

Design Guides for the Web

Annetta Stack, WIT.



Introduction

- user's attention is finite - we don't read pages, we scan
 - eye tracking research shows that we scan in an F pattern
 - implications: first lines of text on a page receive more attention as do first few words
- web pages must be self-evident/ self-explanatory (we don't wish to think about what we do, we 'muddle' through pages)
 - how many of us actually read instructions on how to use something, instead we 'problem solve'
- make obvious whatever is 'clickable' is clickable
- conventions such as metaphors are extremely useful in design, for example a trash icon denotes a bin, a shopping cart denotes items you wish to purchase



Introduction

- in general 88% of user's arrive at websites from search engines & links with just 12% from URLs
 - hence, user's may not be coming directly to your homepage but a page on your site so it is important that this page lets them know if they are on track or not to receive the information they want
 - hierarchy of content – consider how you are going to deliver your content similar to a Table of Contents
- staying standard implies better cross-browser compatibility, especially across mobile devices (W3C)
 - design & use elements in a similar manner to that of major established websites – become creative with your content however
- in terms of design the general rule is get it right in black & white first

+ 4 Basic Design Principles

- Proximity
- Alignment
- Consistency
- Contrast



Proximity

- group related items together (the human eye perceives connections between visual elements that are close to each other)



- proximity is so powerful it may override similarity of colour, shape & other factors that might differentiate a group of objects



Proximity

- the first step to properly implementing the law of proximity is not to fear white space



- white space guides the user's eyes in the intended direction



Proximity

The screenshot shows the Amazon.co.uk homepage with a dark navigation bar at the top. The main content area has a light blue background with a string of warm white lights. A carousel of Echo devices is featured, including the Echo, Echo Spot, All-New Echo Plus, and All-New Echo Show, each with its price listed below it. Below the carousel are four promotional tiles: Prime Video, Women's fashion, Men's fashion, and a sign-in prompt. The Amazon Basics section is also visible at the bottom right.

amazon.co.uk | All | | **Amazon Prime** | 30-day free trial

Deliver to **Ireland, Republic of** | Shop by **Department** | Your Amazon.co.uk | Today's Deals | Gift Cards & Top Up | Sell | Help | Hello, Sign in **Your Account** | Try **Prime** | Your **Lists** | **Bas**

echo £89.99 | **echo spot** £119.99 | **All-New echo plus** £139.99 | **All-New echo show** £219.99

Prime Video
Thousands of movies & TV shows included with Prime
Start your 30-day free trial

Women's fashion
Dresses, jackets, bags & more
Shop this month's picks

Men's fashion
Jeans, trainers, shirts & more
Shop the latest trends

Sign in for your best experience
Sign in securely

amazonbasics
Products for Everyday Living




Ad feedback



Proximity

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 Shop Support My Vodafone  

Welcome
Want to login?

Yes, log me in

No thanks

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Online exclusive offer - €20 a month for the first six months

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Proximity

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Summary of Proximity

- items in close proximity to each other become one visual unit
- the basic premise of proximity is to organise – if information is organised it is more likely to be read & remembered
- elements which are related logically are also related visually
- in essence proximity encourages us to create a clear visual hierarchy – for instance the more important headings are (<h1>) the larger, bolder, distinctive colour, set off by more white space or nearer the top of the page it is
- avoid too many separate elements on a webpage



Alignment

- refers to placing text and elements on your page so that they line up to create order which in turn improves the readability of your design
- alignment is largely invisible yet you would certainly notice it if pages are poorly aligned
- the principle of alignment forces you to be conscious



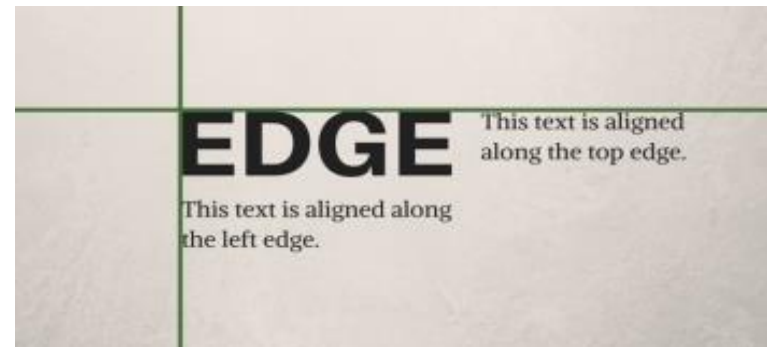
Alignment



- the elements on the left appear not to have any connection
- in your mind's eye get into the habit of drawing lines between elements to determine where connections are lacking

+ Types of Alignment

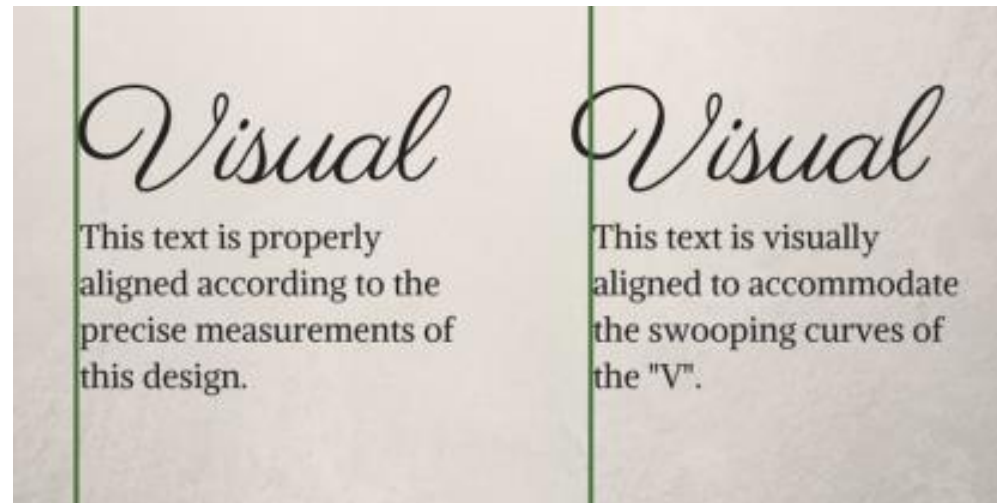
- horizontal: implies left and right margins are equal
- vertical: elements are lined up with top & bottom margins
- center: elements aligned along a center axis
- edge: occurs when text & elements are aligned up with each other's top, bottom & side edges





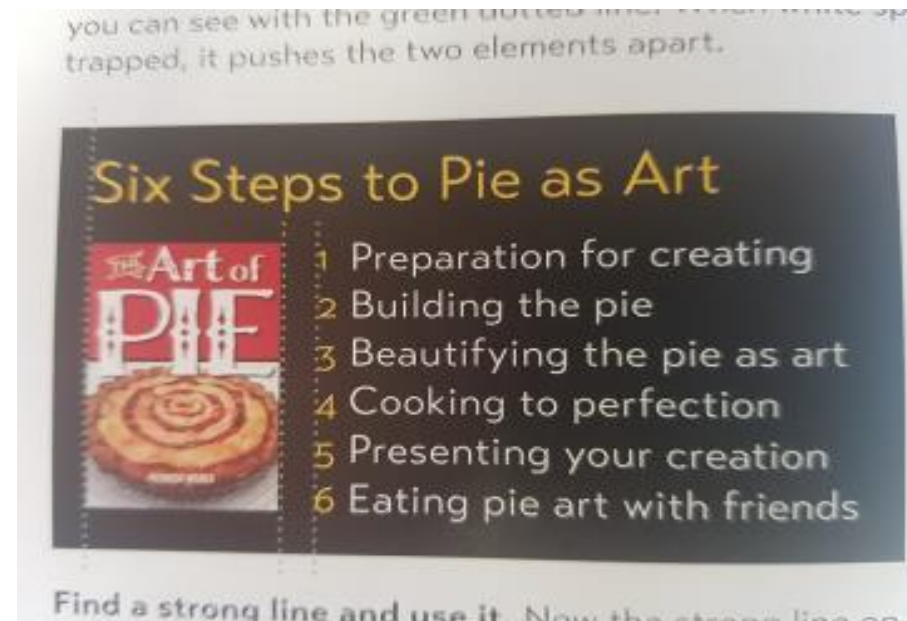
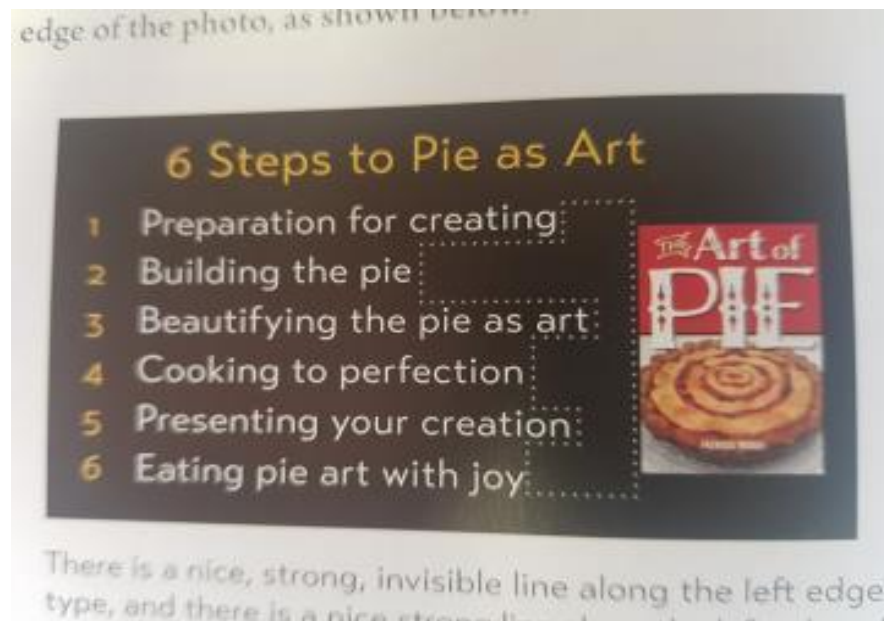
Types of Alignment

- visual/optical: elements may be properly aligned based on measurements but appears misaligned because of specific elements. This is particularly common with rounded elements & fonts





Alignment Example





Alignment Tips

- centered alignment can be very safe. However, it can create a flat, ordinary & sometimes a dull look & feel – context is everything
- left alignment is most common because that is how we read
- visual alignment is more important than precise alignment, so if something looks off don't be afraid to abandon the notion of a grid
- when placing items on a page ensure each item has some visual alignment with another item on the page

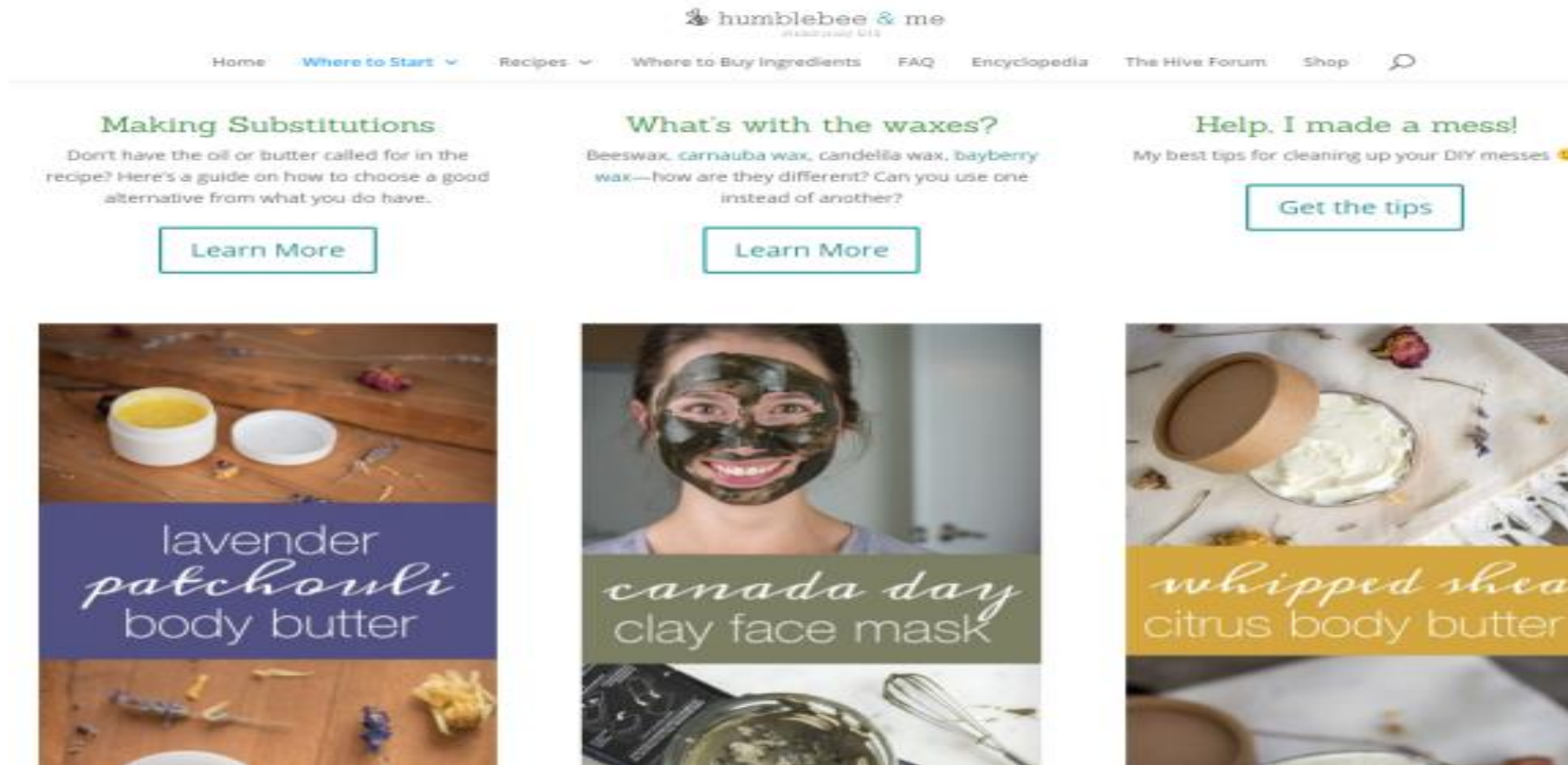


Alignment Tips

- never center headings over flush left body text or elements
- be consistent – choose one & stick to it (apart from your Homepage or Landing page)
- our eyes like to see order plus it helps communicate the information, hence when you place items on the page make sure each one has some visual alignment with another item on the page
 - if lines of text are across from each other horizontally, align their baseline
 - if there are several blocks of text, align their left or right margins
 - if there are graphic elements, align their edges with other edges on the page



Alignment





Consistency

- keep a consistent style throughout your website in terms of typeface (font family in CSS), colour, spatial relationships
 - for example, when using the html element `<h1>` maintain the same size, font, weight, colour, padding or any other attributes of the element
 - even if there is variety to your layout/ structure repeat some elements/aspects of your design throughout the entire website
 - hence elements which are consistent anyway such as `<h1>` , `<h2>` you might decide in your design to make them stronger so they also become a design element in addition to a useful element (this increases the perception of repetitive graphic symbols)
 - what other html elements might you include to create a sense of repetitive graphic design?
- consistency brings unity & cohesiveness to your design
- consistency provides a sense of professionalism to your website & creates trust amongst your users

Contrast – Example 1



Can you feel how your eyes are drawn to this page, rather



Contrast – Example 2





Contrast

- contrast is one of the most effective ways of adding visual interest to your website
- it refers to a noticeable difference between design elements – it is not using a variety of styles (we are still adhering to the consistency principle)
- the easiest way of adding interesting contrast is with graphic design elements as looked at earlier such as typefaces & colour



Conclusion

- (personally I recommend) using the 4 design principles in a methodical manner one at a time:
 - find structure to your content & group content & design elements into logical proximity
 - use space to set items apart or connect them
 - use an alignment
 - find or create repetitive features & keep your layout/ structure & style consistent
 - have fun with contrast (word of caution - perhaps don't over do it)!!