

DAVIN LARKIN

IDENTITY, [Davin Larkin - 19.12.16](#)

Kooyong Design was setup as a design studio and consultancy firm in 2009 as an avenue to get my products to market. However, in 2011 an opportunity arose to work as a design educator in GMIT Letterfrack, an opportunity one could not walk away from. Since this cross roads was presented to me, I have travelled along two roads simultaneously but over time the distance between each has grown.

A professional development opportunity arose in June 2016 which became the catalyst for an identity change. Questions like who was I then, who am I now and who do I want to be in the future swirled through my mind. Ultimately I chose to end the road for Kooyong Design and rebrand under my own name. To me it has served its purpose, it had a time in my life and now I must focus on my next challenge. I have not left behind my work but amalgamated the most important parts to create a positive and creative vision for the future. This website is the culmination of that professional development opportunity and you can read more about the process below.

Kooyong Design, was what I felt the market wanted when it was setup, it is what I wanted, a brand to hide behind. A brand to enlarge your identity, a catalyst to success. These were my feelings 7 years ago but I don't need this anymore. I am comfortable in my own identity and this allowed me to rethink what I was doing.

My work as a designer and my role as a design educator are one in the same. I preach what I practice and I practice what I preach. Students need to see my passion for design if they are to find their own. By rebranding under my own identity I was able to bring all my current work into one place. This new identity and this new website is a show piece of who I am today but also who I think my students could be in the future.

The ethos for what I do is a user centred one. An ethos I advocate in my own design work but also one I utilise in my role as an educator. I do not impart knowledge to my students, I nourish them, I mentor them, I help them think in new ways, see problems from different perspectives and come up with solutions in their own means. I put the student where they need to be, in charge of their learning journey and this website and identity does the same for me.

It promotes my own design work but also advocates the skillset that my students require. Each element has been thought about carefully, there is a lesson to be learnt in every image, every paragraph, a lesson that students must discover on their journey to becoming a designer. As my journey as a designer and educator grows so too will this body of work. It is in essence a learning & teaching portfolio.

Reflecting on the process I took through this identity change the most difficult aspect for me was deciding who I was. I am and always will be an advocate for educators practicing what they teach. It helps keep your skillset relevant but also

invigorates your students. However, deciding how to present myself and this new identity took a little more thinking. Through some visual research a defined vision was developed (Hagen et al, 2013). Once this vision was defined I sourced an editable template online called Pillar (PILLAR, 2016). This template complemented my vision and allowed me showcase the breadth of my work.

The next consideration was how I would like visitors and students to interact with the website. I developed a clear idea of what would be included, shown in Figure 1. This sketch takes the form of a simple sitemap that helped me design the paths visitors would take during their journey and ultimately help improve this interaction (Preece et al. 2002).

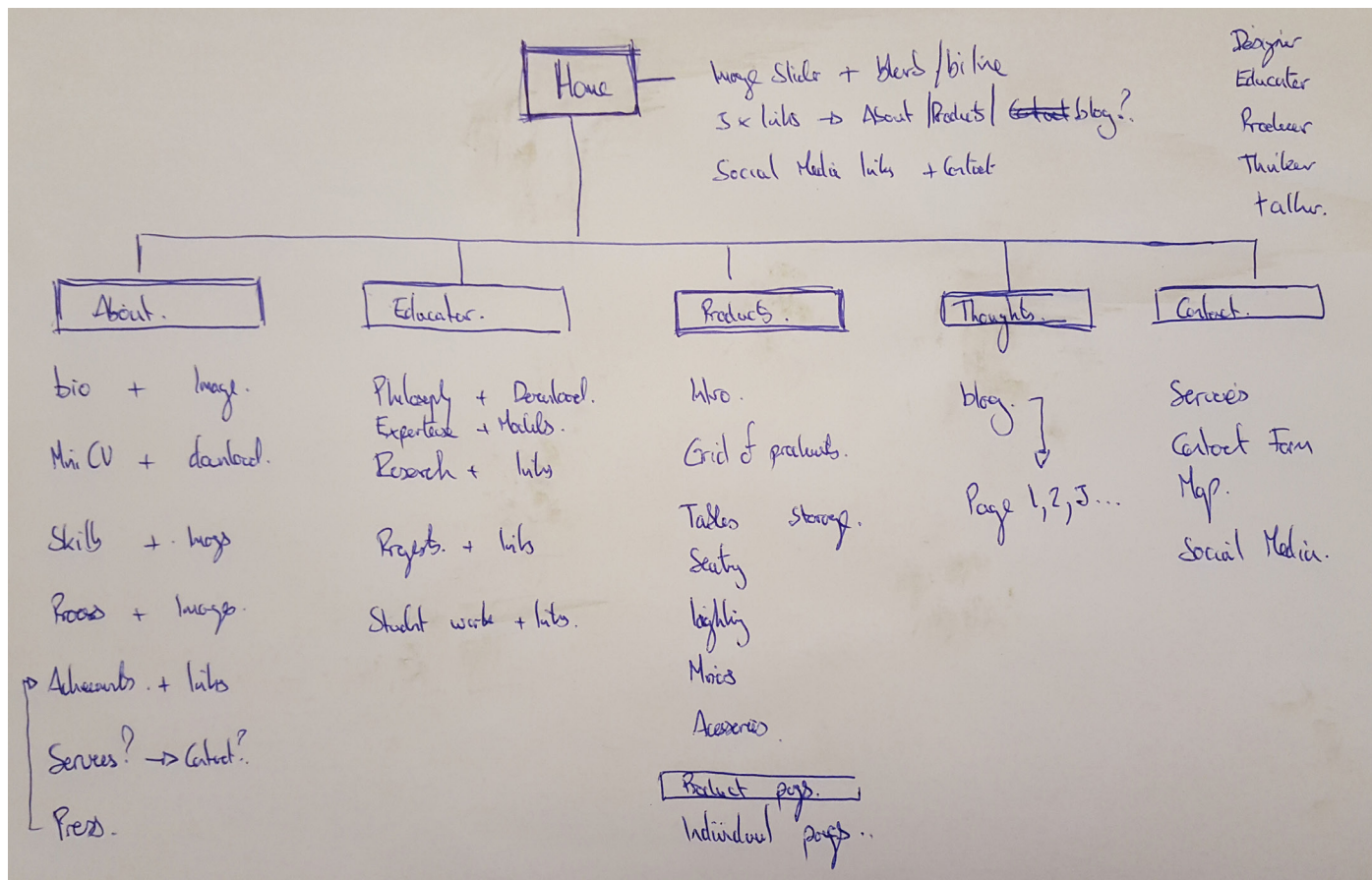


Figure 1: Davin Larkin, Sitemap

The build process was relatively straight forward due to pre-existing technical skills albeit time consuming. Through the support of the online forum (Medirum_rare, 2016) and the world wide web consortium (W3C, 2016) all technical issues were solved before launching this new identity.

The finished portfolio and identity clarifies my dual purpose role as a designer and educator. It presents my own work and showcases my approaches to design and design education in a clear and concise manner.

The most satisfying outcome from this process is a clarity in thinking of what I want to become and where I wish to position myself in the future. This process has allowed me ponder my approach to design, my career and facilitated the development of a portfolio to match these visions. Allowing oneself to take a step back from what they are doing on a daily, monthly and yearly basis gives perspective. Perspective allows you to look at a situation from many angles, something that is fundamental to a designer's skillset. Without this perspective, it becomes very difficult to reinvent yourself because you are always looking in the same direction.

This portfolio is a representation of where I am now, a current perspective. Unfortunately, with a personal and professional identity it never remains static and therefore this is only the beginning of an iterative cycle. It is hoped this new identity will grow and evolve with me as my career path progresses.

References

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