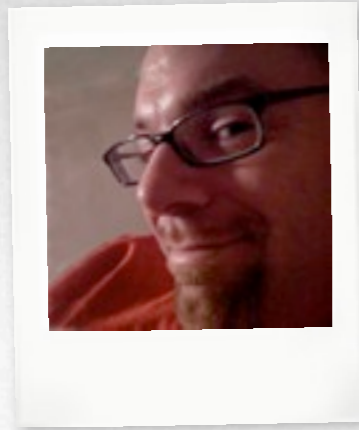# Death, Taxes & Viewport Chrome

the only thing certain is uncertainty itself

edUI Conference (#eduiconf)
24 September 2012

Jason Pamental (@jpamental)
thinkinginpencil.com

thinking in pencil.com

About Me

- Jason Pamental
  Web Strategist, Designer, Technologist

- Have been a strategist, designer, developer & cat-pixel-wrangler since roughly the launch of Netscape 1

- Can be found @jpamental in most places

- Post thoughts, work & pics from Instagr.am @ thinkinginpencil.com

Few Things Are Certain

- ✤ We'll all die eventually

- ✤ Usually after paying a lot of taxes

- ✤ We have **no idea** how someone is going to view our design – **none**

- ✤ **Really**. Think about that last one

You Don't Know Jack

✤ Where we admit we know nothing

✤ I kid, I kid... sorta

✤ HTML5, CSS3 & Web Fonts: game has changed in the past year or 2

✤ Device/Platform multiplier mayhem no way to keep up with all of them

✤ At a bigger inflection point than any before: only a short time from 'desktop' being a minority

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But one more little challenge…

You Don't Know Your User, Either

✤ Impossible to know how your design will be consumed

✤ Or what **else** they might be doing at the time

✤ Desktop/Laptop/Tablet/eReader/ Phone/Console/TV/Car

✤ So what **DO** you know? **Design** *(and that's more than coloring pixels)*

We're Not Designing Pages

- ✤ We're designing **systems** of **relationships & hierarchy** to infer **meaning & importance**

- ✤ Good **design has structure** – but that structure **must be fluid**

- ✤ **960 pixels is a copout.** Our work will be viewed on phones, tablets, tv's – more than on computers as we know them
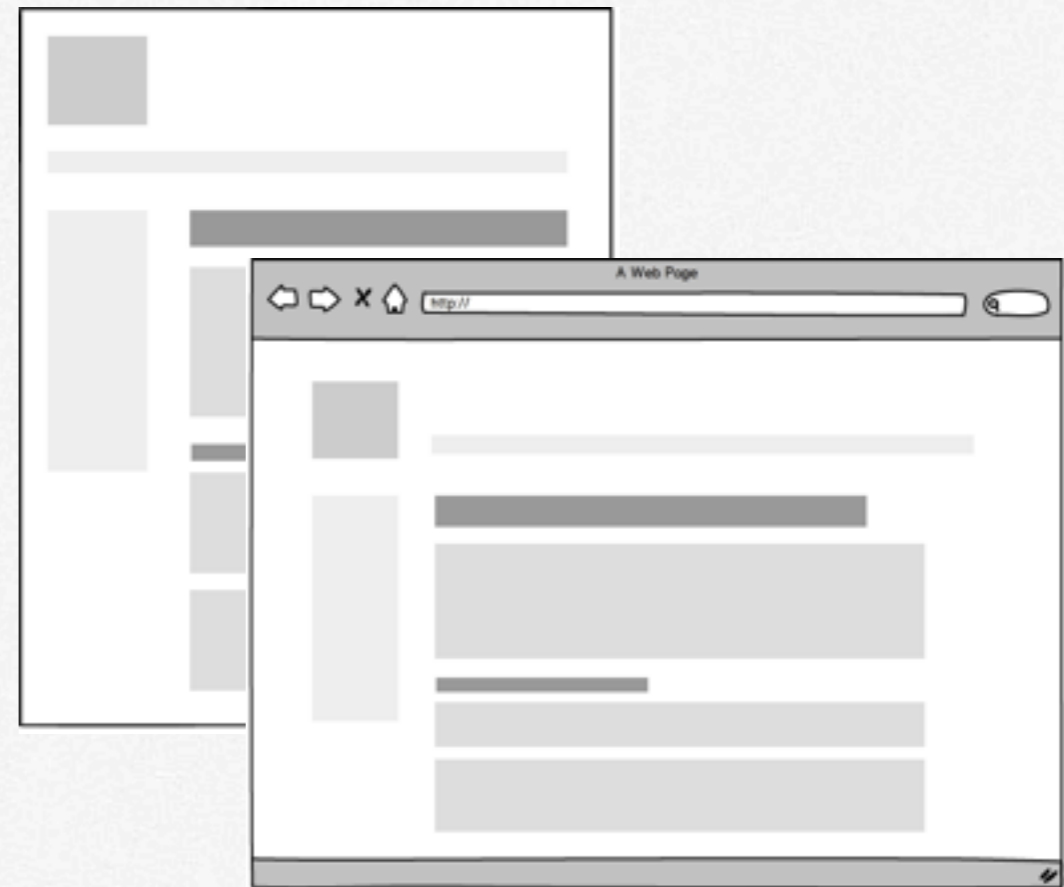
#eduiconf

We're Designing Meaning
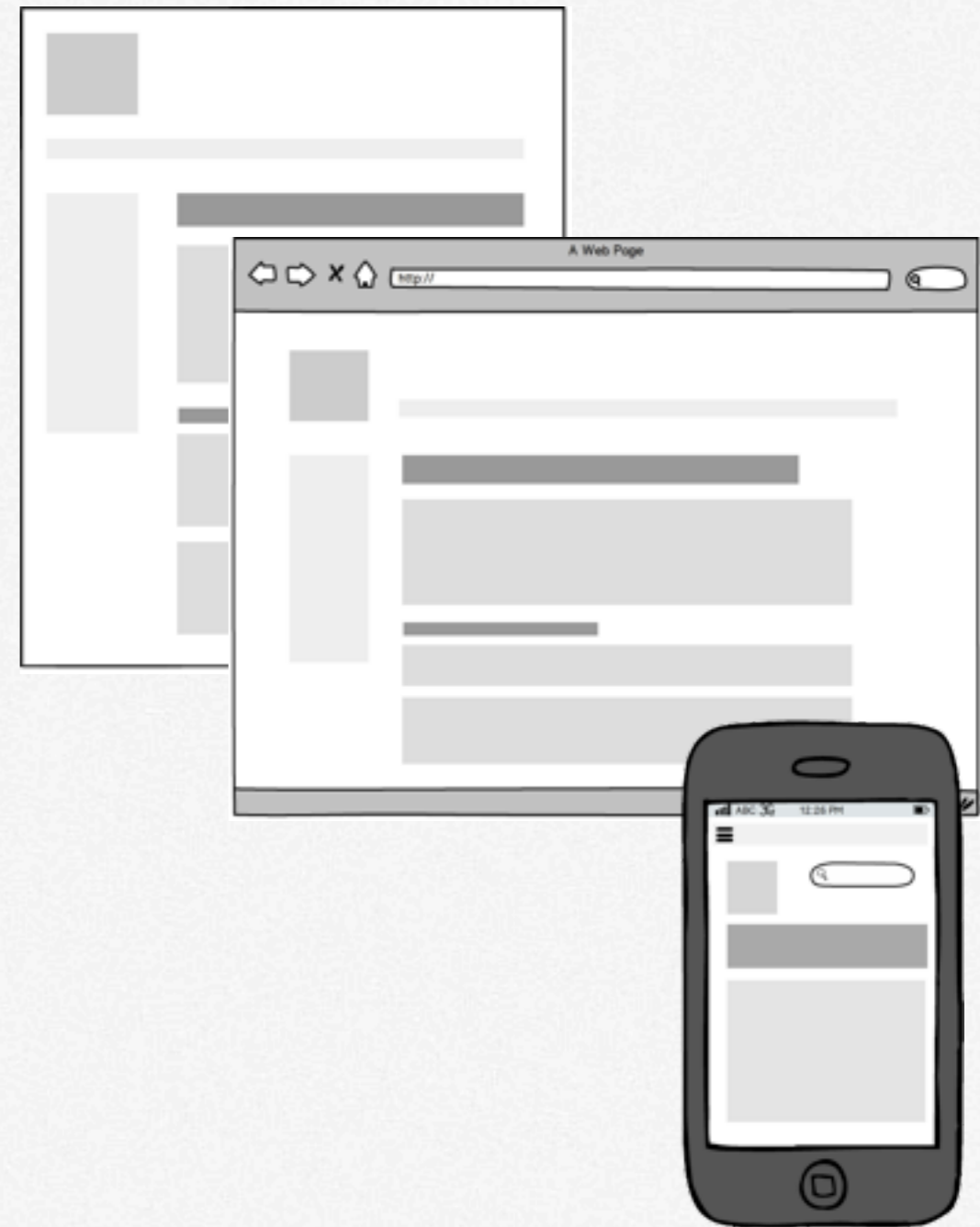
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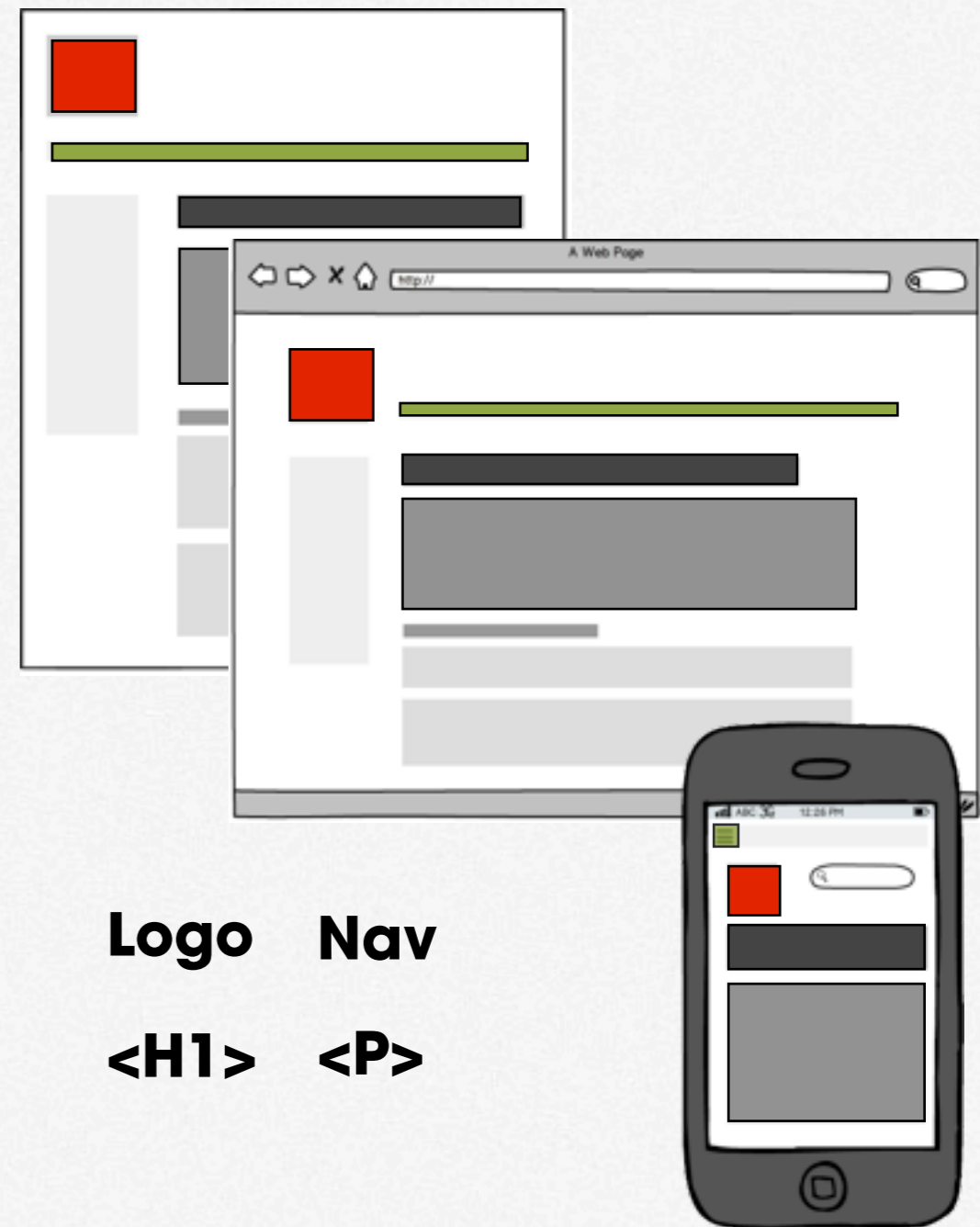
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We're Designing Meaning

- ✤ Design is about conveying information & understanding

- ✤ Information & understanding must hold true no matter how its conveyed

- ✤ How users understand & learn is as crucial as how they see

- ✤ Start with semantics & adapt your presentation to the capabilities of the device on which your design is viewed

A Web Page
http://

Logo   **Nav**

<H1>   **<P>**
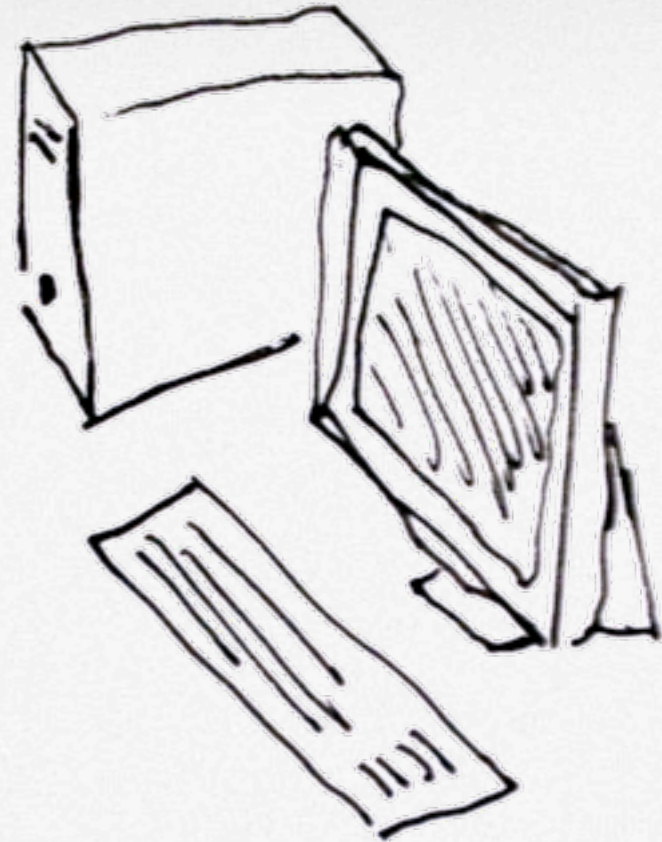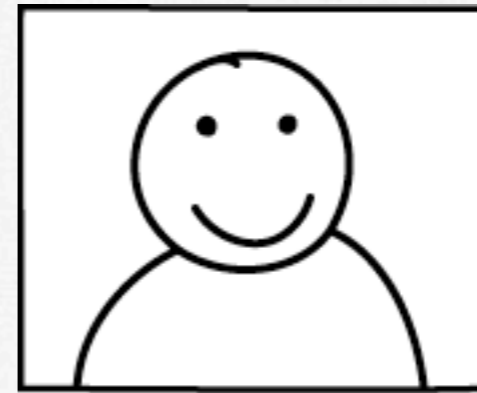
Psychology & Cognitive Science are The New Black

✤ In order to **preserve meaning** & **reinforce understanding**, you must know how learning works

✤ Once you know **how learning works**, you can tailor your system of design

✤ That **system of visual & information hierarchy** can survive across platforms & screen sizes

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Everything's Relative

✤ Every **element** on screen **has importance** *(or it should)*

✤ **Importance is learned** by its relationship to everything *else* on the screen

✤ Know tools that convey hierarchy: **color**, **type**, **size**, **visual cues** *(underline, shape)*

✤ Must hold up when the screen size changes or input mode shifts

Location, Location Location
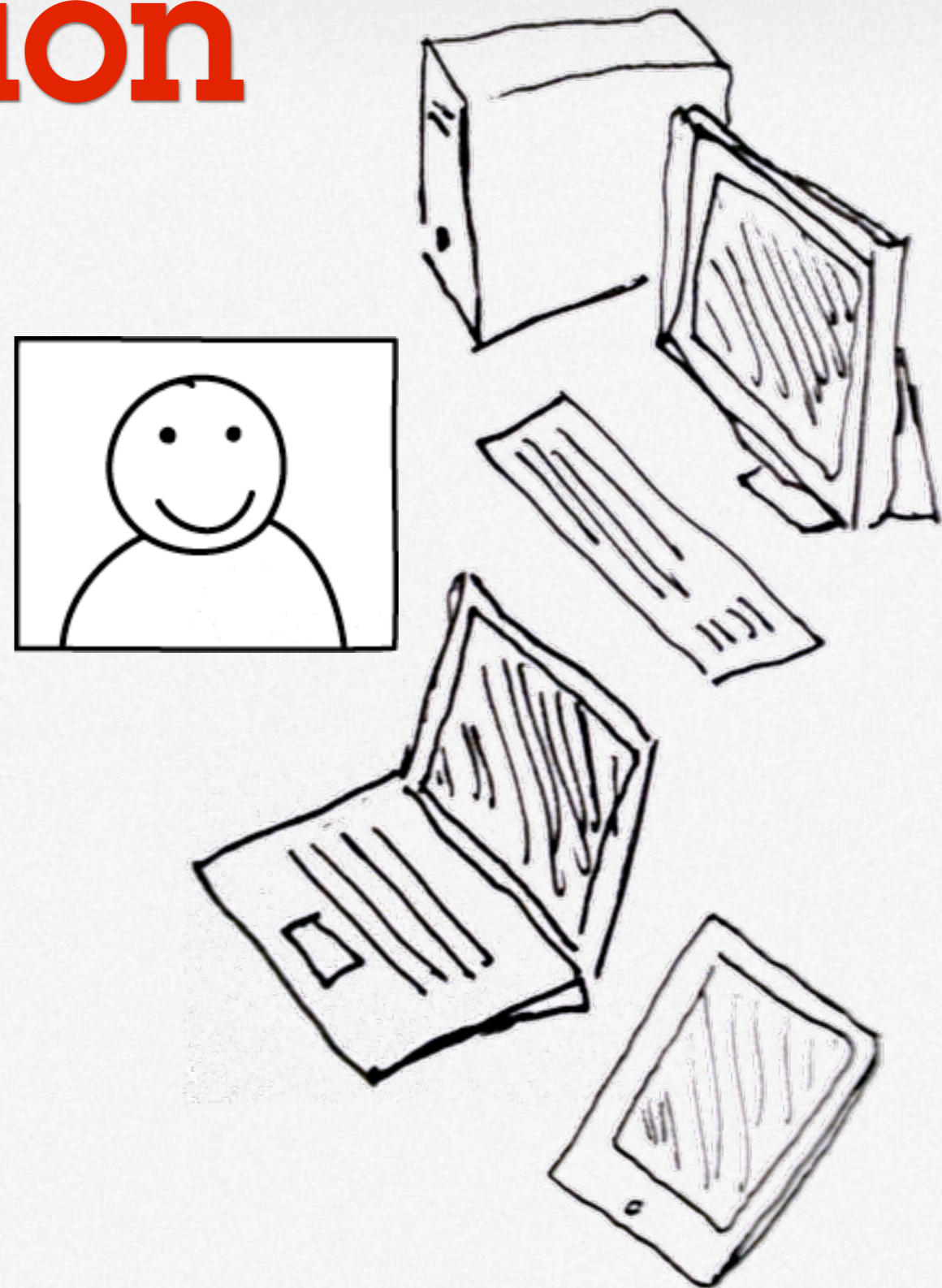
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- ✤ Tablets prefer couches (highest usage in evening)

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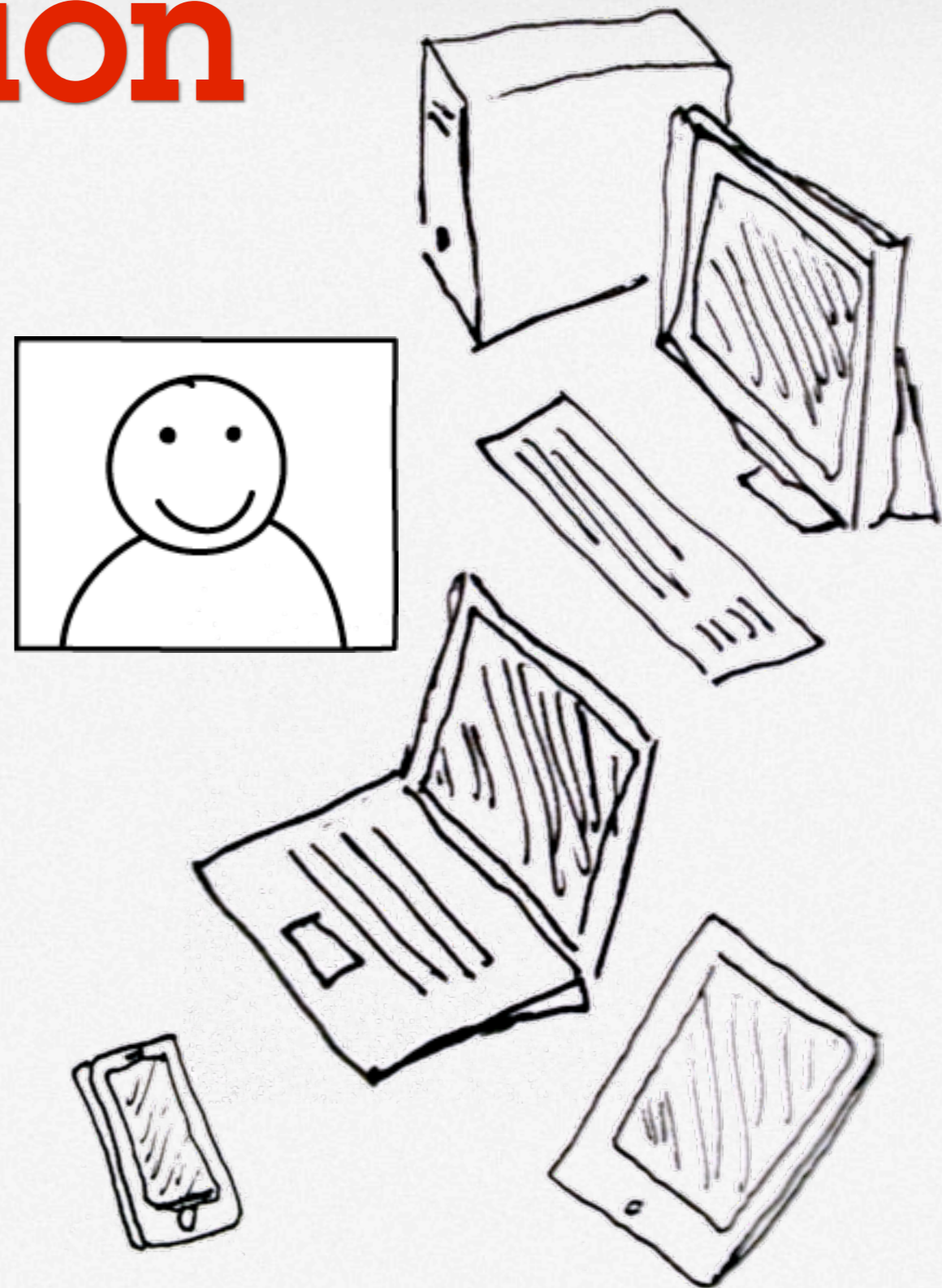
Location, Location Location

- ✤ Desktops are used, well – at a desk

- ✤ Laptops might be in a coffee shop

- ✤ Tablets prefer couches (highest usage in evening)

- ✤ Phones fill the gaps... all of them (in line, in the car, on the train, in bed, in the loo – yes, there too)

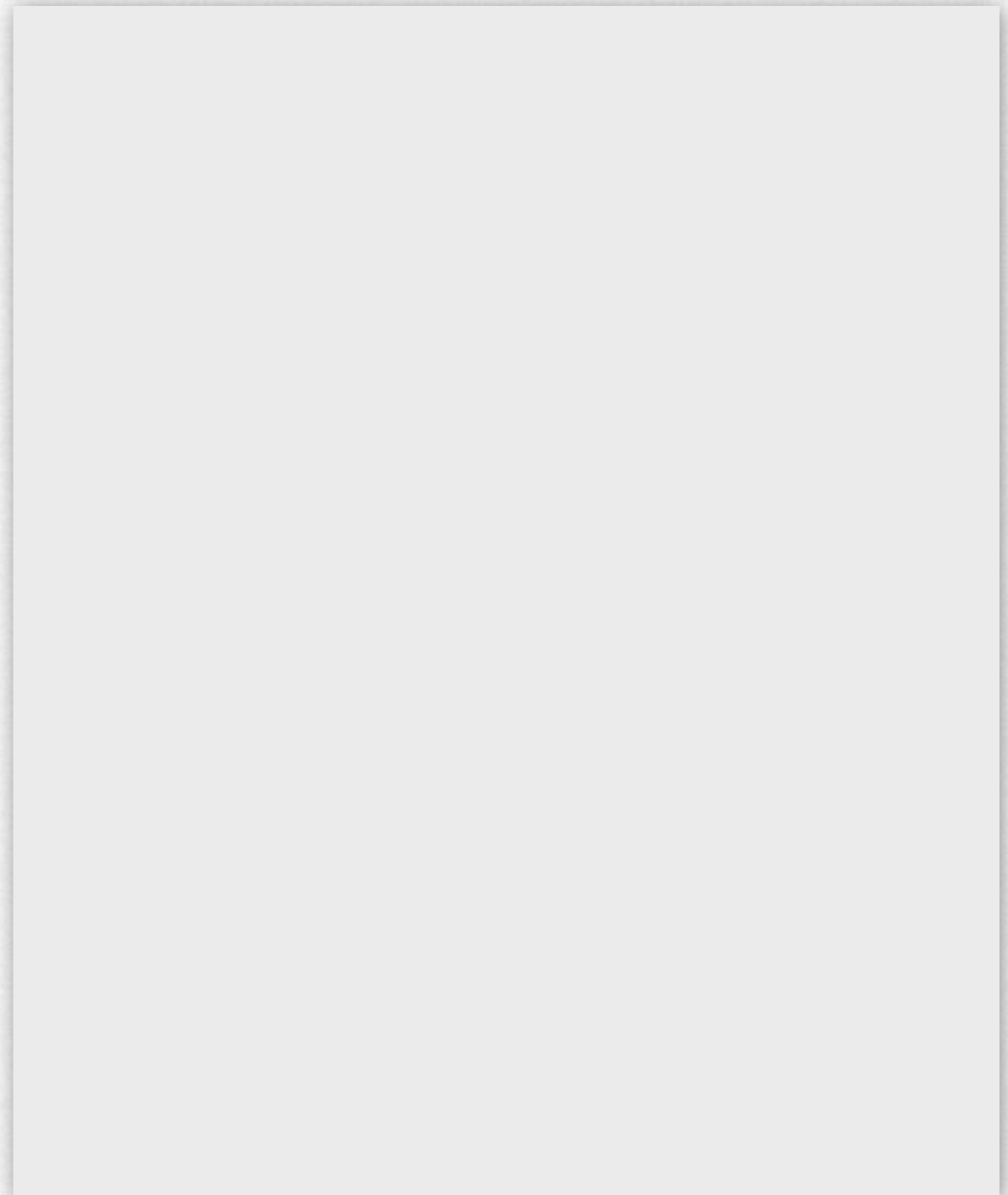# Your Mileage Will Vary

- ✤ With every device & kind of usage comes a differing level of focus

- ✤ **Focus** of attention & mode of input **dictates** your **design** approach

- ✤ **Size matters** – *but attention matters more*

- ✤ What the user is **ALSO** doing at the time matters is even more critical

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Please Pass the Gestalt

✤ Our attention is drawn by contrast

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✤ An **\<h1\>** is bigger than a \<p\> for a reason

A Big Headline

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- ✤ An **<h1>** is bigger than a <p> for a reason

- ✤ **Conventions are your Frenemies**

A Big Headline

Steering now south-eastward by Ahab's levelled steel, and her progress solely determined by Ahab's level log and line; the Pequod held on her path towards the Equator. Making so long a passage through such un-frequented waters, descrying no ships, and ere long, side-ways impelled by unvarying trade winds, over waves monotonously mild; all these seemed the strange calm things preluding some riotous and desperate scene.

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"Mend it, eh? I think we had best have a new line altogether."

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  - ✦ Defy them & create unexpected contrast

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Task-Appropriate Design is the OTHER New Black

✤ A place for everything & everything in its place

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✤ But the place might be different on a phone... or in a car

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✤ As may be the importance of some tasks versus others

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It's not the What but the Why & How

- Josh Clark: '**I have some attention to spend**' – but how are they spending it?

- @LukeW: with **one eye** & **one thumb**

- There is **no mobile user** – there are only **mobile devices**

- Tasks vary by circumstances of use (the *why*)

- *How* users **accomplish** those **tasks** varies by **device capability** (hover, touch, swipe)

For Example

♣ Restaurant site on a phone: What I can eat & how do I get there?

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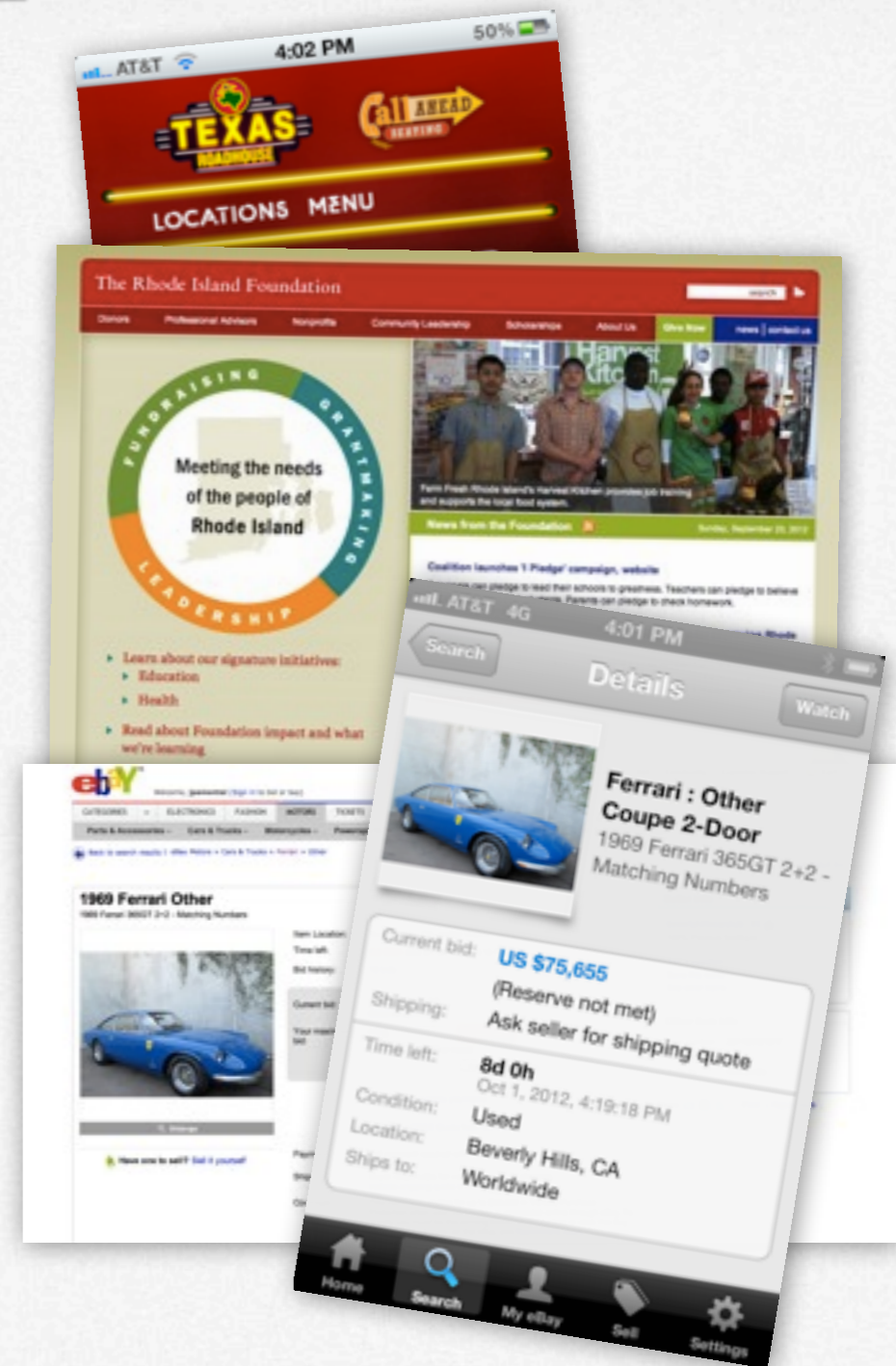✤ Non-profit on a laptop: Are they for real, who's involved, how do I help?

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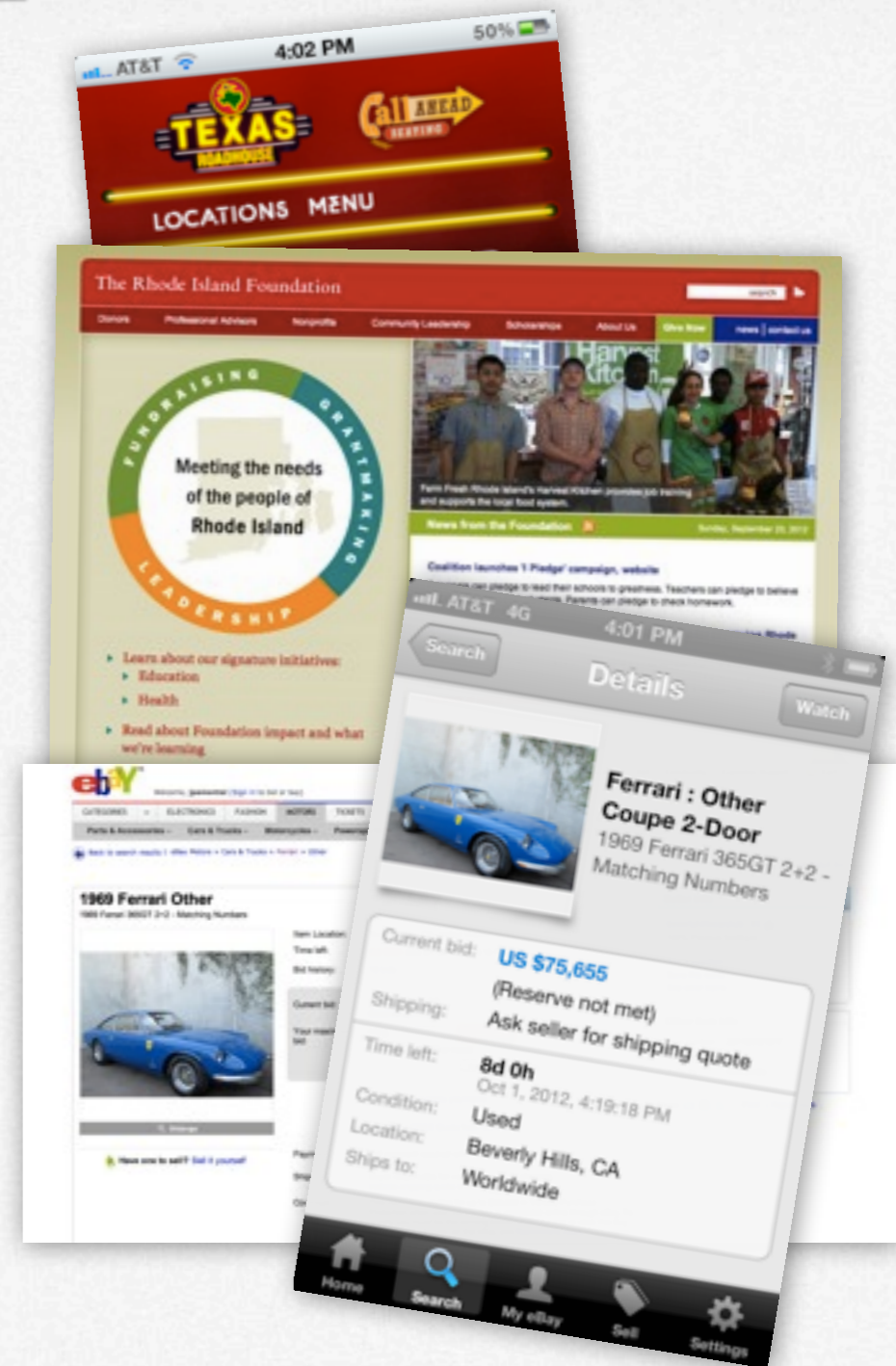
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- ✤ Contexts may coincide with one case or the other – *but neither should exclude the other behavior*

The Medium Is the Message

✤ But the **device capabilities** should dictate how you present it

✤ **Hover** on a desktop aids exploration & speeds browsing

✤ **Touching/swiping** on a small screen is more natural (but don't forget about fat fingers. Again: size matters)
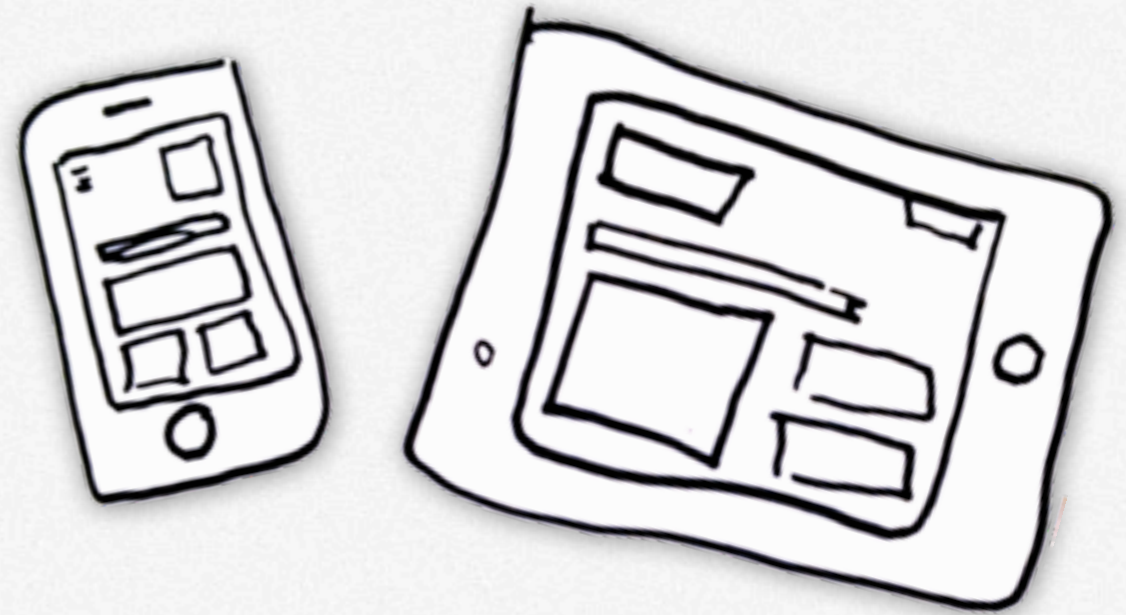
Re-think Your Design Thinking

Design by Sharpie

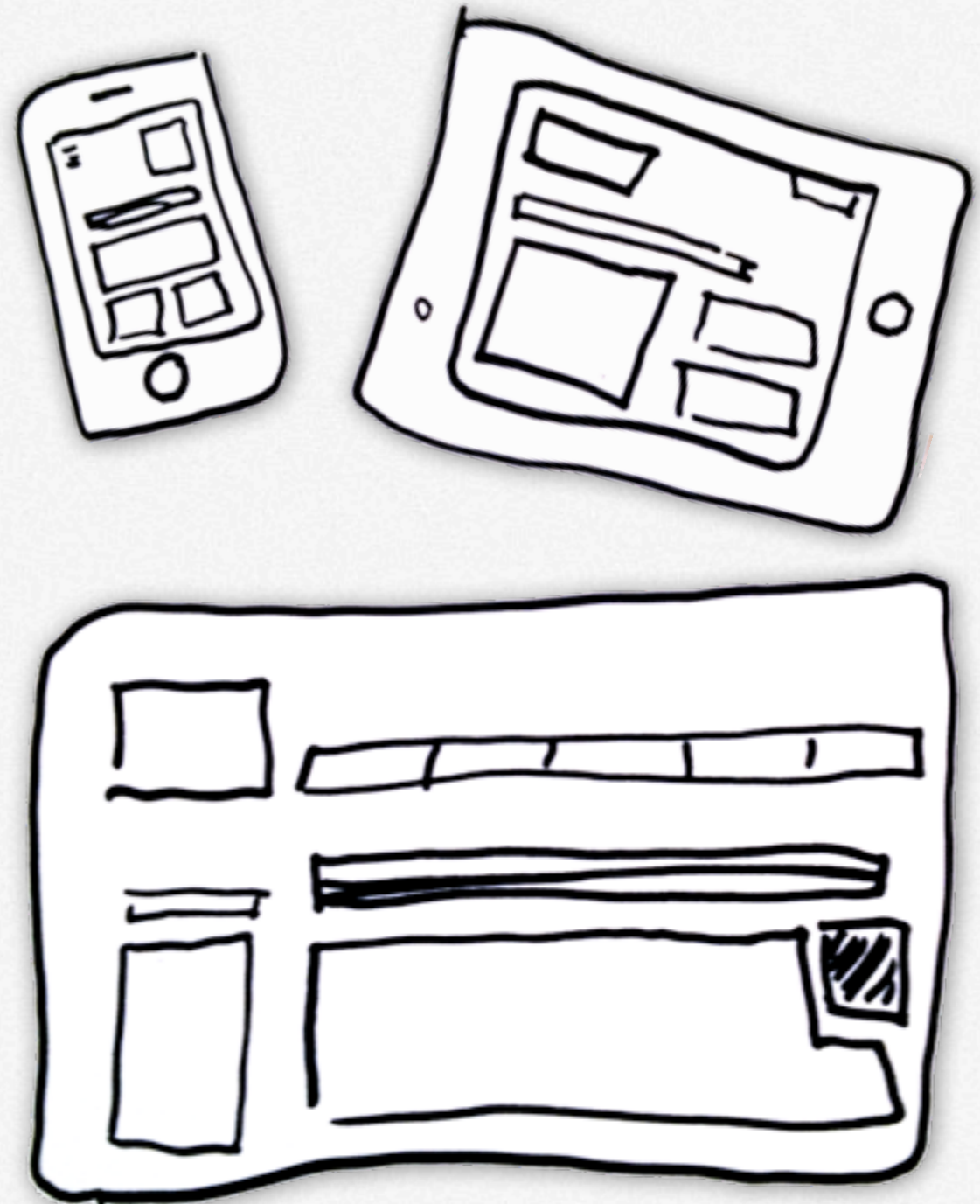✤ Sketch out your design with a fat tip marker to quickly sort out hierarchy

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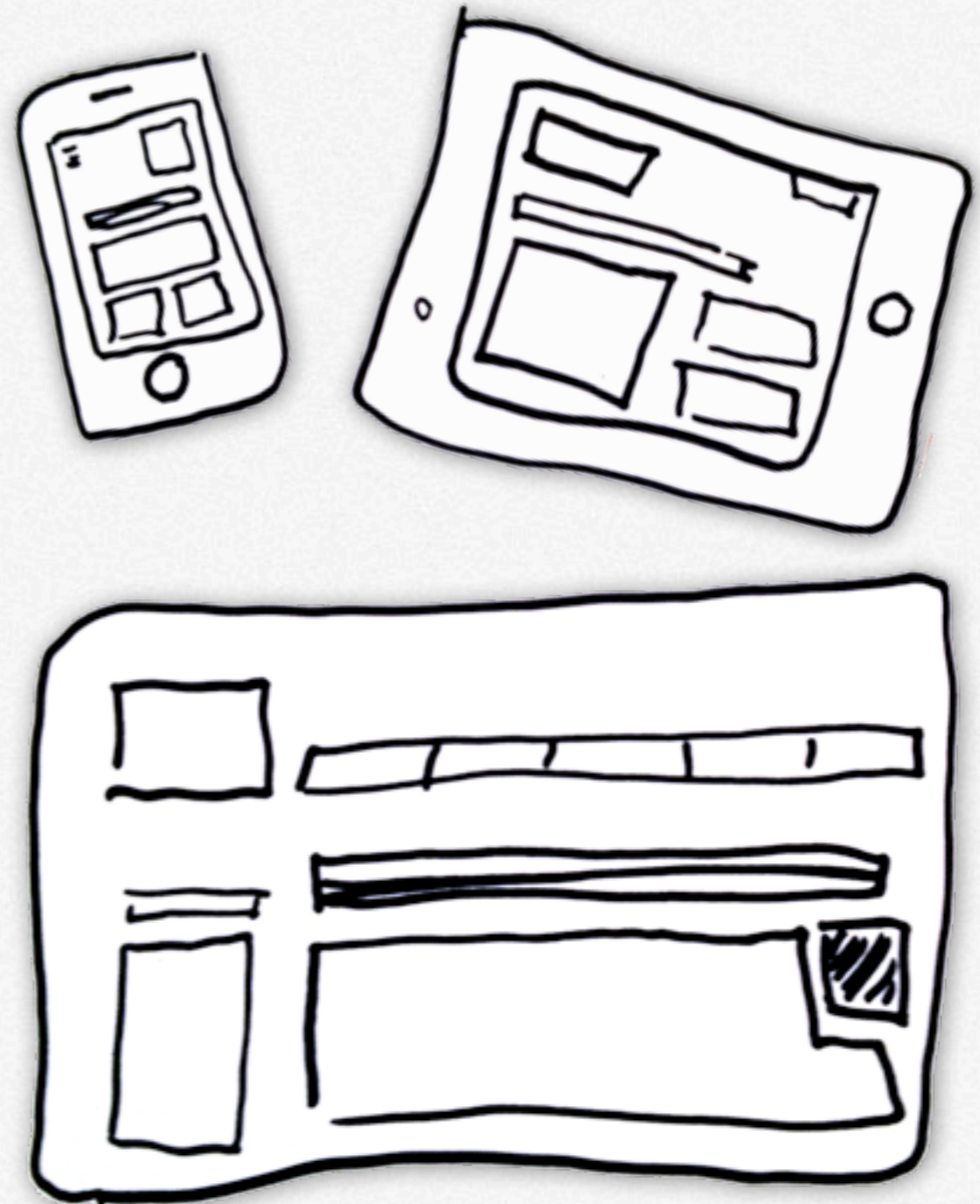- ✤ Don't forget about BIG (#RWD isn't just for smartphones you know)

Design by Sharpie

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- ✤ Don't forget about BIG (#RWD isn't just for smartphones you know)

- ✤ Now interaction: what's natural to the device & method of use

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Research, Research, Research. Repeat.

- ✤ Responsive Design is new

- ✤ UI patterns evolving, but conventions are emerging
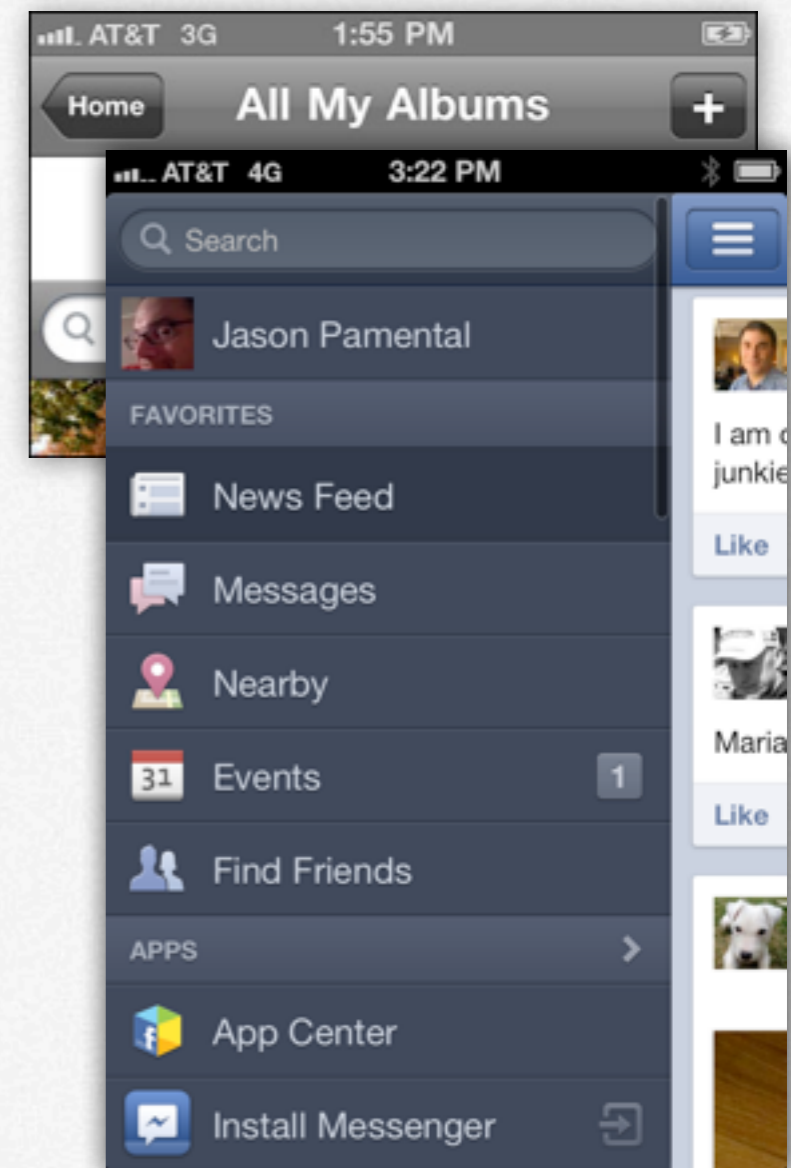
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- ✤ Responsive Design is new

- ✤ UI patterns evolving, but conventions are emerging

- ✤ **Native Apps work:** think about *why*

- ✤ Some App UI patterns can be used on the web

Since We *Know* Real Designers Code...

♣ Why not stretch a bit, explore those adjacent skills & experiment?

♣ You could even crack a book (or at least watch a video)

♣ One size does not fit all: jQuery Mobile & media queries – appropriate experience based on device capabilities

Getting Started is Getting Better

✤ There is no excuse for Arial any more

✤ Or `plug-in not found'

✤ Or `This site best viewed in NetFox Safari Explorer Version 47'

✤ Modernizr, HTML5 Boilerplate, LESS, SASS/Compass, Adaptive Images & more

Why Harp on This?

✤ Because designing a page in Photoshop is simply fantasy

✤ Worse: designing just a page is only 1/400th of the answer (or less)

✤ Even prototyping in static HTML only tells part of the story (though doing so responsively is a start)

What's That Viewport Bit, Then?

- ✤ A school in Amman, Jordan has **over 22%** mobile traffic

- ✤ Ford, Toyota shipping app-filled interfaces in 2012: Pandora streamed to your dashboard

- ✤ 50% of US mobile subscribers own a smartphone

- ✤ Kindle Fire: **7" color tablet for $199,** Webkit-based browser

- ✤ **The revolution WILL be televised:** Samsung has put apps on your TV

You Gotta Know What You Don't Know

✤ Responsive & Adaptive Design is about anticipating the unknown

✤ This has the benefit of being MUCH more flexible and fault-tolerant

✤ WAY easier when editing a couple files – not a couple hundred

✤ Know what else you don't know? ***What comes next***

Be Prepared

- ✤ You know **design**

- ✤ You know your **client** (or you should)

- ✤ You know the **web** & what can be done on it

- ✤ Don't stop looking, seeing & learning

- ✤ Use **a framework or CMS** to help

- ✤ Design **meaning** not pages

and don't forget...

Declare the Pennies on Your Eyes

✤ *(You need a Beatles reference. Just because.)*

✤ Platforms are smarter: leaner, more semantic markup & more reliable device capability detection

✤ Tons of resources – easy to find

✤ Being curious begets curiosity

✤ Every step reveals a new point of view

Now Get Out & Go Make Something Awesome

Hello.

I'm a web professional and I make

Awesome

Uncertainty **FTW**

Thank You!

Jason Pamental (@jpamental)
jason@thinkinginpencil.com

Resources

✤ Mobile UI Patterns:
  http://mobile-patterns.com/dashboard-navigation

✤ LukeW's Multi-Device Layout Patterns
  http://www.lukew.com/ff/entry.asp?1514

✤ Navicon (blog post)
  Jeremy Keith (excellent post w/lots of references)

Monday, September 24, 12

Books

✤ ## Responsive Web Design
Ethan Marcotte, A Book Apart

✤ ## Adaptive Web Design
Aaron Gustafson, Easy Readers

✤ ## Mobile First
Luke Wroblewski, A Book Apart

✤ ## Don't Make Me Think
Steve Krug (really - you still have to read it)

✤ ## The Design of Everyday Things
Don Norman (web usability learned from the design of doors)