EYE LEVEL ART

Eye Level Art, 103 Spring Street, Charleston, SC ▪ P: 843-278-2374 ▪ E: mike@eyelevelart.com

**Three Nights of Music
at the 103 Gallery**
*Jazz, Electric and Bluegrass - a
sound for every ear*

*Did you know if a Special Single
member came to all 3 shows this
weekend they'd save $75?* Learn
more!

A Go Go (Thursday) : Local jazz
guitarist Tyler Ross unites with
bandmates Gerald Gregory, Ben
Wells and Stuart White to
perform John Scofield's modern
classic "A Go Go." *Doors at 9pm.
$8 in* advance, *$10 at the door.
Read Member's Perks* here

Digital Newsletters

Source: Company Newsletters.com -
http://www.companynewsletters.com/electronic.htm

What are Digital Newsletters and Why Should I Make One?

Online newsletters are gaining in popularity because no printing or mailing costs are involved, online newsletters can usually be published for a fraction of the cost of traditional printed newsletters. And because online newsletters can be instantly delivered to readers throughout the world at the click of a button, these publications are ideal for communicating timely information to readers.

Most online newsletters are distributed to readers in two ways:

- through e-mail
- through a Web (Internet or intranet) site

Keep in mind that a person who has an e-mail account doesn't necessarily have Internet access. Many people mistakenly use these terms interchangeably. Some people can receive e-mails, but cannot go out onto the Internet and view Web pages.
Each type of online newsletter has its own strengths and weaknesses, as well as its own unique software requirements for viewing.

The type of online newsletter that is best for you depends on your readers' computer and software limitations. See the table below for a brief summary.

Type of Newsletter	Software Required	Target Audience
Plain-text e-mail	Any e-mail program	Anybody with an e-mail account
HTML e-mail	HTML e-mail program	People who have e-mail and, if you want to use graphics, Internet access
Web	Internet browser	Readers who have access to the Internet
PDF	Adobe Acrobat Reader	People who have either e-mail or Internet access

The following is a quick description, along with the advantages and disadvantages, of the most common types of online newsletters: plain-text e-mail, HTML e-mail, Web (including Internet and intranet publications) and PDF.

Plain Text Email Newsletter

Anyone who has an e-mail account can receive and read plain-text e-mail newsletters. Readers have the newsletter sent directly to them, and they view the newsletter in their e-mail program. However, as its name implies, you are limited to a very plain, simple newsletter. Plain-text newsletters cannot contain color or graphics, and you cannot incorporate any design elements, such as using varying text styles and sizes, or formatting text into multiple columns.

Advantages

▶ Plain-text e-mail newsletters are extremely quick and easy to compose and send out.
▶ This is an ideal format for sending out extremely urgent, time-sensitive information.
▶ Everyone with an e-mail account can read these newsletters.
▶ Because of their small file size, plain-text e-mails are quick for readers to download.

Disadvantages

▶ Because plain-text newsletters cannot contain color, graphics or other design elements, they are not eye-catching. Readers may quickly lose interest when reading row after row of text with no graphical, visual breaks.

HTML Email Newsletter

This type of newsletter is distributed through e-mail and is viewed in the reader's e-mail program. This type of e-mail looks like a Web page. It can incorporate color, photos, graphics and other design elements, such as varying typeface sizes and styles, and text that is formatted into multiple columns. However, only people who have HTML-capable browsers can view these publications.

Whether you choose to code your HTML email by hand or to use an existing template, there are two fundamental concepts to keep in mind when creating HTML email:

1. Use HTML tables to control the design layout and some presentation. You may be used to using pure CSS layouts for your web pages, but that approach just won't hold up in an email environment.

2. Use inline CSS to control other presentation elements within your email, such as background colors and fonts.

It is also a good idea to host your images on the web, creating a smaller email.

A great article to review before proceeding with an html email is "How to Code HTML Email Newsletters by Tim Slavin available at:
http://articles.sitepoint.com/article/code-html-email-newsletters

Advantages

▶ This is the most attractive type of e-mail newsletter because you can include photos, graphics, color and other design elements.

▶ HTML e-mail publications are a good alternative to more expensive printed newsletters.

▶ This type of publication is ideal for people who will primarily read the newsletter on screen.

Disadvantages

▶ People with older, non-standard or Web-based e-mail programs may not be able to read HTML e-mails, and will instead see a confusing array of programming codes on their screens. Recent estimates say that as many as 20% of people with e-mail accounts cannot view HTML e-mails.

▶ If photos or graphics are included in the HTML e-mail, readers must have an open connection to the Internet while they read the e-mail to see the photos. This may be a problem for people who view the newsletter at work because many companies restrict their employees' Internet access.

▶ Unlike a Web newsletter, all articles must be put on the same page. That means a newsletter with a large number of articles must be viewed and printed as one super-long page.

Web Newsletter

This type of newsletter is one that is hosted on a Web site (either on the Internet or an intranet). It is not distributed by e-mail. Readers must go to a Web site and read the newsletter on their Internet browser. These publications can be designed just like any other Web page, including the use of color, photos, graphics and other design elements.

Advantages

▶ A Web newsletter can be as attractive and eye catching as any other Web page, and may include color, photos, graphics, etc.

▶ If you get your newsletter listed and indexed on Internet search engines, you will likely gain more readers and attract more traffic to your Web site.

▶ Ideal for onscreen reading.

▶ It's easy to archive back issues on your Web site. This makes a great resource for your readers, especially if you add a "search" feature to your site.

Disadvantages

▶ Readers must have Internet access to view the publication. Remember, not everyone who has an e-mail account has an Internet connection.

▶ Compared to an e-mail newsletter, a Web newsletter is not as convenient because readers must go to an Internet site to view it rather than have it delivered to them.

▶ Doesn't look as good when printed and read from a hard copy as it does on screen.

PDF Newsletter

This type of newsletter can be distributed as an e-mail attachment or posted on an Internet site for people to download. Readers must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, available for free from the Adobe.com Web site, installed on their computers to view or print a PDF newsletter. A PDF publication looks and prints more like a traditional printed newsletter than any other type of online newsletter.

Advantages

▶ There are fewer design limitations with this electronic format than any other. That's because PDF newsletters can be created to look like just about any printed publication, including fancy, full-color publications.

▶ This is the best electronic format for people who will print and read the newsletter offscreen.

▶ It's easy to convert most printed newsletters to a nearly identical electronic PDF publication.

Disadvantages

▶ PDF files are larger than any other type of online newsletter file. Thus they may take a long time to download with a standard 56k modem. Also, when sending these files as e-mail attachments, some readers may not be able to receive them. That's because e-mail providers usually limit the size of attachments that their customers can receive. Many e-mail providers set that limit at 5 megabytes. A large PDF newsletter that has lots of photos can easily exceed 5 megabytes in size.

▶ Photos and graphics are usually saved in low resolution for PDF newsletters to minimize download time. This means the publication's photos and graphics may look fuzzy when printed.

▶ All readers must have special software -- Adobe Acrobat Reader -- installed on their computers to view and print a PDF newsletter.

To decide which online newsletter is best for you to publish, you'll have to know your readers' software, Internet and e-mail capabilities. Then you'll have to match up the format that works best for your readers.
This may be easy if all your readers have the same technical capabilities. For instance, if your newsletter is only read internally, by employees within your company, they will likely use the same browsers and e-mail programs. However, if your readership is varied, you may find that you have to publish your newsletter in several formats so that no reader is excluded. For instance, many newsletters are published and distributed in both plain-text and HTML e-mail formats, depending on each reader's preference.

Digital Newsletter Design Tips

Sources: Company Newsletters.com - http://www.companynewsletters.com/online.htm & eHow.com - http://www.ehow.com/how_5850325_create-digital-newsletter.html

▶ **Develop your target audience**.
You may want to target current customers about product updates or warranty information, new customers about special deals or new products, or employees about upcoming meetings or birthdays. The format and feel of your newsletter may differ with each group.

▶ **Develop a template for your newsletter.** The best templates for an online publication have at least two columns for easier reading. Lines of text that stretch from one edge of the screen to the other are not only boring to look at, they're more difficult to read.

Shorter text lines make it easier for readers to keep their place when following text from the end of one line to the start of the next line. That's why newspapers and magazines, in both their printed and online versions, always break up a page's text into multiple columns.

Follow the lead of the professionals and do the same with your online newsletter.

Here is a sample layout if using a two column newsletter design - the first column is on the left side and takes about one-third the width of the newsletter. The second column, on the right side of the screen, is wider and takes up the remaining two-thirds of the publication.

The narrower left column is an ideal place to run your newsletter's table of contents, including links to all your articles. For added impact, you can tint this left column with a background color.

The right column is then used mainly for headlines, photos and articles.

▶ **Add content to your newsletter**.
Write it yourself, select a webmaster or solicit content from different company departments for a comprehensive business message. Add content directly to the template while writing or copy and paste from a word processor.

▶ **Use links and graphics, but don't overdo them.**
Use links to lighten up your newsletter's content. Link to your website with articles on new products, services, holiday hours, staff changes, etc. Write a short summary of the article to which you are linking to provide context

Photos, artwork and other graphics will make your newsletter more eye-catching. However, these graphics are a double-edged sword because the more you use, the longer it'll take for your pages to load on your readers' browsers.

If a Web page takes too long to load, viewers will get impatient and move on without reading your pages. Here are some ideas for using graphics effectively:

◆ When deciding whether to run a graphic large or small, go for the smaller size - unless there's important detail in the graphic that will be lost when it's reduced to a smaller size.

◆ Minimize the download time of your graphics by limiting the resolution to 72 DPI (dots per inch). Most computer monitors can't display any higher than 72 DPI, so there is no need to make Web page graphics with a resolution that is any higher. A 300 DPI graphic won't look any better on a computer monitor - it'll just have a much greater file size and take much longer to load on a browser.

◆ Instead of over-using graphics, use fancier text elements to dress up your pages. Colored drop caps (the large first letter of an article, like at the beginning of this story), pull quotes and reverses can all be done without adding independent graphics to your Web page. These fancier text elements can all be programmed into your Web page without adding significantly to the file size.

▶ **Use a table of contents.**
The HTML e-mail templates listed below offer tables of contents that link to anchored articles later in the email.

This allows readers to quickly click to parts of the newsletter that interest them.

▶ **Use lists, rather than large blocks of text**, so readers can quickly glance through topics. These lists may be linked back to your website.

▶ **Before putting your completed newsletter online, be sure to view it in multiple browsers and monitors.**

Unfortunately, a Web page will look different depending on the kind of browser used. That's why it's a good idea to proof your newsletter in multiple browsers.

Most Internet surfers use either Firefox or Microsoft Explorer. These browsers can be downloaded free from their company's respective Web sites, so be sure to get a copy of each. Then, proof your newsletter separately in each browser.
Your Web pages may also appear differently depending on the user's computer monitor settings (VGA vs. SVGA, 256 color vs. true color, etc.). The current standard is an SVGA monitor operating in true color.

However, if you're creating an online employee newsletter and you know that many people in your company have the older, smaller VGA monitors that operate in 256-color mode, you better proof your online newsletter with one of those monitors, too. Chances are, the newsletter will look drastically different.

▶ **Increase readership by Optimizing your newsletter/website for search engine indexing**
If your goal is to use your online newsletter to promote your company's products and services, be sure to optimize your website.

There are three major types of search engines 'Spider' or 'Crawler' engines, directories and hybrids.
Source: http://www.ismartsoftware.com/ismart/default.asp?PageID=63

◆ **Crawler Search Engines**
A Crawler search engine, like Google, 'crawls' or 'spiders' through your website and all it's related links. This means that the spider will visit your website then read all the pages and follow all the links. Spiders usually return to your website every month or so to look for changes. Everything the spider finds goes into an Index.

The Index is like a large catalogue containing a copy of every webpage the spiders find in cyberspace. If your webpage changes, then the spider should find this change and update the Index. When you type in a keyword or phrase into a crawler based search engine the search engine software sifts through the millions of pages stored in the Index and gives you the results it believes is

most relevant to your search query.

Most Crawler based search engines work in this way with minor changes to software, indexing etc. That is why if you type the same query into different search engines you can get varied results.

Google has recently launched real-time searching. To see a video from Mashable on how real-time searching works visit:
http://mashable.com/2009/12/07/google-real-time-search/

◆ **Directories**
Directories differ from Crawler based search engines in that you, as a webmaster, submit a short description about your site, which is then categorized by humans. Search results are based on what is in the description about your site.

◆ **Hybrids**
Hybrid search engines are a combination of the two types of search engines listed above.

Now that we have a basic understating of how search engines work, here are a few tips to help you get the most from your search engine marketing.

◆ **Page Titles**
The titles you give your webpage is crucial in optimising your website for search engines. Make sure your page title is relevant to the topic within the page itself.

For example an article about 'Gardening' would be found to have more relevance with a title of 'Gardening tips for beginners' rather than 'Dave's thoughts about plants'

◆ **Use relevant HTML Keywords (Meta Tags) and Descriptions.**
Meta Tags are keywords or phrases you can add to your webpage. Users do not see these meta tags as they sit behind your page and are used by some search engines as a listing tool.

For example Dave's webpage about plants may have HTML Meta Tags like; Plants, Gardening, Plant help, Gardening tips, Gardening help, Dave's gardening tips.

◆ **Submit your website**
Eventually most search engine spiders should pick up your website and its contents, but don't rely on a search engine to list your site. It is always best to submit your URL. You can also submit other pages from your site. Pick two or three of the most relevant pages that outline what your website is

about and submit them.

For a comprehensive list of search engines and links to their submission pages visit ismart.com: http://www.ismartsoftware.com/ismart/default.asp?PageID=55

◆ **Avoid use of flash and graphics for content**
Search engines cannot read or 'spider' the text content in flash animation or graphics. Whilst these can make your site look fantastic, it can have damaging results for your listing within a search engines results. Stick to using text for content on your website.

◆ **Don't use frames**.
Search engines cannot follow frame links, so try not to create your site in frames. What are frames I hear you ask? Frames allow you to display multiple pages within one browser window. The easiest way to identify a frame site is to click on the links, if the URL address does not change for every page you go to, chances are you are looking at a site built around frames. These types of sites make it very difficult for search engine spiders to crawl and index the information on its pages, plus you cannot bookmark individual pages in these types of sites.

▶ **Send an e-mail to your subscribers to announce each new issue.** One drawback of an online newsletter is that readers forget to check for new issues. It's not like a printed newsletter, which is more visible to readers because they see each new issue when it arrives in their mailbox.

That's why it's important to maintain a database of your subscribers' e-mail addresses. Then when each new issue is available online, send your subscribers an e-mail telling them the Internet address where they can find the new issue, as well as a brief description of the articles that are featured.

Don't have any subscribers? You can build a list of subscribers by putting a message in your online newsletter saying, "Don't miss future issues! Send us your e-mail address and we'll notify you when each new issue comes out."

▶ **Archive your back issues and add search features to your Web site.** Don't replace the previous issue of your newsletter with the newest version. Instead, make an online archive of your newsletter's back issues. Your newsletter archive would not only be a great resource for your readers, it would also make your Web site deeper in content. And the more useful content your Web site has, the more traffic that will be sent to your online newsletter from the search engines.

Once you have about a half dozen issues in your archive, make it a searchable archive. Internal search engines allow users to search your Web site internally, for specific words and terms. This makes it easy for your regular readers to search back issues for specific information.

▶ **Monitor the readership of your online newsletter with a Web statistics program.** If your Webmaster installs a statistics program on your online newsletter's server, you can get invaluable feedback about your publication and its readers.

For instance, typical Web statistics programs let you see how many people have viewed your newsletter; which Web pages within your newsletter are most popular; how much time the average viewer spends on each page; and which external Web sites and search engines referred viewers to your newsletter (in other words, which Web sites have links to your newsletter).

A good Web statistics program is the next best thing to a readership survey.

Where to Find Digital Newsletter Templates

MailChimp:
http://www.mailchimp.com/resources/html_email_templates/

Four basic, flexible templates that have been tested to render properly in most email programs.

Download all the templates in one .ZIP file and customize with Dreamweaver and Photoshop.

When using the templates, make to replace all placeholder images (including shim.gif's) with your own. You'll need to post your images on your web server, and be sure you use absolute paths in your HTML to point to those images.

If you are interested in creating an HTML newsletter, make sure to review "How HTML Email Works, Basic Concepts, Best Practices, Tips And Tricks from Mail Chimp: http://www.mailchimp.com/articles/how_to_code_html_emails/
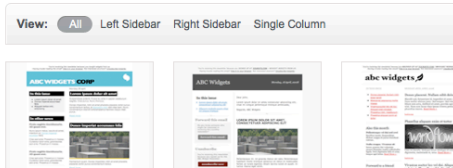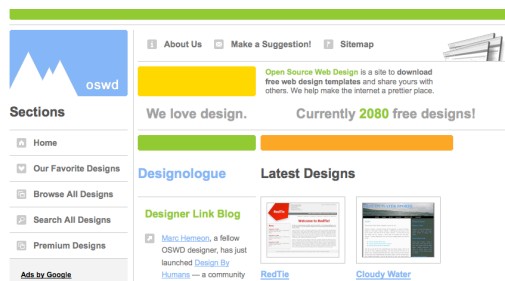
Campaign Monitor
http://www.campaignmonitor.com/templates/

OSWD.org
http://www.oswd.org/

Other Helpful Tools

Firebug

Firebug: http://getfirebug.com/
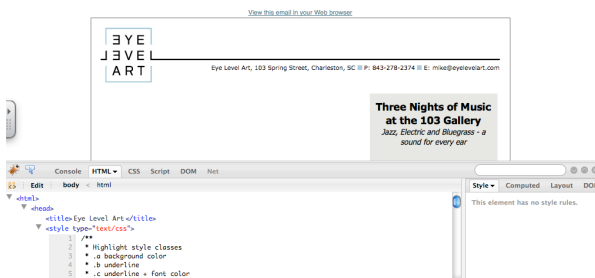Tools for web development. Allows inspect, edit and monitor CSS, HTML, JavaScript and Net requests in any web page.

Firebug: Add-ons for Firefox:
https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/1843
Firebug integrates with Firefox to put a wealth of development tools at your fingertips while you browse.

Finding Inspiration:

▶ **Newsletter Design: 50+ Great Examples**
http://designrfix.com/inspiration/newsletter-designs-60-great-examples

▶ **Email Newsletter Design: Guidelines And Examples:**
http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2010/02/15/email-newsletters-guidelines-and-examples/

▶ **Etsy Newsletter**
http://www.etsy.com/storque/spotlight/etsy-finds-an-affair-to-remember-4429/

Quick Steps for Using Outlook to Send your Newsletter (PC/Office 2007):

1. Open the folder **Documents and Settings**
2. Open the folder with your **username**
3. Open the folder **Application Data**
4. Open the folder **Microsoft**
5. Open the folder **Stationary**
6. **Copy your html newsletter file into your Stationary folder**
7. **Open Outlook**
8. Go to **Tools > Options > Mail Format**
9. Select **Stationary and Fonts**
10. Select **Email Signatures**
11. Select **Theme > Select your html newsletter file** (this will become your default signature file)
12. Click OK until you are back to your main Outlook theme
13. **Create a new email message** (you will see your newsletter)
14. **Repeat steps to change signature back to your regular version.**