THE PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Contrast

Contrast is the difference between various elements within a design, that makes them stand out from each other.

Balance

Balance can be symmetrical (with items of equal weight on either side of a center line) or asymmetrical (with items of different weights laid out in relation to a line that may or may not be centered).

Emphasis

Emphasis causes certain parts of a design to stand out compared to other elements. Conversely, it can also be used to minimize how much an element stands out (such as fine print).

Proportion

Proportion is the size of elements in relation to one another. Larger elements tend to be seen as more important while smaller ones are less so.

Hierarchy

Hierarchy refers to the importance of elements within a design. The most important elements should appear to be the most important, and vice versa.

Repetition

Repetition reinforces an idea or perception. It can be done via things like using the same format for headers, reusing the same colors, images, or similar choices.

Rhythm

The spacing between elements can create a sense of rhythm, either regular or irregular. Rhythms can be used to create a variety of emotions, including calmness (with regular rhythms) and excitement (with irregular rhythms).

Pattern

Patterns can refer to repetition of design elements (as seen in things like wallpaper patterns). They can also refer to set standards for how certain elements are designed (such as top navigation).

White Space

White space, or negative space, refers to areas of a design that have no design elements. This space is important for making a design uncluttered, as well as for making various elements stand out.

Movement

Movement is the way a person's eyes travel over a design. The most important element should lead to the next most important and so on. This can be done via positioning, emphasis, and other design principles.

Variety

Variety creates visual interest in a design. It can be created via typography, color, images, textures, and virtually any other design element. It prevents designs from becoming monotonous and boring.

Unity

Unity is how well the elements of a design work together. Each element should have a clear visual relationship with each other element to help communicate a clear, concise message.