RESPONSIVE PORTFOLIO DESIGN

STRATEGIC DOCUMENT

For some, a personal website is the first introduction to a person. For others, it is a digital reflection of the person they already know. But no matter who the audience is, one's personal website reflects the image they want to project to the world. And no matter who the audience is, they're probably seeing that website from their cell phone.[1] So it better be ready.

PRINCIPLES OF RESPONSIVE WEB DESIGN

For a website to be mobile-ready is for it to be *responsive*. A site built with responsive web design in mind is ready to adapt to the flexibility of quickly advancing display technologies and the growing number of consumer-market phones with widely varying screen resolutions.[2] A survey of articles from web designers and digital marketers posted over the past few years about responsive web design yields advice both enduring and novel. Some highlights follow:

- **Flexbox and grid layout is "responsive by default."**[3] When the features built into these components, e.g. flex-basis and flex-grow, fail to produce a compelling result, turn to media queries.
- **Do not target devices with media queries.** Add breakpoints where the design fails.[4] That might be a matter of pixels, but it might be a matter of line-length becoming too long; the em unit can help here.
- **Media queries can test for height *and* width constraints.** It's easy to forget, but this helps with multi-column layouts.
- **Design for mobile devices first.** Mobile-first web design forces prioritization of the most important content, ensuring that it's on top, front and center to users. Trim down what doesn't need to be there. Build up from the mobile design.[5]

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[1] **Berthene,** April. "Mobile Devices Will Account for 73% of Internet Consumption in 2018." 26 Oct. 2017. Accessed 9 May 2018: digitalcommerce360.com/2017/10/26/mobile-devices-will-account-73-internet-consumption-in-2018

[2] **Marcotte,** Ethan. "Responsive Web Design." *A List Apart*, 25 May 2010. Accessed 9 May 2018: https://alistapart.com/article/responsive-web-design

[3] **Andrew,** Rachel. "Using Media Queries for Responsive Design in 2018." *Smashing Magazine*, 5 Feb. 2018. Accessed 8 May 2018: smashingmagazine.com/2018/02/media-queries-responsive-design-2018

[4] **Frost,** Brad. "7 Habits of Highly Effective Media Queries." *Brad Frost*, 18 Sept. 2013. Accessed 8 May 2018: bradfrost.com/blog/post/7-habits-of-highly-effective-media-queries

[5] **Girard,** Jeremy. "10 Rules of Best Practice for Responsive Design." *The Next Web*, 19 Oct. 2015. Accessed 9 May 2018: thenextweb.com/dd/2015/10/19/10-rules-of-best-practice-for-responsive-design

WIREFRAMES FOR PORTFOLIOS

The preceding guidelines and independent considerations inform these mock-ups for a portfolio website designed, from the ground-up, with responsiveness in mind. This site will showcase the individual's achievements and interests, with attention paid to how potential employers may regard him. The prototype renderings are of the homepage, which will vary widely between screen sizes and will need to successfully impart a positive, lasting impression on visitors in order to function as a good landing page for a personal portfolio site.

Smartwatch browsers, e.g. the Apple Watch, display screens at about 272 pixels wide by 340 pixels tall. This is a very rare use-case for portfolio websites, as smartwatch browsers are a nascent technology unfit for web browsing, and users know it.[6] But something should be displayed, should a stray tweet bring somebody to the portfolio site. So the homepage features just the navigation bar, a welcome message, and a photo of the site owner (Fig. 1); these three elements will feature in every display case.

Small screens, i.e. those that display up to 320 pixels wide and perhaps 480 pixels tall, account for a small number of phones today: flip phones and "handsets" sold by Nokia, Sony and Samsung have been largely abandoned. These users will see the layout that will be patterned for mid-range screens: All the home page's content in a single, wide column to scroll down through (Fig. 2). The static mock-up image can't show this, but the navigation bar at the top is "sticky"; it stays at the top while the user scrolls down the page.

Mid-range screens, e.g. iPads that display 768 pixels wide and 1024 pixels long, have essentially the same experience as small-screen users do, albeit with more room to breathe (Fig. 3). A left-right margin is introduced, the navigation bar can grow, text is larger and so is the photograph. Readers will have a more comfortable time navigating this version of the website.

Large screens, i.e. most laptops that can display up to 1280 pixels by 1024 pixels, get to see the two-column approach to the portfolio (Fig. 4). This allows equal attention to be divided between the greeting header and photograph, on the one side, and the main copy on the other.

Extra-large screens, like those on contemporary iMacs, have too much space for full-screen webpages. That's part of the reason why so many users of these workstations keep applications windowed. But, in case the portfolio is blown up on a 1600-pixel-plus screen, text and div sizes can be proportionally blown up so that less of the screen space would be wasted on empty areas (Fig. 5).

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[6] Moss, Ben. "The Future of Responsive Web Design." *Web Designer Depot*, 25 March 2015. Accessed 9 May 2018: webdesignerdepot.com/2015/03/the-future-of-responsive-web-design

APPENDIX: WIREFRAMES

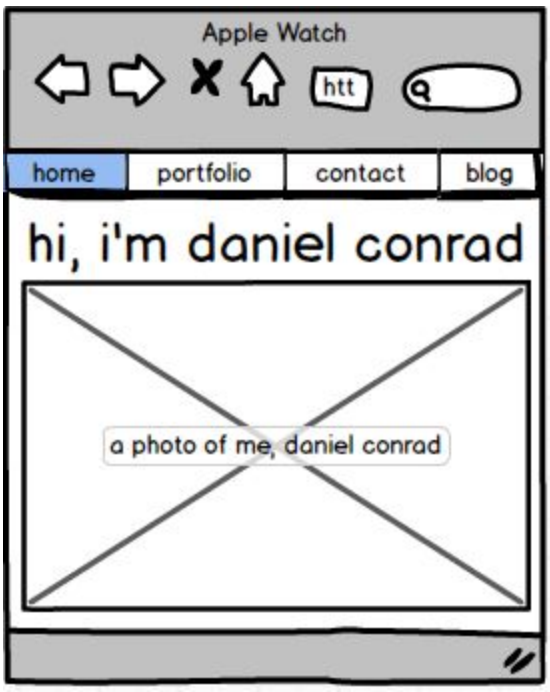

Fig. 1: Homepage adapted to display only name, photo, and navigation bar.

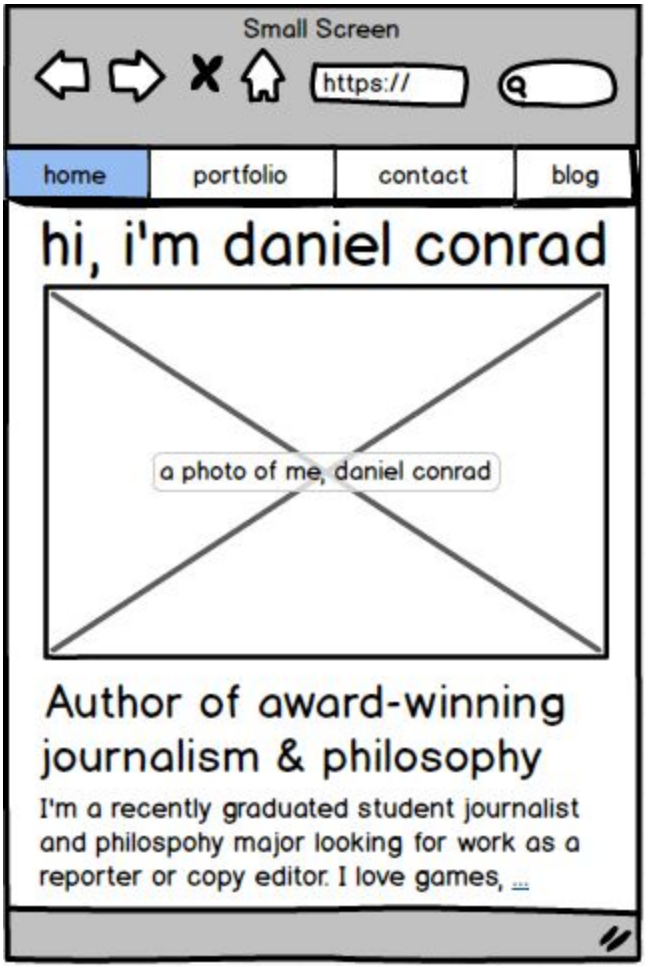

Fig. 2: Homepage adapted for small screens. These users will be able to scroll down to see the rest of the convent in a single wide column, one section after another.

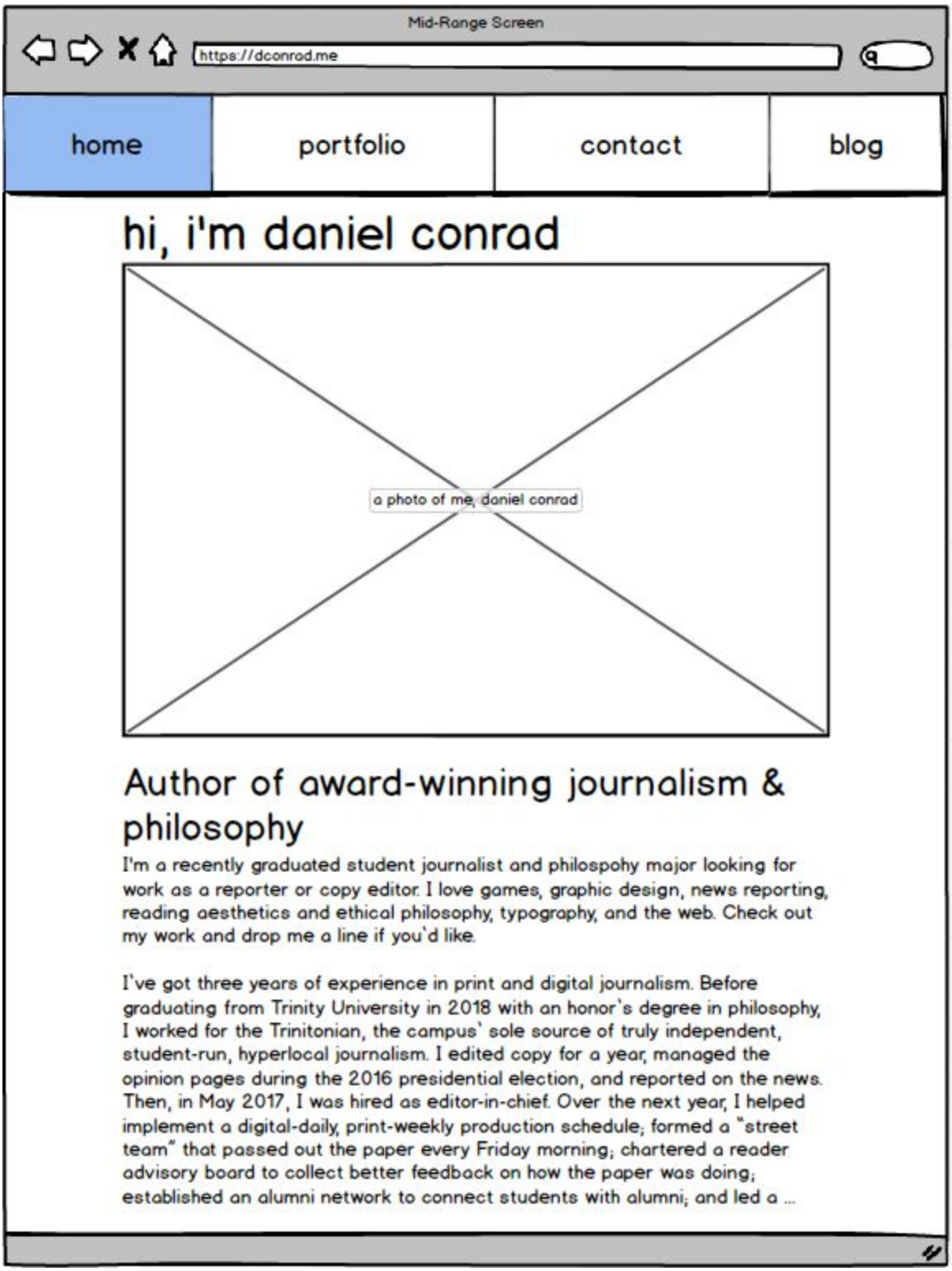

Fig. 3: Homepage adapted for mid-range, tablet screens. Notice the margins on the side and increased size of the navigation bar, photo, and text throughout.

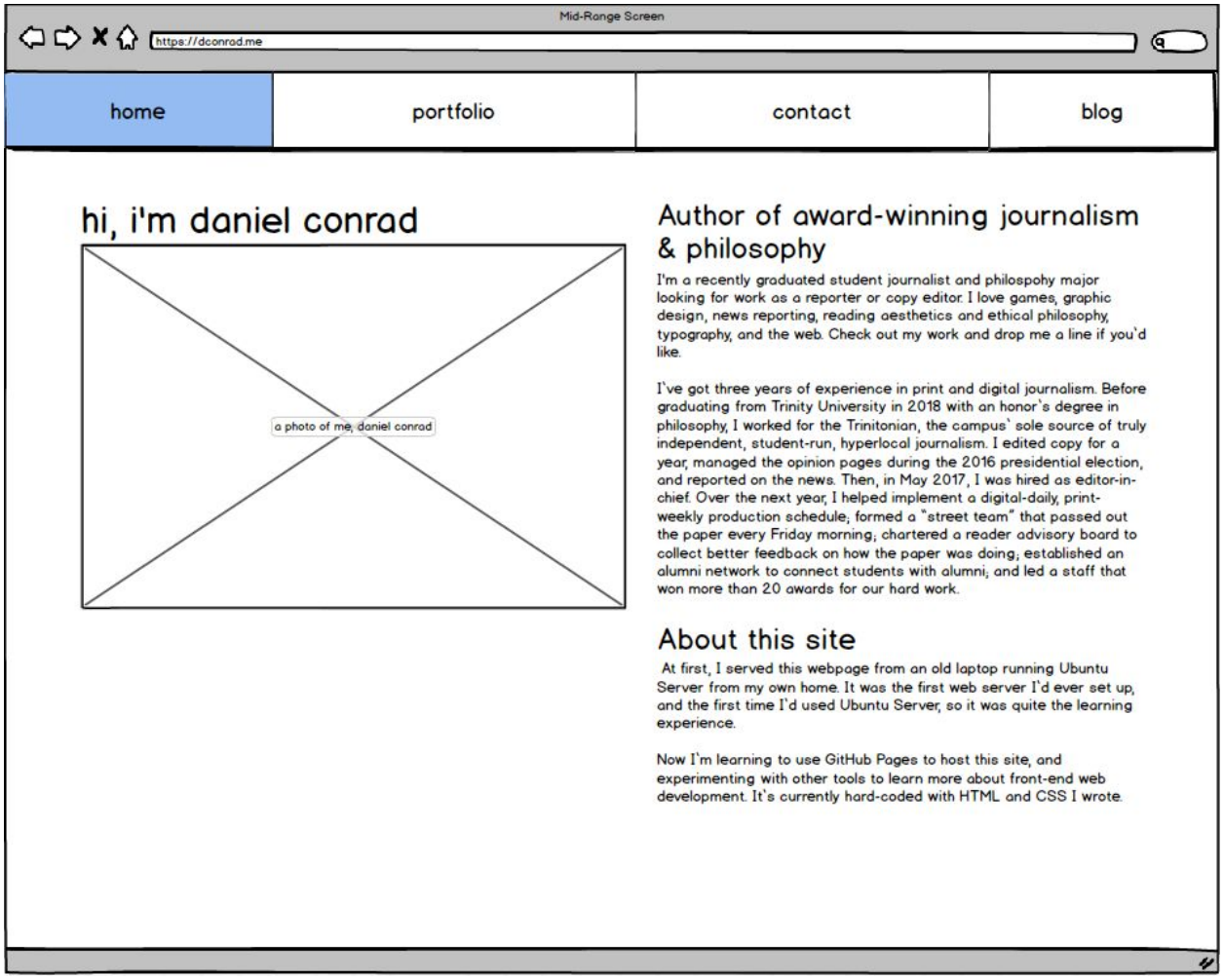

Fig. 4: Homepage adapted for large screens, which enjoy a two-column layout alongside the “breathing room” amenities of the tablets’ view.

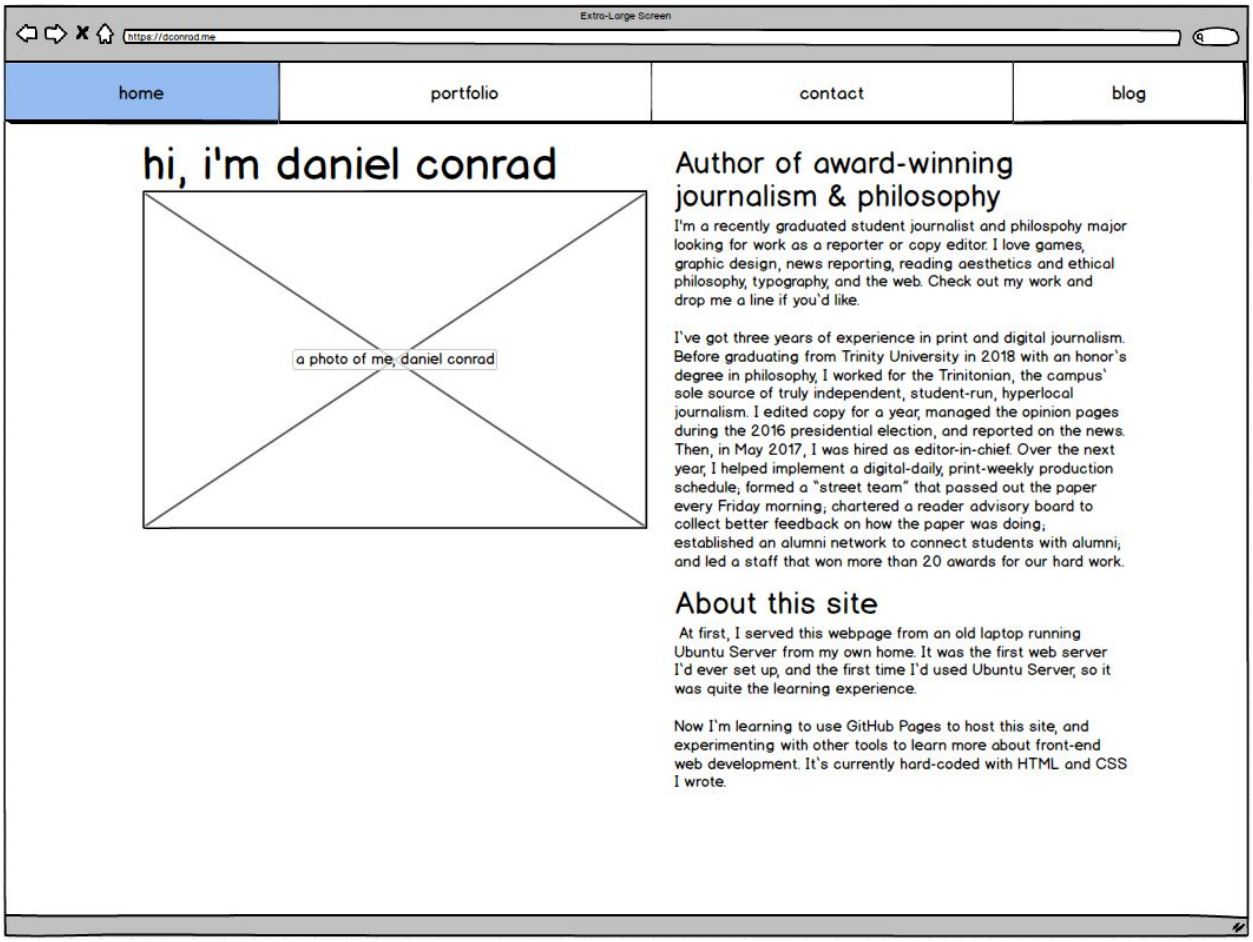

Fig. 5: Homepage adapted for extra-large screens. “Content choreography” is difficult on these screens, but possible with smart use of proportional resizing.