

Joomla! Template Design

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Need to create a professional template in Joomla! ? Need a course in CSS design ? Then the Joomla! Template Design book from Packt Publishing will help get you started.

This book, written by Tessa Blakeley Silver, starts out with the basics of web design in Dreamweaver, GoLive or NVU and then works from there.

Taking the stock standard Solarflare design inside Joomla! 1.0.x, Tessa goes into modifying it to suit a nature conservatory. She covers module switches, CSS layouts, and the basic grounding that is web standards validation. This book is excellent for someone starting out in template design with Joomla (or Mambo for that matter), and provides key examples as to how and why CSS provides the visual and layout effects it does. It also covers Flash, AJAX, template licencing (a key topic considering the current climate of derivative works amongst Joomla!) and modifications to the core content code in order to produce tableless design.

Throughout, Tessa encourages the use of Firefox as the primary browser to test design work on as Internet Explorer has limitations with CSS rules in both versions 6 and 7. This sort of education ever good designer worth their salt needs, as merely because Internet Explorer currently has the market share on some sites does not make it a valid testing platform for cross browser, cross platform design.

There were a few nuances I didn't expect. Semantic design is approximated as being tableless, with the use of division containers within this design book, when truly semantic code (aka POSH), arranges headings, titling, divisions, spanned layers, lists and all other HTML elements in a logical, human readable form. The chapter on Flash utilised the stock standard Flash embedding code that is generated whenever a Flash application is rendered down. There are better third party applications that provide a much better design, as well as semantic benefits, for Flash integration.

Overall this book is perfect for new designers wanting to learn how to design in Joomla!. The chapters on AJAX and menu systems are a benefit even to the most seasoned designer. And since this book covers licencing your templates, considering it was written before the change in direction from the Joomla! Core, it covers licencing quite adequately.