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Directive Presents: Michael Casta



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About Directive

We are a technology consulting firm specializing in technology implementation and management for businesses. We're known for providing big-business, Enterprise-Level IT services to small and medium-sized businesses.

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The Power of Color in Web Design



When you're trying to create an impressive layout and design for your website, that will grab the attention of visitors, color can be one of the most powerful weapons in your design arsenal. Carefully chosen colors that create a balanced contrast allow the designer to control what the user's attention is drawn to. Without any contrast in color, it becomes difficult to emphasize the importance of different elements of your website.

What is contrast and why is it important?

To a designer, contrast is what separates the color's appearances and makes each particular color distinguishable. It is also considered the difference in brightness and color in an object. Contrast plays an important role, not only in web design, but in everyday life. A human's vision is sensitive to contrast. Contrast in colors can be picked out easily and is often used by designers and engineers to indicate visual cues, such as the importance of an item.

Contrast can be applied with different sized elements, as well. Having large font-characters opposed to small font-characters indicates a difference in significance between the two different sized text.

Why do we use contrast in Web Design?

Contrast in web design is extremely useful, if and only if, it can be applied successfully. You can spend all day adding images and content to your website but without the proper formatting and use of color, it may come across as less than impressive or completely over the

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Who Can You Trust with Your Data?



Your company's information on your network is labeled as "sensitive" for a reason. The files on your servers contain the secrets to your success, along with financial records about you, your employees, and your customers. When trusting sensitive data to a third party, make sure that it is someone you trust.

The ability to store your data to the cloud makes trust a relevant issue. There are many different companies competing to store your data on their servers, and every one of them claims that their data storage system is secure. While it is true that the majority of IT companies have security measures in place, based on the size of the company, some data storage companies are bigger targets than others. The bigger a target a data storage company is, the more attacks they will face from hackers.

Technology giants like Google and Microsoft are large enough to have some of the most extravagant IT security systems in the world. This is necessary, because as far as the world of hackers is concerned, these companies have the biggest bulls eyes painted on their backs.

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How Can Terminal Services Help Your Network?



Thanks to the cloud computing, there's a lot of chatter these days about doing your work remotely. The idea of access-

ing your data from anywhere on any device is an exciting prospect, but it is not a new one. Windows Terminal Services (renamed Remote Desktop Services in Windows Server 2008 R2) has had this ability for many years, and it is still a great remote service option for your network.

Even though Terminal Services have been around since Windows NT (circa 1996), new advancements in hardware technology have really opened the doors and allowed for Terminal Services to upgrade and do more for your network. For example, the old standard for networks used to 10 Mbps, which is barely enough juice to run multiple applications. Server hardware has grown to the point where it can now run multiple operating systems. Thanks to more powerful network hardware, Windows Termi-

nal Services can pull off these four services that can enhance the productivity of your network.

Servers Handle the Workload

Terminal Services allow servers to handle your company's heavy computing workload. This means that your desktops processes less data, and can accomplish more with less. As much as every employee would love to get a new computer, purchasing a new workstation is a major expense. If you can extend the life of your computers by letting Terminal Services take the load, then your bill to replace hardware will be much smaller. When it is time to foot the bill for new hardware, using Terminal Services means that you will not need to buy expensive high-performance machines. Also, setting up a new PC is easier and more cost effective.

Minimal Configuration Setting for Desktops

With Terminal Services, you can improve the performance of your workstations across your entire network by configuring each desktop to run at a minimal configuration. When adjustments are made, like media files minimized to their

smallest size, desktop provisioning (the providing of data to a user's desktop) will take a lot less out of your servers, allowing you to free up network resources and make room for growth.

Use One Software Application on Multiple Desktops

Terminal Services allow you to install individual applications on your server instead of on the hard drive of each workstation. This makes software maintenance much easier; because now, instead of going through and updating the software on each and every PC, only one security patch will need to be installed.

Replace Your Desktop Management Software for Terminal Services

Not every company will need to do this, but it is possible to switch out your desktop management software for a Terminal Services environment. This will help if you are trying to cut back on fees and expenses associated with desktop management software. This may not be an option for every desktop management software. Directive will be happy to review your software and recommend

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Who Can You Trust with Your Data?

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We would like to think that every major company is bulletproof and "too big to fail," yet it seems like every week we hear about another major data breach of a large company that results in the theft of valuable customer information. Evernote is the most recent example of this.

Now, we are not advocating that you avoid Microsoft, Google, and any other major technology company, the size of these companies actually comes with many advantages when it comes to doing business. We are just trying to make you aware of the hacker's perspective.

They will go after the big boss before going after the little guy. If data security is an important concern of yours, then you need to go with a company you know that you can trust. Choosing a cloud storage solution solely based on a brochure or commercial claiming that they are the biggest and the best might not be in the best interest of your company's data.

At Directive we have a hands-on approach. If you have done business with us, then you already know how hard we work at maintaining your trust. With the backup solution that we provide, you can be confident that it is a solution that

we have chosen because we feel it is the most secure available. Plus, with Directive, you have a point of contact that will answer the phone who knows much more about your business than your account number.

Trust. This is the advantage of partnering with IT professionals out of your local Upstate New York area. Give us a call at 607.433.2200 and trust us to find a secure data storage solution that you can feel good about.



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The Power of Color in Web Design

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top -- both of which are equally undesirable when it comes to your company's webpage.

To give you a realistic scenario that you may run across, imagine adding a banner to your webpage. You will be applying the banner to a website with an extremely dark or black background.

Because of the dark background, we would begin adding a white block of text to our webpage. White is a definite contrast to the black background, but is it the most effective color to use? A few questions to consider: Is it truly effective in grabbing your attention? How will you indicate which sections are more im-

portant? We can thicken the text of the title to make it bolder. Keep in mind, however, that the human eye cannot pick up on this separation as quickly as it would if we used a variation in color. In summary, it is important to incorporate all aspects of contrast to manipulate the way a user views your page.

How do we know what contrast works best?

The distinct difference in color really helps you catch the important parts in an article. At first glance skimming through this article, which part would YOU look at first?

Using the light brown color gives off the idea that this section may be important,

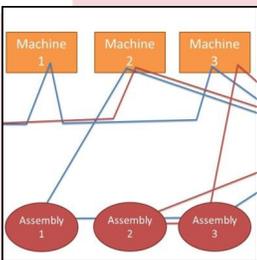
but not in all cases. When used properly, contrast can be very effective. Each color serves a different purpose and usually has a defined range of acceptable colors to use. From a designer standpoint, learning how to control contrast can prove to be very useful in design. It is important to incorporate all aspects of contrast to manipulate the way a user views your page.

Can you see the elements in this blog article that are being emphasized? If so, you may have just learned something new!



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Use Spaghetti to Improve Workflow



Typically, the only way that spaghetti improves the office is by providing a low cost meal during a lunch break. As it

turns out, spaghetti can be used as more than lunch; spaghetti charts are a great

productivity tool that can improve your workflow, eliminate transport waste, and save you money.

A spaghetti chart is a tool used to diagram workflows and identify waste that has been used by engineers and productivity experts for a long time. We are sorry to the disappointment anybody who is craving spaghetti by now, but the spaghetti chart is purely a chart, there aren't

any noodles involved. The spaghetti chart gets its name because it uses curvy lines to connect points of the workflow for the sake of research. When the chart is finished, and you take a step back to survey your project, you will have before you a graph with so many layers of lines that your final product will look like a bowl of spaghetti.

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Let us Help Your IT Department



If your business is large enough to have its own IT department, then you know firsthand how valuable it is to have a knowledgeable technology professional on the premise. Being IT technicians ourselves, we experience this appreciation all the time from helping our clients. Some-

times, a technician's popularity can be almost overwhelming, and for times like these, it is nice to have backup.

An in-house IT technician can work their magic and repair many of your broken technologies -- ranging from removing viruses to rebooting servers. You may not know exactly how they do it, but you have come to rely on them and you trust them. As your company grows, you are faced with tough decisions like, when is it the right time to hire a new staff mem-

ber for the IT department? As much as you care for your IT staff, let's face it, they are not the money makers, and given the chance, you would rather spend your money attracting new sales rather than adding personnel to the IT department.

As a business owner, you have a natural perception about how much longer. . .



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How Can Terminal Services Help Your Network?

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what can be traded for a Terminal Services environment.

If your company is running a computer network with servers and workstations, then you are likely already using Terminal Services. Directive can work with you to show

you how to maximize Terminal Services for your business.

Maybe your business is growing and you currently only have a few workstations. If you are looking to upgrade to a server that runs Terminal Services, then Directive can help you set this up. Call Di-

rective at 607.433.2200 to learn more about how Terminal Services can improve the efficiency of your network.



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We partner with many types of businesses in the area, and strive to eliminate IT issues before they cause expensive downtime, so you can continue to drive your business forward. Our dedicated staff loves seeing our clients succeed. Your success is our success, and as you grow, we grow.

Use Spaghetti to Improve Workflow

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In order to streamline your own operations by using a spaghetti chart, you will first want to decide on which workflow you will want analyzed. It can be something complicated like determining how many different people handle a product before it has shipped, or something simpler like how much movement is involved for employees to send a fax. For illustration purposes, let's use the simple example of employees using fax machines.

To make a spaghetti chart of the fax machine scenario, you can use several different mediums; any software that has a chart and graph making capability will do (like Microsoft Publisher or Gliffy). Although, if you want to get the full spaghetti chart experience, then

it is always fun to go old school and use a tabletop, Post-it notes, and different colors of string.

You will start by making a diagram of your work area. It does not have to be precise, but the more accurate your model is the better. To get a better feel for the workflow area that you are modeling, take a walk around the office and make mental notes about how many footsteps there are between each important station, like from an employee's desk to the fax machine.

Technically, you can make a spaghetti chart on your own, but it is beneficial to include others because this will bring more insight and different perspectives that can lead to greater efficiency. If you are including others, then include everybody on this pregame walk.

Going back to your diagram, you will add Post-it notes to symbolize the major stations in the work flow, be sure to label your notes with "desk" and "fax machine." You will now want to illustrate different workflows from different employees using lines of different colors. Colored pencils or markers will accomplish this, but there is just something quaint about using yarn, perhaps because it looks most like spaghetti noodles.

After you and your team have visually mapped out your current workflow, you may be taken aback with how many curly Q's are tangled before you. All of these loops and detours represent what . . .



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