

Chapter 3: Billboard Design 101

Conventions help people understand things quickly. They ensure that even across countries, cultures, and languages, there are things that can be universally understood, like a stop sign or a website. These conventions are tried and true, and if designers want to innovate and create something new, they have to make sure it's either very clear with no learning curve, or it adds so much value that the learning curve is worth it. In the end, clarity trumps consistency. Visual hierarchies help people understand which information is the most important. It offers a logical, clear, and fast way to process information. Ideally, your page should be divided into clearly defined areas. You want your users to be able to run through your defined areas and understand which information they need immediately and ignore what they don't need. Similarly, you want to make it obvious what's clickable. Choose a consistent text color or decoration (such as button shape) to indicate what is interactive, and stick with it. Don't let everything on the page SHOUT! If "everything" is important then you're not doing your job. Rely on your established visual hierarchies and leave only a few obvious choices for the user to interact with. In general, people only glance or scan text including webpages, so accept & support that- use headings! Write them using descriptive or at least intriguing language, make the size hierarchy between heading levels clear, and use gestalt principles to attach a heading to the appropriate body copy (closeness). Keep your paragraphs short, use bulleted lists whenever appropriate, and highlight key terms (but not in the same style as your links!)