

Don't Stop The Press!

By Stuart Aitken | AITKEN DESIGN

PAISLEY — When Aitken Design was launched back in 2016, we could never have imagined the changes we'd see over the next five years. In the world (Brexit, Trump, the discovery that fish might talk to each other in regional accents); in style (normcore, the nineties as vintage, the surprising persistence of pink), in the office (our core team has grown to four) and, of course, in Graphic Design.

The heart of Aitken Design has always been our Graphic Design, Print, and Web Services. In a decade when print was repeatedly declared dead, we persisted in believing that there were other people out there like us, people who still revelled in thick paper and sweet-smelling ink, not to mention our morden, sharp Graphic Design and cutting edge Web Services putting the client at the heart of what we do.

Of course, for all our love of print, we're also a bunch of tech nuts



Stuart Aitken

with a serious scrolling habit and an armful of wearables. But then we don't believe in either/or. We embrace shallow pleasures and profound ideas, Netflix and fringe theatre.

So welcome to the FIRST edition of Aitken Design's quarterly newspaper: our very first free newspaper straight to you.

What can you expect? Expert information about what is happening in the worlds of Graphic Design, Print and Websites, news at Aitken Design, getting to know the team better, focus on our Clients, and special offers to help you.

So let us know what you think on LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook (or you can email me directly). Tell us what you love, tell us what you hate, and tell us how we can continue to make the new venture even better.

Buckle in for the ride, here's to an amazing three months till the next issue.

Stuart Aitken

Owner/Director (now Newspaper Editor??)

My Mountain

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

Nicola Yale writes about her journey in starting her own accounting business

By Nicola Yale | VALOREM VIRTUAL FINANCE

LOCH LOMAND — I look back on my journey of starting my business and I very clearly remember the first year at night school walking into my HNC class for Accounting. At that point in time I was at work full time during the day as an office manager for a construction company. My second child was months old and my first born was not yet two, my husband worked away and I remember thinking "what have I let myself in for".

Then I took a deep breath, sat down and simply started, I started learning the basics of accounting, I sat each assessment and passed them all with flying colours. I slowly but steadily chipped away at my mountain.

Then came my second year of night school, my girls were a bit older, I still worked full time during the day only this time there was a blip, my husband was hospitalised with meningitis and for two months I had to do as much as possible to look after not only Michael but my girls, my studies and my work. Despite this I sat my graded unit at the end of this second year and achieved not only a pass but an A.

At this point I thought I had reached the top of my mountain, then my friends, husband and tutors convinced me otherwise and with their words of encouragement ringing in my ears I went part time at my work and enrolled in full time college with a view to achieve my HND. I again found myself sitting in a classroom full of students and thinking "what

have I done", however I used my tried and trusted technique of simply starting, again I sat down with my shiny new pencil case and started learning the intricacies of accounting.

During all this there is a small but important point that I haven't yet disclosed, I was suffering from a chronic illness called Endometriosis, slowly but surely the pain worsened each month until there was a point where I couldn't function without my daily cocktail of naproxen and tramadol.

In the January of 2020 I begged my consultant for help, we had already trialled chemical menopause, birth control, cutting gluten and sugar from my diet, losing weight, exercise ... you name it I tried it. Within 2 weeks of me begging for help my consultant had me booked in for a total abdominal hysterectomy.

On the 7th of february I went in for surgery, the surgery was a success and I now live a full life with no pain relief apart from the odd paracetamol when the prosecco gods have been to visit.

Not long after I started recovering I contracted meningitis and was hospitalised again, then my husband fell victim to it again and he was hospitalised. I focused on getting better and looking after my family as much as possible and when I felt ready to go back to college the country was locked down. Despite all the challenges I still achieved two grade A's for my Graded Units and was awarded not only my HND but the class award for my dedication.

I was definitely at the top of my mountain now ... surely?

Nope! One night I laid in bed and thought to myself I am going to start my own business,

if I can overcome all I have and still excell then my talents will be wasted working for someone else. And so the fledgling bookkeeping business that has grown and evolved into a virtual finance department was born. During the immediate growth phase of my baby business did I rest and concentrate on one thing..... I think we know the answer by now..... Helloooooo third year university! No one can ever say I'm not dedicated to my craft. Third year has been intense, the level of learning is beyond what I thought I was capable of, but again my trusty technique of simply starting came to my rescue and I am now the proud owner of a shiny degree in accountancy.

I'm pretty sure I'm at the top of my mountain, but history has taught me that each time I think I'm there it's simply a breathtaking view I'm looking at and not the peak. Only time will tell where I will end up, one thing I know for certain though, if I ever feel overwhelmed I will take a deep breath and I will simply start.

Find out more at valoremfinance.co.uk



Logo created for Valorem Financial Services
by Aitken Design

Q&A With Stuart Aitken

The Aitken Design staff asked Stuart some burning questions

Q: What was the scariest moment in launching your business?

A: Wow, what a good question to start with. The scariest moment in my business? It must have been day one. It was logging onto the laptop, having the work phone standing by, wondering if I would have any clients or work and questioning if I had done the right thing. That was the scariest moment. Day one I had no clients, but day two the phone rang and the rest, they say is history.

Q: Is Hamilton a real place?

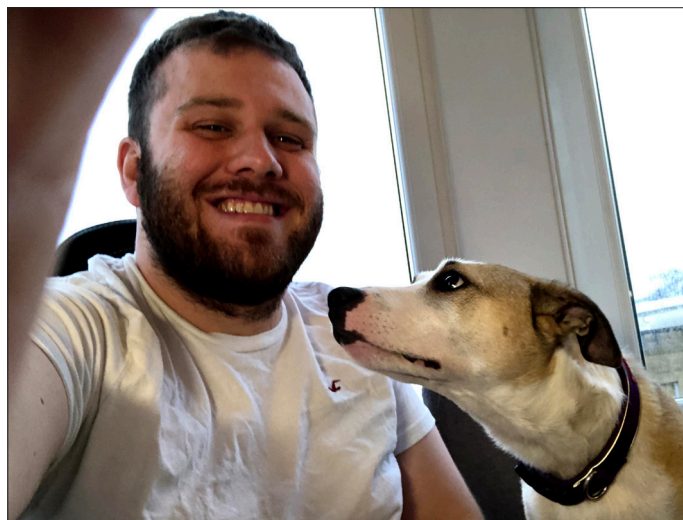
A: Yes indeed, Hamilton is a real place. There are 47 Hamilton towns all over the world. I am assuming here the one in question is Hamilton in Scotland. The town has some amazing history, named after a family that helped make it the town it is today. I spent 10 years of my life in the town, many of my friends live in the town, and of course Aitken Design started in Hamilton.

Q: What's your middle name?

A: My middle name is James. It is a tradition in my family that all the male members of my family have James as a middle name. I am rather proud of my middle name, and love the historic link to the Royal line of Stuart kings named James.

Q: Have you realised that both aitken and design have the same number of letters as hexagons have sides?

A: Until you have said this, no I have not, however I love this.



Stuart and his doggo, Layla

Hexagons have become a major part of our brand and how we structure the business in the last few months. I love that Aitken and Design and a Hexagon all have 6 letters/sides, is it a coincidence? Maybe not. Keep your eyes peeled for more on this in the future.

Q: Who was your childhood hero?

A: Oh very good question. As a child I LOVED the Power Rangers, and maybe perhaps still do. My favorite ranger was the white ranger, standing up for what is right and fighting for good. That has shaped me as a person, I would like to think I have a very fair system of what is right and wrong, and standing up for what is right. Isn't that what all superheroes do?

Cuteness Corner

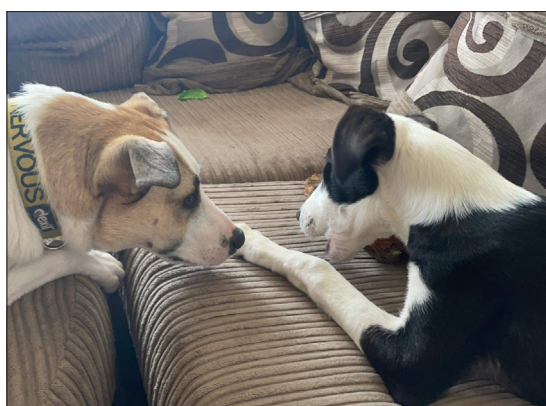
The pets of Aitken Design — keeping us sane during lockdown



Anna's cat, Lola snug in her basket bed



Julie's dogs, Max (left) and Bella (right)



Stuart's dog, Layla (left) meeting new puppy, Oreo (right)



Simon (right) with his houseplant, George (left)

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What The Heck Is A Vector And Why Do I Need One?

By Anna Roszak | AITKEN DESIGN

GLASGOW — It all comes down to pixels and scalability. A pixel is a tiny little square that makes up most graphics that you see on the web. The photos you take on your phone are pixel-based. These have varying levels of resolution, or pixels per inch (PPI), which can limit how large you can print an image without losing quality. If you've ever tried to print something very large with a photo taken on your phone, you'll know what we're talking about. It starts to look grainy and boxy and generally not as good as how it looked on your phone.

The advantage to vector is that it is infinitely scalable. Here at Aitken Design, we create our vector graphics at screen-size. Then if you need it printed into a large banner or billboard, it can be blown-up and still have those crisp, clear outlines. No pixels necessary.

How that happens is that every vector image is not made up of pixels, but paths. Paths are points that are mathematically connected to create the image. When we resize the vector, the program mathematically scales up the image and it looks the same as it did when it was small with no impact on its resolution.

This is why when we ask if you have a vector, our aim is to provide you with the clearest, crispest version of your image as possible. If you have your logo professionally designed, your graphic designer should be able to give you your original vector version of your logo. From that vector, other file types such as .png or .jpg for your websites will be created for quick loading by your browser, but that format is not necessarily the best for print purposes.



Details of two logos recently vectorised: when zoomed-in, the original images on the left became grainy and pixelated. The vectorised images on the right can zoom infinitely without losing sharpness, making them ideal for large-scale printing.

Common Raster (pixel-based) file types

.jpg	.tiff
.png	.psd
.gif	

Common Vector file types

.ai
.eps
.svg

funfact.pdf

A .pdf can sometimes have vector files embedded in it. If your previous graphic designer gave you your logo as a .pdf file, we can open it up and see if it was saved in vector or raster.

Don't Make Me Think

Do's and Don't in Web Design

By Simon Guy | AITKEN DESIGN

GLASGOW — Don't make me think. Four little words that should guide the design of your site. We live in a world saturated with information, most of it useless to us. The function we develop most is not searching for what we need, but filtering out what we do not. Nowhere is this more true than online.

People who look at your website appear fickle. They may enjoy long articles or books. But when browsing online, it's easier to reject anything that interferes with the information they want. If you don't design your site in a way that offers the information they're seeking then they will reject you too. There's plenty more sites in the sea. Even worse, users often muddle on and end up feeling frustrated with your whole service.

One of the most important elements in this is visual hierarchy. The easiest way to think of this is big, medium and small sizes but colour contrast and type of image also plays a role. No one will read everything on your page. They will scan through for something

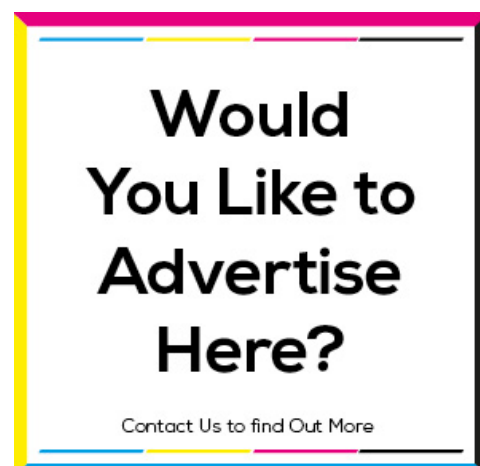
that sticks out to them. Grouping related content together helps guide them.

Making buttons bold and obvious has a huge big impact. The text that you use inside makes a difference. For instance "Jobs" is much better than "Employment Opportunities".

With text in general it is worth being ruthless over every word: does it add to the meaning or distract from it?

Starting your site with a big "welcome to the name of the business I just searched for" is a waste of visual energy for the user. Instead it should be immediately obvious what you are about and what the purpose of the site is. This can be best done with a combination of images, good copy and clearly defined call to action buttons.

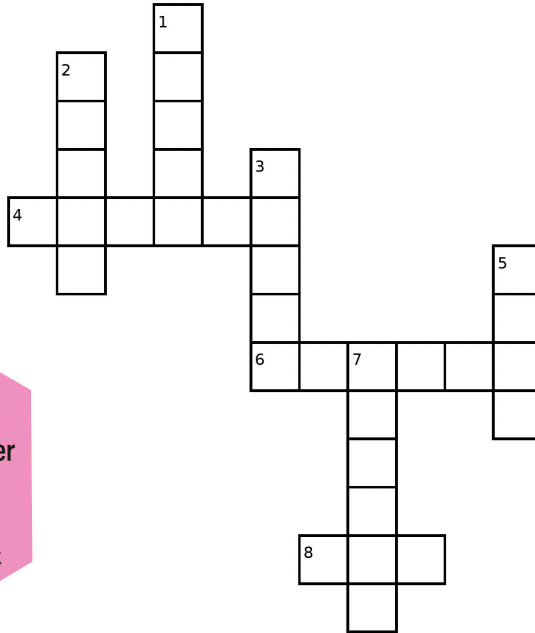
Here at Aitken Design, we strive to pay attention to these small changes that can make a big difference to your customers and your business.



THE BACK PAGE

Crossword

By Simon Guy



Complete our crossword to get £10 off your next order over £100!

Send your pic to
answers@aitkendesign.co.uk

Down:

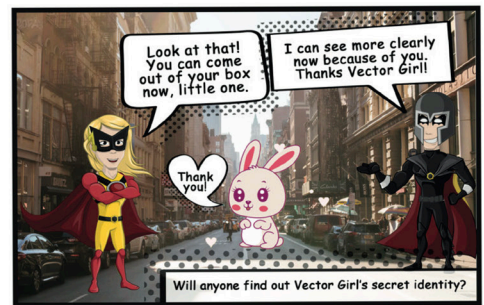
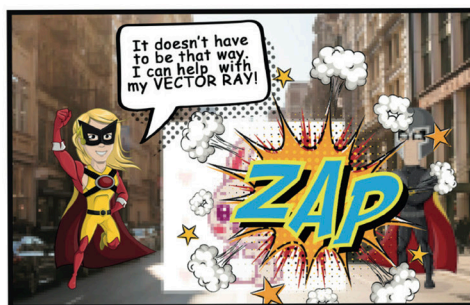
1. Smudge at a crime scene
2. Air passenger
3. Variety; character
5. Female swans

Across:

4. Ship's course; format
6. A preliminary drawing
8. Arachnid's snare

Design Heroes

By Anna Roszak



Made with graphics sourced from amestudio, brgfx, freepik.com & rawpixel.com



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