

Request for Proposals: APC visual identity redesign

September 19, 2014

Project summary

The Association for Progressive Communications (APC) is a worldwide network supporting the use of internet and information and communications technology (ICT) for social justice and sustainable development since 1990. For our 25th anniversary in 2015, we are looking to redesign our entire visual identity with the following goals in mind:

- A visual identity that conveys APC's values and characteristics as an international network of activists and organisations using the internet for social justice and sustainable development.
- Include input from APC staff and network members (about 100 individuals).
- Achieve a look and feel that retains the essence of APC's past, while embodying the present.
- A design that works well across digital and print platforms, including brochures, websites, books/ebooks, avatars, business cards, stickers, T-shirts.

Organisation overview

APC is both a network and an organisation. Our strength comes from the diversity of our membership and staff, and their combined knowledge and experience of promoting and using ICTs at local, national and regional levels. Through both our members and staff who are located in different parts of the world, APC gains local perspectives, contact with grassroots organisations and insights from engagement with national policy makers that we integrate into our regional and global work.

The APC network is comprised of 46 organisations and 21 individuals representing 38 countries spanning 6 continents. We communicate in English, Spanish and French using (and sometimes developing) free/libre and open source software whenever possible.

In addition to its network aspect, APC is an organisation with its own programme structure. APC has a staff of 30, some of whom work part-time for APC and part-time on other work, including for member organisations. Staff members are located in Argentina, Canada, Cote d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Africa, the United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay. APC staff work in two programme areas: Communications and Information Policy (CIPP) and Women's Rights (WRP).

APC's mission

The Association for Progressive Communications is a global network of civil society organisations whose mission is to empower and support organisations, social movements and individuals in and through the use of information and communication technologies to build strategic communities and initiatives for the purpose of making meaningful contributions to equitable human development, social justice, participatory political processes and environmental sustainability.

APC's vision

All people have easy and affordable access to a free and open internet to improve their lives and create a more just world.

APC's values and guiding principles

APC members are bound together by common values. Since our official founding in 1990, the network has developed guiding principles that we endeavour to integrate into all our activities.

APC is committed to working through:

Decentralised action

Sharing information and tools in the public domain

Having a strong global south base and orientation

Creating and strengthening an international membership community for joint action and learning.

We value:

Local initiative and ownership

Freedom of expression, communications and information

Open content and open standards

Free and open source software

Social equality and gender equality

Collaboration and partnership

Inclusiveness and diversity

Creativity and capacity building

Democratic, accountable and transparent governance

ICT solutions that are appropriate and affordable.

Project goals and deliverables

Required: A designer must be prepared to achieve these four goals:

1. We are looking for more than a refresh, but not a complete overhaul either.

APC's current visual identity was first created in 2001. A refresh was done in 2006 along with the launch of our current site APC.org. Additionally, for our 20th anniversary we developed a special visual identity for all of our promotional materials (the website theme did not change).

2. A strong proposal will outline a process for gathering both general and targeted feedback.

Since APC is a diverse network, we have many stakeholders who should be involved in decisions about our new visual identity.

3. We want our new logo to honour our history and value our evolution.

In other words, our audiences should still recognise us with a new logo. The logo should be standardised in three variations: With “APC”, with “Association for Progressive Communications” (in English, Spanish, and French), and with no text in full colour, black and white and as a watermark.

4. An overall style guide should be clear and comprehensive.

In case you are not able to design all of our materials, your style guide should be complete and clear enough to ensure consistency.

Optional: In addition, strong candidates will be able to themselves produce many of the materials required to fully migrate to a new visual identity. A redesign of APC's visual identity impacts the following four areas of our communications.

Stationary and promotional materials

These items are varied and include social media profile pictures and banners, fax covers, letterhead, business cards, HTML newsletter templates, t-shirts, animated logo for films.

Publications

Issue papers, briefs and even books require consistent format and style.

Websites

The main APC website is very robust. Without modifying functionality, we need a website theme that is consistent with our new visual identity. Our main website is currently Drupal (6) but we also have HTML sites, Wordpress, MediaWiki, TikiWiki, Drupal 7 and mobile apps and we would like them all to have a consistent look. In addition to a main, robust Drupal 7 theme, creation of a slim Bootstrap theme could achieve all of our objectives.

Infographics

While each infographic is a unique publications, we want some degree of consistency between them. Very basic style guidelines (fonts, logo placement, footer design) or an ongoing commitment to produce infographics as we need them would be another valuable asset.

Target audience and users

Our audience is international and multilingual, made up of policy advocates, human rights and social justice activists, feminists, civil society organisations and even government officials.

APC.org is our main, but not our only, vehicle for reaching our audience. It is both an independent media outlet and a platform to increase press coverage.

There are four main users of the website (from narrow to broad): APC staff, our members and partners, funders, and a general audience, which is specifically comprised of activists, technologists/hackers and advocates in our sphere of influence. We describe their interactions with the site below:

1. Staff

Even APC staff get their news about our organisation from our website. Logged in, we organise internal documents. Often, we reference and reuse written and polished text that is available on the website. Other public information that is used as a reference for staff include our members list, current list of projects and staff information.

2. Network members, partners

Members of our network use the website in a similar way to staff. Additionally, APC publishes blog posts, articles and links, making it a robust news website for those closest to us. Members, but not partners, also have access to some internal documents when logged in. The most important part of the website for members and funders are our project pages.

3. Funders

It is important that funders be able to easily find information about APC's current projects, our structure and our members.

4. Advocates, activists, hackers/technologists

All of the website copy is written for a slightly general audience. We don't write for a "general" audience, though we do link sector-specific terminology to a glossary so as to make our

publications as accessible as possible. Our aim is that our news articles and blog posts are the biggest draw for advocates and activists working in or around internet for social justice, though as well our project pages and general organisational and network information are important to this audience.

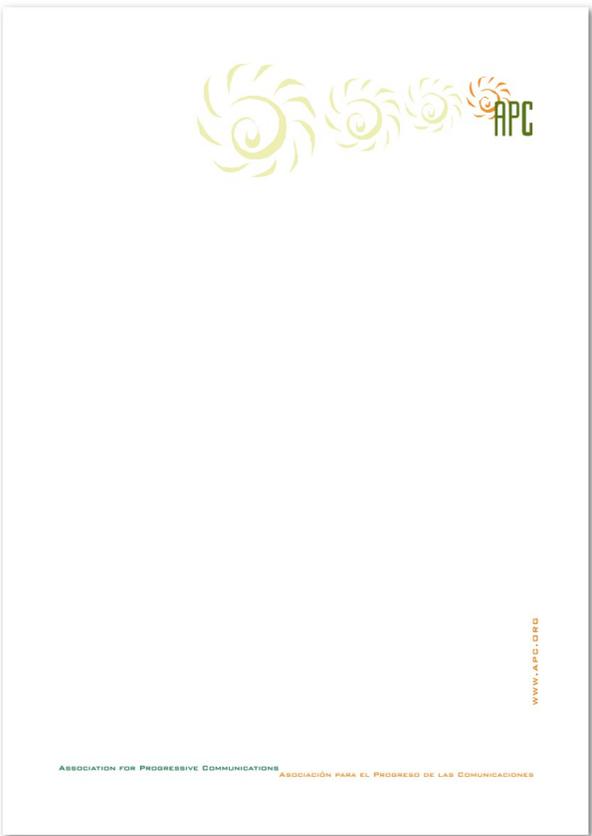
Visual design (look and feel)

Evolution of our visual identity

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| 2001 | 2006 | 2010 | 2011-present |

Assets and existing branding

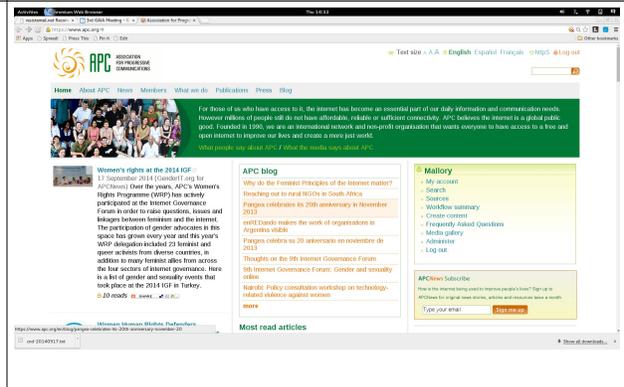
Complete and detailed versions of these assets, style guideline document for issue paper publications and overall visual guidelines are available upon request (see below: *Contact*).

| | |
|------------|---|
| Letterhead |  |
|------------|---|

Business card



Website front page (apc.org)



Linked identities

The following are projects of APC and have their own visual identities:

GISWatch website banner (giswatch.org)



Take Back The Tech logo (takebackthetech.net)



| | |
|--|--|
| EROTICS website banner (erotics.apc.org) |  |
| GenderIT postcard (genderit.org) |  |

Overall appearance guidelines

Imagery and typography should be accessible, inclusive and translate across culture and language. We want high-contrast and balancing colours.

We are looking for an overall design that resonates with our network – a tall order. As mentioned previously under Project Goals, your proposal should address the process to receive initial, broad input from a diverse group (such as a keyword generation exercise).

Technical design requirements

Insofar that the proposal includes these optional deliverables, these design requirements must be considered:

Letterhead

Letterhead templates must be created using open document standards (odt) in both colour and black and white.

General design files

For all modular design files such as business cards and publications layout, files should be completely compatible with free software design programs such as Inkscape or GIMP and use free fonts. Files, except originals or vectors, should be lightweight as possible.

Main and peripheral websites

Like many organisations of our size, APC has several websites for both internal and external use. Often they are Drupal sites. But we also use Wordpress, MediaWiki and Drupal sub-distributions like Atrium and CiviCRM. It should be easy for us to adapt a lightweight version of the main website theme for any CMS.

Ongoing support

There is an opportunity for ongoing work with APC. Often, we contract both design and layout of publications such as issue papers, reports and books. The creation of infographics is an increasingly important need.

Proposed timeline

Deadline for proposals: 30 September 2014

The successful proposal will be notified in October. We'll work together to develop a prioritised timeline to roll out various elements of the new identity.

To submit

Please direct all questions and proposals to:

Mallory Knodel
APC communications manager
mallory@apc.org

Be sure to include:

- Your proposal, addressing all points mentioned in this RFP
- Your ability to meet the project goals and produce deliverables
- Design portfolio that includes both digital and print publications
- One or two references or reviews from a previous client.