

Module 2, Website Analysis (OliviaAsiala.com)

1. Overall site analysis using CRAP

The alumni whose website I chose to analyze is Olivia Asiala, whom I worked with at the College of Veterinary Medicine last spring. Olivia is a fun, outgoing person, and her website definitely reflects that. It probably helps that she is a very recent PW graduate, so the messages she is sending throughout her website are consistent with the things we are currently learning. The rhetorical choices she makes throughout point to someone who is adventurous, whimsical, but also very skilled.

The first thing I notice is the consistency across pages. The same black/white/pea green color scheme is used throughout, as well as the same fonts. Every header photo is in black and white, while every headline is in green. In addition, the use of her personal logo in the top-left hand corner of every page is very powerful. As English readers we read from top to bottom, left to right, so this placements ensures that we never forget we are on the website of Olivia Asiala. Her use of fonts is also consistent, with a trend towards the simple and readable. By using sans-serif fonts across the board (Besides in her logo), she maintains a professional yet elegant look. In addition, the site is easy to navigate. You never lose how to get back to a previous page, and each link along the top of the header photo leads exactly where you would expect it to.

2. Appearance of CRAP principles

Contrast: Olivia's color scheme is very simple, using black and white with pea-green accents for the headlines. However, this contrast in colors works extremely well with the overall feel of the site. My favorite use of contrast though is in her portfolio page, where she breaks slightly from the color scheme. Instead of making the photos of her portfolio pieces black and white like the header photos, they pop out in color, drawing attention and making them more important.

Repetition: My favorite use of repetition on the site is the repetition of the word "Explore" on her portfolio page. The use of this word works extremely well with the other elements of her website, which show Olivia exploring different places in the United States and the world. The repetition of the word invites the viewer to come explore with her, but more than that, explore the work that she has done. It reinforces her personality as a traveler and creative thinker.

Alignment: I believe the best use of alignment on the site comes in the "About" section of her site. The photos of Olivia at different places in the world lining up along the left edge make them seem like a timeline or storyboard, showing her journey to why she is who she is. This alignment also lets us know that while different, these pictures are related.

Proximity: Good use of proximity also happens in the “About” section of Olivia’s website, and it again involves the photos of her around the world. But, with this principle, I like the proximity of the photos to the headlines. You see the photos first, because they are further left, and immediately wonder what they are. Because the headlines are so close, you can quickly see where Olivia is, and why that is important to her as a person.

3. Design Piece that is Most Appealing

For my money, the part of the site design that is most appealing is Olivia’s “Portfolio” page. First of all, my favorite principle used on this page is contrast. By putting her portfolio pieces in color instead of black and white like the header photos, she makes them pop out, and appear more important. I also enjoy the use of repetition on the page as I mentioned earlier, with the word “Explore.” Using explore evokes a certain feeling about her work, that it is something to spend time on, something to dive into and really experience. Finally, proximity and alignment are both used well, allowing us to easily find her writing directly under the “Explore Writing” headline, and aligning the descriptions of the portfolio pieces on the right hand edge of the pieces themselves.

4. Design Piece that is Least Appealing

The design aspect I like the least is on the home page, embedded in the header photo. While I like the green color used for accents and headlines on the rest of the site, on the home page it is used for much more text than anywhere else. This is a little confusing, besides making the text less readable. It could be better done if there was a headline in the pea green, then some body text in white, like the rest of the site is designed. I think she was going for using the logo as the headline, so wanted the green to contrast with the white of the logo, but it is inconsistent with the rest of the site, and is a little hard to read. By making a headline a little bit bigger and in green, then the rest of the body text in white, she would make it more readable, and still effectively contrast the writing with the white of her logo on the page.

5. Aspect of the Design to Mimic

If I were to take one aspect of her design and use it on my own site, it would be the use of contrasting colors she uses for the About, Home, etc. tabs on her site. When you first see the tabs they are all black, but when you hover over them they change to green, and when you click on them they lock down to an even darker green. This contrast in colors lets you know at a glance what page of the website you are on, and this is an extremely effective and important tool. Without this, the sight would be less navigable, and therefore less enjoyable as a whole. By implementing this on my own site, users will easily be able to fly around separate sections.