



# Visual Design and Fluid Navigation

**Human Computer Interaction** 

Luigi De Russis, Alberto Monge Roffarello Academic Year 2025/2026





#### Hall of Fame or Shame?





## Visual Design

Aesthetics for helping users in understanding and navigating the UI

#### **Visual Design**

- Guiding: conveying structure, relative importance, relationships
- Pacing: drawing people into your app, orienting them, and showing where to go, providing hooks to dive deeper
- Messaging: expressing meaning and style, breathing life into your content
- Both at the conscious and sub-conscious levels

- And also...
  - Making everything look aesthetically beautiful (but this is not the goal)

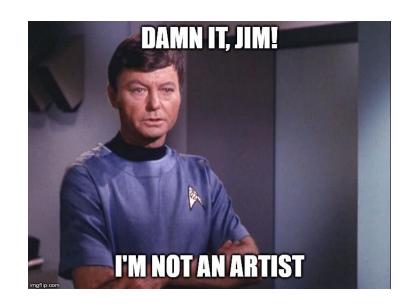
#### Visual Design vs. Art and Artistic Skills

A.k.a. «Help, I'm not an artist!»

- Artistic skills help a bit but are neither necessary nor sufficient
- Art does not need to <u>be practical</u>; design does



Widely-accepted heuristics are a good and easy start



#### The Basics of Visual Design

Basic visual design involves text, layout, and colors. First let's start with text. Gracefully using whitespace helps separate out logical chunks of content. Next, font size and style differences convey hierarchy. Finally, alignment is crucial for helping readers scan quickly.

#### Whitespace

Basic visual design involves text, layout, and colors. First let's start with text.

Gracefully using whitespace helps separate out logical chunks of content.

Next, font size and style differences convey hierarchy.

Finally, alignment is crucial for helping readers scan quickly.

#### Hierarchy

Basic visual design involves ...

#### **Text**

Gracefully using whitespace helps separate out logical chunks of content.

Next, font size and style differences convey hierarchy.

Finally, alignment is crucial for helping readers scan quickly.

#### Layout

#### Colors

#### Alignment

**BASIC VISUAL DESIGN** 

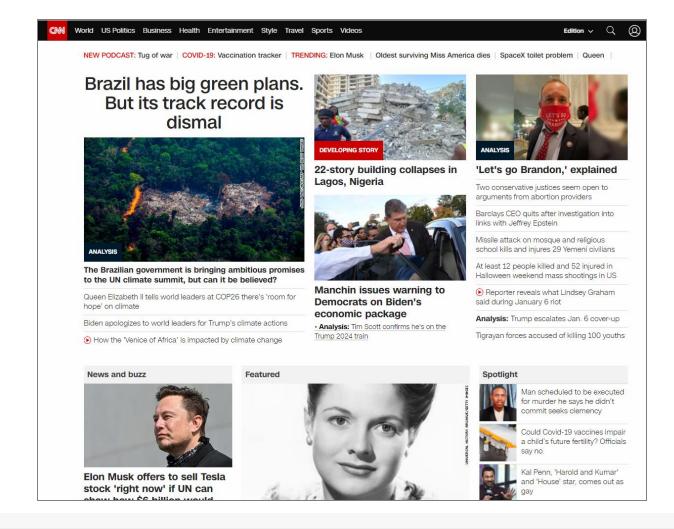
#### **Text**

- Whitespace: helps separate out logical chunks of content
- **Font**: size and style differences convey hierarchy
- **Alignment**: crucial for helping readers scan quickly

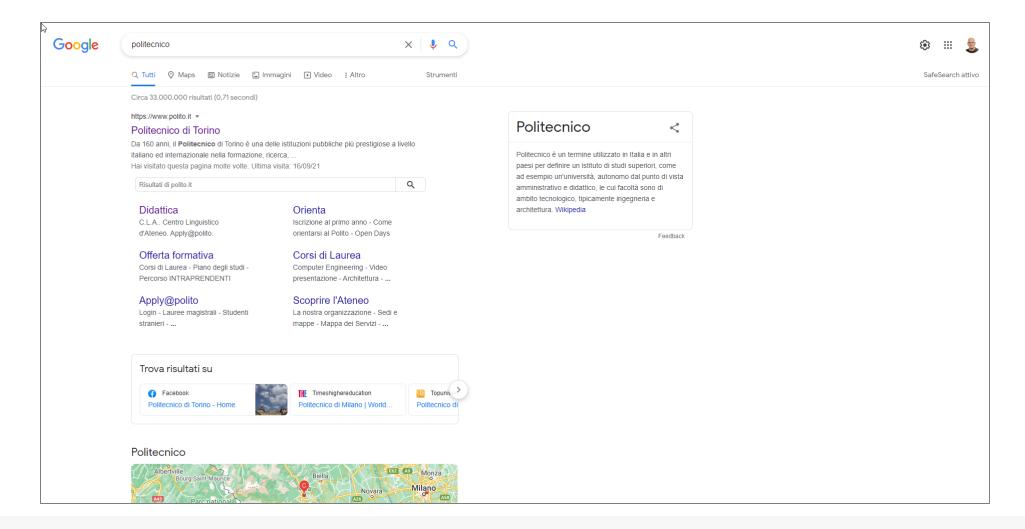
#### Layout

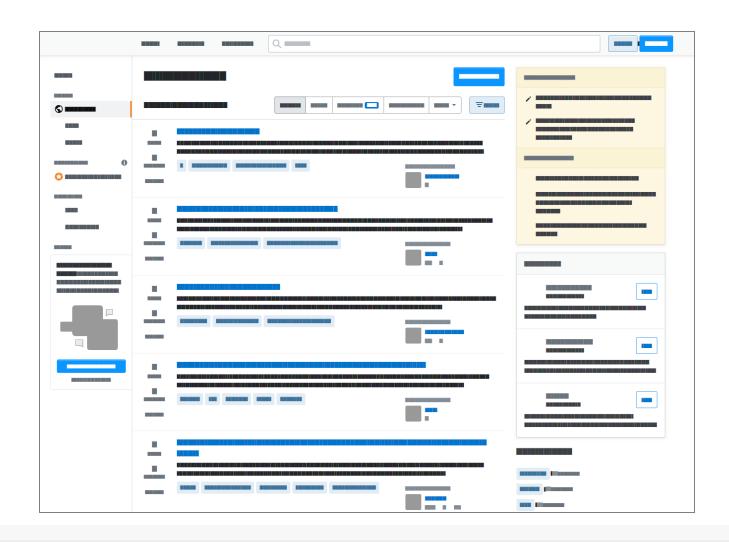
Colors

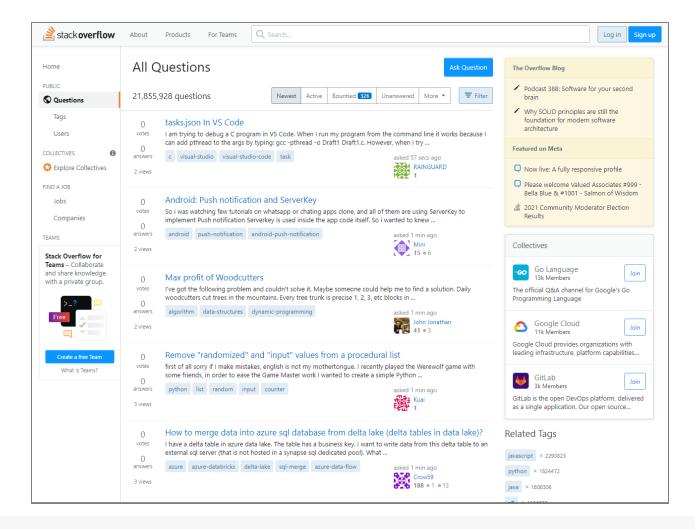




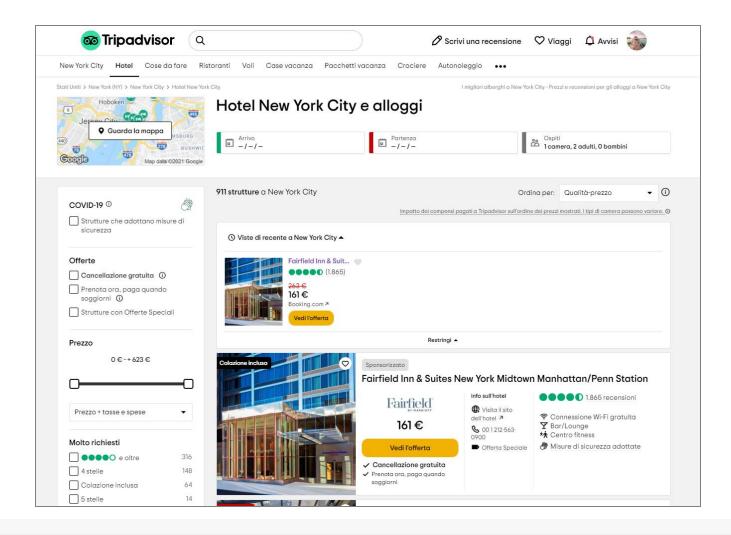






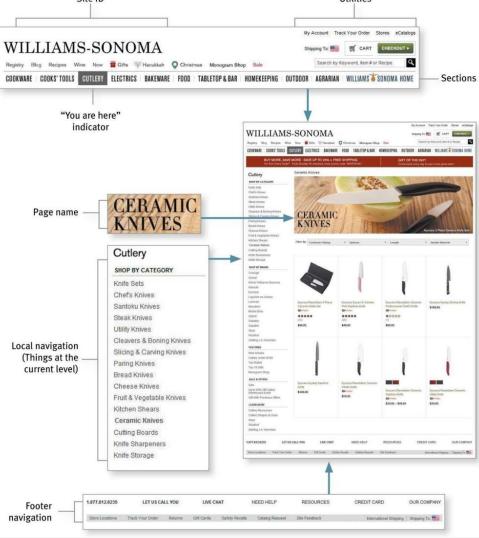




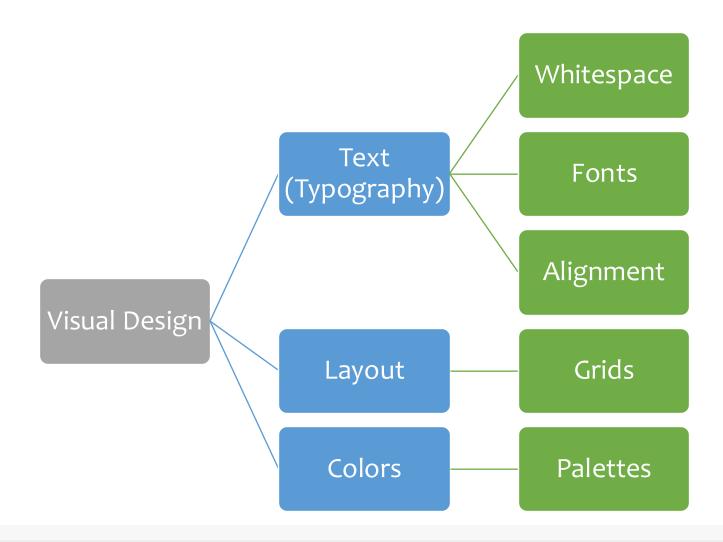




### Conventions Help Recognizing Structure



### **Key Ingredients**



# 'Gestalt' principles

Hints from the psychology of Shapes and of Representation

#### **Gestalt principles**

- Laws from 1920s' psychology: how humans typically see objects by grouping similar elements, recognizing patterns and simplifying complex images
- Designers use these to engage users via powerful -yet natural- "tricks" of perspective and best practice design standards
- "The whole is other than the sum of the parts" Kurt Koffka



#### **Some Gestalt Principles**

- Figure/Ground: Disliking uncertainty, we look for solid, stable items. Foreground catches the eye first
- Closure: Preferring complete shapes, we automatically fill in gaps to perceive a complete image; we see the whole first
- Common Region: We group elements that are in the same closed region
- Element Connectedness: We group elements linked by other elements
- Continuation: We follow and "flow with" lines
- Proximity (Emergence): We group closer-together elements, separating them from those farther apart.
- Good Form: We differentiate elements that are similar in color, form, pattern, etc. and cluster them together

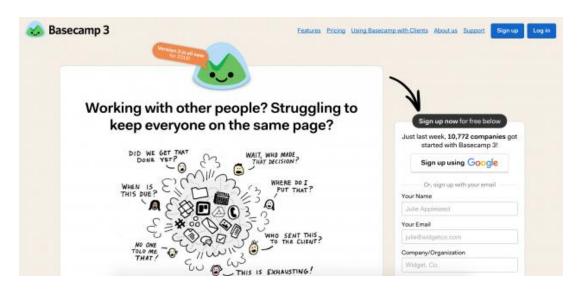
- Meaningfulness (Familiarity): We group elements if they form a meaningful or personally relevant image.
- Prägnanz: We perceive complex images as simple ones.
- Convexity: We perceive convex shapes ahead of concave ones
- Regularity: Sorting items, we tend to group some into larger shapes, and connect elements that form a pattern.
- Similarity (Invariance): We seek differences and similarities in an image and link similar elements.
- Symmetry: We seek balance and order in designs, struggling to do so if they aren't readily apparent.
- Common Fate: We group elements that move in the same direction
- **Synchrony:** We group static visual elements that appear at the same time.

#### **Examples: Figure-ground**



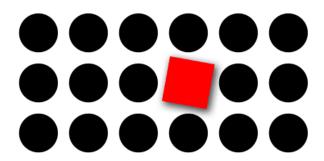


**Figure/Ground:** Disliking uncertainty, we look for solid, stable items. Foreground catches the eye first

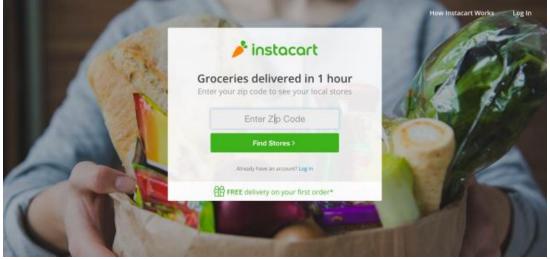




#### **Examples: Focal Point**

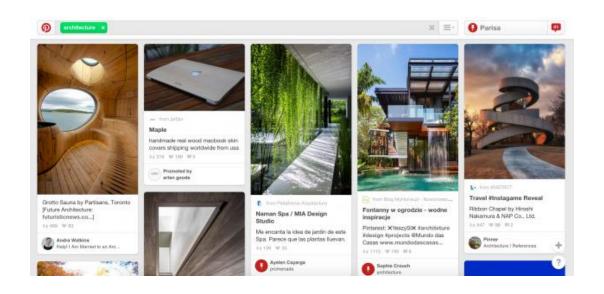


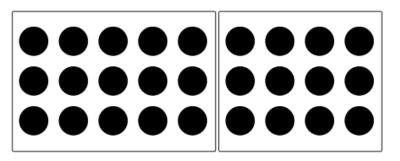


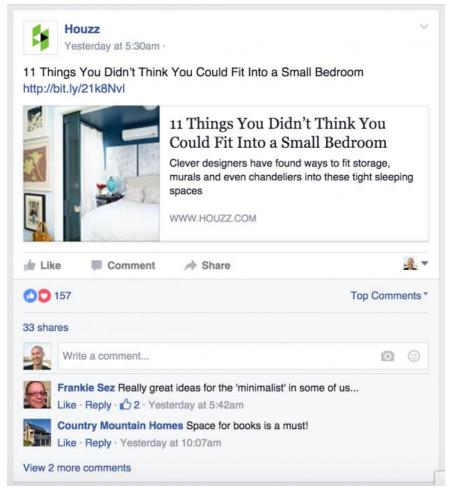


#### **Examples: Common Region**

**Common Region:** We group elements that are in the same closed region

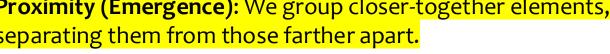


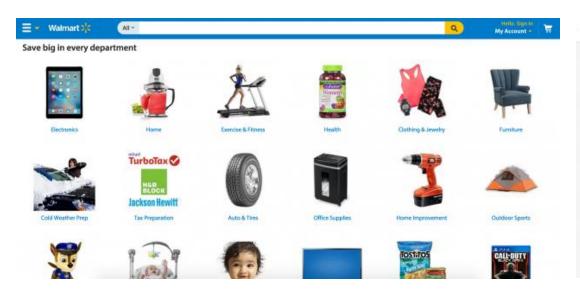


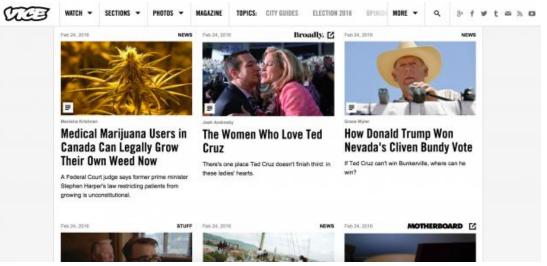


#### **Examples: Proximity**

**Proximity (Emergence):** We group closer-together elements, separating them from those farther apart.









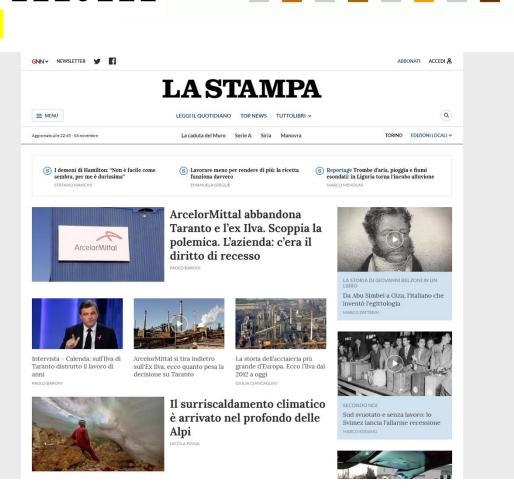
https://www.usertesting.com/blog/g

estalt-principles/

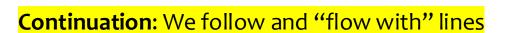
#### **Examples: Similarity**

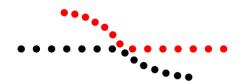
Similarity (Invariance): We seek differences and similarities in an image and link similar elements.





#### **Examples: Continuity**





#### Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought



Crossing the Chasm, 3rd Edition: Marketing and Selling Disruptive Products > Geoffrey A. Moore 南南南南南 72 \$12.35 Prime



The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to 食食食食 1,062

\$16.66 -/Prime



The Innovator's Dilemma: The Revolutionary Book That Will Change the Way Clayton M. Christensen **全 中 中 中 209** Management.... Paperback

\$10.06 \Prime



Creating and Sustaining Successful Growth Clayton M. Christensen 食食食食量22 Hardcover \$18.33 Prime



How Will You Measure Your Life? Clayton M. Christensen **南南南南** (7 583 Hardcover \$15.86 Prime





Page 1 of 20

Step 1 Choose your meals, drinks and treats from our daily



rotating menu.



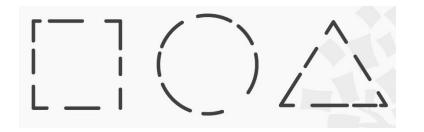
Step 2 Our friendly servers organize your food for delivery - hot and ready to eat!

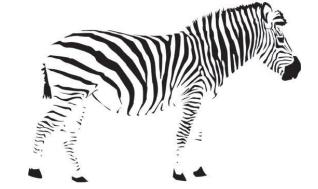


Your meal arrives in around 20 minutes - like a home-cooked meal without the effort!

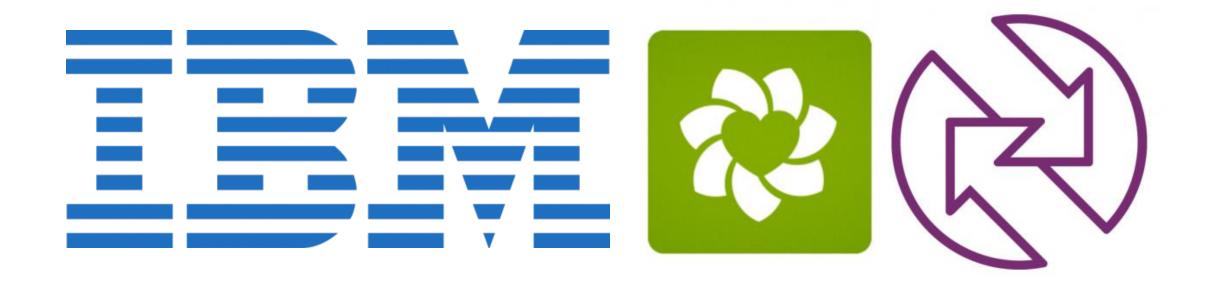
Step 3

### **Examples: Closure**





**Closure:** Preferring complete shapes, we automatically fill in gaps to perceive a complete image; we see the whole first

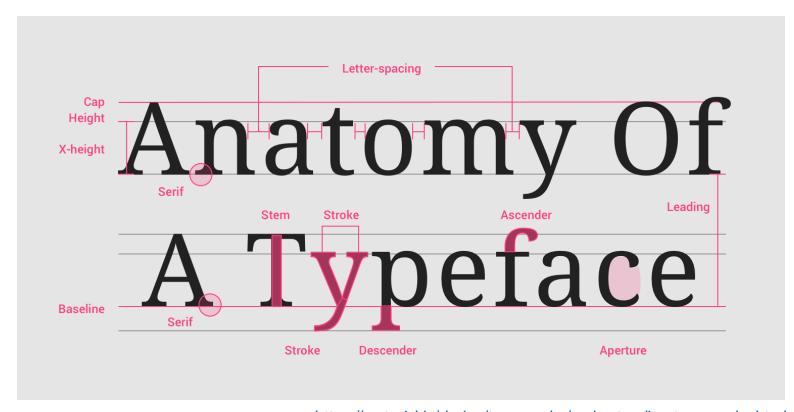


# Typography

Property of text

#### **Characteristics of Text**

- Point Size
- Leading
- Cap Height, x-height
- Ascenders, Descenders
- Weight
- Serifs



https://material.io/design/typography/understanding-typography.html

### Example: Material Design Type Scale

A combination of 13 styles that are supported by the type system

Reusable categories of text, each with an intended application and meaning

Scale Category	Typeface	Font	Size	Case	Letter spacing
H1	Roboto	Light	96	Sentence	-1.5
H2	Roboto	Light	60	Sentence	-0.5
Н3	Roboto	Regular	48	Sentence	0
H4	Roboto	Regular	34	Sentence	0.25
H5	Roboto	Regular	24	Sentence	0
H6	Roboto	Medium	20	Sentence	0.15
Subtitle 1	Roboto	Regular	16	Sentence	0.15
Subtitle 2	Roboto	Medium	14	Sentence	0.1
Body 1	Roboto	Regular	16	Sentence	0.5
Body 2	Roboto	Regular	14	Sentence	0.25
BUTTON	Roboto	Medium	14	All caps	1.25
Caption	Roboto	Regular	12	Sentence	0.4
OVERLINE	Roboto	Regular	10	All caps	1.5

https://material.io/design/typography/the-type-system.html#type-scale

#### **Text**

- Font size, color and spacing define a hierarchy of visibility and attention
- The visual hierarchy should match the relative importance of the information content



https://docs.italia.it/italia/designers-italia/design-linee-guida-docs/it/stabile/doc/user-interface/il-disegno-di-un-interfaccia-e-lo-ui-kit.html

#### **Text**

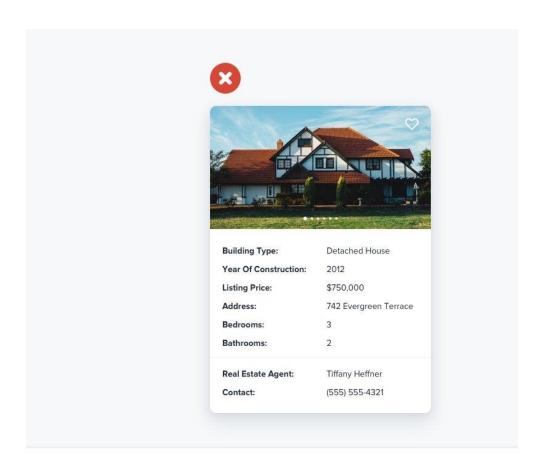
- Font size, color and spacing define a hierarchy of visibility and attention
- The visual hierarchy should match the relative importance of the information content





https://docs.italia.it/italia/designers-italia/design-linee-guida-docs/it/stabile/doc/user-interface/il-disegno-di-un-interfaccia-e-lo-ui-kit.html

#### Exercise (~10 minutes)



www.refactoringui.com

- Redesign this UI to align with the text and layout principles we've discussed so far
  - You can redesign it in low fidelity, or by modifying the picture directly
- Text and layout convey meaning: what information are users most likely looking for?

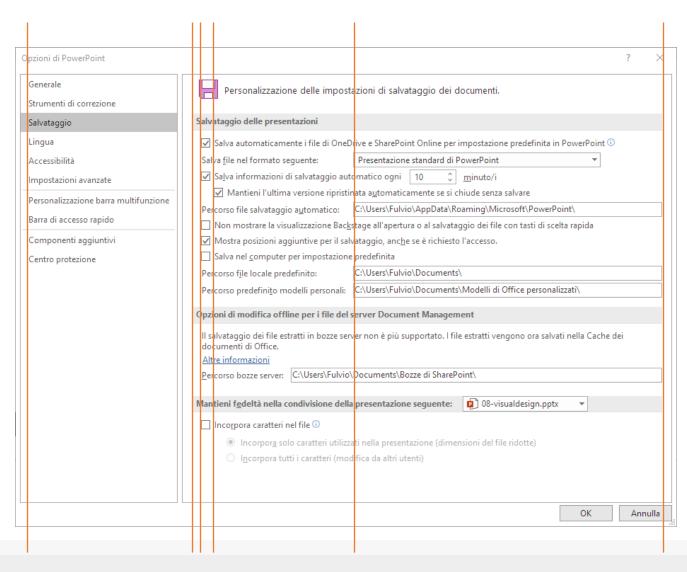
## Grids and Alignment

Exploiting grouping and alignment to convey content, at different levels

### Alignment

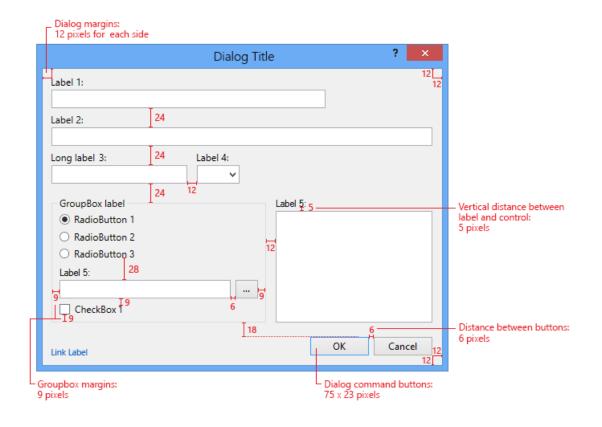
- Invisible lines that run through the interface and "attract" the left- or rightedge of a widget control
  - Vertical
  - Horizontal

### Example



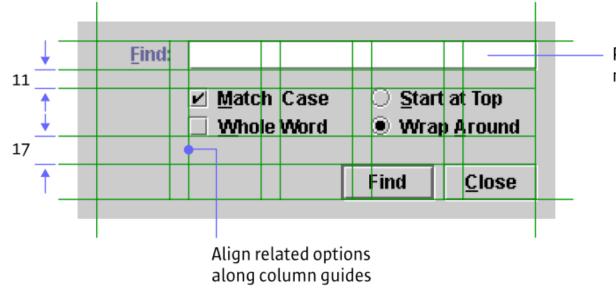
### **Examples**



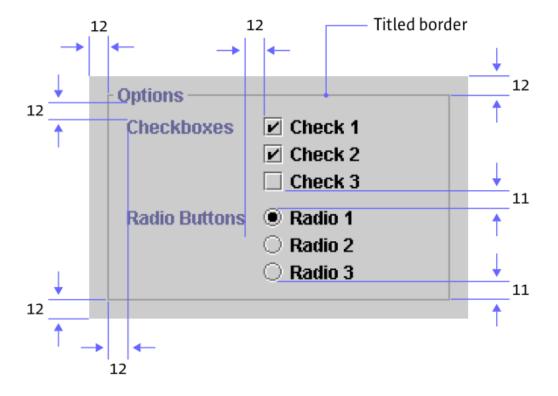


https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/visualstudio/extensibility/ux-guidelines/layout-for-visual-studio?view=vs-2019

### **Examples**



Place most important option near the top

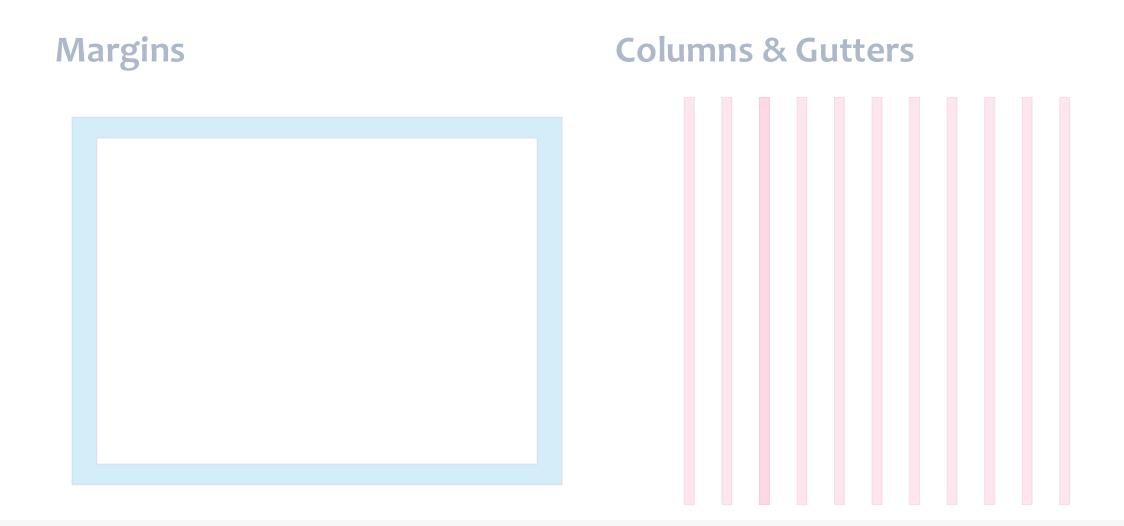


Java Look and Feel Design Guidelines, Sun Microsystems, 1999

### **Grid Layout Ingredients**

- **Guides:** The edge which you choose to align content with
- **Column:** A vertical division of content
- Row: A horizontal division of content
- Margins: The area surrounding your content
- Gutters: The margins between columns
- Hang-line: A horizontal guide to align content to hang off of
- Baseline: The horizontal guide for an element to sit on top of
- **Rhythm**: Proportion systems that can help define the sizing frequency and spacing of each of the above elements.

### **Grid Layout Ingredients**



### **Grid Layout Ingredients**

**Baseline Grids Hanglines and Baselines** 

### **Example Grid-based layout**

- 1. Columns
- 2. Gutters
- 3. Margins



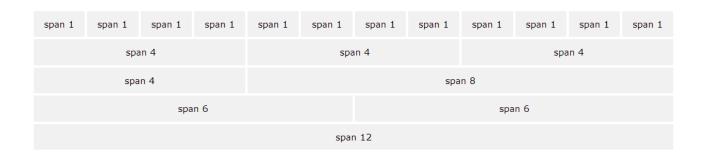
### **Example: Bootstrap grid**

Always 12 columns in total

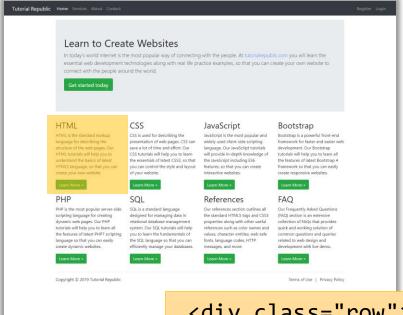
May choose to span a group of columns

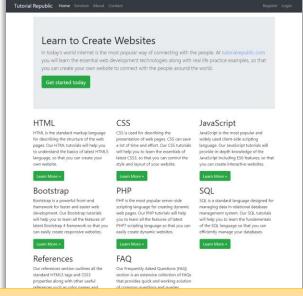
Each column is tagged according to the screen size:

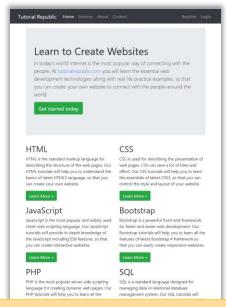
- xs (phones <768px)</li>
- sm (tablets >=768px)
- md (small laptops >=992px)
- Ig (laptops and desktops >1200px)

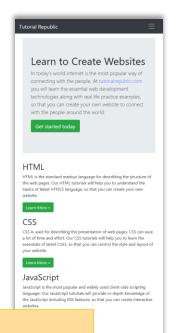


### **Responsive Grid Layout**





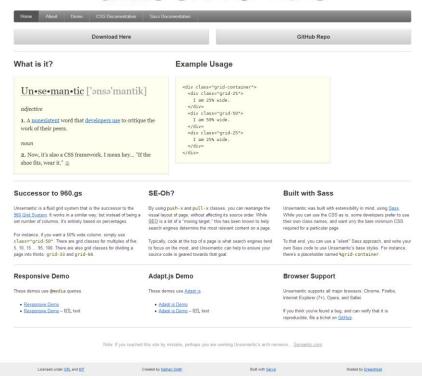




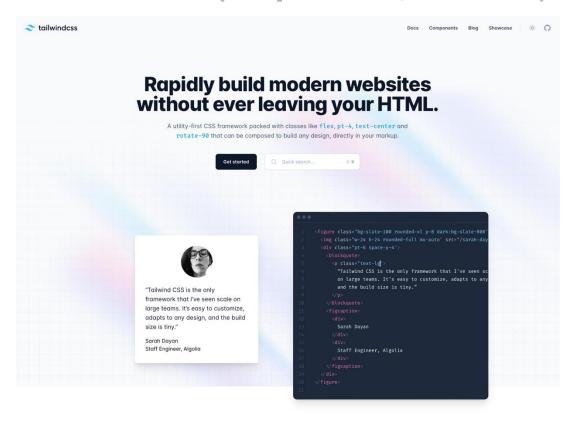
### **Other Grid Systems**

Unsemantic (responsive, based on %)

### unsemantic



tailwindcss (responsive, flexible)



https://unsemantic.com

https://tailwindcss.com

### **Grid Structure**

Main body: Mix of 2x and 3x columns

Alternating row types



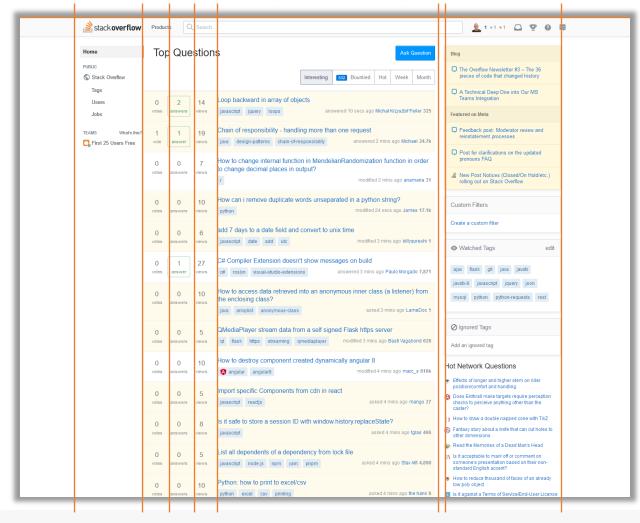
Title area outside the grid

Right column for other types of articles

### **Grid Structure**

Main content (center, wide)

Navigation (left, smaller)



Related content (right, smaller)

### Example (2015 vs. 2019)

#### Add an address **Full Name: A** Address Line 1: Street address, P.O. box, company name, c/o Address line 2: Apartment, suite, unit, building, floor, etc. City: State/Province/Region: ZIP: Country: United States • **Phone Number:** Learn more Optional Delivery Preferences (What's this?) Weekend Delivery: Select your preference Security Access Code: For buildings or gated communities Save & Add Payment Method Save & Continue

Aggiungi un nuovo indirizzo Oppure ritira i tuoi colli quando desideri, presso i nostri punti self-service. Per aggiungere un punto di ritiro o un Amazon Locker, clicca qui. Paese/Regione Nome e cognome Indirizzo Via e numero civico Scala, piano, interno ecc. (Opzionale) Città Provincia Codice postale Numero di telefono Può essere utilizzato per aiutare consegna Aggiungi istruzioni di consegna Consegna nel fine settimana Seleziona la tua disponibilità

Il tuo account > I tuoi indirizzi > Nuovo indirizzo

Aggiungi indirizzo

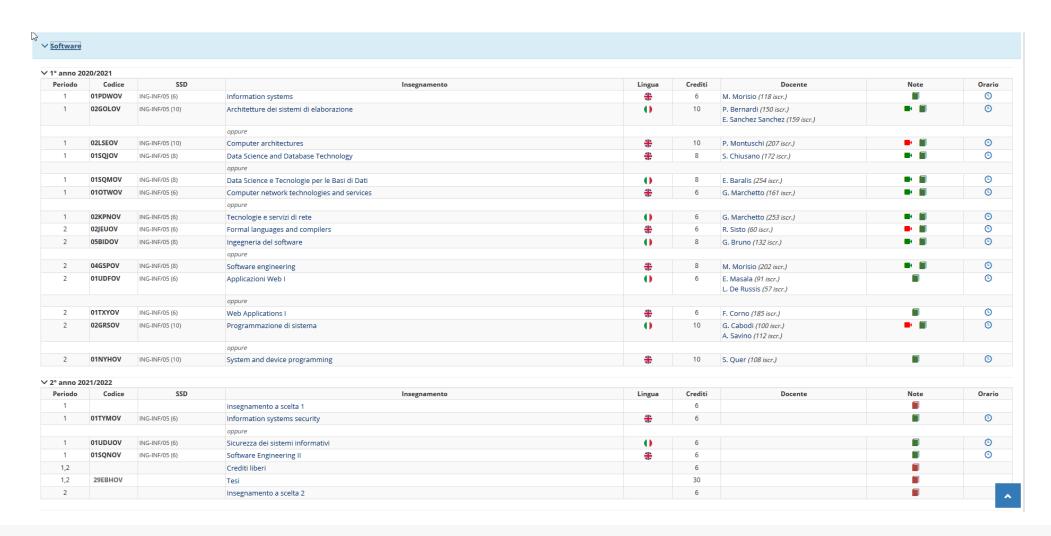
### **Some Best Practices**

- When designing a template, start from the longest block of text
- Left-aligned text is (usually) faster to skim
- Alignment guides the eye and reduces clutter
  - Avoid slight misalignments
  - o Patterns and deviations are "automatically" detected
    - Deviate form a pattern for strategic reasons
  - Use visual proximity and scale to convey semantic information

# Example (2019)

Software							
° anno Periodo	Codice	Lingua	i Insegnamento	Crediti	Docente	Note	Vincol
1	01PDWOV	Elliga.	Information systems ING-INF/05 (6)	6	M. Morisio	<b>⊗</b>	VIIICO
1	02GOLOV	•	Architetture dei sistemi di elaborazione  ING-INF/05 (10)	10	P. Bernardi E. Sanchez Sanchez	$\odot$	
1	02LSEOV	20 PG 50 PG	Oppure  Computer architectures ■	10	P. Montuschi	$\odot$	
1	015QJOV		ING-INF/05 (10) <u>Data Science and Database Technology</u> ■  ING-INF/05 (8)	8	S. Chiusano	$\odot$	
1	01SQMOV	$\mathbf{n}$	Oppure <u>Data Science e Tecnologie per le Basi di Dati</u> ■	8	E. Baralis	$\odot$	
1	010TWOV		ING-INF/05 (8) <u>Computer network technologies and services</u> ING-INF/05 (6)	6	M. Baldi	$\odot$	
1	02KPNOV	$\mathbf{n}$	Oppure Tecnologie e servizi di rete ■	6	G. Marchetto	$\odot$	
2	02JEUOV	20 PA 20 PA	ING-INF/05 (6)  Formal languages and compilers ■  ING-INF/05 (6)	6	R. Sisto	$\odot$	
2	05BIDOV	•	Ingegneria del software ■ ING-INF/05 (8)	8	G. Bruno	$\odot$	
2	04GSPOV	20 PM 20 PM	Oppure Software engineering	8	M. Morisio	$\odot$	
2	01UDFOV	п	ING-INF/05 (8) <u>Applicazioni Web I</u> ING-INF/05 (6)	6	E. Masala	$\odot$	
2	01TXYOV	20 PA	Oppure <u>Web Applications I</u> <mark>■</mark>	6	F. Corno	$\odot$	
2	02GRSOV	п	ING-INF/05 (6) <u>Programmazione di sistema</u> ■  ING-INF/05 (10)	10	G. Cabodi	$\odot$	
2	01NYHOV		Oppure System and device programming ING-INF/05 (10)	10	S. Quer	$\odot$	
° anno Periodo	Codice	Lingua		Crediti	Docente	Note	Vince
1	01TYMOV		Insegnamento a scelta 1 Information systems security NG-NF/05 (6)	6 6		<b>⊗</b>	
1	01UDUOV	m	Oppure Sicurezza dei sistemi informativi	6		$\odot$	
1	01SQNOV	22 PO 20 IO	NG-NF/05 (6) Software Engineering II	6		<b>⊗</b>	
1,2			ING-INF/05 (6) Crediti liberi	6			
1,2	29EBHOV		<u>Tesi</u>	30			
2 nsegnamei	nto a scelta	1	Insegnamento a scelta 2	6			
Periodo	Codice	Lingua	Insegnamento	Crediti	Docente	Note	Vince
1	01TYDOV	20 PA 20 PA	Cloud Computing ING-INF/05 (6)	6		$\otimes$	
1	01PDCOV	SIG.	Digital control technologies and architectures ING-INF/04 (6)	6		$\odot$	
1	01TXZOV	20 (W) 20 (W)	<u>Distributed systems programming</u> ING-INF/05 (6)	6		<b>⊗</b>	Si
1	01NWPOV		Elaborazione dell'audio digitale ■ ING-INF/05 (6)	6		<b>⊗</b>	
1	01UDGOV	<u> </u>	Energy management for IoT ING-INF/05 (6)	6		<b>⊗</b>	Si
1	02JSKOV		Human Computer Interaction ■ ING-INF/05 (6)	6		<b>%</b> ©	)
1	015QIOV	<del>212</del>	Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence ■  ING-INF/05 (6)	6		<b>⊗</b>	
1	01PDXOV	510 510	Modern design of control systems ING-INF/04 (6)	6		<b>⊗</b>	
1	010UVOV	510 510	Optimization methods and algorithms  MAT/09 (6)	6		<b>⊗</b>	
1	DACETOV		B L C	£		(3)	

### Example (same page in 2020)



### Colors

The most dangerous weapon in your toolset



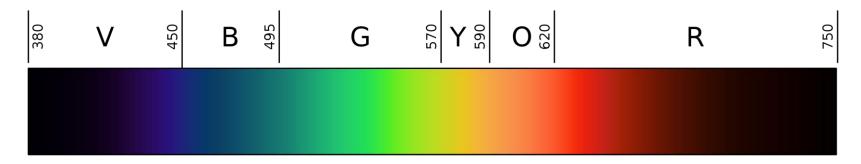
### Colors

- A powerful tool to improve interfaces by communicating key information
- Inappropriate use of colors can severely reduce the performance of an interactive system

### **Colors: Suggestions**

- Be careful, do not exaggerate
- Design in grayscale, first
  - Ensure information is conveyed by text and layout
- When adding colors, try to conserve the same luminance of the grayscale design
- Assign meaning to color
- Use a limited and consistent palette and use slight variations
- Avoid simultaneous display of pure (highly-saturated), spectrally extreme colors
  - o e.g., no blue at the same time as red
  - desaturated combinations (pastels) are better

### **Visible Spectrum**

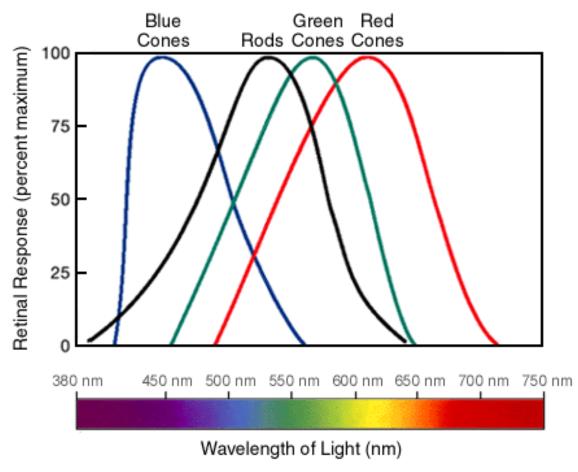


- UV spectrum ends on the left, IR starts on the right
- Wavelenghts are in nm
- Source: <a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Linear\_visible\_spectrum.svg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Linear\_visible\_spectrum.svg</a>

### **Human Vision**

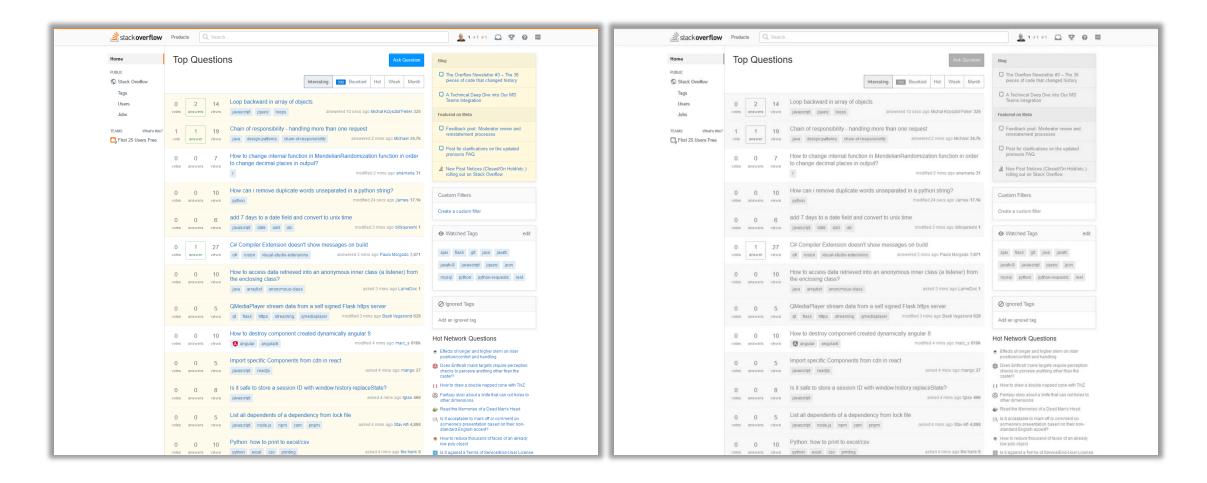
- Human vision: a highly complex activity, often the main source of information about the world
- The eye: a mechanism for receiving light and transforming it into electrical energy
  - light reflected from objects in the world and their image is focused upside down on the back of the eye
  - then, the receptors in the eye transform it intro electrical signal which are passed to the brain
  - o the brain detects, finally, pattern and movements

### **Color Sensitivity of the Eyes**



source: <a href="https://askabiologist.asu.edu/rods-and-cones">https://askabiologist.asu.edu/rods-and-cones</a>

### **Example**



### Example

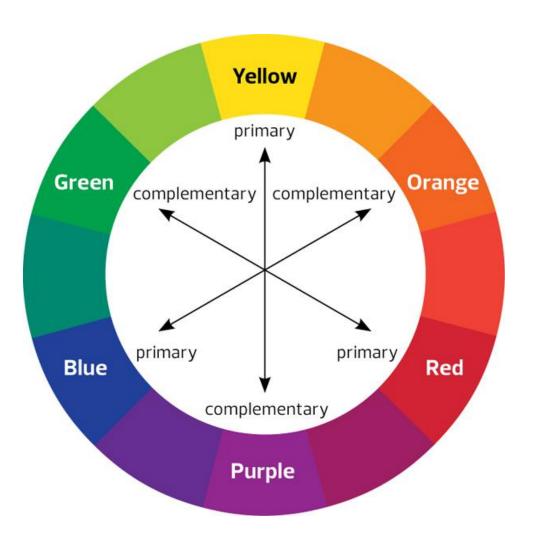




### The Color Wheel

- Aka the Hue Circle
- Pick non-adjacent colors
- Opponent colors go well together
  - Complementary colors

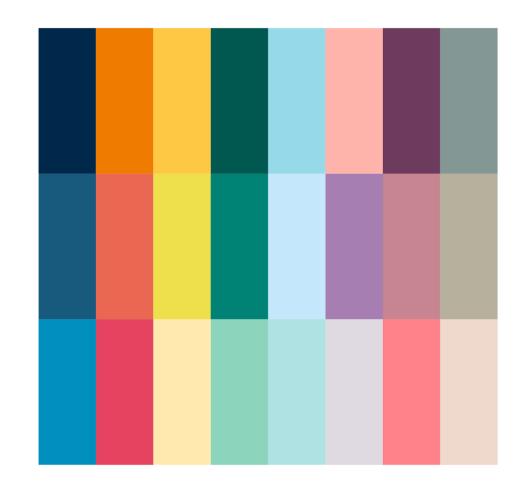
Read more at https://www.canva.com/colors/color -wheel/



### Palettes - PoliTo

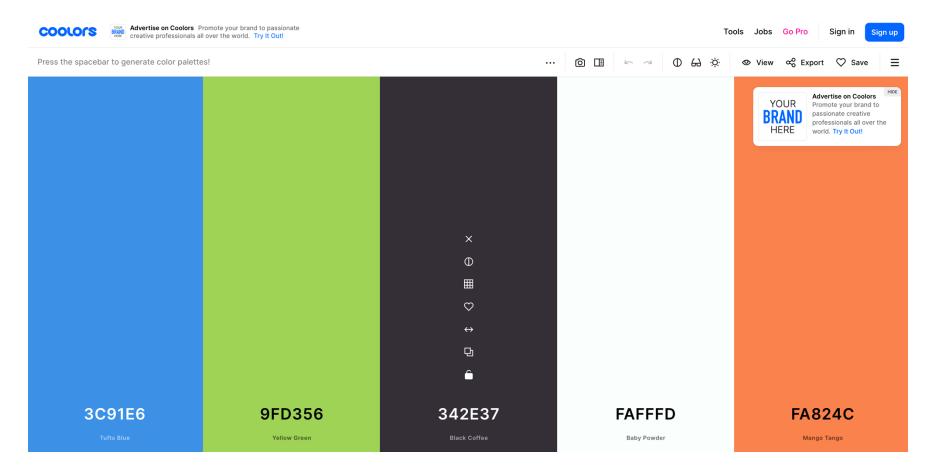
**GERARCHIA COLORI** 





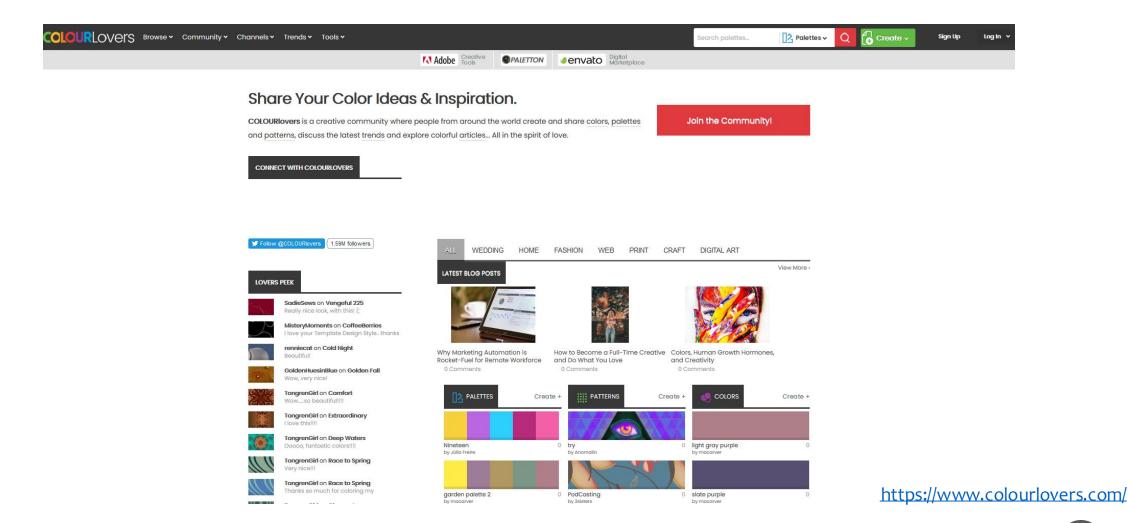
https://www.politocomunica.polito.it/en/corporate\_image/brand\_and\_visual\_identity

### **Palettes Generator**



https://coolors.co

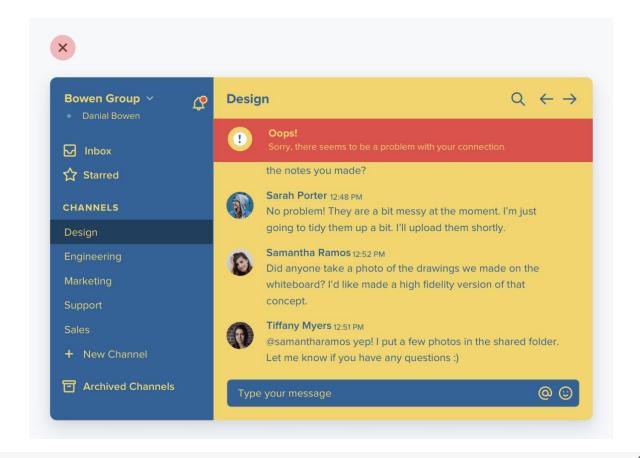
### ColourLovers



### **Using Palettes**



www.refactoringui.com

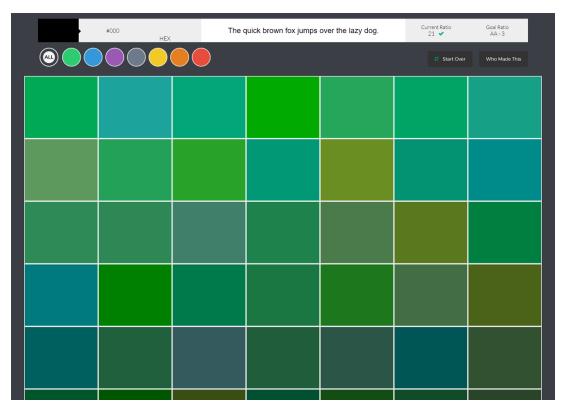


### **Using Palettes**

Bowen Group V Design  $Q \leftarrow \rightarrow$  Danial Bowen Oops! Sorry, there seems to be a problem with your connection. ✓ Inbox the notes you made? **☆** Starred Sarah Porter 12:48 PM **CHANNELS** No problem! They are a bit messy at the moment. I'm just going to tidy them up a bit. I'll upload them shortly. Design Samantha Ramos 12:52 PM 4 Engineering Did anyone take a photo of the drawings we made on the Marketing whiteboard? I'd like made a high fidelity version of that concept. Support Tiffany Myers 12:51 PM Sales @samantharamos yep! I put a few photos in the shared folder. + New Channel Let me know if you have any questions :) Archived Channels Type your message

www.refactoringui.com

### **Color Contrast**



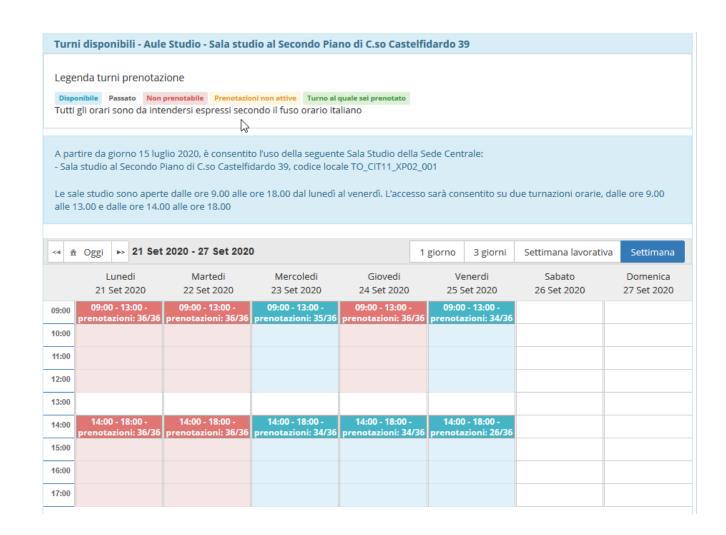


Google Chrome Palette

http://colorsafe.co/

### Example

- Colors needing an explanation legend
- Time intervals are shaded with two different colors
  - "why is the first hour filled with a different color?"
- No indication of the "fill level"



## Reading and Navigating

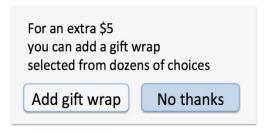
«Informavores» must quickly find the information they need

# **Navigation**

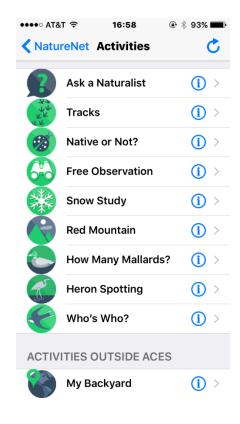
- Enables users to know where they are and to steer themselves to their intended destination
- Is about getting work done (or having fun) through a series of actions
- May consist of
  - Task navigation: successfully operating interactive applications, such as installing a mobile app, completing an on-line survey, or purchasing a ticket
  - o Web navigation: finding information on a website or browsing social media
  - Command menu navigation: finding the action needed in a desktop application
- Has nothing to do with visual elegance / graphic shininess

# **Navigation By Selection**

- Menu bars, pop-up menus, toolbars, palettes and ribbons
- Shortcuts and gestures for rapid interaction
- Long lists
- Linear versus simultaneous presentation





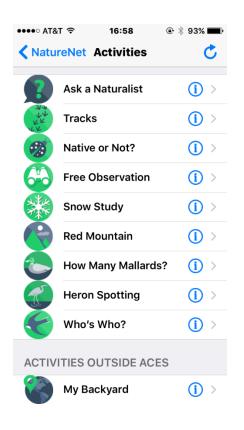


# **Navigation By Selection**

- Menu bars, pop-up menus, toolbars, palettes and ribbons
- Shortcuts and gestures for rapid interaction
- Long lists
- Linear versus simultaneous presentation

Tap
Long press
Double tap
Small swipe
Large swipe
Rapid swipe (fling)
Pinch and spread
2-finger swipe

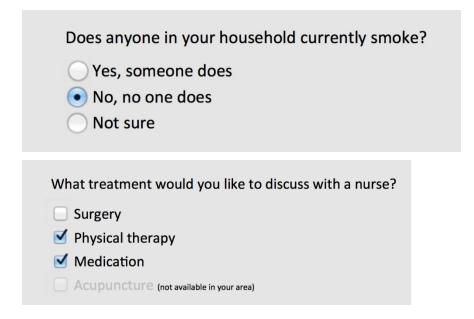


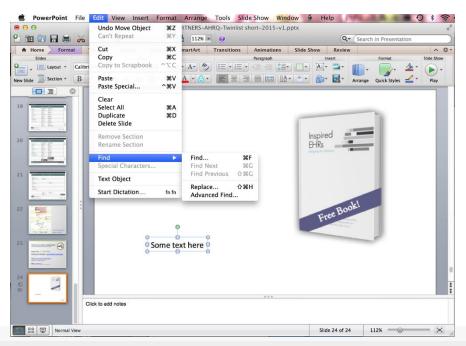


# **Navigation By Selection**

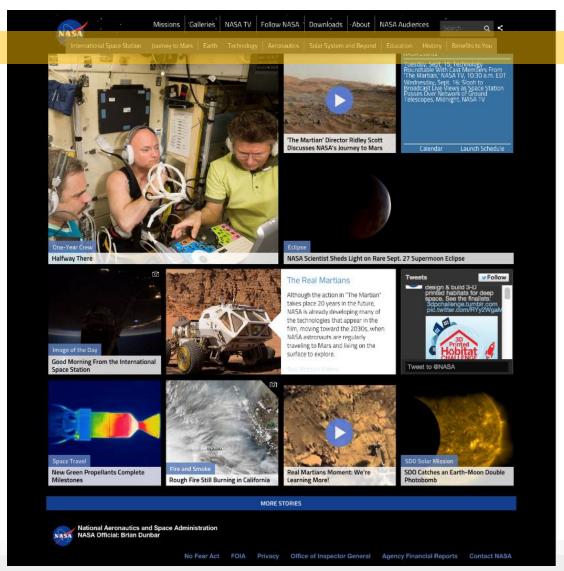
Radio Buttons and Checkboxes

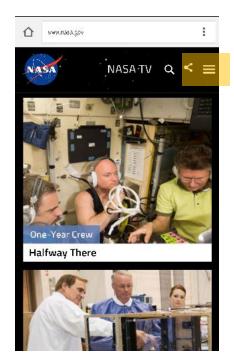
 Menu bars, pop-up menus, toolbars, palettes and ribbons





#### Menus





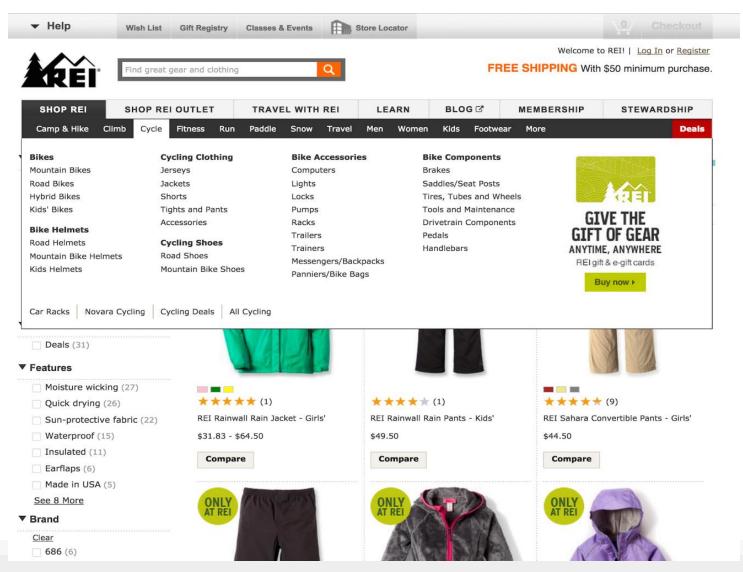
# **Content Organization**

 Organizing menus in a meaningful structure results in faster selection time and higher user satisfaction

#### Approaches:

- Linear sequence (e.g., in a wizard or survey)
- Hierarchical structure (tree) that is natural and comprehensible (e.g., a store split into departments)
- Network structure when choices may be reachable by more than one path (e.g., websites)

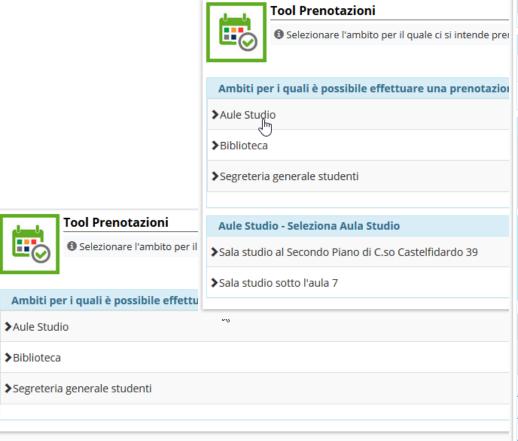
# **Tree-like Content Organization**

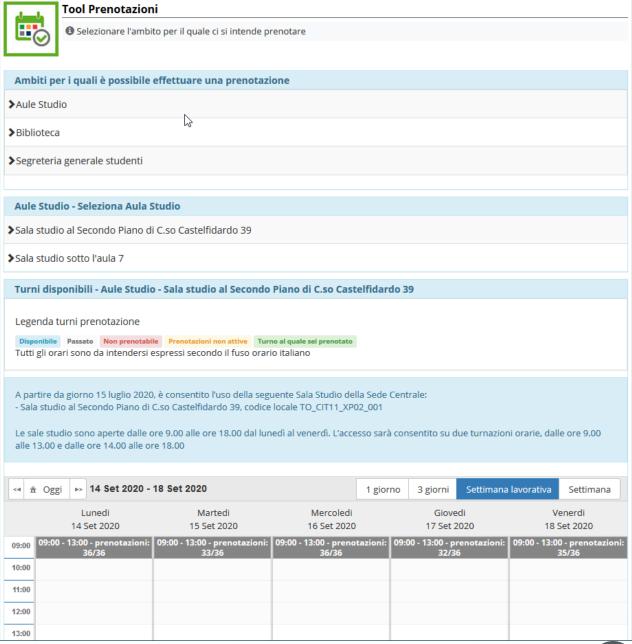


# Rules for Tree-like Organization

- Use task semantics to organize menus
- Limit the number of levels (i.e., prefer broad-shallow to narrow-deep)
- Create groups of logically similar items: e.g., Level 1: countries, Level 2: states, Level 3: cities
- Form groups that **cover all possibilities**: e.g., Age ranges: [0–9] [10–19] [20–29] and [>= 30]
- Make sure that items are non-overlapping: e.g., use "Concerts" and "Sports." over "Entertainment" and "Events"
- Arrange items in each branch by natural sequence (not alphabetically) or group related items
- Keep ordering of items fixed (or possibly duplicate frequent items in dedicated section of the menu)

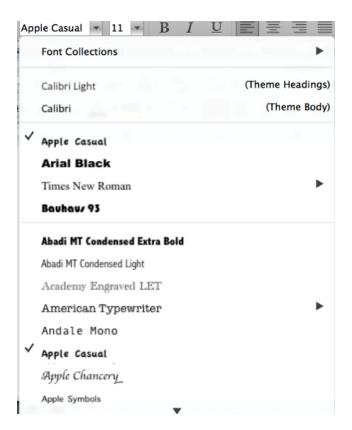
# Example





### Menu Grouping: example

- 3 groups
  - Template styles
  - Frequently used fonts
  - All fonts
- Alphabetical order within each group
  - Lack of a semantic ordering
- Preview for recognition
- Scrollable list



#### **Information Scent**

- Informavores orient themselves using information scent
- How can we figure out how to get the information we want?
- Do we realize what options are available to us?
- Web pages (and UIs general) provide cues to suggest where to find information
  - o Icons, Menus, Breadcrumbs, Color coding, ...

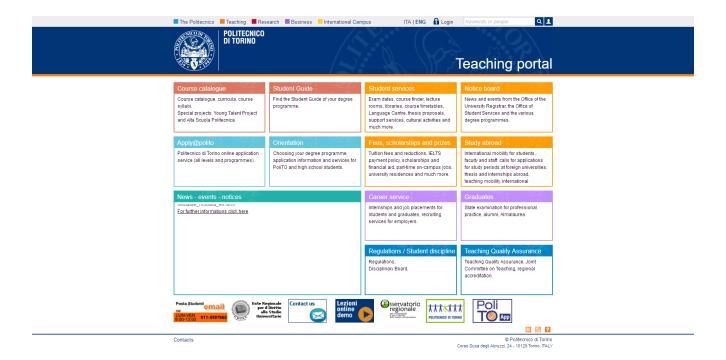


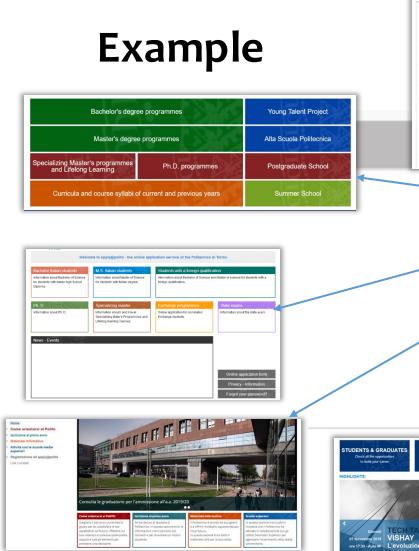
Informavore, an organism that consumes information

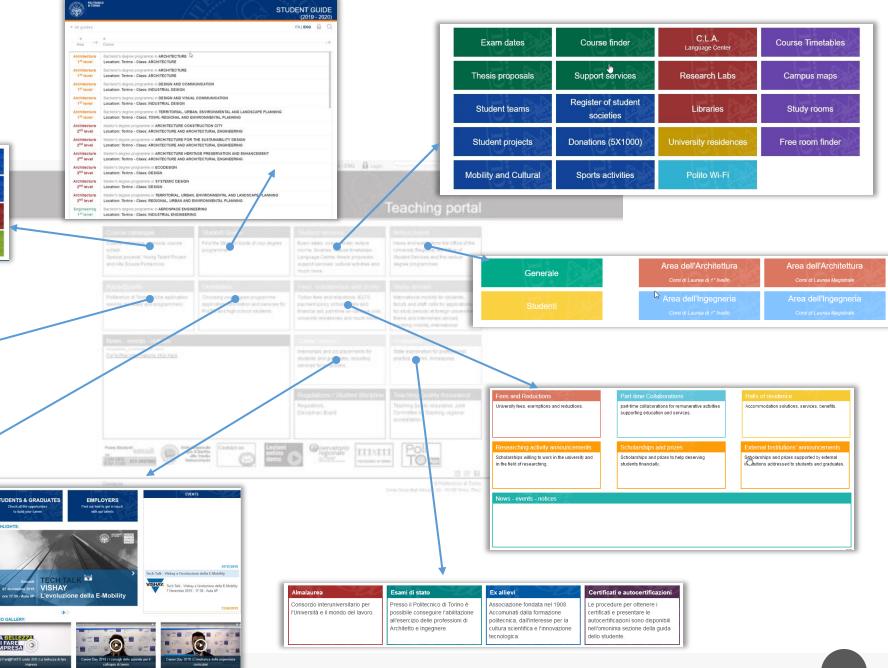
#### **Poor Information Scent**

- Users flailing around...
  - Do not know where to go
- Low confidence
  - Users are not sure of their actions, both before executing it and after they see its effects
- Back button
  - When it's used too often...

# Example





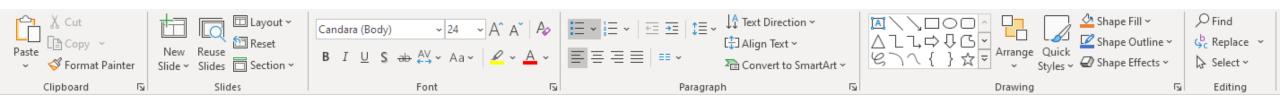


#### **Common Problems**

- Unexpected categories
- Short links
- Hidden navigation
- Icons are too generic, or not easily recognizable

#### **Icons**

- Icons facilitate recognition over recall
  - When they are consistently used, and frequently visible
- Redundant coding helps recognition and memorization
  - Icon + Text + Tooltip + Context

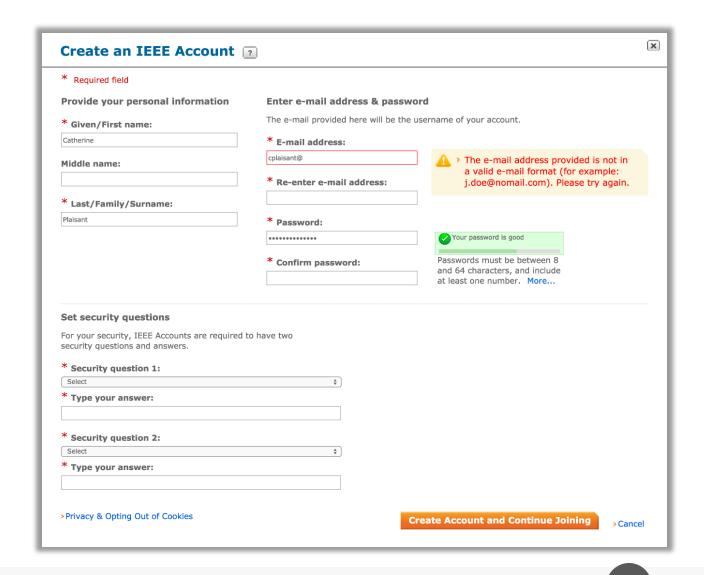


#### Links

- Always use multi-word links
  - Download the <u>next assignment template</u>
  - Assignment template: click <u>here</u>
- Straight language, not jargon
  - Scor-o-matic download
  - Download the <u>spreadsheet for computing scores</u>

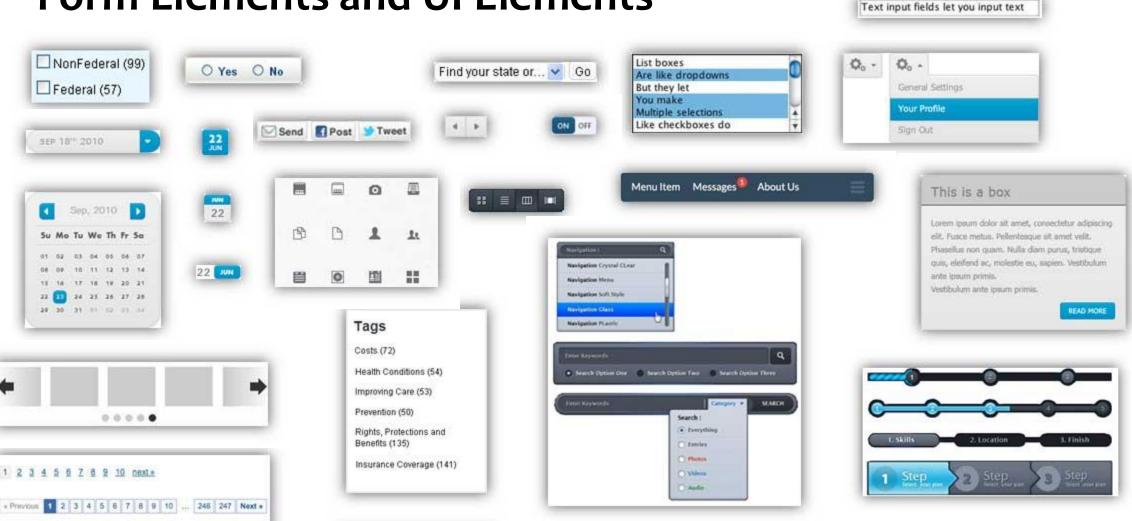
#### **Forms**

- Logical field grouping
  - Sections
    - Dividers
    - Columns (spacing)
  - Titles
- Real-time error checking and validation feedback
  - Suggestions for correction
- Explicit submit button



#### Form Elements and UI Elements

(Prev 1 2 3 4 5 8 ... 33 34 Next)



https://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/user-interface-elements.html

Modern

Fresh

Unique X

# Exercise (~10 minutes)

- Open the Polito website: <a href="https://www.polito.it/">https://www.polito.it/</a>
- Try to find this information:
  - "Deadline for passing all the exams for graduating in the Master Degree in Computer Engineering in the winter session"
- Look for any problems related to navigation and information scent

# Reading Content

Organizing text and content for maximum visibility

# **Reading Content**

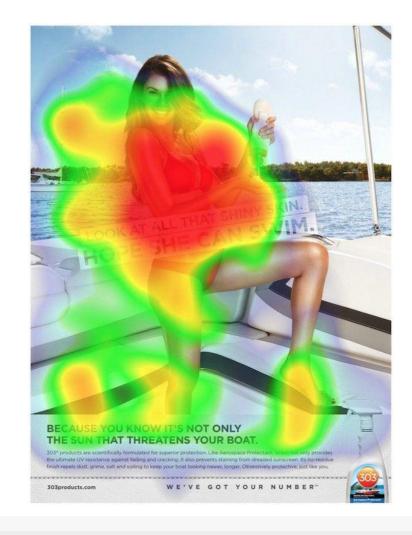
"How people read on-line?"

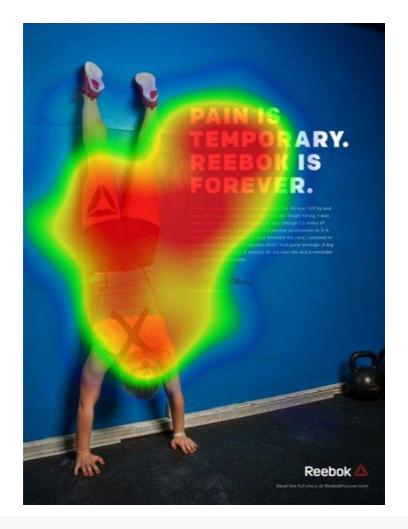
"They don't"

How Users Read on the Web by Jakob Nielsen on September 30, 1997

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/how-users-read-on-the-web/

# Did Anyone Ever Look at the Product Name?





# **Eye Trackers**







source: https://www.tobii.com

# **Eye Tracking**



- Observe eye movements
  - One or more cameras
  - Usually in infra-red
- Infer where the user was looking (on the screen)
- Record the positions where your gaze will go
- Combine observations from many users

### **Eye Tracker: How It Works**

- An eye tracker consists of cameras, projectors and algorithms.
- The projectors create a pattern of near-infrared light on the eyes.
- The cameras take high-resolution images of the user's eyes and the pattern.
- 4 Machine learning, image processing and mathematical algorithms are used to determine the eyes' position and gaze point.



source: https://www.tobii.com/group/about/this-is-eye-tracking/

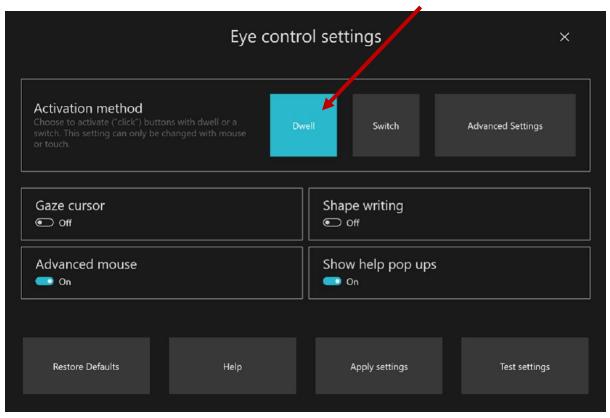
### **Eye Tracker: Examples**



Heatmap and scan path analysis



Beware the Midas' Touch!



Windows 10 Eye Control Settings

#### Location on the Page

Eye tracking studies show where the users actually *look* on the page

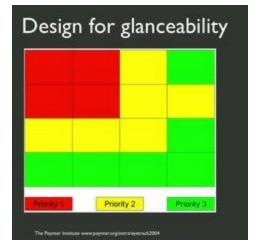
Search "eye tracking heat map" and see the major patterns

Users "glance" and spend limited amount of time on each page.

F-shaped pattern







# Scanning

#### WHAT DESIGNERS BUILD...



#### WHAT USERS SEE...





I want to buy a ticket.





How do I check my frequent flyer miles?

# Experiment

#### **Usability Improvement** Site Version Sample Paragraph (relative to control condition) **Promotional writing (control** Nebraska is filled with internationally recognized attractions that draw large crowds of people condition) every year, without fail. In 1996, some of the most popular places were Fort Robinson State Park using the "marketese" found (355,000 visitors), Scotts Bluff National Monument (132,166), Arbor Lodge State Historical Park (baseline) & Museum (100,000), Carhenge (86,598), Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer (60,002), and on many commercial Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park (28,446). websites Concise text In 1996, six of the best-attended attractions in Nebraska were Fort Robinson State Park, Scotts with about half the word Bluff National Monument, Arbor Lodge State Historical Park & Museum, Carhenge, Stuhr +58% count as the control Museum of the Prairie Pioneer, and Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park. condition Nebraska is filled with internationally recognized attractions that draw large crowds of people every year, without fail. In 1996, some of the most popular places were: Scannable layout •Fort Robinson State Park (355,000 visitors) using the same text as the •Scotts Bluff National Monument (132,166) +47% control condition in a layout •Arbor Lodge State Historical Park & Museum (100,000) that facilitated scanning •Carhenge (86,598) •Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer (60,002) •Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park (28,446). Objective language using neutral rather than Nebraska has several attractions. In 1996, some of the most-visited places were Fort Robinson subjective, boastful, or State Park (355,000 visitors), Scotts Bluff National Monument (132,166), Arbor Lodge State +27% exaggerated language Historical Park & Museum (100,000), Carhenge (86,598), Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer (otherwise the same as the (60,002), and Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park (28,446). control condition) In 1996, six of the most-visited places in Nebraska were: Combined version •Fort Robinson State Park using all three improvements •Scotts Bluff National Monument in writing style together: •Arbor Lodge State Historical Park & Museum +124% concise, scannable, and Carhenge •Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer objective •Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park

#### **Best Locations to Put Content**

- Above the fold
  - Prioritize, do not cram
- Where people expect
  - Where other pages put similar content
  - Not where the ads usually go
- Users will scroll down if the first content is interesting

#### **Banner Blindness**

- The brain learns to avoid uninteresting content
- Banners and Advertisements are recognized subconsciously (by their appearance) and are never considered
   Ads also "poison" adjacent elements
- Lesson learned: never create a message
   / title / warning / etc. that might look
   like an ad. (Faux ads)



# References and Acknowledgment

- Scott MacKenzie: Human-Computer Interaction An Empirical Research Perspective, Morgan Kaufmann
  - Chapter 3: Interaction Elements
- Ben Shneiderman, Catherine Plaisant, Maxine S. Cohen, Steven M. Jacobs, and Niklas Elmqvist, Designing the User Interface: Strategies for Effective Human-Computer Interaction
  - Chapter 8: Fluid Navigation
- COGS120/CSE170: Human-Computer Interaction Design, videos by Scott Klemmer,
   <a href="https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLssT5z\_DsK\_nusHL\_Mjt87THSTlgrsyJ">https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLssT5z\_DsK\_nusHL\_Mjt87THSTlgrsyJ</a>
- Thanks to Fulvio Corno, past teacher of the course, for his work on some of these slides



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