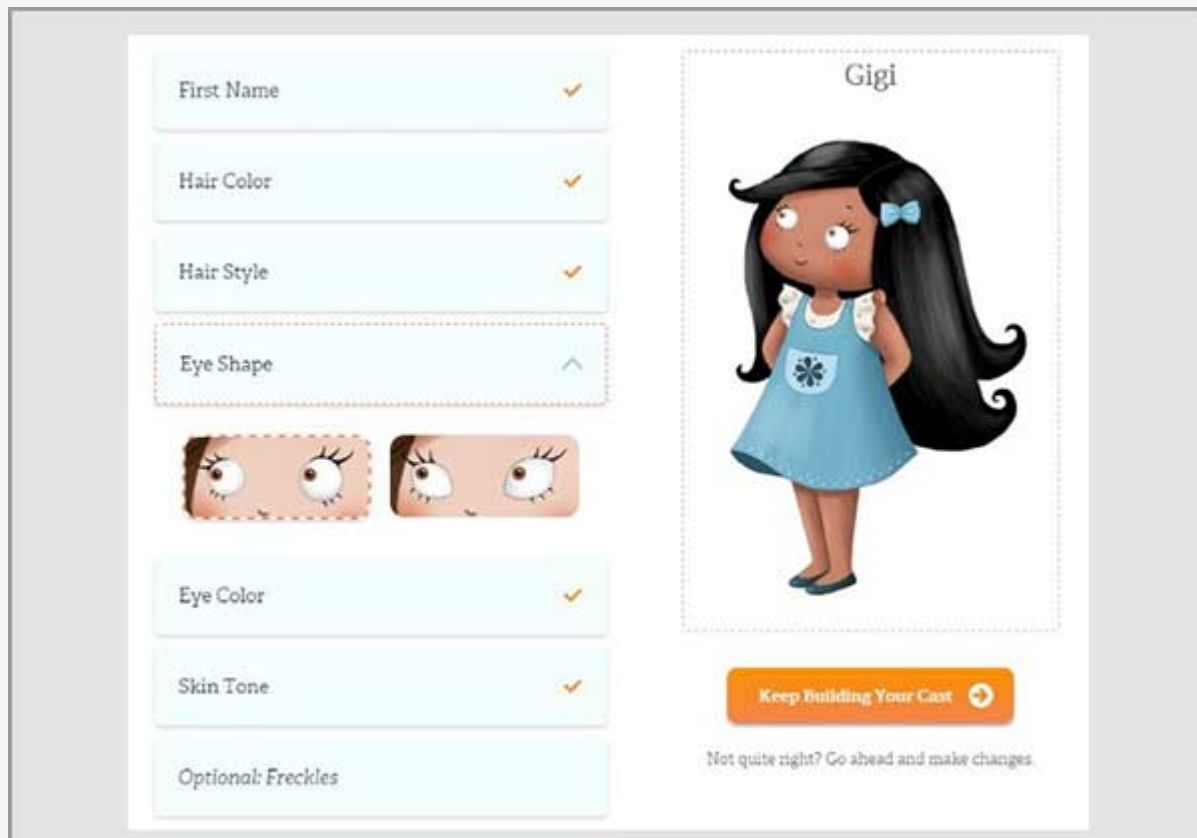


# What Does an Award-winning Website Look Like?

CHICAGO, Ill., May 17, 2016 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – The Independent Publisher Book Awards presented the 20th annual IPPY awards in a special ceremony at the Willis Tower Skydeck. In the Best Publisher/Author/Book Website category, [Snowflake Stories, LLC](#), created by San Fran developer [James Stone](#), was honored with a bronze medal.



The image shows a user interface for customizing a character named 'Gigi'. On the left, there are several form fields: 'First Name', 'Hair Color', 'Hair Style', 'Eye Shape', 'Eye Color', 'Skin Tone', and 'Optional: Freckles'. Each field has a checkmark icon. Below the 'Eye Shape' field, there are two small images of eyes with different shapes. On the right, there is a preview of the character 'Gigi', a young girl with long black hair, a blue bow, and a blue dress with a white floral pattern. Below the preview, there is an orange button that says 'Keep Building Your Cast' with a circular arrow icon. At the bottom of the preview area, there is a small text link: 'Not quite right? Go ahead and make changes.'

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So what does it take to create an award-winning website? A lot, actually. Stone's challenge was to develop a website that would allow for the customization of Snowflake Stories' line of award-winning, bilingual personalized children's books. This was no easy task, as Snowflake Stories books are unlike other personalized books currently available.

When Snowflake Stories founder and Connecticut resident Jill Barletti set out to create books for kids, she truly believed that it shouldn't matter if a child has blue eyes or brown, speaks English or Spanish, or has a single mom or two; her books had to reflect all of those children. The solution? A book, customizable for one special child, which allows for the selection of characters (up to six), each of which is tailored so that the entire cast closely reflects the appearance of that child and his or her loved ones. Language(s) must also be chosen as the book is available in bilingual and single-language versions in any of five languages: English, Spanish,

Portuguese, French, and Italian.

Stone created the publisher's site using ZURB Foundation's responsive framework, which allows the website to resize automatically for different screen sizes. One of the biggest challenges Stone faced was making the book customization process effortless. His innovative solution was to create the proprietary Character Builder, which allows visitors to the website to select each character's physical traits, such as skin color, hairstyle, and eye color, with a few clicks of the mouse. Instead of filling out a boring questionnaire, visitors to [SnowflakeStories.com](http://SnowflakeStories.com) select and customize a book effortlessly and in just a few minutes. The real genius of Stone's work lies in the website's usability. Stone cooked up a way to see each character as it is built; and that's no small feat as some characters have over 6,000 possible combinations.

Another hurdle Stone thought he would face was finding an ecommerce partner that would allow a highly customizable product to pass through to the checkout process. However, [FoxyCart](#) was the perfect solution, as it supports passing custom data into its cart system, as well as providing advanced customization options.

Once the website was completed, Stone called in user interface designer [Marcus Handa](#) to give the website a more polished look. Handa liked the feel of the website's original design, which was reminiscent of paper dolls. He streamlined the site with light colors and thin dotted lines, resulting in a clean design while retaining a handmade feel. Although the judges' scorecards were not made public, the creative problem solving and emphasis on creating a great user experience are two of the distinguishing factors that likely helped to win the award.

#### **About James Stone:**

James Stone is the author of "ZURB Foundation Blueprints," an adjunct professor at the College of Arts & Architecture at Penn State, and a top contributor to the ZURB Foundation project. The award-winning web developer has spoken at the HTML5 Developers Conference and TEDxPSU and aims to bring world-class sites and web apps to self-funded startups using the power of ZURB Foundation. For more information, please visit [JamesStone.com](http://JamesStone.com).

#### **About Marcus Handa:**

Marcus Handa is an award-winning user-interface (UI) designer, from the UK. Marcus is the principal of Marcus Handa Design, which provides design services to web/app developers, startups, and solopreneurs. Marcus is known for his clean and modern style as well as his intuitive interfaces. Additional information available at [MarcusHanda.co](http://MarcusHanda.co).

#### **About the Snowflake Stories:**

After publishing the award-winning "Dance Recital" for young girls, Snowflake Stories will release a second award-winning bilingual personalized children's book, written by Jill Barletti and illustrated by Jelena Brezovec. The second book, "The Big Soccer Game," can be personalized for either a girl or a boy and will be available later in 2016, exclusively at [SnowflakeStories.com](http://SnowflakeStories.com). The company is guided by the principle that just like a snowflake ... every child's

story is unique.

**About ZURB Foundation:**

ZURB Foundation is a family of open-source responsive frameworks used to create websites, apps, and emails, built by California-based ZURB. The company's clientele is an impressive list of the world's largest, most innovative corporations, including Disney, Samsung, Adobe and the Washington Post. To learn more, go to [foundation.zurb.com](http://foundation.zurb.com).

**About FoxyCart:**

FoxyCart provides web professionals with a powerful, secure, and flexible ecommerce platform for their clients. FoxyCart continues to solve ecommerce challenges in unique and better ways for thousands of its clients all over the world. More information about this ecommerce company and its platform can be found at [foxycart.com](http://foxycart.com).