Date: 4/16/06

To: Dr. Carol Johnson

From: Karen Prieto, ENG606

Subject: Proposal for Web Site Production

This proposal describes the planned design and development schedule for my class web site, which is due on May 7. At this point, all site pages are created with partial content, and linked. I will finalize page content over the next couple weeks. This proposal covers several topics:

Note:

This memo's organization is based on a proposal structure designed by
Dr. John Killoran at the University of Colorado (2005).

Introduction

Evelyn George creates and sells stained glass through her small business, Fantasy Glassworks. Most of her sales are conducted at craft shows in central New Jersey. The work is a hobby. The sales cover Evelyn's costs and boost her feelings of self-worth.

Unfortunately, craft show turnout has been declining along with stained glass sales. At some shows, Evelyn earns barely enough to cover her table fee. Also, since Evelyn's products are fragile, they require special handling, so packing and unpacking for a show takes a lot of effort. Evelyn would benefit from another method of displaying and selling her stained glass products.

Therefore, the purpose of my web site is to increase Evelyn's stained glass sales by increasing product exposure. This web site will describe available products and styles so that people can visually select what they want, as well as see possibilities for other purchases. The site may also be a valuable follow-up tool for craft show visitors who express interest, but do not buy at the show.

Feasibility

Evelyn is skeptical about web sales, primarily because of the hazards of shipping fragile items. Due to the time and effort she invests in each piece, the cost of a damaged shipment includes an emotional component.

But Evelyn is skilled at packing and has successfully shipped her stained glass in the past. And she is used to driving through New Jersey on her way to various craft shows. So the web site can begin by targeting local sales.

To give Evelyn more control of shipping concerns, the site will not include an e-commerce function. Customers will be advised to contact Evelyn directly to make delivery or pickup arrangements, as well as to fine-tune the specifications for purchased items.

Audience

The site's primary audience are people who visit the site based on a business card or brochure from Evelyn's craft show tables. A secondary audience are people referred by search engines, whose search criteria match the site's key phrases.

According to Shari Thurow in *Search Engine Visibility* (49-50), key phrases should reflect terms that potential customers are searching for, and should include common abbreviations, misspellings, and synonyms. Targeted key phrases for Fantasy Glassworks include variations and combinations of these terms:

- stained glass
- gifts
- décor
- crafts
- hand-made
- made in usa
- new jersey

Content

In *The Online Copywriter's Handbook*, Robert Bly (7) describes how to provide information about a product:

> "Present in a clear, concise, yet compelling fashion, the information your customer needs in order to make a decision about whether to buy. Give the product's key features and benefits, and respond to the buyer's questions and objections."

Descriptions will include each product's dimensions, color options, and price. Product photographs will be presented in jpg format. The site will emphasize Evelyn's work with three-dimensional pieces, which seems to be her niche. Instead of a shopping cart, the site will provide instructions for contacting Evelyn and placing orders.

In addition to product and ordering information, the site will include a few short articles about the process of working with stained glass. While this section may be interesting to human visitors, its primary purpose is for search engine visibility, since the additional keyword content may help attract spiders and directory listings.

Text on each page will be divided by sub-headings where appropriate to support scannability, as suggested by both Jakob Nielsen in *Designing Web Usability* (104) and Wendy Peck in *Great Web Typography* (15). Paragraphs will be written using inverted pyramid structure, which is also recommended by Nielson (111).

Design

All pages have a white background with a 20-pixel external border of dark yellow, #f0e68c. *Figure 1* on page 3 shows the design of the home page.
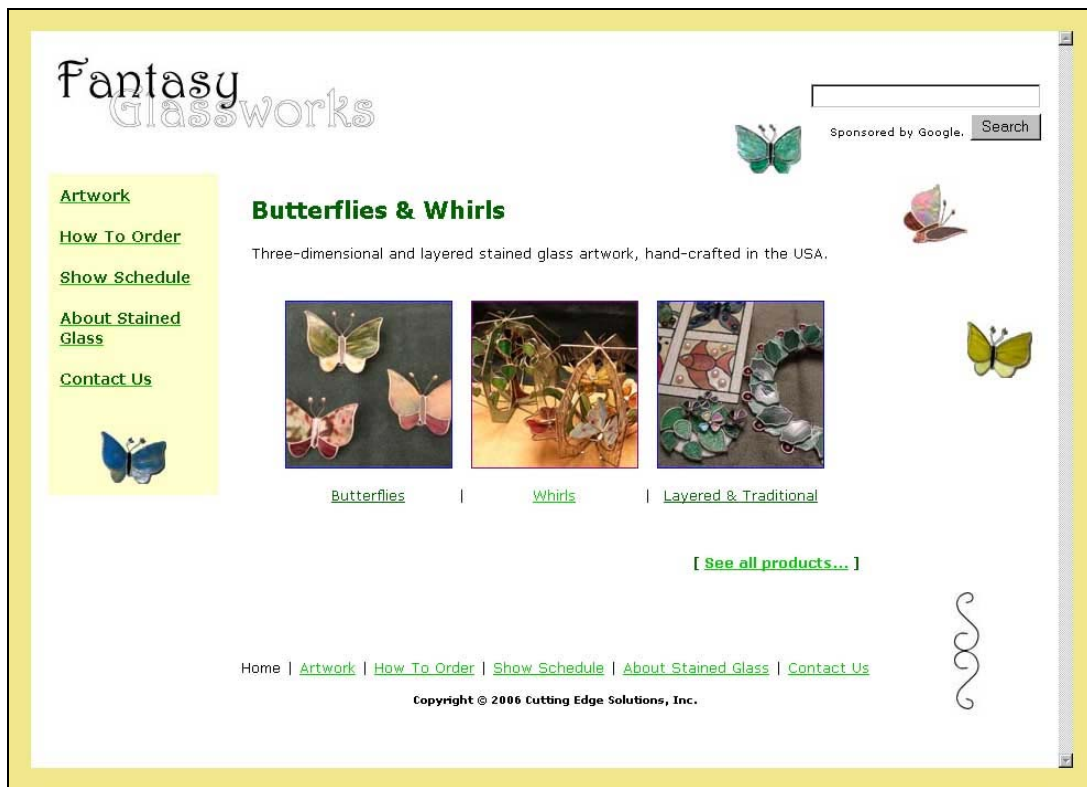
Figure 1   Fantasy Glassworks Home Page

Navigation System

Nielsen (188) states that a site's navigation system should answer these questions for site visitors:

- "Where am I?

- Where have I been?

- Where can I go?"

According to Steve Krug (62), persistent, or global, navigation should include these five elements:

- The site's name or logo

- A link to the home page

- A search tool

- Links to the site's major sections

- Links to the site's utilities

    (Per Krug (65), utilities are "important elements of the site that aren't really part of the content hierarchy.")

Both Krug and Nielsen recommend including a search tool in site navigation because, according to Nielsen (224), over 50% of web users are "search-dominant," while only 20% of web users navigate solely by clicking links, or "browsing," as Krug calls it (54).

Therefore my site's global navigation includes a prominently-displayed logo, a **Search** field, and hyperlinks to pages on the second level of the site (see *Figure 5 - Page Structure* on page 6). (The site does not have any utility pages.)

The logo links to the home page on every page except *Home* itself. The **Search** field will provide a simple search only, since Nielsen (227) reports that most web users don't know how to conduct Boolean searches, nor how to successfully re-work their queries.

The navigation links are hypertext, rather than images or menus, because Thurow (94) recommends using hypertext for a site's global navigation to increase search engine visibility. Thurow notes that search spiders can follow text links easily, and that search engines often assign higher relevance to hyperlink anchor text. She also observes that hypertext navigation has usability benefits because visitors intuitively understand the difference between visited and unvisited link colors (91).

Primary navigation links appear on all pages. The site's secondary navigation - links to pages on the third level - display on only on "parent" pages and third-level pages.

Page Layout

All tables use relative widths to ensure that visitors do not need to scroll horizontally. Nielsen (174) stresses the importance of a page layout that adapts to various resolutions, monitor sizes, and window sizes. When completed, paragraphs will span no more than 70% of the page, since Peck (15-16) recommends using columns to achieve shorter, more comfortable line lengths.

Elements of the navigation system are arranged with decorative accents to achieve a balanced look and feel. According to Richard Johnson-Sheehan (195),

> "Balance is perhaps the most prominent feature of design in technical
>
> documents. On a balanced page or screen, the design features should
>
> offset each other to create a feeling of stability."

Peck (24-25) also promotes the importance of page balance, stating that balance is influenced by the placement, size, and color of both text and images.

Therefore the Fantasy Glassworks logo displays in the top left corner, opposed by the **Search** field in the top right corner, and balanced diagonally by decorative scrollwork in the bottom right corner (*Figure 2*).

◄ *The logo appears at the top left of the page…*

…balanced by scrollwork at the bottom right. ➤

Figure 2   Top & Bottom Corners

Peck (21) observes, "Your font choice creates a mood for your page. That your look and feel of the page matches the intended message is still important". The logo font is Harrington 42 pt, with "Glassworks" in bold outline. The curly serifs of the Harrington font are suggestive of the word "fantasy," while being fully-legible. The outline effect for the word "Glassworks" suggests transparency, which meshes with the site's topic.

Primary and secondary navigation links appear in a pale yellow, #ffffcc, box along the left side of the page. This box has a 4 point margin, since Peck insists that text needs "room to breathe" (14). The navigation links are balanced diagonally by small butterfly images in the top right corner, below the **Search** field. These butterflies are in turn balanced by a single butterfly image below the global navigation (*Figure 3*).
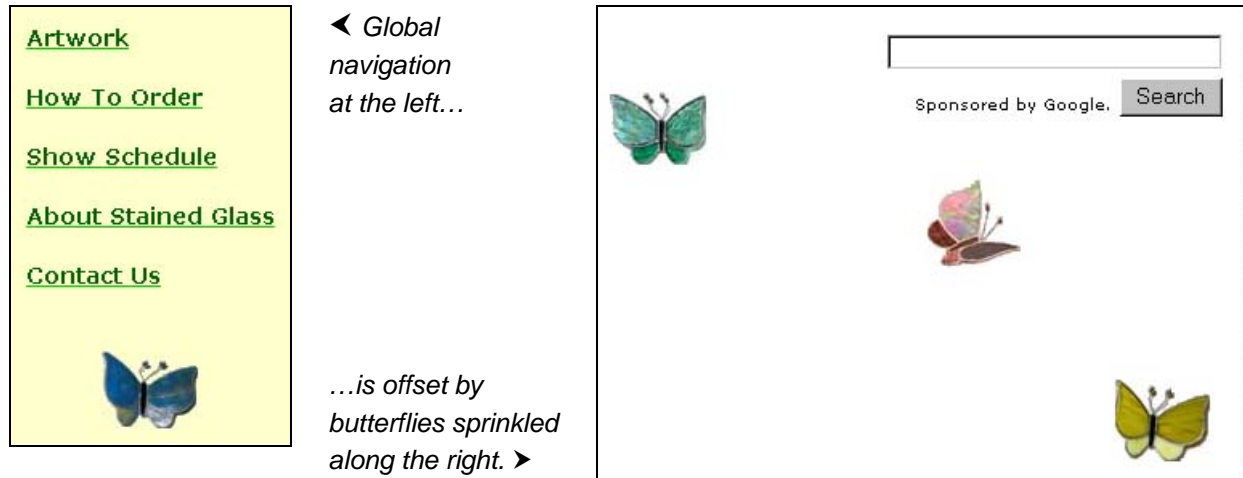
◄ *Global navigation at the left…*

…is offset by butterflies sprinkled along the right. ➤

Figure 3   Navigation & Decoration

The primary navigation links are echoed in small text along the bottom of the page, as Peck also advises (39), followed by copyright information (*Figure 4*).

Figure 4   Footer

Text Styles

Site text is formatted as described in *Table 1* below. I chose a sans-serif font for both headings and bodytext because both Nielsen (126) and Peck (7) indicate that san-serif fonts are easier to read on computer screens. Peck goes on to suggest that each page should not use any more than two font families (14). Peck and Nielsen also agree that high-contrast colors (Peck 22-23, Nielsen 125) and a comfortably-readable text size are important (Peck 24, Nielsen 126).

Table 1   Formatting

Headings		Bodytext	
Font:	Verdana, Arial, sans-serif	Font:	Verdana, Arial, sans-serif
Size:	~21 / 16 / 13 px	Size:	~13 px
Style:	Bold	Style:	None
Color:	Medium green, #006400	Color:	Black, #000000

Level one headings will be presented as GIF images, since HTML text is not anti-aliased (Peck 11).

Navigation Links			Hyperlinks		
Font:	Verdana, Arial, sans-serif		Link:	Medium green, #006400	
Size:	~14 px		Active:	Light green, #66FF66	
Style:	Bold		Visited:	Bright green, #00CC00	
Color:	Same as headings.		Hover:	Light green, #66FF66	

Secondary navigation links are indented.

Storyboard

Structure

Figure 5 shows the site's pages and their hierarchical relationships. According to Bly (15), internet users dislike reading long pages of text. Bly and Nielsen agree that online copy is more effective when presented as small chunks of information (Nielsen 112).
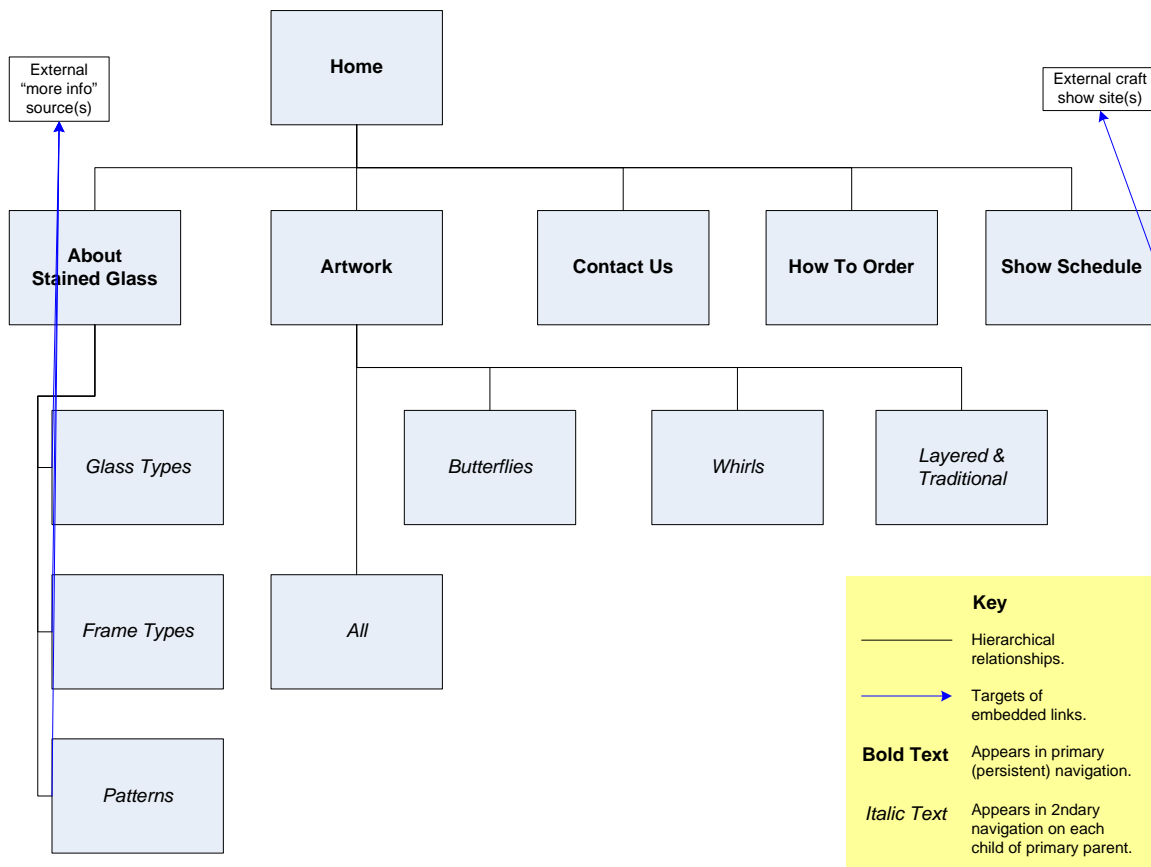

Figure 5   Page Structure

Rather than listing all of Evelyn's products on the Artwork page, I display each category of product (Butterflies, Whirls, Layered & Traditional) on a separate page. I use the same "chunking" method for the *About Stained Glass* section of the site. However, I include an *Artwork> All* page to allow visitors to easily compare products, as suggested by Nielsen (215).

The *Contact Us* and *How To Order* pages were originally combined on a single *Ordering & Contact Information* page, since the ordering process is simply to contact Evelyn. But I subsequently split these two topics based on an informal usability review. My reviewer advised me, "If I'm looking for contact information, I don't want to click something that says 'ordering,' and vice versa" (Prieto). Nielsen (198) supports my reviewer's advice:

> "The site structure should be determined by the tasks users want to
>
> perform on your site… It is often necessary to distribute information from a
>
> single department across two or more parts of the site…"

Figure 6 shows how the pages are connected via embedded links. These links allow users to instantly jump deeper into the site from the Home page, and allows some lateral movement within the hierarchy. These links will also help ensure that search spiders reach the site's deepest level.
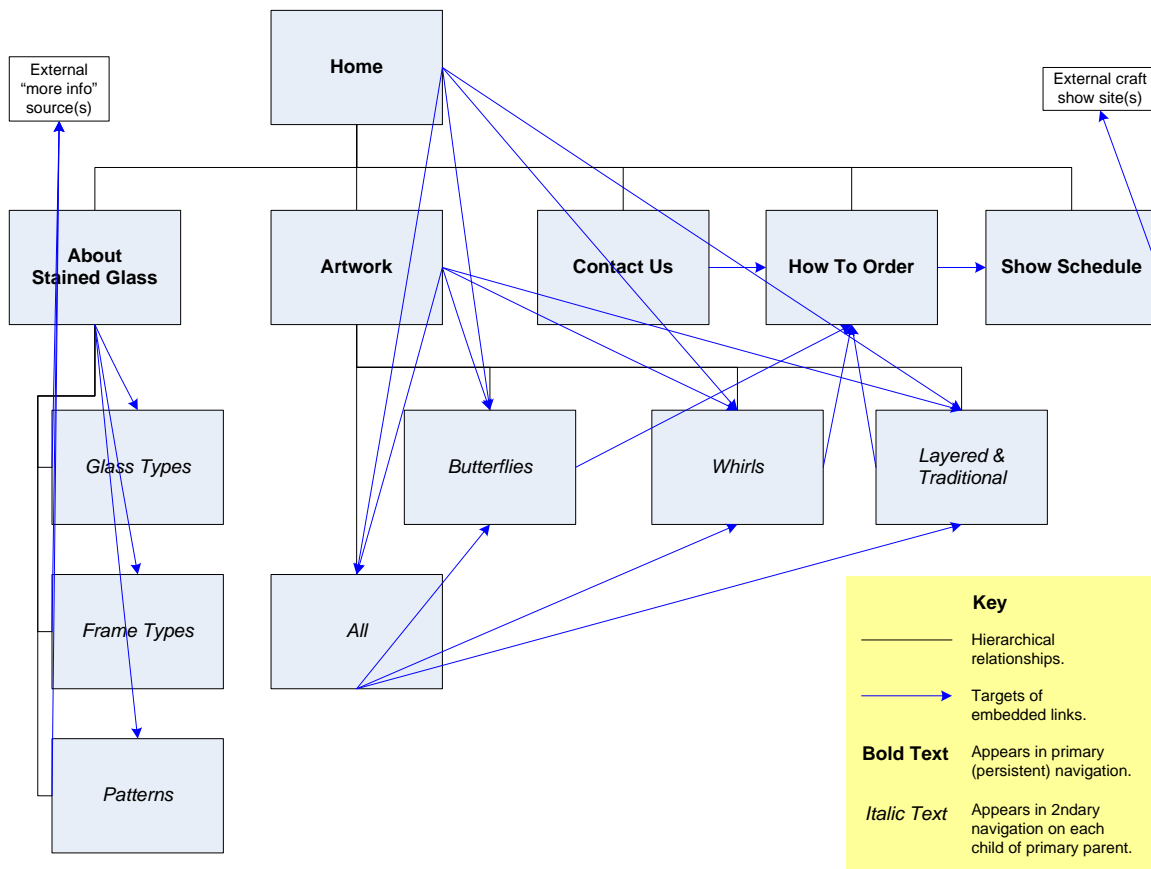

Figure 6   Page Structure with Internal Links

Page Descriptions

1.   Home   /index.html

Title:	Stained Glass Art, 3D & Layered, by Fantasy Glassworks
Header:	Butterflies & Whirls
Purpose:	Catch visitors' interest & send them to the products pages.
Text:	"Three-dimensional and layered stained glass artwork, hand-crafted in the USA."
Images:	Three images, in a row below the text, that show examples of the three product categories: Butterflies, Whirls, Layered & Traditional.
Embedded Links:	Each image links to the corresponding [level 3] product category page (2.1, 2.2, 2.3). Linked captions below each image does the same.
	Another text link "See all products…" appears below the image captions, targeted to a listing of all products (2.4).

2.   Artwork   /artwork.html

Title:	Stained Glass Art, 3D & Layered, by Fantasy Glassworks
Header:	Artwork
Purpose:	Introduce the three categories of products, & provide lower-level links.
Text:	Briefly describe each category: Butterflies, Whirls, Layered & Traditional.
Images:	The same product images as on the home page, but arranged vertically. Possibly a few photographs of products in context as well – e.g. hanging from a ceiling or attached to a window.
Embedded Links:	Links to each product category page (2.1, 2.2, 2.3).

2.1   Butterflies   /artwork_butterflies.html

Title:	Butterfly 3D Stained Glass Art by Fantasy Glassworks
Header:	Butterflies
Purpose:	Describe butterfly products & pricing.
Text:	Sample color schemes. 4"x3.5"x2.25" $12.00. Emphasize "great gift"-ness.
Images:	Photos of sample butterflies from various angles.
Embedded Links:	How To Order (3).

2.2 **Whirls** /artwork_whirls.html

Title:	"Whirls" - Tree & Floral 3D Stained Glass Art by Fantasy Glassworks
Header:	Whirls
Purpose:	Describe whirl types, and colors, & provide link to ordering info.
Text:	Tree whirls: Sizes - Large (9.25 x 6.25 x 9.25), Small (7.25 x 4.25 x 7.25). Sample color schemes. $88, $58.
	Floral whirls: Sizes - Large (9.25 x 6.25 x 9.25), Small (7.25 x 4.25 x 7.25). Sample color schemes. $95, $75.
Images:	Photos of each whirl from multiple angles with neutral backgrounds.
Embedded Links:	How To Order (3).

2.3 **Layered & Traditional** /artwork_layered.html

Title:	Stained Glass Art, 3D & Layered, by Fantasy Glassworks
Header:	Layered & Traditional Stained Glass
Purpose:	Describe various "flat" pieces, & provide link to ordering info.
Text:	Holly Wreath: Description & price. Reversible. 12.5" diameter.
	Violets: Description & price. 5.5"x5.75"
	Critter Squares: Description & price. 12"x12"
	Rose: Description & price. 6"x8.5"]
Images:	Photo of each flat piece with neutral background.
Embedded Links:	How To Order (3).

2.4 **All** /artwork_all.html

Title:	All 3D & Layered Stained Glass Art by Fantasy Glassworks
Header:	All Stained Glass Artwork
Purpose:	Provide a list of all products sorted by price, with links to detailed information.
Text:	Name, price, and brief description of each item variety.
Images:	Thumbnail of each item type.
Embedded Links:	Each name and thumbnail link to the appropriate product detail page (2.1, 2.2, 2.3)

3. How To Order /ordering.html

Title:	Ordering Information for Fantasy Glassworks
Header:	How To Order
Purpose:	Clearly state options for ordering.
Text:	To order, call or email for callback. Ref Contacts page. Caution against transmitting payment info via email.
	Pickup: Pick up at craft show or arrange for pickup at another location.
	Delivery: Call for shipping quote or drop-off (Southern NJ only). For a list of upcoming craft shows, please refer to Show Schedule.
Images:	None
Embedded Links:	Link to the Show Schedule page ([4](#4)).

4. Show Schedule /show_schedule.html

Title:	Scheduled Craft Shows for Fantasy Glassworks
Header:	Craft Show Schedule
Purpose:	Information about Evelyn's scheduled craft show appearances.
Text:	"Next Show," with location, schedule, and detailed directions.
	List of location & schedule for other planned shows.
Images:	None.
Embedded Links:	External links to specific craft show web sites (if available).

5. About Stained Glass /about_glass.html

Title:	Stained Glass Creation Techniques - Fantasy Glassworks
Header:	About Stained Glass
Purpose:	Increase site's keyword weight for improved search rankings.
Text:	How Is Stained Glass Artwork Created? Describe the step-by-step process of working with stained glass, with emphasis on 3D pieces.
Images:	Supporting pictures as available/ appropriate.
Embedded Links:	Links to supporting topics ([5.1](#5.1), [5.2](#5.2), [5.3](#5.3)).

5.1   Glass Types   /about_glass_types.html

      Title: Types of Stained Glass - Fantasy Glassworks

      Header: Types Of Stained Glass

      Purpose: Increase site's keyword weight for improved search rankings.

      Text: Describe types of glass (e.g. weights, colors, textures) and how they are obtained/ selected.

      Images: Supporting pictures as available/ appropriate.

Embedded Links: External links to web site(s) with more information.

5.2   Frame Types   /about_glass_frames.html

      Title: Types of Metal Frames for Stained Glass - Fantasy Glassworks

      Header: Types Of Frames

      Purpose: Increase site's keyword weight for improved search rankings.

      Text: Describe types of frame metals (i.e. pewter versus lead) and their functions.

      Images: Supporting pictures as available/ appropriate.

Embedded Links: External links to web site(s) with more information.

5.3   Patterns   /about_glass_patterns.html

      Title: Using Patterns for Stained Glass - Fantasy Glassworks

      Header: Stained Glass Patterns

      Purpose: Increase site's keyword weight for improved search rankings.

      Text: Describe the use of patterns and how they are obtained/ selected.

      Images: Supporting pictures as available/ appropriate.

Embedded Links: External links to web site(s) with more information.

6.   Contact Us   /contacts.html

      Title: Contact Information for Fantasy Glassworks

      Header: Contact Us

      Purpose: Provide pertinent contact info.

Text: For artwork questions, please email Evelyn, or call her at 732-657-8584.

For website technical issues, please email the webmaster.

For ordering information, refer to How To Order.

Images: None

Embedded Links: Mailto links and link to How To Order page ([3](#)).

Methods & Resources

I am preparing product content by taking digital photos of Evelyn's pieces and writing brief descriptions of their characteristics. I am preparing content about working with stained glass by researching the topic on the internet, and summarizing my findings. I will cite or link to external sites as appropriate.

All HTML content is generated using Macromedia® HomeSite® 5.5. Text styles are driven by an external cascading style sheet (CSS). CSS is recommended by Peck (9):

> "CSS-defined style uses far less code… [C]ontrolling fonts with CSS also
>
> saves a great deal of time for the designer, and provides consistency
>
> throughout your site."

In *Cascading Style Sheets – The Definitive Guide*, Eric Meyer also advocates CSS, listing several benefits. According to Meyer (3-7), CSS:

- Allows more sophisticated design,

- Is easier to use,

- Can be applied to multiple pages,

- Accommodates conflicting rules between the author, the browser, and the reader, and

- Promotes smaller file sizes.

Photographs and images are prepared with Adobe® PhotoShop® 7.0. The site's search function will be provided by Google™ [Free SiteSearch](#). The site is temporarily hosted in the [GeoCities domain](#) until Evelyn can arrange for a domain name and hosting provider.

Development Schedule

Release 0.1 of the web site (already in place) includes all site pages and global images. Most pages have placeholder text, but these pages are complete:

- Home

- Artwork

- Contact Us.

For Release 0.2, in late April, all pages will be complete, except those in the *About Stained Glass* section. By May 7th, all content will be in place for Release 1.0.

Maintenance

Once the site is launched, it will require two maintenance activities:

- Updates to the craft show schedule page, to highlight and provide directions for the next scheduled show. This activity will keep the craft show page "fresh," and show some movement to returning visitors.

- Additions and updates to listed products, as needed.

Conclusion

If you have any comments or suggestions, I would welcome them. If needed, please contact me by email at kmp22@njit.org. Thank you.

Works Cited

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