Basics of graphics design

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The Basics of Graphic Design: The Elements

There are 7 specific design principles you should try to follow whenever you are creating a graphic design.

These elements or principles can help you create wonderful layouts that are both effective and pleasing to the eye.

They can also teach you to communicate a visually better message to your target audience through your designs.

1. **Line:** line in graphics design can be used for a whole lot of purposes.
   From
   – connecting content

- stressing a word or phrase

- forming patterns.

Lines can be vertical, horizontal, diagonal, circular, patterned, free form or solid. They are used as roadmaps to direct the viewers eye movement. If you use trees for example which are standing straight up (vertical) there is no movement felt by the viewer.

On the other hand if you have the trees bent at an angle this will make the viewer feel a sense of motion or movement.

Lines are simple, but can convey different emotions by using different properties.

2. **Shape:** The three basic types of shapes are Geometric (Circles, Squares, Triangles etc.), Natural (leaves, mountains, people etc.) and abstract (icons, stylizations and graphic representations).

   They give volume to the forms in a design. You don't always have to use similar shapes in your design work; instead you can

mix it up and put them together making sure that the placement of them keeps your piece balanced.

Sometimes adding just a small shape to a blank area will make the piece look more balanced ✾.

3. **Colour:**
   People process colour in the artwork subconsciously. Colour is used to generate emotions, define significance, create graphic interest and unify branding.
   To establish mood, create interest, build appeal and get a message across, colour is the most powerful tool in your graphic design arsenal.

   The colour wheel is a great tool for a graphics design artist and you will use it to create a great piece of artwork.
   The importance of colour design stems from the significance of colour to the human mind.
   Colour creates ideas, expresses messages, spark interest, and generate certain emotions.
   The use of Colours allows designers to achieve harmony in their designs.

   HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT COLOR FOR YOUR DESIGN ✦✦✦✦
   Colour is one of the basic elements in design. **No matter if the design is meant for promotion, branding, marketing, or simply to fill a gap.** – choosing the right colour is key in reaching the right audience.

   CHOOSING THE RIGHT COLORS
   First off, colours are subjective, especially in design. **What the designer feels is appropriate for a design can be a complete failure** in the eyes of a client, et vice versa.

The best piece of advice would be to choose carefully:

- You should sit down with your client first and discuss in advance what colour they would prefer

- based on colour psychology, your subjective feeling

- and maybe ask another designer for an opinion to decide on what the best solution would be for your project.

4. **Textures:** Textures can look similar to solid background colors, but if they are analyzed closer, small but effective differences can be noticed.
   Texture styles include paper, stone, concrete, brick, fabric and natural elements, among flat or smooth colours.

Textures can also be subtle or pronounced and can be usedsparingly or liberally. They work with pretty much everything E.g.

Even if they do not seem important, the textures can totally change a design and offer a totally different visual impact.

5. Value

Value simply describes light and dark.

A design with a high contrast of values (i.e. one which makes use of light and dark values) creates a sense of clarity.

Differences in values creates clear designs. The knowledge of value plays a big role when you want to express the illusion of movement or bring one element into sharp focus while another fades into the background.

6. Space

An important part of any good graphic design, Space is the area around the elements in a design, which is used to separate or group information.

You must learn to use it effectively to define importance and lead the eye to where it wants to travel. In design language, **white space is called negative space,** which is used to connect, separate or maximize the relationship between the elements making up the design.

Space can also be efficiently used to give illusion of depth or multi-dimension to the observer.

Negative space, also called **white space,** is just as important as the positive shape itself- because it helps to define the boundaries of the positive shape and brings balance to a composition. Spacing is an important characteristic that affects text readability.

7. <u>**Size**</u>

In graphics design, size is used to convey importance, attract attention and create contrast. The functionality of a graphic design layout centers heavily on this element – size.
In graphics design, size is used to create contrast. People generally use size to attract attention to the most important part in the design; typically a larger sized object or form attracts the most eyeballs inside an artwork.

Also, different sizes within the same graphics design or layout create an order of dominance.

In this example above the baseball field acts as the reference object. Without it, the baby would not appear to be super sized.

Principles of design

NB: There is no real consensus in the design community about what the main principles of design actually are. That said, the following principles are those mentioned most often in the articles and books on the subject.

Contrast

One of the most common complaints designers have about their clients feedback often revolves around the client who says the design needs to **pop** more.

While that sounds funny , what the client means is that the design needs more contrast.

Contrast refers to how different elements are in design, These difference make various elements stand out. It is very useful for creating a focal point, or a spot to which your eye is naturally drawn.

An example of high-contrast design is design of *parabola's website.*
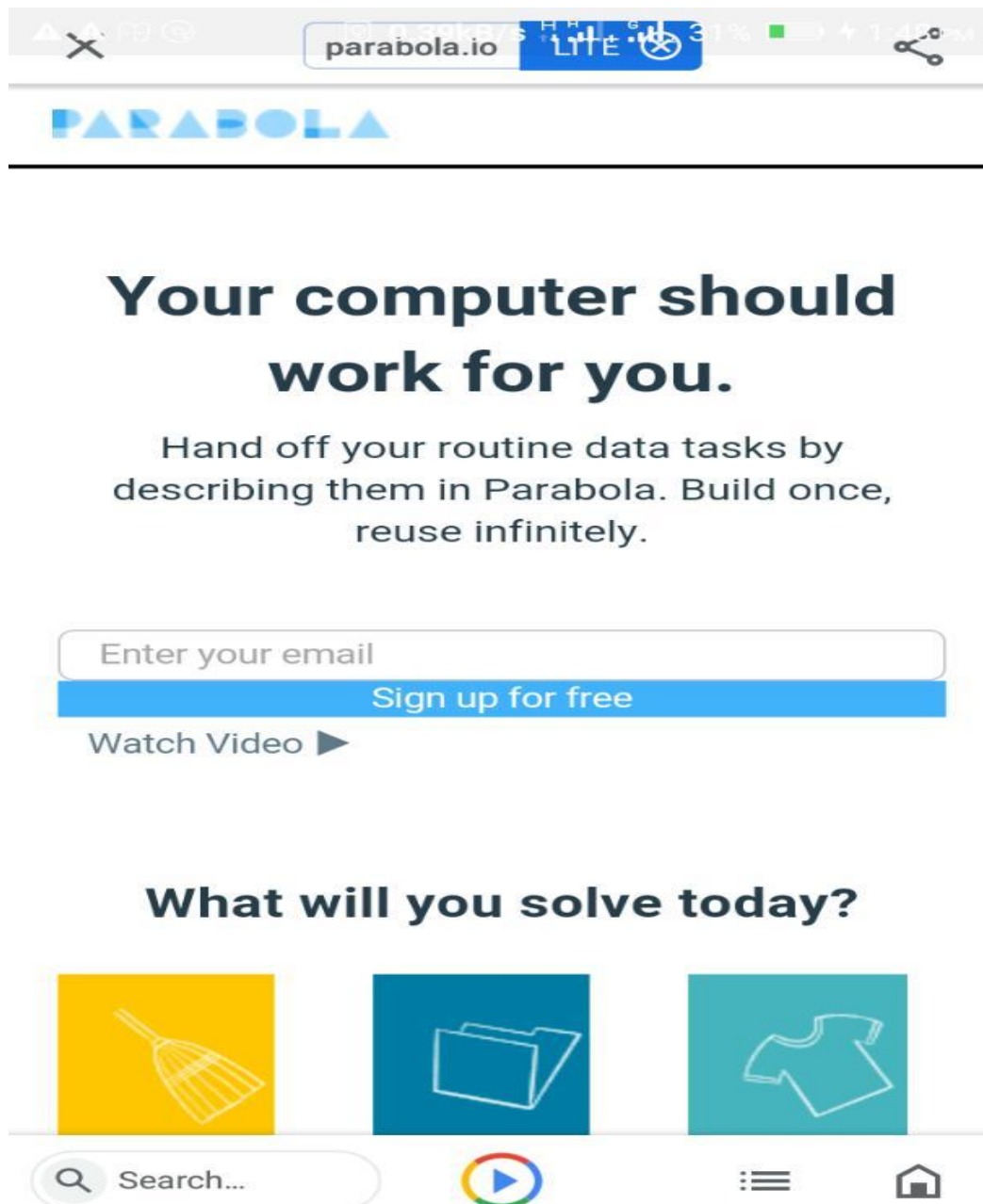
Balance

Every element of a design – typography, colours, shapes etc. Carries a visual weight. Some elements are heavy and drawn to the eye,

while other elements are lighter. The way these elements are laid out on a page should create a feeling of balance.

Emphasis

Emphasis deals with the parts of a design that are meant to stand out. In most cases, this means the most important information is meant to convey.

The emphasis here is the governor's picture.

Proportion

Proportion is one of the easier principles to understand. Simply put, its the size of elements in relation to one another.

Proportion signals what's important in a design and what isn't. Larger elements are more important, smaller elements less.

Proportion is a vital part of elements and principles of design. The proportional differences between the tiny type and large images clearly delineates which element is more important.

Hierarchy

Heirarchy is another principle of design that relates to how well content can be processed by people using a website. It refers to the importance of elements within a design. The most important elements (or content) should appear to be the most important.

It is mostly illustrated through the use of headings in a design.

Repetition

Repetition is a great way to reinforce an idea. It's also a great way to unify a design that brings together a lot of different elements. It could be done in a number of ways : by repeating colours, shape, lines and other elements of design.

An example is this article- the headings are in bold format signifying their importance.

 Rhythm

The spaces between repeating elements can cause a sense of rhythm to form, similar to the way the space between notes in a musical composition create a rhythm. There are five basic types of rhythm a designer can create;

Random rhythm have no discernable pattern.

Regular rhythm follow the same spacing between each element with no variation.

Alternating rhythm follow a set of pattern that repeats, but there's variation between the actual elements e.g. 1-2-3-1-2-3pattern.

Flowing rhythm follow bends and curves, similar to the way sand dunes undulate or waves flow.

Progressive rhythm change as they go along, with each change adding to the previous iterations.

Rhythms can be used to create a number of feelings. They can create excitement or create reassurance and consistency.

Pattern

Patterns are nothing more than a repetition of multiple design elements working together. Wallpaper patterns are the most ubiquitous example of patterns that virtually everyone is familiar with.

COLOUR PSYCHOLOGY

It is the study of hues as a determinant of human behaviour. Colour influences perceptions that are not obvious, such as the taste of food. Colours have qualities that can cause certain emotions in people.

Red -

Is associated with energy, passion, action, war, danger, strength, power, determination, desire, love.

Green

Nature, tranquillity, good luck, health, ecology and jealousy. It is also said that green can improve reading ability.

Blue

Conservative, calm, peaceful, tranquil, secure, orderly, stability, reliable.

Yellow

Happiness, optimism, creativity, energy, enthusiasm, hope, fun and cheerfulness.

Purple

Luxury, power, wisdom, magic, creativity, and it also has part of the attributes of colour blue and red. Like energy, calmness and stability.

Orange

Happiness, joy, fascination, enthusiasm, creativity, determination, attraction, success, encouragement and stimulation.

This book was written by Popoola Abdussalam.

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