Fundamentals of Web Development

CH 3: Focus on Web Design

Joe Boylson

**QUESTION 1:**

**Odesza Store :** [**https://store.odesza.com**](https://store.odesza.com/)

**James Coffee Co. :** [**https://jamescoffeeco.com**](https://jamescoffeeco.com/pages/coffee)

I chose these two websites based on the credentials of the assignment, but also because these websites are very interesting to me. Both sites are online stores and I have personally bought from *both* of these sites. I would also like to point out that both of these organizations - one of them being an actual company and coffee shop, and another a favorite band. I would like to point out that both have great brand awareness that contributes to the success of their website.

Now, in taking a deep-dive into each of these sites, we can start to see some trends, not only between the two, but also in *most* small online shops these days. To begin with, you have this triple-column layout. In the first website, Odesza’s online shop, this layout persists across every single page; in fact, there isn’t much else besides this. Furthermore, the top navigation bar and header also appear on every single page. In the second site, you also have some merchandise displayed in that same triple-column layout, but you have a few more individual pages as well because the company has more to offer than just some cool merch. And, like the first site, it has a navigation bar that is present on all pages. Lastly, both sites follow a similar color pallette, not only in the website, but also in the products and other information that they display (which is why i say they have good brand awareness). These redundancies of colors and layouts are all examples of *repetition.*

If we take an even deeper look at each site, focusing only on the colors, we also see that both have elements of *contrast*. The color palettes for each site include a white, a darker color, and an accent color. In the first website you have a darker, space-like, navy on clean white and accented by a rich orange. There are actually a few types of contrast here. The most obvious is the white and the navy: one is light and the other dark. But you also have contrast between the orange and the blue as these are on opposite sides of the color wheel. On the second site, however, there are not really any vibrant colors but rather the site follows a neutral theme. There is still the same contrast of light and dark with whites and tans against browns and blacks. The color theme here may be more of an example of *repetition* as the color is mainly focused around brown - increasing in brightness to form the tan and white and decreasing in brightness to form a darker brown and black.

These websites both have excellent use of alignment and proximity. Both are present in the three-column product grids I had mentioned above. Obviously these grids are going to have an element of *alignment -* because alignment is the essence and purpose of a grid. The grids are also aligned in the page such the the center of the middle column is centered with the middle of the page. This contributes to both the alignment of the pages as well as the *proximity* due to the margins on each side now being equal. Another simple example of proximity is in each grid item: each has its own spacing around it which separated the items and allows the viewer to easily separate them from one another.

All the these design elements contribute to the overall look and feel of the site and I find them both very visually appealing. As a user, there are a few things on each which I would improve. In the first, the whole shop website is actually separate from the rest of the band’s website. They do have a sections about the band, a gallery, showtimes, etc - but the shop is completely separate with its own design. I would like this to be a little more complete, like the second site, which has everything all bundled with one layout and design. On the first site, I would also improve the navigation bar, specifically the way it changes size when you scroll down. The minimal amount that the navigation shrinks seems a bit pointless; either hide most of it, or none at all. And lastly on the second site, there are buttons for “support” and “sign-up” at the bottom-left of the pages. These buttons and icons seem a bit odd where they are and how they look. I would like to see them grouped together or displayed as options on the actual navigation bar itself. In the second site, there is much less to gripe about as the site is very well made. I have a slight issue with the footer section displaying the company’s recent posts to Instagram. It seems a little odd where it is and the whole section seems a little unfinished somehow. How to improve this? Possibly remove the section altogether and create a new “social” page of some kind; this would be my suggestion. I also noticed that in the footer, there is also a “locations” section - which is empty. But in fact, there are locations open - or at least one which is located in San Diego, CA. This is less of an improvement and more of a fix. And also, again about the footer, there are 4 sections. As of now, these are not aligned correctly and it looks very strange. This, I would definitely improve - it would definitely add to the *alignment* of the page.

**QUESTION 2:**

**James Coffee Co. :** [**https://jamescoffeeco.com/**](https://jamescoffeeco.com/)

This website is built with a modern and flat design through it’s layout and also through its colors. The layout is built around a grid system, with each page usually containing one or three columns. There are lots of rectangles in this site, both visible and suggestive - the visible have the iconic and modern rounded corners and contain no drop shadow or border of any kind. The background is always white and clean; nothing exists in the margins. These things contribute to a very clean and minimal design. Another contribution is in the san-serif font which again, is very clean and straightforward; all the titles are in caps and have their own kind of rectangular space all to themselves. And lastly, the color pallette is also very neutral and minimal, consisting only of shades of gray and brown. There are also many photographs which have their own diversity of color but follow the same trend as the entire website itself. All of these things contribute to a flat, modern, and minimal design.