Designing with C.R.A.P.

INFO/COM S 130: Intermediate Web Design and Pwning
Who am I?

- Christian Montoya
- Section 3 Teaching Assistant
- Class of 2007 Senior
- Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Web Developer *in my spare time*
- Blogger *when I'm not doing homework*
Today you will learn about C.R.A.P.

- C.R.A.P. : The 4 basic principles of design.
- **C**ontrast
- **R**epetition
- **A**lignment
- **P**roximity

  - "...the basic principles of design that appear in every well-designed piece of work."
  - Robin Williams,
  - *The Non-Designer's Design Book*
Disclaimer

- C.R.A.P. will not guarantee perfect design
- This lecture is not enough for you to fully understand C.R.A.P.
- Only when you truly understand C.R.A.P. will you know when to use it and how
- *The Non-Designer's Design Book* is a must read if you want to be a good designer (and impress the graders)
- I am not an expert on design, but I know C.R.A.P. when I see it
Contrast

- If elements on your page are not the same, make them very different.
- Contrast attracts the attention of your viewers.
Contrast: Exhibit 1
Repetition

- Repeat visual elements throughout each page and your entire site.
- Repetition develops the organization and creates a strong brand.
Repetition: Exhibit 1

RegionalLink Airlines
RegionalLink Airlines Pty Ltd will become the lead franchiser to a group of carriers - the first example of franchising in the Australian air transport industry...
read more »

MDev Property Group
MDev Property Group contracts the services of Shock Media Studios to develop their fully integrated Customer Relationship Management System (CRM)...
read more »

Gallery 482
A customised content management system was the conclusive solution having the ability to provide the level of flexibility and structure that Gallery 482 required...
read more »
Repetition: Exhibit 2
Alignment

- Nothing should be placed arbitrarily. Do not toss elements randomly at your page or simply try to fill space.

- Every element should have a visual connection with another on the page.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tue 12 Sep</td>
<td>Home Page Heroics</td>
<td>Art directing the NYTimes.com home page on the fifth anniversary of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
<td>September 11th. Read this post...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 11 Sep</td>
<td>Five Years</td>
<td>Thinking about September 11th half a decade later. Read this post...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu 07 Sep</td>
<td>A Browser Back from the Brink</td>
<td>At long last, OmniWeb 5.5 is out of beta, and it’s just like it was. Read this post...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Posts</td>
<td>September 2006</td>
<td>10 posts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August 2006</td>
<td>17 posts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 2006</td>
<td>7 posts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Alignment: Exhibit 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>folio</th>
<th>supplemental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>digital</td>
<td>home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>goodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>web design</td>
<td>pencils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pixel/interface</td>
<td>colors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>identity/print</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proximity

- Items related to each other should be grouped close together.
- Grouping organizes information and reduces clutter.
Proximity: Exhibit 1
I felt good in the room that faced the wall of the old house decorated with sculptures of snakes and half-naked men. When my translation didn’t go well I stared at their taut muscles. Yet, I was quite happy when Stavro visited my office. He was a queer fish; he maintained that the gloom inside him blended well with the dusk in the room.

Wil Burrow is different. In the three years I’ve known him, he rarely shouts or curses or slaps me more than in a tender way. Not even when he’s had too much to drink and I ask about his wife and the question makes him sad and crazy in his eyes, does he do this. After even a bad day,
Let's play "Spot that C.R.A.P."

- Let's look at some successful web designs and examine how they utilize the principles of contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity effectively.
Example 1: chevrolet.com
Example 1 C.R.A.P. analysis

- Header, Car Types, and Specific Models are all separated simply by changes in color (contrast).
- Car Types are aligned with each other, and Models are aligned with each other. All arrows are aligned.
Example 1 C.R.A.P. analysis

- Without the contrast and alignment, the visual hierarchy and organization of information is lost.
Example 1 C.R.A.P. analysis

- Repetition of the style of these "buttons" unifies them as being related both in subject and function. It is also clear that any conventions that apply to one button apply to the rest.
Example 1 C.R.A.P. analysis

- Slight deviations from the style causes elements to stand out and attract undue attention. An element that stands out also breaks the visual flow of the design.
Example 2: iconbuffet.com
Example 2 C.R.A.P. analysis

- Proximity strengthens the center stage and separates it from the rest of the site.
Example 2 C.R.A.P. analysis

- Without tight proximity, the visual relationship is no longer present.
Example 3: zimmertwins.com
Example 3 C.R.A.P. analysis

- Alignment of paragraphs keeps content organized.
- Proximity of headers to sub-content provides a visual relation.
- Repetition makes elements easy to recognize.
Example 3 C.R.A.P. analysis

- Removal of these cues from the information being presented can make the content very confusing.
Example 4: veerle.duoh.com

Veerle’s photo imaging contest
2006 at 09.12 am posted by Veerle 114 comments

A new week started and I hope the creative batteries are fully charged because it’s competition time boys and girls. Told you about it a week or so ago that I would do a creative contest to celebrate the launch of Expression Engine 1.5. Don’t worry if you are not that creative because everybody can join in. A good sense of humor is all you need to make a chance too.

posted in: ExpressionEngine | Fun |
Example 4 C.R.A.P. analysis

- Contrast between columns defines main and secondary levels of content.
- Proximity of title to post-data creates a common location where all information about a post can be found.
Example 4 C.R.A.P. analysis

- Without contrast between the columns, it is hard to tell that columns are even present.
- With post-data thrown about the page just to fill space, the user is left with many places to look for information.
Further reading...

- How C.R.A.P. is Your Site Design?
- 5 Simple Steps to Designing Grid Systems
- Grid Computing... and Design
- Color Scheme Generator
- Color Schemer
- And of course, The Non-Designer's Design Book
Credits

- Contrast Exhibit 1: dangergraphics.com
- Contrast Exhibit 2: stopdesign.com
- Repetition Exhibit 1: shockmedia.com.au
- Repetition Exhibit 2: chevrolet.com
- Alignment Exhibit 1: subtraction.com
- Alignment Exhibit 2: pseudoroom.com
- Proximity Exhibit 1: mattbrett.com
- Proximity Exhibit 2: paumanokreview.com
- All ugly sample graphics were made by Christian Montoya