

bar-h.org Artist's Statement

Description

Bar-h.org is a website that displays an archive of inside jokes (quotes). Visitors to the site may do any of the following:

- View all quotes sorted by submission date (newest first)
- View all quotes sorted by rank (calculated by votes)
- View all quotes that match a specific tag (category)
- View ten (10) random quotes
- Search for quotes that match specific text or tag(s)
- Browse all tags submitted by others
- Instantly add their own quote(s) with appropriate tag(s)
- Vote on existing quotes (plus or minus, only once per quote per user)

Lecture Topic: Appropriation and Parody

The idea for making a site that let people submit, view, and vote on quotes was appropriated from BASH.org. BASH.org is a site visited mostly by computer savvy people who are bored and want to laugh at the stupidity of others. The parody is that bar-h.org is an archive of pretty exclusive inside jokes only. BASH.org also has a screening process where submissions are reviewed for format, readability, and quality while bar-h.org just puts up whatever automatically.

The name "bar-h" is also a parody. BASH is in all caps and the entire bar-h website (minus parts of some quotes) is in lowercase. "Bar-h" is also "bash" with one letter changed and a dash, as well as the name of the residence hall where a lot of the first quotes were heard and recorded. The reference itself is an inside joke. (Note: I wanted the site to be "barh.org" but that domain name was already registered.)

Artistic/Technical Aspects

The overall feel of the site is minimalist, which I feel is best because I want the focus to be on the content of the quotes with minimal distraction. I tried to give the site a modern feel as well by contrasting the 8pt Verdana font's softness with the sharp edges of rectangular blocks, as you can see in the header image, navigation links, and tag links. As for the quotes, I left the default <pre> tag font of Courier New to give the feeling of someone typing them in on a typewriter (also appropriated from BASH.org).

The color scheme was originally going to be pink/purple/white which I got from giving a reddish hue to my original orange/blue/white scheme. I ended up replacing the pink with green because I thought it looked sleeker, plus the tag links at the end of each quote looked best in green because I kept thinking of the style of the site that is built on tagging blogs (technorati.com).

As for the technical end, the site was coded largely in PHP, which handled the quotes' submission into the MySQL database as well as generating pretty much all of the HTML content. The site's style and structure was handled via a single CSS stylesheet (style.css). It is best viewed in the latest version of Firefox, but works just fine in any modern browser.

Revisions

Since it was critiqued on May 3rd 2006, I have made one major change and several minor ones. The major change is the addition of a full text search in the navigation. Previously if someone wanted to find a quote they had to rely on it being logically tagged, but now they can search for any word or phrase that is contained somewhere in a quote text or tags and the quote will be displayed in the search results page.

Minor changes include some style changes of the pagination and sorting links, a few style changes in the footer, adding a small uniqueness to the header image of several different pages, the addition of a favorites icon (favicon.ico), and the addition of <meta> tags to aid in search engines' indexing.

Link

The site can be found at <http://www.bar-h.org>. It is hosted on my private server, currently provided by DreamHost (dreamhost.com).