

Unit 9: Design Critique

Project for Unit 9 is a written response which consists of two sections. The first section is titled Reflection. In this section, using questions which act as prompts, we are guided to reflect on the design and development of the website we have created for the class. The second section is titled Critique, where we go through the process of critiquing one website from group 1 and another website from group 2 considering aspects such as layout, typography, navigation, and flow.

Reflection:

Which existing websites out there most inspired your web site design thus far? When I was building my website I was inspired by websites of various categories of apparel retailers:

<http://www.jcrew.com>

<http://www.madewell.com>

<http://www.rennes.com>

<http://www.saksfifthavenue.com>

<http://www.neimanmarcus.com>

<http://www.theline.com>

<http://www.makieclothier.com>

<http://www.inhabitny.com>

What I learned from these sites is the use of layout, typography, and negative space to create compelling websites. I adapted the use of extensive negative space to frame elements, the selection of typography to create mood and tone, and adherence to industry standards regarding layout to promote ease of use. However since the proposed business makes handmade clothing I decided to implement these design considerations so that the look and feel of the website consistently represented the business and product niche.

Which parts of your design are you most proud of?

I really like the sun image which I have used as the background for the website. In addition, I think the colors, typography, layout, use of negative space, and responsive design come together well.

What struggles did you encounter in your design process?

Learning to use html and css to create design has been a challenge.

Familiarizing myself with typography and design principles to create a coherent webpage that might appeal to users was another aspect that was challenging in the design process.

Which struggles did you encounter during page development?

I was not sure how to center the background image in the viewport. I was not sure how to get the navigation links in the spot i wanted them to be located.

John helped with both these bits. The next major struggles had to do with scaling my product detail page and navigation bar for responsive viewing across different devices.

What did you learn from making your project responsive?

Struggling to make the page responsive i got a better sense of how the HTML and CSS come together to create the layout we see rendered by a browser. I gleaned insights into better coding practices for future projects and a tentative protocol for developing websites.

Critique

Review one website from group 1 and one website from group 2. Comment on each website's layout, typography, navigation, and overall flow.

Group 1

<https://medium.com/>

<http://www.sagmeisterwalsh.com/>

<http://squarespace.com/home/overview/>

<http://www.businessoffashion.com/>

Group 2

<http://www2.warnerbros.com/spacejam/movie/jam.htm>

<http://cavs.mit.edu/>

<http://www.spectrumpowderworks.com/>

<http://mimarch.net/>

Review of <https://medium.com> from Group 1. Medium is a website which features a collection of articles or stories written by a number of different authors - a hybrid between an e-zine and a blog, a place where anyone can write a blog post and have it edited by others who use the site before publishing to Medium.

Medium uses a two column layout sandwiched between a header at the top and a footer at the bottom. The left column is reserved for a listing of articles and the right column is a content rich navigation bar. The left column or the content column uses the following pattern for each article: a logo, name of category, author's name and date published to Medium, image associated with article, title of article, a one sentence lead in, and 'continue reading' button captioned with an approximate time it will take to read the article.

Medium uses a color scheme of white, grays, and limited use of green to highlight. White is used for the background color, shades of gray for most of the typography, and a light shade of green for 'continue reading' and name of article's category.

The typography relies on a sans-serif typeface to give the site a modern feel. Contrast is achieved using font-size (from small to large) and font-weight (super light to heavy, bold).

All elements on the page are framed in plenty of negative space. Content is grouped by function. The website name is in the top left and beside it are links to articles selected by staff, another link to top articles as determined by views/ votes, and bookmarks. At the top right are three call to action buttons: sign up/ sign in, write a story, search. In the content column, all the articles stack on top of each other so viewers can scroll down until they find an article that piques their interest. The right hand column is divided into three sections. At top are links to categories or tags to articles that might interest the visitor. The middle portion contains a link to an about Medium page. The lower third of the right column lists the top 5 articles by title.

The careful use of layout, typography, and navigation establish a clear hierarchy and flow of elements which in turn create a comfortable user experience.

Review of mimarch.net from Group 2. Mimarch dot net is the business website for Mimar Architects and Engineers. The website as it currently exists lacks clarity. The layout is cluttered, redundant, unfocused. The layout does not display focal point, hierarchy, grouping, alignment, balanced use of positive and negative space, consistent use of typography and color to organize content or assist visual flow. Finally, the site does not scale as we resize the browser window.

The elements on the page are not surrounded by sufficient negative space. Negative space is not used to enhance visual flow, chunking of information, nor create places for the eyes to rest.

Content is repeated in four different locations: vertical navigation bar in top left corner, horizontal navigation bar in header, navigation bar in footer, jumping links in the hero image.

Content is not organized by function or category. There is no easily discernible organization to the images provided in the center of the page. Also, there is a layering of thumbnail images over the central image that is visually cluttered. Typefaces, font-sizes, font-weights are not used in a systematic fashion to create visual ordering of the page. The color scheme is not used to enhance the website, organize information, or create highlights.

Eliminating repeated elements can potentially increase negative space on webpage. Organizing content according to category or function can facilitate grouping or separation of content. Focal point, hierarchy, and flow can be achieved through typography and color. And determining the needs of audience can determine whether a responsive site would enhance business goals.