

# DESIGN HACKS

*for the*

# PRAGMATIC MINDED

a hoppy talk from Kyle Neath with a sweet finish

**Kyle Neath is...**



~designer  
@  
**github**  
SOCIAL CODING



@kneath



**warpspire.com**

**What's Important**

**My favorite beer**

# Dogfish Head 90 minute IPA



But Firestone's DBA  
is **so delicious...**



I can **always** go for a  
Black Butte Porter



And Sierra Nevada has  
never let me down





Luckily, I don't have to choose

Oh yeah, and I like to  
fall in the snow



If I'm a designer...

**What am I doing at  
a Ruby Conference?**

**Developers design  
lots of things**

# Documentation

## Admin Sections

## Miniapps & Side Projects

**But more importantly..**

**Designers vs. Developers  
is a **false** separation**

it's a lot more like a spectrum

**Design is just as  
important as Tech**

it's all about the end product

You should want to be  
a better designer

A little bit about  
**My design background**

**I just wanted to build  
websites**

# **Steal Everything**

**Turns out good design is  
just a collection of hacks**

# This talk is not...

Design theory

Anything I learned in school

Organized or coherent

# This talk is...

A collection of hacks

Tips to polish your designs

A couple design strategies

A little bit about  
**Type**

**Good typography is 90%  
what you aren't doing**

you don't have to be fancy

# Classic fonts go a long ways

Helvetica, Arial, sans-serif

Times New Roman, Georgia, serif

Monaco, Courier New, monospace

# Playing with font weights and styles is easy & less risky

Tweets containing **The Personal Hotspot**



**kaiyau** Kai Yau Teo

@ynnii @kaypeeoff but with the personal hotspot on iOS4.3 all you need is your iPhone for the iPad's internet connection right?

9 minutes ago



**font-weight: 300**

Playing with font weights  
and styles is **font-weight:bold**  
easy & less risky

Tweets containing **The Personal Hotspot**



**kaiyau** Kai Yau Teo

@ynnii @kaypeeoff but with the personal  
hotspot on iOS4.3 all you need is your  
iPhone for the iPad's internet connection  
right?

9 minutes ago



**font-weight: normal**

# Increase line height to improve readability

We're GitHub! If you're ordering a tshirt, you probably know that this isn't the main gig. Please enjoy one of our cheeky grey shirts and be sure to check back periodically for new designs. Exercise patience while waiting for your crisp new attire - we are busy every day doing things...

# Increase line height to improve readability

We're GitHub! If you're ordering a tshirt, you probably know that this isn't the main gig. Please enjoy one of our cheeky grey shirts and be sure to check back periodically for new designs. Exercise patience while waiting for your crisp new...

A baseline grid can be  
a great tool

but don't be too obsessive about it

Vertical Grid = 50px

A baseline grid can be  
a great tool

but don't be too obsessive about it

font-size: 100px

font-size: 50px

A little bit about  
**Color**

**Color can be a great way  
to highlight content**

# It can also serve to set expectations

Hey guys! We just restocked the GitHub mugs today. Head on over to the [GitHub Shop](#) to pick one up today!

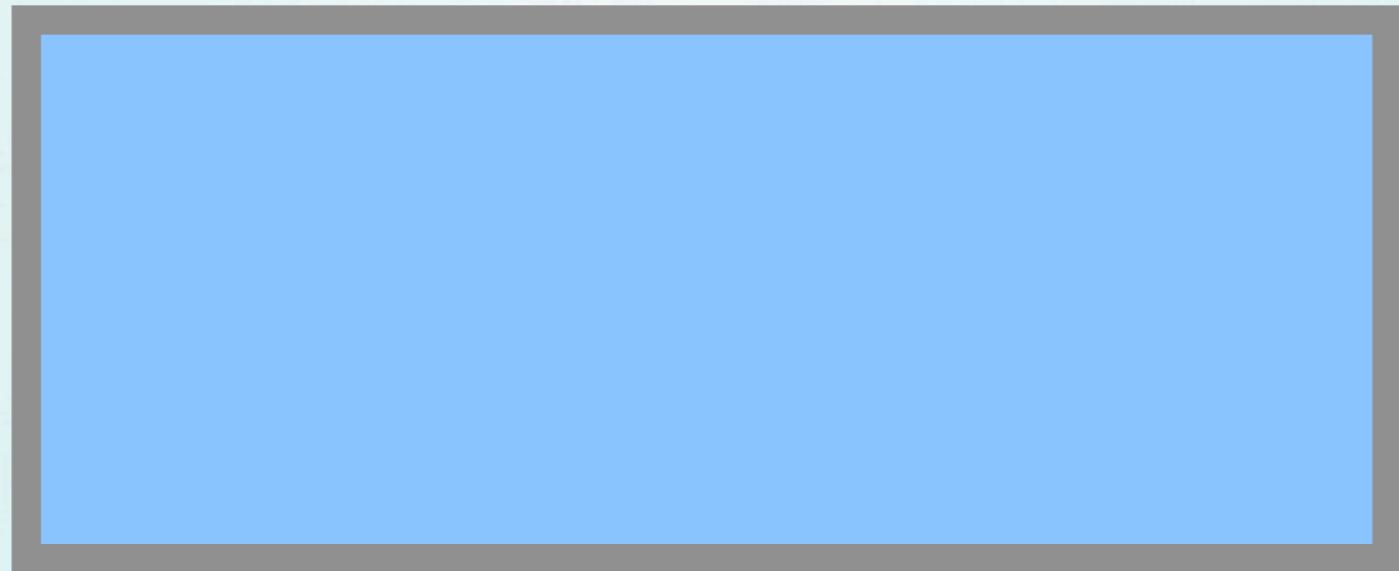
**But using color for the  
sake of color can be  
distracting & harmful**

# **Start with greyscale**

---

**Add color later**

**A lot of people use grey  
on colored backgrounds**



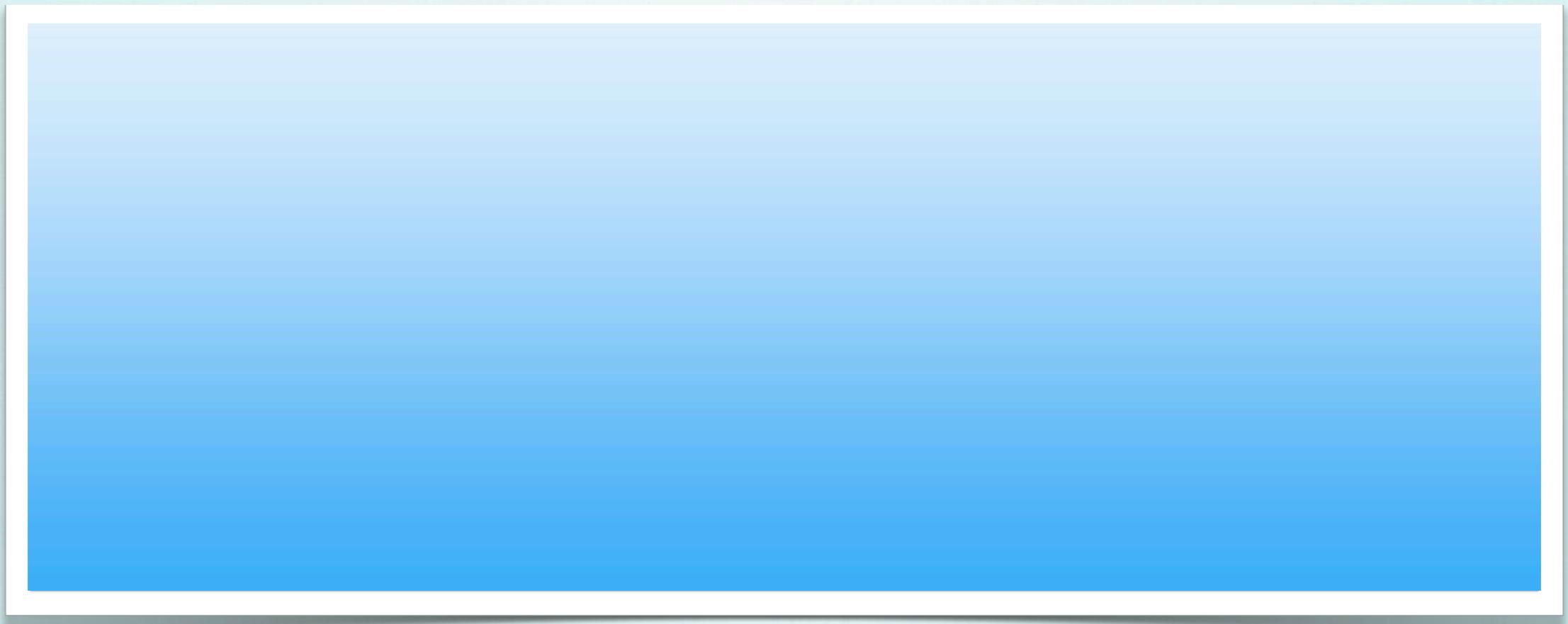
Add some of the  
background hue instead



# Wondering why your gradients look so... drab?



# **Blend Mode Superpower Overlay Gradient**



# Blend Mode Superpower Color Burn Gradient



# **Lesson Learned**

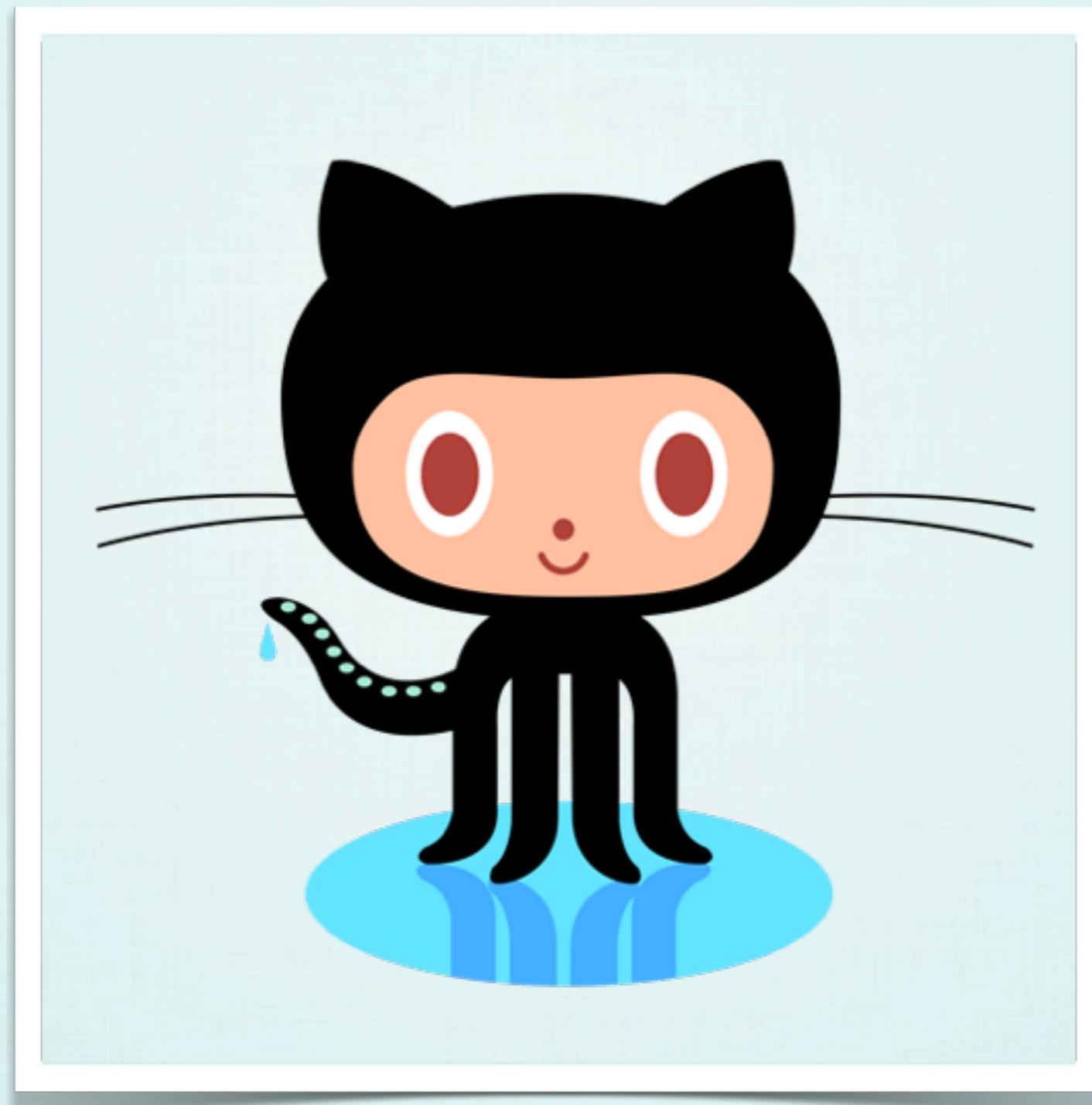
**Adding black or white  
desaturates colors**

# Cheating with **Stock Icons & Images**

# Salads are hilarious and spice up boring pages



# But seriously



# Icon sets are crazy helpful Insanely cheap



**Pictos**

**648 Icons**

**PNG & Vector & Fonts**

**\$240**

**Your time is better  
spent elsewhere**

It's all about  
**Spacing & Alignment**

# Your text is crying for padding

We're GitHub! If you're ordering a tshirt, you probably know that this isn't the main gig. Please enjoy one of our cheeky grey shirts and be sure to check back periodically for new designs.

We're GitHub! If you're ordering a tshirt, you probably know that this isn't the main gig. Please enjoy one of our cheeky grey shirts and be sure to check back periodically for new designs.

# When in doubt...

We're GitHub! If you're ordering a tshirt, you probably know that this isn't the main gig. Please enjoy one of our cheeky grey shirts and be sure to check back periodically for new designs.

**padding = margin = font size**

# Grids are awesome

<http://960.gs> will make your design 10x better



PLEASE JUST  
ALIGN ALL

THE THINGS

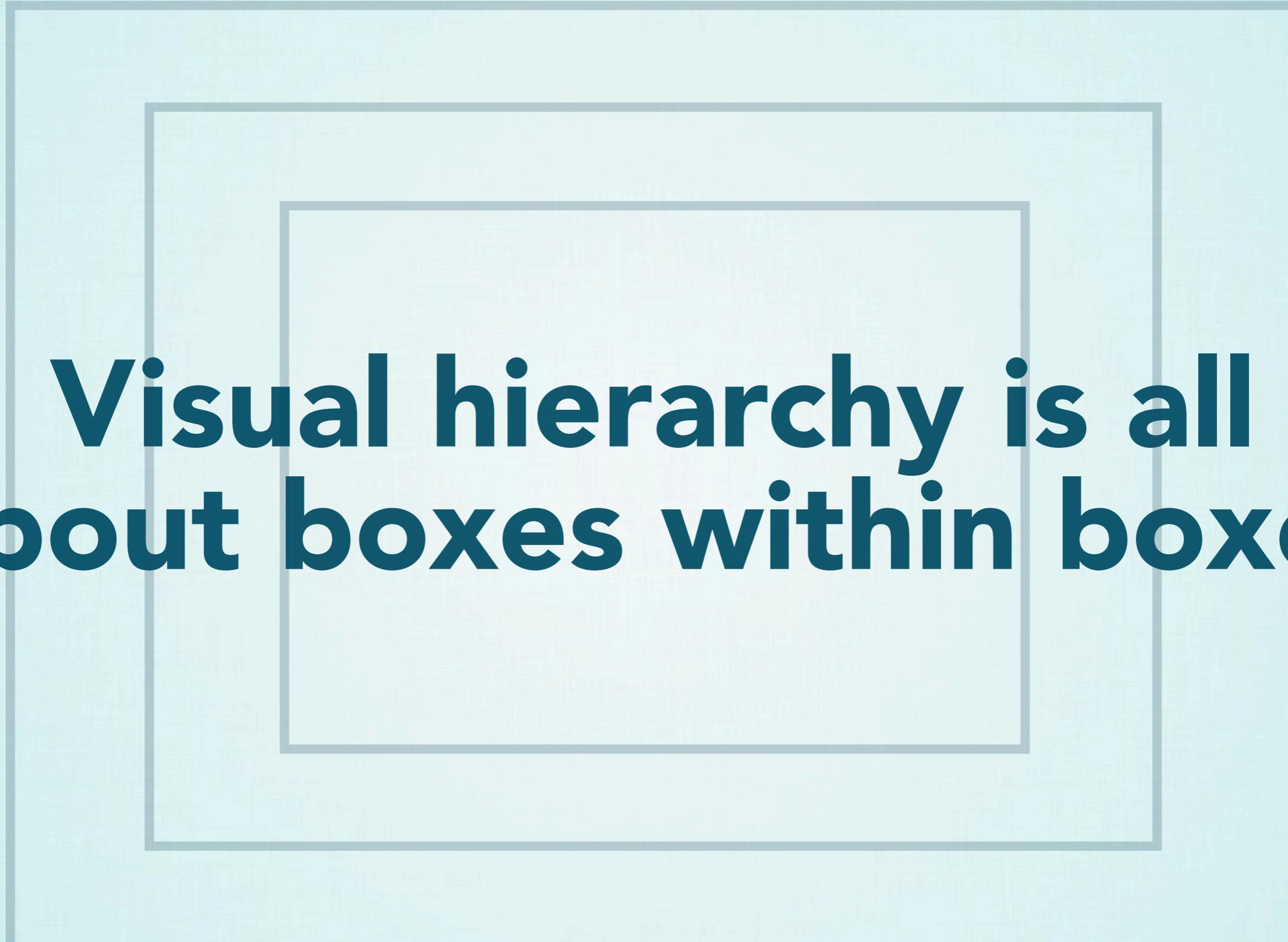
**Alignment is not hard**

**It is not a special skill**

**It just takes effort**

**ALIGN ALL  
THE THINGS**

Bring it together with  
**Visual Hierarchy**

The diagram consists of four nested rectangular boxes, each with a thin gray border. The innermost box is positioned in the center of the slide. It is surrounded by three larger boxes: one to the left, one above it, and one to the right. This arrangement creates a visual metaphor for 'boxes within boxes' used to explain visual hierarchy.

**Visual hierarchy is all  
about boxes within boxes**

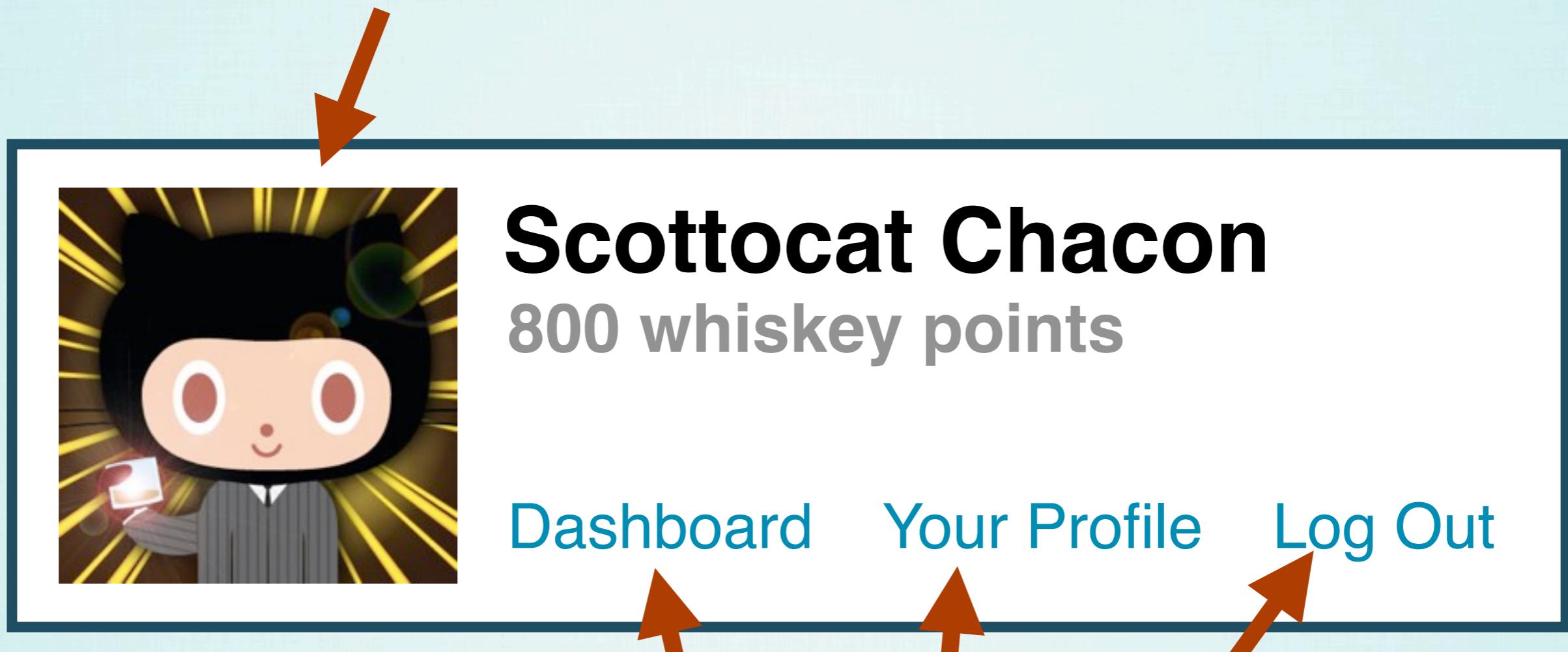
# Related elements should be grouped together



**Scottocat Chacon**  
800 whiskey points

[Dashboard](#)   [Your Profile](#)   [Log Out](#)

**The avatar (Scottocat) owns this box: everything descends from it**



**Scottocat's links (and no one else's)**

# Always be thinking about what owns the box



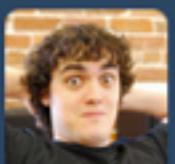
**Scottocat Chacon**  
800 whiskey points

Search the whole site...



**This doesn't belong!  
It's not owned by Scottocat**

**UI design is just a series  
of boxes within boxes**



Text



Photo



Quote



Link



Chat



Audio



Video

Following 77 people

Liked 33 posts

i has a kyledog

[kneath.tumblr.com](#)

484 posts

64 followers

Messages

Drafts

Queue

Customize

## Tracked Tags

#github (10+)

## Radar



pie0:

reply reblog



[theraljess](#) replied to your photo: [MeToday — "Me Meet Me" \(on pie0's flickr\)](#)  
[There's...](#)

I only see 4 Pies?

Stare harder :)

#theraljess



teawithlemon:

4 notes reply reblog

via [urhajos](#)

Owned by the  
logo (site)

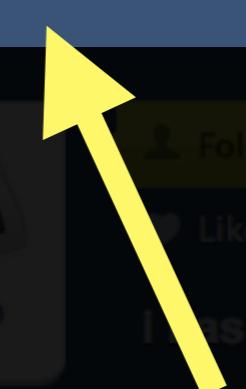
Global Actions



teawithlemon:



4 notes reply reblog



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I has a kyledog

keaneth.tumblr.com

keaneth.tumblr.com

Messages

Drafts

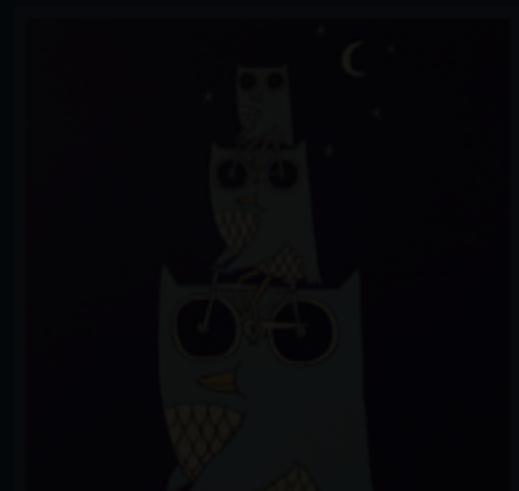
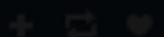
Queue

Customize

Tracked Tags

github (10+)

Radar



via urhajos

# Owned by the activity stream

Dashboard   Explore   Goodies   Account ▾

Search Tumblr

Following 77 people

Liked 33 posts

I has a kyledog

kneath.tumblr.com  
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github (10+)

Radar

+   -   ♥

 pie0:

 [therealjess](#) replied to your photo: [MeToday — "Me Meet Me" \(on pie0's flickr\)](#)  
[There's...](#)

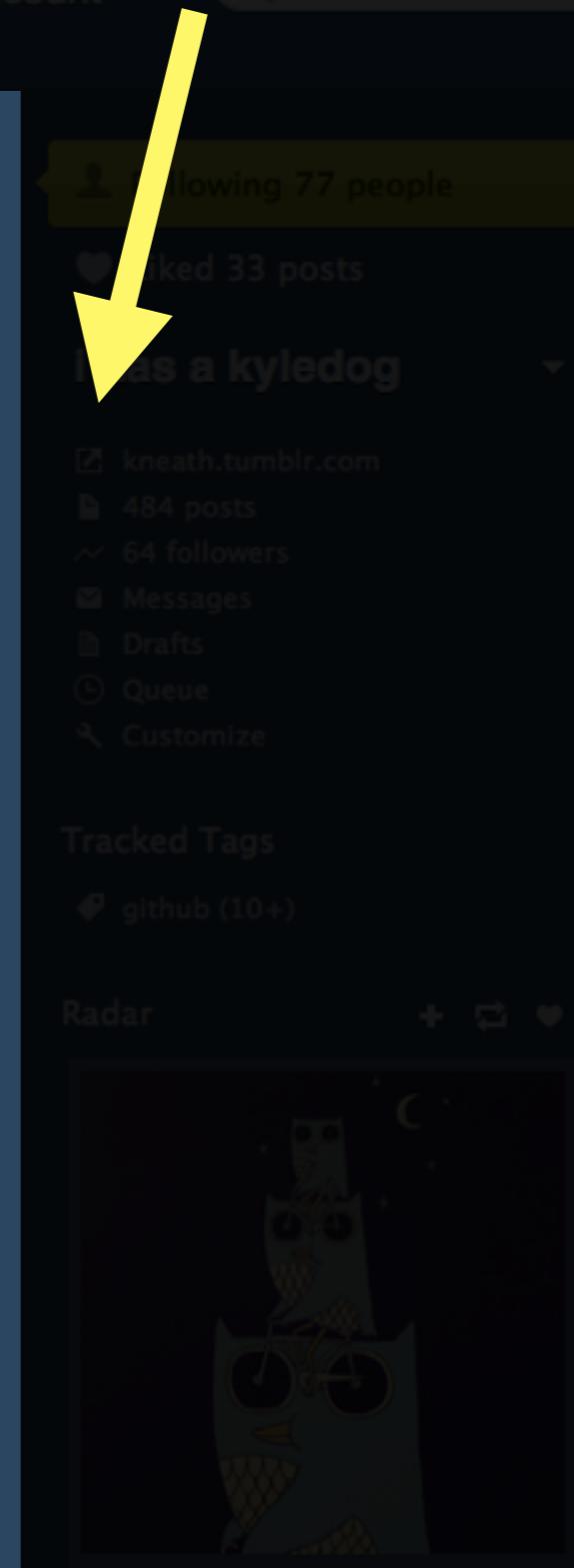
I only see 4 Pies?  
Stare harder :)

#therealjess

 teawithlemon:

4 notes   reply   reblog





via urhajos



# Owned by pie0



Text

Photo

Quote

Link

Chat

Audio

Video



pie0:

reply reblog



therealjess replied to your photo: [MeToday — "Me Meet Me" \(on pie0's flickr\)](#)  
There's...

I only see 4 Pies?

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4 notes reply reblog



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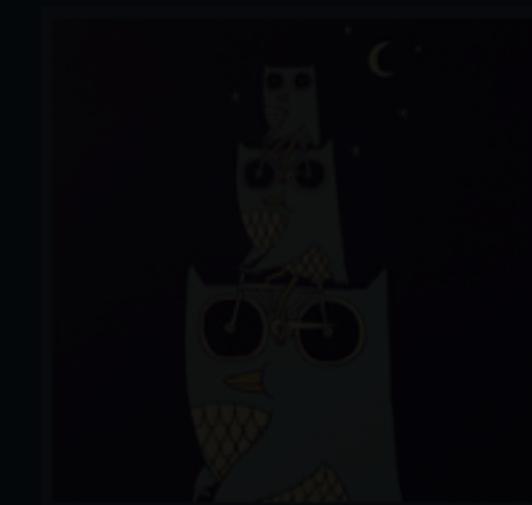
Queue

Customize

Tracked Tags

github (10+)

Radar



via urhajos

# tumblr. These are post-specific actions

Following 77 people

Liked 33 posts

I has a kyledog

kneath.tumblr.com  
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Messages  
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Customize

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github (10+)

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pie0:

[therealjess](#) replied to your photo: [MeToday — "Me Meet Me" \(on pie0's flickr\)](#)  
[There's...](#)

I only see 4 Pies?  
Stare harder :)

#therealjess

...because the post owns this box

**Write out an outline of  
your UI elements**

# Header

- › Logo
- › Global navigation
- › User box

# Dashboard

- › Activity stream
  - My friends' actions
  - My actions
- › Repository list
  - Owned repositories
  - Watched repositories

# Try the squish test



kneath

682

Dashboard

Inbox 3

Account Settings

Translations

Log Out

Explore GitHub

Gist

Blog

Help



Search...

**655,777** people hosting over **1,867,080** git repositories

jQuery, reddit, Sparkle, curl, Ruby on Rails, node.js, ClickToFlash, Erlang/OTP, CakePHP, Redis, and [many more](#)



Find any repository



## git /'git/

Git is an extremely fast, efficient, distributed version control system ideal for the collaborative development of software.

## git·hub /'git,hʌb/

GitHub is the best way to collaborate with others. Fork, send pull requests and manage all your **public** and **private** git repositories.

### Plans, Pricing and Signup

Unlimited public repositories are **free!**

Free public repositories, collaborator management, issue tracking, wikis, downloads, code review, graphs and much more...

#### Team management

**30 seconds** to give people access to code. No SSH key required. Activity feeds keep you updated on progress.

[More about collaboration](#)

#### Code review

Comment on changes, track issues, compare branches, send pull requests and merge forks.

[More about code review](#)

#### Reliable code hosting

We spend all day and night making sure your repositories are **secure**, **backed up** and **always available**.

[More about code hosting](#)

#### Open source collaboration

Participate in the most important open source community in the world today—online or at one of our meetups.

[More about our community](#)

# 1000px → 400px



Improve your  
**Presentations**

**For the love of all that is good in this world...**

**INCREASE YOUR  
FONTSIZE**

# 80 characters is way too many

```
def code_blocks
  warning = "Long strings should be trunc..."
  display(warning)
end
```

# Got a big hunk of code?

```
def code_blocks
  warning = "Long strings should be trunc..."
  warning = check_warning(warning)
  warning = spellcheck_warning(warning)
  warning = fix_problems(warning)
  warning = create_problems(warning)
  warning = add_dimension(warning)
  warning = move_forward(warning)
  warning = move_backward(warning)
  display(warning)
end
```

# Step through it one line at a time

```
def code_blocks
  ...
  warning = fix_problems(warning)
  ...
end
```

# Step through it one line at a time

```
def code_blocks
  ...
  warning = create_problems(warning)
  ...
end
```

**40 characters wide  
4 lines of code**

**Font size as big as will fit**  
**Brevity over correctness**



# Contrast is awesome

**Does it look sleek?**

**Increase the contrast**

**Add 75% white overlay**

**Add 75% black overlay**

Add 75% white overlay

Add 75% black overlay

# How to Be a better designer

# **Steal Everything**

# Side Projects

# Practice

FIN

