Nathaniel Northway

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I'm a personable and professional web designer & developer. I focus on creating websites that are minimal and informative. I specialize in responsive websites and custom applications. I am passionate about accessibility, simplicity, and being open & honest with the people I work with. Since 2015, I have worked with dozens of small & large businesses as a designer and developer. From 2016-2022, I co-owned and operated a SAAS company called Gittr, which enabled local-level courier companies to provide online ordering to their customers. I have a passion for free information and like to share my knowledge and experience on my blog. I have released free software, including a databaseless blogging system and a simple browser extension. In my free time, I like to be in nature, cycling, cooking, and spending time with my fiance (and our 4 cats!).

Skills

Technologies - Pro	Technologies - Familiar	Soft Skills
HTML5	LAMP stacks	Client Communication
CSS3	Photoshop	Team work
SASS/SCSS	GiMP	Problem solving
JavaScript	Yii	Organization
jQuery	Git	Responsive Design
PHP	Node.js	Resilient
MySQL	React.js	Iterative Design
PHPMyAdmin		
CodeIgniter	Vue.js	Adaptable
SEO	Babel	Working with APIs
WordPress	Google Domains	Office365 Products
GitHub		
DNS		

Work Experience

Sterling Lawyers, LLC - Menomonee Falls, WI - March 2022 to Current
Web Developer
My responsibilities include maintaining the current Sterling Lawyers website, developing and documenting procedures, and developing new conversion channels on the website. My KPIs include core web vitals across all devices, page speed, and site conversion rate. The website is based on WordPress and uses the Divi Theme Builder. Notable plugins include RankMath SEO, WPRocket, Custom Post Types UI, and Smush Pro. The website is hosted with Cloudways and utilizes their server-level caching system (Varnish), as well as StackPath's CDN and DNS. I also am responsible for building and developing our backlinking strategy, and have developed new opportunities and procedures in my time there.

Notable achievements in my time at Sterling Lawyers include implementing a version control system using Cloudways' automated tooling and using Monday.com to manage pull requests. It's a one-way system using a staging site to develop and stage changes, so no changes are made to the live site.

I've also implemented a double-caching system to better serve our clients. We use WPRocket to manage CSS and JavaScript compression, Smush Pro to compress images and serve from a CDN, and we use Cloudways' Varnish Cache for server level caching. Implementing this lead to core web vitals improving across the board by over 50%, page speed increasing by over 50% on mobile, and a growth in organic conversion rate.

I've also built multiple integrations with Salesforce to capture leads, including multiple surveys, newsletter signups, and content gates. I push all these through a handler which parses the information, assigns values to the data where needed, and seamlessly pushes the data to Salesforce without pointing the user away from our website. This gracefully handles errors and I believe has halved our lead loss rate. It also has cut our spam submissions down significantly, so our sales team spends less time following up on fake leads.

Cherry Tree Dental - Remote - March 2021 to March 2022
As the web developer, I build, migrate, maintain, and ensure compliance with standards on our 35+ web sites. I build new sites on a custom WordPress theme that I developed and maintain. I constantly update the custom theme to suit needs as our practices grow, and manage changes with GitHub.

I use GoDaddy's automatic migration tools to transfer content to our platform when possible, but often, have to build new. The decision to rebuild a site may be due to accessibility concerns, issues with the previous host, or design concerns. Often, websites that we inherit are out of date, from a technology perspective, and need to be rebuilt in a way that can scale with changing standard practices.

A large part of my job is ensuring compliance with HIPAA and other legal requirements, so security is a top priority. I manage security with GoDaddy's tools to ensure SSL connections are forced, but also ensure that the code I produce & manage is clear of security vulnerabilities. I am the administrator for all our sites and make sure that only authorized users have access.

All our sites are integrated in some way with other services, including Google Maps, reCaptcha, Places, and Analytics. On a select number of sites, I implemented third-party services to complete patient forms online or complete other account related tasks.

As part of the marketing team, I also help manage Facebook, Google MyBusiness, and Healthgrades profiles. A big function of our team is rebranding offices, and I play a role in determining timelines, communications, and branding. I work with our team to determine

quarterly schedules, and am responsible for getting all of our sites on the same platform by the end of 2022.

Gittr, LLC - Milwaukee, WI - October 2016 to March 2022
Gittr is an online ordering and payment management platform built for local-level courier companies. Gittr enables our clients to provide an online ordering platform for their services, which is mostly delivery from restaurants. Gittr sends the order to the delivery provider and client, collects payment, and distributes the payment once the order is complete.

My role at Gittr is multifaceted. I work with my business partner Brennan to track down and fix bugs, plan & test new features, and edit our source code to be faster and lighter. I work primarily on the front-end, building out and updating UIs and responding to user feedback and requests frequently. I work mostly with PHP and HTML, but often have to edit CSS with SASS, edit photos and digital images with Photoshop or GiMP, and work with other languages to manage our VPS. I work a lot with our databases, writing code to update installations automatically with CodeIgniter, manually manipulating test environments with SQL statements and using PHPMyAdmin for a visual layer.
- Integrates with TwinJet dispatch software via API to send the order to restaurant & delivery service simultaneously
- Uses the Stripe Payments API to validate credit cards, collect and distribute payments
- Uses Stripe Customers API to bill our clients for their subscription
- Uses OpenStreetMap API to determine customer delivery eligibility and allow dispatchers to draw their delivery zones.
- Built on CodeIgniter PHP framework, MySQL, HTML, CSS, and jQuery.
- Uses a LAMP stack
- Served on a self-hosted VPS on Namecheap

Web Development - Freelance Highlights
Avalanche Creative - August 2022 - Present
https://avalanchegr.com/
Avalanche Creative is an SEO & Content Marketing agency based in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I began working for them remotely in August of 2022 to supplement their team. I have worked on 11 different projects with them in some capacity, but played a large part in developing a lot of front-end components for Fleis and Vandenbrink, a civil engineering firm with locations throughout Michigan and Indiana. I developed multiple UI components, including an accordion with media, using custom HTML & CSS in Beaver Builder while utilizing custom fields to display repeated content in an accessible, good-looking manner. Aside from that project, I have developed a lot of front end components for other clients and worked with content writers to publish new layouts and blog posts.

Wandrer.earth - October 2021 - Present
https://wandrer.earth

Wandrer is a web-app based on Strava's API that adds a competitive element to exercise routing. Wandrer calculates the miles traveled by a user within a boundary and puts that completion percentage against other users, creating a game that is played by over 40,000 people. Wandrer's previous iteration was based on an early Bootstrap version, which didn't scale to 2021 standards and caused a lot of overflow and usability issues on mobile devices. They were looking to change their front end and hired a designer to help.

In October of 2021, I was brought on to the team on a freelance basis to help reconstruct their front-end. Working off the wireframes the designer provided, I used HTML & SASS to complete the static implementation, using dummy data to facilitate edge-case testing. I based the build on Bootstrap, but omitted the Bootstrap JS library because they required specialized components that went far beyond Bootstrap's intended scope. I deployed on PHP to get some real-world testing done and used Heroku to field test.

This implementation is the first time I've worked fully remote on a freelance basis and it's gone extremely well. Over the course of the project, I've met weekly with the owner and back-end engineer to discuss progress and I believe that we're all very happy with the new design. I've managed to learn a lot about product architecture and wireframing, and I've gotten the chance to work with software & products that I was previously unfamiliar with, such as Zeplin, Heroku, and OpenMapBox.

Flush with Mush LLC - September 2021
https://flushwithmushllc.com
Flush With Mush is a Milwaukee based mushroom growing farm that sells to restaurants and direct-to-consumer via farmer's markets. They started operating in early 2021 and wanted to build a web presence that could scale with them. To start, they wanted a simple one-pager with basic information about their brand, products, and which markets they would be at. They also wanted to have good SEO and start with a website that was able to be utilized for E-commerce in the future.

I started by building them a bespoke PHP site, ready for integration with Stripe for future e-commerce use. I set them up on a self-hosted LAMP stack and provided them with an SSL certificate to bring in better SEO. I served all assets locally, including fonts and external libraries, which makes the site blazing fast on all platforms. I worked with Noelle to generate great content, and using that, was able to leverage some good SEO. We plan to integrate more functionality this year, including building out a feature to bookmark, print, and share recipes, then, we hope to start e-commerce next season. After Launch, Noelle and Chip were happy to have a web presence and have a list of products updating for each weekly market appearance. They're excited for the next steps - as am I!

J. Marc LeGear Design - March 2020
J. Marc LeGear Design is a crafter of handmade wooden goods. Jason makes Furniture, small boxes, furniture, and custom pieces. He has a website on Wix that he built himself. I teamed up

with him to boost his SEO, make his site more accessible, and develop an SEO and Content Strategy to better target a specific audience and grow his organic traffic. We started with building a keyword list, which was used throughout the site in content blocks, image titles and alt text, and in SEO tags. We ensured that all SEO best practices were being followed. We set up accounts with Google Search Console and Analytics to help track progress and report errors. I ran Lighthouse to study page metrics and made recommendations and changes to achieve better performance and SEO.

At the end of the project, Jason had a much better understanding of how to utilize his site and maintain the SEO that I had done. We were able to improve his site's performance by about 30%, increase the best practices score by 50%, and SEO and Accessibility scores to the high 90s from the 50s.

Bound Couriers - Remote - August to December 2020
https://bound614.com
Bound Couriers is a small courier company based in Columbus, Ohio. I helped transition them from a Squarespace website to a PHP-based, self-hosted website on a LAMP stack that I manage. Their previous website was difficult to use on non-desktop platforms and their SEO wasn't great. The stock tools for tracking analytics were not what they wanted and they didn't have great copy.

A month after launch, they reported a 20% increase in visitors and a noticeable increase in conversions. The team at Bound is very happy with their site and will be expanding in the new future to integrate dispatching custom orders.

- Mobile first site
    - Built with PHP, HTML5, CSS3, ES7 (JavaScript)
    - PHP compiles front-end code from page-parts
- Built using Bulma framework
- Edited copy to tell a story
- Included new features like a contact form
- Integrated Google Analytics
- Boosted SEO
- Client logos & imagery edited for the web using GiMP
- Added SSL

FacilityNow - Milwaukee, WI - 2018 Launch, ongoing maintenance
https://facilitynow.com
FacilityNow is a facilities management company based in Milwaukee with clients all over the state. Their previous website was well designed but wasn't great on mobile and didn't have many features. They didn't rank well on Google and were getting ready to expand their client base.

After launch, we saw a rise in Google rankings from the second page to the 4th spot on the first page, a large improvement in Page Speed Insights, and better interaction with their contact form.

- Modernized site with a responsive design
    - Built with PHP, HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript
    - PHP compiles front-end code from page-parts
- Improved SEO by modernizing meta tags
- Improved SEO by adding a supplementary WordPress site
- Moved hosting providers
    - Transitioned integrations with client and project management integrations (BaseCamp)
    - Imported email accounts/forwarders
- Built out interactive elements to tell their story
    - Focused on staff and their process
    - Worked with a photographer to capture the staff
    - Worked with the team to get short snippets about them written
- Edited images for the web with GiMP
- Edited copy

Personal Projects

Topik - January 2021 - current
http://topik.natenorthway.com
Topik started as a rebuild of my personal website. Topik is a flat-file blogging system that is focused on simplicity and speed. It is not a CMS, and has no 'admin backend', comments, or databases. It's built on PHP, with a HTML/CSS/JS front-end layer. Posts are written in PHP and saved to a directory, which the Post class reads from to generate the feed. Each post has different variables which means that each post page has a unique set of SEO tags. I wanted to focus on being lightweight, so it ships with little dependency on external scripts and files. Font Awesome and Bulma are the only external calls, but even those are not necessary. It scores 100 on Google Page Speed insights and comes in at under 250kb.

Lorem Clipsum Chrome Extension - 2018
https://natenorthway.com/lorem-clipsum/
I was doing a lot of in-browser editing for a remote client in the summer of 2018. I was working with designs that didn't have text content ready, so I was using a lot of filler text. I got tired of going from tab to tab to select, copy, and paste lorem ipsum text, so I built a Chrome extension to automate copying lorem ipsum text to the clipboard. It's available for free in the Chrome Webstore.

Education

Milwaukee Area Technical College
2016-2017
Attended two semesters of Web & Software Development program.

High School Diploma
Nathan Hale High School
June 2012

Assessments

Search Engine Optimization — Highly Proficient
August 2019
Measures a candidate's ability to interpret online website performance metrics and understand search engine optimization tactics.
Full results: https://share.indeedassessments.com/share_assignment/vr6b0nfdcuguxfim