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NEXT STEP

INSTANT INSPIRATION

If you are a person not living under a rock and actually put to use the internet beyond Facebook and Gmail, you will undoubtedly have come across a few sites or apps that made you stop and just wonder at just how pretty it looks. If you have too much time on your hand, or are bored with that engineering degree maybe you even decided to learn how to design – be it web pages, logos or motion graphics.

Initially the work is daunting, and at time might make you wonder why you ever stopped using Microsoft Paint and Windows Movie Maker and switched to these fancy software with fancy terms that do not make any sense.

But say you are past that stage, Adobe is now the puppet to the strings that you hold, and you can make it dance, sing and woo a girl. But what do you make? Inspiration is hard to come by, and even the muses tend to be lazy in a country like ours. Of course you can sit under a blanket, crank up the Beethoven and hope that inspiration strikes. Or you can just head on over to these sites – see what people are making, get ideas and put them to use. Remember that line about stealing and art and cubes and whatnot?

BEHANCE

By far my favourite site in this list, behance.net is owned by Adobe and is a site where designers from around the globe show their work – completed and the ones in progress. It's a great site for showcasing your portfolio, getting feedback, and of course,



for the design padawan, for being inspired.

At Behance you can search according to different filter, the most useful of which is the Tools Used. Not only do you see the great work that people are doing, at times you will be baffled by what has been done, which hopefully might get you to think about

how to go about it and – voila! You can also filter in terms of creative fields from architecture to web design.

AWWWARDS

"Our mission is to discover, recognize, and promote the talent and effort of web designers, developers,

and agencies who create unique digital experiences that are useful, innovative, intuitive, and beautiful," reads the about us section of the website. True to their words, awwwards.com is a gem for the web designer. Sites are getting prettier by the day, not only in terms of looks – innovative ways of interaction with

the user are also cropping up. What Awwwards does it bring to you an already curated list of sites so you don't have to go searching for them in nooks and crannies. That next webpage you want to design for that hotshot client? – well take a look at this before starting.

ART OF THE TITLE

This one is more for those working with motion graphics. Whether you love or hate James Bond, admit it, you loved the elaborate opening sequences. Opening titles of shows and movies are now a form of art in themselves – just think of Hannibal or Daredevil. Artoftitle.com is a collection of articles, with lots and lots of pictures and videos devoted to this art form. Even if you don't need fancy titles, beautiful imagery never fails to inspire.

ABDUZEEDO

Abduzeedo describes itself as a collection of visual inspiration and useful tutorials. From works of architecture, illustration, logos, photography and even typography to Photoshop and Illustrator tutorials, abduzeedo.com is a site one can get addicted to browsing.

DEVIANTART

This list would not be complete without DeviantArt. The budding digital artists playground, deviantart.com has a lot to offer. It has work by artists sorted into categories like Digital Art, Photography, Design & Interfaces. DeviantArt is not solely dedicated to

digital art, but then again, who says you need only that to be inspired?

Honourable mentions: This list is too short to do justice to the massive amount of cool and beautiful work that is available on the internet. Brainpickings.org, with its collection of cultural and artistic musings, is a useful site to browse when one wants to be productive but don't want to work. Trapcode.com is another site I personally found really useful. Though it is primarily a technology R&D company, their sharelog section has great work and tutorials on graphics design up on display. Another site similar to Behance, is theinspirationgrid.com, sorted into neat categories, and with a clean design.

There's a lot more on the internet that can inspire. And you don't need to be a designer to appreciate something beautiful. It soothes, inspires and motivates. It might even prompt you to take up a productive hobby and thus add a new item on your CV beyond "proficient in Microsoft Word."

MOYUKH MAHTAB

The writer is an online journalist at The Daily Star and a junior at the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka.

Rainy season survival for the office goer

You corporate types have rigid office times. You can't take a break because you think an alien invasion might take place or worse: that it might rain. So fashion needs to take a back seat as you let the weather dictate your outfit.

A waterproof backpack or satchel for carrying spare clothes, extra socks and food if you get stranded in a bus in a flooded street full of hungry piranhas.

NO: Avoid suede shoes and/or purse. Water will ruin it.

Get yourself some leather protectant and spray on liberally.

Carry a pair of sandals for walking through muddy, flooded roads.

DO: Get a pair of water resistant leather shoes.

DO: Get rubber soled shoes. Those hard, formal brogues could easily slip on wet, mossy ground.

A dark rain coat because it will keep your clothes dry and make you appear like a

detective character from an old gangster movie.

Umbrella: For style, nothing beats a wooden handled full length piece. For functionality, you need to have a

foldable piece. Some men will feel silly carrying an umbrella.

Top secret: No one cares. You look sillier getting to office with your shirt sticking flat to your slightly protruding belly.

MOST IMPORTANT ACCESSORY:

A Ziploc bag should be part of your daily wallet, purse, keys and cell phone set. In sudden downpour, a Ziploc bag will protect your wallet and phone.



WORDS & ILLUSTRATION:
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Making a DIFFERENCE

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.

HOW TO PICK UP A NEW SKILL

Sometimes you need to learn a new skill out of necessity. For me it was SPSS. In the 5th semester of my BBA, I had to finally learn the darned thing. Till then, I had somehow managed to avoid it – why on earth would I need it now for a research paper in a group of eight other equally capable people? Wrong. There wasn't a single person who was willing or able to use SPSS and somehow the responsibility fell on me.

Forget the SPSS. If you want to launch an online business, you should probably have a good feel for digital marketing. If the boss wants you to create a financial model in Excel, you should probably know what all the functions do. But that's just the easy part. Saying that where there's a will, there's a way is misleading. It doesn't even begin to encompass the blood, toil, tears and sweat that are put into picking up a new skill.

Get inspired

I've wanted to learn the piano ever since discovering an upright in the basement of a holiday hotel when I was six. That thirst was quenched only this year. But I was woken up from my decade-long reverie the minute I actually tried playing something. It sounded abominable. It's easy to get disenchanted – and some of time it's inevitable. The secret is to get inspired, every single day. What you want to learn probably already exists out there, and nowadays, getting inspiration is only a few clicks away.

Know what you want to do backwards and forwards So you know what you want to do. But how well do you really know it? Before jumping into anything, jot down a couple of questions. If you're getting into graphics design, find out what separates a good design from a bad one. What kind of brushes will you need? Where can you download them? What kinds of tutorials are out there? What style of design do you want to master? Follow some relevant Facebook pages or YouTube channels. You would be surprised how many people share not only why they make what they make, but how.

Another important thing you need to resolve is whether you can learn it completely on your own or whether you should sign up for courses, be it online or from a professional tutor. Give it a go on your own, but don't be shy if you need some extra help.

Set goals

The more processes you can break down a skill into, the more manageable and doable it becomes. Once you start thinking about it, you can figure out exactly which things you will need to do because learning a skill is made up of many different bits and pieces. Achieving small incremental goals also gives you structure and the motivation you need to keep going.



Learn by doing

You can sit behind your computer for hours, taking notes on writing code, but when it comes to doing the real thing, what are the chances that you'll remember everything you learned? When a friend and I tried Code Academy's HTML & CSS course, we took screenshots of the coding and did short practice simulations. But the great thing about the course was that it also contained an interim lesson where we had to code a website from scratch. By working on exercises yourself, you internalise the various steps and processes involved and put to use what mini-skills you pick up along the way.

Stick to it

When school and grades were getting the better of me, I considered quitting my new part-time job and I asked myself if I was any good at what I was doing in the first place. While it's good to assess yourself objectively, if you're doing something new it's more important to stick to it. It might be weeks or months before you see any visible results, but sometimes the remedy is just to plough through. There is no right time or place to take risks and work on new projects, but if you've gotten started, don't throw it away – figure out your approach and follow through.

AMIYA HALDER

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