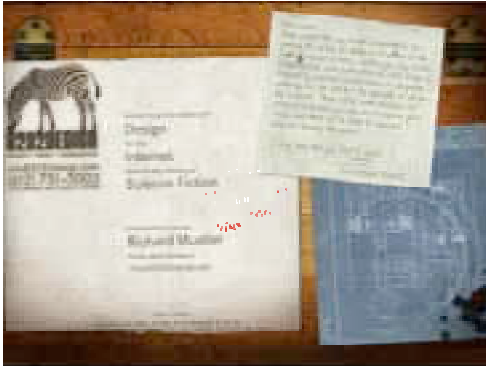




Design for the Internet relating to Science fiction
By Richard Mueller – richard@3232design.com
Minneapolis web designer & artist

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My web site – www.3232design.com. Not a splash page, but with sections of useful content such as a blog teaser and links to projects. Also contains the 'About Us' info.

2



The Unincorporated Man website - www.theunincorporatedman.com
Radial symmetry, progressive rhythm. Most important info is on the left side of the page.

3



www.nobrowcartoons.com
Cluttered look makes cartoon the focal point. Navigation and logo on the left.

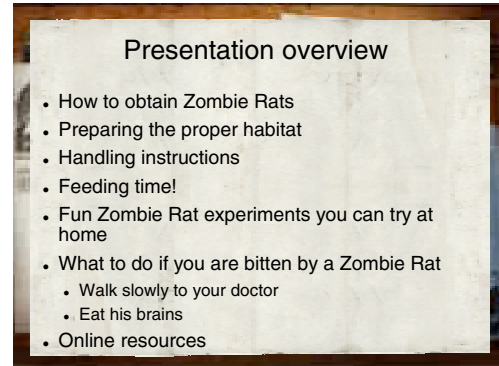
4



Ian Tregillis author site, www.iantregillis.com.

Top navigation, left side reserved for fun interactive pieces. Columns help break up text. Breaks the rule of 'no more than three fonts on the page' but since it's more of a scrapbook it was appropriate.

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Presentation Overview

What is design

Principles and elements of design

Quick overview of the history of design in sci fi

Color theory, fonts, images

Structure and layout

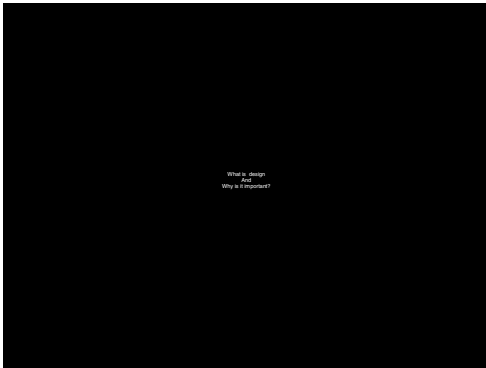
Search engine optimization (SEO)

Simple tips and best practices

Extended concepts overview

examples

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What is design and why is it important?

Design is a subset of art; the art of organizing and displaying information

Make info easy to find and use, unlike this slide

Increases the impact of the message

Improves credibility, professionalism, stature

Always start with the content; without that, there is no point.

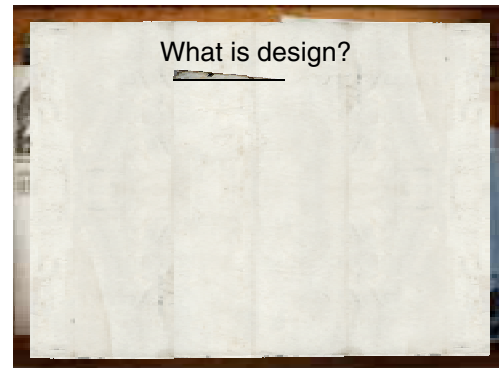
Design is the box, not what is in the box

It's what makes you want to buy, motivates

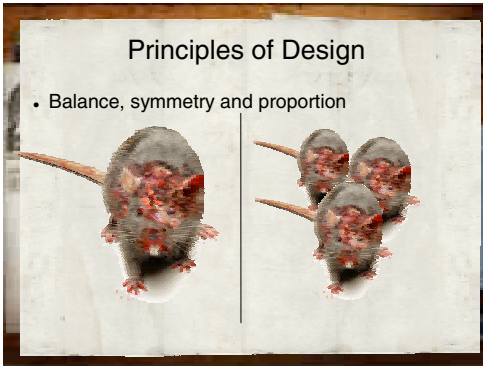
members to join and inspires visitors to return

Show, don't tell

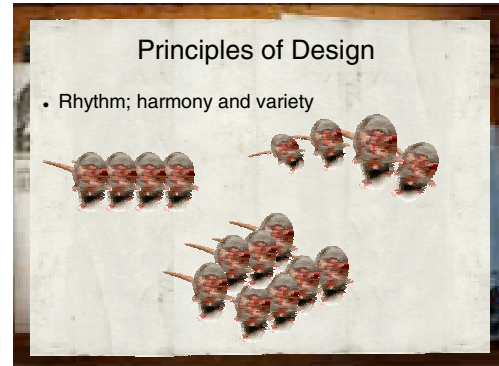
7



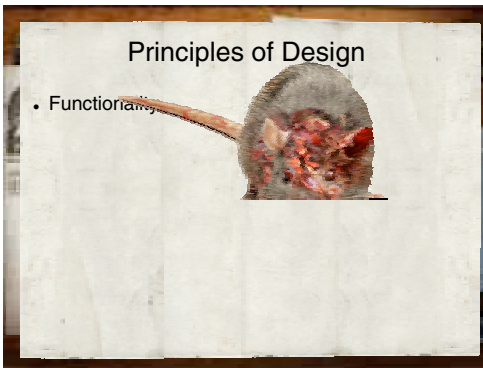
8



Balance, symmetry and proportion
 Balance and symmetry: horizontal, vertical, radial
 Text, images, objects, shapes, colors all have 'weight'
 White space serves to give weight to objects
 'weight' is visual importance
 Symmetry vs asymmetry: restful vs dynamic
 Proportion: the relative sizes and weights of elements



Rhythm, Harmony and Variety
 Rhythm: regular, flowing, progressive
 Unity: closure, the eye continues in a straight line unless blocked ('continuanace')
 Similarity, alignment: lined up text, same shapes, repeated
 Variety: creates interest. Breaks up a line with different sizes and asymmetry
 Harmony: the balance between variety and unity.



Elements of Design

- Line ———
- Space
- Shape ● ■ ★
- Direction — | /
- Size
- Texture
- Color ■
- Type (text and font choices)
- Brains



A quick history of design in Sci-Fi

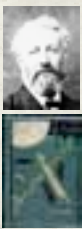
- Proto-history



Gilgamesh, the Tale of the Bamboo Cutter

A quick history of design in Sci-Fi

- Early beginnings – Jules Verne, H.G. Wells



Early design wasn't differentiated into genres yet. The books use the same basic design (fonts, layout) as traditional literature of the time.

A quick history of design in Sci-Fi

- Early 1900s

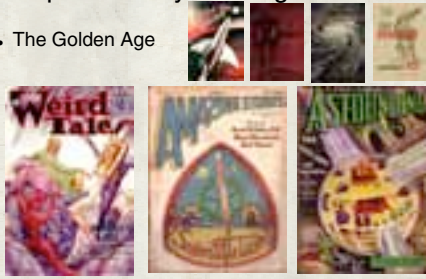


Sci-fi comes into its own

Metropolis: features a robot with skyscrapers towering over it. These were invented by this movie. The font is angular and alien, suggesting metal, technology.

A quick history of design in Sci-Fi

- The Golden Age

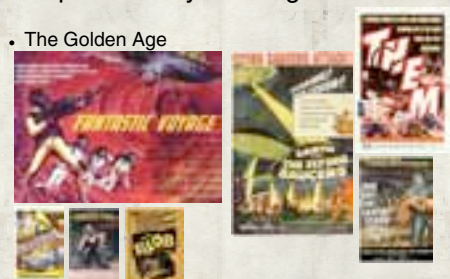


Much more freedom of movement and experimentation in design and layout
Slanted, rounded fonts with sharp edges recall the look of rocket ships

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A quick history of design in Sci-Fi

- The Golden Age

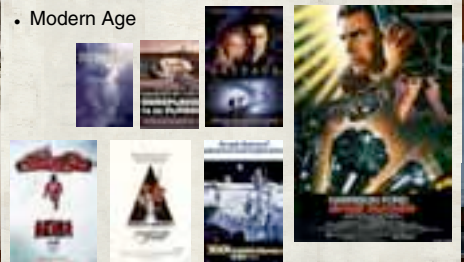


Robot carrying girl – common theme borrowed from other genres and twisted to sci fi
Sans-serif italics: modern, exciting.
Florid typography
Lots of supporting text

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A quick history of design in Sci-Fi

- Modern Age

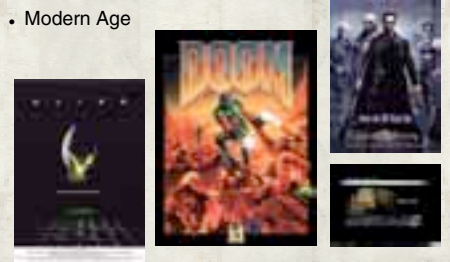


The fonts of Blade Runner and Star Trek capture the essence of sci-fi in the modern era: the fonts are broken up, weirdly angular. Tech and alien-looking.
Gattaca: serif font helps it look corporate. Horizontal balance & symmetry
Akira: Japanese text superimposed on title, looks like blood. Shows the tone of the movie well.
2001: regular astronauts on the moon: the future is now. Sans-serif font is Helvetica, which epitomized the modern minimalist movement, perfect for sci fi.
Contrast that with the bubbly cartoony font for Clockwork Orange – 60s feel, but the image is creepy and the contrast is evident.

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A quick history of design in Sci-Fi

- Modern Age



Video games and beyond
Designing immersive experiences. We can do this online to some extent.

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Fundamentals of Zombie Rats

- Degree of decomposition
 - Early stages – roadkill: careful, they're faster than they look
 - Middle stage – greater hunger for brains
 - Late stages – spare parts for your 'project'
- Obtaining brains
- Fun Zombie Rat tricks
 - Hide-the-brains
 - Ouch, did you just bite me?
 - Braaaaaains
- Braaaaaains



Fundamentals of design

Color

Theory: associations, technical considerations

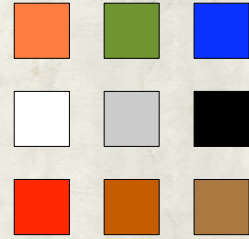
Fonts: dos and don'ts

Images: copyright issues, sources

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Color Theory

- Warm vs Cool
- Light vs Dark
- Vibrant vs Muted



Warm: active, energetic

Cool: soothing, calm, professional

Light: uplifting, clean

Dark: moody, serious

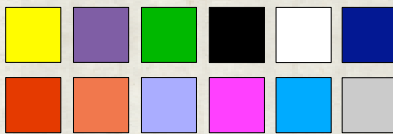
Vibrant: cartoony, child-like

Muted: serious, subtle

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Color Associations

- Psychology of Color



Culturally based: red = good luck (china), purity (india), mourning (south africa)

Blue = liberal (US), conservative (Europe); Green = reform (Iran)

White: clean, sterile, pure, cold, winter

Black: classic OR new; death, intelligence, mystery

Gray: elegance, stability, wisdom, balance, neutrality

Red: passion, fire, energy.

Orange: happiness, energy, autumn, playfulness

Yellow: cheerful; irritation; cowardice; smart; hazardous

Green: nature, wealth, growth, calm, spring

Blue: confident, stable, professional, sky, depression

Purple: royalty, wisdom, heroism, penance

Pink: feminine, romance

Brown: earthy, calm, comfort, nature

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Fonts

- Title vs body copy
- Readability vs Look & Feel
- Serif vs Sans-Serif
- Use as few fonts as possible
- 'Degradable' fonts – web-safe

Never stretch fonts

Fonts are the look and feel of text

www.dafont.com – free fonts! Excellent range.

Serifs are the little pieces that hang off the edges of fonts to improve legibility: at the foot, spreads out. Little balls at the end of a lowercase 'r'

Serif fonts are more professional, easier to read in print and large sizes.

Sans-serif fonts are more legible in small sizes online and are more minimalist

Uppercase is serious, lowercase is approachable

Only use web-safe fonts:

Serif: Palatino, Times, serif

Sans-serif: Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif.

For fancy fonts in headings use a graphic.

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Images



The creator of an image has copyright. Do not violate copyright by linking to or copying images unless the image is being commented on or parodied. This includes derivative works.
Use fan/member art, or stock art (free sources available); NASA, Wikipedia (check to make sure) and flickr.com (advanced search, check 'licensed for commercial use')
Images are used to complement and reinforce message of text. Brings a site to life.
Use alt tags! Helps the blind and Google.

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Concept

- Organization
 - Research
 - Brains
 - Definition
- Design
 - Structure
 - Layout
 - SEO considerations



Research:

Demographic, audience & what they respond to

See what other successful sites like yours do

Determine the purpose of your site & use that as a guide to figure out concept & design

Brainstorm: descriptive adjectives to describe the look and feel of your site (not to be confused with search keywords): soft, shiny, rubbery, rough, hard

Narrow down keywords to ones that fit your audience and purpose. Use to guide the design.

Logo: the face of your site, memorability. Minimal.

Info site: clean, white, minimal. Art site: lush, textured, rich. Look & feel should evoke the emotions you want your users to remember.

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Structure

- 5 – 7 'buckets' for navigation
- 2 layers of navigation
- Site map
- **NO SPLASH PAGES**

5-7 main top navigation links.

Less than 5 means consolidate content or get more

More than 5 means generalize links and add subnav

Link names should be descriptive and short

2 layers of navigation: main and crap.

Main: home, about, contact, gallery, etc.

Crap: privacy policy, faq, site map

Site map mirrors navigation. Might be redundant for small sites. Good for search engines

Avoid splash pages: non-functional, adds clicks

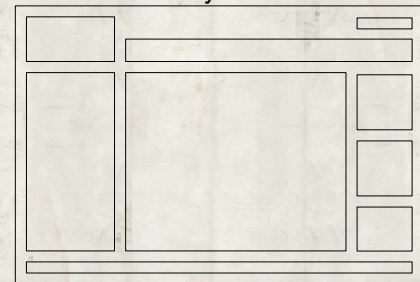
Keep navigation consistent – don't confuse users

'breadcrumbs' so users don't get lost

Don't use flash for the entire site, just pieces for impact

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Layout



Layout: information wants to hide.

Wireframe 1-3 basic page structures and reuse them

Use a 'points' system to determine content weight – each page gets 20 points, each item (news area, image, text) divides the points by importance. The most important stuff is higher on the page and larger

Important areas (in order): left, top, right, bottom

1024x768 screen minimum: design should be no larger than 950 pixels wide. 500 pixels high is 'above the fold' meaning visible on page load. Variable.

Top nav: more room for content. Left nav: more flexibility for large complex navigation & subnav

Keep navigation consistent

Use page titles so users know where they are.

Grid theory: to line content up.

Columns should be no wider than 600 px.

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Search Engine Optimization

- 'Power' keywords
- Domain name
- Incoming Links
- Page titles
- Link text
- Content
- Meta description
- Wordpress, Blogspot

SEO (search engine optimization)

Used to increase visibility of your site, drives traffic

Choose 'power' keywords: unique, relevant

Keywords in domain name. Old domain names are better though. As short as possible.

Use keywords in directory and file names

Use keywords first in page title tags

Link text should be descriptive: not, 'click here'

Incoming links to your site from highly-ranked sites are very important.

DMOZ – open source internet directory

Wordpress as a basis for a simple site gets higher pagerank automatically

Google analytics – track keyword use and fine-tune

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Best Practices

- Avoid cliches
- Content is more important than design
- KISS — no tricks or gimmicks
- Never center body text
- View your site on different browsers, OS
- Use CSS, not tables
- Employ leather gloves when handling Zombie Rats

No starfield backgrounds!

Don't overpower content with design

Use solid colors – gradients make larger images

JPG – for photos. GIF- for text & solid colors. PNG- for best reproduction & blended transparency (though not in IE6), but PNG is a huge file

Use animation to draw focus, not as a gimmick

Never center body text, it's hard to read. Flush left ragged right is best.

Test in several browsers: IE 6, 7, 8; Firefox 2 & 3; Safari 3 & 4; Chrome; Opera.

Test in both mac and PC: Qemu or Vmware

Use CSS for layout, tables only for tabular data

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Extended concepts

- Google Checkout, PayPal
- Javascript
- PHP
- MySQL
- Web hosting
- Wordpress, Blogspot, Joomla



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