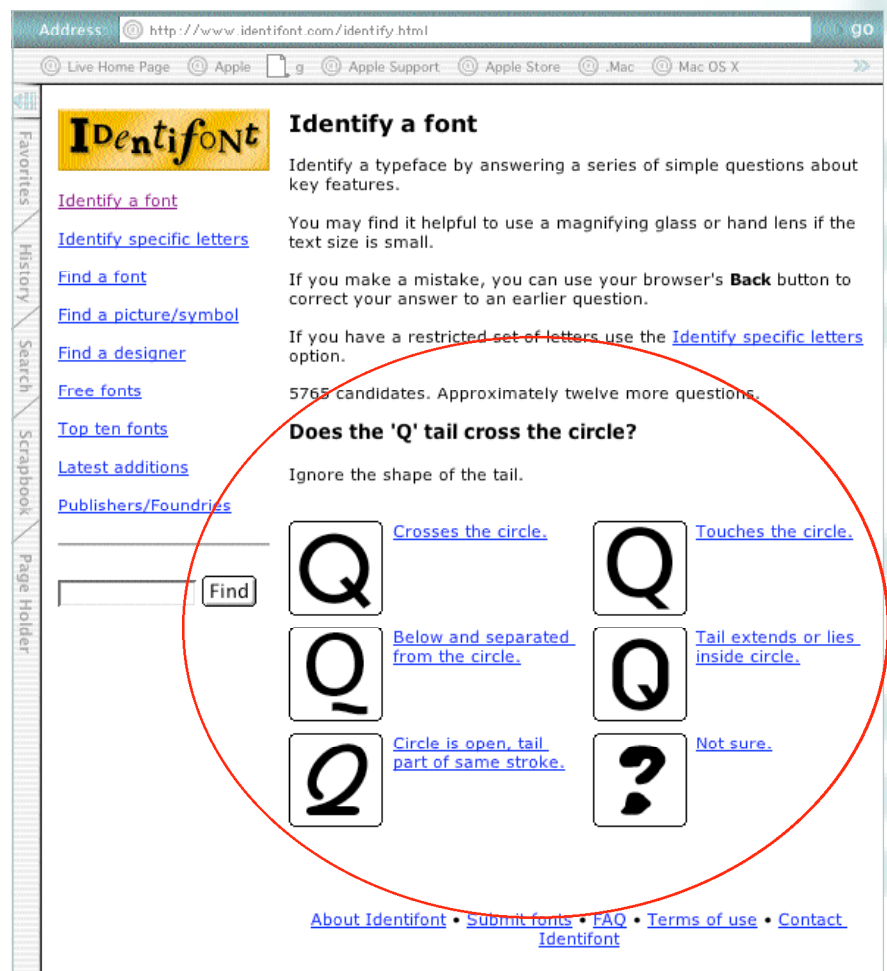


FIGURE 6

The identification process starts here.
When you become aware of font characteristics, you'll begin to recognize more fonts on your own.

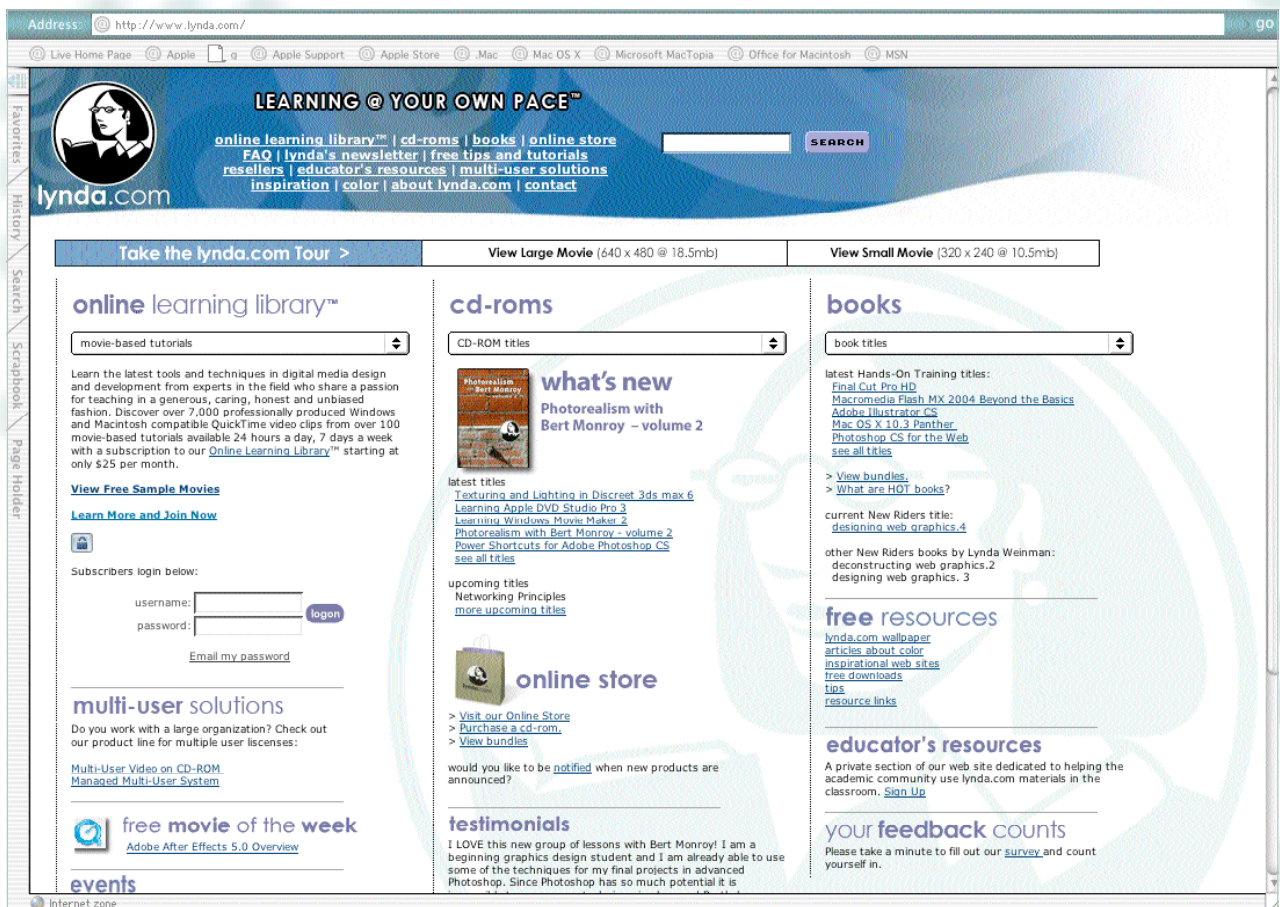


FIGURE 7

The homepage of Lynda.com

Training

<http://www.lynda.com>

Unfortunately, today's graphic designer is a slave to technology. It seems like new design programs and computer operating systems are being released daily. If you don't stay current, you'll eventually get left behind, and that means fewer job opportunities and lower salaries. You won't always have the time or money to return to school or attend an expensive workshop, so check out *Lynda.com*.

About the Site

Lynda.com is a tutorial Web site. Developed by self-taught trainer and web developer Lynda Weinman, the site offers on-line tutorials, as well movies, books and CD-ROMS. In the year 2000, Wendy Peck, author of the "Production Graphics" feature for a Web site called *webreference.com*, asked Weinman about her teaching philosophy. Weinman said:

*"I always put myself in the shoes of the person who doesn't know. Every book I write, video I produce or curriculum I develop takes this into account. I remember what it felt like not to know, and I remember the stages of my learning process. I try my best to recreate that process for my students, walking them through a subject using small information chunks that build progressively."*⁴

Lynda.com is a membership Web site, but its fees are very reasonable. A one-month membership, with access to the complete learning library, is only \$25, and that fee gives you unlimited access for that month. Annual and premium memberships are also offered. If you opt for the premium membership (\$375 annually), you not only will have unlimited access to the tutorial library, but you also will receive digital files that mirror and enhance the lessons. Since a typical two-day, lecture-only design seminar can cost more than \$300, this site is a great value, and the one-month membership option gives you the opportunity to test the quality of the tutorials without making a huge monetary commitment.

Lynda.com also provides links to design tips and trends and offers an e-mail newsletter to its subscribers.

Busy designers don't always have the time and money to advance their skills and stay on top of emerging technologies. A Web site like *Lynda.com* helps graphics professionals stay current by offering reasonably-priced software tutorials they can access at their convenience and complete at their own pace.



FIGURE 8

A small sample of the training materials offered on the site.

FIGURE 9

This new electronic magazine tells you all about color.

Color

www.pantoneuniverse.com

Color can convey the message of a design in much the same way a font can, suggesting a retro message or a futuristic one, for example, or creating a feeling of calm or of frantic activity. Designers need to understand the power of color in their work and be able to recognize color trends so they can create designs that are successful for their clients.

About the Site

Pantone® is a company whose name is recognized by design professionals everywhere. For the last 40 years, designers have used its Pantone Matching System® to specify colors to their clients and to ensure their final pieces are color correct.

Pantoneuniverse.com is an offshoot of the Pantone company. Its Web site features a new electronic magazine called *MIX: All About Color*, which discusses how color works in the real world.

The first issue of this magazine is on-line now. It contains stories about color and its influence on home and retail decor, on fashion, and on beauty. It also discusses future color trends and contains fun features like “colorstrology,” which links your birthday and personality traits to your own personal color.

This Web site does not discuss color as it relates specifically to graphic design, but it will help you draw parallels between your work and the color that is everywhere around you.

Don’t be afraid of using and experimenting with color in your graphic design. As you look both inside and outside your discipline to discover its powerful effects, remember that plenty of resources exist to help in your search — like *pantoneuniverse.com*.

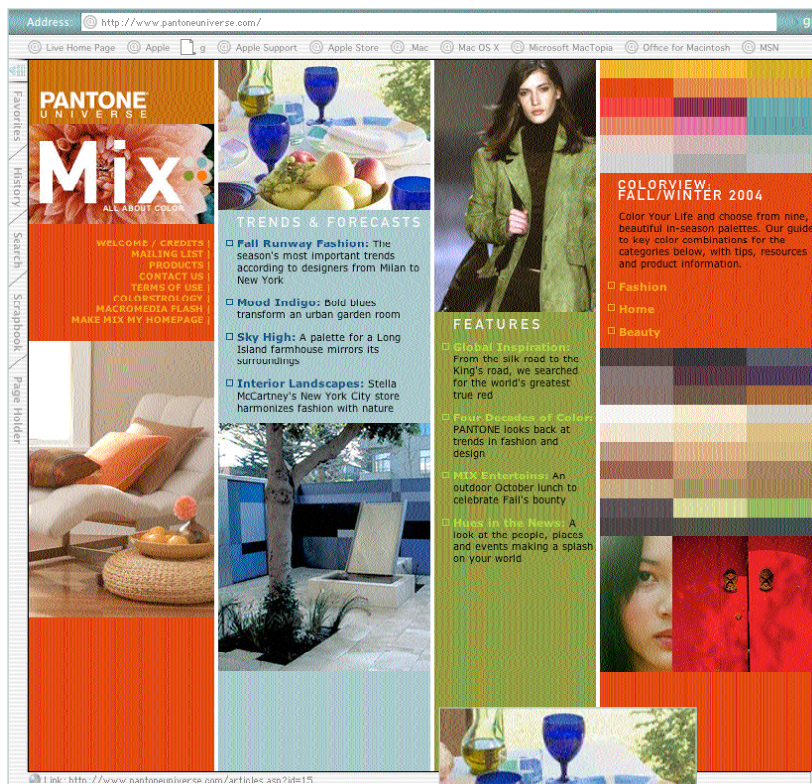


FIGURE 10

A feature about color trends

Conclusion

Digital technology has a place in the graphics industry, and its influence cannot be reversed. It's true that this technology can sometimes make designers feel like little more than computer operators, but its positive impact on design far outweighs the negative. Instant access to tools and information via the Internet is one example of that positive impact. The Web sites discussed in this lesson are only a small sample of those available for graphic designers to explore, so don't stop your adventure with these four. Continue to search the Internet to help keep your designs fresh and your knowledge up-to-date.

References

- ¹PhotoDisc, Getty merge – PhotoDisc Inc., Getty Communications Plc create Getty Images Inc. holding company. February 16, 1998. *MacWeek*. Retrieved February 4, 2005, from http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0MKNK/Is_h7_v12/ai_20441492.
- ²Getty Redesigns Website, Resizes Images, Rebrands Photodisc and Reconnects Sellers with Buyers. March 20, 2003. *SiteCynic*. Retrieved February 4, 2005, from <http://www.seattle24x7.com/cynic/gettyredesign.htm>.
- ³<http://www.identifont.com/about.html>. Retrieved February 3, 2005.
- ⁴Peck, Wendy. Graphic Greats: Lynda Weinman. *Graphic Greats: Production Graphics with Wendy Peck*. Retrieved February 3, 2005, from <http://webreference.com/graphics/greats/lynda/1.html>.