

# Computing & Information Studies



## IMAGE: Twitter Header

The function of this graphic was to serve as a header image for the CIS Twitter account. As such, there were numerous constraints affected by both the institution (W&J) as well as the media platform (Twitter). Specifically, design constraints by W&J included color selection and typography; constraints by Twitter included image dimensions as well as open areas for other imagery. Only certain colors and typefaces could be used according to the W&J Style Guidelines, and Twitter of course limits the area of usability because the personal photograph - in this case the image of the Tech Center - needed space to overlap the header image. So the bottom left of the image needed to be open to allow for that overlap.

This image had to serve as a representation of the Computing and Information Studies department at Washington & Jefferson College. Representing an organization or institution was particularly challenging, and I elected to avoid photographic content since the field is so broad and various connotations could be decoded by multiple viewers in various ways. I also thought that photographic content in the header would compete with the contrast provided by the personal photograph on the account.

Given the design constraints, I tried to create what contrasts I could in type and color. So the logo and institutional identifiers are in the official colors of W&J: red and black. Typographically, I contrasted structures between serif and sans-serif fonts using the official typographic guidelines of the College, available online. Alignment is present in many places - the department name is aligned left and also aligned with the towers logo. Unfortunately the official W&J logo is center aligned - a very weak alignment - but I'm following the official branding guidelines. And honestly, for a logo component it's fine (if boring). I made sure to keep the logo and the College name in close proximity.

The design itself is quite simple. Essentially it is just some text and a logo. But that simplicity is offset by visual interest provided by the personal profile image as well as any content from the actual Twitter posts themselves. Thus simplicity becomes central to the design of the image, so as not to conflict with the myriad of other content elements available via this medium.

Overall the image is not aesthetically pleasing. It is in many ways boring due to the design constraints. A second iteration might include some variation of the background - possibly a gradient element similar to the red and black banners commonly used by the College. The addition of such might generate more visual interest without distracting from the visual hierarchy of the graphic.

## **Development Details**

- 1) Looked up official College publications Standards & Guidelines
- 2) Created new file at 3:1 aspect ratio (900X300 pixels, 150 dpi)
- 3) Filled the background layer with red
- 4) Appropriated the College towers logo
- 5) Magic Wand tool to select white surrounding logo
- 6) Inverted the selection
- 7) Used the Select and Mask Task Area to refine the edges of the selection
- 8) Output the towers logo into its own layer
- 9) Added text and modified accordingly
- 10) In a new layer, used Single Line Marquee Tool to create a line across image
- 11) Added a stroke of one pixel (black)
- 12) Erase Tool to remove line except for the area to either side of the '&'
- 13) Linked the text, logo and line layers
- 14) Created a new line for departmental text
- 15) Exported as a PNG file for web delivery