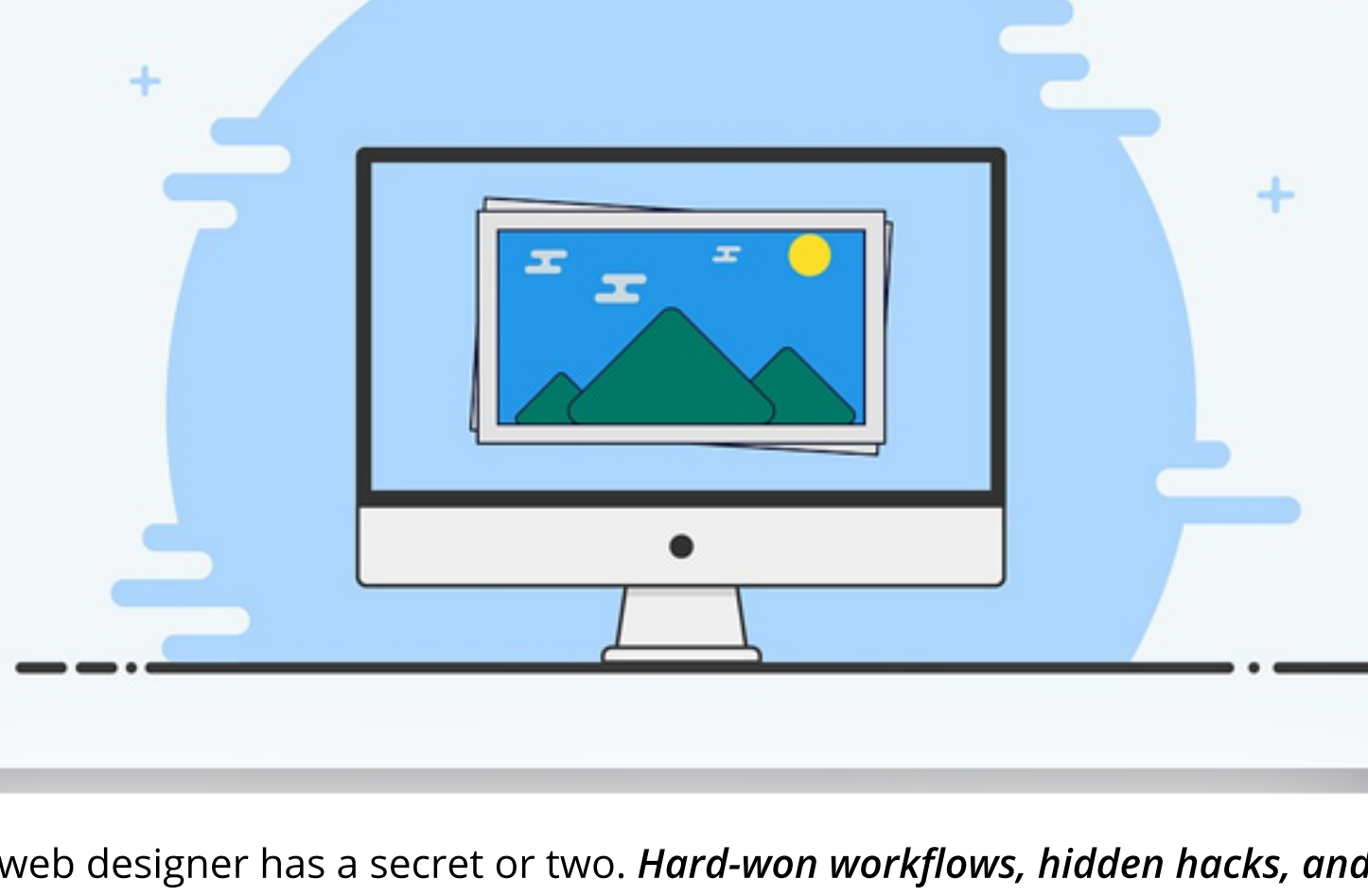


Web Design Tips for a Professional Site

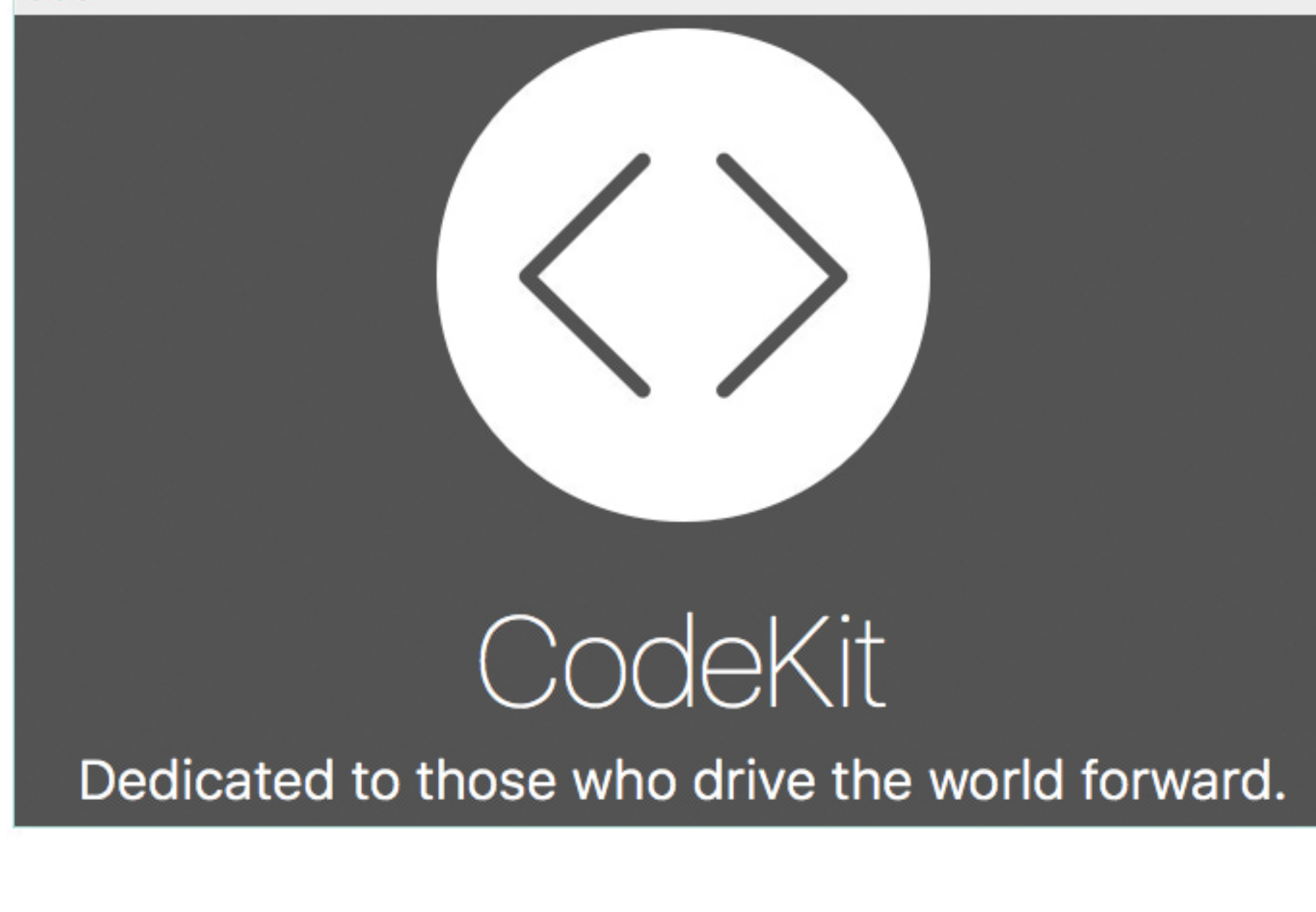


Every web designer has a secret or two. *Hard-won workflows, hidden hacks, and insider knowledge* that are the mark of *true experience and the stuff* that separates *great web design training* from good.

CODEKIT FOR BROWSER RELOADING

CodeKit enables you to instantly see changes in your browser, without refreshing

"If you're on a Mac then CodeKit is a must," says Keir Whitaker, co-founder of Viewport Industries. "The browser reloading feature is worth the small cost alone. The days of hard refreshing your browser to make changes take effect are long gone."



APPLY GLOBAL CHANGES

Here's a coding tip from musician, producer and web dev Elliott Fienberg that can help speed things up at the early stages of your design work. Use the wildcard CSS rule - using an asterisk as the selector - and you can globally apply changes to an entire page. For example, to change all the fonts on a page to sans-serif, you just need:

```
*{font-family:arial, helvetica, sans-serif;}
```

This is a great designer's trick to have in your pocket while you're going through the design process. Of course, it's not such a great idea to leave it in your live code, so use this trick carefully and sparingly!



SET GARISH OUTLINES



File this in the "simple acts of genius" folder - a tip from Christopher Murphy of Web Standardistas that makes cross-platform design so much easier. "When working with media queries, set an outline in a garish colour," says Murphy. "For example:

```
{outline:10px solid green/red/yellow/blue;}
```

This enables you to instantly see which exact rules are being applied to what you're currently looking at."



CHECK YOUR CHARACTER COUNT

"45-75 characters per line is generally accepted as safe for comfortable reading," says Trent Walton, founder and designer with Paravel. "There's a quick trick to ensure your responsive or fluid design supports this. Place a line of dummy text on your page with an asterisk at character 45 and an asterisk at character 75. Now test the site to make sure it resizes within these parameters."

USE TYPECAST WITH GOOGLE FONTS

Monotype recently teamed up with Google to release a new, free public version of Typecast which can be accessed through Google Fonts. It enables you to select any font on the Google Fonts website and then follow the link to the Typecast app.

From there, you can work with that font on text of any length and use a wide range of type controls to build clear, readable type systems through adjustments such as font size, weight and line spacing. Your work can be exported as production-ready HTML and CSS, or PNG files, to share with others or merge with comps.



USE KEYNOTE (MAC) TO CREATE RAPID PAGE PROTOTYPES

You don't need Photoshop to create rapid prototypes of web pages, landing pages, call to actions or other web interface elements. There's an entire underground movement around using Keynote (that's Apple's version of PowerPoint) to create mockups.

There's even an online repository containing user interface design templates for wireframing, prototyping and testing mobile and web apps in Keynote.



BURY THOSE SOCIAL MEDIA ICONS

You did all that work to get people to your website, and yet you're inviting them to leave? That's what you're doing when you place social media icons in a prominent location of your website, like in the header. Bury the icons in the footer.

If people are on your website, you want them to stay, learn and perhaps inquire about your services, not check out company picnic photos and bowling outings on Facebook. Social media should send people to your website, not vice versa.

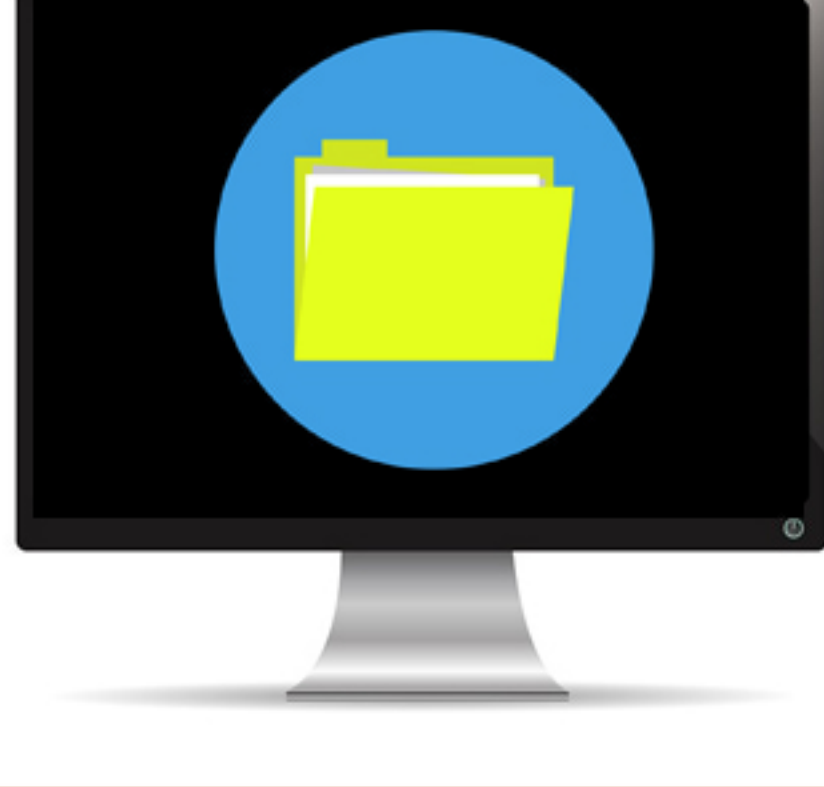


SIMPLIFY NAVIGATION

Reducing your visitors' options might seem counter intuitive, but it can actually help guide people to your most productive content. Rather than overwhelming your website visitors with links to every page, simplify your navigation.

Eliminate dropdown menus and especially multi-tier dropdown navigation that only the most skilled mouse user can navigate, and go a step further by reducing the number of links in the header or sidebar of your website.

STEP AWAY FROM THE COMPUTER



I believe that good design starts with great planning. Getting your ideas down on paper or on a whiteboard can help you iterate through a design, refining it and adding detail as you go along. Drawing on a whiteboard can also make the design process collaborative and allow other team members to give input.

It's also easy to erase pencil from paper or marker from a whiteboard and make quick changes, and once you have something concrete to work with, snap a photo with your mobile phone and get to work on screen.

USE THE SQUINT TEST

Want a quick way to learn what's most prominent on your website? Back away from your computer screen and squint. Most everything will become blurry, and only the larger, colorful, more prominent features will be noticeable.

It's said that this technique helps a designer understand what a first-time visitor may notice when he scans your website. Will the visitor notice what's most important?

