

News

Neo-NeoCon 2010



Last month I had the pleasure of attending the [NeoCon World Trade Fair](#) at the gigantic Merchandise Mart in Chicago, home to the event for the last 42 years. If you aren't already familiar with NeoCon, it's the largest design expo and conference in North America, attracting around 40,000 architects and designers each year.

Left: Merchandise Mart. [Click here](#) to view some of my photos from NeoCon '10



This year represented an important milestone in NeoCon's history, as they took the leap of digitizing their data and event information through a partnership with NYC-based online product management start-up [DesignerPages.com](#). As someone who spends a large portion of my time online, using and building websites, I found this partnership fascinating and brilliant, yet also crucial, and surprisingly pioneering. NeoCon's new model allows it's guests, designers, exhibitors, press, and fans to become more engaged in the experience, allowing the information to be re-visualized and distributed among a variety of channels.

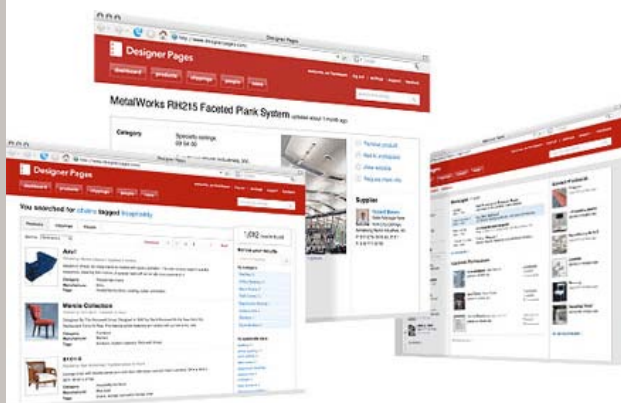
To learn more about this new partnership I spoke with friends Jacob Slevin and Avi Flombaum, founders of [DesignerPages.com](#).

How did DesignerPages.com and NeoCon begin working together?

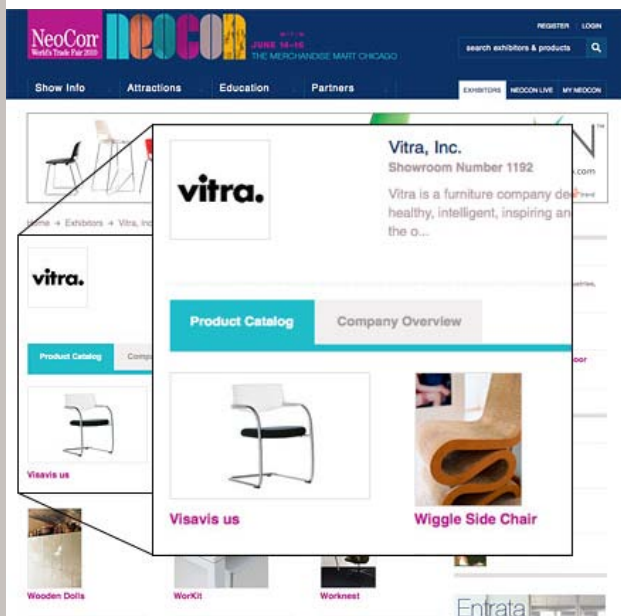
We launched [DesignerPages.com](#) out of beta at NeoCon East 2007. In 2009, we served as the Social Media Sponsor for NeoCon WTF in Chicago, which helped pave the way for our digital partnership with [NeoCon.com](#) in 2010.

How have you integrated DesignerPages.com's web platform with NeoCon's physical presence?

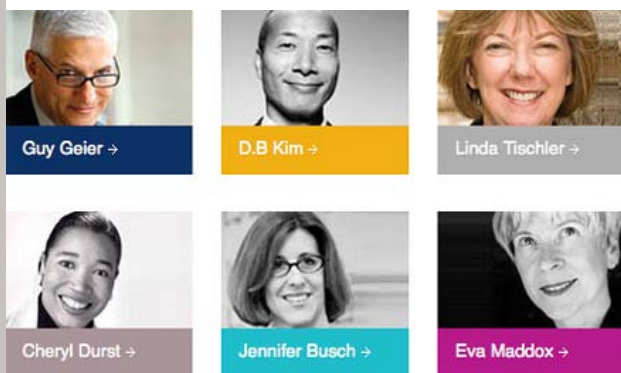
DesignerPages.com is a manufacturer-generated search platform to help designers search, save, and share product information online. But at its core, it's really a comprehensive product-service, currently hosting product information for nearly 2,500 manufacturers, and 140,000 plus products (someday it will host every product available to market). In that capacity, we like to think of DesignerPages.com as the IMDB for architectural and design products, and have been looking for various opportunities to call upon this product information for web clients other than DesignerPages.com itself. NeoCon.com was a perfect collaboration to begin exploring this new territory.



NeoCon World's Trade Fair is the industry's leading contract furniture and furnishings expo with over 700 exhibitors releasing their newest product each year. But the show has never had a true product locator. This year, NeoCon.com allowed attendees to browse and interact with all exhibitor products online, plain and simple. It's a trimmed DesignerPages.com, specific to NeoCon WTF.



Further, we leveraged the "workspace" feature from DesignerPages.com to power attendee NeoCon Guides, an attendee's personalized itinerary for the show. When we take down NeoCon.com to move to a new creative for 2011, all attendees' NeoCon Guides will be available via DesignerPages.com so no information is lost.



Some of the NeoCon '10 guides that used the DesignerPages.com platform to curate selections from this year's show

Did you learn anything from this first collaboration that will help define how you will develop next year's platform?

We're always learning with every new move we make. NeoCon.com is no different. We've been studying search behavior on NeoCon.com and have many ideas to improve the browse functionality for next year. We're also committed to strengthening the bridge between the digital and physical spheres. For example, next year we'll begin exploring mobile integration so attendees can save product information to their NeoCon.com accounts directly from the show floor.

Is DesignerPages.com's partnership with NeoCon unique? Are you, or do you plan on, collaborating with other similar organizations?

Our relationship with NeoCon and Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc. is very special. We're a new brand to this industry, and we couldn't be more grateful for this opportunity to align ourselves with such a great Company and great group of people. Yes, this partnership is unique. While we are excited to partner with other forward-thinking companies down the road, for the time being, NeoCon WTF is the only contract trade show on our radar.

- [Paul Petrunia](#) on Jul 21, 10 | 9:24 pm