

Most Anticipated of 2006
Best New Site
Best Redesign
Best Design
Best Designer
Best Web Development Tool
Best Application
Best Weblog(s)
Site of the Year
Best Overall
About the Awards

Clips of the Daily Show and SNL's [Lazy Sunday](#) may be what made YouTube popular, but content from its diverse user base and unexpected gems are what make it great. Case in point: [Chad Vader: Night Shift Manager](#). Now spun off into its own universe you can access Chad Vader and other great content at [splu.net](#).

If you haven't seen [episode I](#), [episode II](#), [episode III](#) or [episode IV](#) you might not understand why waiting for future episodes is so exciting, but even if you're not a Star Wars fan, you can probably still appreciate the humor and polish of the series.

[Screencasts](#), [blog posts](#), [blog posts on screencasts](#) -- when [37signals](#) launches a feature upgrade, it's an event. It's also an exercise in waiting. Not to be deterred -- or maybe it would be better to say hastened -- by deadlines and specific launch dates, 37signals are masters of anticipation and the release of recent [Backpack](#) features are no exception. It doesn't hurt that the final product is a yet more proof of the attention to detail, restraint and execution that goes into each member in the 37signals family of products.

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[DFCKR](#) was launched late in 2006 but it already has provided loads of fresh and original

design-related content. Even though the creator of the site, Alex Giron, is still keeping the CSS gallery [CSS Beauty](#) alive and kicking ass, [DFCKR](#) gives visitors a taste of design concepts from across a broad spectrum of media. The contrast of [DFCKR](#) and CSS Beauty is extremely important because as galleries have waned in popularity and layouts homogenized across the board for web design, but that doesn't mean other areas of design have stopped producing compelling and attractive works. If the CSS gallery sites are to move forward, the designers must move forward and [DFCKR](#) is just the site to get those neurons popping with excitement again.

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In March of 2006 designer [Veerle Pieters](#) launched one of the most remarkable redesigns in the last few years and lit the drowsy web on fire with her use of color, typography, and detail. Rich, glorious details littered throughout her entire [blog](#) show how even the smallest aspect of the site was given copious attention.

The best part is that throughout the year -- and the existence of her blog -- she's even taken the time to write detailed tutorials how to create the effects that make those details dramatic and attractive.

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I realize there's a relationship between this year's best design and [last year's best design](#) in uber-talented designer [Khoi Vin](#), but while he is the [NYTimes](#)' Design Director, he wasn't totally responsible for the redesign that occurred to the site in March of this year. However, the rich detail and fantastic execution of the pulling together the mountain of content that has been taking place since that time has his design hallmarks interweaved.

Knowing how much I don't know about dealing with large organizations, massive amounts of content and bureaucracy; having the end product being so complete, detailed and well-executed the entire team involved deserves that much more credit for this beautiful site.

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You can find designers who are [great at layouts](#), you can find designers who make [kick-ass icons](#), you can find designers who are fantastic at typography but rarely do you find all that in one

individual. [Dan Cederholm](#) is one such super-designer. This year he's redesigned [SimpleBits](#), into yet another stellar design, he's worked on such beautiful sites as [Cork'd](#), created a gorgeous logo for [TravelPost.com](#), and even XHTML/CSS development for [MTV.com](#). Then, there is also his icon shop, featuring the clever and useful [Chameleon icon set](#) -- simple customizable icons you can color match to your products.

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I swapped out the best web application category for a best web tool category because to produce a great web application you must build it upon a solid framework. Now, if you then make that framework intelligent and flexible you can make a truly remarkable web application. For the client side, [Prototype](#) is about the smartest tool you can use to make this happen. As soon as you find some good documentation (I recommend going [here first](#), and [then here](#)) you can dive right in and peel back any mystery surrounding AJAX. Looking at the code and implementation when using Prototype, you might just say out loud, "damn, that's so smart, this is insane..."

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With the explosion of so much great audio and video content available this year, where would we be without [Flash Pro's](#) video encoding?

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[Cute Overload](#) has not failed at cheering me up during some tense times this year and with a category like [cats & racks](#), you really can't help but enjoy the overwhelming personality of the site. I mean, [look at that kitten on the left, totally spooked!](#) Hahaha.

You will likely see this site receive lots and lots of praise and it's earned it by culling through the cute to provide near-daily updates of funny, surprising, and impossibly cute pictures.

[Waiter Rant](#) will probably lead you to overanalyze every interaction you've ever had (or will ever have) with your waiter if you don't already, but it's fascinating to read about the experiences of

this anonymous waiter working at an upscale restaurant. Topics like bad tipping reach far beyond typical clichés when written with the author's imaginative style and interesting perspective.

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Ask MetaFilter wasn't launched in 2006 but it certainly came into its own this year. Fueled by the unique MetaFilter community, it's seen as many clever and interesting questions as it has answers. I mean, what kind of conversation can occur by asking a simple question: Why is the opening at the front of men's briefs still there if it's rarely used?

In the new social web 2.0h, lots and lots of sites will fail because the community itself won't grow roots -- I dunno what magic concoction goes into cultivating a truly remarkable community but Matt Haughey, creator of several popular community-based sites does and Ask MetaFilter is one of the best.

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One of the best things about working on these awards is the ability to honor folks who I have a deep amount of respect for in an arena that's separate from my daily blog and unambiguous in terms of purpose. It is freeing to be able to step outside of everything when working on these awards but picking the winner for Best Overall is a particular challenge especially when you consider the caliber of last year's winner: 37signals.

But this year Firewheel Design has been a clear standout in terms of work produced and quality of those products. This talented group of designers and developers has had a great year in 2006. After launching the IconBuffet free delivery service at the end of November 2005 and managing its exploding popularity in 2006, then came a mid-year upgrade to their beautiful Blinksale invoicing application, and then creation of the playful DSicons.com. And this is only their in-house work.

The Firewheel staff has expanded in 2006, too; bringing in some huge talent in the forms of Keegan Jones and Scott Raymond -- two names you probably already recognize, but the entire team should be congratulated on their hard work.

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Last year was ripe with excitement and I set out to capture the feel of that year with the [2005 artypapers AWARDS](#). For this year's [2006 Artypapers Awards](#), that goal remains the same. Some categories got reworked, some winners are probably not what you would expect, but these awards still capture what I truly thought was the best of the web this year.

My name is [R. Marie Cox](#) and [Artypapers, LLC](#) is my company; it provides such web application services as [Side Job Track](#) and still in development [Pro Job Track](#), SJT's big sister. I'm still not qualified to give out awards, but don't let that stop you from enjoying the site's I've linked to and making your own judgments.

If you're interested in downloading and linking to this page with a button, select an appropriate button below:

2006 Artypapers Awards Buttons



The image displays three different button designs for the 2006 Artypapers Awards. The first button is a large red '06' with a green heart above it, and the text 'artypapers awards' below. The second is a smaller version of the same. The third is a rectangular button with a green heart above a red '06', the text 'artypapers award' to the right, and 'WINNER' in red below. A gold heart icon is also present between the second and third buttons.

Please upload these images to your server if you choose to use them -- do not link to them directly.

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