

Redesigning Digital Photographic Assets to Optimize Website Presentation at the Faculty of Art and Design Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: The rapid development of digital communication technologies requires higher education institutions to present professional, informative, and visually representative media particularly through institutional websites, which serve as the primary public interface. Preliminary observations indicate that photographic assets displayed on the website of the Faculty of Art and Design Education (FPSD) at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia have not met aesthetic and communicative standards. The majority of images consist of low-quality documentation with minimal digital processing and limited adherence to visual communication and photojournalistic principles, resulting in insufficient representation of institutional identity. This study aims to redesign photographic assets to optimize the visual performance of the FPSD website using a Design Thinking methodology. The research process included the stages of empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test, conducted through website observation, interviews, surveys, and visual quality assessments. Findings reveal that 78.1% of respondents expressed the need for professional-standard photographic production. The prototyping stage produced redesigned photographic assets that fulfilled technical photography standards, visual branding principles, and institutional communication needs. Prototype evaluation demonstrated significant improvements in aesthetic quality, communication effectiveness, and user experience within website display. The study concludes that enhancing photographic assets results not only in better visual aesthetics but also strengthens institutional credibility, professionalism, and authenticity of academic information. Practical implications emphasize the importance of establishing structured guidelines and standardized procedures for documentation and visual asset management in art and design education environments.

KEYWORDS: Digital Communication, Design Thinking, Institutional Website, Photographic Assets, Visual Branding.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed how higher education institutions communicate information and construct institutional identity. Today, institutional websites function as a primary medium of organizational communication because they enable fast, broad, and geographically unrestricted access to information. A university website serves as a dialogic communication space that builds relationships between an institution and its publics [1]. In the context of higher education, this function is particularly crucial since a website reflects professionalism, credibility, and the core values embodied by the institution [2]. As an academic entity in the field of art and design, the Faculty of Art and Design Education (FPSD) at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia is expected to present a strong visual quality aligned with its creative identity. Visual communication plays a key role in conveying messages effectively and aesthetically, making the quality of photographic assets on the institutional website a strategic element in strengthening institutional image and capturing user attention [3].

However, preliminary evaluation indicates that most photographic materials displayed on the FPSD website are of low visual quality, captured using non-professional equipment, and lack proper digital post-processing. Questionnaire findings reveal that 78.1% of respondents believe that reshooting is necessary using professional photographic standards. The issue is further compounded by limited visual documentation competence among those responsible for image production. Many photos fail to adhere to essential aesthetic principles, lighting standards, or visual composition, which diminishes communicative clarity and weakens the intended message. Visual literacy becomes a crucial aspect in producing photographs that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also informative and contextually accurate [4][5]. Within digital media environments, the quality of visual content critically determines communication effectiveness and user experience [6]. Moreover, documentation of academic activities should follow journalistic principles such as 5W+1H to ensure that each photograph carries clear informational value. Yet, findings show that many images

appear aesthetically pleasing but lack communicative relevance because they do not align with the news context or information being delivered. Therefore, the integrity of photographic content in digital communication must be prioritized [7].

Addressing these challenges requires a systematic design-based approach centered on user needs. The Design Thinking approach is considered relevant because it supports creative reframing of problems, enables the development of alternative solutions, and validates concepts through iterative processes [8]. Design Thinking has proven effective in resolving communication and visual barriers through the stages of empathy, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing. In the context of academic visual asset development, this method ensures that photographic outputs achieve high technical standards while remaining informative, meaningful, and representative of each study program's identity. Therefore, this study aims to redesign photographic assets for the FPSD institutional website using professional visual standards that improve communication quality and strengthen institutional branding. This effort is expected to enhance the overall website presentation, reinforce the academic image of FPSD, and serve as a model for visual asset development within art and design education environments.

METHOD

This study employed the Design Thinking approach, a human-centered and iterative problem-solving framework widely used in the development of products, services, and visual media because it enables the creation of innovative solutions grounded in a deep understanding of user needs and contextual challenges [9]. The research process followed the five fundamental phases of Design Thinking: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test to guide the redesign of digital photographic assets for the FPSD institutional website.

The empathize phase focused on understanding the needs, experiences, and challenges faced by website users, including students, lecturers, administrative staff, and website managers. Data were collected through direct observation of the existing FPSD website interface, interviews with website administrators and documentation staff, and an online survey distributed to the academic community of FPSD. This stage generated a comprehensive understanding of the issues related to visual quality, the mismatch between content and communication needs, and constraints regarding equipment and human resources.

In the define phase, the data gathered during empathy were analyzed to identify the core problems requiring targeted solutions. The key issues identified included the poor visual and aesthetic quality of the photographs displayed on the faculty's website, the absence of photojournalistic clarity due to the lack of application of 5W+1H principles, the lack of guidelines or standard operating procedures for photographic documentation, and limited photography competencies among documentation staff. The outcomes of this phase resulted in a problem statement that established a foundation for developing visual solutions that addressed both functional and institutional needs.

During the ideate phase, brainstorming sessions were conducted with the research team, website managers, and representatives of the FPSD community to generate a wide range of alternative visual solutions. This process involved discussions on representative photography concepts for each study program, categorization of required photographic asset types such as facilities, academic activities, environment, achievements, and human resources alongside the development of visual quality standards covering composition, lighting, colour style, and perspective. Considerations regarding the required professional photographic equipment were also discussed to ensure that the solutions proposed could effectively enhance visual representation.

The prototype phase involved producing sample photographic assets based on the concepts generated during the ideation stage. Trial photography sessions were conducted using professional equipment, integrating visual communication principles and photographic aesthetics. Image editing was applied to ensure tonal consistency, lighting balance, and compositional clarity. The prototype assets were then embedded into mock-up website layouts to assess visual integration within actual page environments, providing a tangible preview of their functional and communicative performance.

Finally, the test phase evaluated the prototypes through visual assessments by lecturers and photography practitioners, feedback collection from students, staff, and website managers, and an evaluation of alignment between visual assets and the informational identity of each study program. The results of this evaluation informed iterative improvements to ensure optimal quality before full implementation on the FPSD website. The application of this method enabled the development of digital photographic assets that are not only technically improved, but also relevant, communicative, and representative of the academic and creative identity of the Faculty of Art and Design Education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Initial Condition of Photographic Assets on the FPSD Website

Initial observations indicate that the visual quality of photographic assets displayed on the website of the Faculty of Art and Design Education (FPSD) remains far below aesthetic and communicative standards. Most of the images consist of older documentation captured using low-resolution devices such as outdated smartphones. In addition, many photos appear dark, lack clear focus, display poor composition, and show minimal digital post-processing. This condition not only reduces the overall visual quality of the website but also weakens its role as an informational platform and as a representation of the institutional visual identity of an art and design faculty [10][11]. For a faculty rooted in creativity, such inconsistencies in visual quality represent a fundamental problem, as they directly influence public perception.

B. Survey Findings: The Need for Photographic Asset Improvement

A survey distributed to FPSD stakeholders including lecturers, administrative staff, and students revealed that 78.1% of respondents believe that the photographs on the website must be replaced through professional-quality reshoots. This response indicates that the need for visual improvement is a substantial and widely-recognized issue across FPSD, rather than merely a technical concern viewed from the perspective of web administrators. The desired visual improvement involves not only aesthetic enhancement but also more accurate representation of identity, activities, facilities, and academic strengths of each study program.

C. Analysis of Documentation Competence

Interviews and observations regarding the documentation process demonstrated that most photographs were taken by individuals who lack visual competency or basic photographic knowledge. As a result, the captured images exhibit several weaknesses, including insufficient sensitivity to composition and lighting creating flat or dark images lack of understanding of visual hierarchy, causing key information to be visually unclear, failure to apply journalistic principles such as 5W+1H, leading to non-communicative visuals despite aesthetic appeal, and mismatch between photographed objects and website content needs. These findings indicate that improving photographic asset quality requires not only better equipment but also the enhancement of human resource competence responsible for documentation.

D. Identification of Photographic Asset Requirements

Through contextual analysis and discussions with program administrators, a classification of required photographic asset categories for website enhancement was established. These include building, facility, and classroom photographs; academic and non-academic activity documentation; student work portfolios; portraits of lecturers and administrative staff; and documentation of special events such as workshops, seminars, exhibitions, and art performances. The objective of this research is to produce photographic assets that accurately represent the six study programs within FPSD: Art Education, Dance Education, Music Education, Film and Television, Visual Communication Design, and Music.

E. Prototyping Process of Photographic Assets

In the prototyping phase, the research entered a crucial stage in which visual concepts previously developed during the empathy and ideation phases were transformed into concrete photographic assets. Prototype photographs were produced through professional shooting sessions using high-standard equipment, not only to enhance the technical quality of the images but also to create visuals capable of representing the unique character of each study program within FPSD. The use of high-resolution cameras, lenses with controlled optical characteristics, and studio-grade lighting systems enabled the exploration of various aesthetic approaches, including lighting ratio adjustments, the use of shadow-highlight balance, and the application of visual composition principles such as rule of thirds, leading lines, and depth of field [12]. This photographic process extended beyond technical execution and incorporated visual branding strategies to reinforce the institutional identity of an art and design faculty [13].

From a visual branding perspective, photographs are not merely documentary evidence, but symbolic identity elements. Each photograph communicates institutional values related to professionalism, creativity, and character. Therefore, photo prototyping was directed to position FPSD not only as an academic institution but as a creative, modern, and aesthetically distinguished artistic environment. For instance, when photographing facilities, the images were designed not only to display functional space, but also to depict the atmosphere of creative learning through controlled camera angles, lighting intensity, and visual arrangements that

highlight the strengths of the environment. A similar approach was applied to documenting activities, where the dynamics of learning and academic collaboration were captured through communicative moments that were contextually relevant.



Figure 1. Output of Digital Photographic Assets for the FPSD Website

Following the shooting process, the prototype photographs were integrated into the website interface of the Visual Communication Design study program as a preliminary case application. This integration served as an essential step in evaluating how images function within the context of digital communication. In digital media, photographs do not stand alone; they interact with layout structure, information hierarchy, typography, and user behaviour [14][15]. A photograph that appears strong and compelling during production may lose effectiveness when inserted into an unsupportive web layout, making this stage a critical validation point. When prototype photographs were uploaded, the presence of professional lighting and consistent colour tone produced visual harmony that strengthened the overall cohesion of the website design. High-quality images contributed to a perception of seriousness, modernity, and aesthetic credibility an impression vital for shaping the digital identity of an art faculty.

From a user experience (UX) perspective, professional photography demonstrated a strategic role in directing user focus and enhancing visual comfort when navigating the website [16]. Photographs with strong composition allow users to grasp the intended information more easily, without confusion. The application of visual hierarchy principles supports natural eye movement from one element to another, leading to more intuitive information processing. Consistent colour tone also contributes to a smoother navigation experience, as photos no longer appear as fragmented visual elements but as integral components of the site's identity. This aligns with UX concepts emphasizing that user experience is not only determined by navigational structure but also by the extent to which visual elements support meaning-making and usability [17].

Beyond user experience, the perspective of digital communication highlights that visual quality directly influences the credibility of institutional information. Sharp, well-composed, and contextually relevant photographs enhance the trustworthiness of communicated information, whereas dark, blurry, or contextually ambiguous images weaken institutional perception especially within art-based academic environments. Therefore, the prototype images were designed to prioritize communicative value through the application of journalistic principles such as 5W+1H. For example, photographs of academic activities were developed not only to appear visually appealing but to clearly represent who was involved, what activities were taking place, and where they occurred. This ensures that each image functions as both an informative medium and a visual asset supporting FPSD's identity.

When prototype photographs were evaluated by students, alumni, and academic staff, responses showed strong appreciation for the improvements. Many participants expressed that the website appeared more representative, professional, and aligned with the identity of an art institution. This evaluation reinforces the finding that visual quality is not merely an aesthetic addition but a fundamental component in shaping institutional image, strengthening digital communication, and creating a higher-quality user experience. Positive feedback from multiple user groups demonstrates that the prototype successfully meets institutional needs while establishing new standards for visual documentation within FPSD.



F. Implications of Visual Enhancement on Institutional Image

The improvement of photographic asset quality through a systematic design process generated changes that extended beyond aesthetic enhancement and significantly influenced institutional image as a whole [18][19]. In the context of the Faculty of Art and Design Education, where identity is strongly tied to creativity, aesthetics, and professionalism, visual quality functions as a strategic element in building public perception. As the digital face of the institution, a website requires visual components that accurately reflect artistic and academic competence. When displayed photographs are low-quality, dark, out of focus, or fail to capture academic activities meaningfully, the institution risks being perceived as lacking seriousness in managing its visual communication [20].

Conversely, the research showed that the use of high-quality photographic assets directly strengthens perceptions of institutional professionalism [21]. Photographs captured with appropriate equipment and thoughtful consideration of composition, lighting, and contextual alignment create strong and credible visual representations. This elevates photographs from simple documentation to powerful communication tools that reinforce values, identity, and the strategic positioning of FPSD. Images showcasing modern facilities, active academic processes, student achievements, and creative engagement construct a visual narrative presenting FPSD as a dynamic, progressive academic environment with high standards.

Moreover, representative visuals enhance the authenticity of information delivered through the website [22]. Textual information supported by high-quality images is more easily understood and more persuasive for site visitors. Communicative photographs, particularly those applying journalistic 5W+1H, explain context more clearly than text alone, enabling visitors to feel the institutional atmosphere rather than merely reading about it. Thus, photographs serve as a bridge between the institution and its audience, enriching understanding of institutional identity and academic activity [23].

The integration of professional photographs into the website also significantly improves user experience. Consistent, harmonious, and aesthetically appealing visuals create a more comfortable browsing environment. Attractive visual presentation improves navigational clarity, increases visitor engagement duration, and strengthens the overall effectiveness of institutional communication. A visually cohesive website positions the institution as professional, organized, and trustworthy.

Ultimately, the provision of professional photographic assets not only fulfills technical needs for website improvement but directly contributes to institutional communication strategy and positioning. As a faculty rooted in artistic values, FPSD must reflect this identity through all its communication channels. The presented photographs embody these values demonstrating commitment to quality, detail, creativity, and professionalism. A strong and consistent visual identity helps FPSD position itself as a competent, modern, and competitive institution in the field of art and design education at both national and international levels.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the quality of photographic assets on the website of the Faculty of Art and Design Education (FPSD) plays a critical role in shaping institutional image, strengthening visual communication, and improving user experience in accessing digital information. The findings reveal that most of the previously used photographs did not meet aesthetic or communicative standards due to limitations in documentation equipment and the lack of photographic competence among documentation staff. These conditions reduced the effectiveness of the website as an informational medium and negatively influenced perceptions of institutional professionalism, particularly for a faculty grounded in art and design.

Through the application of the Design Thinking methodology, this research successfully mapped the core problems and developed prototype photographic assets that address the website's visual needs. The sequential stages of empathizing, defining, ideating, prototyping, and testing demonstrated that a human-centered approach can produce visual assets that are not only technically superior but also communicatively relevant, academically representative, and effective in strengthening the visual branding of FPSD. The integration of prototype images into the website interface shows a significant improvement in aesthetic appeal, credibility, and visual comfort. Positive feedback from students, alumni, and academic staff further reinforces that improving visual quality on institutional web pages has a tangible impact on institutional perception and digital engagement.

Overall, this study concludes that the management of photographic assets within higher education should not be carried out casually or merely as routine documentation. Photographs must be intentionally designed, produced, and managed with consideration of aesthetic value, informational function, and institutional visual identity. In the context of FPSD, enhancing photo quality is a strategic step in reinforcing the faculty's position as a leading, creative, and professional institution in art and design



education. These findings provide a strong foundation for establishing visual documentation standards within FPSD and encourage the implementation of more structured and professional documentation practices.

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