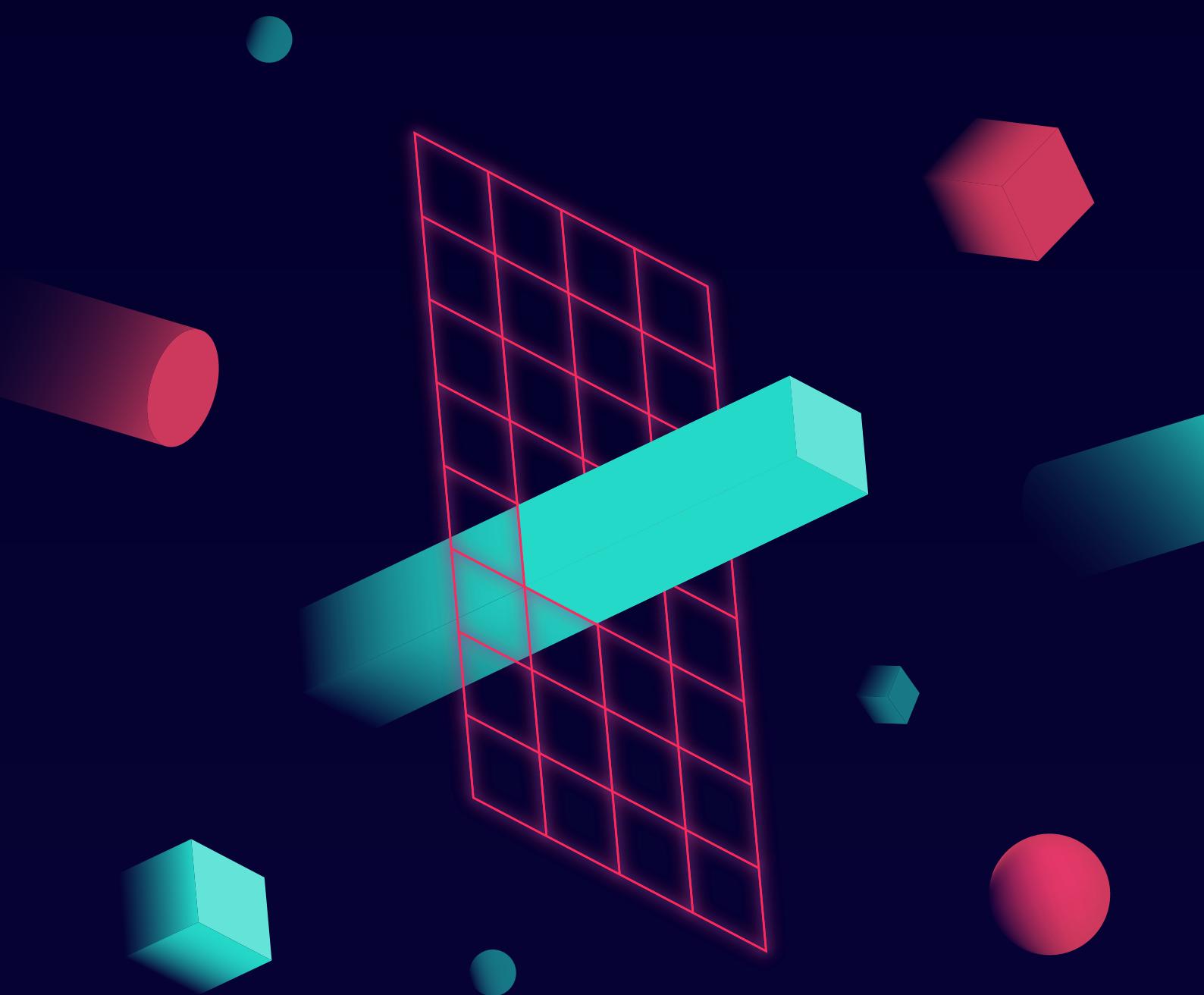


UXPin

Web Design Trends 2018





Web Design Trends

2018

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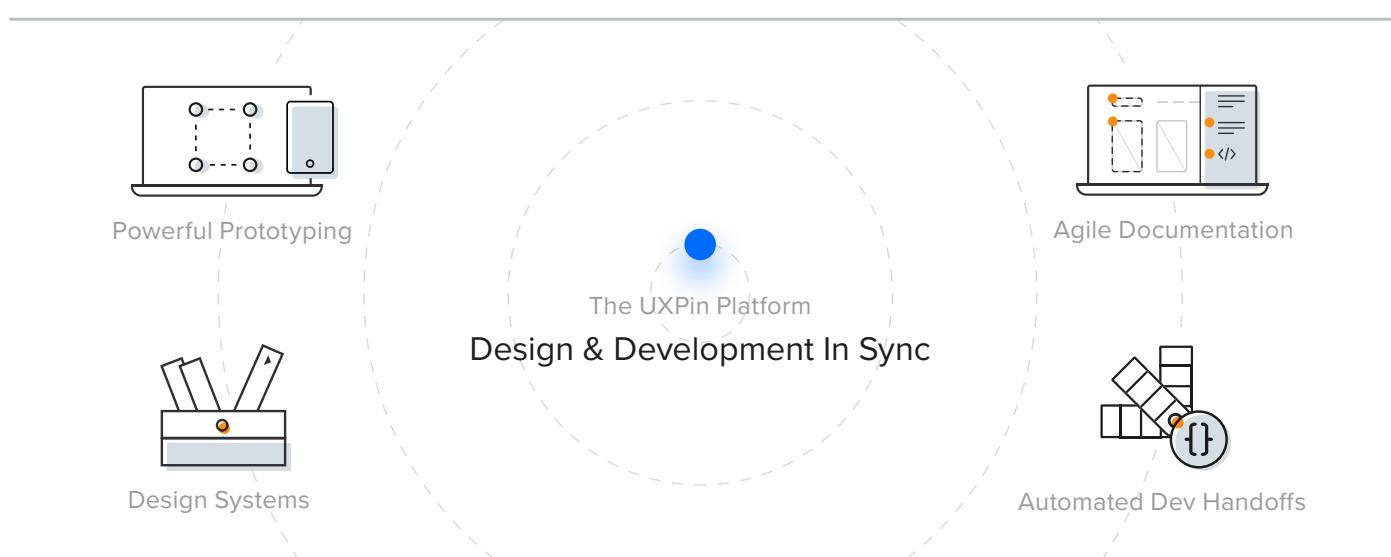
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Design consistency. Product development efficiency. Everywhere.

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UXPin is the full-stack design platform for product teams. Design, document, create your design system, and automate developer handoffs. Together.



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Give everyone a consistent toolkit. Import Sketch assets to build a design system of interactive components. Codify best practices and pin them to your elements.

Spread design collaboration and buy-in

Automatically notify teams about updates to your prototypes and design system. Consolidate all feedback into action items.

Automate documentation and developer handoff

Auto-generate specs and style guides. Pin technical notes to elements for easy reference.



Larry Sawyer
PayPal

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Component-Based Websites Created With Design Systems

While it's not necessarily a visual or interactive trend, design systems undoubtedly influence the look and feel of all the properties it governs. They provide the principles, tools, libraries, and code that create the trends we see on the web today.

Design systems are becoming more than a trend – they're a best practice that will extend far beyond 2018. In the coming years, we can expect design consistency across the web to improve.

That doesn't mean that every website will look like each other, but rather that each website will be more consistent with itself and with our expectations of functionality and usability.

Design systems help solve the problems of scale that come with large and remote teams working together. They give everyone standardized principles and components, which leads to benefits like:

- **Faster time to market:** Design systems create a Lego-like process where everything is reusable, minimizing the time spent rebuilding the same components.
- **Consistent UX across platforms and products:** Standardized components create a much more coherent “look and feel”.
- **Less version control issues:** If you update a component in a design system, the changes populate across all instances. The design system is the final record of truth.
- **Easier collaboration and communication:** Design systems create a shared general knowledge base and components for designers, PMs, and engineers.

That's why [69% of 3157 designers surveyed](#) said they were currently building their own design system, if they didn't have one already.

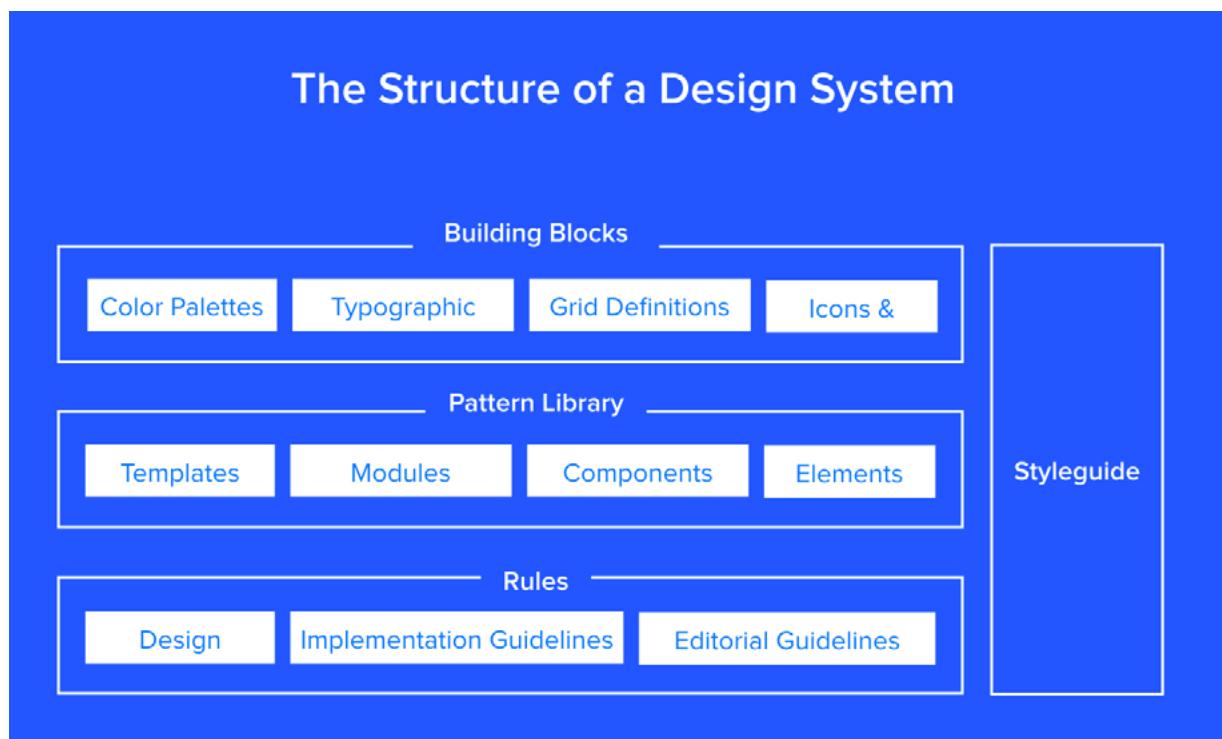
While only large companies had the resources to build design systems before, new tools and processes have now made it much more feasible for companies of all sizes. We've seen it firsthand as small companies and agencies have even made good use of UXPin's [design systems platform](#).

Let's explore the nuts and bolts of a design system, how to build one, then showcase a few examples of websites built with a design system.

What exactly is a design system?

First, let's get the definitions straight.

- **Design System** – the complete set of design standards, documentation, and principles along with the toolkit (UI patterns and code components) to achieve those standards.
- **Pattern Library** – A subclass in the design system, this is the set of design patterns for use across a company.
- **Style guide** – Another subclass in the design system, this static documentation describes the design system itself: how products should look and feel, use cases for UI patterns, correct typographic scales, etc.



Bottom line: A pattern library (e.g. set of symbols and assets in Sketch) and style guide are only parts of the much more robust design system.

How it all connects

First, keep your focus broad and think about the idea of design systems. At the broadest level, a design system is a living entity containing the common linguistics, principles, and tools to help teams build products coherently. As [Nathan Curtis says](#), a “design system isn’t a project, it’s a product serving products”.

[Shopify’s Polaris Design System](#) is one of the best examples. On the homepage, they’ve already broken down all the core sections:

- **Product principles** – What is the purpose and soul behind all the products?
- **Written content** – How should the product’s interface copy look and feel?



Be principled

Explore what we care about most when we build new features and products.

[Find out more](#)



Write it

Learn how to use language to design a more thoughtful product experience.

[Get writing](#)



Get visual

Find out how we approach the visual elements of our interface with purpose.

[Take a look](#)



Build something

Use components as building blocks as you develop new products and features.

[Start creating](#)



REACT COMPONENTS

Clone the repository to start building with Shopify Polaris.



UI KIT

Get the latest version of our UI kit as a Sketch file.

Shopify’s Polaris Design System

- **Visual properties** – What should the “skin” of the product look and feel like?

- **Components** – What are the UI patterns and code components needed to build products coherently across devices?

In this case, Polaris is the complete design system of principles, written content, visual properties, and components. The style guide is simply the static documentation on the Polaris website which describes how to use the design system. The pattern library is part of the “Components” in the Polaris design system.

The differences are subtle but unmistakably important when it comes to improving product development. A style guide on its own becomes quickly updated since documentation requires maintenance. A pattern library lacks the instructions and principles for coherent implementation.

The design system ties everything together.

How to create a design system

Now that you know what these terms mean and how they work together, let's quickly review how to build a design system. Here is a quick summary of our 50-page e-book [*Creating a Design System: The 100-Point Process Checklist*](#).

1. **Create the UI inventory:** First list and describe all of the design patterns currently used in your interface and note the inconsistencies therein.

2. **Get support of the organization:** Present your findings and explain the utility of a common design language to everyone. As explained in our [Evangelizing Design Systems templates](#), estimate the number of design and engineering hours wasted on redundant work and how product coherence can improve NPS scores.
3. **Establish design principles:** Codify your practices. You're now starting to work on the style guide for the design system.
4. **Build the color palette:** When building the UI inventory, we found 116 different shades of grey that needed consolidation. Create the palette and its naming convention.
5. **Build the typographic scale:** You can optimize the scale to serve existing styles, or you might try to build a harmonious scale using the golden ratio or major second. When building the scale, don't forget that you're not only setting the size of the font, but also weight, line-height and other properties.
6. **Implement icons library and other styles:** Decide which icons from the UI inventory will become part of the design system, then [standardize the implementation](#).
7. **Start building your first patterns:** This is the task that will never end. Patterns should always either reflect the truth about the product, or reflect the aspirational state of the product in the near future.

Websites built with a design system

You can find plenty of websites that describe [each company's design system](#).

But what does a website look and feel like when it's built with a design system? Much more logical, consistent, and better-performing thanks to less code bloat.

Here's a few websites that were built with the principles and toolkits of some of the best design systems around.

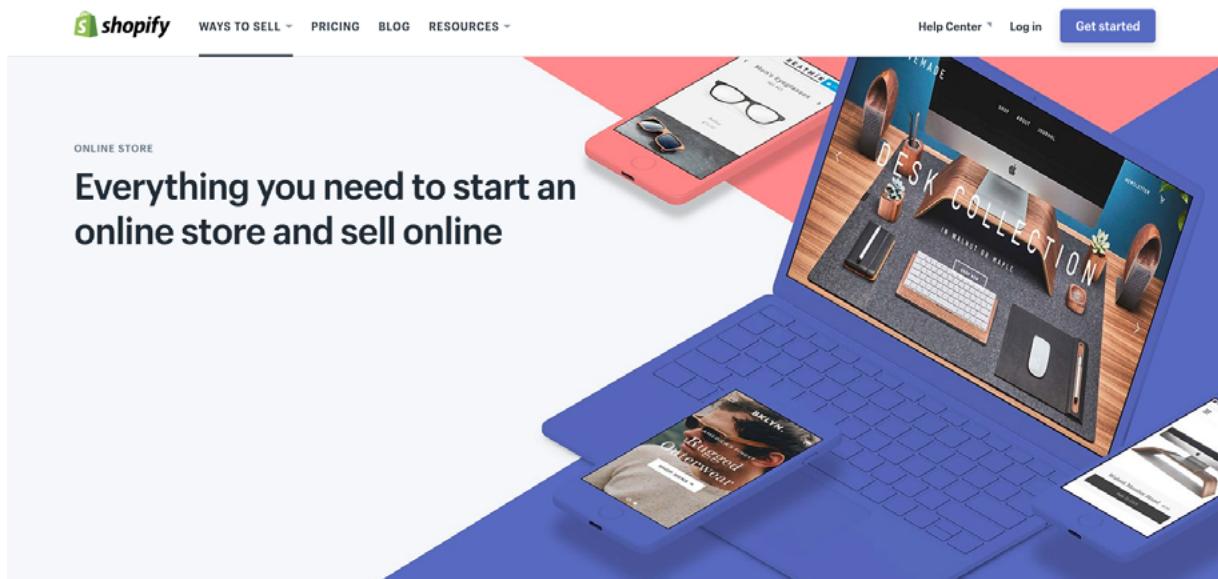
1. GE Digital

The screenshot shows the GE Digital website. At the top, there's a dark header with the GE logo and the tagline "GE Imagination at work". Below the header, a large banner features a photograph of an industrial facility with the text "OIL & GAS" and "New Tech Helps Oil & Gas Weather Storm" along with a "EXPLORE OIL & GAS" button. To the right of the banner is a sidebar with a list of industries:

01	Automotive
02	Aviation
03	Chemical
04	Food & Beverage
05	Healthcare
06	Industrial Manufacturing
07	Intelligent Environments
08	Oil & Gas With Knowledge Comes Profit
09	Power & Utilities
10	Transportation

Below the sidebar, the text "Our Software and Services" is visible. At the bottom of the page, the text "Built according to [Predix](#) design system" is displayed.

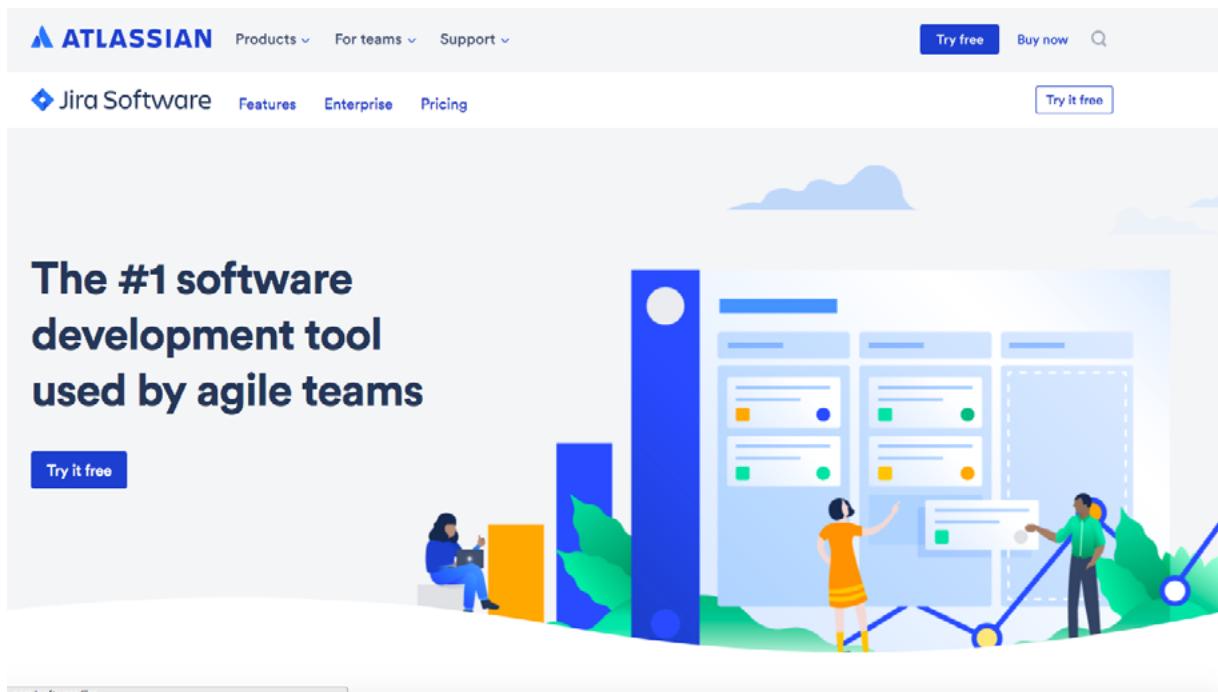
2. Shopify



The screenshot shows the Shopify homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'WAYS TO SELL', 'PRICING', 'BLOG', 'RESOURCES', 'Help Center', 'Log in', and a prominent blue 'Get started' button. Below the navigation, the text 'ONLINE STORE' is followed by the headline 'Everything you need to start an online store and sell online'. To the right, a large image features a blue laptop, a red smartphone, and a white tablet, each displaying different parts of an online store. The laptop screen shows a 'DESK COLLECTION' page with various desk accessories. The smartphone screen shows a product page for a 'Reindeer Onesie'. The tablet screen shows a product page for a 'Leather Journal'. Below this main image, a sub-headline reads 'Selling online with your own ecommerce website has never been easier, faster, or more scalable. Impress your customers with a beautiful store.' To the right of this sub-headline is a text input field with placeholder text 'Enter your email address' and a 'Get started' button. At the bottom right, there's a small note: 'Free 14-day trial, no credit card required.'

Built according to Polaris design system

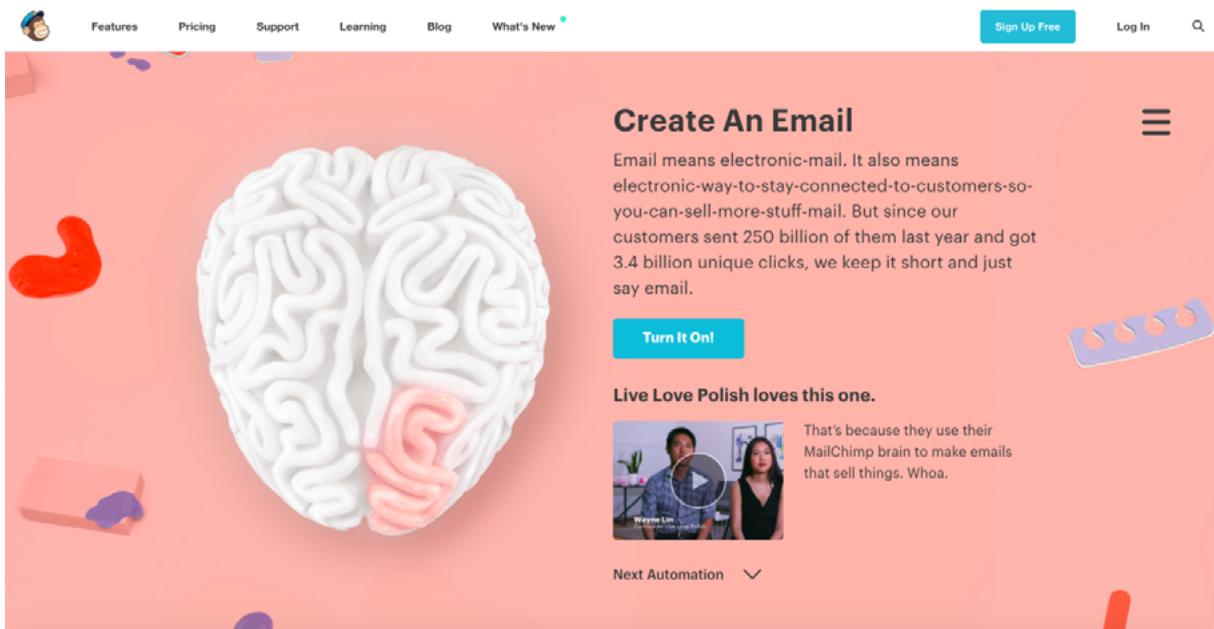
3. Atlassian



The screenshot shows the Jira Software homepage. At the top, the Atlassian logo is followed by navigation links for 'Products', 'For teams', 'Support', 'Try free', 'Buy now', and a search icon. Below this, the Jira Software logo is shown with links for 'Features', 'Enterprise', and 'Pricing', and a 'Try it free' button. The main visual is a colorful illustration of three people interacting with a digital board. One person is sitting at a desk with a laptop, another is standing and pointing at the board, and a third is sitting at a desk. The board itself is a grid of cards with various icons and text. The background is a bright, airy space with clouds. At the bottom left, there's a URL 'atlassian.com/software/jira'.

Built according to Atlassian Design Guidelines

4. MailChimp



Built according to MailChimp Design System

5. Github

Built according to Github Design System

Conclusion

A properly built design system is a living gold standard—from the general building blocks of every piece of design, through the UI patterns, and building up the high-level rules defining the future of the product.

A design system isn't set in stone however. It must evolve with the company to reflect the most current truth.

Building and maintaining a design system is definitely a big challenge, but one worth facing.

Modern Retro Designs

What's old is new again. At least when it comes to website design, anyway.

Design concepts borrowed from decades ago are making an impact digitally today. Many of the ideas and designs originally created for print campaigns are making a comeback in the digital space.

What makes retro design styles work is the sense of nostalgia they invoke with users visually. Pair that emotion with a modern interface and user patterns and you've got a combination that's hard not to interact with.

Modern retro design is so popular that [The New York Times](#) even gave it a mention:

While millennials and members of Generation Z – those born in the years from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s – may not remember what the web looked like in the era of AltaVista and GeoCities, the retro designs tap into the current cultural revival

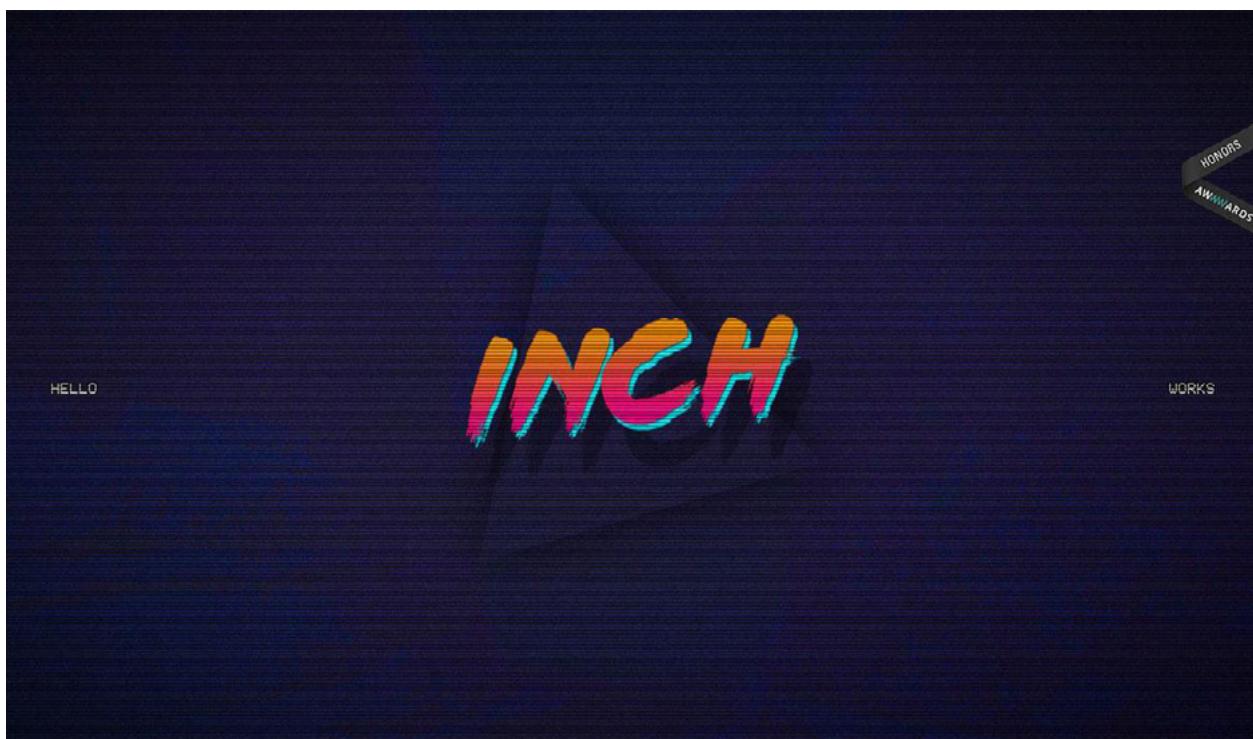
of all things '90s. (See the return of "Twin Peaks," "Will & Grace" and concert T-shirts.)

For those who are older, these sites recall the improvised internet of their youth, in the days before mobile optimization and beta-tested user interfaces brought a sleek uniformity to modern web design.

Nostalgic websites meant to mimic the days of dial-up modems are cropping up in artsy and tech-geek corners of the web.

So what does the modern retro design trend look like? Let's take a look.

Throwback Decades



Lucas B.



Sweet Magnolia Gelato

The image shows the homepage of Solange Music. On the left, there is a large photograph of a person standing on a beach under a clear blue sky with white clouds. On the right, there is a form for contact information. It includes fields for name, email address, address, country/region, and postal code, followed by a submit button and links for privacy policy and terms and conditions. Below the form, there is a row of six icons with labels: news, live, music, videos, works, and store. The word "solange" is written vertically on the far left edge of the page.

Solange Music



Shiner

Retro can actually refer to a lot of things. The modern retro designs that are most popular now include styles that are most reminiscent of the 1980s and 1990s. (Which for some of us might not seem like that long ago at all.)

Designers are also borrowing a few influences from the 1970s, particularly in terms of color.

What's appealing about retro design is that it pulls from early computer influences as well as print, fashion and events of the time:

- **1990s:** This era was both bold with lots of animation color and moving parts or stripped down versions of designs that provided pure information. Designers were trying to find their way in the new digital age of visual and graphic design.

- **1980s:** Pixels were OK and the bright neon culture of MTV and video games had a distinct influence on design elements of the time.
- **1970s:** Muted color and bold typefaces help draw users into designs that were still primarily in print (aside from television screens).

To make any of these retro styles work, the interface must meet modern usability standards. In many of the examples, you can actually see the juxtaposition of old and new – a muted color palette with a familiar hamburger-style navigation menu or a pixelated game with simple swipe actions.

Old-School Typography



SBS Australia



Chamberlains Leather Milk

Big, block-style lettering with elaborate strokes and coloring will take users back in time in an instant. The same can be said for more cursive styles with heavier lines and roughed up edges.

Both styles have found new success because of resurgence in retro typography styles. Many of these website designs pay homage to print with an almost movie-poster style that demands attention.

To make the most of these vintage style typefaces, keep the rest of the typography palette simple. Opt for one retro typeface for display purposes and use a simple serif or sans serif for the main body copy to ensure readability.

Consider pairing this style of typography with old-style visuals as well. (Some of these typefaces can look a little odd with super modern

imagery. Remember one of the keys to a retro style is to evoke the emotion of the era.) Both examples above use a dot-grain filter for images that connects typography to the design style of the 1970s and 1980s when photography and videography had that same dotted look.

Less Bright or Brighter Color Choices



Caava Design

Flat design and material design led to a resurgence in bright, bold color options. Modern retro styles pull color trends the other way with more muted hues and color overlays.

Reds, yellows and oranges are especially popular. As can be subtle blues and greens when you are going for a 1970s or 1980s vibe. Many of these color choices are paired with illustrated imagery, rather than actual photographs.



Vintage Hope

Color sometimes isn't enough to move you to another time though; it can take other visual cues.

Consider neon colors, which have an early 1990s feel. With the right animation – harsh flashing rather than subtle movements – users know exactly what decade they are in. The same colors though are popular today without the nostalgia, making it important to use color with some other visual cues, most often typography or texture and gradients.

Texture and Gradients



Hovland

The website header includes the brand name 'BALENCIAGA' on the left, a search bar in the center, and 'LOG IN' and a menu icon on the right. The main navigation bar shows 'WOMEN > NEW ARRIVALS'. The products are arranged in a grid:

- Top Left:** A woman wearing a teal poncho and a floral skirt. Product: TUBULAR PLEATED SKIRT \$1,395.
- Top Middle:** A grey tote bag. Product: LAUNDRY CABAS S \$2,250.
- Top Right:** Black over-the-knee boots. Product: KNIFE OVER THE KNEE BOOTS \$1,395.
- Bottom Right:** A gold clutch. Product: WRAP BUCKLE EARCUFF \$230.
- Bottom Left:** A close-up of a shoe.
- Bottom Middle:** A woman wearing a dark coat and red skirt.
- Bottom Right:** A small product shot.

Balenciaga

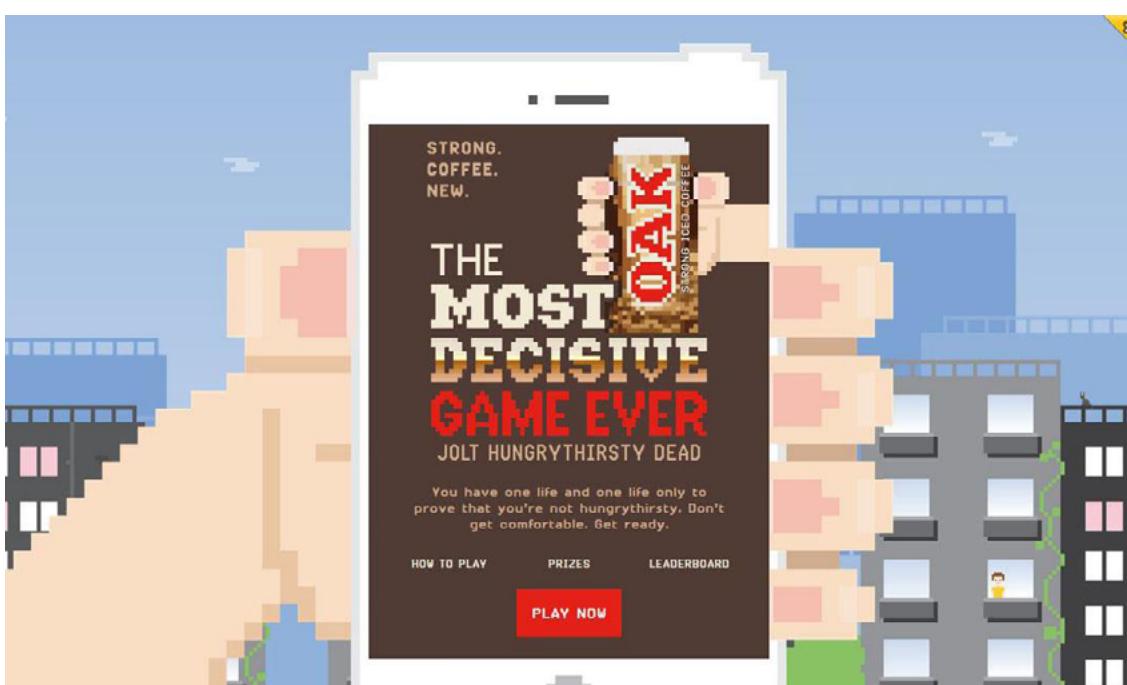
Background patterns can be a huge visual cue when it comes to creating a time-period connection. Remember getting away from skeuomorphism just a few years ago?

There are two distinct styles when it comes to texture and gradients:

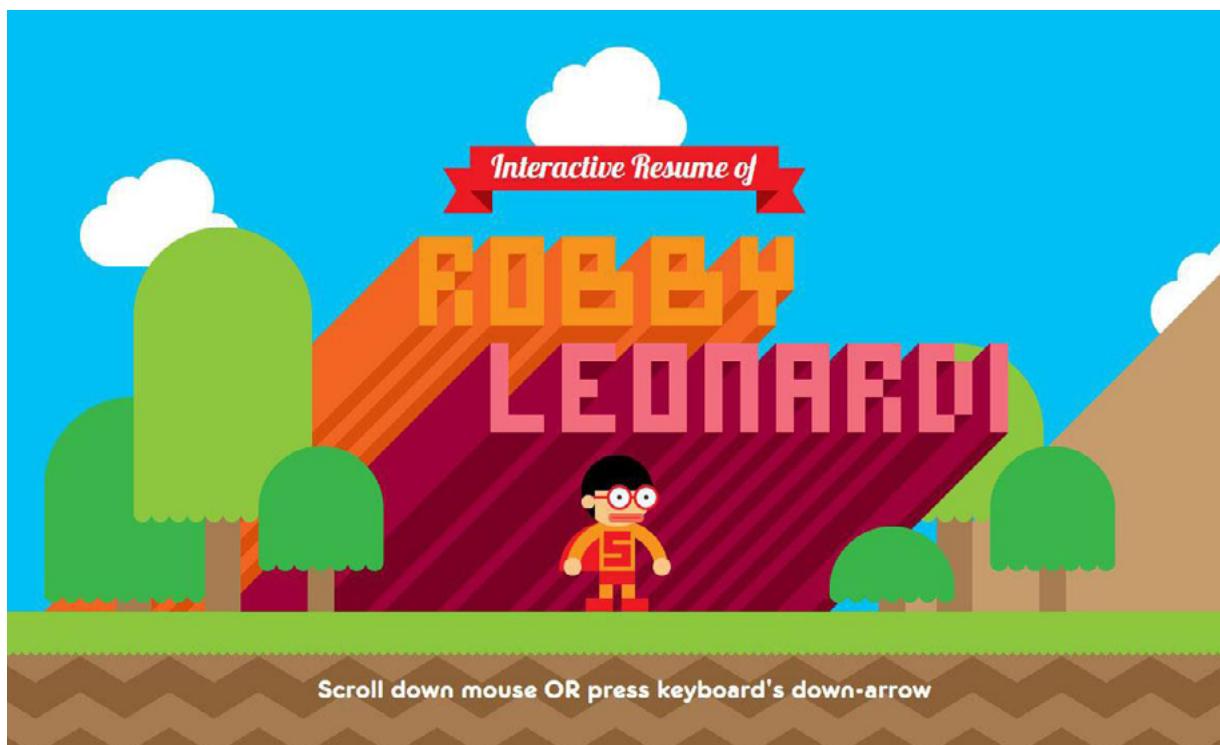
1. Plenty of texture in the design so that websites have a realistic (kind of) look
2. Lack of all styling for an easy, minimal, stripped down style

Both options are usable and either style can work in a number of ways. But they take on very different feels – warm and cozy with plenty of high-design texture or more stark and cold with the minimal option.

Video-Game Style



The Most Decisive Game Ever



Interactive Resume of Robby Leonardo

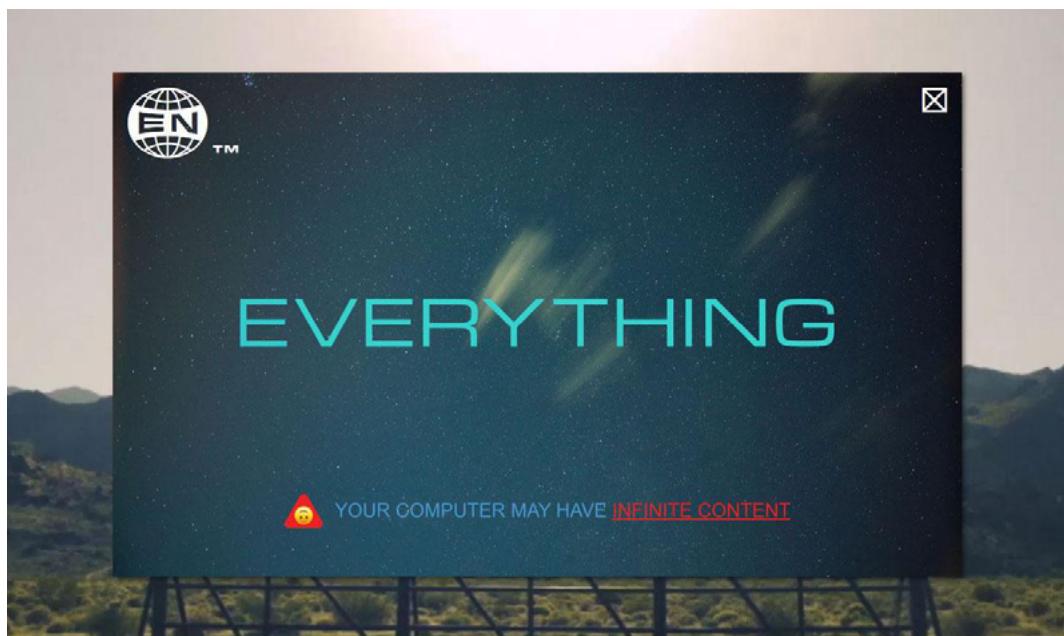
How many of you think “Super Mario Bros.” when you think of video games? This is a common connection and the video-game style retro design pattern is popular because of that.

In a high-def everything world, an intentional, more pixelated style actually starts to stand out.

The examples above showcase two very different ways of drawing on that video game nostalgia. [The Most Decisive Game](#) is a fully block style design that looks old (but does not have old-school interactions). [Leonardi's portfolio](#) uses the color and mood of the classic Mario Bros., but with smoother, cleaner lines for the artwork (that's the modern touch).

The combination of old and new works well for both sites and really exemplifies what modern retro is all about.

“Obnoxious” Graphics



Everything Now



Retrominder.tv

We went through a lot of bad website design before we got to some of the more polished styles that users are accustomed to now. But are some of those obnoxious graphics actually appealing?

They can be for some users.

The old flicker TV really can take you back to the past in an instant. It's at the heart of why designers can make style like this work. There are a lot of users that connect to the imagery.

What keeps the designs fresh is that connection to yesteryear and a desire to go back in time with click and touch actions and navigation and user elements that are very now. [Everything Now](#) is packed with videos to watch, iTunes and Spotify downloads and concert dates and ticket sales that are just one click away.

[Retro Minder TV](#) is a fast-paced speed trivia site, which uses images of the past with modern gamification and appeals to a desire for instant gratification (a common user behavior).

Pull it All Together

Modern retro is a bit of a quirky design trend.

The trick to a retro design is adding enough modern flair so it doesn't just look old. (You don't want the next [Million Dollar Homepage](#).)

Make sure to use imagery and design styles that invoke the type of brand nostalgia that works with your messaging. Then build the design on a modern framework so that users feel an emotional draw and understand how to interact with and use the design.

If you plan to go the retro route, pick a specific look and decade to pull from. You probably want to avoid mixing and matching all of the styles noted in the examples above. One distinct piece of retro design is more than enough.

It's also important to consider that not all modern retro styles will work for extended periods or for every brand, making this trend ideal for a smaller brand page or microsite. Some of today's trends might just be the next retro style and it is important to stay on top of those changes so that your vintage style is appropriate.

Polygonal Shapes and Geometric Layers

Polygons and other geometric flair are popping up all over the web design world. From stacked triangles to layers of simple shapes and color, geometry is a great way to create visual impact.

But first, what exactly is a polygon (or poly shape)? Traditional geometry outlines common shapes such as squares, triangles and rectangles. Polygons are shapes that are also defined in geometry as plain figures connected by straight lines that close off. They can have any number of sides as long as each figure can be closed using straight lines.

Today's design trend focuses on polygons that are mostly flat in style, with some gradient shading and plenty of interesting paths in the two-dimensional space. Poly shapes can work with photo, video or alone as a texture or background.

What almost all the polygon and geometric shape designs have in common is a demand to be seen.

Polygons Everywhere



Anakin

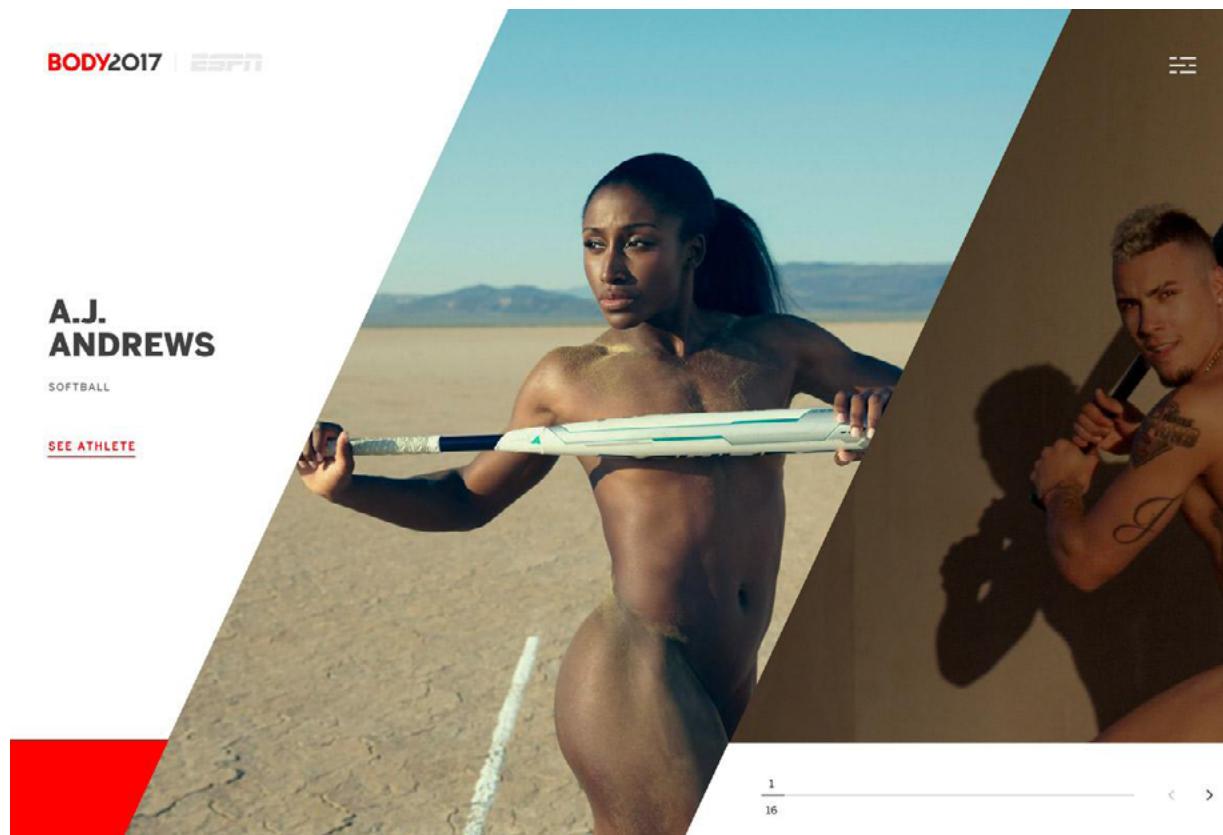


Absolut

The polygon trend probably has roots in experimental 3D animation, virtual reality, and gaming (where triangles are often used to create and render objects quickly). Poly shapes also pay homage to some of the more retro design patterns that have been popular in 2017 as well.

The other nice thing about polygons and geometric patterns is they can work in a number of ways – as a full design aesthetic, for a logo or for icons or divots to draw the eye. Poly shapes work with color, as line art, and in a flat style or in animated form.

Simple Geometry



1 / 4 ↑

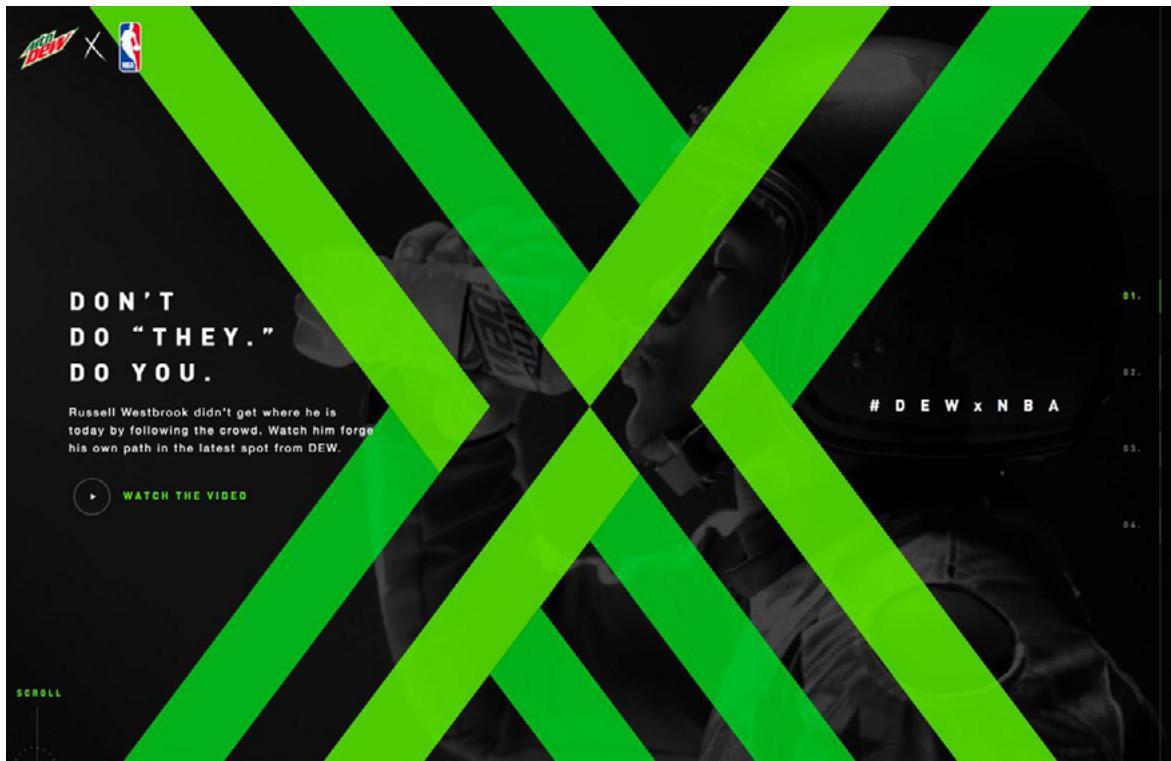
Minus 99

Geometric patterns don't need to be complicated to be elegant.

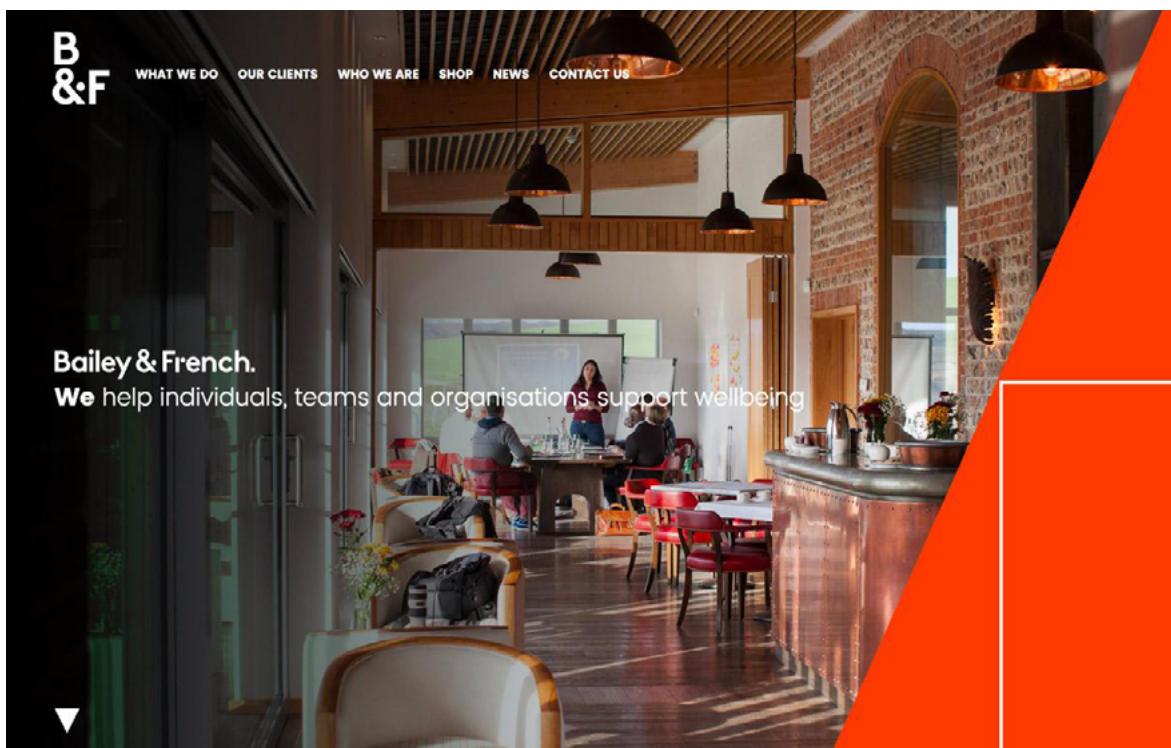
Clean simple lines such as the slanted shape ESPN uses for its [Body Issue](#) design as well as the floating squares from Minus 99 showcase the content with just a touch of something extra.

Note that with the slanted shape of the ESPN design, your eye wants to move across the screen from left to right. It's quite intentional because there's a horizontal scroll that carries the user through more content in that very direction.

Bold Lines Grab Attention



Mountain Dew



Bailey And French

Sometimes a pop of color is the singular element that can set off a design. But how do you do it without adding unwanted noise to the content?

Poly shapes are a good solution that let you draw attention to photos or videos as a focal point. Poly shapes and color can also make users stop on a page because the look is unexpected. The goal with a design technique like this is to cause a slight disruption in the normal browsing pattern so users will stop and look around.

What makes each of these designs successful are the color choices and intersections of lines. Note how the “X” on the [Mountain Dew site](#) comes together in multiple colored and pixel – perfect lines. The corner triangle from [Bailey & French](#) is reminiscent of a golden ratio and the color complements the photo to actually pull users back into the image. (The poly outline also continues below the scroll to keep users flicking the mouse.)

Geometric Divots and Details



Woodwork



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One **purebred**
web development
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for custom **WP**, advanced **React** and **chatbots**



Chop Chop Agency

Some of the best geometric and poly patterns aren't full scale design elements. From icons to logos to animated tools, combining subtle shapes is another way to draw the user in.

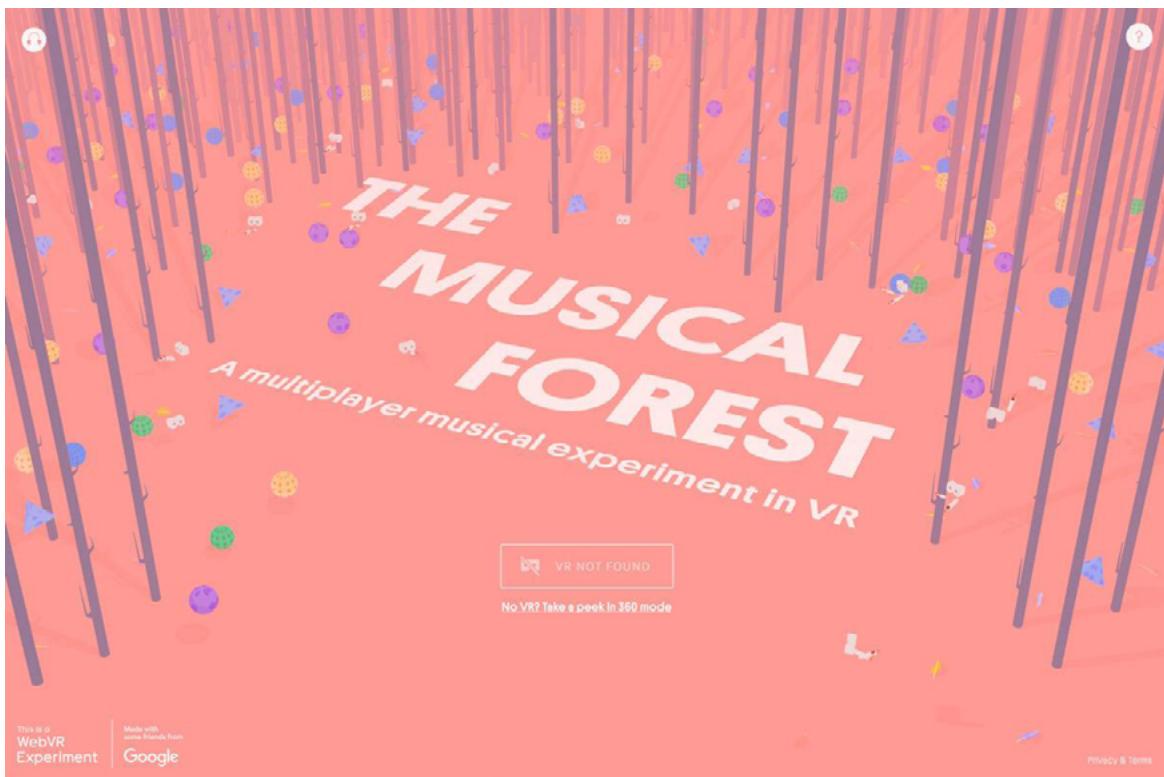
Connecting shapes and lines creates depth, particularly when used with color. While there are no real rules about size or color, the biggest trend seems to be polygon combinations with a bright, Material Design-inspired monotone or more gradient-style palette. (You can see how many trends tend to overlap with a design element such as this one.)

When it comes to smaller elements, using poly shapes puts a visual twist on the same old circle and rectangular button and navigation styles, while maintaining a certain degree of consistency that users understand.

When working with small poly shapes, a touch of animation can be a web designer's best friend. Use tiny interactions, such as a hover effect, subtle movement or shape shift to draw in the eye and show users that they need to interact with the object.

If you hang around the [Chop Chop Agency site](#), you'll see that the poly arrow does more than point users to navigational elements. It also shifts into other shapes that match downpage elements.

Virtual Reality and Games



The Musical Forest



My Most Beautiful Nightmare

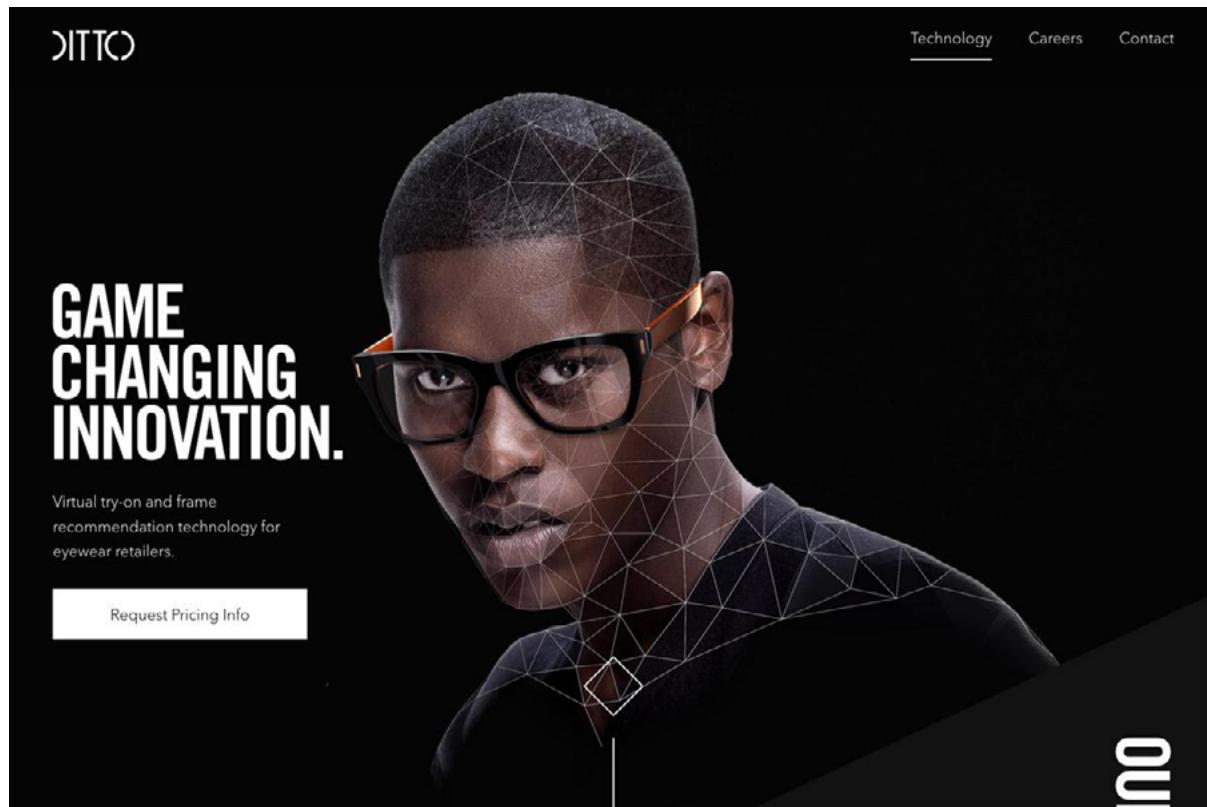
While we can't say it for certain, the poly trend seems to have emerged just as more VR-based designs started to take shape. The logical reason is a connection between interfaces and rendering. (Many 3D and VR designs feature poly-shape based animations.)

Poly shapes also offer a glimpse into a world that's not real. With many of the VR elements and games that use polygon-based design, the environment is not supposed to look just like reality. The poly theme emphasizes the escapism of being in a virtual, fantasy world.

Putting It All Together



Xbox Gift Card



Ditto

What's nice about the polygonal trend is that you can apply it to or with almost any other design pattern. Poly shapes easily accentuate existing content and interactions.

The last two examples here show that polygons can work almost anywhere, from helping to sell [Xbox gifts cards](#) online (yes, polygons are great for e-commerce too) to helping the user understand a more complex bit of information, for [Ditto](#) a company that uses poly shapes to show you how eyeglasses will fit.

One last note, make sure to go back and click the links for the examples above. It's hard to fully experience the interactive elements without playing around with the poly shapes in action. (You are sure to be inspired to try this web design trend!)

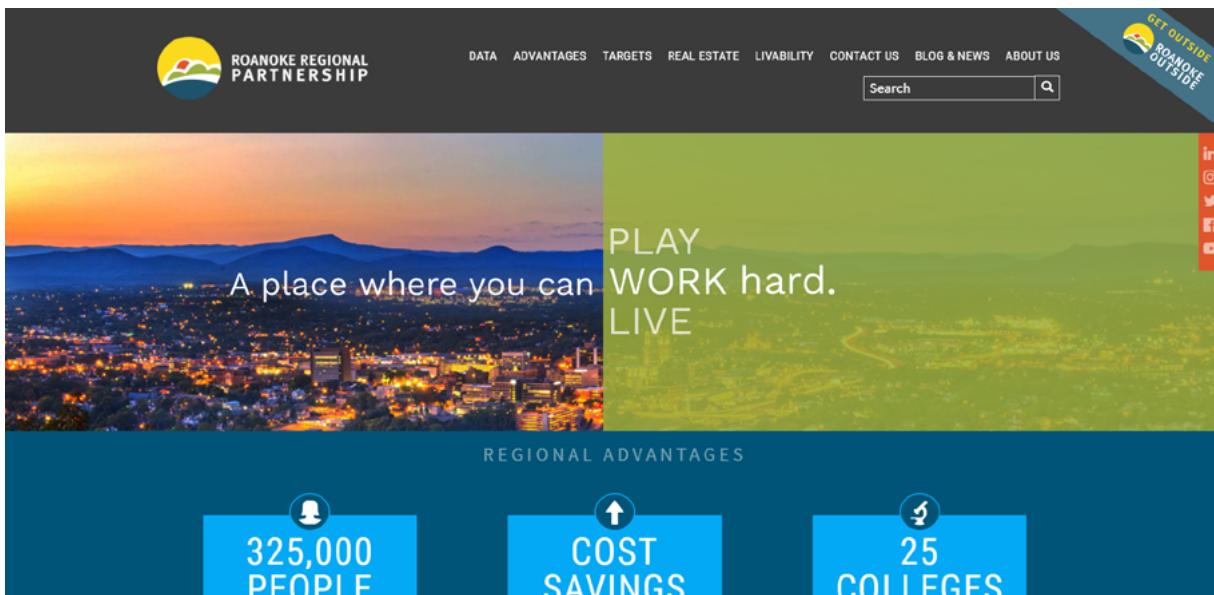
Complex Desktop Interactions, Simple Mobile Interactions

As techniques and effects on desktop websites get more and more complex, the mobile responsive versions of those same websites remain pretty streamlined.

And that's a good thing.

While many responsive sites have focused on a singular experience, more designers are creating websites that look like the same brand but offer different, more device-relevant experiences.

Mobile Simplicity is Important



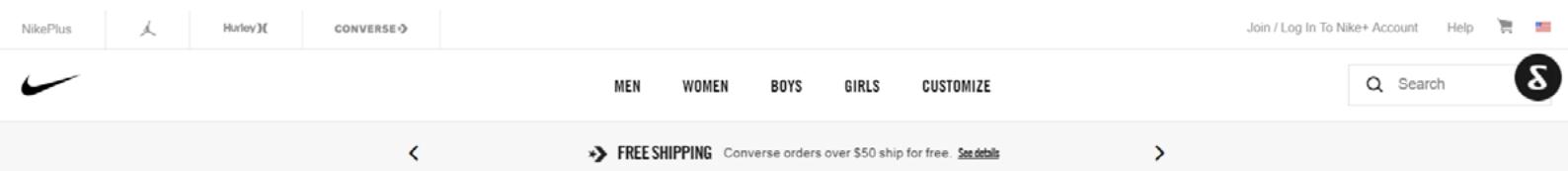
When it comes to usability and function, simplicity is a key consideration with mobile devices. Some of the more flashy desktop design elements – video, complex animations and even hover states – just don't translate to smaller screens.

But that doesn't mean you can't have the best of both, which is why more designers working with complex desktop designs are implementing a simplified mobile responsive version.

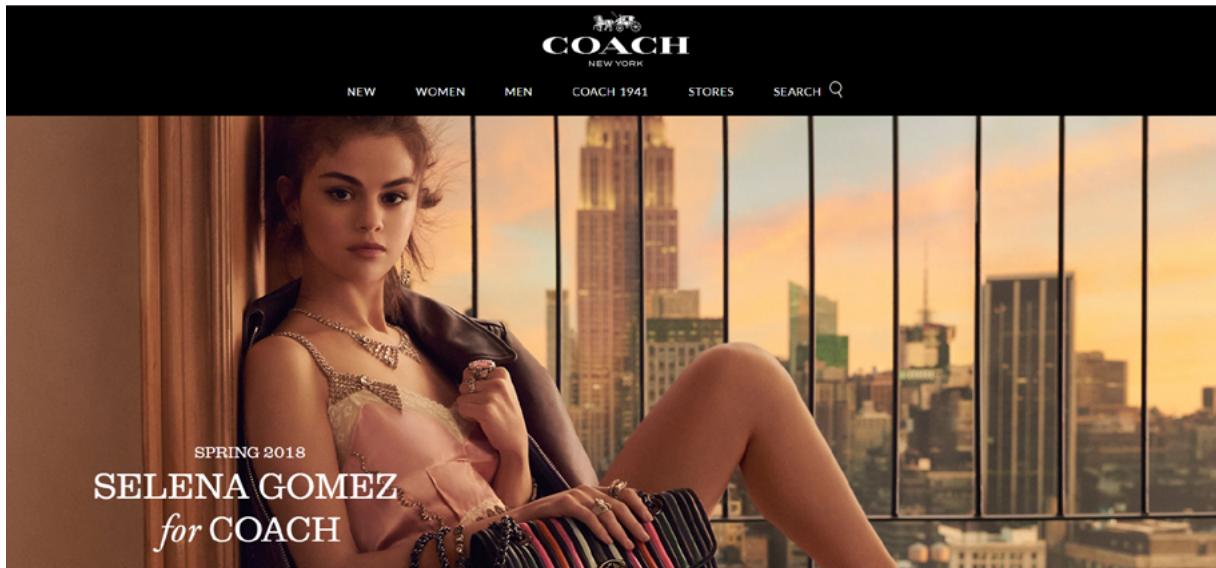
It's better for users because the simplified mobile option often is smaller and loads faster, and doesn't rely on high-speed internet connections (which aren't always available) to work properly. The less complicated interface is also easier to use when the canvas is limited because you aren't trying to cram too many elements onto the small screen at once.

Take a look at roanoke.org (above) on a desktop computer: There's a nifty text animation in the hero header. It's large and bold and attention-grabbing. The mobile experience is equally striking with a great image, but without the text animation. It would be too small to render (and read) in the smaller, more vertical format and the animation could bog down the design and not work at all on mobile devices. This simple change is exactly why designers prefer unique and streamlined mobile experiences even if the desktop design is more complex.

Alternatives to Complex Interactions



The screenshot shows the Converse website homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for NikePlus, Hurley, CONVERSE, Join / Log In To Nike+ Account, Help, and a shopping cart icon. Below the navigation is a search bar with a magnifying glass icon and the word "Search". The main header features the Converse logo with a star symbol. Below the header, there's a promotional banner for "CONVERSE X VINCE STAPLES" featuring a man in a dark hoodie and another man in an orange hoodie with "S E A" on the back. The banner also includes the text "SOLD OUT" and "Vince Staples partnered with Converse to create the ultimate merch for his Life Aquatic Tour staff...". The page layout includes categories for MEN'S, WOMEN'S, BOYS', GIRLS', and CUSTOM items.



Coach



Mother's Brewing

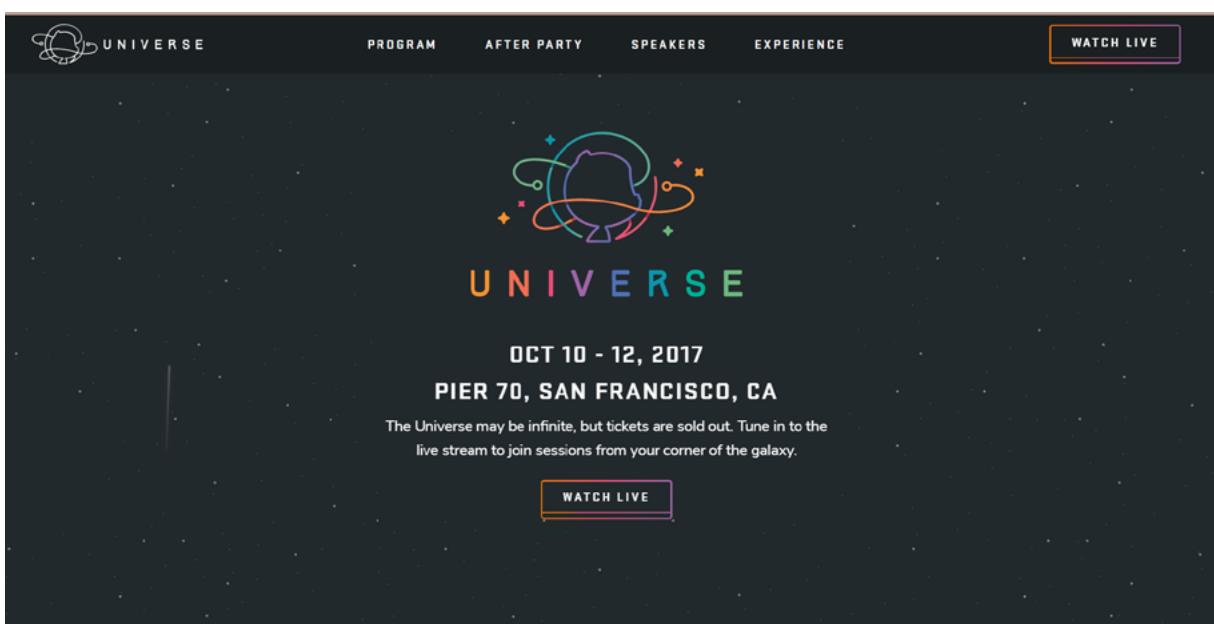
It can be frustrating to realize that the perfect design element just won't work on a mobile device due to visual constraints or performance issues.

Luckily, there are plenty of alternatives for mobile responsive websites that will work with your desktop website design, sans complex interaction.

- Replace a hero video header with a great image of the same scene. While a screen grab from the video isn't always the best option, you can have still images made at the same time as the video for this purpose. (Then you'll also have a collection of video clips and photos that "match" for a variety of applications.) If you must use video, opt for a button that takes the user to YouTube, which will more reliably play video on mobile devices.
- Forget hover animations or instructions for mobile. They don't work. Instead, think in thumb-sized taps or actions. Design oversized buttons and other clickable/tappable elements that are easy to interact with on a smaller screen. The design should be obvious and easy enough for the user to interact with that it doesn't need the instructions or visual cues that come from a hover state. Use gestures that are more common for mobile – swipes, taps or even a shake – to show and hide information.
- Some simple animations work across devices, but elements such as loading animations or complex gamification or video-style motion doesn't translate to mobile UX. [Coach](#), above, converts a slider with video background combination, to an animated GIF for mobile. Users still see movement, but it's much more lightweight and contained in a single element.
- Remove all dropdown menus right away. Designers still debate the value of a hamburger menu; love it or hate it, users seem to understand what it means. While it's not necessarily recommended for desktop experiences, this method of tucking away navigation elements is a viable mobile solution.

- Use voice activation when you can in mobile interfaces. Voice commands are rapidly becoming the standard for interacting with mobile devices. Think about your website: Are there elements users could talk to?
- Carefully evaluate color and backgrounds. Some desktop designs look great with a dark background and darker type, but at smaller sizes this combination could be unreadable. Because of the smaller canvas size, mobile versions of websites need to have plenty of color contrast between background and foreground and text elements to ensure maximum readability. You don't have to develop a completely new color palette, but mobile users tend to move through content more quickly. Opt for more muted colors, darker text elements and plenty of white space.

Design Within Limitations



Github Universe



GLASS' LABEL

Meet Label'Glass: the brand new glass embellishment service from Royston Labels.

[READ MORE](#)



Royston Labels

Don't just design a desktop design and let the mobile site "care for itself." This happens way too often and is the reason this design trend exists. A significant number of users – for most websites that's often upward of 50 percent – will access the design on a mobile device.

Think about each of these limitations in the design process and develop a simple solution that's optimized for mobile:

- **Screen size and readability:** Design one thought per mobile "screen."
- **Connectivity:** Heavy websites with long load times will not be used on mobile devices. Attention spans are short and if the site doesn't load immediately, users will find something else to do with their time.

- **Touch:** Every element should be optimized for touch. And remember to change that microcopy so buttons don't say "click here." Use gestures and touch wisely and avoid functions that only work on a handful of devices (such as 3D touch).
- **Distractions:** Mobile users are notoriously distracted. Provide content in small, digestible blocks that are easy to read at a glance. Give users key information – contact, address, etc. – right away.

Pull It All Together

The trick to a successful responsive website design is tweaking it for different contexts. You can include great video clips or complex animations on a desktop site; but you need something else when planning for mobile.

Don't forget to add simple touches for mobile that users love: Notifications, location-based tools, touch ID and wearable connectivity are just a few of the interface elements you can actually add to mobile sites to increase interaction and engagement. Users know and almost expect many of these interactions (particularly location) and they should feel like a seamless part of the design that you don't even really see or have to think about.

[The Weather Channel](#) has a robust desktop website, but it does something great when you access it on a mobile device. The current local weather conditions appear in a bigger, bolder box right at the top of

the screen. That design gives users exactly the right content in the right form at the right time – a decision that represents the heart of mobile design.

Simple Homepages

A website homepage doesn't need to be elaborate to be effective.

Some of the best – and most timeless – homepage designs are so streamlined that you don't think about anything other than the message on the screen. And minimalism isn't the only answer.

5 Key Homepage Elements

Before diving into a simple homepage design, let's revisit the basics of homepage design.

These elements are all part of commonly accepted user patterns:

- **Headline:** Main text that tells users what your website is about
- **Navigation:** Links to other content that add to messaging
- **Logo or branding:** Make sure users know who owns the website and establish trust

- **Visual element:** Image, video or illustration that supports messaging
- **Call to action:** A button, form or link that gives users something to do

Minimalism

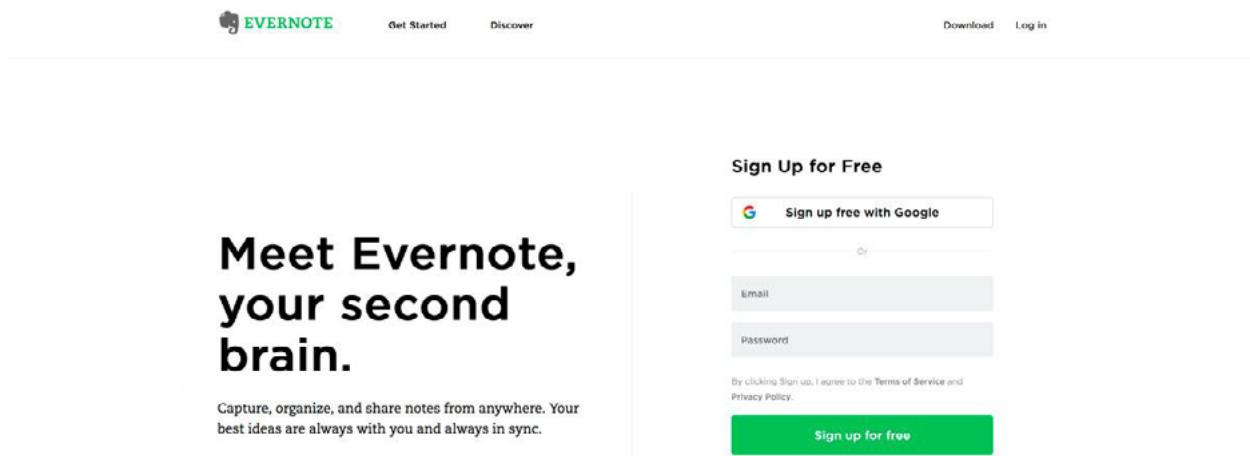
Simple homepage design is almost a series of mini trends. There are a lot of different ways to create a simple visual concept and they can all look rather different. Minimalism is probably the most well-known simple visual pattern.

Minimalism is identified by an overall lack of design elements or embellishment. Most of the designs are white with black text (or the reverse). There aren't a lot of images or elements to distract the user from the key message. Typography is often streamlined as well, with a simple sans serif.

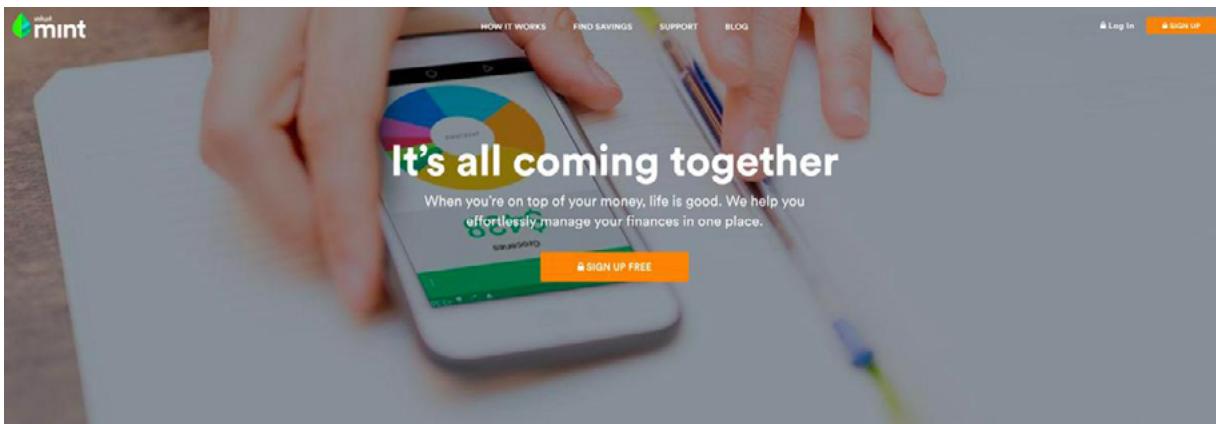
The screenshot shows the Airbnb homepage with a clean, minimalist design. At the top, there's a search bar with fields for 'Where' (set to 'Anywhere'), 'When' (set to 'Anytime'), and 'Guests' (set to '1 guest'). To the right of the search bar is a red 'Search' button. Below the search bar, there are four navigation tabs: 'FOR YOU' (which is underlined in blue), 'HOMES', 'EXPERIENCES', and 'PLACES'. The 'EXPERIENCES' tab is currently selected, as indicated by its bolded text. Below the tabs, there's a section titled 'Experiences' with four thumbnail images: a man looking up at a building, two men holding surfboards, a row of houses, and a person in a wetsuit standing in water. To the right of the thumbnails, there's a 'See all >' link and a small arrow pointing right.

To make the most of a simple, minimal homepage, pick an element or piece of content to focus on and make that part of the design shine. Give it plenty of white space so that the user is drawn to the primary element in the design.

[Airbnb](#), for example, uses minimalism to highlight the booking tool. Everything a user needs to search for a place to stay is right there in the middle of the homepage. [Evernote](#) uses a similar technique with a simple bit of messaging next to a place to either sign up or login.



Flat/Almost Flat Design



Budgets? You betcha

Easily create budgets, and see our suggestions based on your spending.

Bills? Done

Track and pay bills like never before. Get alerts and schedule payments on the spot.

Credit score? Checked

Find out yours for free and get tips to help improve it, no credit card required.



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You use Dropbox.
Why doesn't your company?

Upgrade to Dropbox Business and get the solution that both employees and IT admins love.

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Gartner has named Dropbox a Leader in the 2017 Magic Quadrant for Content Collaboration Platforms. [Read the report.](#)

Flat design is the design trend that just keeps hanging around. It has stuck around because it keeps evolving.

Flat, almost flat, and flat 2.0 designs are all simplified two-dimensional design schemes. Flat often uses bright color and simple typography

to draw user attention and eliminates design tricks such as heavy shadows, textures and patterns.

The most effective flat design homepages have a central focal point that all design elements “point to.” This can be a button or image or text element that draws users in.

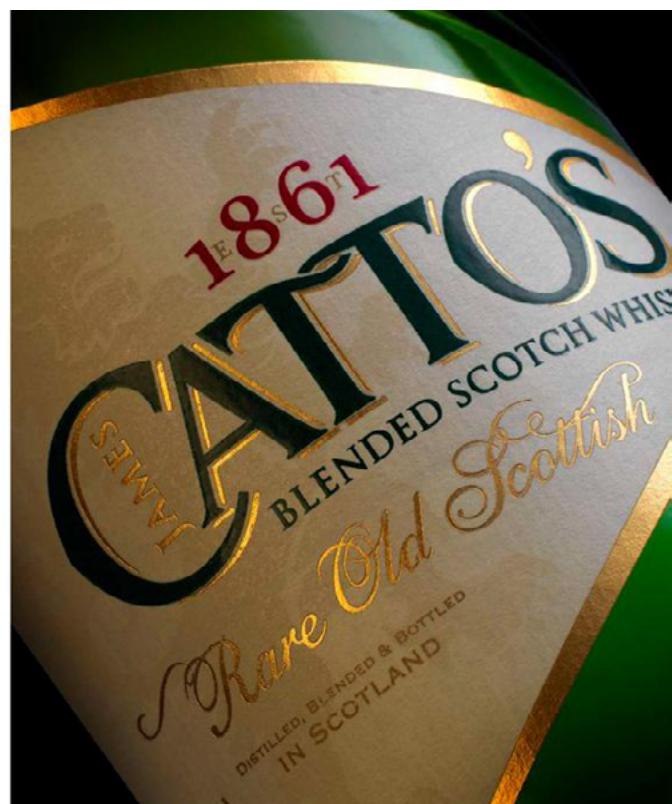
And the most common technique is to use contrasting color for the clickable (or tappable) user interface element. A brightly colored button, for example, is an instant focal point.

Subtle Animation

Animation doesn't have to be a full-length movie or cartoon characters running across the screen to grab attention. Sometimes the smallest, most subtle animations are the most effective because they create an element of surprise for users.

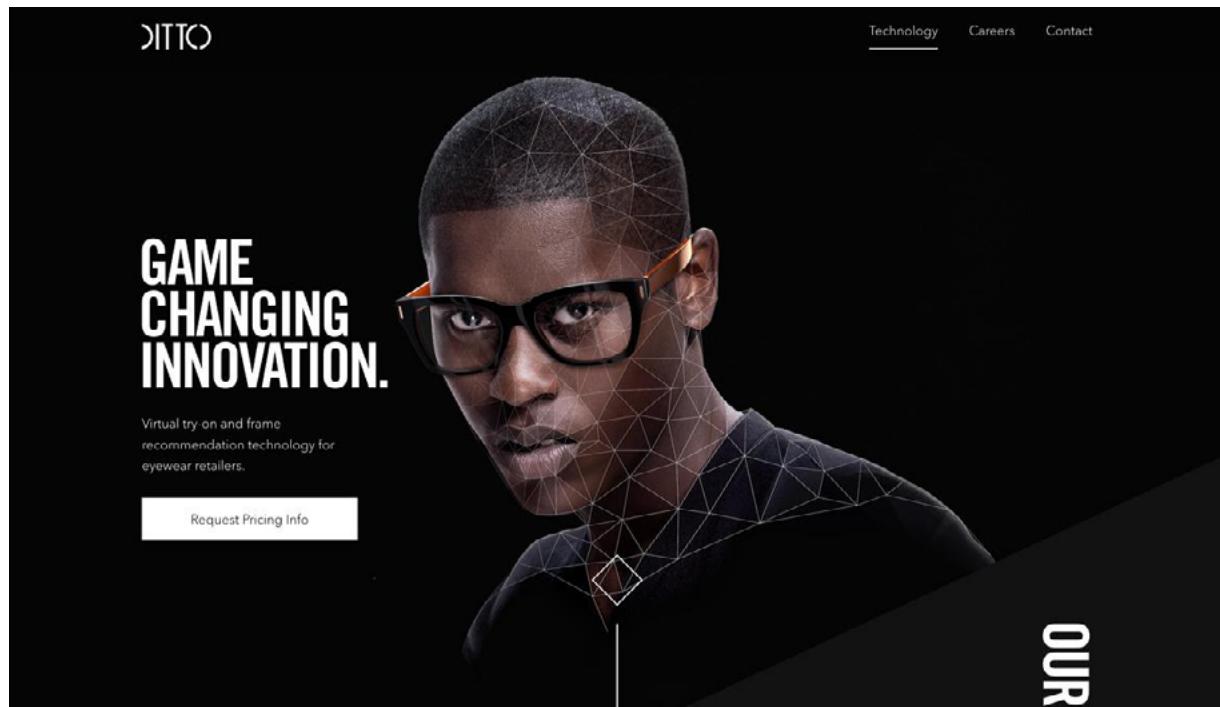
There are two methods to use simple animation on the homepage:

- Automated animation in which an element moves in a timed manner on its own (such as the rotating text and images on the [Royston Labels homepage](#))



Royston Labels

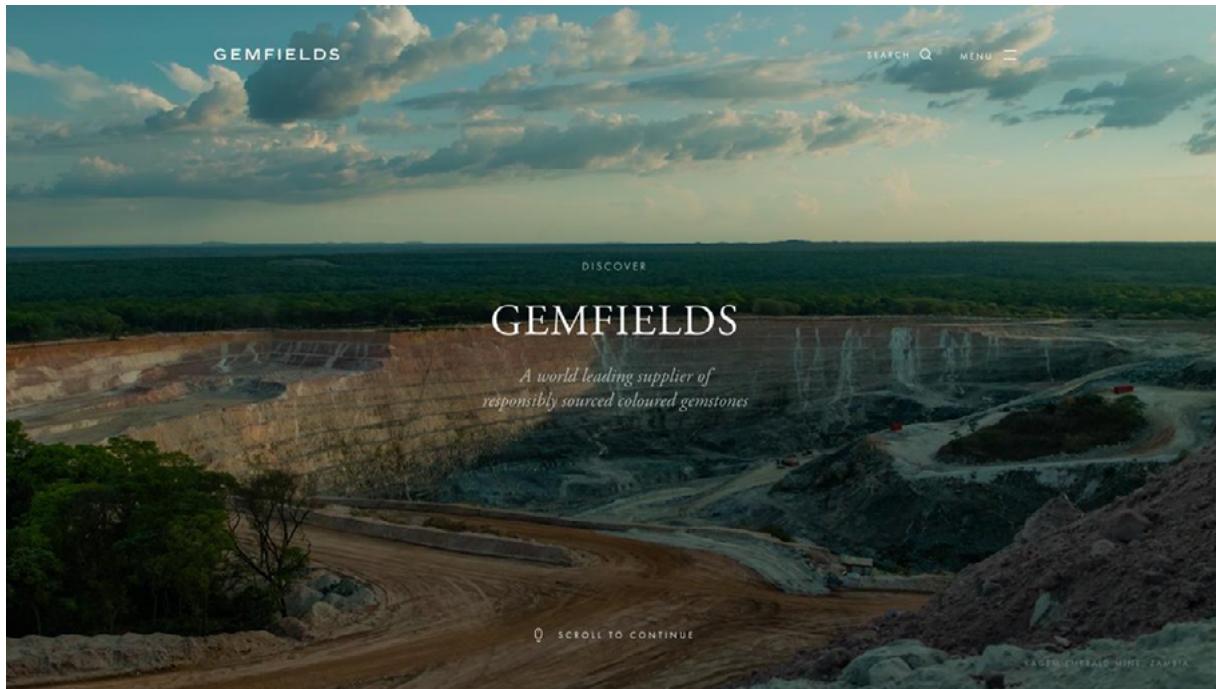
- Scroll – or click-based animation that is controlled by user action (such as the moving polygons on the [Ditto homepage](#))



Ditto

Both methods can be effective in their own ways. The key to using animation is that it has to contribute to the meaning of the design. Animation is not just a design tool; it is a storytelling tool.

Beautiful Photography or Videography



A picture (or video) is worth 1,000 words.



That is so very true when the image is striking and original. Homepages with great images will draw in users. From great scenes in nature

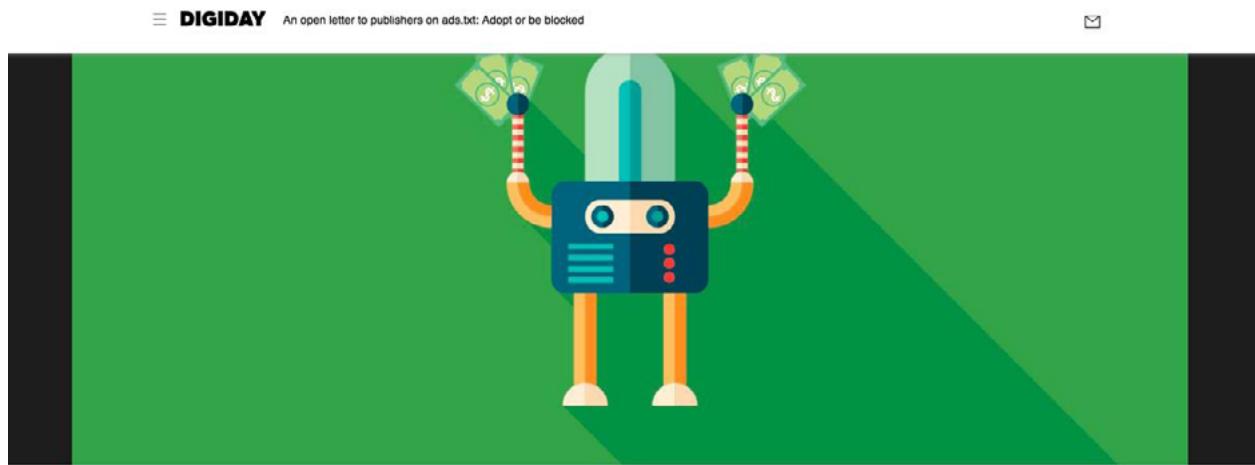
to interesting faces, art or products great imagery is sometimes all you need above the scroll.

Make the most of great image by giving them space. Pair a great image or video clip with simple typography (and not a lot of it).

This is one of those patterns where the scroll should be an integral part of the design. Consider placing all secondary messaging below the scroll (and include a visual cue to users to they know to keep moving down the page).

Design for Reading

The screenshot shows the Medium homepage with a minimalist design. At the top, there's a navigation bar with a 'Write a story' button, the 'Medium' logo, a search icon, a help icon, and a user profile icon. Below the header, a section titled 'You might like' displays several article cards. Each card includes a thumbnail image, the article title, the author's name, the publication date, and a brief description. The cards are arranged in a grid-like layout with some vertical spacing between rows. At the bottom of the page, there's a 'Digital design' section labeled 'SUGGESTED' with two more article cards. The overall aesthetic is clean and focused on readability.



Liane Nadeau is vp, director of programmatic at DigitasLBi

Dear Publishers,

It has come to our attention that most of you have yet to adopt the ads.txt protocol on your site. As valued partners of ours, we wanted to extend a few words of motivation and explain why this is so important to our relationship moving forward.

As you likely (read: hopefully) know, the IAB launched ads.txt in May to reduce domain spoofing and reselling in the open marketplace. Ads.txt, which stands for Authorized Digital Sellers, is a text file that lives on your web server to tell us on the buy side who should be

One of the best things about simple homepage design is the renewed focus on readability and great typography. (These concepts go hand-in-hand.)

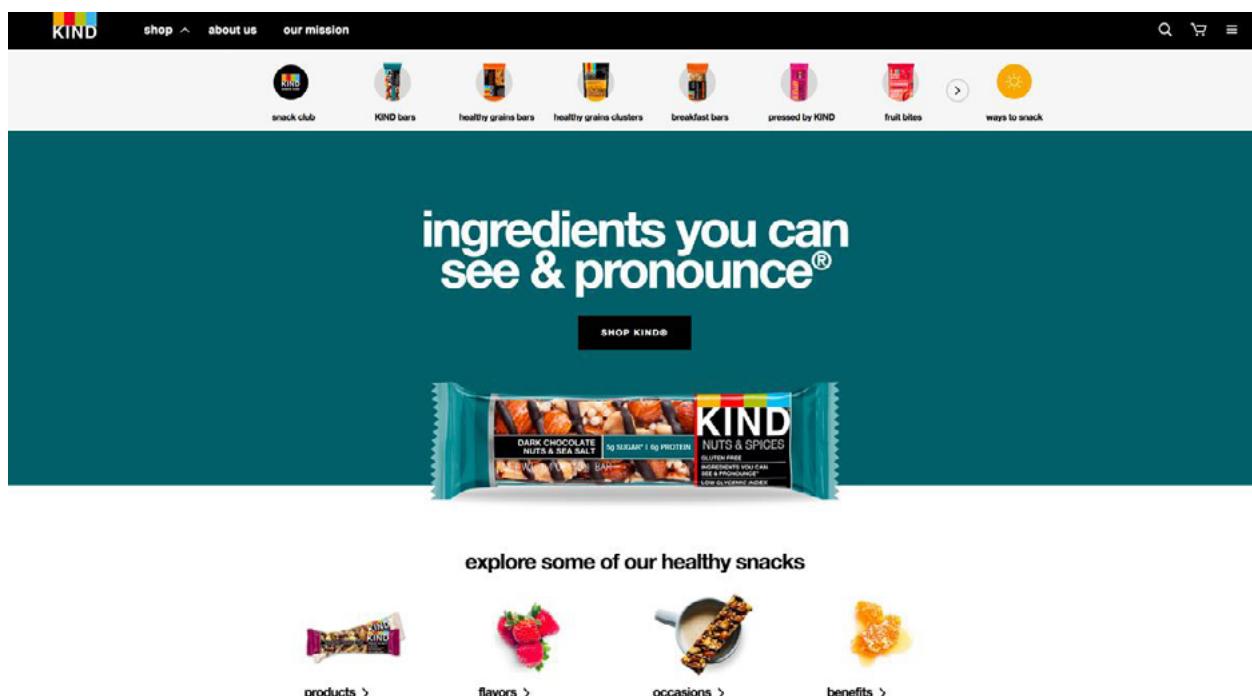
More websites – particularly those that feature more longform content – are using simple design schemes so that text is more readable. Highly readable websites all share a few techniques:

- Typography is simple with serif or sans serif options, including regular weights and uniform stroke widths for characters
- Text size is a little larger than expected, often starting at 16 points for body copy
- Leading or line heights are somewhat exaggerated (1.75 the text size or more)

- Text blocks are surrounded by oversized gutters with plenty of white space
- Typography is dark on a light background with colored type only for distinct accents
- There are no text wraps in blocks of copy; text flows and images or callouts are centered in the body copy so that line lengths are equal for the entire copy block

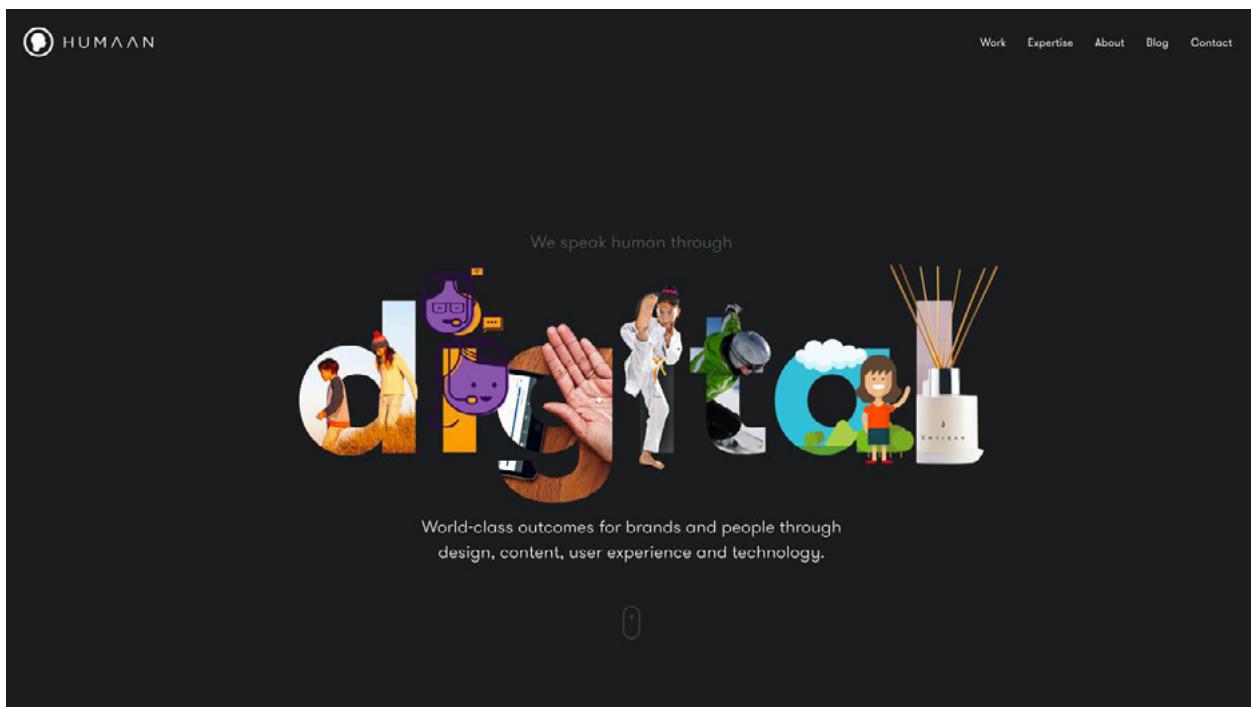
Bold Type Treatments

Simple homepage typography does not have to be boring. Some of the most basic and interesting homepage designs actually use complex typography as a focal point.



But what makes typography bold?

- Bold typography contrasts with the background
- Bold typography includes something unexpected, such as a fun typeface or fill
- Bold typography can be oversized (or tiny)
- Bold typography can be colorful
- Bold typography is anything that screams “read me” when users see the homepage



The examples above show two very different uses of bold typography in simple homepage designs. [Kind Snacks](#) uses color contrast with oversized, lowercase lettering to draw users in. [Humaan](#) uses lettering as art on a dark background with plenty of space to create interest. Both visual outlines include a lot of space around lettering for emphasis and readability.

Pull it All Together

There's a common thread in all of these website designs: A distinct focus on an actionable element. There's a call to action that's front and center in almost every design.

And that's how it should be.

Your homepage should be designed to encourage users to do something. Whether it's to click on a link to learn more, buy a product or log into a service, the goal is to convert a visitor into an active website user.

Remove the clutter, and the path of action reveals itself naturally to users.

Tactile Design

Talk of artificial intelligence isn't the only discussion that's blurring the lines between reality and digital spaces. More tactile interfaces are rapidly growing in popularity.

The trend started with the emergence of [Material Design](#), Google's design guidelines that dictate how their interfaces will look and work.

But tactile design goes beyond the basics of Material Design. The key to making tactile design work is creating enough space so physical objects look real in a digital space.

What is Tactile?

A cut above.

New metal looks with striking cut-out details.

SHOP NOW

Trendy, Not Spendy

Tactile design is not the same as the skeuomorphic concepts that were the standard in the early 2010s. Tactile relies more on flat or almost-flat elements, reserving shadows and effects for elements to help “lift” them off the screen.

Most tactile projects create an illusion of three-dimensional objects in a digital space.

Google’s [Material Design guidelines](#) provide a good synopsis of what tactile design is supposed to be: “The material is grounded in tactile reality, inspired by the study of paper and ink, yet technologically advanced and open to imagination and magic.

“Surfaces and edges of the material provide visual cues that are grounded in reality. ... the flexibility of the material creates new afford-

dances that supersede those in the physical world, without breaking the rules of physics.

“The fundamentals of light, surface, and movement are key to conveying how objects move, interact, and exist in space and in relation to each other. Realistic lighting shows seams, divides space, and indicates moving parts.”

Tactile design, is not virtual reality, it’s much more of a set of layered effects that connect users and interfaces to create more engagement.

“Borderless” Design Elements



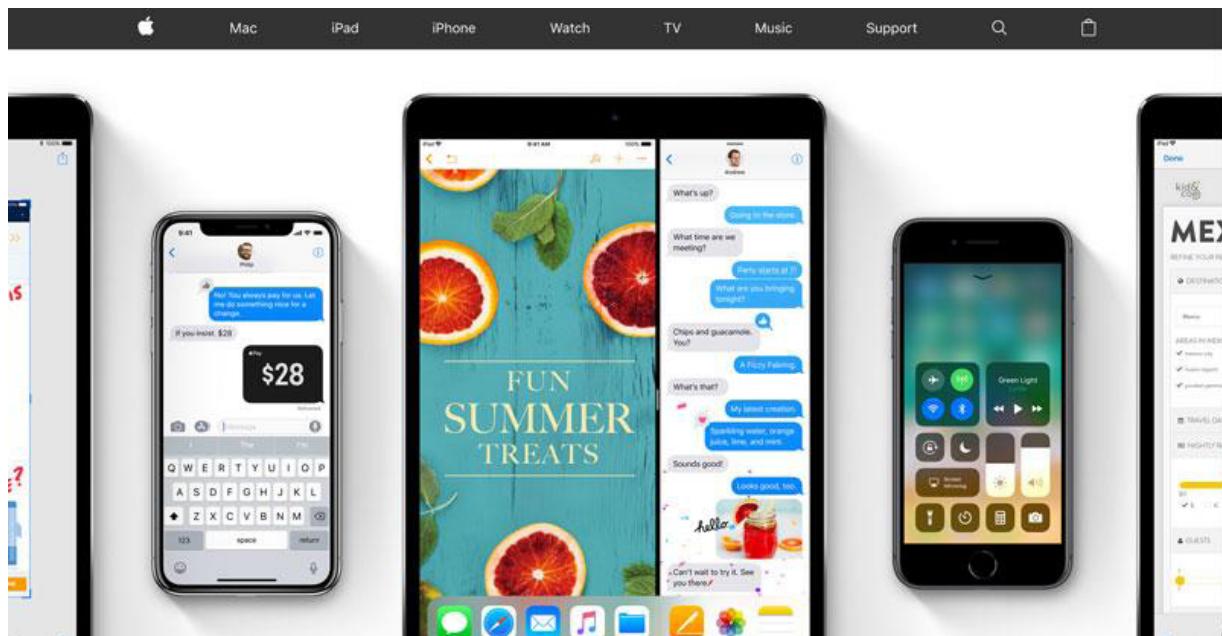
Tactile design doesn't live in a box or frame. The idea is that users should imagine a canvas beyond the screen and the potential of objects in that space as well.



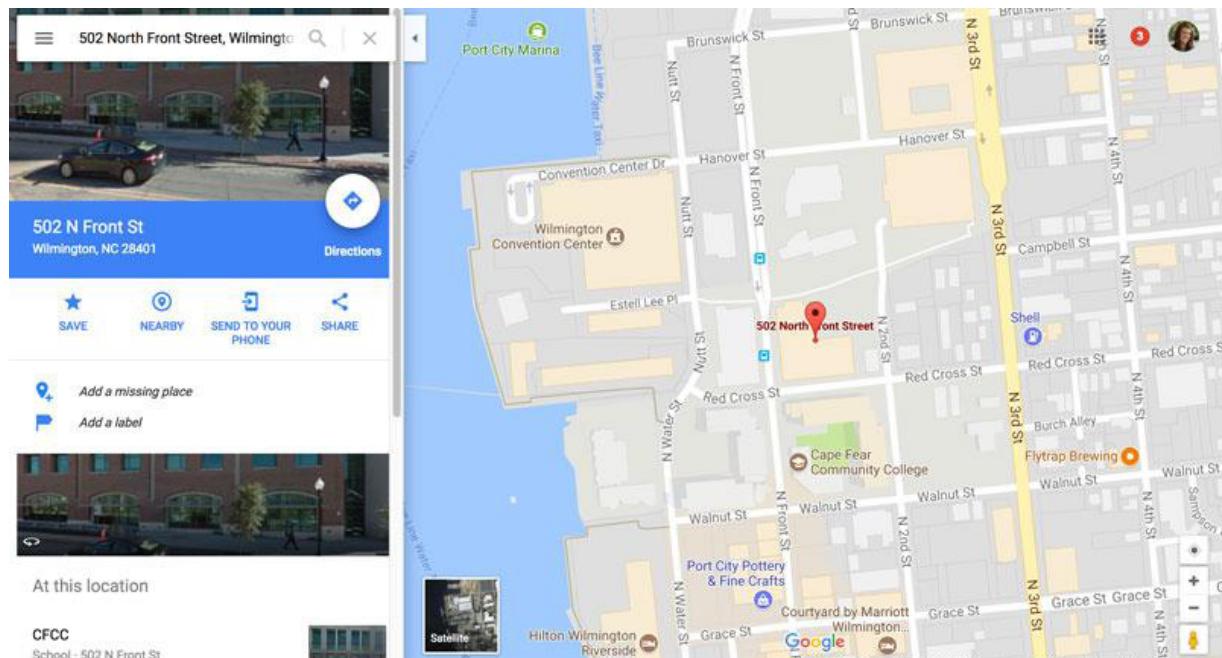
Layers and elements can cross planes and go into the “space” of other elements, with text on multiple screens and elements sitting almost on two places at once. ([The Epicurrence website](#) design does a lot of this, mixing it with tasteful parallax effects to ensure the user knows what to do and keeps moving through the website.)

Because of the idea that digital and real are one, these designs can’t be boxed in.

Multilayer Designs



A key component of tactile is the concept of creating layers that matter. Elements that rest on top of each other or a canvas of sorts.



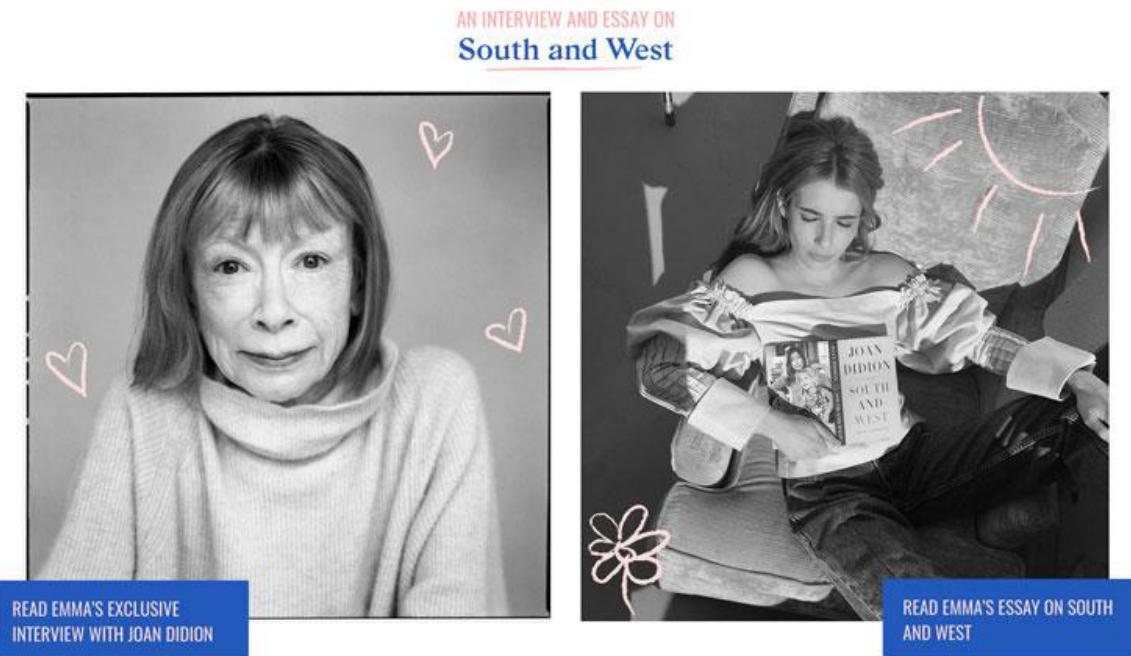
Most designers apply this concept with shadows. Even Apple went for a more tactile design scheme with iOS 11, which was released in

early September. Almost every part of the interface uses card-style elements stacked on what backgrounds with distinct shadows for separation. ([The App Store](#), in particular uses this format providing an entirely new and different user experience. Just think of how interesting it would be to dig into Apple's analytics to see how effective the design is a few months after launch.)

[Material Design](#) uses that same layering concept with buttons and user interface elements that seemingly hover over objects and layers, often in a space between objects and layers. Note the distinct layering of objects in something as simple as a Google map.

What's nice about these tactile elements is that they are – and should be – obviously usable, but not so special that the user pays attention to them. Buttons and clickable or tappable objects should be innately designed for interaction.

Purposeful Motion and Animation



Tactile design is much more focused on elements that are rooted in reality than dazzling effects. Rather than illustrations and complicated animations, these designs focus on photography and more purposeful motion.

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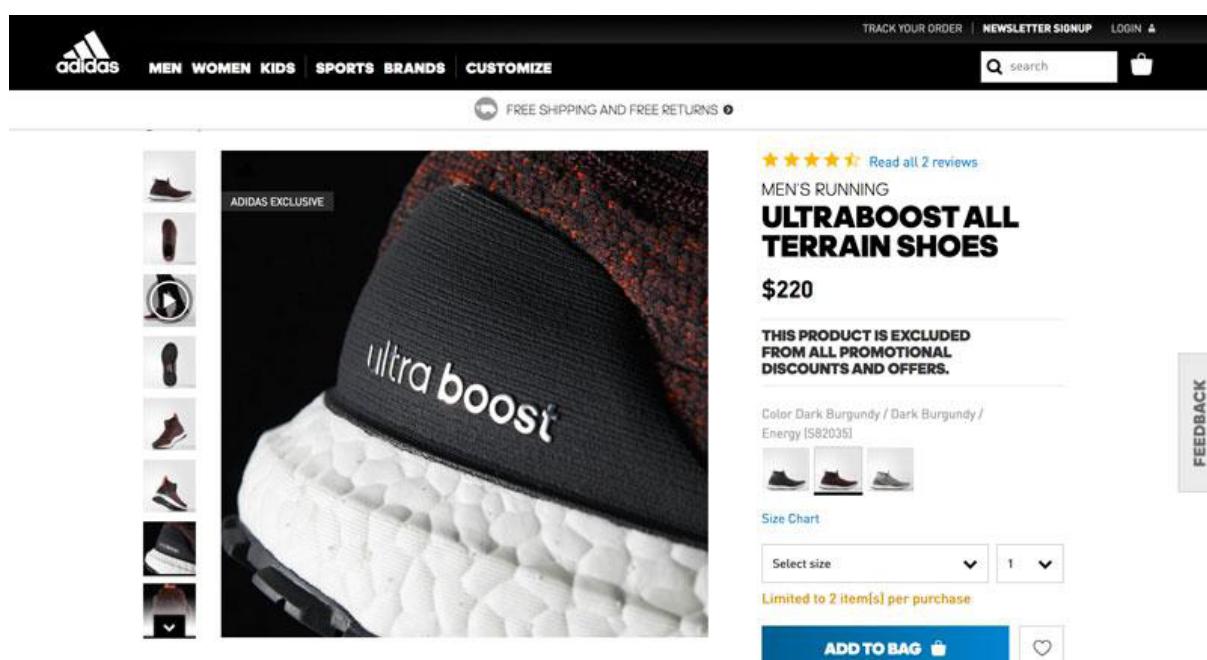
A beautifully designed case, a set of premium modular containers.
Includes 1 Prepd Pack Case, 1 Large Container (with saucepot), 2 Small Containers and 1 set of Chopsticks.
Additional containers and magnetic cutlery can be purchased separately.

Elements that move, include hover states or transitions between pages or elements add to the usability of the design. They don't exist merely for decoration. The movement helps guide users through the design. It feels real.

Keep in mind that any motion should follow the rules of physics and have a natural feel. Motion shouldn't be forced or happen automatically. Tactile motion happens as the result of a user interaction, such as a click, tap, hover or scroll.

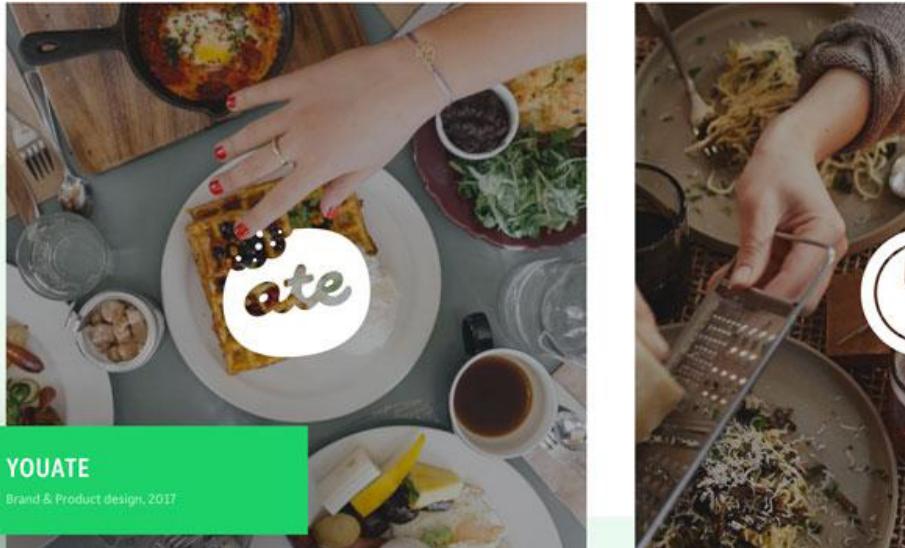
When using parallax effects and scrolling, layers should move in a way that mimics how two piece of paper would interact with each other in the real world. The layers are independent and move on their own, but interact with a three-dimensional effect as well.

Detailed Photography



Online portfolio and blog of [Richard Gazdik](#),
a Budapest based digital designer and frontend developer.

WORK



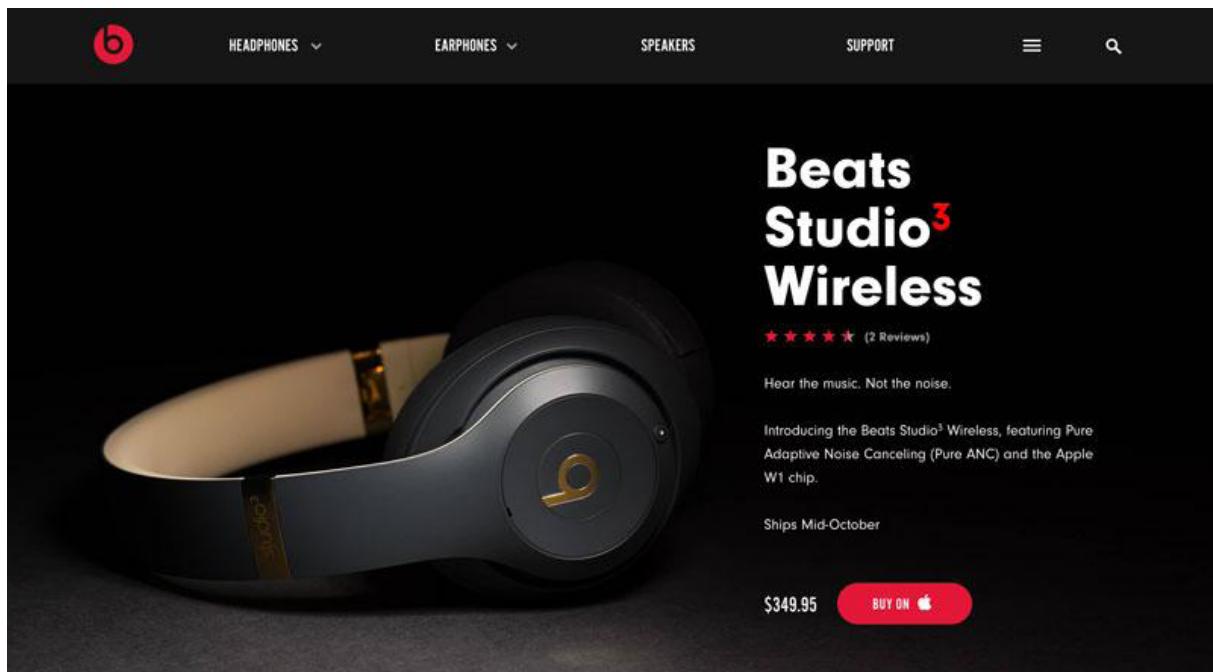
When thinking about ways to make a website design more real and tactile, consider the power of HD photos. Super detailed, close-up shots of products, people or even nature provide texture.

Look at the detail shots for the Adidas shoe, above. You can almost feel the smooth and rough textures of the shoe material. That connection creates user trust because they know exactly what to expect.

Natural Light

Not only do tactile interfaces have to replicate the way things look and interact in the real world, but they should also live in a space that looks real. A key element to looking real is creating a realistic environment for elements with natural lighting and shadows.

The most common design error when it comes to lighting and shadows is that all of the darker or shadow elements in the design don't come from the same light "source."



Shadows – even those created artificially for design purposes – should fall into a natural pattern. (If a shadow is below and to the left of one item in the design, use the same specs for shadows on other elements).



Look at the example design for [OTQ](#), above. The top of the bed appears to have lighting on it from the lightness at the top. Look at the below the bedside tables, where shadows are below the tables. The shadow perfectly matches the light source shown elsewhere in the design, making the overall effect look and feel more real.

Pull It All Together

Many of the interfaces using tactile design elements actually use multiple techniques noted above. You can even see this in many of the examples.

Tactile design requires a rethinking of design schemes and patterns – it's not something a designer can deploy quickly to an existing design, making it a trend that's emerging slowly over time as sites redesign and reinvent themselves.

With design thought leaders such as Google and Apple making tactile design the foundation of their aesthetic, more websites – of all sizes – are certain to follow.

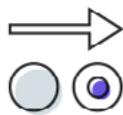
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Your entire UX process in one place



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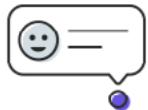
Iterate:

Built-in version control improves efficiency and eliminates confusion.



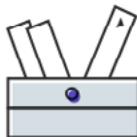
Document:

Cleanly annotate your designs. Insert custom code snippets that travel with elements.



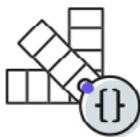
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