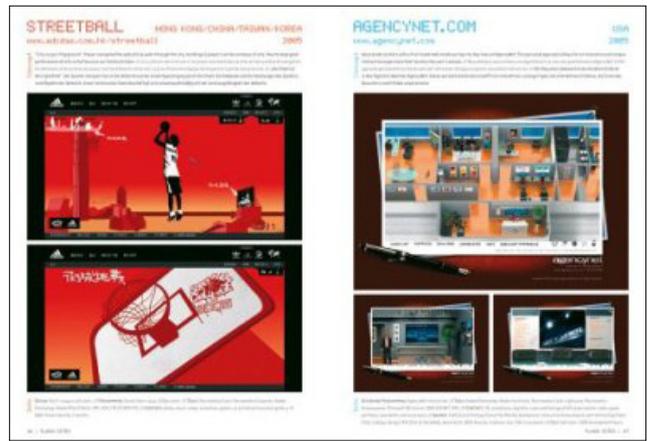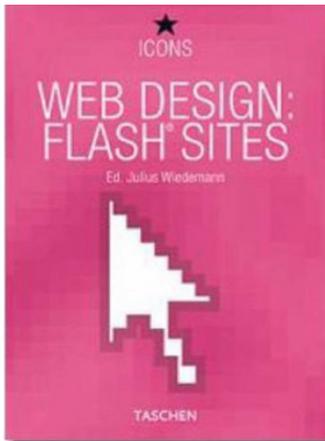**Review of the book**
Web Design : Flash sites
by Petr Kanda

In my review I picked a book called Web design : flash sites, which is part of a compilation of books written by Ed.Julius Wiedemann and published by Tashen. First I would like to say that this book is introducing some of the best flash sites which are available on the web space at the moment. After browsing through the book I discovered a completely new world of dynamic web pages and you can not expect to find in this printed application any static XHTML as that is not what this publication is about. I will also compare this book with other examples I found in bookshops or online.

This book starts with an introduction by Rob Ford who is FWA www.theFWA.com Founder and General Manager. FWA (Favourite Website Awards) is the Flash designer's and developer's number 1 daily source of inspiration which serves millions of visitors each year from broad global audience. His work has been featured by Macromedia, Yahoo, The Guardian and numerous online and offline publications. He talks very interestingly about history of flash sites through its beginning and great improvement at the beginning of the 21 st century until now when he predicted more changes to come in the future with much more inter-active web pages loaded with 3D features and videos. This book is bilingual and is written in three different

languages, first comes the English, then the French and finally the German translation. There is very interestingly added just after the introduction by Rob Ford article by Kurt Noble's and his KNI crew explanation of his project for Bacardilive.com. He explains how interesting it was to work on this project and describes some of the methods used while redesigning their webpage. Then we have the French and German translations of the same article which is very useful and the book doesn't need to be reprinted three times. In the third and final part of this book, before I can proceed towards the main content of this book, we find an interview with Pascal Leroy founder of group 94 (web design company based in Belgium). In this interview Pascal very interestingly answers questions about his career, working experience and flash techniques used on certain design projects. The article is then translated into French and German.The rest of the book is filled with images of various web pages and with a little picture description on the top. The book only contains flash based web sites, where I found 200 flash sites from 30 countries. These pages are a mix of extensive previews of every possible industry from company webpages, personal, music sites, portfolios etc. Simply, the best from flash sites today and all with 100% flash navigation.

Every Flash site has a single page with screenshots of some content of the webpage. On the top of each page, there is an actual address for the webpage and above that is the name of the webpage with a use of spaces and with obviously bigger font. This is good while entering web address to the address bar as for example when a webpage address is too long such as www.sierrasnortedeextremadura.com and letters are obviously merge together. I find this too long to even remember. For an easier retyping the words are separated to sierra norte de extreme adura. I think that addresses to any webpage should be clear, short and without hyphens, underlined etc. As WebPages should serve to visitors and not make it complicated for them. In the right corner is written the name of the country and the year the webpage was designed. What I found very helpful is that on the bottom of every page, you can have access to the name of the company which created certain webpage. I find that this was a very good idea if you really like what is in the book I can search further and find out more. Some of them if programmed have the name of the design company which programmed it and companies web site addresses. Tools that have been used to create particular webpages such as Macromedia flash, Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Adobe illustrator, PHP, CMS etc. this would be very helpful for web designers beginners or professionals. Also what can you expect from pages content as Audio, video, photos, message board, 3D, games, newsletters and others. And finally the cost which is in here doesn't specify in money value received but in hours or months spent on the building of the site. Some of the pages also had received awards which are also stated as what kind of award, where and in what year.

I found the graphic content of the webpages in this book is very interesting because as a student of Graphic and web Design I can get plenty of inspiration from this mix of different styles. The design of the book it self is according to me quite average when the small size of the pages cuts on information which could be added if bigger. It is more of an presentation of Flash websites. The picture content is photographic only and therefore it gives me a very clear idea what the page looks like before actually opening it.The pages themselves are printed in glasse in glossy ink and the quality is as we can expect from Taschen publisher. This book is according to me targeting a broad spectrum of public, mainly people who are really into web design and producing flash based web sites and people who try to move their web design into a different dimension. Also for beginners as myself and potential clients to people who would like to spent some interesting moment on the internet.

This book is therefore definitely a good inspiration in what can be achieved in web design. I was desperate to find here any kind of advice on how to actually make flash based webpage of this character as I was truly amazed by most of them. There is not such a link but instead you can probably contact the author directly as details to each one of them are provided on the bottom of each page.

The aim of this book is to gather all the best flash sites together and introduced them to a broader public. I think that the selection is chosen very well and when listing through pages, it provides me with the ability to find something new and exciting all the time. It woul be actually very hard to try to find all these Flash based websites without this book and therefore it did achieved its goal..

What else is on the market ? Is this the only printed publication ? I did quite huge reasearch and I looked around the local bookshop as well as online to find out what else is on offer. Suprisinly there is not that many printed application concerning Flash websites as I previosly thought. If I put a side the rest of Web design compilation from which this book is coming from. I discovered a book called Advertising now online(02) which is a second book after Adverisement now print. This book is published by Tashen and has the same autor Julius Weideman. Book is devided to chapters {food, media, technology etc) exploring world top award winning agencies and their campaigns for example Coca Cola, Ice tea Pepsi etc. Text is written by 9 of creative directors plus interwiev with them. This book in comparison to Web design Flash sites is bigger, thicker and includes DVD of randomly choosen webpages which you can watch comfortably from your sofa and dont have to type all pages manualy just to find out its content.. More over this book actually have more writen description about most of the webpages than Web design Flash sites..

There is a certain question which is keep on coming on my mind. Where we can see any of these books in 5 years time ? Technology is moving quite fast and who knows what is going to happen with all these flash websites in future. I think I have a kind of answer as I came across during my reasearch to a book called WWW. Design flash – The best web sites from all around the world(03).This book was writen by Daniel Donnelly (In Your Face Too: More of the Best Interactive Interface, WWW Design: Web Pages from Around the World, Cutting Edge Web Design: The Next Generation) who is owner of Interact Design in northern California in 2002. Begins with intoducion by Hillman Curtis who is designer and filmaker and who designed sites for Yahoo, Adobe, American institute of graphic designers or Parmount. Book in comparison to Web design Flash sites is bigger in its 287m x 229mm to 140mm x 190mm and graphicaly more interesting. The size of the book is imporatnt because more pieces of information can be included and that what is missing in Web design Flash sites concerning each site.This book brings together 70 of most extrodenary examples of using flash 6 years ago.

This printed application is more descreptive in information on the process of page makeing and unusual techniques as well. Includes hyperlinks to all sites and featured links to flash demos and tutorials.

All that was the best six years ago in 2002. Suprisingly as I tryed to check certain websites from this book I find out that most of the webpages is currently not
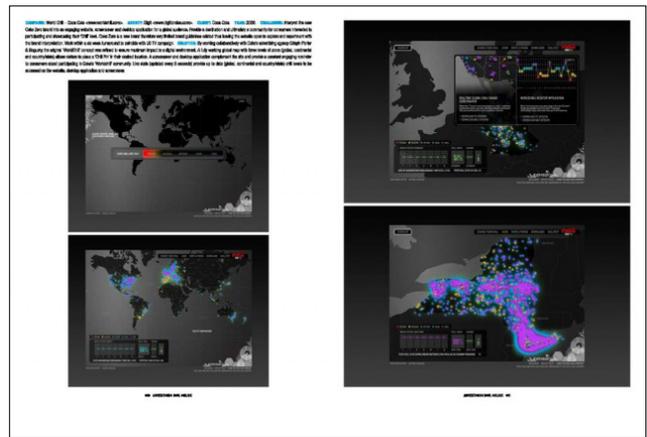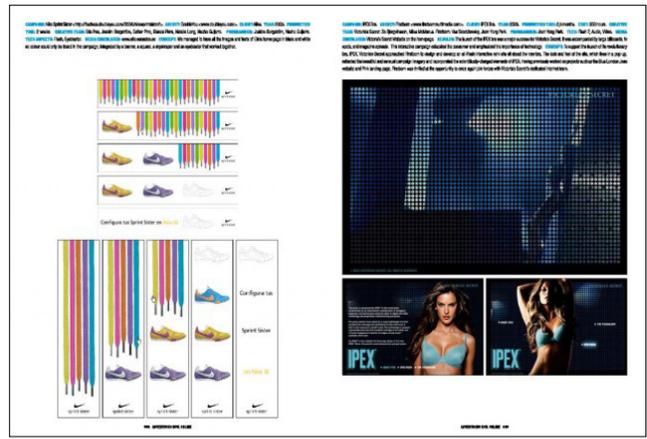
available any more. I think that this could be taken as example where book such as Web design flash sites can be found in 5 years time. Sites like portfolios can be uploaded and have to follow the trend of improving technology but commercial stuff will not last and new techniques will be used to replace the old one. Just an example which is comfirming what I wrote earlier from the book Web design flash sites. Taschen left little note on one of the back covers saying ' Taschen is not responsible when web adressess cannot be reached if they are offline '.

The other books I founded are more related to how to work with macromedia flash programes, showing of tutorials and training.

To conclude I think that this book is neccessary for web designers, web developers and other related profesionlas in mean of finding out what is out there online now and also to give a unique experience in discovering new Flash based websites. This would be definitelly dificult to find without specific adress.

It was a great idea to publish this book, but according to me it could be done 'graphicly' in better way as this is just as presentation of flash based websites. Example of how to make this book better is in www design flash : the best web sites from all around the world which I mentioned earlier. I as reader would apreciate more writen stuff about each webpage in

mean of gaining information. I will work on my first flash website as I gather more technical information about how to create something similar. This information is not in this book, so I have to look somewhere else unfortunately.

From my point of view I think that all this Taschen compilation could be printed in bigger format, separated by chapters and in one book. Its small size 140mm x 190mm from the first look apear as this is some kind of pocked book, but as I find out later it is still too big to insert it in one.

I came across so many people who don't like flash sites and it is for example because of its slow download etc. This book is proving that these times are gone and you don't have to wait five minutes for the page to load. Back when flash sites started this was sorted by attaching simple game to entertain visitors while the page was loading. This is not true any more and in these days when broadband is getting faster and connection is improving all this takes only few seconds. Iteresting statement by Jacob Nielsen on www.uservision.com when he states why is flash bad and why is good. Flash is just a tool and you cant blame the brush for final result,but the artist. He also compares XHTML to silent movies in beggining of last century and flash is something more interactive what will replace XHTML in future.I have to mention that XHTML look
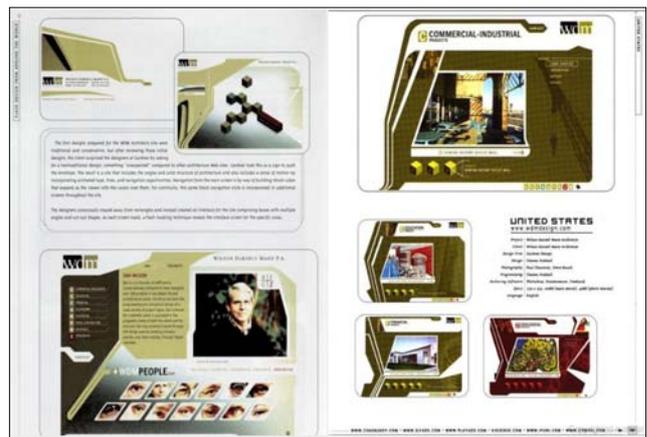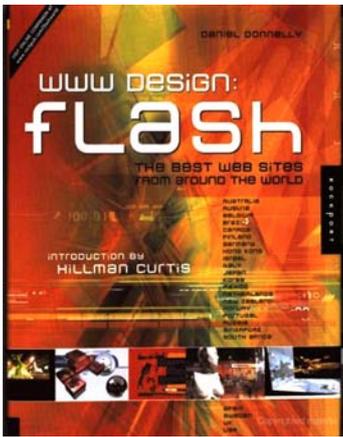
differently on pc and on mac but flash sites doesnt change. When talking about static XHTML I have to ask myself what was the spark for flash websites. Moving form static page to interactive as I find at (http://www.flashmagazine.com/434.htm) it makes quite sense that flash websites were influenced bu computer games.
As I am concern, there is no better printed aplication about flash based websites on the market at the moment. This book then comes in handy in broading your spectrum of interest. I think that this is a good opportunity for us as web designers, people who are just interested in web technology and others to start not just constructing and design web pages but printed application for customers too. Because our customer is the only and real authority, who can clearly let us know how good project we had done.
If any one of you would like to enter the contemporary world of Flash based websites there is no other better printed application on the market than this book and for price of just £5.99 each.

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