

## Being Jakob Nielsen

by Jim F. Kukral

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I've finally done it! I've found a way to become Jakob Nielsen, the Internet's usability prophet. The Martha Stewart of the home arts. The Bill Gates of nerds. The Alan Greenspan of economics.

I can now possess Jakob's thoughts, drive his car and, most importantly, redesign his Web site, into something that is both usable and attractive.

Isn't it about time?

Since I can now read Jakob's mind, I can now understand why he won't redesign the Web site. He feels that the site is usable, and that's all that matters.

But I feel that the site is boring—and, well... how shall I put it? Uninspired?

Nah, that's a bit too nice. Let's just say ugly.

*Whoa Jim, are you honestly calling out Jakob Nielsen on his Web site? Who do you think you are?*

To answer my own questions, Yes, I guess I am calling him out. And I'm not anyone special, just a Nielsen fan who expects more.

From a usability perspective, the site is solid. However, there's more to just being usable.

Yes, I said it. Usability isn't everything!

The site definitely leaves the reader with an overly chewed-tasteless-piece-of-gum feeling. It's just... blah.

- So big deal, you say, the site is usable right? Yes it is!
- But is it memorable? No!
- Is it nice to look at right? No!

- Would you still visit the site if it weren't full of amazing content? Not a chance!

To Mr. Nielson's credit, there is a **valid explanation** about why the site is devoid of an artistic soul, one of the reasons being, "I didn't want to spend money to hire an artist."

An explanation that I'm sure many of his clients have tried to pass by him over the years, and to which I'm sure he has said being cheap isn't a solution.

Maybe I'm wrong, but I doubt it, since I now share Mr. Nielson's thoughts... in case you had forgotten already.

But just because I can now share his thoughts doesn't mean I can agree with them.

Why wouldn't the **King of Usability** want to tackle the greatest challenge of them all:  
**Designing a beautiful AND usable Web site?**

Isn't that what all Web professionals should strive to do? Why does there have to be a barbed-wire fence between designing a usable site and designing a graphically pleasing site?

There doesn't, and to Mr. Nielsen's credit, he doesn't believe there has to be, either, even though his Web site shows me otherwise.

So what's the hold up, Jakob?

2004 is upon us. Perhaps you have a Web site redesign in the works. Or maybe you're finally going to build that company intranet you've been dreaming of.

Are you going to spend the money for a good designer and usability person, or go the way of Jakob Nielsen and forgo the design part?

Obviously, your budget may have something to say about spending extra money on a designer, but don't worry about it.

Just say, "Jakob Nielsen doesn't feel it's necessary, why should we?"

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**Jim F. Kukral** Jim's latest ebook, *BlogsToRiches*, provides a step-by-step guide to bloggers on how to earn money with their Weblogs ([blogstoriches.com](http://blogstoriches.com)).

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