

# Graduates not grounded in basics, says design firm founder

BY RANDAL JACKSON

NEW ZEALAND'S INTERACTIVE AND web design schools are failing to give students a grounding in some of the fundamentals of good design, says Boost New Media owner Nathan Donaldson.

"There's a lack of strong basic skills around colour and typography and more emphasis put on the interactive nature of screens," he says.

Donaldson, who has taught programming, web design and electronic marketing in Malaysia and New Zealand, says that, unlike print, screen designers don't have a fixed output. "It can be quite varied with different devices for access, and different screen settings."

With the introduction of Web 2.0, people are now using bigger fonts, clearer fonts and simpler layouts in their design, he says.

"Different audiences have diverse needs."

He says design education has changed a lot over the past 10 years. "It was really difficult to get into the Wellington Polytechnic course in the 1990s because they accepted only 30 or 40 people. These days, it's in the hundreds.

"There aren't the number of jobs out there.

"People need to have it explained



Nathan Donaldson

to them what they will need to become designers. If that happened, there wouldn't be so many wanting to do the courses.

"We have people applying who don't have basic design skills. There's confusion about what a web designer does. We get developers applying."

He says it would help if design schools engaged more with the industry, perhaps

introducing an internship programme, such as is common in Europe.

Boost New Media's clients include ACC, the Families Commission and Telecom.