

re.web at the College of William and Mary

Transcript of: “Beauty Is in the Eye of the Beholder, and It’s Only Skin Deep”

Today is Thursday, November 15, 2007 and this is Susan Evans talking with you about W&M’s re.web project. Today’s podcast is about the new home page design that will be created for the W&M web project and the title is “Beauty Is in the Eye of the Beholder, and It’s Only Skin Deep.”

The concept behind the cliché, “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” first appeared in the Greek language during the 3rd century BC. But Margaret Hungerford is widely credited with the phrase in her book, Molly Bawn, published in 1878. “Beauty Is Only Skin Deep” is a 1966 hit single recorded by The Temptations.

I’m thinking about what’s beautiful today, because in the coming weeks, the mStoner team will present three or four home page concepts for the W&M web site. Three web designers will work independently of each other on these new designs. If you were to take a look at the mStoner portfolio of college web sites, you’d find some attractive and appealing home pages. I encourage you to visit the web sites of Harvey Mudd College, Randolph College, Concordia College, and Ball State University.

As I view these sites, and other designs in the mStoner portfolio, I’m encouraged and excited by the way they look. I’m anxious for W&M to have a more attractive web site that reflects our traditional, yet innovative curriculum, and our vibrant community. We have a lot to look forward to on the design front.

So why the “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” title for this podcast? Because the final home page design selected for W&M won’t be beautiful to all 12 million people who visit our site each year. I do hold out hope that no one will think the new look is downright ugly. But I am realistic enough to know that not all beholders will think it beautiful.

Actually, more than to launch a beautiful site, our goal is to launch a new home page that looks professional, and uses a creative design to support the new navigation, special interest features, and other interesting content that it will present. Now we’re getting to the “only skin deep” part.

People are surprised when I tell them that the way the new W&M site will look is actually a smaller part of the re.web project. Of course, the use of color on a web site does matter; and as important as color, will be the fabulous, new photography of W&M photographer Steve Salpukas. However, how a site looks is the surface (it’s the “skin deep”). The more complicated work ahead will be creating a new structure for all of the information on our web site and adding some new features. By new features, I mean the stories we tell about our campus, the faculty and student profiles we post, and the information and services we make available through a new navigational structure or a superior search.

To wrap up: When some of you decide you don’t like the new look – we won’t be surprised. We do hope to grab your attention with the new design though. Then, over the long haul, and for some in spite of the new look, we’ll keep your interest with engaging information, distinctive features, and useful services.

Thanks for listening. No new podcast next week, since it will be Thanksgiving Day. Back on Thursday, November 29th. Until then.