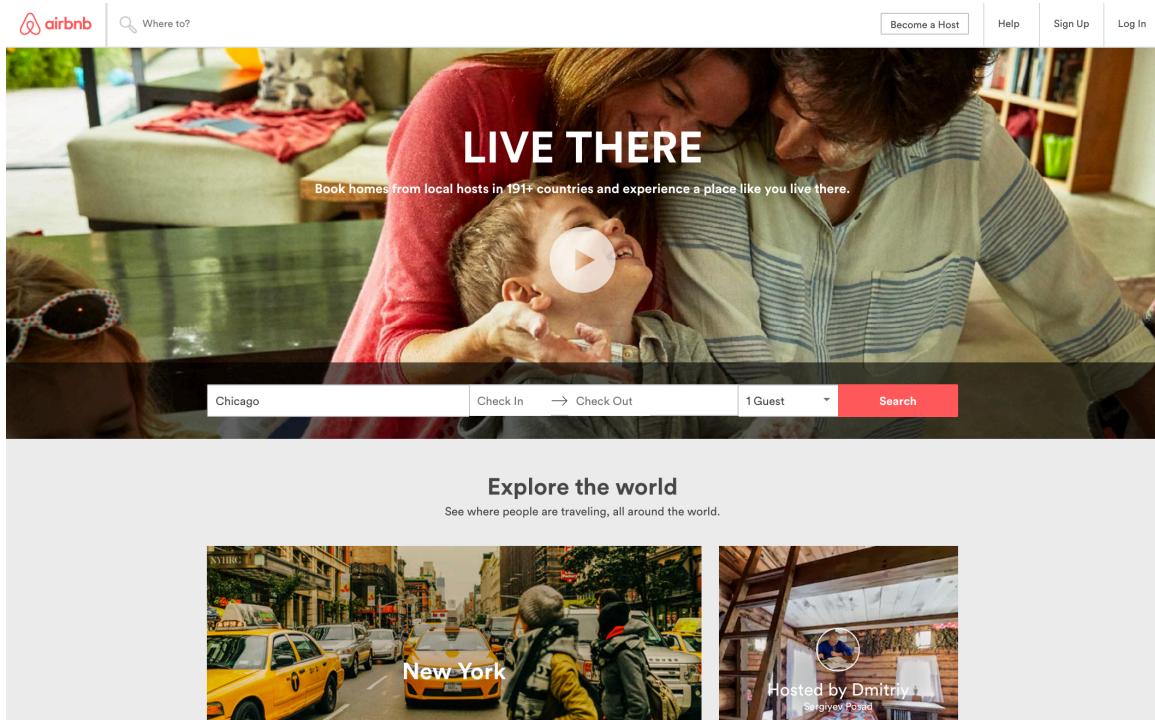


Unit 2 Design Challenge:

website #1: AirBnB



1. How does the site exhibit effective use of space, size and balance?

The site has a clear focal point in the header's slide carousel. This sets the tone for the site that it is all about the human experience. There is a clear call to action to search for the city you would like to visit with check in & check out dates so the user can see the MANY listings available.

The hierarchy is clear. The user is pulled into the header and given an easy opportunity to search for cities they'd like to visit. The text in the h1 headline invites the viewer to move beyond the fold where they are shown other cities to consider through a masonry grid of city galleries. These are less important though and surrounded by ample negative space. The site is well balanced through the use of a grid and moves between single larger header like sections and mulit-column sections as the user scrolls down the page.

2. How could this site benefit from a reexamination of space, size and balance?

I'm not sure that I would change much about the design of this site. The only thing I would change is I would reduce the amount of negative space on the sides of the masonry grid of city. I would prefer a little more width and three columns instead of only two.

Website #2: Houzz.com

The homepage of Houzz.com features a large, scenic image of a rustic outdoor living space with a fireplace and a stone wall. Overlaid on this image is the text "THE NEW WAY TO DESIGN YOUR HOME". Below the image are two sign-up buttons: "Sign Up with Email" (green) and "Continue with Facebook" (blue). A central call-to-action button says "Create the home you've always wanted". Below this are three main sections: "Discover design ideas" (with a magnifying glass icon), "Find home professionals" (with a wrench and briefcase icon), and "Shop for your home" (with a shopping cart icon). Each section includes a brief description and a "Get Started" button. At the bottom left is a sidebar titled "Search 5,489 Effingham Professionals" listing various service categories with icons. To the right are two featured stories: "My Houzz: Modern Personality for a 1905 Family Home" and "Porter Construction Traditional Kitchen".

1. How does the site exhibit effective use of space, size and balance?

The site has a clear focal point in the large header slide carousel. The site has a great balance between positive and negative space. I like how the first section offers a significant amount of negative space. As a result, I am not distracted by the negative space around the multi-column section that follows.

The relationship of sizes flows nicely. There is a clear hierarchy with strong calls to action: sign in / connect then Get Started.

2. How could the site benefit from a re-examination of space, size and balance?

I honestly don't think I would change anything about the site's design.

What makes these two sites different?

At first glance, the two sites feel similar as the main differences are below the fold.

Both sites have a prominent slide carousel in their header with a width of 100%. Both sites have text over the images in their carousel and a call to action included in the header space.

Both sites have a search field above their header as a part of their navigation.

The main difference above the fold is that houzz uses text / graphics in their first section. This section has a lot of negative space which offers a nice relief before moving into all of the information in the mulit-column section that follows.

In contrast, airBnB has a h1 headline which offers ample negative space. However, the height of this section is rather small so this first section doesn't offer as much relief as the first section of the houzz site.

As the user moves below the fold, the houzz site reads much like a blog to emphasize the human aspect of the site's users. It is not too different than a multi-column portfolio grid, except that the rows don't have the same number of columns. It doesn't feel as random as a masonry grid as the rows that don't contain 3 columns have a very deliberate reason for breaking the pattern. This section continues to offer additional postings as the user scrolls down. The footer is minimal with a white background / light text that does not demand much attention.

Below the fold of the airBnB site, the user moves through three sections after the header that feel deliberate in their design. The header has a width of 100%. Section 1 has a masonry grid that has a width of about 65%. The second section is another slide carousel that has a width of 100%. The last section has 4 columns and fills a width of 80%. The footer is prevalent with a black background with white text to contrast the white background / black text of the main site. The footer includes many links, including social media links.