

Principles of Good Web Site Design

Good Design:

- Complimentary Colors
- Site uses the 5 main principles of design (described below)

Bad Design:

- Too much animation
- Blinking text
- Too many color changes
- Colors that don't go together
- Too busy
- Too many font changes
- Don't use too light of a font unless a dark plain background
- Don't use too bright of colors

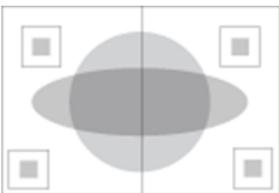
The Principles of Design:

- Balance
- Rhythm
- Proportion
- Dominance or Contrast
- Unity

Balance

The arrangement of the objects in a given design as it relates to their visual weight within a composition. Balance usually comes in two forms: symmetrical and asymmetrical.

Symmetrical



Symmetrical balance occurs when the weight of a composition is evenly distributed around a central vertical or horizontal axis. Under normal circumstances it assumes identical forms on both sides of the axis.

Asymmetrical

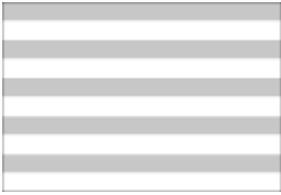


Asymmetrical balance occurs when the weight of a composition is not evenly distributed around a central axis. It involves the arranging of objects of differing size in a composition such that they balance one another with their respective visual weights. Often there is one dominant form that is offset by many smaller forms. In general, asymmetrical compositions tend to have a greater sense of visual tension.

Rhythm

Rhythm is the repetition of elements, often with defined intervals between them. Rhythm can create a sense of movement, and can establish pattern and texture. There are many different kinds of rhythm, often defined by the feeling it evokes when looking at it.

- *Regular: A regular rhythm occurs when the intervals between the elements, and often the elements themselves, are similar in size or length.*
 - *Flowing: A flowing rhythm gives a sense of movement, and is often more organic in nature.*
 - *Progressive: A progressive rhythm shows a sequence of forms through a progression of steps.*



Regular rhythm



Flowing rhythm

Proportion

Proportion is the relationship in scale between one element and another, or between a whole object and one of its parts. Differing proportions within a composition can relate to different kinds of balance or symmetry, and can help establish visual weight and depth. In the below examples, notice how the smaller elements seem to recede into the background while the larger elements come to the front.



Dominance or Contrast

Dominance relates to varying degrees of emphasis in design. It determines the visual weight of a composition, and often resolves where the eye goes first when looking at a design.

Dominant: The object given the most visual weight, the element of primary emphasis that advances to the foreground in the composition.



Unity

Unity describes the relationship between the individual parts and the whole of a composition. It investigates the aspects of a given design that are necessary to tie the composition together, to give it a sense of wholeness.

Similarity, Proximity and Alignment

Items of similar size, shape and color tend to be grouped together by the brain, and a semantic relationship between the items is formed. In addition, items in close proximity to or aligned with one another tend to be grouped in a similar way.

Rule of Thirds

The rule of thirds is a compositional tool that makes use of the notion that the most interesting compositions are those in which the primary element is off center. Basically, take any frame of reference and divide it into thirds placing the elements of the composition on the lines in between.

Visual Center

The visual center of any page is just slightly above and to the right of the actual (mathematical) center. This tends to be the natural placement of visual focus, and is also sometimes referred to as museum height.