

Ten Reasons for a Facelift

Doug Beyer

Monday, August 08, 2005

- 
- 



- [Doug Beyer Archive](#)

If you're reading this, you've already seen that **magicthegathering.com** has had a facelift. Unlike facelifts that happen to actual faces, however, it's considered appropriate to comment on this one. I mean it's not like your Aunt Bee got her nose done, and you have to avoid staring and keep the conversation polite. It's **magicthegathering.com**. It's where you go to find out what's going on with **Magic**. So go ahead and stare. Look around. Click stuff. Meanwhile I'll lay out our reasons for the redesign and let you know what's where, and why.

What's the Point?

Why did we redesign? Let me guess: you had finally learned where everything was since the [last redesign](#), and now we've gone and moved stuff around again. And you hate that it's all wide now. So why did we bother?

1. **We redesigned to focus on new articles.**

An enormous majority of our readers visit the site an average of six times per week or more. Why? Because there's guaranteed new content on the site six times per week (and during covered events, there's new content on Sundays, too). On a similar note, our web servers experience an enormous nightly traffic spike at midnight Eastern time. Why? Because new content goes up at that time. That tells an important story: you want new content and you want it as soon as possible.

That's why we've devoted greater real estate to the newest content on the site, and provided a direct line to follow to find each updated piece of content to see. The next couple of bullets go into more detail on our focus on new content.

2. **We redesigned to show off the featured article better.**

Under the old site, the weekly [feature article](#) had a special spot in the middle of the page, where it sat all week. But by Tuesday or so, it was old news; almost everybody had already read it or at least clicked on it. (Can we really tell whether you've *read* the feature article, as opposed to just clicking on it? Oh yes, believe me, we can *tell*. ...Okay, maybe we *infer* based on delay times between page views and stuff like that. But I could have said something about our omniscient [Gleemax](#) and you would have believed it, right?) So now, the big area in the upper left (which is the primo spot, the first place

most web users' eyeballs naturally go) is where the feature article sits on Monday mornings. But that big area will swap out with new content throughout the week. It will then roll off that spot to the center column to allow other articles to take the spotlight.

3. **We redesigned to provide greater visibility for recent articles.**

The center column, just to the right of the big spotlight area, now acts as a combination of recent article showcase and mini-archive. Together with the big spotlight area, the top of the center column will always hold the freshest **Magic** content. If you miss a day, you can look back through the center column to see what you've missed. If you (Urza forbid!) miss a *week*, the stuff you've missed will have rolled off onto the archives. Click on "MORE ARTICLES" below the fourth recent article box to find older content, or just click "ARCHIVES" right at the top of any page.

4. **We redesigned to allow a more direct page-path to other fresh content.**

Ask Wizards, Magic Arcana and Card of the Day are all extremely popular content. (Again, we know that because of [Gleemax](#) or something. *waves hands distractingly*) Under the old site, you sort of had to hunt around for these features, because they were mixed in with relatively static content all over the page. Now they're all together in a convenient cluster at the bottom of the page, straight down from the recent articles. Scientific tests were performed to make sure the scrolling involved measured in at around 6.2 DEU (Digit Energy Units) -- well under the Universal Digit Efficiency Standard set down by Former Vice President Al Gore in 1991. (We talked to Al, and he found Card of the Day just fine.) (Okay, fine, we made up the Al Gore thing. But we did do some user testing to make sure nobody exploded on their way down to find Magic Arcana. One kid shifted in his seat once while scrolling, which was as close as we got to an explosion, and that was probably only due to the horrible chairs in the computer lab, not the site design.) Suffice it to say, we think you'll like having your favorite daily-updating features together in a centralized, predictable location.

5. **We redesigned to make critical information more accessible.**

But not every **magicthegathering.com** reader is visiting solely to read a BeeDeeEm or a JayEmEss or a, uh, ZeeVeeEye. **Magicthegathering.com** is also a resource for those looking for prerelease dates, product info, rules, decklists, and general information about the game. To that end, important essential information is now available in the right column of the main page and on the right side of and every article (such as this one). It's generally static information -- it only changes when there's a new set release, a batch of tournament decklists, a new site feature or promotion like Orb of Insight or You Make the Card, and that sort of thing. Most of the time your eyeballs can just skip that column -- it's not where the daily action is. Look there when you need reference materials and **Magic** resources. You'll note that this column is repeated on article pages, partly so we can get the word out about important information but mostly so you have those resources in reach at all times.

6. **We redesigned to improve browser compatibility.**

Magicthegathering.com looks good in more browsers now. Let's not talk about the old site's Card of the Day alignment issues under Firefox, shall we? Let's just not.

7. **We redesigned to take advantage of advancing technology.**

The site is 910 pixels wide, like the [Dungeons & Dragons site](#) and others at wizards.com. People have bigger, higher-quality monitors than they did two years ago, and higher resolution. [Gleemax](#) still tells us that some of our readers have their resolution set to 800 by 600 pixels, but not very many of them. (Mr. Former Vice President, you go to Control Panel, Display, Settings....) Widening the site by another 160 pixels gave us a lot more real estate for the main page, which allowed us to lay out the enormous amount of information there in a smarter way. In addition it gave us a nice wide space for articles while allowing us to add information and resources on the right side. Plus the wider the article layout, the bigger the **Magic** art we can show you.

8. **We redesigned to improve the Tournament Center.**

The new [Tournament Center](#) focuses more on the information you want to see if you're a regular in leagues and tournaments. Upcoming events and past event coverage are still showcased, along with the most recent tournament-related columns by **magicthegathering.com** writers Brian David-Marshall, Mike Flores and Scott Wills -- plus a featured spot for a rotating Judge column. If you're looking for decklists, the Tournament Center is the place to visit. Decks from the most recent Pro Tour Qualifier seasons, along with 2005 Regionals, can always be found in the right column. Webcast coverage from past Pro Tours will also be only a mouse-click away as we continue to add to our video archives of recent and past events. Basic information is now easier to find via the Programs, Resources, and Statistics boxes, and more future events are listed in the schedule at the bottom of the page. If you're not sure what Program is right for you, click on the "New to Tournaments?" graphic in the right column to find out and get started playing in leagues and tournaments.

9. **We redesigned to improve the *Magic Online* page.**

The [Magic Online](#) page has also been upgraded. Not only is it wider (meaning that you no longer have to scroll down) but it's got more information on it! We've added a fourth slot for articles, which should mean that current announcements will always be easily available right on the front page, and there's a link to the [Into the Aether archive](#) so you can easily browse through previous announcements and information by Bennie Smith and Into the Aether Author Emeritus Jay Moldenhauer-Salazar (before he switched columns).

10. **We redesigned to make everything prettier.**

Last but not least, the new design is, we think, a lot easier on the eyes. With graphics and layout designed by in-house art wizard Jen Page, the site has simply never looked better. If you end up saving money on eye surgery and headache medication this year due to browsing a more lovely **magicthegathering.com**, it's Jen you should thank.

That's it. Now go poke around. Test our links. Form opinions. Read outrageous criticisms or post your own, far more insightful ones. Enjoy the new face of **magicthegathering.com** -- polite conversation optional.