

DESIGNING CHANGE

RE-NOURISHING SUSTAINABILITY

There comes a time in a designer's life when their workspace transforms into a graveyard for expired projects. Looking at the piles of waste, guilt sinks in knowing that they weren't even printed on recycled paper.

Boston-based art director and graphic design professor Yvette Perullo calls this familiar scenario direct-to-trash. She looked to the web for advice on making her work eco-friendly, and found that although interest in green design is widespread, the information out there is like a broken record—repetitive and unhelpful.

Illinois-based graphic design professor Eric Benson encountered the same frustrations when researching the topic. So they both took action, creating an online sustainable design mega-tool. Add a third partner, San Francisco-based writer and designer Jess Sand, to the mix, and you have the dynamic trio behind Re-nourish.com.

This go-to design resource is filled with information and handy tools, like the project calculator, to help designers navigate

through the sustainability chatter to take action themselves.

Re-nourish—initially launched by Benson in 2006 as part of his MFA thesis project—merged with Perullo's site (RethinkDesign) in 2009 after the two met at a design conference over beers and realized their common interest. Since its relaunch, interest has spiked and Re-nourish.com was one of the top three finalists in the 2009 Cooper-Hewitt People's Design Award. "By delivering the much-needed tools, resources and education that is long overdue in this profession, we are going to start seeing more exciting changes take place," Perullo says.

"With a quarter of a million graphic designers in the U.S. alone, we produce a whole lot of printed matter, most of which ends up in landfills," Sand says. "We designers have a lot of power to change this."

The three partners build on one another's strengths almost seamlessly despite being scattered across the country. Perullo explains that the goal of Re-nourish.com is to help

make sustainability deeply integrated into the design process and less of an afterthought. Benson views the designer as a pivotal axis point between the client, manufacturers and vendors, mediating everything from price to materials. Sand sees this as a unique, influential spot in the supply chain, but suspects that most designers hold back from exerting their influence out of fear of losing the client or out of failure to recognize that control.

"We want less toxic materials made with less toxic manufacturing processes. We want fewer resources depleted. We want more affordable alternatives," Sand says. "Our hope really is that Re-nourish empowers designers to find their voice and to exert their decision-making muscles when practicing their craft." **HOW**

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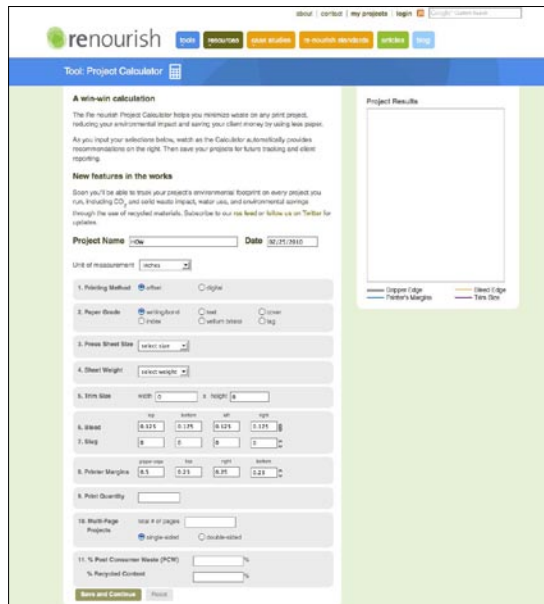
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CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM

The three partners behind Re-nourish.com have only met collectively once. Multimedia lead Yvette Perullo, top, lives in Boston; outreach lead Eric Benson lives in Champaign, IL; and content lead Jess Sand lives in San Francisco.



PROJECT CALCULATOR

A top feature on Re-nourish.com is the Project Calculator, left, which can help the designer to minimize paper, reduce environmental impact and save their client money, says Benson. And the best part? No math skills are required.

