



NIMBLE PARTNERS

Proposal for MIT IS&T

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1 Background

Nimble Partners is a Brookline-based user experience design firm committed to making technology and information work for people.

We work with software development, higher education and nonprofit organizations to design web applications and information-rich sites that help people work, find and learn.

We formed Nimble Partners in 2004 because we're inspired by communications that resonate and make understanding easier. With a combined 35+ years experience, we have helped clients such as MIT, Harvard University, Tufts University, Endeca, Texterity, Curaspan Healthgroup and others communicate successfully by providing expert visual design, information architecture, and usability and interface design services that focus on what people value.

Select past and current clients include:

Asian University for Women
Buzzillions.com (with Nine By Blue)
Curaspan, Inc.
Diamond.com
eLearn Magazine
Endeca
Framingham State College
Kayak.com
Korn Design
Harvard University Center for Wellness
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
MIT CSAIL
MIT Center for Transportation & Logistics
MIT Dean for Undergraduate Education
MIT Division of Student Life
MIT Drawing Information Systems
MIT Facilities
MIT Housing
MIT Human Resources/Benefits
MIT Medical
MIT Office of Faculty Support
MIT Sloan School Executive Education
MIT Sloan School Media Relations
MIT Vice President for Finance
Napster
New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA)
Stoltze Design
Texterity
Tufts University Advancement
Umbra, Ltd.

2 Partners

Deborah Levinson

Designers, engineers, and communications professionals speak very different languages. I help bring them all together, and I've been doing this for the past 16 years in both higher education and the corporate world.

I'm an MIT graduate, though with an unusual degree – a bachelor's in creative writing – so I'm a geek, but one who expresses herself through the written word rather than through code. I'm also a co-author of *The MIT Guide to Teaching Website Design*, published by the MIT Press in April 2001.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Levinson".

Tania Schlatter

My greatest professional satisfaction comes from designing interfaces and communication systems that help people find what they are looking for, easily complete a once-laborious task or learn something new by making connections across topics and time.

I have an M.Des. in human-centered communication design from the Institute of Design in Chicago, studied with Paul Rand and Armin Hofmann in Brissago, Switzerland and earned a BFA in graphic design from Boston University. I've been practicing design for 20 years. In that time I've learned a lot of ways to involve people in the interaction design process for better results, and am very good with visual systems, grids and Helvetica.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tania Schlatter".

3 Description of proposed work for MIT Information Services and Technology

Information Services and Technology (IS&T) provides computing, networking, telephony, and other hardware and software systems support for the entire MIT community. With a service catalog this vast, it is difficult to communicate the full breadth of IS&T's offerings, and more important, how the organization can help people solve problems.

Users describe the current home page in conflicting terms: "useful" vs. "hard-to-use"; "straightforward" vs. "confusing"; "comprehensive" and "valuable" vs. "overwhelming" and "frustrating." This indicates that while there's a good foundation, there's still work to do to improve site usability and content findability.

To help IS&T redesign its website to better map to its audience's needs and expectations, Nimble Partners recommends the following set of tasks and deliverables.

Information design

To define how site audiences expect to find the information they're looking for, we need to first understand their situations and patterns of use. IS&T has already conducted some research in this area, and we will review it to identify user goals and expectations, as well as where the site falls short of meeting both.

We will develop a preliminary site map based on the current content inventory, input from IS&T, and user scenarios ("stories" of typical paths users take through the site and their context) that we will begin to create with the team in the kickoff meeting. The scenarios will help keep users' needs in mind as the new site is developed and will inform the creation of paper schematics of key page types to demonstrate proposed content and hierarchy. These schematics will become the foundation for a larger, clickable wireframe necessary for usability testing.

We propose beginning the work with a project kickoff meeting to review business and design goals and IS&T audience research, as well as to discuss user types, goals, and expectations. Following the kickoff meeting we will:

- Review existing site's content inventory and prepare a preliminary site map.
- Identify and document 3-5 primary scenarios of use.
- Develop 5-6 page schematics.
- Review all with the team and refine twice prior to usability testing.

Usability testing

Based on the site map, user scenarios, and schematics, as well as input from IS&T's Usability team on their desired test protocol, we will develop a wireframe prototype showing the navigation structure and general information hierarchy on sample pages. We will also consult with Usability to help outline the ideal protocol for testing the soundness of the proposed new site structure, and will attend all test sessions. The outcome of these tests will inform our final recommendations for the site map and information architecture, and as part of this, we will refine the wireframe to cover all page types planned for the site. The wireframe will serve as a resource to help the team focus on page structure during the visual design process.

- Collaborate with Usability team to develop test protocol.
- Work with Pixelslam, our development team, to expand the paper schematics into a clickable HTML prototype (up to 3Opp).
- Review the wireframe and test protocol with the project team; refine wireframe once.
- Observe eight half-hour test sessions with representative site users, either in person at MIT or remotely.
- Meet with client team to review Usability's findings.
- Refine the wireframe based on test outcome to serve as a reference for visual design, production and copywriting.
- Meet with the client team and writer to review final site map and wireframe.

Visual design

Although the client team has already sent a list of sites with elements whose look and feel appeal to them, we will meet with the team to review and confirm design preferences and requirements. Based on this information, along with what we learned during the usability phase of the project, we will develop three design directions for the team to review, and refine one selected direction into the full complement of templates.

- Design kickoff meeting with client team.
- Develop three design directions for three pages (home, second-level, third-level) and review with the client team.
- Refine one direction three times into final list of fourteen templates (including design modifications, if any, for mobile devices).
- Create online style guide to serve as development and maintenance resource and review it in person with the client development team.

4 Project schedule

The following schedule is preliminary. Nimble Partners, Pixelslam, and IS&T will work together to develop the final schedule.

March 1	Kickoff meeting
Mid-March	Site map, scenarios, schematics presented
End of March	Site map, scenarios, schematics complete; usability test and wireframe development begin
Mid-April	Usability testing; visual design begins
End of April	Usability test results delivered; information design and usability phase deliverables finalized
Early May	First visual design review
Mid- to late May	Second visual design review; ATIC Lab design review
Early to mid-June	Third visual design review
End of June	Visual design complete and delivered to Pixelslam; site development begins
July	Site development continues
Early to mid-August	Site development complete; testing phase begins
End of August	Site delivers to IS&T

5 Cost estimate

Information design and usability phases	\$9,000
Meetings/communication/management	\$11,000
Visual design	\$16,000
Development consultation	\$2,000
Total estimate:	\$38,000

The estimate includes all activities and deliverables described in the proposed work section. Pixelslam's estimate for site development will be provided separately.

Compensation for test participants is not included.

Additional optional costs and services

Design changes/edits beyond the scope described herein	\$125/hr
Art direction for photography and/or illustration	\$125/hr

Costs for photography and/or illustration (commissioned or stock) are not included in this proposal and will be negotiated separately, if needed, based on quantity, size, complexity, style, usage rights, etc.

Assumptions

This estimate is based on the following assumptions:

- MIT will deliver a complete inventory of all site content to Nimble Partners before the project kickoff meeting.
- MIT is responsible for recruiting all test participants, providing a location for tests, developing the test protocol (in collaboration with Nimble Partners), administering the tests, and analyzing test results. MIT will also be responsible for any compensation paid to test participants.

6 Work samples: higher education websites

MIT Medical Site Redesign

MIT Medical wanted to revise its website to drive health plan enrollment, increase awareness of MIT Medical's program offerings, and encourage student participation in wellness initiatives.

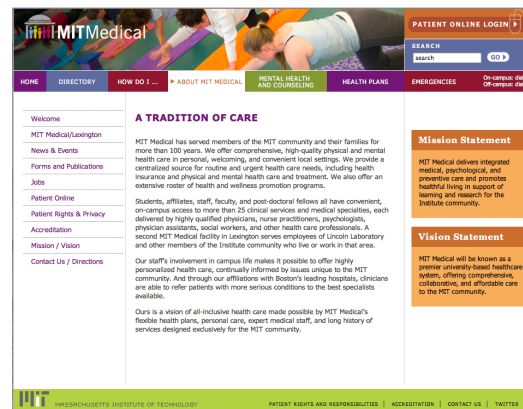
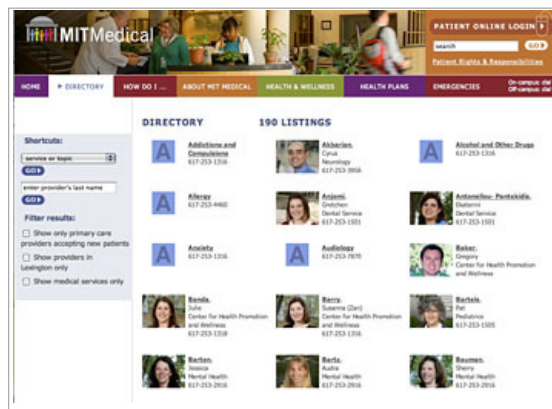
Through card sorting and interview sessions with faculty, staff and students, we discovered that users went to the site when they needed to find answers to very specific, time-sensitive questions, but were often frustrated by the vast amount of site content and its distributed organization.

Focusing the site's design to streamline access to critical information drove decisions during the project, from the question-oriented layout of the home page to a comprehensive online directory that allows users to quickly locate providers and services. We used photos of the staff along with banner images of the facility to help new patients feel welcome and know what to expect in advance of an appointment.

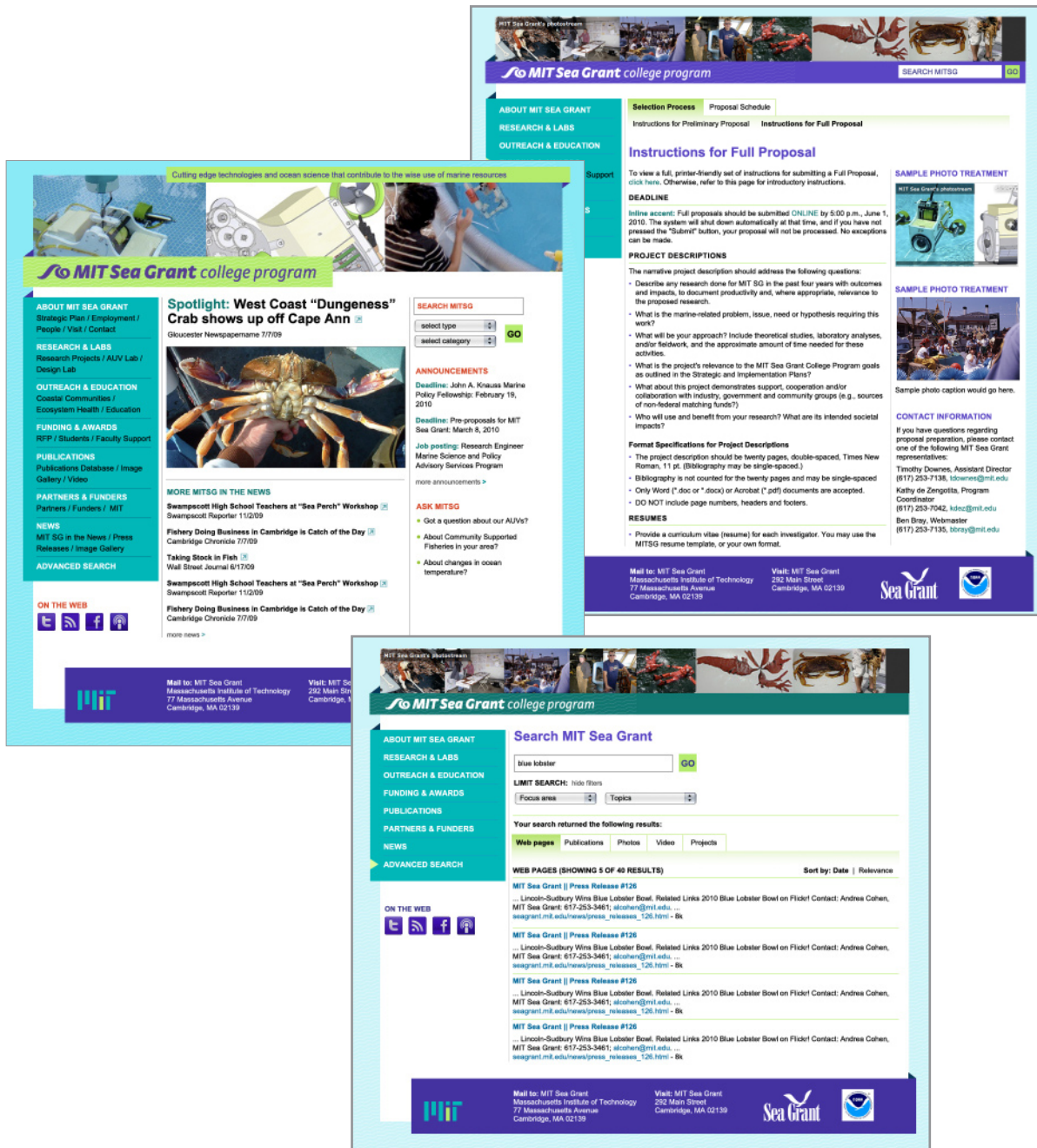
Usability tests confirmed users could locate information more easily and enjoyed the new site structure and features.

<http://medweb.mit.edu/>

Proposal - Nimble Partners, LLC



Work samples: higher education websites



MIT Sea Grant Site Redesign

We redesigned the MIT Sea Grant website, part of a network of national Sea Grant sites, to visually convey the excitement of discovery through research to school-age students and the Sea Grant community.

In addition to being packed with detailed information for researchers, the media and students, the site showcases a vast collection of images dynamically from Sea Grant's Flickr photostream.

Templates provide Sea Grant staff with a system that allows them to update the site frequently and easily.

This site is not yet live, but you can sneak a peek at <http://www.nimblepartners.com/sneakpeek/seagrant.html>.

Work samples: higher education websites

MIT HR Templates

MIT Human Resources encompasses many groups, each with their own site and content and promotional needs. The Benefits Office is its largest and most frequently used website.

The Benefits team needed a template system they could use to provide structure for the vast amount of content they publish. The system had to be flexible enough to allow Benefits to promote time-sensitive news in multiple ways, while at the same time establish conventions for navigation and information hierarchy to improve usability.

The new design accommodates changing navigation, promotions, and content: each site uses its own color palette and can display unique elements, like logos, but still appears part of the HR family and can be easily edited in Drupal's CMS.

<http://hrweb.mit.edu/benefits/>

<http://hrweb.mit.edu/>

<http://hrweb.mit.edu/worklife>

Work samples: higher education websites

MIT Sloan Media Relations Expertise Guide

MIT Sloan Media Relations connects reporters and members of the media with appropriate Sloan School faculty, researchers and noteworthy School news and events. They published an annual printed guide to faculty expertise, but wanted to move it online, which would allow for more timely updates and eliminate printing and distribution costs.

We designed an HTML prototype that included faceted search as well as multiple paths to the guide content. We talked with reporters as they used the prototype, designed features that supported their work habits, and refined others based on their feedback. The final design allows reporters to search and browse keywords, topics, disciplines, countries, regions or names. Visually, the Guide incorporates elements of the parent Sloan site while serving as a useful and appealing stand-alone application for reporters who go directly to the Guide on a frequent basis.

<http://mitsloan.mit.edu/expertiseguide/>

Faculty Expertise Guide

When you want information on the hottest topics in business, the MIT Sloan School of Management is the place to come. MIT Sloan's faculty and research staff, celebrated around the world, dissect today's business problems and solutions each day through research and in-classroom discussion. This guide provides a window to the intellectual vibrancy of MIT Sloan. The great volume of research conducted at MIT Sloan and the interest of faculty and researchers continually evolve, so please contact Paul Denning, director of media relations, if you don't find what you need.

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Simon Johnson
Professor & Kelly Professor of Entrepreneurship
Global Economics and Management (GEM)

Simon Johnson is the Russell A. Katz (1994) Professor of Entrepreneurship at MIT's Sloan School of Management, a position he has held since 2006. He is also a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, D.C., and a senior advisor to a number of the private equity and venture capital firms. He is also a member of the MIT Entrepreneurship Center. He is the author of the MIT project on Asia and President of the Association for Computational Economic Studies from 2006-2007.

From March 2007 through the end of August 2008, Professor Johnson was the International Monetary Fund's Executive Director (chief economist and Director of Research Operations). In the fall, Professor Johnson led the global economic crisis task force, which produced immediate responses to worldwide financial trouble, and also among the earliest to propose new forms of engagement for emerging wealth funds. He was also the IMF chief economist to have a blog.

In 2009-2010 Professor Johnson was a member of the US Executive and Development Commission Advisory Committee on Market Oriented Investments, a report of the need for continuing strong market regulation is published as part of the final report from that committee.

ARE A: Behavioral and Policy Sciences (BPS)
GENERAL CATEGORIES: Corporate governance, executive compensation, international, new asset markets, venture capital.

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Parent Disciplines



Work samples: nonprofit websites

FSG SOCIAL IMPACT ADVISORS

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FSG is a nonprofit organization that works with foundations, corporations, governments, and nonprofits to accelerate the pace of social progress by engaging civil society in three ways:

- Advice**
We offer consulting services on strategy, evaluation, and operations to help clients increase their impact.
- Ideas**
We distill and share learning from our research and client work to benefit the entire field.
- Action**
We create and launch new initiatives designed to strengthen the field.

WHAT'S NEW

CSR & Corporate Philanthropy: Game-Changing CSR
Switching from defense to offense makes all the difference.

Social Investment: Investing for Impact
Financial and social returns are not incompatible.

CSR & Corporate Philanthropy: Nestlé and CSR
How creating shared value benefits both Nestlé and society.

Action Initiative: Evaluation 2.0
The goal: New approaches to evaluation.

Action Initiative: Enabling Social Investment
The goal: Free \$1 billion in foundation assets for social investment by 2011.

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Advice

This is a paragraph introducing FSG's strategy consulting services. It is the generic strategy service description. It should not be too long.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE
Our collaborative approach to social consulting brings a deep understanding of both foundation and corporate organizational dynamics to every non-profit program area including education, health, the arts, and social services. The portfolio of daily enables us to deliver results that create and activate measurable, sustained, and high-visibility impact. We have a deep understanding of the non-profit field.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH
Our collaborative approach is a combination of our research, an evidence-based approach to our advisory services, and a commitment to social consulting. Through each engagement, we work closely with our clients' staff, leadership and board to ensure broad ownership and a clear plan for moving from strategy to action.

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING AND CONTRIBUTING
Our collaborative approach is a combination of our research, an evidence-based approach to our advisory services, and a commitment to social consulting. Through each engagement, we work closely with our clients' staff, leadership and board to ensure broad ownership and a clear plan for moving from strategy to action.

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Ideas

Along the way, we have learned a great deal from our clients and action initiatives about ideas that effect the entire field of philanthropy. Sharing this learning is key to our mission and our commitment to contributing to the field.

WHAT'S NEW
Research: Economic Evaluation in the Field of Social Investment
FSG's white paper on new approaches to evaluation in the rapidly growing field of social investment was commissioned by the Social Investment Forum (SIF) and published in the Social Investment Forum's 2007 Social Investment Research Report. Download PDF >

2006 Guide to Social Investment: A Social Investment
An annual publication that provides the field with the most up-to-date information on social investment. Download PDF >

Scaling Social Impact
Research report on the challenges and opportunities of scaling social impact. Download PDF >

Engaging, Inspiring and Activating for Community Foundations
A new report from the Social Investment Forum. Download PDF >

What's New
An annual publication that provides the field with the most up-to-date information on social investment. Download PDF >

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Action

This is a paragraph introducing this section. It is the generic section description. It should not be too long.

CLEAN WATER INITIATIVE
Clean water is a basic need for every child in the world. FSG's Clean Water Initiative is a partnership between FSG, Google, Microsoft, Oracle and the United Way Foundation. Download PDF >

SOCIAL INVESTMENT INITIATIVE
Social investment is a new approach to social consulting that combines the power of social consulting with the power of social investment. Download PDF >

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FSG Site and Identity Redesign

Foundation Strategy Group (FSG) converted from a for-profit philanthropic consulting firm to a nonprofit organization. The new FSG, Inc. is a hybrid organization that is an experienced advisor to philanthropic enterprises; a contributor to the knowledge and advancement of the philanthropic field at large; and an incubator of long-term, grant-supported initiatives, all intended to promote positive social impact.

This major repositioning effort necessitated a new identity and the design and launch of a new FSG website. The site was intended to reflect the organization's new status and offerings, and to begin shaping new perceptions about the firm in the minds of its target audiences. Nimble Partners worked with FSG to create a new information architecture that emphasized the firm's structure and brought its provocative work to the forefront. Visually, we designed a new look and feel that maintained FSG's core brand attributes while introducing new associations of warmth, openness and a commitment to learning and contributing to the philanthropic field.

Thank you

for considering Nimble Partners. We'd love to meet with you to learn more about your project and how we can help.

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partners@nimblepartners.com