VISUAL & DESIGN PRINCIPLES
for designing a visually enhanced
and a more inclusive web site. 〞

Day 1:
- Design principles
- Making a site more inclusive
- Colour use

VISUAL & DESIGN PRINCIPLES presented by Hothead Studio for LLS (Frank Hofmann)

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Class objective:

Living in an era where the visual part of what you display has become more important than ever before, the topics covered are to visually enhance & add quality to the web-based work you create.

Eight factors that can visually enhance your website:

1. Simplicity:

Keeping the site design as simple as possible has a better effect on the viewers. It leaves the viewer in a more relaxed state which motivates the viewer to remain on the site for longer.

2. Colour:

Colour communicates messages & evoke emotional responses. This can help you influence your customer's perception & behaviour towards your brand. Try to apply a colour theme limited to only 2 - 3 colours. Pleasing colour combinations also increase customer engagement as it makes people feel good, motivating them to remain on the site. (More aspects of colour will be covered.)

3. Type: (fonts)

Good typography use commands attention & works as the visual voice of the brand. Typefaces should be clear to read, especially since on different devices it will appear smaller than on others. Legible website fonts are: Lucida Sans, Arial, Calibri, Verdana, Tahoma & Helvetica. It is best to use no more than 3 different fonts on the website.

Eight factors that can visually enhance your website:

Imagery:

Most of the information we consume on websites & our online interaction is visual. Hence, it is important that all photography, imagery, video & graphics used is of high quality & expressive as to portray its message with positive dynamics. The professional feel that this creates lends the website public credibility & benefits the aim or purpose of the website.

4. Navigation:

Since the navigation on websites are where people interact to find what they are looking for, it is essential to keep it simple, intuitive & consistent. If the site navigation is confusing visitors leave to find what they need elsewhere.

5. Layout:

The **F**-based pattern is the most common way visitors scan text on a website. Eye-tracking studies have found that most of what people see is in the top and left areas of the screen.

6. The **F** shaped layout mimics our natural pattern of reading in the West (left to right and top to bottom). Applying this to the website will follow the reader's natural pattern of scanning the page.
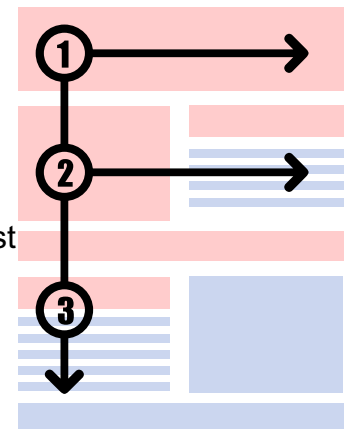
7. Visual Hierarchy:

Visual hierarchy is to arrange the elements in order of importance. This is done either by size, colour, imagery, contrast, typography, whitespace, texture & style. The function of visual hierarchy is to establish a focal point because it shows visitors where the most important information is.

8. Mobile Friendly:

As we know, currently & for a while now most online interaction happens from mobile screens. Therefore it is clearly beneficial to build websites with a responsive layout that maintains the websites' visual impact when viewed on mobile screen.

Making a website inclusive & accessible to the visually impaired:

"285 million people are estimated to be visually impaired worldwide: 39 million are blind & 246 million have low vision." - World Health Organization

Given the figures by the World Health Organisation, a website for the visually impaired will not only make it more inclusive, but will also expand the scope of the audience. There are 3 categories of being visually impaired: Low vision, colour blindness & the blind.

1. For low vision viewers:

Good ways to make a site more accessible for people with low vision is to either use bigger text or to include text size settings in order for them to make the text bigger. Proper contrast can also be applied to make viewing easier for them.

2. For Colour-blind viewers:

As there are 3 variations of colour-blindness, it is not always easy for the developers/designers to truly satisfy everyone's needs and at the same time maintain the desired look & feel of the site.

Therefore, the simplest & most practical approach is also the proper application of contrast. Should one be willing to go the extra mile in accommodating the colour-blind audience, there are websites that can assist you in doing so.
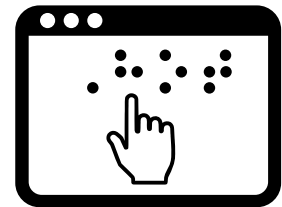
To see what a site looks like, to all 3 variations of colour-blindness, the url of the site can be pasted in the provided window on the site in the link provided below. Then one adjust one's colour use accordingly:

https://www.toptal.com/designers/colorfilter

3. For the blind:

If you want to your website to be accessible website you have to make sure it works with 'screen readers'. Although HTML is accessible to screen readers, there are a couple of points to note so that the proper information is relayed.

1.) Pay attention to the title tag
2.) Make sure your site is navigation-friendly
3.) Every image needs an alt attribute
4.) Role Attributes and Landmarks
5.) Avoid click event listeners on <div> elements

Should this interest you, a comprehensive elaboration can be read on this link:

https://medium.com/hackernoon/a-short-guide-to-screen-reader-friendly-code-9ccf31b7e36a

Because of colour use playing such a huge role in today's communication and effect on the audience, below follows some information that can be applied to optimize this aspect effectively.

How to apply the use of colour for a more effective website:

Colour has the power to communicate messages & evoke emotional responses. This engages the viewer in a positive way and hence, also motivates the viewer to peruse the site properly.

Finding a colour palette that fits your brand will allow you to influence your customer's behaviour towards your brand. Keeping the colour selection limited to 2 or 3 colours will keep a simple feel & enhance the desired effect.

When choosing the **brand** name display it will be beneficial to apply scientific findings of how it effects the viewer's perception of the brand, as shown in the colour chart below:

RED	ORANGE	YELLOW	GREEN	BLUE	PINK	PURPLE	Brown	BLACK	WHITE
Power	Confidence	Optimism	Nature	Trust	Balance	Wealth	Dependable	Luxury	Simplicity
Energy	Adventure	Creativity	Growth	Loyalty	Creativity	Vision	Reliable	Elegance	Cleanliness
Strength	Warmth	Happiness	Prosperity	Logic	Imagination	Royalty	Support	Class	Health

Although there will be instances where these colours are used differently for various reasons, it is good to apply these guidelines as it is how it affects the majority of people.

When choosing the colours of the **website** itself, remember that the warm colours move to the front & the cool colours subside backwards, putting the focus on the warmer colours first.

On the right is a diagram of warm vs cool colours.

Warm Colours:

Cool Colours:
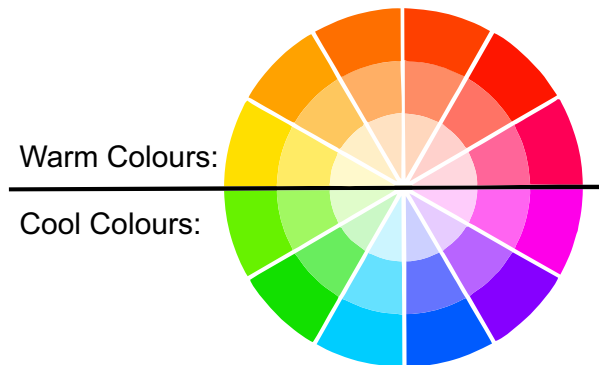
Since there are so many variations in the effective use of colour, I included the link below. Should you want to further your knowledge in this regard, on the link below you will find more data elaborating on the psychology of colour use:

https://neilpatel.com/blog/psychology-of-color-and-conversions/

This briefly covers some important aspects of creating a website that is more inclusive and has a more dynamic/effective visual display. There is so much data we can apply to all we do today, but if one can currently incorporate the covered aspects, it will make for better results & progress.

Happy creating!

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