Design Critique

Step 1: Reflection

Which existing websites out there most inspired your web site design thus far?

Existing design portfolio and design agency websites. Seeing what other designers do to show their various skills was great, particularly other blogger-turned designers such as:

http://katejordandesign.com/

http://www.thesuitcasedesigns.com/

http://www.mergeworld.com/

I wanted it to be attractive, but not overly "pretty" so I was trying to find that geeky/girly balance.

Which parts of the design are you most proud of?

The mobile view. Using media queries to be able to change my site and make the user experience work well on all devices was very satisfying and I really like the way it looks on a small screen.

What struggles did you encounter in your design process?

I struggled to stick with decisions I'd made with regards to colour and typography. I'd start with one thing and then change it and I spent a long time image sourcing. I felt that the image influenced the design more than the design influenced the image, and that formed the basis of the look and feel of the site initially. I had a picture in my mind of what I wanted but without going and hiring a photographer I had to work with what I found and then used that as a starting point for colours and typography.

Which struggles did you encounter during page development?

I found it frustrating sometimes that I couldn't understand why something wasn't changing and why certain elements didn't line up. It's not something I have a complete hold of just yet.

What did you learn from making your project responsive?

That there are a lot of changes that need to be made to make the page readable and user friendly on different devices. It's not just a matter of making everything 'fit' onto the screen. I also had to consider all screen sizes from the beginning. When picking an image and making design choices I had to keep the question – but how is this going to work on mobile? – in my mind at all times.

Step 2: Reviews

Review a website from group 1 and a website from group 2 of the following list, commenting on each website's layout, typography, navigation, and overall flow.

Group 1

http://www.businessoffashion.com/

There's a lot of content and the design is very effective at laying it out in a way that flows. The layout is extremely clean. The logo stands out because of the whitespace around and balances the rest of the content-heavy page.

The immediate focal point is the highlighted main content on the left in the scroller. Then it's the top left because of the bright colour. Then my eye goes to the right to the 'Daily Digest' section. As it's separated by numbers in a different colour and a larger font this leads the eye downwards inviting the user to scroll.

Simple lines, white, black and grey, with small touches of a maroon to draw attention to specific areas: 'New', 'Subscribe' and the numbers make them stand out a little. Separation of content through shades of grey, boxes and lines stops the content looking overwhelming.

The main font used looks like quite a classic news serif font which is used everywhere in different weights, apart from the nav and sub-headings, slugs which are all in a sans-serif font, mostly using small caps.

Group 2

http://cavs.mit.edu/

The MIT site is so out of balance it's disconcerting. It goes against a lot of the guidelines, so much it almost feels like they are trying to make the user uncomfortable.

The font looks like a very standard web font which has not been styled at all and the blue they use reminds me of the early websites and the standard

colour for linking and the font size is generally too small and not the best size for readability.

The moving graphics are always in your line of sight so are distracting. There is no particular flow with the eye bouncing around the whole screen. There is an excessive amount of white space which doesn't help.

The lines don't completely line up. There isn't consistency on the links. Some say 'more' while some of the images are clickable but with no indication that they should be.

The images and text often overlap in the subpages. It's basically a lesson in what *not* to do.