

Softpath Design System

Version 1.0 | February 2026

Design Philosophy




"**Editorial Tech**" - The intersection of a technical publication and a personal editorial voice. Softpath should look like someone who thinks seriously about growth infrastructure, not just another consultant with a Calendly link.

Core Principles






- 1. **Asymmetric Tension** - Intentional visual imbalance. Left-heavy text with right-aligned accents, staggered grids, elements that break expected alignment.
- 2. **Typographic Drama** - Dramatic weight and size shifts between hierarchy levels. Typography does most of the visual heavy lifting.
- 3. **Red Does the Work** - Softpath red is the only accent color. Used sparingly but with purpose. Not decoration, but signal.
- 4. **Data Aesthetic Without Data Viz** - Subtle nods to precision and measurement: grid patterns, monospace accents, structured layouts. Signals "analyst who codes."
- 5. **Static Confidence** - No scroll-jacking, no entrance animations, no parallax. Interactions are subtle and purposeful. The design stands on its own.




Color System

Brand Colors









Token	Hex	RGB	Usage
--red-primary	 #D82C20	rgb(216, 44, 32)	Primary CTA buttons, active states, accent lines
--red-dark	 #B52318	rgb(181, 35, 24)	Button hover states, pressed states
--red-light	 #E84C42	rgb(232, 76, 66)	Rarely used - highlights if needed

Neutral Palette (Light Mode)

Token	Hex	Usage
--bg-primary	 #FFFFFF	Page background
--bg-secondary	 #F8F8F8	Card backgrounds, code blocks
--bg-tertiary	 #F0F0F0	Hover states on cards
--text-primary	 #1A1A1A	Headings, primary body text
--text-secondary	 #4A4A4A	Secondary body text, descriptions

Token	Hex	Usage
--text-tertiary	 #767676	Meta text, captions, timestamps
--border-light	 #E5E5E5	Card borders, dividers
--border-medium	 #CCCCCC	Input borders, stronger dividers

Neutral Palette (Dark Mode)

Token	Hex	Usage
--bg-primary	 #0F0F0F	Page background
--bg-secondary	 #1A1A1A	Card backgrounds
--bg-tertiary	 #252525	Hover states on cards
--text-primary	 #F5F5F5	Headings, primary body text
--text-secondary	 #B0B0B0	Secondary body text
--text-tertiary	 #808080	Meta text, captions
--border-light	 #2A2A2A	Card borders, dividers
--border-medium	 #3A3A3A	Stronger dividers

Color Application Rules

- 1. **Red is interactive** - Only use red for elements users can click/tap or for intentional visual anchors (section accent lines)
- 2. **Links default to text color** - Links inherit `--text-primary`, red appears on hover
- 3. **No colored backgrounds** - Sections use white/off-white, never colored washes
- 4. **Dark mode is opt-in** - Light mode is default, dark mode respects system preference

Typography

Type Scale

Using a 1.25 ratio (Major Third) with 18px base.

Level	Size	Line Height	Weight	Letter Spacing	Usage
Display	64px / 4rem	1.1	700	-0.03em	Homepage hero only
H1	48px / 3rem	1.15	700	-0.02em	Page titles
H2	36px / 2.25rem	1.2	600	-0.01em	Section headers
H3	28px / 1.75rem	1.3	600	0	Subsection headers
H4	22px / 1.375rem	1.4	600	0	Card titles
Body Large	20px / 1.25rem	1.6	400	0	Lead paragraphs
Body	18px / 1.125rem	1.7	400	0	Default body text
Body Small	16px / 1rem	1.6	400	0	Secondary text
Caption	14px / 0.875rem	1.5	500	0.02em	Meta info, dates
Label	12px / 0.75rem	1.4	600	0.08em	All-caps labels

Font Stack

Primary (Headings + Body):

```
css
--font-primary: "Space Grotesk", system-ui, -apple-system, sans-serif;
```

Monospace (Code, Labels, Accents):

```
css
--font-mono: "JetBrains Mono", "Fira Code", "SF Mono", monospace;
```

Font Loading:

```
html
<link rel="preconnect" href="https://fonts.googleapis.com">
<link rel="preconnect" href="https://fonts.gstatic.com" crossorigin>
<link href="https://fonts.googleapis.com/css2?family=JetBrains+Mono:wght@400;500&family=Space+Grotesk:wght@400;500;600;700&display=swap"
```

Typography Rules

1. **Headings are tight** - Negative letter-spacing on H1/H2, creates density and confidence
2. **Body is generous** - 1.7 line-height for comfortable reading
3. **Monospace for precision** - Use for: dates, categories, code, technical terms, navigation labels (optional)
4. **No italics for emphasis** - Use semibold (600) instead
5. **Maximum line length** - Body text: 680px / ~75 characters

Spacing System

Using an 8px base unit.

Token	Value	Usage
--space-1	4px	Tight gaps, icon padding
--space-2	8px	Inline spacing, small gaps
--space-3	12px	Component internal padding
--space-4	16px	Card padding, list spacing
--space-5	24px	Section internal spacing
--space-6	32px	Between components
--space-7	48px	Between sections
--space-8	64px	Major section breaks
--space-9	96px	Page section padding
--space-10	128px	Hero/footer spacing

Layout Widths

Token	Value	Usage
--width-content	680px	Blog posts, long-form text
--width-wide	960px	Cards, grids
--width-max	1200px	Maximum container width
--width-full	100%	Edge-to-edge when needed

Components

Buttons

Primary Button

```
css
```

```

.btn-primary {
  background: var(--red-primary);
  color: #FFFFFF;
  padding: 16px 32px;
  font-family: var(--font-primary);
  font-size: 16px;
  font-weight: 600;
  letter-spacing: 0.01em;
  border: none;
  border-radius: 0; /* Sharp corners - no border-radius */
  cursor: pointer;
  transition: background 0.15s ease, transform 0.15s ease;
}

.btn-primary:hover {
  background: var(--red-dark);
  transform: translateY(-1px);
}

.btn-primary:active {
  transform: translateY(0);
}

```

Secondary Button (Outline)

```

css
.btn-secondary {
  background: transparent;
  color: var(--text-primary);
  padding: 15px 31px; /* Account for border */
  font-family: var(--font-primary);
  font-size: 16px;
  font-weight: 600;
  letter-spacing: 0.01em;
  border: 1px solid var(--border-medium);
  border-radius: 0;
  cursor: pointer;
  transition: border-color 0.15s ease, color 0.15s ease;
}

.btn-secondary:hover {
  border-color: var(--red-primary);
  color: var(--red-primary);
}

```

Text Button / Link Button

```

css

```

```
.btn-text {
  background: none;
  border: none;
  color: var(--text-primary);
  font-family: var(--font-primary);
  font-size: 16px;
  font-weight: 500;
  padding: 0;
  cursor: pointer;
  position: relative;
}

.btn-text::after {
  content: " →";
  transition: transform 0.15s ease;
  display: inline-block;
}

.btn-text:hover::after {
  transform: translateX(4px);
}
```

Cards

Service Card

css

```
.card-service {
  background: var(--bg-primary);
  border: 1px solid var(--border-light);
  padding: var(--space-6);
  transition: border-color 0.15s ease, box-shadow 0.15s ease;
}

.card-service:hover {
  border-color: var(--border-medium);
  box-shadow: 0 4px 12px rgba(0, 0, 0, 0.04);
}

.card-service__icon {
  width: 48px;
  height: 48px;
  margin-bottom: var(--space-4);
}

.card-service__title {
  font-size: 22px;
  font-weight: 600;
  margin-bottom: var(--space-3);
  color: var(--text-primary);
}

.card-service__description {
  font-size: 16px;
  color: var(--text-secondary);
  line-height: 1.6;
}
```

Blog Card (Featured)

CSS

```
.card-blog-featured {
  display: grid;
  grid-template-columns: 1fr;
  gap: var(--space-4);
  padding: var(--space-6);
  border: 1px solid var(--border-light);
  transition: border-color 0.15s ease;
}

.card-blog-featured:hover {
  border-color: var(--red-primary);
}

.card-blog-featured__meta {
  font-family: var(--font-mono);
  font-size: 13px;
  color: var(--text-tertiary);
  text-transform: uppercase;
  letter-spacing: 0.05em;
}

.card-blog-featured__title {
  font-size: 28px;
  font-weight: 600;
  line-height: 1.3;
  color: var(--text-primary);
}

.card-blog-featured__excerpt {
  font-size: 18px;
  color: var(--text-secondary);
  line-height: 1.6;
}
```

Blog Card (Compact)

CSS


```
.card-blog {  
  padding: var(--space-5);  
  border: 1px solid var(--border-light);  
  transition: border-color 0.15s ease;  
}  
  
.card-blog:hover {  
  border-color: var(--red-primary);  
}  
  
.card-blog__meta {  
  font-family: var(--font-mono);  
  font-size: 12px;  
  color: var(--text-tertiary);  
  margin-bottom: var(--space-2);  
}  
  
.card-blog__title {  
  font-size: 18px;  
  font-weight: 600;  
  line-height: 1.4;  
  color: var(--text-primary);  
}
```

Navigation

Header

CSS

```
.header {
  position: sticky;
  top: 0;
  background: var(--bg-primary);
  border-bottom: 1px solid var(--border-light);
  padding: var(--space-4) 0;
  z-index: 100;
}

.header__inner {
  max-width: var(--width-max);
  margin: 0 auto;
  padding: 0 var(--space-5);
  display: flex;
  justify-content: space-between;
  align-items: center;
}

.header__logo {
  display: flex;
  align-items: center;
  gap: var(--space-3);
}

.header__logo-mark {
  width: 32px;
  height: 32px;
}

.header__logo-text {
  font-size: 20px;
  font-weight: 700;
  color: var(--red-primary);
  letter-spacing: -0.01em;
}

.header__nav {
  display: flex;
  gap: var(--space-6);
}

.header__nav-link {
  font-family: var(--font-mono);
  font-size: 14px;
  font-weight: 500;
  color: var(--text-secondary);
  text-decoration: none;
  text-transform: uppercase;
  letter-spacing: 0.04em;
  transition: color 0.15s ease;
}

.header__nav-link:hover,
.header__nav-link--active {
```

```
color: var(--red-primary);
}
```

Section Dividers

Accent Line

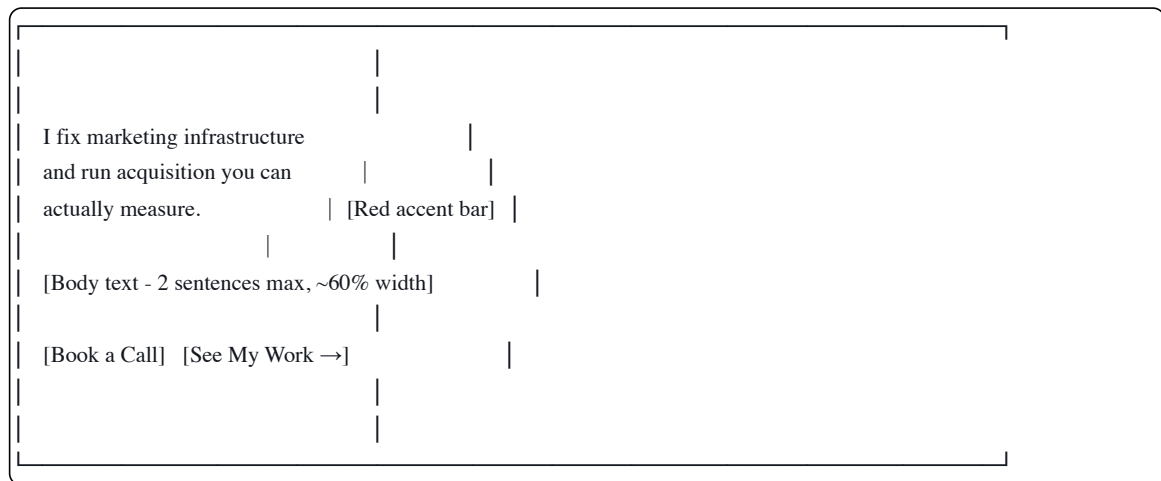
```
css
.section-header {
  display: flex;
  align-items: center;
  gap: var(--space-4);
  margin-bottom: var(--space-6);
}

.section-header__title {
  font-family: var(--font-mono);
  font-size: 12px;
  font-weight: 600;
  text-transform: uppercase;
  letter-spacing: 0.1em;
  color: var(--text-tertiary);
}

.section-header__line {
  flex: 1;
  height: 1px;
  background: var(--red-primary);
}
```

Layout Patterns

Homepage Hero



- Hero text is left-aligned, occupies ~60% of width
- Red vertical accent bar on the right side
- Generous vertical padding (128px top/bottom)
- No background image, no gradient

Service Grid

[Icon]		[Icon]		[Icon]	
Martech & Tracking		Paid Acquisition		Marketing Analytics	
Description text here...		Description text here...		Description text here...	

- 3 equal columns on desktop
- Stack to single column on mobile
- No rounded corners on cards
- 1px border, subtle shadow on hover

Blog Section (Homepage)

WRITING										[red]									
JUN 2025 · 8 MIN READ																			
I've Been Rebuilding Analytics																			
Setups. Here's What I Learned.																			
First paragraph excerpt that gives a taste...																			
MAY 2025 · 5 MIN										APR 2025 · 6 MIN									
Post Title Here										Post Title Here									
[View all posts →]																			

- Featured post takes full width with larger typography
- Secondary posts in 2-column grid below
- All posts link to full articles

Visual Elements

Grid Pattern Background (Subtle)

Use sparingly as a section background:

```
css
.bg-grid {
  background-image:
    linear-gradient(to right, var(--border-light) 1px, transparent 1px),
    linear-gradient(to bottom, var(--border-light) 1px, transparent 1px);
  background-size: 32px 32px;
  background-position: center center;
}
```

Accent Bar

Vertical red bar used in hero and as visual anchor:

```
css
.accent-bar {
  width: 4px;
  height: 120px;
  background: var(--red-primary);
}
```

Code Blocks

```
css
.code-block {
  background: #1a1a1a;
  color: #e5e5e5;
  font-family: var(--font-mono);
  font-size: 14px;
  line-height: 1.6;
  padding: var(--space-5);
  overflow-x: auto;
  border: 1px solid #2a2a2a;
}

/* Always dark, even in light mode */
```

Responsive Breakpoints

Breakpoint	Width	Usage
<code>--bp-sm</code>	640px	Mobile landscape
<code>--bp-md</code>	768px	Tablet portrait
<code>--bp-lg</code>	1024px	Tablet landscape / small desktop
<code>--bp-xl</code>	1280px	Desktop

Mobile Adjustments

- Navigation collapses to hamburger menu at `--bp-md`
 - Hero typography scales: Display 64px → 40px
 - 3-column grids become single column
 - Horizontal padding increases: 20px → 24px
 - Section vertical padding decreases by ~30%
-

Icons

Use Phosphor Icons (regular weight) for consistency: <https://phosphoricons.com/>

Service Icons:

- Martech & Tracking: `ph-plugs-connected`
- Paid Acquisition: `ph-target`
- Marketing Analytics: `ph-chart-line-up`

UI Icons:

- Arrow right: `ph-arrow-right`
- External link: `ph-arrow-square-out`
- Menu: `ph-list`
- Close: `ph-x`

Icon sizing:

- Navigation: 20px
 - Service cards: 32px
 - Hero accent: 48px
-

Animation

Allowed Interactions

```
css
/* Button hover */
transition: background 0.15s ease, transform 0.15s ease;

/* Card hover */
transition: border-color 0.15s ease, box-shadow 0.15s ease;

/* Link underline */
transition: opacity 0.15s ease;

/* Arrow nudge */
transition: transform 0.15s ease;
```

Forbidden

- Page load animations
 - Scroll-triggered animations
 - Parallax effects
 - Hover scale > 1.02
 - Any animation > 300ms
 - Bounce/elastic easing
-

CSS Custom Properties (Complete)

CSS

```
:root {
  /* Colors - Light Mode */
  --red-primary: #D82C20;
  --red-dark: #B52318;
  --red-light: #E84C42;

  --bg-primary: #FFFFFF;
  --bg-secondary: #F8F8F8;
  --bg-tertiary: #F0F0F0;

  --text-primary: #1A1A1A;
  --text-secondary: #4A4A4A;
  --text-tertiary: #767676;

  --border-light: #E5E5E5;
  --border-medium: #CCCCCC;

  /* Typography */
  --font-primary: "Space Grotesk", system-ui, -apple-system, sans-serif;
  --font-mono: "JetBrains Mono", "Fira Code", "SF Mono", monospace;

  /* Spacing */
  --space-1: 4px;
  --space-2: 8px;
  --space-3: 12px;
  --space-4: 16px;
  --space-5: 24px;
  --space-6: 32px;
  --space-7: 48px;
  --space-8: 64px;
  --space-9: 96px;
  --space-10: 128px;

  /* Layout */
  --width-content: 680px;
  --width-wide: 960px;
  --width-max: 1200px;

  /* Breakpoints (for reference - use in media queries) */
  --bp-sm: 640px;
  --bp-md: 768px;
  --bp-lg: 1024px;
  --bp-xl: 1280px;
}

@media (prefers-color-scheme: dark) {
  :root {
    --bg-primary: #0F0F0F;
    --bg-secondary: #1A1A1A;
    --bg-tertiary: #252525;

    --text-primary: #F5F5F5;
    --text-secondary: #B0B0B0;
    --text-tertiary: #808080;
  }
}
```



```
--border-light: #2A2A2A;
--border-medium: #3A3A3A;
}
}
```

File Structure (Jekyll)

```
softpath/
├── _config.yml
├── _layouts/
│   ├── default.html
│   ├── page.html
│   ├── post.html
│   └── home.html
├── _includes/
│   ├── header.html
│   ├── footer.html
│   ├── card-service.html
│   ├── card-blog.html
│   ├── card-blog-featured.html
│   ├── card-project.html
│   └── section-header.html
├── _posts/
├── _sass/
│   ├── _variables.scss
│   ├── _reset.scss
│   ├── _typography.scss
│   ├── _layout.scss
│   ├── _components.scss
│   └── _utilities.scss
├── assets/
│   ├── css/
│   │   └── main.scss
│   ├── images/
│   └── fonts/
├── pages/
│   ├── about.md
│   ├── services.md
│   ├── work.md
│   ├── blog.html
│   ├── projects.md
│   └── contact.md
└── index.html
```

Checklist Before Launch

- ☐ All custom properties defined
- ☐ Font files loaded with `font-display: swap`
- ☐ Dark mode tested
- ☐ Mobile breakpoints verified
- ☐ All hover states work

- ☐ Navigation accessible via keyboard
- ☐ Code blocks styled
- ☐ 404 page designed
- ☐ Favicon and OG images set
- ☐ Page load < 3s on 3G