Web Design Theory

Colour Theory in Web Design

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Colour Theory in Web Design

Colour is unarguably one of the most crucial aspects of web design. It has the power to evoke certain emotions in users, which wield a powerful influence over how they view a brand and how they feel when using a website. Plus it's a great tool for focusing people's attention on certain aspects of a page, and helping dictate their path to conversion

Colour in web design, using colour theory and the colour wheel, comes down to three main things:
- Complementation: How we see colours in terms of their relationship to other colours.
- Contrast: How we use colours to reduce eyestrain and focus users' attention to certain elements on a page.
- Vibrancy: How we use colour to influence the emotions of users or attract a specific target market.

Google Design Sprint

Understand · Define · **Diverge** · **Decide** · Prototype · Validate
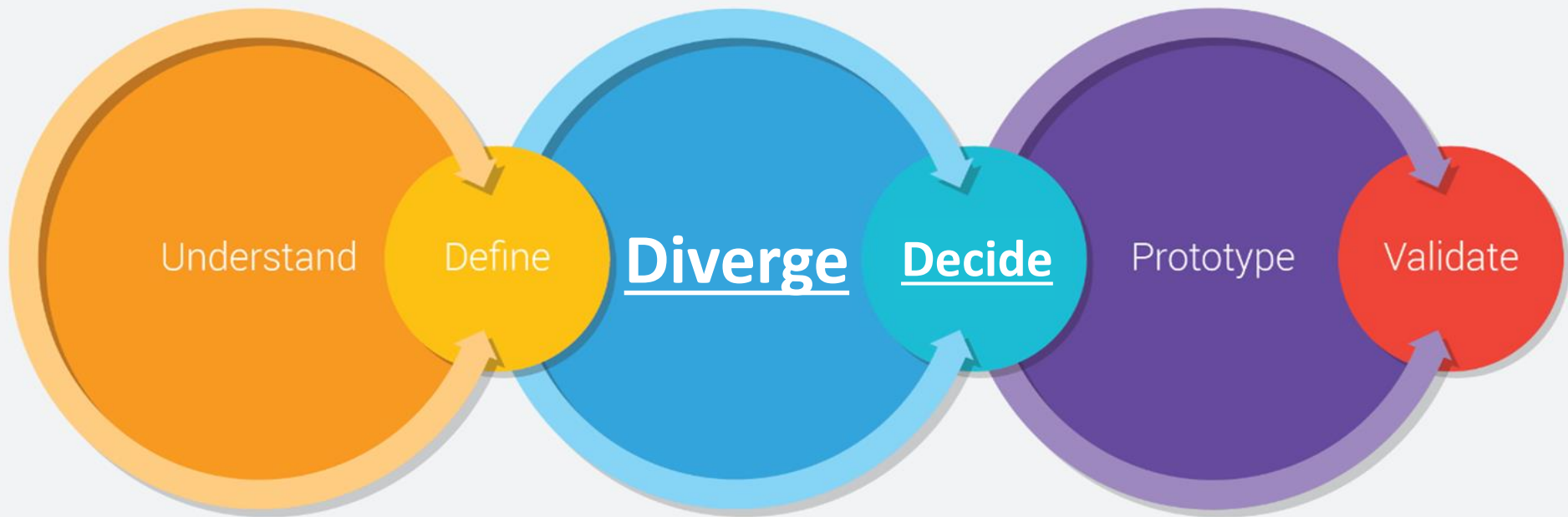
Colour Theory

Colour theory tells us that different colours work together -or don't- for specific reasons.

Choosing the right colour combinations is crucial to creating a successful website. Colour theory dictates how colours can be combined for optimal use and allure.

Colour creates ideas, expresses messages, spark interest, and generate certain emotions. Some colours hold a universal significance- for example, it is commonly understood that red is a colour for warning and green means go. But, put together, most people would associate the colour combination of red and green as Christmas. Bright colours tend to set a happy and positive mood, whereas dark colours tend to project the opposite. Within the psychology of colours, warm colours show excitement, optimism, and creativity; cool colours symbolize peace, calmness, and harmony.

Choosing colours for a website is not about just choosing colours that you like- the colours should strengthen the website and branding of the business. Colours that work well individually may not be as pleasing together as they are individually. By considering colour combination as both a science, seeing how colours work together literally, and as an art, by seeing what colours symbolise and how they are evaluated internally and emotionally, the correct colour combination for your website design can be achieved.
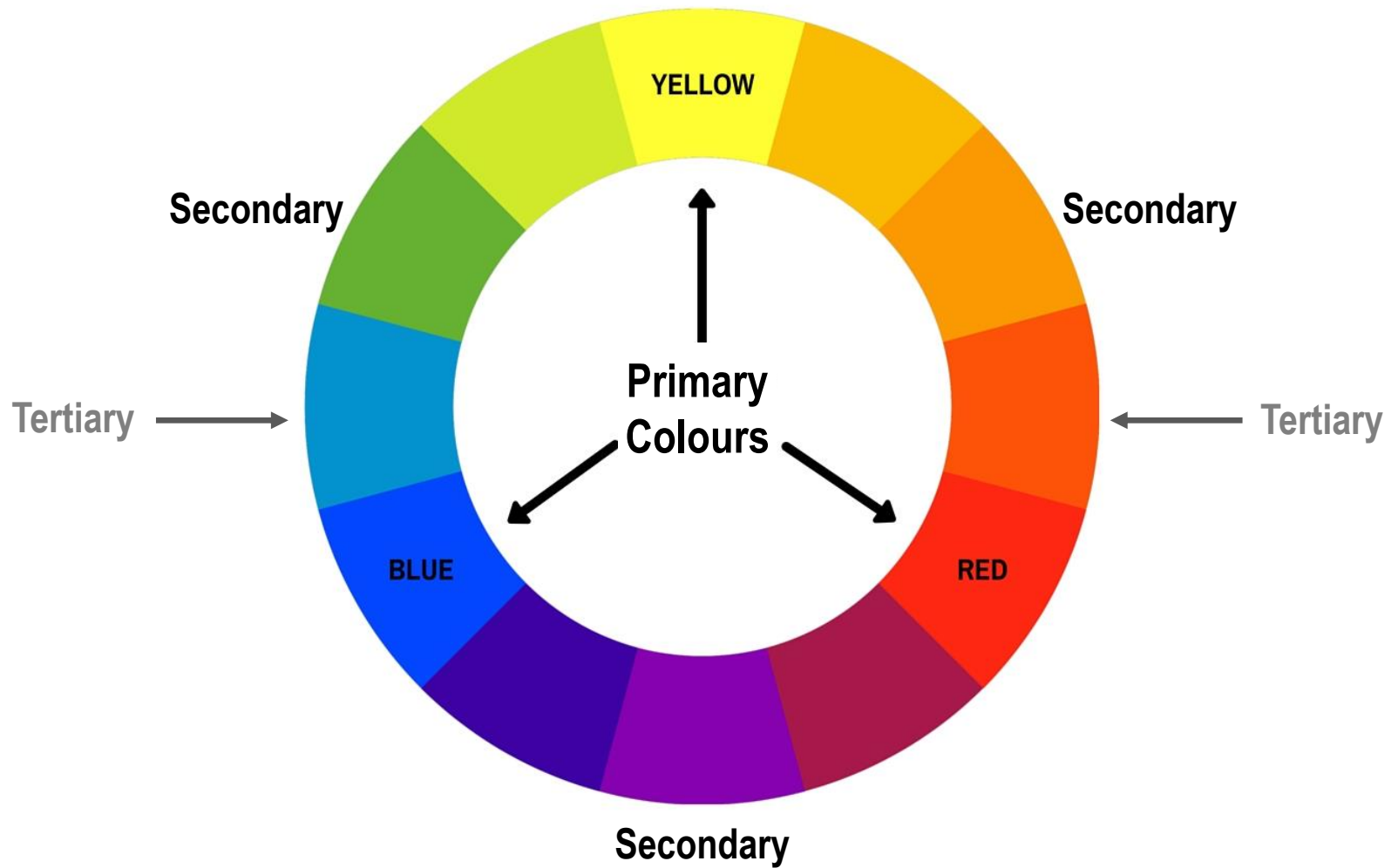
The Colour Wheel

Colour schemes begin by examining the colour wheel, where we find three colour groupings: primary colours, secondary colours, and tertiary colours.

✓ **Primary colours** cannot be created by mixing other colours together.

✓ **Secondary colours** are formed by mixing two primary colours: blue and yellow make green, red and yellow make orange.

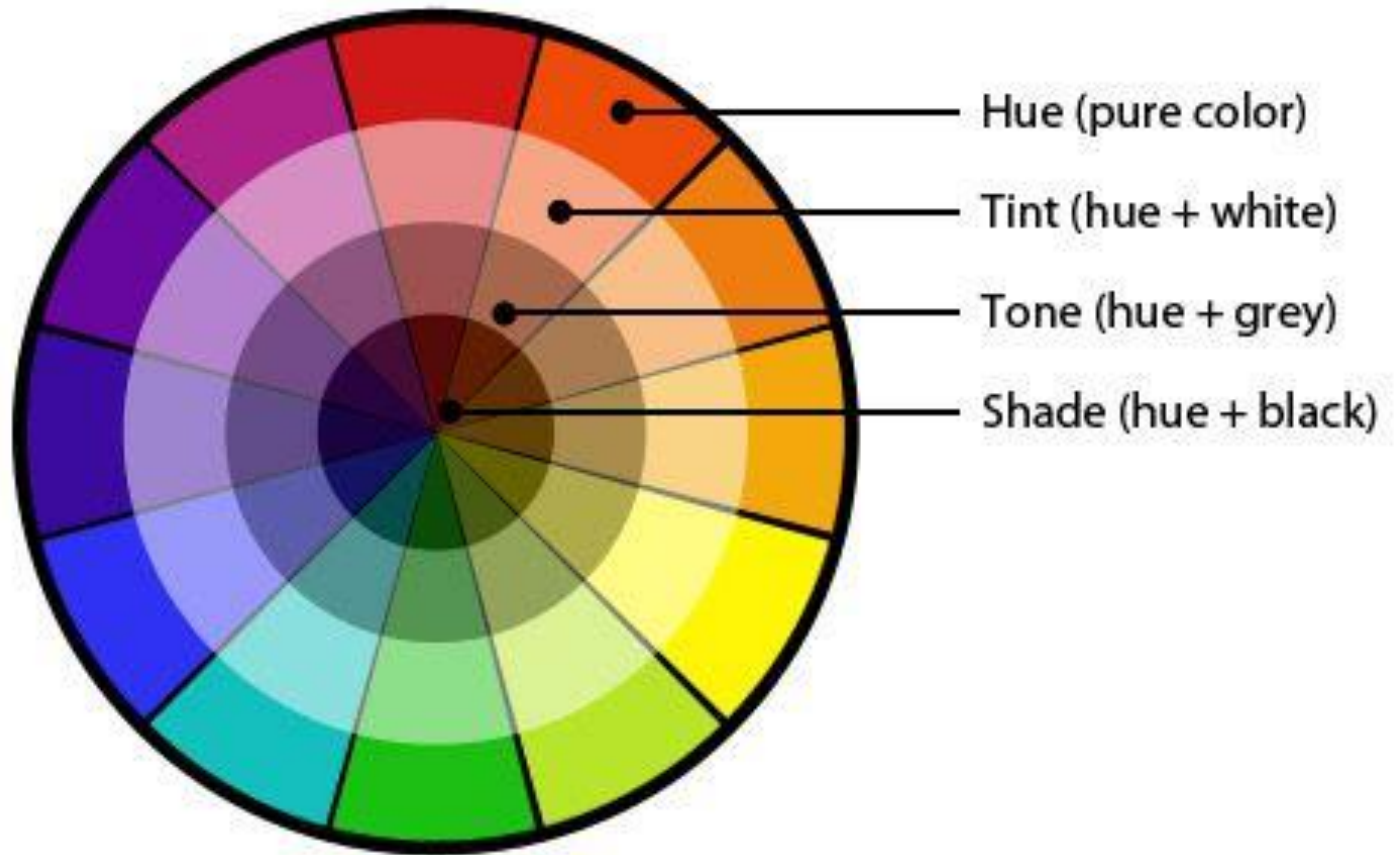✓ **Tertiary colours** are derived by combining primary and secondary colours: blue-green or red-orange.

Web designers use these types of colours to evoke feelings.

The Colour Wheel

Secondary

Secondary

Tertiary

Tertiary

Primary Colours

YELLOW

BLUE

RED

Secondary

The Colour Wheel

Hue (pure color)

Tint (hue + white)

Tone (hue + grey)

Shade (hue + black)

Combining colours from the Colour Wheel

Complementary

- High contrast creates vibrant looks.
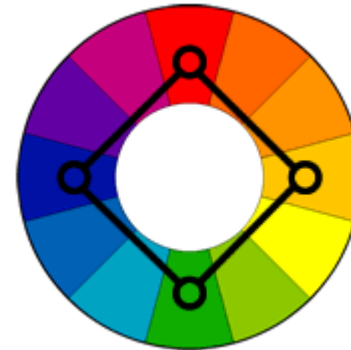- Work well to stand out something.
- Don't use them for text.

Analogous

- They match well to create serene designs.
- "Nature", harmonious and pleasing arrangements.
- One dominant, 2nd one supporting and 3rd one as an accent.

Triad

- Together express action, energy.
- Ensure balanced & equal vibrancy
- E.g. one for the background, and two for content and navigation

Square

- Works best if one colour is dominant.
- Plenty of possibilities for variation.
- Need careful balance between warm and cool colours.

Colours are combined to create:

✓ Continuity.- Analogous colour schemes incorporate three colours from the same area of the colour spectrum, such as shades of yellow and orange, or a mixture of greens and blues. They tend to have a lower contrast, but work well when trying to create a feeling of harmony and continuity. They usually match well and create serene and comfortable designs. Analogous colour schemes are often found in nature and are harmonious and pleasing to the eye.

✓ Contrast.- Contrast is the area of colour theory with the biggest impact on the usability of a website. It refers to the level of clarity between two objects on a page, most notably between text and background colour. Complementary colours that are directly across from one another on a basic colour wheel provide maximum contrast.

✓ Vibrancy.- Vibrant combination of colours stands out from the background, pulsing with energy. Designers use vibrant combinations to make people focus their attention on important elements. Any primary or secondary colour can be used to create a vibrant design. The vibrancy of the colours you choose has a profound effect on your users' emotions, a concept known as the psychology of colour.

   Tip: In general, you should not use too many different colours on a webpage.

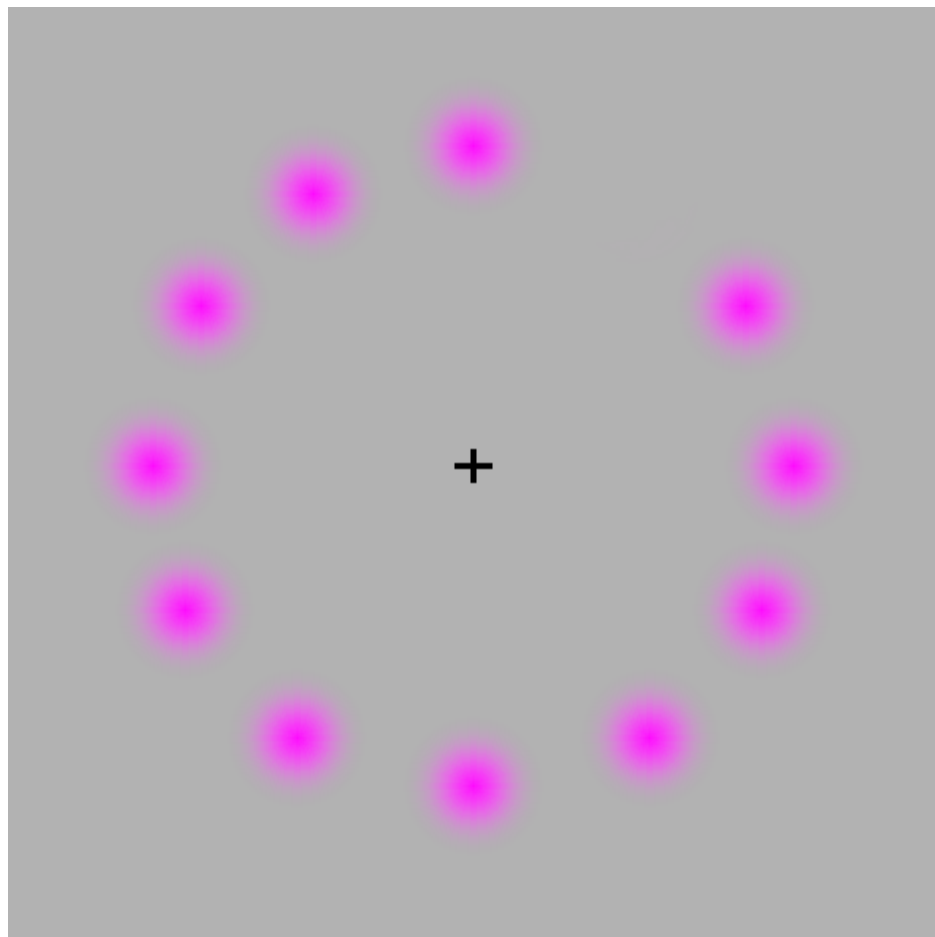**Creating Continuity with analogous colours**
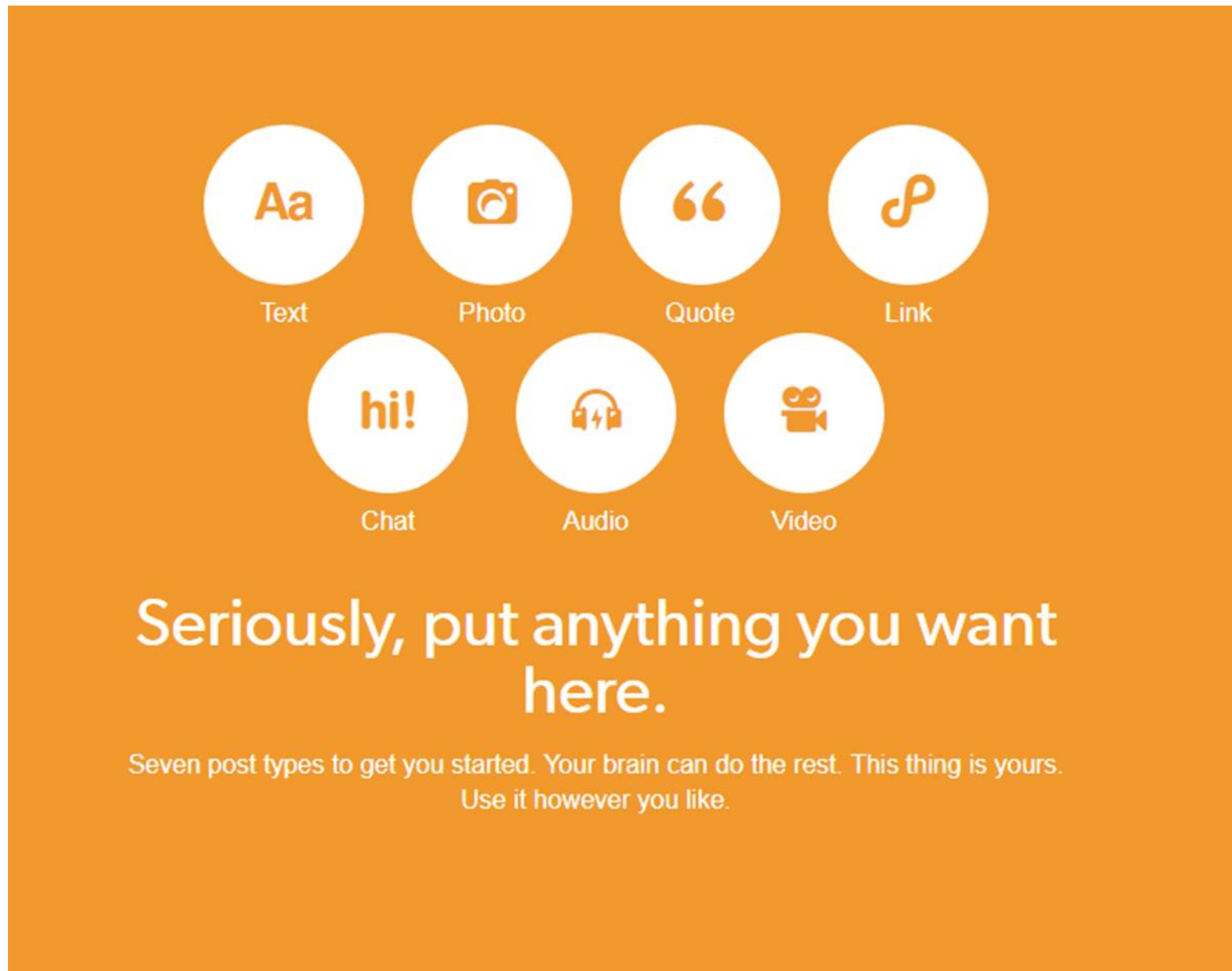
Creating Contrast with a background colour and white texts

Creating Vibrancy with analogous colours

Colours as a design element

Colour palettes

Warm Colours

Red: Passion, Love, Anger

Orange: Energy, Happiness, Vitality

Yellow: Happiness, Hope, Deceit

Colours as a design element

Colour palettes

Cool Colours

Green: New Beginnings, Abundance, Nature

Blue: Calm, Responsible, Sadness, Trust

Purple: Creativity, Royalty, Wealth

Colours as a design element

Colour palettes

Neutrals

Black: Mystery, Elegance, Evil

Grey: Moody, Conservative, Formality

White: Purity, Cleanliness, Virtue

Brown: Nature, Wholesomeness, Dependability

Tan or Beige: Conservative, Piety, Dull

Cream or Ivory: Calm, Elegant, Purity

Colours as a design element

Colour palettes

Useful resources

http://www.colourlovers.com/

http://colorschemedesigner.com/

Examples of good use of colours:

✓ https://www.truedigital.co.uk/

✓ https://basisystems.com/

✓ https://www.atlassian.com/time-wasting-at-work-infographic

✓ https://www.naturalawakeningsmag.com

✓ https://www.oipolloi.com/

✓ Facebook

Use colours to enforce your IA
(the purpose, the context, the message, the user, the content)

- ✓ https://www.doritos.co.uk/

- ✓ https://www.greenparty.org.uk/

- ✓ http://www.moshimonsters.com
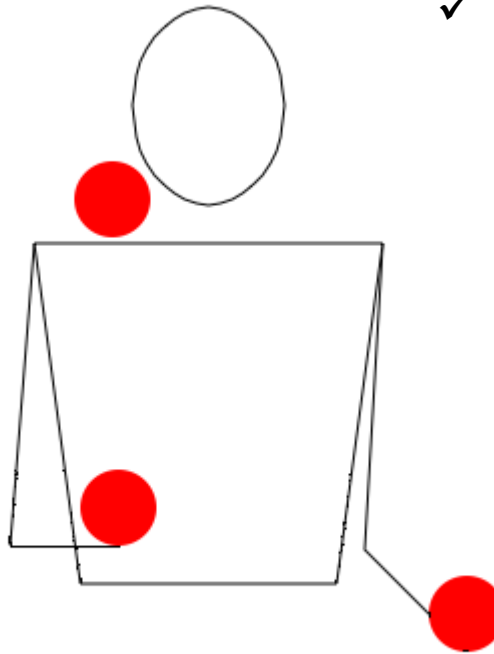
- ✓ https://www.washingtonpost.com/

- ✓ http://melonfree.com/

Design Theory
- ✓ Information Architecture (IA)
- ✓ User eXperience (UX)

Design Principles
- ✓ UI Design Principles
- ✓ Colour as a design element

Technology
- ✓ HTML5
- ✓ CSS3
- ✓ JavaScript

Technology

*The problem with CS professionals is that
they know technology well
but
know very little about how users use technology*

The three Amigos

My "worst" website:

http://www.theweddinglens.com/why-the-wedding-lens