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Content >> Style

I touched on this topic briefly yesterday, but it's still haunting me: why do I always focus so much on style over content, and what can I do about it?

Branding has always been my Achilles' heel, because I go to it first—and just about any venture is instantly shot.

- POWrDecks: When I was 13, I tried to make an eBay-based competitive Pokémon deck building company. Let's be honest, this one failed on content
- Colberg Tutoring: I spent 2 weeks of a high school summer making a very nice logo, business cards, and a Squarespace website. At least a day was spent literally figuring out the distinction between "Colberg Education" (the company) and "Colberg Tutoring" (the brand). Then, just about nothing happened... I maybe gave out 10 of the 1000+ business cards I drafted & iterated.
- Education: How many brands + domains + splash pages + logos have I gone through? Teltic. (My)Celium. Colberg Education. Nota School. Now, Quiry—and I'm still going! I remember spending two weeks on the color and capitalization of the Teltic logo in October. Ouch!! Imagine if I'd spent all those hundreds of hours on talking to parents/students/teachers... I might have gotten somewhere.
- Solar Food: branding, site, basic HTML logo. This wasn't too bad; I failed (so far) on content, because I moved away from the house my prototype is in. Much better than education!
- Blog: I spent 50% of the effort towards a first blog ("dLife/dTime") coming up with the name and domain. Then tons of time on basic CSS + blog previews for the site.

Remember how I short-circuited my branding problems yesterday by giving up and calling it "Brennan's Blog"? I proceeded to spend 6+ hours improving the website CSS and refactoring the entire codebase. What the hell?! Nobody cares about CSS without anything to read, and no reader *ever* cares about nice file structures in the frontend `components` folder! If I kill my branding deliberations only to do that kind of crap, I'm just picking a different version of the *same exact problem*.

Earlier today I decided that all my projects will be called "Project [Word/Name]" until they meet a certain threshold of success. Then I proceeded to obsess over even that infinitesimal branding!! No. I've lost my style privileges. All projects will be "Project # (where # ascends as I embark on more projects)." Their websites will be subdomains of brennancolberg.com, and made of dead-simple CSS in grayscale HTML, hosted on Next.js websites with reference to a template I'll make no sooner than having 3 different projects be successful enough to be worth branding. Hopefully, that'll take at least a year. Good lord—my mind jumped straight into wanting to create that framework **TODAY**! NO: DO THINGS FAST & MANUALLY, BRENNAN

(Hey, that sounds familiar: "do things that don't scale." I truly am standing on the shoulders of giants—especially one big one named Paul Graham)

There is literally no reason I can imagine to do branding and detailed CSS before you have people using your product. Why refine the look of a website that nobody uses? Why make a flashy, catchy logo & name if you have nothing good to sell? Style should only be refined once it has content to make more appealing—you can't make a nonexistent product desirable or easier to use.

Why do I do it? Two reasons: an unhealthy obsession with efficiency that leads inevitably to premature optimization, and the fact that my ego *really* likes feeling part of something impressive-looking.

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