

Chris Brown's Plaine Studios has helped area businesses such as Republic New Orleans create Web sites that are easy to use.

Key innovation: making technology more personal and user friendly

Biggest client: Republic New Orleans

Where they're based: New Orleans

Top executive: Chris Brown, founder

Year introduced: 2002

2006 sales: \$114,000

In a culture where even groceries can be ordered on the Internet, the New Orleans-based Web design company Plaine Studios is helping to make technology more personal and easy to use.

"In a digital world where jargon and confusion are ways to seduce clients into thinking they're getting the latest and greatest, we try to boil things down to common sense while using those same latest and greatest technologies," said founder Chris Brown.

Started in 2002 to make digital design and media acces-

sible to individuals and businesses wanting trouble-free Web sites, Plaine Studios increased its line of services after Hurricane Katrina to include high definition video, traditional print design and comprehensive Web solutions, which, Brown said, are tools that help a business or individual communicate more effectively with their audience.

In 2005 after Katrina, Plaine Studios worked to open Republic New Orleans nightclub even though owner Robert LeBlanc said some thought the project was a "foolish" venture in the recently flooded city.

"(Plaine Studios) really cares about their clients," said LeBlanc. "They go above and beyond. ... They become educators."

Robert said Brown and his team successfully "toe that line" between art and the management of clients to provide tangible solutions. The end product is a functional Web design with a creative edge.

Republic New Orleans uses its Web site to update information about the business to create a more intimate and cost-effective relationship with clients, LeBlanc said.

Brown and his staff also extended their expertise to the Greater New Orleans Youth Orchestra. The company developed a new Web site for GNOYO that caters to the organization's diversity through a "one-stop-shop" Web page for "on-the-go" members, including an alumni submission form, a student blog section and a compact disc order form for supporters.

"They made our Web presence come to life," said Marianna Roll, GNOYO communications coordinator. "They made our entire organization excited about not only the Web site but also about what the Web site reminds us of."

Plaine Studios aims to keep it simple even in a field with technology constantly changing and expanding.

"We're trying to bring to New Orleans high quality design and advertising that can compete on a national level, but on a more reasonable budget," Brown said. "Because we keep things small and focused, we provide a high level of customer service that you can't get with a large firm."*

— Amy M. Ferrara