

Back packer

backpacker.gr

first year

retrospective

Or: how to label a button

on your website in order

to prevent prospective

users from using it *

backpacker.gr has gone public this very day (the 16th of january) exactly one year ago (2006). Since then a lot have happened and a lot have changed. As a retrospective (or maybe as a tribute) the following summarize the events, the thoughts and the regrets(?) of the first year.



- *The fonts*

It is most certain that the downloads indication next to each typeface can be misleading (though not always). Sure, BPpong and BPneon are at the top of the downloads list, but the opposite occurs when it comes to their usage. In fact, I have not seen a single example of a graphic design artifact using either one of them up to this day. This can only mean one thing: both typefaces ended up as major failures (and I can accept that for BPpong - I never actually liked her - but I expected more from BPneon). But, if this is the case, does anyone have an explanation as to why BPmyhand (my actual handwriting and perhaps the worst looking typeface I have ever designed and/or seen) was used extensively and in a variety of contexts (ranging from take-out and election candidates' flyers to wine labels and websites)? I don't have an answer but I can tell you this: I am erasing it from the site (and my hard disk)!
[regret #1]

On the other side I was very pleased to see several great usage examples of BPchildFatty: the first one was a poster for the first personal exhibition of Sophia Tsibikaki (www.short-things.gr) and the second one for a cooking TV show called "Hungry Bear" (or something like that in Greek) from RedFish (www.redfish.gr). And another two include a number of stickers from T-bar, a

custom t-shirts store in Thessaloniki (www.t-bar.gr) and the Refresh Ink wooden label in a printing accessories store, again in Thessaloniki.

Five backpacker typefaces were released from Cannibal™ fonts (www.fonts.gr) at the beginning of July. And I have Panos Haratzopoulos and Eirini Vlachou to thank (and ask them to forgive me) for the numerous corrections and the work I have put them through with those terrible fonts. Up to date the backpacker package has sold 5 copies.

- The updates

The site underwent its first major update with the addition of the typography + design projects section at the end of April. I am pretty happy with how the section is growing and even though it's growing slowly, it's growing (and will keep growing) steady :-). ... So, stay tuned!

The second major update was the addition of the new backpacker fonts coming up [and regret #2]. You know when you are working on something big (at least in your mind) and you want people to see it and you rush into presenting it to them and you regret it afterwards?

Well, that's exactly the case with the upcoming fonts.

The whole idea of people expecting(?) to see the finished typefaces as soon as possible was a great source of stress. And the worst thing is that in the end

BP PhD has changed greatly ever since and the BP inktrap project was abandoned altogether (the inktraps were closed and the resulting typeface is BP display black). The third major update (* and the answer to the poster's alternative title) was the addition of the "make a donation" button at the beginning of May. No comments on that ...

The final major update (which took place at the end of August) included the overall redesign of the website's main menu together with the presentation of the new backpacker logo. I am still very happy with both and I think that they will stay put for some time.

- *Computer Arts Project #86*

After an invitation from Richard Hill (www.richardjhill.com), I wrote and sent a small piece of advice/quote to be published in a special Computer Arts Project issue on typography (#86, p. 65). It was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the past year. I hope people found what I had to say interesting, if not anything else.

- *Strange Screen*

At the beginning of October I designed and developed the website and the catalog for a video art festival in Thessaloniki called Strange Screen (www.strangescreen.gr). I also participated in the competition section with a rather provocative video (it was an invaluable experience seeing viewers' reactions during the

screening without them knowing I was present in the screening room). The most interesting thing is that in the end backpacker.gr was one of the supporters of the festival (just below the sponsors) for reasons that I cannot elaborate right now. Nevertheless, I can say without a doubt that it was a great experience.

- 2 posters for *Epsilon*

The year ended with an invitation from Dimitris Papazoglou (www.designersunited.gr) to participate with a poster for a 2006 retrospective initiated by *Epsilon* magazine (www.enet.gr). I ended up with two posters (one of them published) both of which I am really happy I had the chance to design.

**In the end, what remains
is the need of getting
a part of yourself out
there and slicing it to
pieces for the world to
understand it. For there
can be no design without
people using it, seeing
it, understanding it,
judging it, rejecting it,
correcting it, living it ...**

