**Comcast Annual Report: Pros and Cons of Graphical Design**

By Stacey J. Haseleu

The Comcast 2011 Annual Report is offered through three components: an online viewing, 10K form in PDF format, and a 2012 proxy statement in PDF format. The online viewing allows for quick access to what is usually complicated data, so for the purposes of this analysis, I will focus on the effectiveness of the online format. Although there are some positive aspects to this application, I found the usage of graphics in comparison to text to be greatly ineffective.

When you first open the application, you are welcomed by a distinct introduction to the information you think you are about to read. The screen below clearly states the document you are
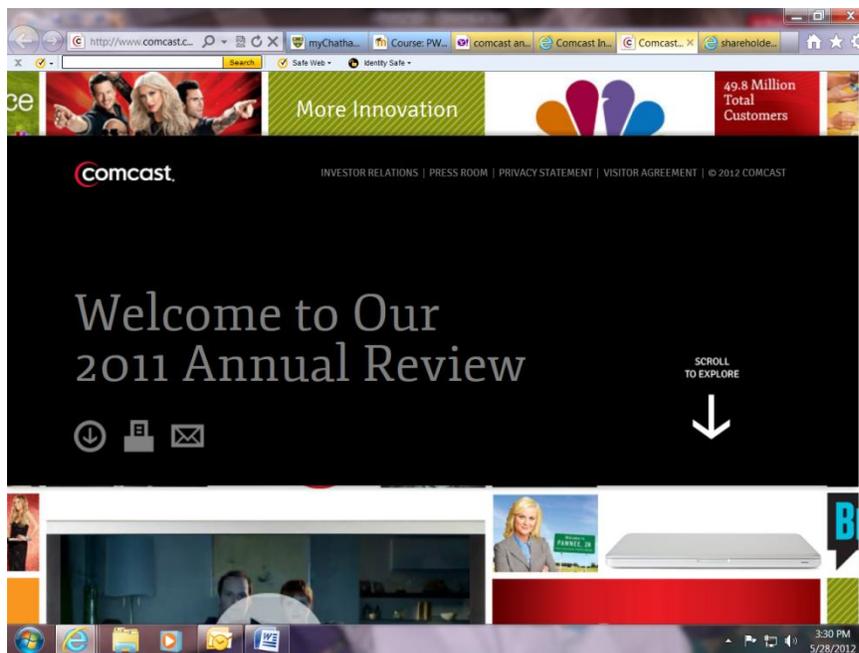

reading, offers clear instructions on how to navigate, and provides a pleasing combination between large, easy-to-read text and graphics. You are able to scroll over the three main graphics under the title, which give you three options: downloading,

printing, and sending to social media. This screen by itself works well and creates a nice juxtaposition between graphics and large, easy-to-read text.

When you scroll down further in the document, however, between each text segment of

information is a screen that looks like the

one to the left. This screen is very

inefficient. It contains a plethora of pictures

and graphics, but no text. It is confusing to

the reader and makes the eye wander,

trying to find text that is not there. It is a

waste of space and makes the reader keep

scrolling unnecessarily.
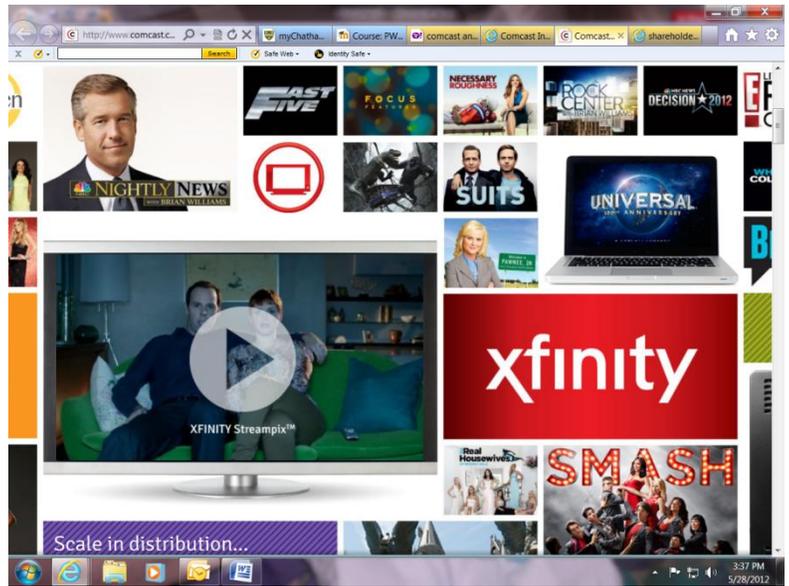
If you keep scrolling, you finally come to the screen below.   "Finally", you think to yourself,

"some substantial text that will give me some of the information I'm looking for." But all the screen
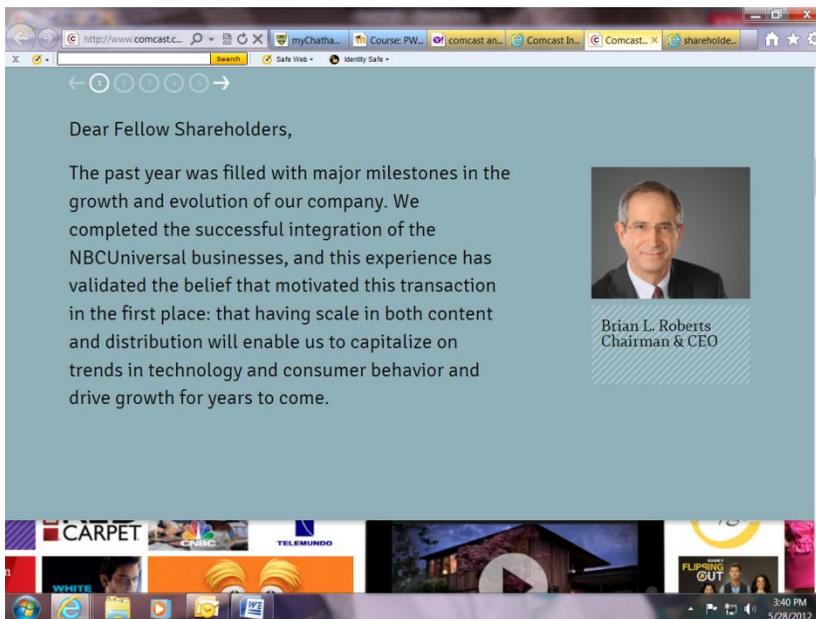
essentially contains is another

"welcome" of sorts from the

CEO. While the text, in a never-

ending sea of graphics, is

welcome, it still does not convey

any substantive information.

The picture of the CEO is a nice

touch that allows the reader to

see who is addressing the

audience, but after scrolling through so many graphics, I found myself disappointed that I was not

receiving more in depth information pertaining to the annual report. So I began my scrolling again,

through another page of un-texted graphics which finally led to another block of text; the Financial

Highlights.

The Financial Highlights section of the document was most effective. The four screenshots below perfectly combine charts and graphs with text that adequately explain the annual report's financial information. Each chart/graph explains financial information that would be more difficult to understand if it was simply presented in text format. The graphics are not overwhelming for the audience and they clearly depict the complex financial information in a user-friendly format.

Overall, the online document served its purpose; to provide a large amount of technical information to an audience quickly and in a format most easily digested by a lay audience. The dissemination of information worked most effectively when the text was paired with graphs that depicted the complex information. The biggest downfall of this format was the unnecessary and overwhelming amount of graphics the reader had no choice but to scroll through in order to reach all of the pertinent information.