

An aerial photograph of a city grid, showing a dense pattern of streets and buildings. The image is tilted slightly counter-clockwise. A semi-transparent blue rectangle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title and author's name. The title is in a bold, white, sans-serif font, and the author's name is in a regular weight of the same font. The background image shows a mix of urban structures, including houses, commercial buildings, and some green spaces.

**Ordering Disorder**  
Grid Principles  
for Web Design

Khoi Vinh

# Ordering Disorder: Grid Principles for Web Design

Khoi Vinh

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# Chapter 4

# **Execution**

There's no better way to learn how to design with a grid than to actually roll up your sleeves and try it. Now is the time to put all that theory, history, and preparatory study to work. This section focuses on creating a practical solution to the challenge of designing a website.

There is, of course, no such thing as a typical website or even a typical Web design problem. But the job we'll focus on in this section combines many common types of pages, including a blog, profile pages, and a home page that knits together disparate content types. The project also illustrates many different design challenges that will be instructive in showcasing a general approach to real-world grid design. Taking all of the project's constraints into account, we'll construct a single grid system and apply it to the various page types found throughout the site.

A side note: this section, and indeed this book, were written and designed so that readers can start reading anywhere, and I fully expect that many will buy this book exclusively so that they can skip ahead to this very section. There's nothing wrong with that, of course. Still, it's worth mentioning that, just as the ideas and context provided in the preceding chapters are of limited use without the practical advice that follows here, it's also true that the how-to instruction in this section will be of limited use without the ideas that precede it. The next 120 or so pages will provide you with the tools, but the preceding chapters are meant to provide you with the creative skills necessary to make good use of these tools. Don't cheat yourself!

## OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS

The job at hand is to design an online design journal—a website by, for, and about designers. It will combine editorial content in the form of blog publishing and a social networking layer into a cohesive user experience.

The site is composed of four major templates. We'll take an in-depth look at how to construct a grid that works for all of them, then apply that grid to the design of each. As we work through each template, the various constraints and lessons will build on one another:

- Blog article page
- Category/catalog page
- Profile page
- Home/gateway page

Later in the book, we'll extend that solution across a number of secondary templates, which will help demonstrate the flexibility of our system. These include:

- Messaging pages (e.g., error pages)
- Blog index pages
- Preferences pages
- Calendar display pages
- Email templates

Since we're dealing in the hypothetical, we'll also assume a make-believe name for our design journal: Designery.us. This gives us some grounding in the branding requirements for our project, which we'll discuss in greater detail soon.

# Getting started

## **UNDERSTANDING THE REQUIREMENTS**

If there's one lesson you should take away from this book, it's that understanding a project's constraints is the first and most critical step in crafting a solution. We must identify the criteria that determine whether the outcome we create will be successful, or even workable. Until that is accomplished, there's little point in thinking about the grid we might develop, much less in unpacking our digital design tools to start choosing typefaces and colors.

For Designery.us, we will suppose the preexistence of a set of well-documented wireframes prepared by an information architect. Wireframes are schematic drawings that capture the features and types of content that are required for each template. These wireframes do much of the job for us; in fact they function as documentation of many (though not all) of the constraints that inform the project.

At this point, we won't account for the constraints presented by every template throughout the site. Instead, we'll focus on the four major templates that will form the basis of the majority of pages. If we design our solution thoughtfully, we trust that whatever grid we develop can be easily applied or adapted to the less critical templates later on.

In reviewing the wireframes for those four main templates, we can identify two principle constraints. These, helpfully, are fairly clear cut and reasonably typical of many Web design challenges: the viewport size and the advertising unit.



## THE VIEWPORT

It seems unlikely that we'll ever have a single, standard size that all Web browsers will adhere to. Even as desktop screens get ever larger, our attention will continue to be divided among the much smaller screens on our mobile devices, the medium-sized screens that are becoming common with tablet computing devices, or the large-scale screens on our high-definition televisions. (Paradoxically designers must treat large television screens like lower-resolution devices because users sit far away from them.)

However, as this book goes to press, at a still early juncture in the Web's development, it seems reasonable to say that 1024 pixels wide by 768 pixels tall is as close as we come to a canonical size. Or, rather, it's the most utilitarian of the handful of standard screen resolutions we can work within. It's neither too small for most reasonably sized displays nor too large for the increasing power and resolution of handheld devices.

So the first constraint is that our design must fit into a 1024 x 768 screen.

Of course, a 1024 x 768 screen doesn't translate directly into a viewport of that same size for a web page. Thanks to menu bars, the tendency of most browsers to be sized slightly smaller than the space available to them, and other bits of user interface overhead, most browsers have a natural "posture" about 20 percent smaller than the total screen real estate. Within that browser window, we'll also want to accommodate some minor padding on the left and right sides of the window, so our design doesn't abut either edge, reducing the available viewport even more.

*Opposite: Our hypothetical project is based on these four wireframes for the article, category, profile and home pages.*

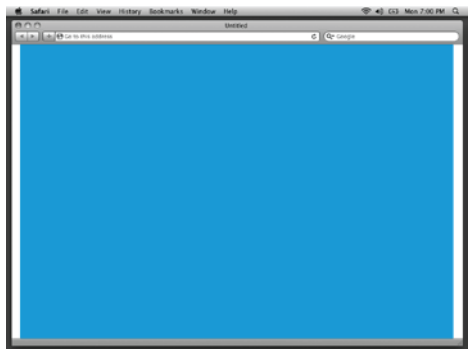
*A 1024 x 768 screen is as close as we have to a standard screen resolution. This will serve as one of the constraints for our design.*



*A browser's natural posture inside a screen makes roughly 80 percent of the screen available to users for viewing any web page. This makes for a space within the browser of about 974 x 650 pixels.*



*Assuming some visual padding on the left and right edges of the browser, this reduces the available screen real estate—or "live area"—to approximately 960 x 650 pixels.*





## **THE ADVERTISING UNIT**

Looking at our wireframes, we see right away one shared requirement: a rectangular ad unit is a prominent feature. It may not appear on every page, but we can recognize immediately that whatever grid we construct needs to work with this ad unit. This ensures consistency across the site.

For many Web designers, ads are the bane of our craft. They present a particularly touchy kind of constraint that often seems antithetical to creating well-designed user experiences. By their nature, ads are intended to disrupt the flow of the user experience that designers try to orchestrate in our solutions.

The rather obvious fact of the matter, however, is that for many sites, advertising units are their very lifeblood; they provide the revenue that allows the sites to run. In spite of their inconvenient nature, they're a very real and important constraint.

That also happens to make them a very useful constraint, too. We have discussed the paradox that the less mutable the constraint, the better the design problem. A prominent advertising unit is helpful to us in that it provides a foundation on which to build our grid; it effectively informs the way the grid is shaped.

For our purposes, we'll use the Internet Advertising Bureau's "big ad" unit, which is 336 pixels wide by 280 pixels tall, as our second constraint. As it happens, the width of this particular unit specification can also accommodate at least two other sizes of ads: the 300 x 250 medium rectangle unit and the 300 x 600 half-page unit. That is, a design created around the big ad unit should be fairly easy to use for these other ad sizes.

### **A THIRD CONSTRAINT: THE BRAND**

The viewport and the advertising unit are our two most critical constraints, but it would be irresponsible to proceed without acknowledging an equally important factor: the brand. While the influence of the brand on the construction of a grid-based solution is less direct than other constraints, it's nevertheless an important factor in the overall design solution. The grid you build for a youth brand, for instance, might be less restrictive than the one you might build for a financial services brand.

For the purposes of this exercise, we'll make some straightforward assumptions about the Designery.us brand:

- The audience is designers of all ages and Internet experience levels.
- The overall tone should be friendly, well-organized, simple, and uncluttered.
- The logo should be prominently displayed.



## **SUMMARY**

Having run through these criteria, we now have enough information to define the problem at hand. Before moving on to developing the grid itself, it can be useful to summarize these constraints to prevent any possible miscommunication. This is best done by restating the problem in a simple, concise paragraph:

Design the basic site templates for an online design journal. The site combines blog articles and social networking layers into a cohesive package, as outlined in the wireframes on page 50. The templates should accommodate a minimum screen resolution of 1024 x 768 pixels with a live area of approximately 960 x 650. The structure of the page must accommodate an IAB standard 336 x 280 ad unit. The completed design should reflect the Designery.us brand's design-savvy, uncluttered tone; feature its logo prominently; and use its red, black, and white color palette.

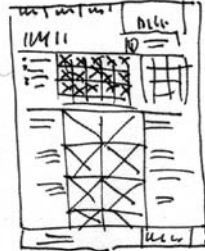
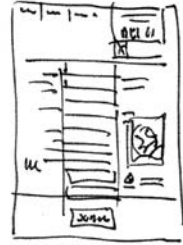
The designs for each of the pages in our site begin with hand-drawn sketches.



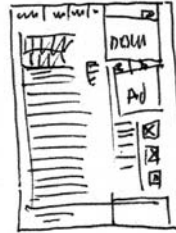
HOME PAGE



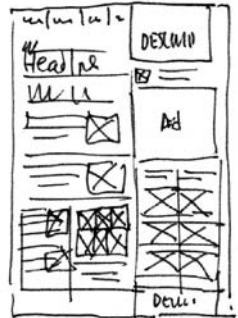
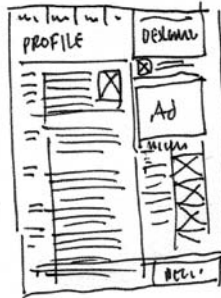
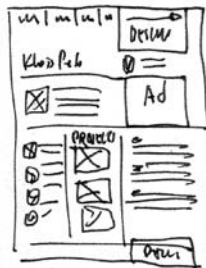
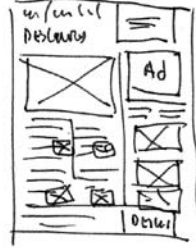
BASIC PAGE



CATEGORY PAGE



ARTICLE



## Sketching the solution

As with every design problem, the best path to a solution starts with sketching. Using pencil and paper, we can run quickly through several different approaches for a design framework that will work across the site. Again, the focus is on the four main templates, and in fact we only need to create sketches for those pages, but it can be helpful to keep the secondary templates in mind during this process as well.

In sketching, the goal is not to create a drawing of a completed solution, but rather to think as creatively as possible through approximation. Sketches should be fast, loose, and small in scale—a single sheet of paper is more than enough room for at least a half a dozen sketches done in quick succession. It's not important at this point to sketch an exact grid or to determine the number of units in the solution. Instead, focus on the number of columns to be used on a given page, regardless of how complex or difficult it will be to create those columns mathematically. In sketching, we want to remain as free as possible to come up with creative solutions, and let those ideas in turn determine the grid we'll construct later.

After several rounds of this visual brainstorming, we'll settle on these rough sketches to guide us as we begin to construct the grid.

Notice that these sketches take considerable license from the preliminary layout suggested by the wireframes: the name of the site is pushed to the far right and occupies a larger proportion of the page, some of the navigation items have been changed or consolidated, and there is a much different balance between the elements on the page and white space. As designers, this sort of interpretation is part of our responsibility. It's not enough to simply translate the wireframes—we must also *interpret* them so that the final outcome is the best, most coherent user experience we can design. In some cases call for looser interpretations than others, it's also the designer's responsibility to engage the other stakeholders in discussion over the departures from the wireframes that designers feel are necessary. In short, for designers, the creative process has its origins here in the sketching stage.

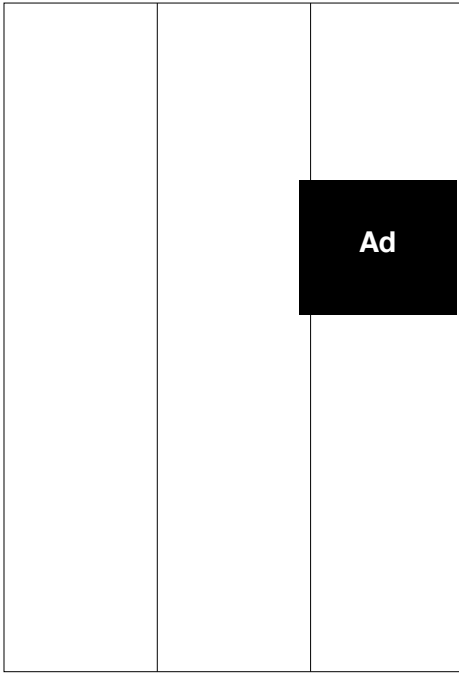
It's also worth repeating that sketching need not be an isolated part of the process. It's important to keep a pencil and paper handy even beyond this initial sketching phase, in case we need to return to sketching to work out previously unforeseen problems. This ability to sort through many creative possibilities in short order can be invaluable throughout the design process.

# CONSTRUCTING THE GRID

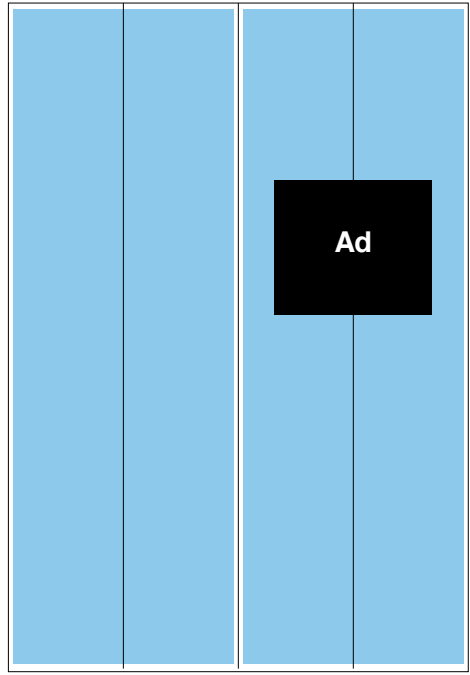
## **ESTABLISHING THE COLUMNAR GRID (UNITS)**

In print, designers base the sizes of units and columns on the fixed constraint of the sheet size they're working with. The final size of the printed page, poster, or panel directly influences the mathematics of the grid. In Web design, though, the closest equivalent to a sheet of paper—the browser window—is volatile, if not unreliable. This is where having a fixed constraint as described in chapter 3 is enormously helpful; in the problem at hand, the advertising unit is preordained and therefore serves as a handy ballast for the design as a whole. Again, everything flows from our constraints.

To translate the rough columnar structures implied in our sketches into an actual, mathematically precise grid, we can apply any of the many readily available Web-based tools that will create solutions in an instant—but I'm going to employ a trial-and-error method that will progressively reveal the critical decision-making that produces a comprehensive solution.



*Dividing the page into three equal columns doesn't work with our ad unit.*



*And neither would four equal units, which would require too wide a column for the ad.*

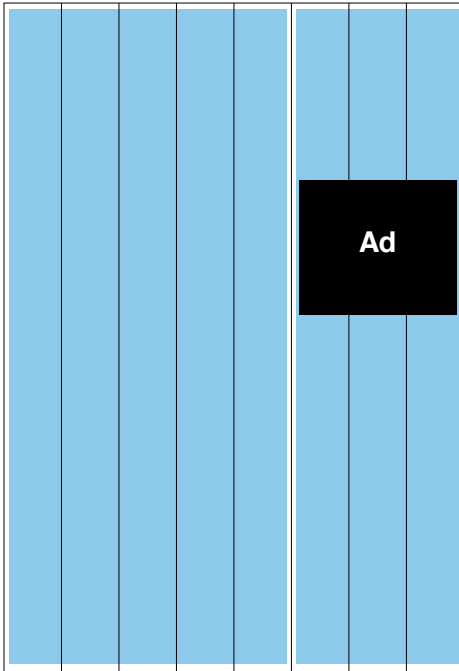


First we'll start by making simple, clean divisions to the page. Our sketches imply a two-thirds/one-third column structure, in which the left region is twice as large as the right region. Remembering that our viewport is 960 pixels wide, we can divide the page into three columns of 320 pixels each.

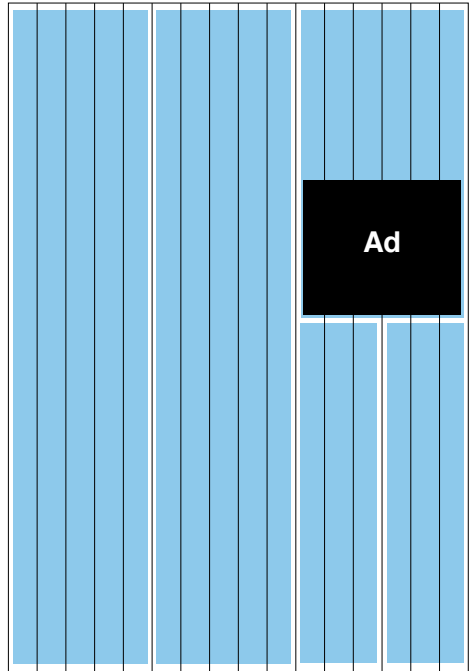
This would be an elegant basis for our grid, but of course this column size would be insufficient to house our ad unit of 336 pixels wide. It's possible to reduce the size of the left region and increase the size of the right region, but if we do that we wouldn't be creating a rational grid but rather an improvised one, and we'd be sure to encounter problems later. The goal here is to create a *uniform* set of divisions of the page that will give us layout guidance across the range of design problems we will encounter in this project.

Assuming that we'd add at least five pixels of margin to the left and right sides of that ad unit to prevent it from bumping up against the column edges, we know that our right-most region would need to be at least 346 pixels wide. Multiply that by three and we find that such a grid would already require 1,038 pixels in width, which exceeds the maximum width of our viewport significantly—and that isn't even taking into account additional width necessary for column gutters. As helpfully simple as a straight three-column structure would be, this problem calls for some more subtle calculations.

The next logical option is to divide the page into four units of 240 pixels wide each. That lets us combine the two rightmost units into a single column of 480 pixels, which will obviously give us plenty of room for our ad, but more room than we really need. What's more, it renders the two leftmost units too narrow to function as columns; the two-thirds/one-third balance of the design would be gone.



*Units and columns in multiples of four often point to the right solution. Here the page is divided into eight units.*

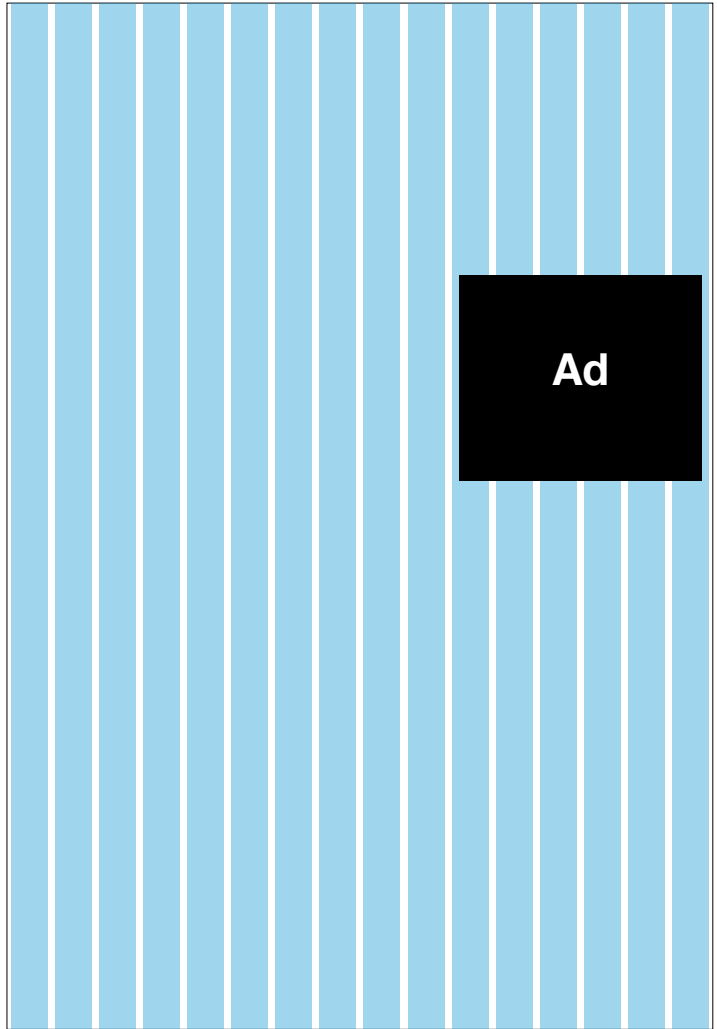


*To let us create a more fine-grained set of columns, we'll subdivide those eight units into sixteen.*

On the other hand, units and columns in multiples of four very often point to the right solution, even if they're not workable in and of themselves. (Indeed, most sound grid solutions are made up of four, eight, or sixteen columns, so it's often useful to create new grids with that in mind.) If we divide the page into eight units of 120 pixels wide each, that allows us to combine three of those units into a 360-pixel wide column, which can comfortably accommodate the ad unit. That would leave a 600-pixel-wide left region, which restores the original two-thirds/one-third balance we're seeking, and will function well as the main text region on our article page. However, this left region would be composed of five units, an awkward number should we need to create further subdivisions.

The improvised answer to this problem would be to simply divide the left region into two columns of 300 pixels wide each. In effect that's what we'll do, but we can use this opportunity to make a more thoughtful decision. By subdividing the grid even further, from eight units of 120 pixels wide each to sixteen units of 60 pixels wide each, it allows us to create a more fine-grained set of columns. The left region can be divided into two columns of five units each, and the right region can work as a single column of six units or, if it needs to be subdivided, two columns of three units each.

*Our final  
sixteen-unit grid.*



Sixteen units can make for a complex grid, but this arrangement gives us a high level of granularity that will prove useful later on. What's more, because the total number of units is a multiple of four, it conforms to our rule from Chapter 3 that states, "The simpler the grid, the more effective it is." Remember that the idea behind this rule is that grids should be as mathematically useful as possible, i.e., combining units into columns should be based on measurements simple enough to be able to calculate without having to use a calculator. Sixteen units of 60 pixels wide each, totaling 960 pixels in width, makes for such a mathematically useful framework; we know right away that two units are 120 pixels wide, three units are 180 pixels wide, and so forth.

The mathematical usefulness of this sixteen-unit framework bears out even more when we add the subtlety of gutters. We want to incorporate a gutter between each unit, so that when combined into columns there will always be a gutter available, and mathematically accounted for, to the right of that resulting column. If we establish a gutter of 10 pixels wide and subtract that width from the unit, we're left with sixteen units of 50 pixels wide each, which is an even more straightforward calculus.

### **ESTABLISHING THE BASELINE GRID**

We now have our columnar grid, and it's time to develop our baseline grid. Remember that the baseline is the invisible line on which letterforms rest—the anchor for lines of type. We form a grid by creating a uniform set of these baselines that run from the top of the page to the bottom. The spacing of the lines is determined by our typographic specifications.

A good baseline grid complements larger type elements like headings and subheadings, but baselines are principally obligated with guiding the body text—the text that renders the majority of the content—on a page. Body text on the Web typically runs anywhere from 11 to 14 point in size, though it doesn't take much digging to find designs that use more extreme sizes. Specifying type can be as easy as simply choosing a font size within that range that seems most suitable, but the human eye most comfortably reads (or scans) 60 to 80 characters per line and no more. This is called the line measure, and we typically refer to “wide measures”—typesetting with 80 or more characters per line—as being undesirable because they become difficult to read.

Returning to the columnar grid, we see that the widest area in which we're likely to set text is in the left region, where ten units and nine gutters of space amounts to a width of 590 pixels. That's plenty of room for the main column of text on the article template, which is the template that will likely demand the widest measures of all of our layouts. But even in such a wide column, our text is unlikely to run from edge to edge without some kind of buffer to relieve the visual tension, so we can reduce the width by two units and two gutters, which we'll use as padding. That leaves us eight units and seven gutters for a width of 470 pixels. Even then, we may add additional in-column padding (which we'll discuss later) so the actual width may be closer to 450 pixels.

*Setting sample blocks of text helps us determine the right line measure and font size.*

**Georgia Regular 12 pt.**

Mr. Phileas Fogg lived, in 1872, at No. 7, Saville Row, Burlington Gardens, the house in which Sheridan died in 1814. He was one of the most noticeable members of the Reform Club, though he seemed always to avoid attracting attention; an enigmatical personage, about whom little was known, except that he was a polished man of the world. People said that he resembled Byron—at least that his head was Byronic; but he was a bearded, tranquil Byron, who might live on a thousand years without growing old.

**Georgia Regular 13 pt.**

Mr. Phileas Fogg lived, in 1872, at No. 7, Saville Row, Burlington Gardens, the house in which Sheridan died in 1814. He was one of the most noticeable members of the Reform Club, though he seemed always to avoid attracting attention; an enigmatical personage, about whom little was known, except that he was a polished man of the world. People said that he resembled Byron—at least that his head was Byronic; but he was a bearded, tranquil Byron, who might live on a thousand years without growing old.

**Georgia Regular 14 pt.**

Mr. Phileas Fogg lived, in 1872, at No. 7, Saville Row, Burlington Gardens, the house in which Sheridan died in 1814. He was one of the most noticeable members of the Reform Club, though he seemed always to avoid attracting attention; an enigmatical personage, about whom little was known, except that he was a polished man of the world. People said that he resembled Byron—at least that his head was Byronic; but he was a bearded, tranquil Byron, who might live on a thousand years without growing old.

The question now is what type size is best suited for such a width? We could use calculation tools, but because every typeface is composed of different metrics the best course of action may be to simply set sample text within such a width and judge the results for ourselves. Typesetting 12-point Georgia Regular, for instance, will yield close to 80 characters per line, while 14-point Georgia Regular will yield just over 60 characters. Some designers—and users—will prefer one or the other size, but for our purposes we'll select 13-point Georgia Regular, which yields roughly 70 characters per line—right in the middle of our sweet spot of 60 to 80 characters per line.

To vet that decision, we also want to set sample text within narrower columns so we can appraise its visual appropriateness. The character count will of course be well short of the maximum measure, but it's still worth making sure that the text will be easily readable in different widths.

*Setting type within various other widths helps us vet our choice of font size.*

<b>Georgia Regular 13 pt.</b>	<b>Georgia Regular 13 pt.</b>	<b>Georgia Regular 13 pt.</b>
Mr. Phileas Fogg lived, in 1872, at No. 7, Saville Row, Burlington Gardens, the house in which Sheridan died in 1814. He was one of the most noticeable members of the Reform Club, though he seemed always to avoid	Mr. Phileas Fogg lived, in 1872, at No. 7, Saville Row, Burlington Gardens, the house in which Sheridan died in 1814. He was one of the most noticeable members of the Reform Club, though he seemed always to avoid attracting attention; an enigmatical personage, about whom little was known, except that he was a polished man of the world. People said	Mr. Phileas Fogg lived, in 1872, at No. 7, Saville Row, Burlington Gardens, the house in which Sheridan died in 1814. He was one of the most noticeable members of the Reform Club, though he seemed always to avoid attracting attention; an enigmatical personage, about whom little was known, except that he was a polished man of the world. People said that he resembled Byron—at least that his head was Byronic; but he was a bearded, tranquil Byron, who might live on a thousand



The font size in turn lets us determine the line-spacing, which effectively produces the baseline grid. The science of determining the correct line-spacing is really a shadow of the practice of “leading” from traditional typography, which was based on the act of physically adding more space between lines of text in the form of lead slugs. There are a handful of rules of thumb, but no universally accepted guidelines. Visually heavier typefaces demand more line-spacing than lighter ones; typefaces with large, voluminous bodies (especially characters like *B*, *C*, and *O*) benefit from more leading while typefaces with narrower or smaller bodies need less. There are myriad additional factors to consider: whether a font is italicized, whether it features serifs, how starkly its bold weights contrast with its regular weights, and so on. The short of it is that line-spacing should usually be positive (especially in body text), which is to say 13-point text should always have line-spacing of at least 13 pixels, and it should look good. Too little line-spacing makes it difficult for the eye to parse a paragraph into legible lines, and too much line-spacing makes it difficult for the eye to follow from line to line.

For these purposes, we’ll select a line-spacing of 18 pixels, which will allow lines to cohere together nicely into paragraphs. This in effect establishes our baseline grid, with a baseline occurring every 18 pixels starting at the top of the page and running down to the bottom. This grid helps guide us in the placement of typography and other elements, but it’s important to remember that it’s only a guide. Overly strict adherence to this grid is impractical in Web design, as the added complexity of coding elements to align to both the baseline and columnar grid is hardly worth the effort. The advantages of using a grid in Web design is felt much more acutely when elements align to the columnar grid; put simply, alignment with the baseline grid is too subtle a design detail to benefit most users.

Still, we can refer to the baseline grid to help us make many design decisions that would otherwise be improvised. Paragraph spacing, for example, can be determined by the baseline grid. In print, paragraphs frequently follow one another with no additional leading. But on the Web, where some basic typographic touches such as an indentation on the first line of a paragraph are still not easily implemented, and users tend to scan pages much more quickly than in print, buffering paragraphs with spacing is desirable. We can add a full 18 pixels of line space between paragraphs to maintain consistent visual spacing and to ensure that other elements, when aligned with the baseline grid, are in visual harmony with our paragraphs.

We can also determine the specifications of our headings and subheadings, the HTML elements **H1**, **H2**, **H3**, and so on. **H1**s are typically the most visible text on the page, and they frequently appear apart or distinct from the main body text, so it's not as critical to base those headings on the baseline grid as much as it is to base **H2**s and **H3**s on the baseline grid. These elements should obviously be larger and/or more prominent than the body text, but we're not basing their *font size* directly on the baseline grid but rather their line spacing. For instance, we'll specify our **H2**s at 24 point with a line-spacing of 26 pixels, or two baselines. We could just as well set the type size anywhere between, say 22 point and 30 point, so long as we maintain the line-spacing at 36 pixels. What determines the exact specification is our own visual assessment of how comfortable the type looks within the line-spacing, whether descenders on letterforms such as *g* and *y* overlap text below them, and whether the spacing feels sufficient.

*Not all of our text specifications need to map to the baseline grid. Here, His are off the grid.*

**H1 Lorem Ipsum Dolor  
Sit Amet, Consectetur  
Adipiscing Elit**

**H2 Lorem Ipsum Dolor Sit Amet,  
Consectetur Adipiscing Elit**

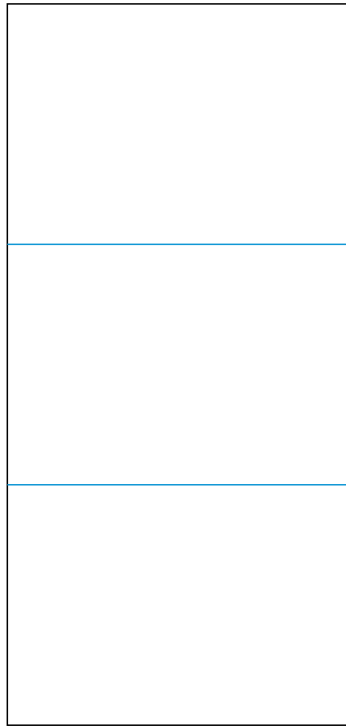
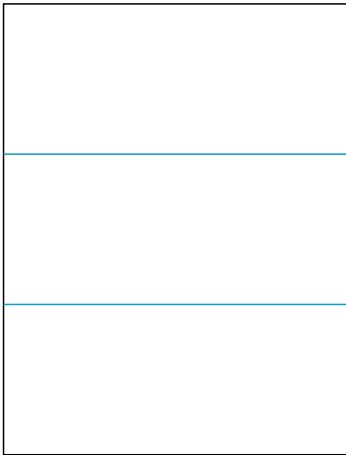
**H3 Lorem Ipsum Dolor Sit Amet, Consectetur Adipiscing Elit**

### **ESTABLISHING THE FIELDS**

The baseline grid is essential in establishing fields, rationally determined horizontal divisions on the page that help us in the visual pacing of grouped elements from top to bottom. Fields can be useful for sizing the approximate space necessary for the branding and navigation at the top of the page, for example, or estimating the appropriate space for content that is intended to sit higher on the page than other content.

In print design, we might create fields by dividing the page into a number of discrete horizontal regions, allowing us to achieve a precise balance of elements from top to bottom. On the Web though, the height of the page is usually an unknown quantity. One page can fit all of its elements and content in the “above the fold” area, allowing the user to access all content without scrolling, while another page within the same website might have a page that’s so long it requires seemingly interminable scrolling. Creating a design framework that divides these pages into thirds, for example, is impractical since the resulting thirds would be wildly inconsistent.

Still, the concept of fields can help us establish a visual rhythm along this unpredictable axis. Fields of a fixed height running from top to bottom can serve as guidelines along which we can place key elements; at the same time, we can ignore these guidelines at will.

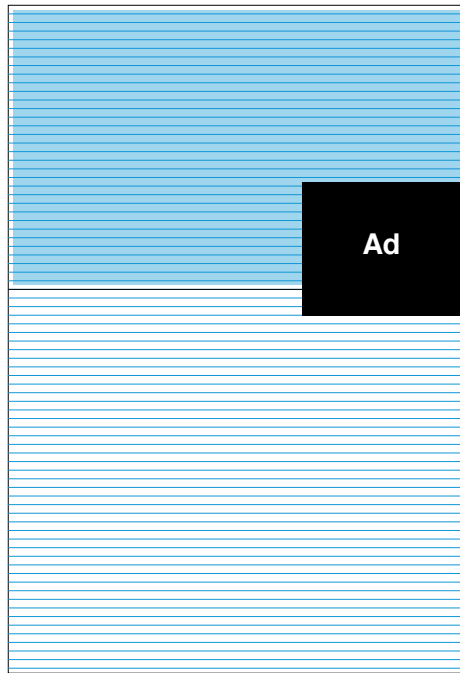


*Determining the height regions can be unpredictable when page heights vary.*

How do we determine the correct height for these fields? The answer is to use the golden ratio. Sort of. Rather than fully calculating the true ideal measurements for these regions using the golden ratio in all its complexities, we can acknowledge the limited resolution of our computer screens and therefore justify using a simplified form of the golden ratio—the relatively round number of 1.618—to determine an approximation. This is as simple as dividing the width of our page, 960 pixels, by the number 1.618, which yields a value of approximately 593.

What this tells us is that a rectangle of 960 pixels wide by 593 pixels tall is roughly consistent with the golden ratio; if we place that rectangle at the top of the page, its bottom edge demarcates a field for us—or nearly does. Within our baseline grid, the closest baseline occurs at 594 pixels, or 33 baselines down from the top. Again, this is an exercise in approximations, so that number is entirely acceptable for our purposes: our horizontal field will occur every 594 pixels from the top of the page.

*The golden ratio helps us determine the height of our fields.*



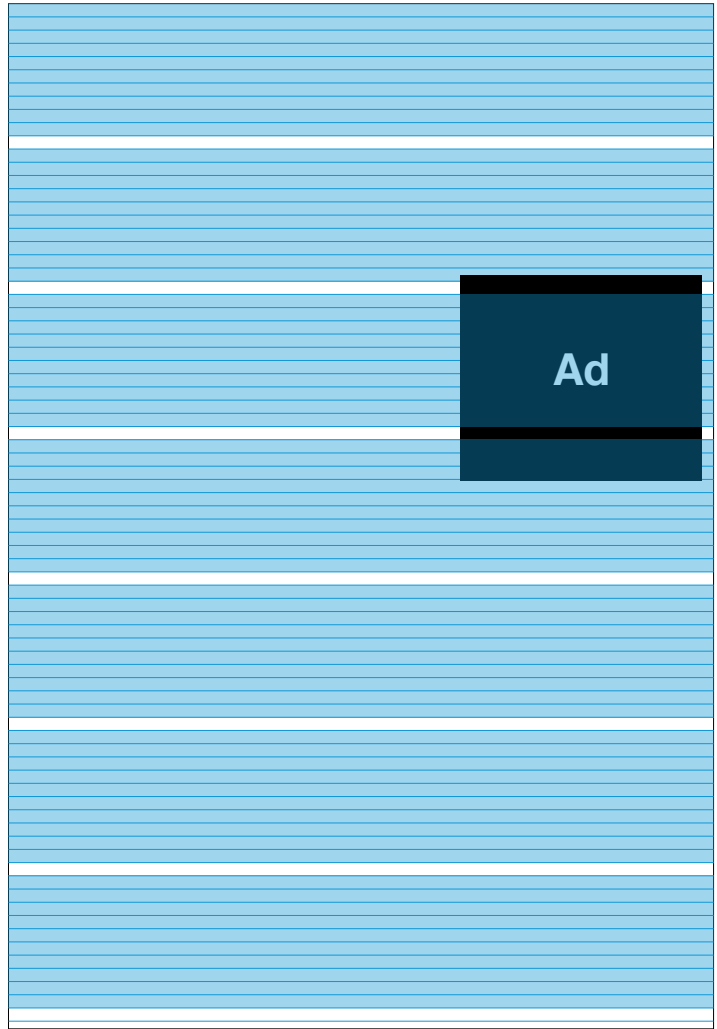
It's also worth noting that within this rectangle we can form a square of 594 pixels on each side, and its right edge roughly aligns with a significant columnar division in the page that we've created. This is a matter of happenstance only; there's no mathematical design that helped us arrive at this happy coincidence, but it still serves as a useful confirmation that the grid is solidly built.

Demarcating a field at every 594 pixels leaves many gaps in design guidance. The unfortunate truth of many web pages is that they're replete with elements that need to find a home on the page, many too varied in size to depend on a guideline only once every 594 pixels. What we want from our grid, particularly our baseline grid, is an infrastructure of visual hints as to where we might align any given element with the knowledge that it fits neatly into our overarching sense of order.

Of course, we could use our 18-pixel baseline grid and align elements on any of the hundreds of baselines that occur on a page, but that presents too many guides. What we need is something in between, something roughly equivalent to our columnar grid.

This can be easily achieved by using the rule of thirds to further refine our fields. If we divide the 594-pixel height by three (remembering that three is a particularly effective divisor), we create divisions of 198 pixels each along the baseline grid. By using a full baseline as a visual gutter between each of the thirds, we create fields of 180 pixels each, or ten baselines each.

*Fields applied  
throughout the  
length of the page.*



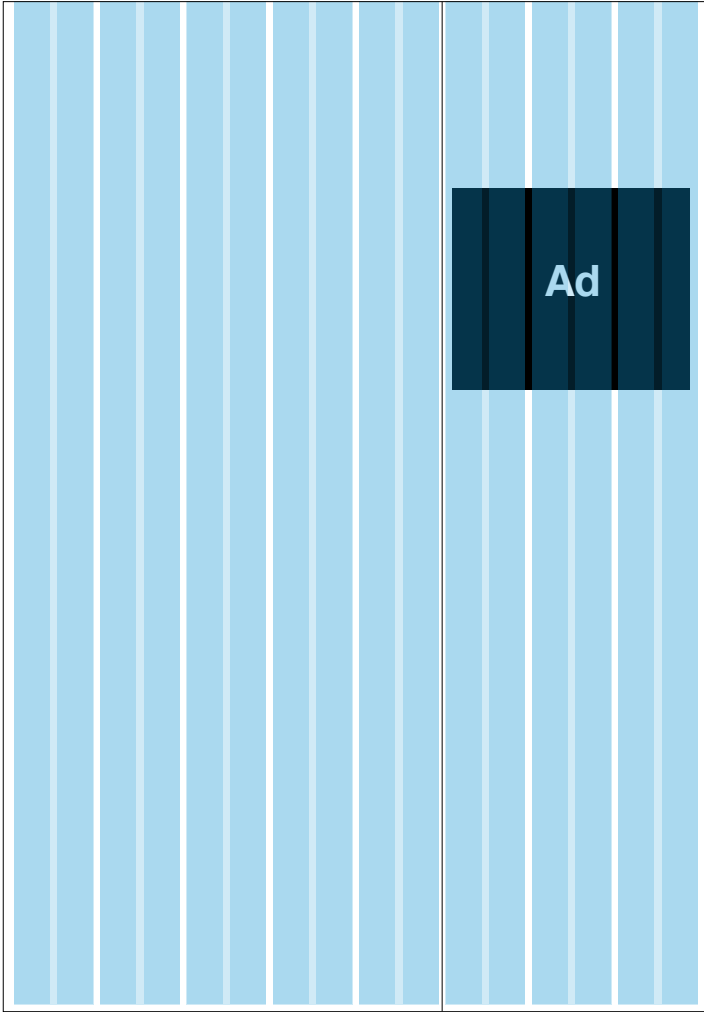


It's important to note that the baseline grid, even more than the columnar grid, is only a set of guidelines, and is not meant to be strictly obeyed. Again, there are too many elements on most Web pages to affix or align each one to the baseline grid. Doing so would require a mathematical rigor that, if it can be achieved, might produce rationally exact measurements and placements but will most likely be something less than elegant. The result would be a design driven by math, rather than a design that uses math to create an elegant product. What's more, the effort required to remain completely true to the baseline is likely to exceed its usefulness to the designer and the user. What's important here is to build a sound grid foundation that can provide guidance where necessary, while at the same time reserving the right to disregard it. Any grid is a series of suggestions, and it's the designer's responsibility to accept them or disregard them.

## DESIGNING THE PAGE TEMPLATE

With the basic grid completed, we can begin to design the actual interface for our site. First we'll want to establish the placement of the core elements, the ones that appear persistently throughout the site: the search box, navigation, account log-in and sign-up links, and, of course, the brand.

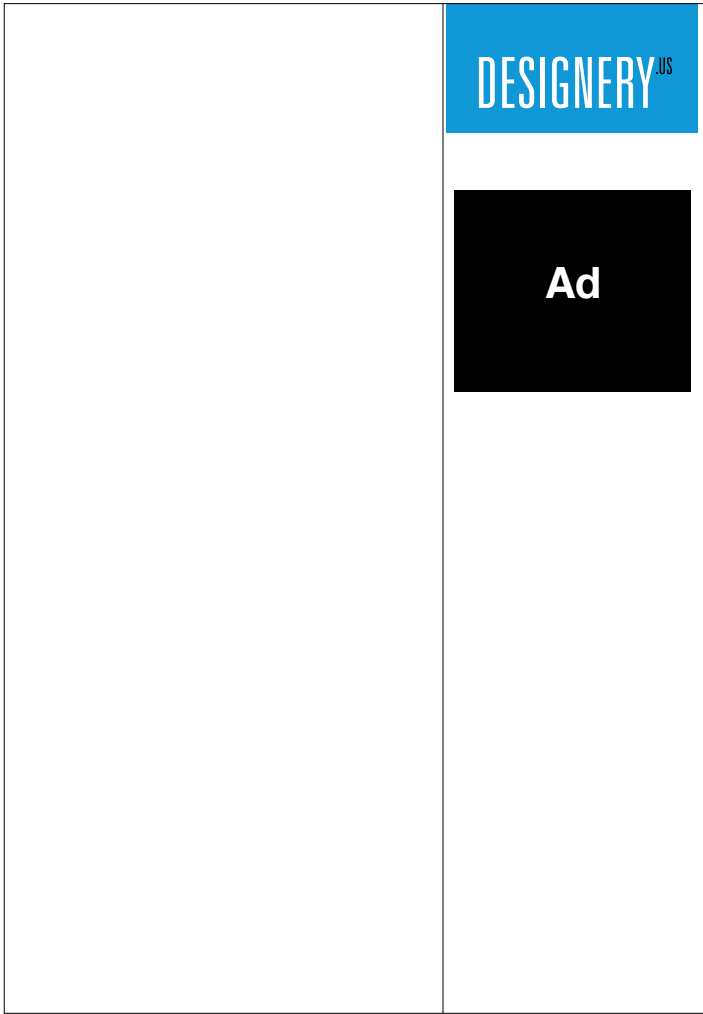
To do this, we'll divide the page into two major regions, one for the main content and one for the ad unit and secondary content. By combining six units on the right side of the page we create a column that can house our advertising unit, leaving ten columns to the left for our main text column.



*Our page template starts with a simple division of the page into major regions.*

We'll use some artistic license here and place the Designery.us logo in the far right column, prominently at the top of the page. This off-kilter presentation is congruent with the design-friendly sensibilities of the audience. Placing it on the right also allows us to display the logo at a consistently larger size than if we had placed it on the left side, where it would compete for space with each page's primary headline and content.

What's more, its placement in this position helps resolve a problem that occurs frequently in website design: the far-right column is commonly overlooked. Many web users pay little attention to this region of the page, and with good reason: website publishers frequently use it as a kind of dumping ground for advertisements and promotional items. Displaying the Designery.us logo at the top of this region can help mitigate that phenomenon, as its prominence can visually activate the space.

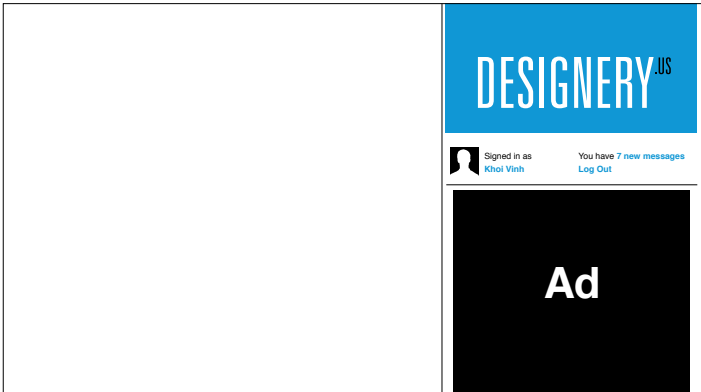


*Placing our logo at the top right for an off-kilter presentation.*

We can further energize this region by including additional elements that have real value for the user. For example, the user’s profile area, which includes his logged-in state and notifications of his messages and updates, can be placed just below the logo. This is a prominent position for elements that communicate directly relevant information to the user (in contrast to the ad unit and the links to peripheral content that are more commonly found in this part of the page), which increases the overall value of this far-right region and decreases the likelihood that it will be ignored.

Note that this information is divided up into two short columns. Each is left-aligned with the columnar grid, of course, and the text is aligned with the baseline grid. The avatar icon is also aligned with the baseline grid.

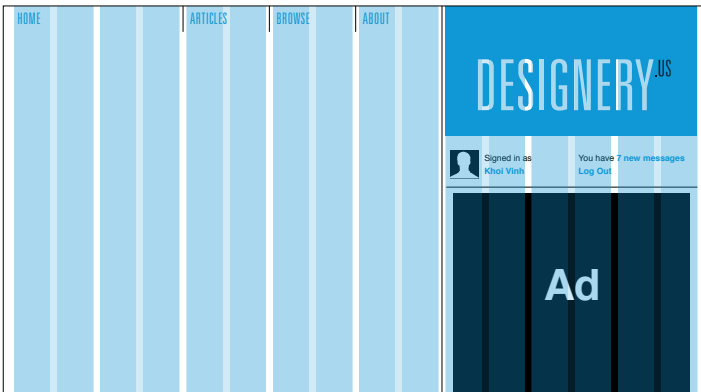
We don’t want to relegate all of the critical elements to that far-right region, of course. In fact, with the logo at the right, it’s even more important that our navigation be easily accessed from the left side of the page. So we’ll run the navigational elements along the top edge where users will be sure to spot them.



*Adding account elements just below the logo.*



*The account elements are aligned with our grid.*



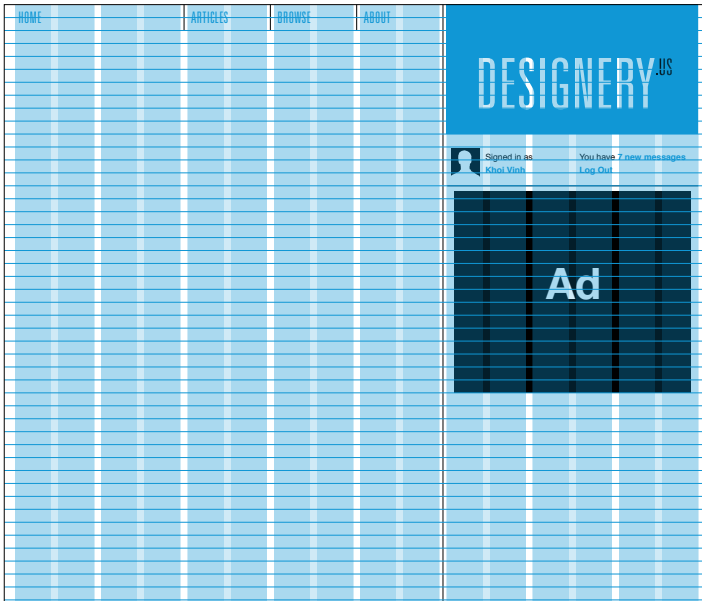
*Placing our navigation elements across the top of the page.*

Looking at the grid, there are ten units in this region, which can be consolidated into five columns of two units each. Each column would measure 110 pixels wide, a comfortable amount of space for navigational buttons. However, our wireframe shows only three navigational elements: Home, Articles, and Browse (the Profile section now appears at the far right). We can promote the About Designery link that our wireframe suggests should appear in the footer to the level of the top navigation, reasoning that it's too important to be left so far down the page. This gives us a total of four navigational elements. That still leaves one column blank, but we can address that by giving the Home link—usually the most important of all navigational links—a double-wide space of four units, or 230 pixels. This makes the Home link particularly prominent and findable without requiring us to make it too visually loud.

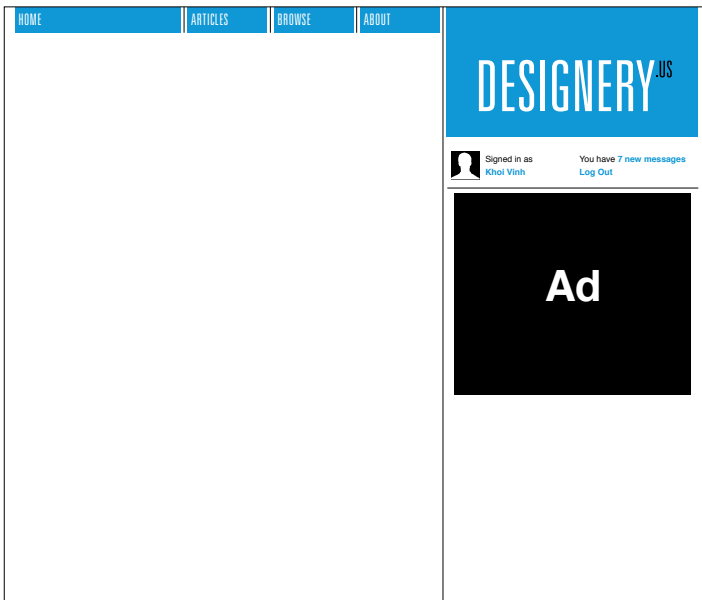
Note also that the navigational links do not align with the baseline. The type is just a bit too tall to fit comfortably in our baseline grid without consuming more space than is truly necessary. Instead, we'll make the height of the navigation button—the overall area in which the link resides—two baselines, or 36 pixels, tall, and center the text vertically within that area. We define the height of those areas with a vertical divider line.

Using the baseline grid to guide the height of these navigation items also helps us determine the rollover states of these items. When the user mouses over any of the items, a background color will appear to emphasize their clickability.





*The type in the navigational elements does not align with the baseline grid.*

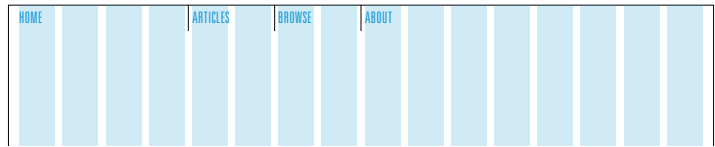


*Rollover states for the navigational elements.*

This is a good opportunity to reiterate the importance of spacing in grid-based design. Notice that the navigation links do not align with the left edge of the column. In fact, none of the text we've placed so far (or will place) fully aligns with the left edges of its respective column. Every piece of text is nudged in slightly from those edges by 5 pixels.

The reason we do this is that we must account for the behavior of these text items. In print design, elements are more commonly fully aligned with their column edges, but they remain fixed in place and rarely have different states.

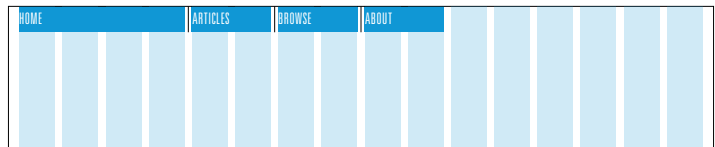
*Aligning elements with their column edges looks good.*



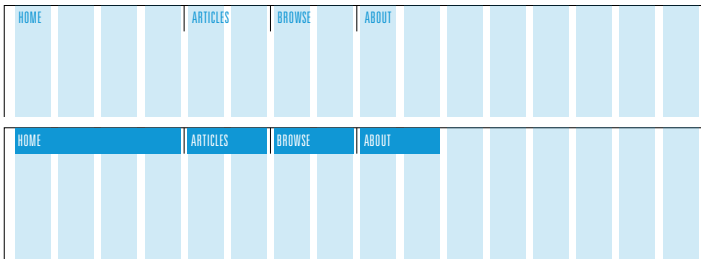
This is an aesthetically unimpeachable layout technique but it does not contend with rollover states, which are common on the Web for functional or link text. This is what fundamentally distinguishes interaction design from its antecedents in print: the digital designer must account for behaviors.

On the Web, a link or text button in its default state might look like simple text on a plain background, but it often carries additional behaviors. On rollover, for instance, a colored background box is revealed as part of the link.

*But it presents problems when we create different behavioral states.*



As you can see from this example, text that fully aligns with the column edge presents problems. On rollover, the text crashes into the left edge. We can adjust it in the rollover state—that is, nudge it a few pixels to the right of the column edge—to make it more aesthetically pleasing and accommodate that behavior. But to have the text placed at one location and its rollover state placed in another location can be disconcerting, especially if a user rolls on and off a link quickly or repeatedly. The same text would jump erratically between spots. It's wisest to make the placement for both the default and rollover states consistent; that is, the text placement for the default state should be the same as the text placement for the rollover state.

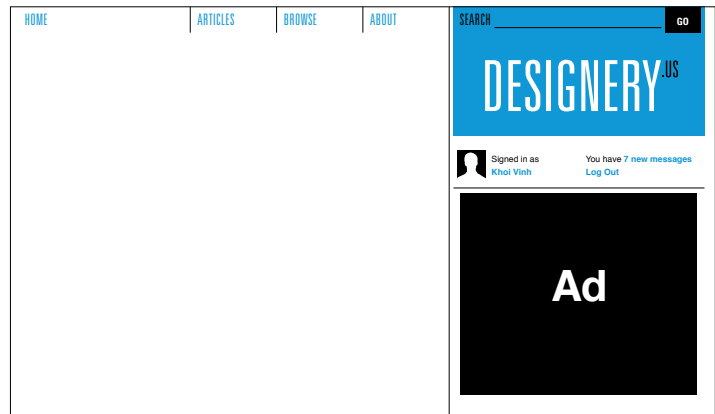


*Instead, place elements a few pixels away from the column edges.*

The implication here is not just that link text should be placed a few pixels away from column edges, but rather that *all text* should be padded in this way. Having a mix of placements—some at the column edge and others nudged in—will create visual disarray, to begin with. At the same time, it's difficult to know what text will function as links and what text will not, so it's safest to assume that all text, at some point or another, has the potential to assume additional behaviors.

Returning to our page template, we'll also add the search box along the same axis as the navigation links. Search is frequently used as a form of navigation, and presenting it inline with the navigation creates a logical organization, though in this case we'll place search above the Designery logo back in the far-right region. We'll also use some artistic license to design a slightly unusual search box, one that looks like a blank line rather than a box.

*Adding the search box above the logo.*

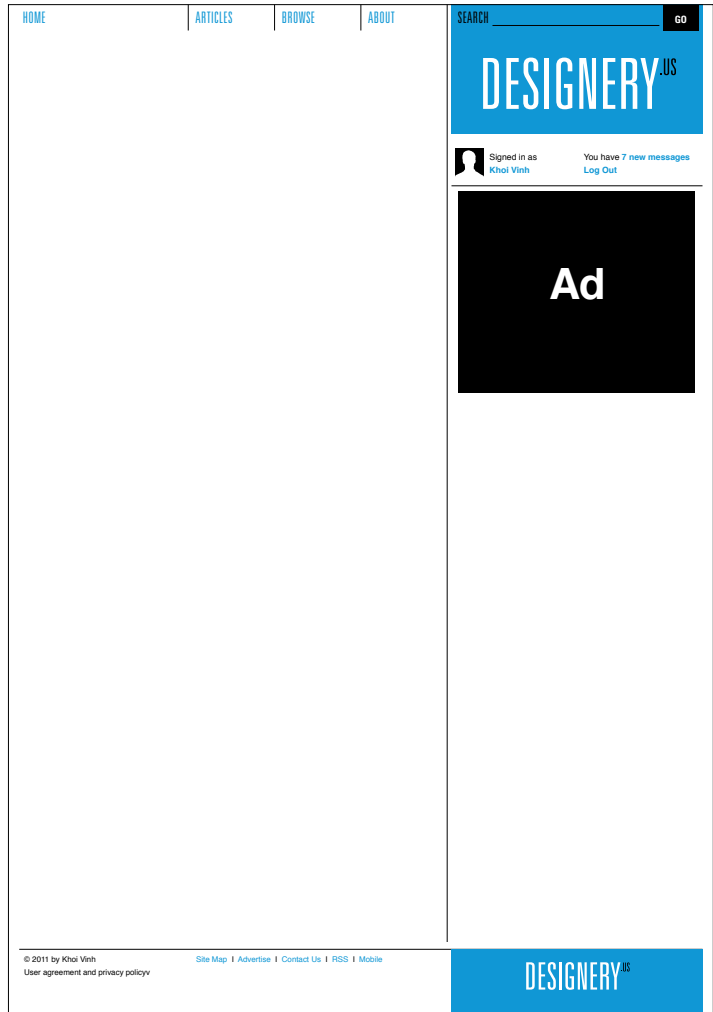


Finally, we have the footer to include in the template. Different schools of web design argue that footers can be simple and incidental or very complex and substantial. Either approach is valid, but in this case we'll favor a simpler footer. Using alignments with our grid, we can include the copyright information at the left, then a string of secondary navigational links indented at about four units from the left. Though the placement of these two elements echoes the double-wide Home link and the other navigational links at the top, it's not entirely necessary to expressly match the columnar structure in the main body of the page. So long as the elements in the footer are aligned with elements of the grid, that should be enough.

*Adding the footer to the page.*



The completed page template.



That said, we can echo the far-right region of the main part of the page with a bit of Designery branding. This subtly emphasizes the unusual placement of the logo in the far-right column.

That completes the design of our basic template. It establishes a standard set of elements to be used throughout the site, but of course we should keep in mind that any element can be modified to produce the best possible total user experience. In the following projects, we'll see where and when it's appropriate to make those kinds of changes.

## PROJECT 1: ARTICLE PAGE

When designing a website, many designers begin with the home page template, a logical starting point because the home page can establish so much of the site’s aesthetic tone. Oftentimes, though, the home page can present so unique a challenge that it keeps us from reaching our bigger goal: as we start the design process, we want to solve as many of the most wide-reaching problems as early as we can.

There’s also the argument that the home page is the most prominent page on the site, the face and gateway to the content. Again, this is a completely valid argument, but in the direct access world of the Web, it’s the content itself (and not the gateway to that content) that often matters most. The home page, after all, is usually an index of content. On the other hand, the kind of pages that contain the content—like the product page on a shopping site, or like the article page on a content site—attract the most attention from search engines, get forwarded via email, and make the rounds on social networks.

For those reasons, we’ll use the basic template we’ve designed to first tackle the article page template. Of course, we’ll base our design on the requirements in this wireframe:



The wireframe for our article page.

<b>Designery.us</b>	<a href="#">Home</a>	<a href="#">Articles</a>	<a href="#">Browse</a>	<a href="#">Profile</a> Welcome back, Khoi 7 Messages   <a href="#">LOG-OUT</a>	
Search <input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="SEARCH"/>	<a href="#">Previous Article</a>	<a href="#">Next Article</a>		
2010-MM-DD <b>Article Headline Goes Here</b>					
A brief summary of the article goes here, Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam,					
<input type="radio"/> PRINT <input type="radio"/> EMAIL <input type="radio"/> SHARE					
	By <b>John Doe</b> Editor				
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Vivamus quis felis lectus. Ut ac leo justo, Cras adipiscing nulla quis erat convallis tincidunt. Ut dapibus molestie eros, vitae feugiat ligula gravida eget. Integer in nulla at lectus blandit commodo sed vitae tortor.					
		A caption for this large image goes here.			
Integer suscipit tincidunt augue, sit amet auctor enim tempus et. Donec elementum interdum pretium. Duis quis libero orci. Morbi ut dui turpis, sed viverra tellus. Quisque sollicitudin lectus eget nisi laoreet condimentum. Suspendisse ultrices lobortis ipsum sed facilisis. Cras malesuada arcu eget leo commodo vitae commodo dolor dictum. Nulla facilisi. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Morbi elit ante, porttitor vel lobortis id, viverra ac eros.					
Cras tincidunt iaculis risus id faucibus. Sed sed justo id quam scelerisque euismod ac non ante. Nunc ullamcorper nisi vitae mi ultrices sit amet laoreet odio hendrerit. Nunc et nisi eu nisi eleifend imperdiet et quis dolor. Donec vitae lacus interdum ipsum fringilla luctus. ■					
		<b>Recent Articles</b> <a href="#">Article One Headline</a> By Jane Smith <a href="#">Article Two Headline</a> By Don Jones			
		<b>Recent Projects</b>  <a href="#">Project Name</a>  <a href="#">Project Name</a>			
		<b>Subscribe to Our Email Newsletter</b> Email <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="GO"/>			
<a href="#">About Designery</a>   <a href="#">Contact Us</a>   <input type="radio"/> <a href="#">RSS Feed</a>   <a href="#">Legal Notices</a>   © 2011 by Khoi Vinh					

The primary component of this page is, of course, the large column of text that houses the content and that is an ideal fit for the left-hand region of our basic template. We can quickly flow sample content into that left-hand region using the type specifications we've already established to get a sense of how this works.

Recall that when we established our type specifications, we determined that the widest column our text would run in would be made up of eight units—even though we have ten units here. This preserves the comfortable line measure (number of characters appearing per line) for reading.

<p><a href="#">HOME</a></p> <p><a href="#">ARTICLES</a></p> <p><a href="#">BROWSE</a></p> <p><a href="#">ABOUT</a></p> <p>         Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. In aliquam sapien sed dui faucibus congue. Curabitur ut nisi et nunc semper consectetur non id velit. Duis fringilla quam sed nisi sagittis plebs. Curabitur et nulla lectus. Vivamus auctor, ante ut consequat elementum, leo dui aliquam turpis, at suscipit purus turpis a felis. In bibendum malesuada eleifend. Nullam viverra hendrerit libero eget tristique. Duis lobortis, leo et eleifend imperdiet, nisi sapien sollicitudin sem, ut facilisis erat enim a velit. Nullam malesuada odio id ligula auctor eget suscipit leo bibendum. Maecenas tempor, magna vel tristique aliquam, tellus massa laoreet leo, sit amet adipiscing quam enim non ante. Donec nec lectus mauris, hendrerit sollicitudin diam. Duis ut augue sit amet metus posuere feugiat. Morbi ut elit non augue vestibulum euismod vel sit amet neque. Maecenas sit amet orci eu justo suscipit viverra eget a enim. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Aliquam et orci id felis tristique congue tempus sit amet leo. Sed elit augue, pellentesque id congue nec, consequat feugiat tellus. Nam vel viverra ligula.       </p> <p>         Nunc diam massa, auctor vel lobortis et, porta at sem. Vestibulum libero leo, aliquet in sagittis at, imperdiet vel nibh. Aenean est quam, consequat id blandit sit amet, congue suscipit velit. Etiam massa sapien, tincidunt eu vulputate non, venenatis posuere dolor. Integer dignissim aliquet aliquet. Praesent nec lacinia ligula. Integer sollicitudin lectus at nunc volutpat cursus. Donec malesuada iaculis lectus eget mattis. Aliquam ornare viverra euismod. Nunc volutpat sagittis dignissim.       </p> <p>         Etiam volutpat purus eu nibh congue a luctus ipsum vehicula. Proin nec pharetra diam. Morbi felis neque, porta et fermentum eget, euismod eu justo. Cras leo enim, semper eu ornare quis, feugiat ac urna. Vestibulum non arcu arcu, a egestas augue. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Integer lobortis laoreet volutpat. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Vestibulum risus magna, bibendum vitae tincidunt id, dictum sed eros. Etiam libero lectus, eleifend eget facilisis at, vulputate vel ante. Quisque ac felis mattis orci auctor convallis. Mauris augue nisi, tincidunt at ornare nec, viverra id nunc. Integer fermentum, est at gravida commodo, tortor elit pellentesque ligula, posuere ornare justo arcu eget orci. Etiam tincidunt, magna vitae malesuada fermentum, dui velit aliquam diam, ut iaculis dolor arcu venenatis erat. Praesent feugiat bibendum tellus vel ornare. Praesent lectus libero, consectetur sed pretium gravida, egestas et purus. Cras varius, odio eu posuere suscipit, quam metus iaculis ipsum, at feugiat justo tortor quis elit. Nam ultricies interdum dui.       </p> <p>         Nulla dignissim ante at dui euismod a gravida urna scelerisque. Aliquam accumsan tincidunt fermentum. Aliquam ni erat, elementum sagittis mollis sit amet, aliquet eget dolor. Morbi malesuada risus et est scelerisque congue. Aliquam id elit odio. Quisque quis dolor metus, vitae ultrices nisi. Mauris ante est, varius et gravida tincidunt, suscipit convallis libero. Integer id metus ac ipsum rutrum scelerisque. In ullamcorper, nisi eu aliquam luctus, tortor leo suscipit elit, a consectetur neque urna nec nunc. Phasellus malesuada urna eget sapien vulputate vulputate. Etiam volutpat luctus leo ut sodales. Duis quis odio tempus nibh blandit eleifend eget id libero.       </p>	<p>SEARCH <input type="text"/></p> <p>GO</p> <p>DESIGNERY<sup>US</sup></p> <p>Signed in as <b>Khoi Vinh</b>   You have 7 new messages   Log Out</p> <p>Ad</p> <p>© 2011 by Khoi Vinh   Site Map   Advertise   Contact Us   RSS   Mobile   User agreement and privacy policy</p>	<p>Sample text flowed into left-hand column.</p> <p>DESIGNERY<sup>US</sup></p>
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In this preliminary layout, the eight-unit column is flanked by empty units that create a visual margin. While this is acceptable, content is usually best served by appearing as far left as reasonably possible, so we'll create a bit of a design flourish in the middle of the page: we'll shift the eight-unit column to the left and create a two-unit gutter that will remain relatively empty.

<p><a href="#">HOME</a></p> <p> <a href="#">ARTICLES</a> <a href="#">BROWSE</a> <a href="#">ABOUT</a> </p> <p>           Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. In aliquam sapien sed dui faucibus congue. Curabitur ut nisi et nunc semper consectetur non id velit. Duis fragilla quam sed nisi sagittis placerat. Curabitur et nulla lectus. Vivamus auctor, ante et consequat elementum, leo dui aliquam turpis, at suscipit purus turpis a felis. In bibendum malesuada eleifend. Nullam viverra hendrerit libero eget tristique. Duis lobortis, leo et eleifend imperdiet, nisi sapien sollicitudin sem, ut facilisis erat enim a velit. Nullam malesuada odio id ligula auctor eget suscipit leo bibendum. Maecenas tempor, magna vel tristique aliquam, tellus massa laoreet leo, sit amet adipiscing quam enim non ante. Donec nec lectus mauris, hendrerit sollicitudin diam. Duis ut augue sit amet metus posuere feugiat. Morbi ut elit non augue vestibulum euismod vel sit amet neque. Maecenas sit amet orci eu justo suscipit viverra eget a enim. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Aliquam et orci id felis tristique congue tempus sit amet leo. Sed elit augue, pellentesque id congue nec, consequat feugiat tellus. Nam vel viverra ligula.         </p> <p>           Nunc diam massa, auctor vel lobortis et, porta at sem. Vestibulum libero leo, aliquet in sagittis at, imperdiet vel nibh. Aenean et quam, consequat id blandit sit amet, congue suscipit velit. Etiam massa sapien, tincidunt et vulputate non, venenatis posuere dolor. Integer dignissim aliquet aliquet. Praesent nec lacinia ligula. Integer sollicitudin lectus at nunc volutpat cursus. Donec malesuada iaculis lectus eget mattis. Aliquam ornare viverra euismod. Nunc volutpat sagittis dignissim.         </p> <p>           Etiam volutpat purus eu nibh congue a luctus ipsum vehicula. Proin nec pharetra diam. Morbi felis neque, porta et fermentum eget, euismod eu justo. Cras leo enim, semper eu ornare quis, feugiat ac urna. Vestibulum non arcu arcu, a egestas augue. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Integer lobortis laoreet volutpat. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Vestibulum risus magna, bibendum vitae tincidunt id, dictum sed eros. Etiam libero lectus, eleifend eget facilisis at, vulputate vel ante. Quisque ac felis mattis orci auctor conwallis. Mauris augue nisi, tincidunt at ornare nec, viverra id nunc. Integer fermentum, est at gravida commodo, tortor elit pellentesque ligula, posuere ornare justo arcu eget orci. Etiam tincidunt, magna vitae malesuada fermentum, dui velit aliquam diam, ut iaculis dolor arcu venenatis erat. Praesent feugiat bibendum tellus vel ornare. Praesent lectus libero, consectetur sed perthum gravida, egestas et purus. Cras varius, odio eu posuere suscipit, quam metus iaculis ipsum, at feugiat justo tortor quis elit. Nam ultricies interdum dui.         </p> <p>           Nulla dignissim ante at dui euismod a gravida urna scelerisque. Aliquam accumsan tincidunt fermentum. Aliquam mi erat, elementum sagittis mollis sit amet, aliquet eget dolor. Morbi malesuada risus et sed scelerisque congue. Aliquam id elit odio. Quisque quis dolor metus, vitae ultrices nisi. Mauris ante est, varius et gravida tincidunt, suscipit conwallis libero. Integer id metus ac ipsum rutrum scelerisque. In ullamcorper, nisi eu aliquam luctus, tortor leo suscipit elit, a consectetur neque urna nec nunc. Phasellus malesuada urna eget sapien vulputate vulputate. Etiam volutpat lectus leo ut sodales. Duis quis odio tempus nibh blandit eleifend eget id libero.         </p>	<p>SEARCH <input type="text"/></p> <p>GO</p> <p>DESIGNERY.US</p> <p>Signed in as <b>Khoi Vinh</b>   You have 7 new messages   Log Out</p> <p>Ad</p> <p>DESIGNERY.US</p>
<p>© 2011 by Khoi Vinh   User agreement and privacy policy</p> <p> <a href="#">Site Map</a>   <a href="#">Advertise</a>   <a href="#">Contact Us</a>   <a href="#">RSS</a>   <a href="#">Mobile</a> </p>	<p>DESIGNERY.US</p>

Shifting text to the left by one unit.

This runs counter to the impulse to take advantage of every bit of space possible to deliver information as efficiently as possible. But in fact carving out an area that remains relatively empty can aid the overall page by allowing it to breathe visually. Aesthetically speaking, it's also in keeping with the large amount of negative space that we've created at the top of the page.

Our wireframe also calls for a few other major elements: a navigation mechanism that allows users to jump from article to article, a list of recent articles, a list of recent projects, and an email subscription sign-up form.

It would be impractical to stack all these elements in the right-hand region, as suggested in the wireframe. As elements intended to help users find additional content or services, we don't want users to have to encounter them linearly, which would be the case if a user had to scroll further down the page before seeing them one by one. Instead, we want as many of them to appear as close to the top of the page as is reasonable. To do that, we'll subdivide that right-hand region into columns by simply dividing that six-unit area into two columns of three units each.

This lets us place several of these elements relatively high on the page without any one of them forcing the others too far down the page. Let's start with the lists of articles and projects; they can appear side by side, directly below the ad unit.

<p><a href="#">HOME</a>   <a href="#">ARTICLES</a>   <a href="#">BROWSE</a>   <a href="#">ABOUT</a></p> <p>         Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. In aliquam sapien sed dui faucibus congue. Curabitur ut nisi et nunc semper consectetur non id velit. Duis fragilla quam sed nisi sagittis placerat. Curabitur et nulla lectus. Vivamus auctor, ante ut consequat elementum, leo dui aliquam turpis, at suscipit purus turpis a felis. In bibendum malesuada eleifend. Nullam viverra hendrerit libero eget tristique. Duis lobortis, leo et eleifend imperdiet, nisi sapien sollicitudin sem, ut facilisis erat enim a velit. Nullam malesuada odio id ligula auctor eget suscipit leo bibendum. Maecenas tempor, magna vel tristique aliquam, tellus massa laoreet leo, sit amet adipiscing quam enim non ante. Donec nec lectus mauris, hendrerit sollicitudin diam. Duis ut augue sit amet metus posuere feugiat. Morbi ut elit non augue vestibulum euismod vel sit amet neque. 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Duis quis odio tempus nibh blandit eleifend eget id libero.       </p>	<p>SEARCH <span>GO</span></p> <p><b>DESIGNERY</b>.US</p> <p>Signed in as <b>Khoi Vinh</b>   You have <b>7 new messages</b>  <a href="#">Log Out</a></p> <p><b>Ad</b></p> <p><b>RECENT ARTICLES</b></p> <p><b>Information Architecture of the Absurd</b>        Summary of what this article is about lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur.  <a href="#">Read full article...</a></p> <p><b>Brands in the Age of Twitter</b>        Summary of what this article is about lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur.  <a href="#">Read full article...</a></p> <p><b>Shadows and Reflections: Post-Aqua Software Aesthetics</b>        Summary of what this article is about lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur.  <a href="#">Read full article...</a></p> <p><b>Real-life Tales from Portfolio Day</b>        Summary of what this article is about lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur.  <a href="#">Read full article...</a></p> <p><a href="#">More articles...</a></p> <p><b>RECENT PROJECTS</b></p> <p><b>Metal Machine Musicbox</b>        By D D 5-Oh-Hundred  <a href="#">View project...</a></p> <p><b>30 Logos/30 Days</b>        By Cassie Patel  <a href="#">View project...</a></p> <p><b>School Portraits Remixed</b>        By El Burger  <a href="#">View project...</a></p> <p><a href="#">More projects...</a></p> <p><b>DESIGNERY</b>.US</p>
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The right-hand region is subdivided to place additional elements.

The headings on these elements follow approximately the same style as the navigation that we created earlier: they also use our brand typeface, Univers, and simply add a thin rule above the heading text. The text itself is centered vertically within two baselines, again like the navigation. These headings are fairly minor details, and it makes sense to reuse type specifications from elsewhere in the design; the fewer type styles we have, the more orderly the overall layout appears.

Placing these two lists below the ad is straightforward, but if we then turn to the email subscription form, we realize that if it comes after these two lists of items it would appear too far down the page for many users to notice. Since it doesn't require a great deal of height, we can promote it to a higher position.



<p><a href="#">HOME</a></p>	<p><a href="#">ARTICLES</a></p>	<p><a href="#">BROWSE</a></p>	<p><a href="#">ABOUT</a></p>
<p>           Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. In aliquam sapien sed dui faucibus congue. Curabitur ut nisi et nunc semper consectetur non id velit. Duis fringilla quam sed nisi sagittis placerat. Curabitur et nulla lectus. Vivamus auctor, ante ut consequat elementum, leo dui aliquam turpis, at suscipit purus turpis a felis. In bibendum malesuada eleifend. Nullam viverra hendrerit libero eget tristique. Duis lobortis, leo et eleifend imperdiet, nisi sapien sollicitudin sem, ut facilisis erat enim a velit. Nullam malesuada odio id ligula auctor eget suscipit leo bibendum. Maecenas tempor, magna vel tristique aliquam, tellus massa laoreet leo, sit amet adipiscing quam enim non ante. Donec nec lectus mauris, hendrerit sollicitudin diam. Duis ut augue sit amet metus posuere feugiat. Morbi ut elit non augue vestibulum euismod vel sit amet neque. Maecenas sit amet orci eu justo suscipit viverra eget a enim. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Aliquam et orci id felis tristique congue tempus sit amet leo. Sed elit augue, pellentesque id congue nec, consequat feugiat tellus. Nam vel viverra ligula.         </p> <p>           Nunc diam massa, auctor vel lobortis et, porta at sem. Vestibulum libero leo, aliquet in sagittis at, imperdiet vel nibh. Aenean est quam, consequat id blandit sit amet, congue suscipit velit. Etiam massa sapien, tincidunt ut vulpate non, venenatis posuere dolor. Integer dignissim aliquet aliquet. Praesent nec lacinia ligula. Integer sollicitudin lectus at nunc volutpat cursus. Donec malesuada iaculis lectus eget mattis. Aliquam ornare viverra euismod. Nunc volutpat sagittis dignissim.         </p> <p>           Etiam volutpat purus eu nibh congue a luctus ipsum vehicula. Proin nec pharetra diam. Morbi felis neque, porta et fermentum eget, euismod eu justo. Cras leo enim, semper eu ornare quis, feugiat ac urna. Vestibulum non arcu arcu, a egestas augue. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Integer lobortis laoreet volutpat. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Vestibulum risus magna, bibendum vitae tincidunt id, dictum sed eros. Etiam libero lectus, eleifend eget facilisis at, vulpate vel ante. Quisque ac felis mattis orci auctor conwallis. Mauris augue nisi, tincidunt at ornare nec, viverra id nunc. Integer fermentum, est at gravida commodo, tortor elit pellentesque ligula, posuere ornare justo arcu eget orci. Etiam tincidunt, magna vitae malesuada fermentum, dui velit aliquam diam, ut iaculis dolor arcu venenatis erat. Praesent feugiat bibendum tellus vel ornare. Praesent lectus libero, consectetur sed pretium gravida, egestas et purus. Cras varius, odio eu posuere suscipit, quam metus iaculis ipsum, at feugiat justo tortor quis elit. Nam ultricies interdum dui.         </p> <p>           Nulla dignissim ante at dui euismod a gravida urna scelerisque. Aliquam accumsan tincidunt fermentum. Aliquam mi erat, elementum sagittis mollis sit amet, aliquet eget dolor. Morbi malesuada risus est sed scelerisque congue. Aliquam id elit odio. Quisque quis dolor metus, vitae ultrices nisi. Mauris ante est, varius et gravida tincidunt, suscipit conwallis libero. Integer id metus ac ipsum rutrum scelerisque. In ullamcorper, nisi eu aliquam luctus, tortor leo suscipit elit, a consectetur neque urna nec nunc. Phasellus malesuada urna eget sapien vulpate vulpate. Etiam volutpat lectus leo ut sodales. Duis quis odio tempus nibh blandit eleifend eget id libero.         </p>			
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SEARCH GO

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Placing the email subscription form near the top of the page.

This leaves the article-to-article navigation. This too can take advantage of the two columns we've created in the right region, with a box in the left column serving as a link to the previous article and a box in the right region serving as a link to the next article. This navigation requires more prominence than the other items we've placed in this region, though. Navigation is generally more critical than promotional content. If designed properly, it appears and performs consistently and in congruence with user expectations, and so becomes critical to the utility of the site. For those reasons we'll place these navigation links above the ad unit, in a spot where users can always find them.

<a href="#">HOME</a>	<a href="#">ARTICLES</a>	<a href="#">BROWSE</a>	<a href="#">ABOUT</a>
<p> <a href="#">Signed in as Khoi Vinh</a>   You have 7 new messages   <a href="#">Log Out</a> </p>			
<p> <a href="#">Previous Article</a>   <a href="#">Next Article</a>  <a href="#">Lorem Ipsum Dolor Sit Amert</a>   <a href="#">Lorem Ipsum Dolor Sit Amert</a> </p>			
<div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 50px;"> <h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">Ad</h1> </div>			
<p><b>GET UPDATES VIA EMAIL</b></p> <p>Your email@address</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">SUBSCRIBE</a></p>			
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="101 654 537 1039" style="width: 48%;"> <p><b>RECENT ARTICLES</b></p> <p><b>Information Architecture of the Absurd</b>            Summary of what this article is about lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur. <a href="#">Read full article...</a></p> <p><b>Brands in the Age of Twitter</b>            Summary of what this article is about lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur. <a href="#">Read full article...</a></p> <p><b>Shadows and Reflections: Post-Aqua Software Aesthetics</b>            Summary of what this article is about lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur. <a href="#">Read full article...</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">More articles...</a></p> </div> <div data-bbox="537 654 794 1039" style="width: 48%;"> <p><b>RECENT PROJECTS</b></p> <p><b>Metal Machine Musicbox</b>            By D D Oh-Hundred  <a href="#">View project...</a></p> <p><b>30 Logos/30 Days</b>            By Cassie Patel  <a href="#">View project...</a></p> <p><b>School Portraits Remixed</b>            By El Burger  <a href="#">View project...</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">More projects...</a></p> </div> </div>			
<p>© 2011 by Khoi Vinh   <a href="#">Site Map</a>   <a href="#">Advertise</a>   <a href="#">Contact Us</a>   <a href="#">RSS</a>   <a href="#">Mobile</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <span style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">DESIGNERY</span><sup>US</sup> </p>			

The article-to-article navigation requires more prominence, so it's placed above the ad.

Most of our elements are now in place on the page, and we can turn our attention to some of the smaller details. Actually, the next detail is smaller but still significant: the headline and byline area of the article.

In our design of the basic template, we've already established the type specifications for our **H2** headings, but here we need to determine specifications for the headline as an **H1** style. Aside from the logo, this will be the most prominent type on the page. (In fact, for many users, especially those entering the site through an article, the headline may need to be even more prominent than the logo.)

Our 18-pixel baseline grid can help us determine a size relatively quickly if we use a multiple of 18 to determine the line-height. Three baselines, or 54 pixels, is too large, so we'll use two baselines, or 36 pixels. With a line-height of 36 pixels, we'll want the text to be slightly smaller, and using a sans-serif font like Arial or Helvetica, we can set the size at 34 point to achieve a nice balance between size and line-spacing.

We'll set the byline, date, and summary of the article at 12 point on the baseline grid, again in a sans-serif font. Note that by using sans-serif typography for this kind of meta-information as well as for many of the elements we've already placed on the page, we're establishing a convention where serif fonts are reserved for the longer blocks of text that make up the content itself.

We can use the same typographic approach for the print, email, and share links that need to appear near the top of the article. These three items should be placed somewhere easily findable but inconspicuous, and here we can use the negative space we've created at the right of the body text for that purpose. We'll place the links to the right of the byline and the summary, within that negative space. The links are relatively small, so they'll remain unobtrusive in size. But their placement in this column—surrounded by so much space above and below—will make them noticeable when the user scans the page for them.

<p><a href="#">HOME</a>   <a href="#">ARTICLES</a>   <a href="#">BROWSE</a>   <a href="#">ABOUT</a></p> <p>Monday, January 3, 2011</p> <h1>Lorem Ipsum Dolor Sit Amet</h1> <p>By <a href="#">John Foster-Smith</a>, Editor</p> <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisi imperdiet orci, in mollis tortor nulla eu tortor. Pellentesque ultrices vulputate libero in ultrices.</p> <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. In aliquam sapien sed dui faucibus congue. Curabitur ut nisi et nunc semper consectetur non id velit. Duis fragilla quam sed nisi sagittis placerat. Curabitur et nulla lectus. Vivamus auctor, ante ut consequat elementum, leo dui aliquam turpis, at suscipit purus turpis a felis. In bibendum malesuada eleifend. Nullam viverra hendrerit libero eget tristique. Duis lobortis, leo et eleifend imperdiet, nisi sapien sollicitudin sem, ut facilisis erat enim a velit. 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Duis quis odio tempus nibh blandit eleifend eget id libero.</p> <p>© 2011 by Khoi Vinh   <a href="#">Site Map</a>   <a href="#">Advertise</a>   <a href="#">Contact Us</a>   <a href="#">RSS</a>   <a href="#">Mobile</a></p> <p><a href="#">User agreement and privacy policy</a></p>	<p>SEARCH <span>GO</span></p> <p><b>DESIGNERY</b>.US</p> <p> Signed in as <b>Khoi Vinh</b>   You have <b>7 new messages</b>   <a href="#">Log Out</a></p> <p>Previous Article: <a href="#">Lorem Ipsum Dolor Sit Amert</a>   Next Article: <a href="#">Lorem ipsum Dolor Sit Amert</a></p> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 20px; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">Ad</div> <p><b>GET UPDATES VIA EMAIL</b></p> <p>Your email@address <input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="button" value="SUBSCRIBE"/></p> <p><b>RECENT ARTICLES</b></p> <p><b>Information Architecture of the Absurd</b> Summary of what this article is about Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur. <a href="#">Read full article...</a></p> <p><b>Brands in the Age of Twitter</b> Summary of what this article is about Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur. <a href="#">Read full article...</a></p> <p><b>Shadows and Reflections: Post-Aqua Software Aesthetics</b> Summary of what this article is about Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur. <a href="#">Read full article...</a></p> <p><a href="#">More articles...</a></p> <p><b>RECENT PROJECTS</b></p> <p><b>Metal Machine Musicbox</b> By <a href="#">D D 5-On-Hundred</a> <a href="#">View project...</a></p> <p><b>39 Logos/39 Days</b> By <a href="#">Cassie Patel</a> <a href="#">View project...</a></p> <p><b>School Portraits Remixed</b> By <a href="#">El Burger</a> <a href="#">View project...</a></p> <p><a href="#">More projects...</a></p> <p><b>DESIGNERY</b>.US</p>
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Adding type styles for the title, byline, and summary elements at the top of the article.

Our wireframe specifies that the body of the article will usually contain illustrations and a caption, and there are additional elements that we need to account for: block quotes and lists that might appear in the text.

Images are easy enough to place in the flow of the text column. We'll also create a caption style that will follow our concept of metatext appearing in a sans-serif font. To keep it distinct from the main text, we'll make it 1 point smaller and set it in a lighter shade of gray. This caption appears directly beneath the image, and we'll skip a baseline before resuming the article.


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Monday, January 3, 2011

# Lorem Ipsum Dolor Sit Amet

By John Foster-Smith, Editor

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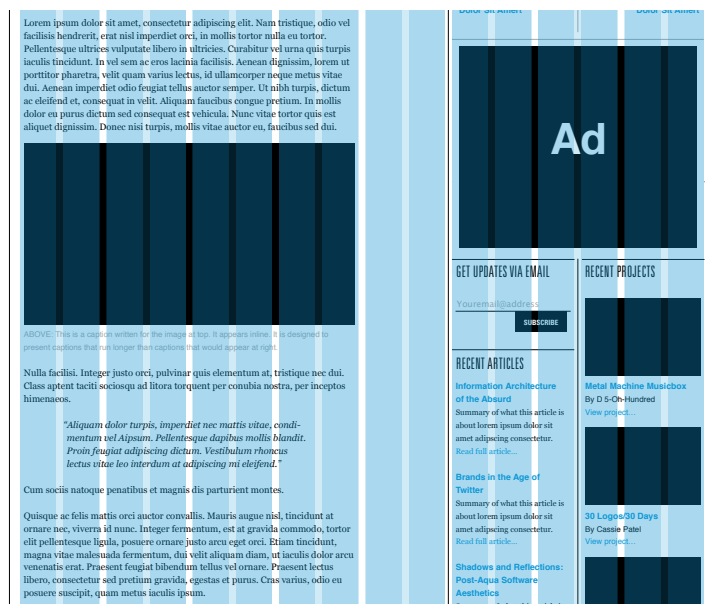
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Adding images and a caption style to the body of the article.

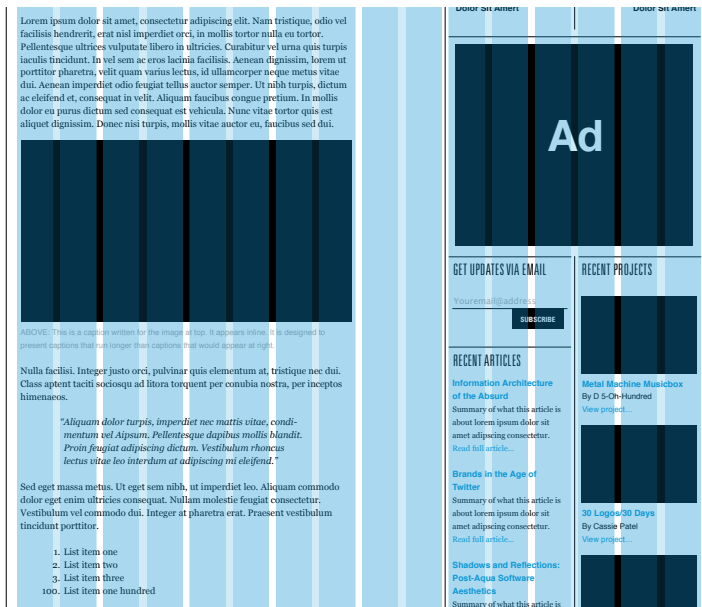
Block quotes also need to be distinguished from the main text, but in a different way; rather than functioning as a kind of metainformation, block quotes are integral to the narrative within the text. We'll do this by using an italic version of the serif font in the body and indenting the entire block quote paragraph by one unit.

Adding a blockquote style to the body.





We'll use a similar indentation for a list style within the text. The items themselves will be indented by one unit, but the bullets for the lists—whether numeric (in the case of ordered lists) or dingbats (in the case of unordered lists)—are right-aligned with the left edge of that second unit. If an ordered list were to get lengthy and three-digit list item numbers were needed, the numbers would grow to the *left*, rather than to the right, thereby protecting the integrity of the entire list's indentation along the columnar grid.



Adding a list style to the body.

Finally, we'll add a set of tools that allow the user to take action on the article—print, email, and share—to the header area of the page. This is a fairly minor element, but it's important that it occurs in a subtle but prominent location as many users will look for it. We can take advantage of the empty column that we created to the right of the text and to the left of the advertising unit for this purpose; by placing the article tools near the top of this column, they can visually activate that vertical space while calling attention to themselves.

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Monday, January 3, 2011

# Lorem Ipsum Dolor Sit Amet

By John Foster-Smith, Editor

Print | Email | Share

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- List item one
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- List item three

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The completed article design.

## PROJECT 2: CATEGORY PAGE

As we push forward and design further templates, we'll continue to borrow patterns for the placement, arrangement, and configuration of page elements from the article template. That's how we maintain consistency within a design system. At the same time, we'll be inventing new patterns and potentially revising some of the old ones—different templates will call for different elements, and so we'll remain flexible about the execution of our ideas.

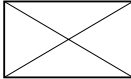
Take our next template, the category page, as an example. This page offers a menu of projects and people to choose from within the hypothetical social network of Designery.us; it presents a series of thumbnails of people and projects that invite the user to sample the breadth and depth of the site. In our wireframes, the category page shows two major regions in a two-thirds/one-third layout. At first glance, this seems a natural fit for the basic arrangement we created for the article page.

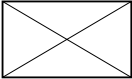
The wireframe for our category page.

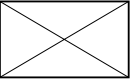
Designery.us Home Articles Browse Profile  
Welcome back, Khoi  
7 Messages | LOG-OUT

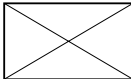
## People & Projects

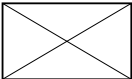
### Popular Projects

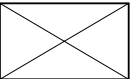
  
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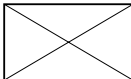
  
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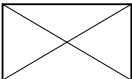
  
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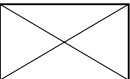
  
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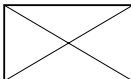
  
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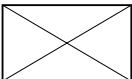
  
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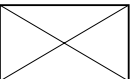
  
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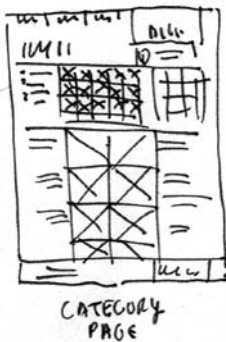
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<a href="#">Apr 2010</a>	<a href="#">May 2010</a>	<a href="#">Jun 2010</a>
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*Our thumbnail sketch of the layout for this page.*

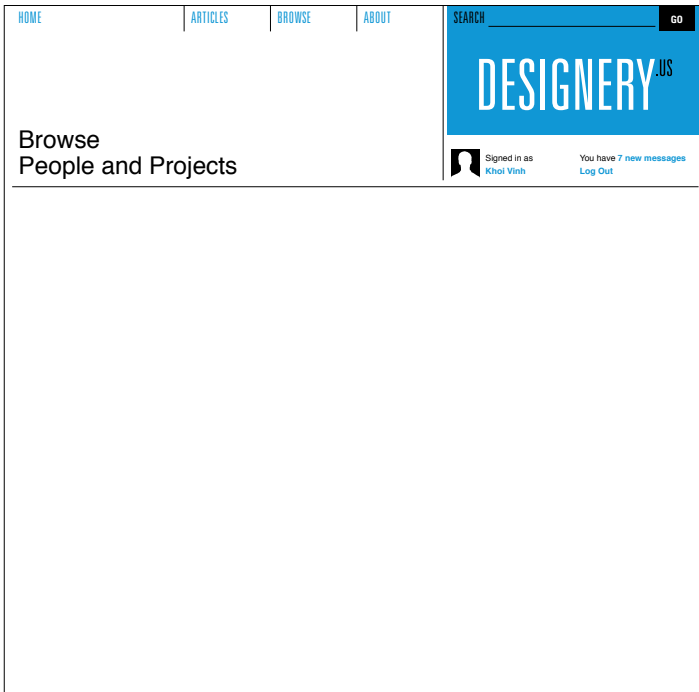
If we were to simply echo that article page, we'd be creating a consistent experience, which is a good thing. However, we'd also be missing an opportunity to create a better design. The goals that a user has in mind when he encounters this page are different from those he has in mind when he encounters an article. In the latter case, he is principally concerned with reading an article, immersing himself in one train of thought, and only secondarily concerned about straying further afield to see what else Designery.us has to offer. In the case of the category page, the user is primarily looking to explore what the site has to offer and who else is engaged with its content and features; he doesn't want to focus on one idea, he wants to survey all the ideas—or the most interesting ideas—available on the site.

To that end, it would actually be a disservice to simply reuse our layout from the article page. Instead, we want to create a new kind of layout that addresses the specific needs of this particular template while remaining consistent with the overall design that we began to create with that template. That mission is made significantly easier by building our new Category template design on the same sturdy grid foundation we've already established.

Instead of a two-thirds/one-third layout, we can imagine a more symmetrical layout where the projects are arranged in two columns down the middle of the page and flanked with their descriptive text. We can even extend that symmetrical approach to the other items on the page: the elements in the right-hand region on our wireframe can be arranged in three symmetrical columns as well. A rough thumbnail sketch can help us work out these notions:

Although we're using three columns to organize the text, the division between columns is less pronounced than the division between the two-thirds region and the one-third region from our article page. In a sense, we want all of the columns to act together as a single region, even if they'll be segregated from one another.

To do this, we'll simply extend the dividing rule that runs under the log-in section across the entire expanse of the page. This interrupts the downward visual thrust of the branding area and helps demarcate a "top of the page." This is where the title of the page will go. And the area that falls under this line is now more of a blank slate, undisturbed by the asymmetrical branding above it.












*By extending the rule beneath the account elements, we create a different region dynamic on the page.*

Our sketch suggests that the thumbnails for our projects should occupy a fairly wide middle region, two columns side-by-side. We can consolidate eight units from our 16-unit grid to form that region, and flank it with four units on each side.

In effect, this is the general dynamic of the page: a strong central region offset by the branding in the top right. As we add the other elements to the page, we want to keep this in mind and avoid disrupting that dynamic.



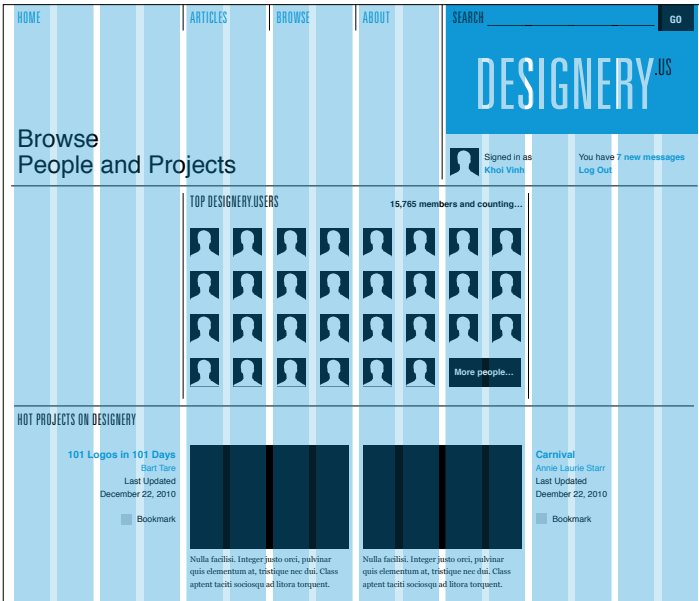
<p>HOME</p> <p>Browse People and Projects</p>	<p>ARTICLES</p>	<p>BROWSE</p>	<p>ABOUT</p>	<p>SEARCH <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="GO"/></p> <p><b>DESIGNERY</b>.US</p> <p>Signed in as <b>Khoi Vinh</b>   You have <b>7</b> new messages  <input type="button" value="Log Out"/></p>
<p> </p>				
<p><b>HOT PROJECTS ON DESIGNERY</b></p>				
<p><b>101 Logos in 101 Days</b>        Start Tava        Last Updated        December 22, 2010</p> <p><input type="button" value="Bookmark"/></p>	 <p>Nulla facilis. Integer justo orci, pulvinar quis elementum at, tristique nec dui. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent.</p>	 <p><b>Carnival</b>        Anne Louise Starr        Last Updated        December 22, 2010</p> <p><input type="button" value="Bookmark"/></p>	 <p>Nulla facilis. Integer justo orci, pulvinar quis elementum at, tristique nec dui. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent.</p>	
<p><b>Movie Posters Remixed</b>        Ruby Flagler        Last Updated        December 22, 2010</p> <p><input type="button" value="Bookmark"/></p>	 <p>Nulla facilis. Integer justo orci, pulvinar quis elementum at, tristique nec dui. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent.</p>	 <p><b>Color by Algorithms</b>        Joe Gillis        Last Updated        December 21, 2010</p> <p><input type="button" value="Bookmark"/></p>	 <p>Nulla facilis. Integer justo orci, pulvinar quis elementum at, tristique nec dui. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent.</p>	
<p><b>Everything in Blackletter</b>        Norval Jones        Last Updated        December 18, 2010</p> <p><input type="button" value="Bookmark"/></p>	 <p>Nulla facilis. Integer justo orci, pulvinar quis elementum at, tristique nec dui. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent.</p>	 <p><b>Lokocracy Branding</b>        Woodrow Truesdell        Last Updated        December 12, 2010</p> <p><input type="button" value="Bookmark"/></p>	 <p>Nulla facilis. Integer justo orci, pulvinar quis elementum at, tristique nec dui. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent.</p>	
<p>© 2011 by Khoi Vinh        User agreement and privacy policy.</p>	<p><a href="#">Site Map</a>   <a href="#">Advertise</a>   <a href="#">Contact Us</a>   <a href="#">RSS</a>   <a href="#">Mobile</a></p>			<p><b>DESIGNERY</b>.US</p>

Placing project thumbnails down the middle of the page.

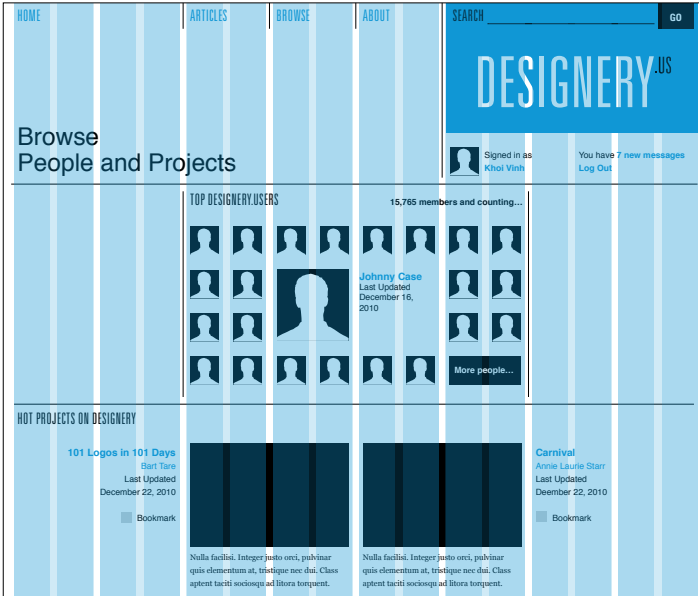
The collection of avatar icons of Designery.us users, for instance, can be placed right above the project thumbnails. We can tie their size directly into our grid by making them exactly one unit in size: 50 x 50 pixels. This allows us to place plenty of thumbnails in this section—eight across and four down. And since this is just a sampling of the thousands of users on Designery.us, we can create a link to find more people in the bottom right corner by combining slots for two thumbnails into one.

One problem now presents itself. Identifying users by avatar icons alone can be difficult. Though it's not uncommon on the Web to display lists of users in this icon-only fashion, it's preferable to create a mechanism for revealing the names attached to each icon. Normally that can be done by simply rolling over the icon to reveal the name as text label, but here we can be more creative.

By carving out a display area within the grid of icons, we can let users enlarge the thumbnails in place. Clicking on one of the surrounding icons would enlarge it in this display area and reveal that user's name and additional information.



A gallery of user avatar icons placed directly above the projects.

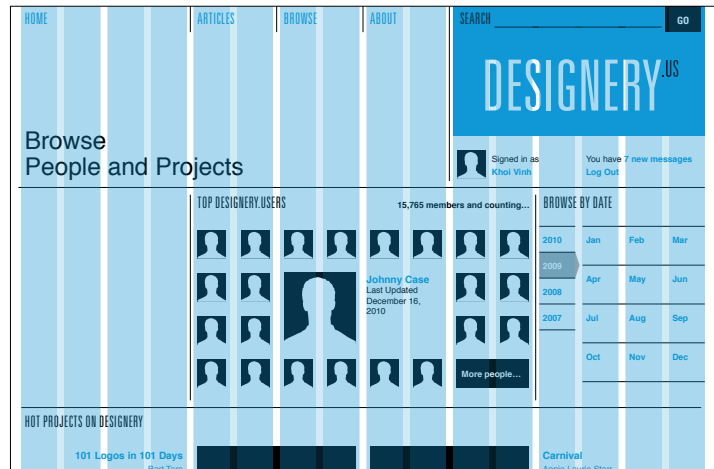


We can use the grid to design a mechanism for revealing the names attached to each avatar icon.

Note that the enlarged avatar is 110 x 110 pixels in size. This allows it to conform to the grid and remain proportional to the smaller avatar icons. This is one of the more pleasing side effects of using a well-developed grid: at times, the design seems to guide itself, without requiring arbitrary design decisions.

We can apply a similar solution to the date archives. The wireframe calls for a sort of miniature, year-by-year browser; the user clicks on a year and a list of months within that year appears in place. To the right of the user avatars, we have four units that we can use for this. Rather than arrange the years horizontally, as suggested in the wireframe, we can arrange them vertically, creating a list of years that can function as navigation. When the user clicks on a year, the months appear to the right of it within the remaining three units. In practice, because every year has the same months, the right-hand side won't change much, but the overall browsing interface should still be intuitive for nearly everyone.

*Adding the date browser in the top-right corner.*



HOME
ARTICLES
BROWSE
ABOUT

SEARCH

GO

## Browse People and Projects

Signed in as **Khoi Vinh**  
[Log Out](#)

You have **7 new messages**  
[Log Out](#)

EXPLORE ...

- Most Popular
- Most Recently Updated
- Most Discussed
- Most Blogged
- Most Commented
- Random & Interesting
- 1 Year Ago on Designery

TOP DESIGNERY USERS 15,765 members and counting...

**Johnny Case**  
 Last Updated December 16, 2010

[More people...](#)

BROWSE BY DATE

2010	Jan	Feb	Mar
2009	Apr	May	Jun
2008	Jul	Aug	Sep
2007	Oct	Nov	Dec

HOT PROJECTS ON DESIGNERY

**101 Logos in 101 Days**  
 Start Time  
 Last Updated December 22, 2010

Bookmark

Nulla facilis. Integer justo orci, pulvinar quis elementum at, tristique nec dui. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent.

**Carnival**  
 Anne Laurie Starr  
 Last Updated December 22, 2010

Bookmark

Nulla facilis. Integer justo orci, pulvinar quis elementum at, tristique nec dui. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent.

**Movie Posters Remixed**  
 Ruby Flagler  
 Last Updated December 22, 2010

Bookmark

Nulla facilis. Integer justo orci, pulvinar quis elementum at, tristique nec dui. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent.

**Color by Algorithms**  
 Joe Gillis  
 Last Updated December 21, 2010

Bookmark

Nulla facilis. Integer justo orci, pulvinar quis elementum at, tristique nec dui. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent.

**Everything in Blackletter**  
 Norval Jones  
 Last Updated December 18, 2010

Bookmark

Nulla facilis. Integer justo orci, pulvinar quis elementum at, tristique nec dui. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent.

**Lokocracy Branding**  
 Woodrow Truesmith  
 Last Updated December 12, 2010

Bookmark

Nulla facilis. Integer justo orci, pulvinar quis elementum at, tristique nec dui. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent.

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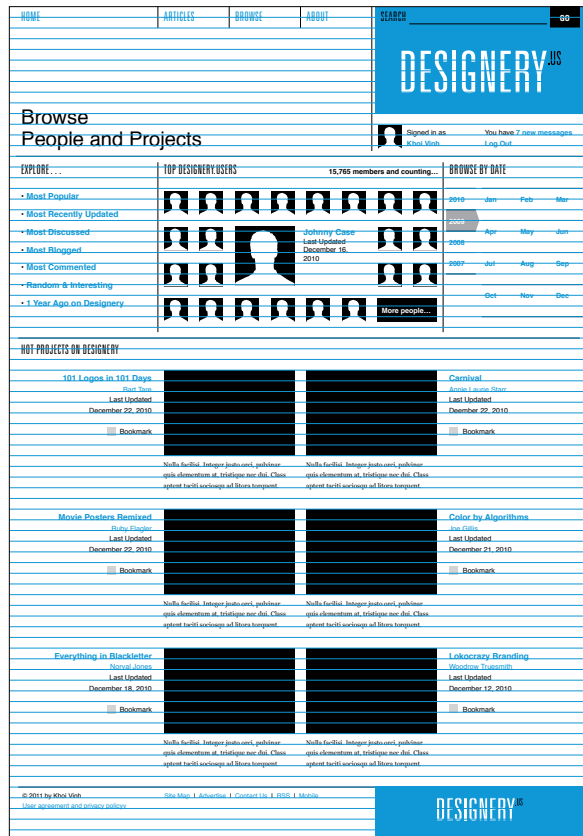
[Site Map](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [RSS](#) | [Mobile](#)

The final category page design.

Finally, we can place the list of Explore links to the left of the avatar icons. This is very straightforward, literally just a list of links. Oftentimes simplest is best.

Throughout the process of assembling this design, there's been no mention of the baseline grid, but in fact, if we take a look at the placement of the elements we can see that they are in alignment with the baselines.

*A look at the category page design with the baseline grid.*



In many ways, the placement of elements on the baseline grid on this page is determined by the subheads (Explore, Top Designery.users, Browse by Date and Hot Projects on Designery). As established on the article template, the rules that appear above each subhead are aligned to a baseline, the subhead text itself is aligned vertically between two baselines, and one additional baseline is skipped before content beneath the baseline appears.

Stepping back from the completed design we can see that the general dynamic of the page is quite pleasing. There is a strong symmetry to the page as seen in the project thumbnails with their flanking pieces of textual information, but there is a lot of asymmetry at work too: the off-center large avatar, the text list on the left that is not quite counterbalanced by the date browser to the right, and the logo at the top right. The page successfully echoes the article template in terms of maintaining a clear aesthetic link (and maintaining the branding and typographic styles), while also addressing the distinct challenges of this category page.

Finally, we'll add a set of tools that allow the user to take action on the article—print, email, and share—to the header area of the page. This is a fairly minor element, but it's important that it occurs in a subtle but prominent location as many users will look for it. We can take advantage of the empty column that we created to the right of the text and to the left of the advertising unit for this purpose; by placing the article tools near the top of this column, they can visually activate that vertical space while calling attention to themselves.

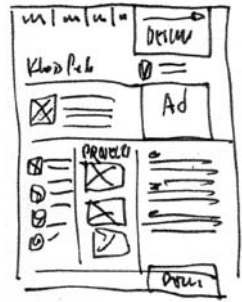
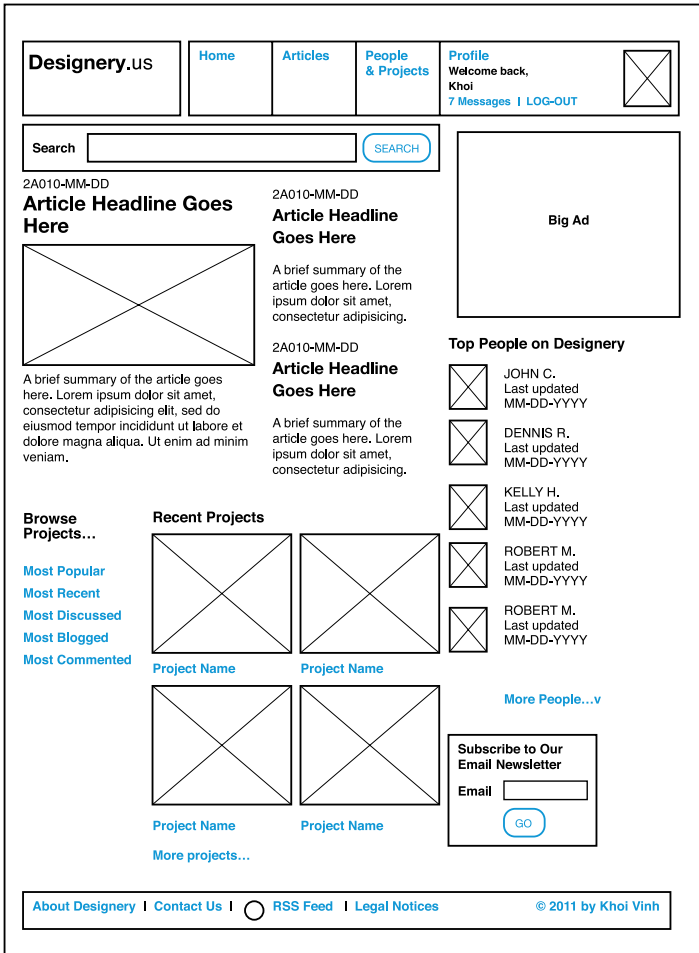
## PROJECT 3: PROFILE PAGE

Up next is the user profile page for Designery.us. Our wireframe suggests that in many ways it's similar to the category page—it provides a high-level view of many different kinds of content, rather than a presentation of just one particular piece of content.

At the same time, it obviously offers a more narrow focus than the category page in that it presents the biography and network activity of a single user. Where the category page design was meant to be expansive in its survey of activity across the site, the layout for this profile page should be more intimate.

A quick thumbnail sketch emphasizes the user's personal information at the top of the page as the principal element in the design, occupying a region of its own. Additional information, like the user's friends, projects, and activity, follows underneath, much like extensions of the personal information at the top.

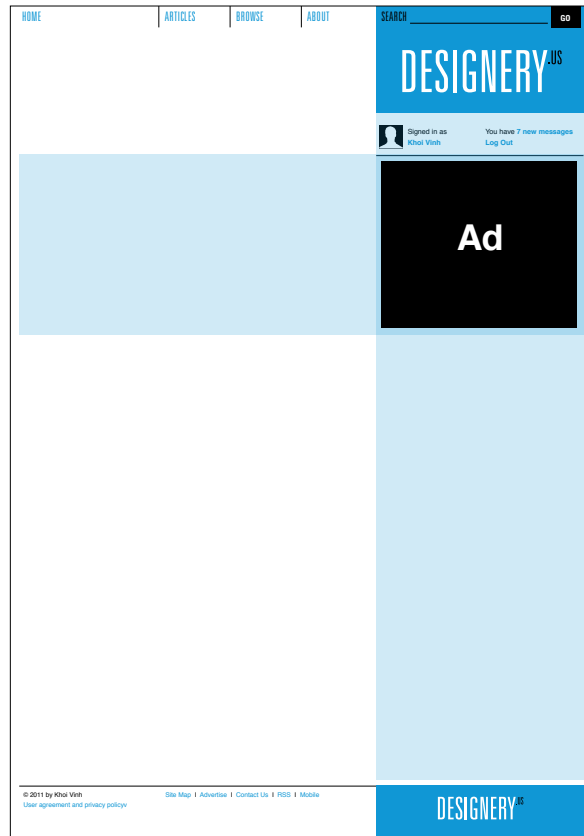




At left, the wireframe for the profile page and above, the thumbnail sketch for its design.

This layout suggests a hybrid of the two-thirds/one-third layout from the article page and the symmetrical layout from the category page. It still allows our big ad to form a region of its own at the far right, but it borrows from the layout of the category page by carving out an area at the top that is horizontally congruent with the same ad. In fact, you can look at the basic architecture of this layout as an extension of the dimensions of the ad unit:

*The basic architecture of the page is an extension of the dimensions of the ad unit.*

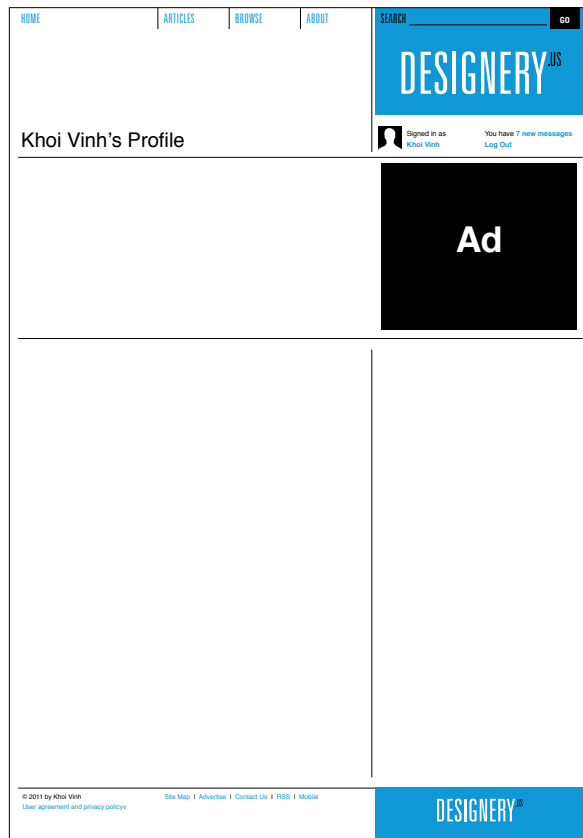


With this basic arrangement in place, we can begin to work the content into the regions. The personal information at the top is the obvious place to start, because it needs to command the most attention on the page. Other users who arrive at this page must recognize immediately that it is devoted to one particular user, and that user's name and image must be prominent. At the same time, it must also provide the user's biographic details in a quick, easy to read form. The goal of the page is to allow others to quickly get a sense of who this person is.

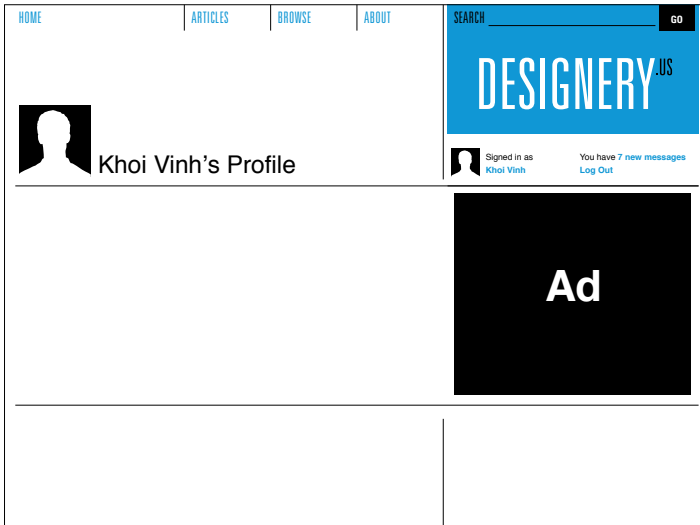
Again, we'll borrow from the convention we established on the category page by extending the dividing rule that runs under the log-in section across the expanse of the page. As with the category page design, this allows us to carve out a fairly spacious region at the top of the page for the title. Unlike the category page design, we're not really using this line to interrupt the downward visual thrust of the branding area.

In fact, we're depending on that downward visual thrust to help define the right-most column. Here that line defines the top portion of a new region that extends the dimension of the ad unit. (Also recall there was no ad unit on the category page.) We can complete the thought by extending a dividing rule just below the big ad, again across the entire page.

*Adding divider rules to define the page.*



How we use this space is now the question. We could place the avatar icon for the user next to the title of the page for maximum impact, as shown.

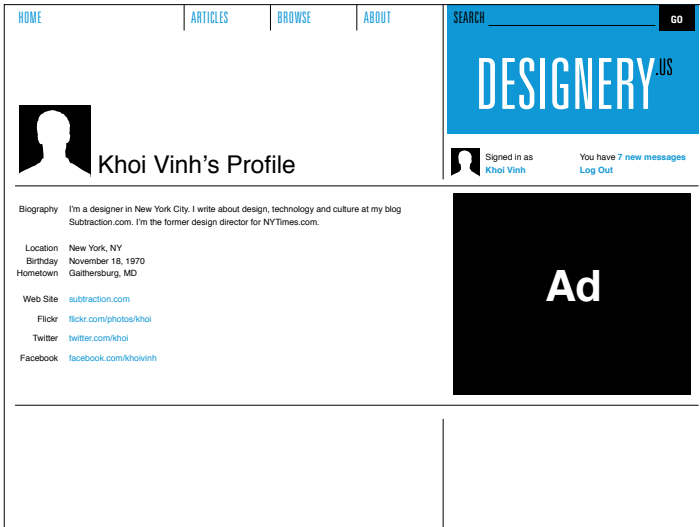


*One possible placement for the user's avatar icon.*

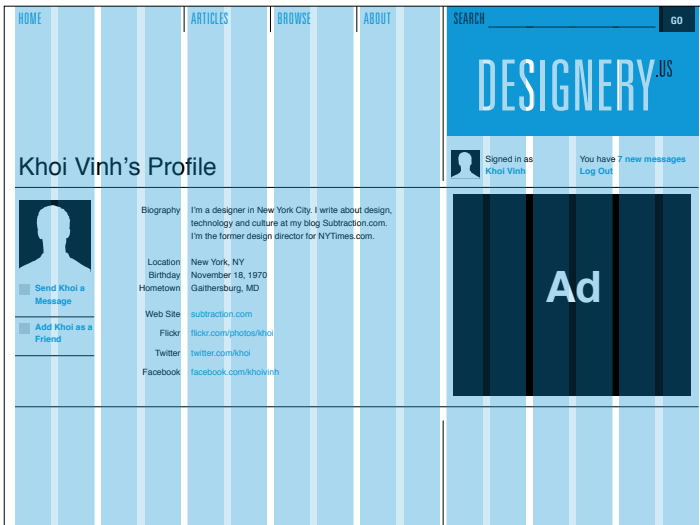
However, that presents two problems. First, it bumps the user's name a few units to the right. That creates a slight hurdle for viewers scanning for this user's name. Much like the headline on our article page design—and any **H1** text that functions as the most critical piece of information on the page—it's helpful to keep the name as far left as possible for easy legibility.

Our second problem is that if we place the image outside the region we've created just below the title, we have scant few elements to put in that region. Recall that shorter lines are easier to read, especially with information that is meant to be consumed quickly, such as the biographical information we're designing now. Without the avatar icon in that area, the text would need to run in longer line measures (characters per line). Some of the bits of information are quite short, as well, leaving significant negative space. While the look and feel we've established thus far has generally not shied away from using negative space, our strategy is not simply to create as much of it as we can, but rather to use it purposefully and judiciously. By contrast, this kind of negative space feels unintentional and disorderly.

All of this argues for placing the icon below the title. Doing so takes up two units of width and effectively creates a narrower column for the biographical information. In fact, we can further narrow that column by creating another sub-column in which we can place the label for each bit of biographical data. That consumes two additional units of width, and leaves us with six units within which we can run the actual information.



*With the avatar icon at the top, the information below feels disorderly.*



*A different placement for the avatar information makes more sense.*

As you can see, this presentation makes much more sense. The avatar icon is close to the profile name at the top of the page, but it also breaks up the space within the region below. The labels hang to the left of the actual information, which makes the data more easily scannable. And the biographical information resides in a narrower, more comfortable-to-read column.

As a finishing touch for this region, we'll also add links for the Send message and Add as a Friend functionality just below the avatar. Again, this adjacency works well; it comes just below the elements that allow another user to identify who this user is—a perfect spot to place links that enable another user to take action on that information.

Below the biographical information, we're confronted with our familiar two-thirds/one-third division of the page. As it happens, we also have three different kinds of content to place here: the user's friends, projects, and activity. Having three kinds of content suggests that we also divide this region into three, echoing the symmetry we created on the category page.

However, the far-right column has already been defined to some extent by the ad above it. Though not impossible, it would be uncomfortable to reduce its width to precisely echo the three-column construction from the category page. (Recall that we created this by setting up two columns of four units each flanking a single column of eight units.)




HOME | ARTICLES | BROWSE | ABOUT

SEARCH  GO

# DESIGNERY.US

---

## Khoi Vinh's Profile



Send Khoi a Message

Add Khoi as a Friend

**Biography** I'm a designer in New York City. I write about design, technology and culture at my blog Subtraction.com. I'm the former design director for NYTimes.com.

**Location** New York, NY

**Birthday** November 18, 1970

**Hometown** Gaithersburg, MD

**Web Site** [subtraction.com](#)

**Flickr** [flickr.com/photos/khoi](#)

**Twitter** [twitter.com/khoi](#)

**Facebook** [facebook.com/khoivinh](#)

Signed in as **Khoi Vinh**

You have **7 new messages**

[Log Out](#)


Ad

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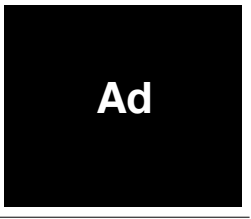



*Lower on the page, we might divide the page into three equal regions, echoing the symmetry from the category page.*

Here we can remain consistent without being rote. We can still create three columns in the lower portion of the page, but they can be responsive to the specific requirements of this particular design problem rather than a replication of another design problem.

To do this we'll maintain the far-right column's six-unit width. That leaves us with ten units to the left. From these, we'll combine four units to create a left-hand column and six units to create a middle column. The resulting structure is shown on the opposite page.

Though not perfectly symmetrical, we can use the power of the content itself to help this arrangement echo the layout of the category page. We have three kinds of content here but the one with the most visual impact is the details of this user's projects, which are represented by thumbnail pictures. If we place these in the middle column, we can create a semblance of symmetry down what is visually (if not mathematically) the center of the page.

<a href="#">HOME</a>	<a href="#">ARTICLES</a>	<a href="#">BROWSE</a>	<a href="#">ABOUT</a>	SEARCH <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="GO"/>	
<h2>Khoi Vinh's Profile</h2>				Signed in as <b>Khoi Vinh</b>   You have <b>7 new messages</b> <a href="#">Log Out</a>	
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="button" value="Send Khoi a Message"/></li> <li><input type="button" value="Add Khoi as a Friend"/></li> </ul>	<p><b>Biography</b> I'm a designer in New York City. I write about design, technology and culture at my blog Subtraction.com. I'm the former design director for NYTimes.com.</p> <p><b>Location</b> New York, NY</p> <p><b>Birthday</b> November 18, 1970</p> <p><b>Hometown</b> Gaithersburg, MD</p> <p><b>Web Site</b> <a href="#">subtraction.com</a></p> <p><b>Flickr</b> <a href="#">flickr.com/photos/khoi</a></p> <p><b>Twitter</b> <a href="#">twitter.com/khoi</a></p> <p><b>Facebook</b> <a href="#">facebook.com/khoivinh</a></p>				
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="97 1039 281 1101"> <p>© 2011 by Khoi Vinh  <a href="#">User agreement</a> and <a href="#">privacy policy</a></p> </div> <div data-bbox="281 1039 545 1101"> <p><a href="#">Site Map</a>   <a href="#">Advertise</a>   <a href="#">Contact Us</a>   <a href="#">RSS</a>   <a href="#">Mobile</a></p> </div> </div>					

*A less symmetrical layout is more responsive to the specific requirements of this page.*

To do this we have to consider the space we're working with. We don't have room to make these thumbnails as large as similar thumbnails on the category page. However, we can reuse the dimension of the thumbnails from a similar display of projects we created on the article page design. From that page, the thumbnails were three units wide, or 170 pixels, each. Using that specification, we have the room within this six-unit, 350-pixel-wide column to fit two smaller stacks of these thumbnails side by side. The result is a presentation that's reminiscent of the category page, but more appropriate for the elements at hand.

HOME
ARTICLES
BROWSE
ABOUT

## Khoi Vinh's Profile

**Biography** I'm a designer in New York City. I write about design, technology and culture at my blog Subtraction.com. I'm the former design director for NYTimes.com.

**Location** New York, NY

**Birthday** November 18, 1970

**Hometown** Gaithersburg, MD

**Web Site** [subtraction.com](#)

**Flickr** [flickr.com/photos/khoi](#)

**Twitter** [twitter.com/khoi](#)

**Facebook** [facebook.com/khoivinh](#)

[Send Khoi a Message](#)

[Add Khoi as a Friend](#)

Signed in as **Khoi Vinh**

You have **7 new messages**
[Log Out](#)

**SEARCH**

**GO**

# DESIGNERY

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Ad

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[Subtraction.com](#)

**Redesign Sketches**

Khoi Vinh

Last Updated Dec 18, 2010

[A Brief Message](#)

Khoi Vinh

Last Updated Nov 8, 2010

[Fear of a Cooper Black Planet](#)

Khoi Vinh

Last Updated Oct 2, 2010

[A Whole Mess of Unfinished Ideas and Fitful Starts](#)

Khoi Vinh

Last Updated Oct 2, 2010

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Khoi Vinh

Last Updated Sep 5, 2010

[Idle Sketchbook Time](#)

Khoi Vinh

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*A slightly different presentation of project thumbnails.*

















In a slightly different vein, we'll need to reinvent the display of the user's friends, which in theory should be similar to the Top Designery users area of the category page. Recall that on that page we created a grid display of avatar icons that reveal information about the users they represent only when a user clicks.

We could recreate that presentation here, but it would be problematic. For one, we have a narrower width that is not height-limited in the way that the category page was. On that page, the grid of thumbnails had a fixed number of rows; because the network is composed of innumerable users, we only had to create a display that gave a sampling of some of those users. Here on the profile page, we're obligated to create something a bit more definitive, and that will list each avatar's true name more explicitly. So rather than trying to adapt the display from the category page, we'll create a new, more straightforward presentation here with the avatars left-aligned and users' names next to them. This also heads off another problem: this presentation is fairly lightweight and allows the column next to it to continue to carry the bulk of the page's visual weight, thereby preserving the sense of approximated symmetry.

HOME	ARTICLES	BROWSE	ABOUT	SEARCH <span>GO</span>											
<h2>Khoi Vinh's Profile</h2>				 Signed in as  Khoi Vinh <span style="float: right;">You have 7 new messages Log Out</span>											
 <input type="button" value="Send Khoi a Message"/> <input type="button" value="Add Khoi as a Friend"/>	<p><b>Biography</b> I'm a designer in New York City. I write about design, technology and culture at my blog Subtraction.com. I'm the former design director for NYTimes.com.</p> <p><b>Location</b> New York, NY</p> <p><b>Birthday</b> November 18, 1970</p> <p><b>Hometown</b> Gaithersburg, MD</p> <p><b>Web Site</b> <a href="#">subtraction.com</a></p> <p><b>Flickr</b> <a href="#">flickr.com/photos/khoi</a></p> <p><b>Twitter</b> <a href="#">twitter.com/khoi</a></p> <p><b>Facebook</b> <a href="#">facebook.com/khoivinh</a></p>														
<h3>FRIENDS</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Jerry Warriner</b> Last Updated December 22, 2010</li> <li> <b>Kathy Hale</b> Last Updated December 22, 2010</li> <li> <b>Francis Dollarhyde</b> Last Updated December 21, 2010</li> <li> <b>Hildy Johnson</b> Last Updated December 21, 2010</li> <li> <b>Dix Handley</b> Last Updated December 21, 2010</li> <li> <b>Johnny Clay</b> Last Updated December 19, 2010</li> <li> <b>Connie Allenbury</b> Last Updated December 19, 2010</li> </ul>	<h3>PROJECTS</h3> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="284 539 406 616"></td> <td data-bbox="406 539 528 616"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="284 616 406 677"> <a href="#">Subtraction.com Redesign Sketches</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Dec 18, 2010         </td> <td data-bbox="406 616 528 677"> <a href="#">A Brief Message</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Nov 8, 2010         </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="284 677 406 754"></td> <td data-bbox="406 677 528 754"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="284 754 406 816"> <a href="#">Fear of a Cooper Black Planet</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Oct 2, 2010         </td> <td data-bbox="406 754 528 816"> <a href="#">A Whole Mess of Unfinished Ideas and Fitful Starts</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Oct 2, 2010         </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="284 816 406 893"></td> <td data-bbox="406 816 528 893"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="284 893 406 954"> <a href="#">The Front Page Project</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Sep 5, 2010         </td> <td data-bbox="406 893 528 954"> <a href="#">Idle Sketchbook Time</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Sep 5, 2010         </td> </tr> </table>					<a href="#">Subtraction.com Redesign Sketches</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Dec 18, 2010	<a href="#">A Brief Message</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Nov 8, 2010			<a href="#">Fear of a Cooper Black Planet</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Oct 2, 2010	<a href="#">A Whole Mess of Unfinished Ideas and Fitful Starts</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Oct 2, 2010			<a href="#">The Front Page Project</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Sep 5, 2010	<a href="#">Idle Sketchbook Time</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Sep 5, 2010
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*Rather than adapting the avatar icons display from the category page, we'll create a different presentation in the left column.*

Placing the activity content in the right column.

<a href="#">HOME</a>	<a href="#">ARTICLES</a>	<a href="#">BROWSE</a>	<a href="#">ABOUT</a>	<div style="text-align: right;">SEARCH <span style="float: left;">60</span></div> <h1 style="text-align: center;">DESIGNERY<sup>US</sup></h1>
<h2 style="text-align: left;">Khoi Vinh's Profile</h2> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="357 294 433 448" style="width: 25%;">  <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">Send Khoi a Message</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">Add Khoi as a Friend</a></p> </div> <div data-bbox="479 294 732 474" style="width: 60%;"> <p><b>Biography</b> I'm a designer in New York City. I write about design, technology and culture at my blog Subtraction.com. I'm the former design director for NYTimes.com.</p> <p><b>Location</b> New York, NY</p> <p><b>Birthday</b> November 18, 1970</p> <p><b>Hometown</b> Gaithersburg, MD</p> <p><b>Web Site</b> <a href="#">subtraction.com</a></p> <p><b>Flickr</b> <a href="#">flickr.com/photos/khoi</a></p> <p><b>Twitter</b> <a href="#">twitter.com/khoi</a></p> <p><b>Facebook</b> <a href="#">facebook.com/khoivinh</a></p> </div> </div>				
<h3>FRIENDS</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="357 540 479 579">  <span style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <b>Jerry Warriner</b>  <small>Last Updated December 22, 2010</small> </span> </li> <li data-bbox="357 594 479 632">  <span style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <b>Kathy Hale</b>  <small>Last Updated December 22, 2010</small> </span> </li> <li data-bbox="357 648 479 686">  <span style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <b>Francis Dollarhyde</b>  <small>Last Updated December 21, 2010</small> </span> </li> <li data-bbox="357 702 479 740">  <span style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <b>Hildy Johnson</b>  <small>Last Updated</small> </span> </li> <li data-bbox="357 756 479 794">  <span style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <b>Dix Handley</b>  <small>Last Updated December 21, 2010</small> </span> </li> <li data-bbox="357 810 479 848">  <span style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <b>Johnny Clay</b>  <small>Last Updated December 19, 2010</small> </span> </li> <li data-bbox="357 863 479 902">  <span style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <b>Connie Allenbury</b>  <small>Last Updated December 19, 2010</small> </span> </li> </ul>	<h3>PROJECTS</h3> <div style="display: grid; grid-template-columns: 1fr 1fr; gap: 10px;"> <div data-bbox="531 540 646 671">  <p><a href="#">Subtraction.com Redesign Sketches</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Dec 18, 2010</p> </div> <div data-bbox="657 540 772 671">  <p><a href="#">A Brief Message</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Nov 8, 2010</p> </div> <div data-bbox="531 694 646 825">  <p><a href="#">Fear of a Cooper Black Planet</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Oct 2, 2010</p> </div> <div data-bbox="657 694 772 825">  <p><a href="#">A Whole Mess of Unfinished Ideas and Fitful Starts</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Oct 2, 2010</p> </div> <div data-bbox="531 848 646 979">  <p><a href="#">The Front Page Project</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Sep 5, 2010</p> </div> <div data-bbox="657 848 772 979">  <p><a href="#">Idle Sketchbook Time</a> Khoi Vinh Last Updated Sep 5, 2010</p> </div> </div>	<h3>ACTIVITY</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="793 540 1011 579"> <small>December 22, 2010</small>              Khoi posted a comment on <a href="#">Imaginary Album Covers</a> by <a href="#">Kathy Hale</a>.         </li> <li data-bbox="793 594 1011 617"> <small>December 22, 2010</small>              Khoi favorited <a href="#">Imaginary Album Covers</a> by <a href="#">Kathy Hale</a>.         </li> <li data-bbox="793 632 1011 671"> <small>December 18, 2010</small>              Khoi posted a comment on <a href="#">Capital Ideas</a> by <a href="#">Harry Caul</a>.         </li> <li data-bbox="793 686 1011 709"> <small>December 18, 2010</small>              Harry Caul posted a comment on Khoi's project <a href="#">A Whole Mess of Unfinished Ideas and Fitful Starts</a>.         </li> <li data-bbox="793 725 1011 763"> <small>December 17, 2010</small>              Joseph Frady posted a comment on Khoi's project <a href="#">A Whole Mess of Unfinished Ideas and Fitful Starts</a>.         </li> <li data-bbox="793 779 1011 817"> <small>December 17, 2010</small>              Norval Jones posted a comment on Khoi's project <a href="#">A Whole Mess of Unfinished Ideas and Fitful Starts</a>.         </li> <li data-bbox="793 833 1011 871"> <small>December 17, 2010</small>              Julia Seton favorited Khoi's project <a href="#">A Whole Mess of Unfinished Ideas and Fitful Starts</a>.         </li> <li data-bbox="793 887 1011 910"> <small>December 17, 2010</small>              Khoi favorited <a href="#">Big Time Branding</a> by <a href="#">Johnny Case</a>.         </li> <li data-bbox="793 925 1011 964"> <small>December 12, 2010</small>              Khoi favorited <a href="#">Hurricane Yo' Momma</a> by <a href="#">J.J. Hunsecker</a>.         </li> <li data-bbox="793 979 1011 1017"> <small>December 12, 2010</small>              Khoi posted a comment on <a href="#">Hurricane Yo' Momma</a> by <a href="#">J.J. Hunsecker</a>.         </li> </ul>		
<small>© 2011 by Khoi Vinh</small> <small><a href="#">User agreement and privacy policy</a></small>				




This leaves only the activity content in the right-hand column. The content itself is very straightforward—just a stream of text posts—and there’s no need to complicate it. We can run the text from top to bottom in a simple column. Often, this simple approach to content works best in the far-right column anyway, as users have come to regard that region of many web pages as being full of ads. A counterintuitive approach turns out to be more effective in this area: the plainer the content, the less it looks like advertising, and therefore the more users are likely to pay attention to it.

## PROJECT 4: HOME PAGE


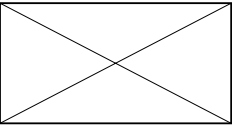
Our last major template is the home page. Recall that we went against common practice by designing our other templates first in order to establish conventions and patterns that we can draw upon when tackling the unique challenges of the home page. As with any of our designs, we're free to adapt and make changes where necessary, but we also want to maintain consistency.

As is typical with many home pages, ours needs to serve several purposes at once: it must present a sampling of the latest and/or most interesting editorial content, it must preview some of the activity and content happening within the Designery.us social network, and it must showcase some of the most active users of the network. What's more, it has to introduce the Designery.us brand in a way that other pages do not. The wireframe reflects these competing interests in that it's the least suggestive of a particular layout approach; in some ways, it's the most open-ended of all of them.

The wireframe for the home page.

<b>Designery.us</b>	<a href="#">Home</a>	<a href="#">Articles</a>	<a href="#">People &amp; Projects</a>	<a href="#">Profile</a> Welcome back, Khoi 7 Messages   <a href="#">LOG-OUT</a>	
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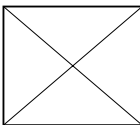
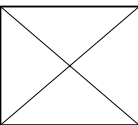
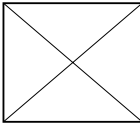
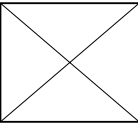
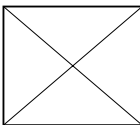
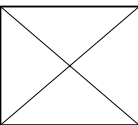
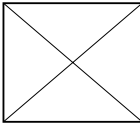
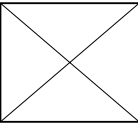





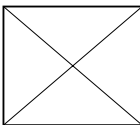
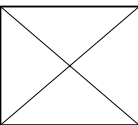
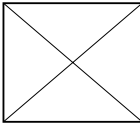
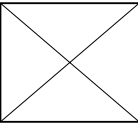
  

Search <input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="SEARCH"/>	
<p>2A010-MM-DD <b>Article Headline Goes Here</b></p>  <p>A brief summary of the article goes here. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam.</p>		

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<p><b>Browse Projects...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Most Popular</a></li><li><a href="#">Most Recent</a></li><li><a href="#">Most Discussed</a></li><li><a href="#">Most Blogged</a></li><li><a href="#">Most Commented</a></li></ul>	<p><b>Recent Projects</b></p> <table border="1"><tr><td> <a href="#">Project Name</a></td><td> <a href="#">Project Name</a></td></tr><tr><td> <a href="#">Project Name</a></td><td> <a href="#">Project Name</a></td></tr></table> <p><a href="#">More projects...</a></p>	 <a href="#">Project Name</a>	 <a href="#">Project Name</a>	 <a href="#">Project Name</a>	 <a href="#">Project Name</a>	<p><b>Top People on Designery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> JOHN C. Last updated MM-DD-YYYY</li><li> DENNIS R. Last updated MM-DD-YYYY</li><li> KELLY H. Last updated MM-DD-YYYY</li><li> ROBERT M. Last updated MM-DD-YYYY</li><li> ROBERT M. Last updated MM-DD-YYYY</li></ul> <p><a href="#">More People...</a></p>
 <a href="#">Project Name</a>	 <a href="#">Project Name</a>					
 <a href="#">Project Name</a>	 <a href="#">Project Name</a>					

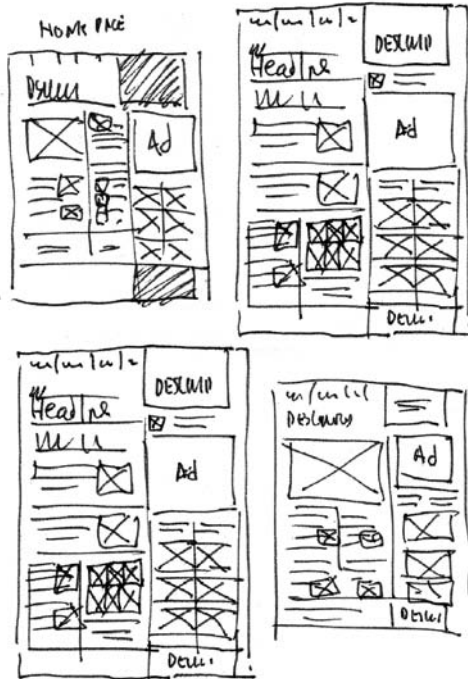
<p><b>Subscribe to Our Email Newsletter</b></p> <p>Email <input type="text"/></p> <input type="button" value="GO"/>
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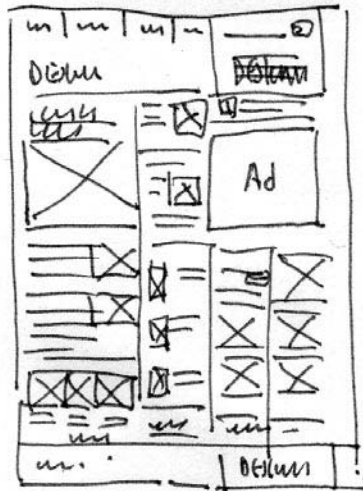
<a href="#">About Designery</a>   <a href="#">Contact Us</a>    <a href="#">RSS Feed</a>   <a href="#">Legal Notices</a>	© 2011 by Khoi Vinh
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Our sketching is therefore even more critical in translating the requirements of the wireframe. We can run through several different layout ideas for this content quickly and without investing undue time and effort.

*Its unique requirements make sketching even more critical for the home page.*



The sketch on which we'll base our design uses a fairly standard approach to arranging editorial content within a web page. It divides the page into a three main columns: a large column at far-left for the most important content, a narrower column in the middle for peripheral content, and our familiar far-right column that's carved out by the advertising unit just below the branding area.



*The final sketch for our home page design.*

Let's start at the top of the page, where we have a unique branding requirement that we didn't encounter on other pages. As the official gateway for the site, the home page must introduce—and briefly explain—the Designery.us brand to newcomers. This could be done simply enough by including a short tagline near the branding area:

**Designery is a public square for design practitioners, students, and fans.**

But the right-hand positioning of the logo that we used on other pages makes it difficult to do this; such a tagline would have to be placed to the *left* of our standard branding area. That would create a kind of semantic jumble in which the explanation would appear before the concept, so to speak; what we want is the concept first and the explanation second.


To that end, we'll shift the logo out of that box and to the left, letting it stand (more or less) alone below the navigation, and we'll place the tagline in the box at right. This kind of exception makes sense for the home page because, again, it has distinct expectations. We want the brand to broadcast itself more loudly on this page, and presenting it in a manner that is unique from every other page within the site actually elevates this page in importance.

HOME | ARTICLES | BROWSE | ABOUT

# DESIGNERY<sup>US</sup>

SEARCH  GO

Designery is a public square for design practitioners, students and fans. [LEARN MORE](#)

 Signed in as **Khoi Vinh** | You have **7 new messages**  
[Log Out](#)

## Ad

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[User agreement and privacy policy](#)

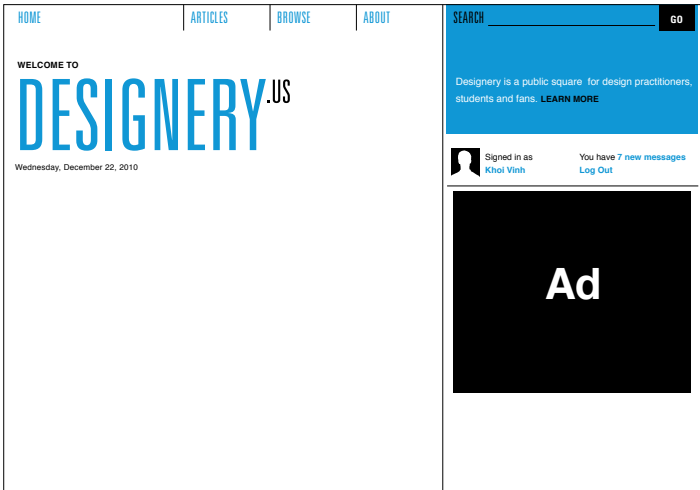
DESIGNERY<sup>US</sup>

*Altering the branding for the home page.*

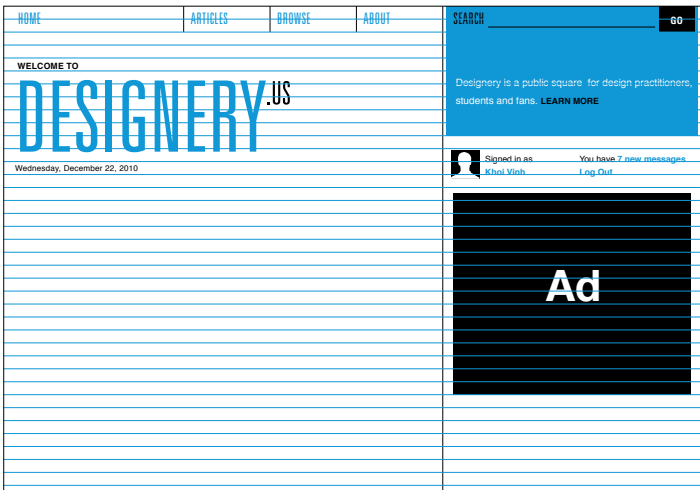
We can even help emphasize this distinction by enlarging the size of the logo. The area where it now resides has been left largely untouched on our other pages, so if we're going to make use of it here, we want to use it to maximum effect. We'll make the logo considerably larger to activate the full region, but not so large that it's uncomfortable in that area. We'll also add some bits of salutary text: a welcome statement and the date.

With the logo enlarged, the tagline has shifted further up to top-align with the logo itself. This helps the user's eye read from left-to-right, logo-to-tagline, concept-to-explanation.






*Enlarging the logo activates the region.*



*The baseline shows how the logo and the tagline are top-aligned.*




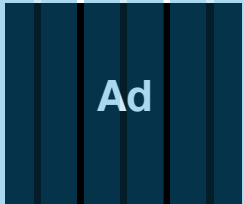



Now let's address the body of the page. Our sketch calls for three columns. We know already that the grid can support at least two different configurations of three columns: the symmetrical arrangement we created for the category page, and the configuration we created for the profile page which was more varied. In this case, a symmetrical arrangement again proves impractical because of the big ad that's required on the right-hand side, so we can turn to the three-column structure from the profile page. However, we'll transpose two of the columns so the first column is wider and calls more attention to itself. This will aid the readability of the page: in content-rich sites, the most important content usually appears at the top left of the body area—and is also usually the largest of all the content elements on the page.

<p><a href="#">HOME</a>   <a href="#">ARTICLES</a>   <a href="#">BROWSE</a>   <a href="#">ABOUT</a></p> <p>WELCOME TO  <b>DESIGNERY</b>.US</p> <p>Wednesday, December 22, 2010</p>		<p>SEARCH <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="GO"/></p> <p>Designery is a public square for design practitioners, students and fans. <a href="#">LEARN MORE</a></p> <p> Signed in as <b>Khoi Vinh</b>   You have <b>7 new messages</b>   <a href="#">Log Out</a></p>
		<div data-bbox="548 284 786 485" style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 50px;"> <h1>Ad</h1> </div>
<p>© 2011 by Khoi Vinh   <a href="#">Site Map</a>   <a href="#">Advertise</a>   <a href="#">Contact Us</a>   <a href="#">RSS</a>   <a href="#">Mobile</a>  <a href="#">User agreement and privacy policy</a></p>		<p><b>DESIGNERY</b>.US</p>

*The basic three-column structure we'll use for the home page.*



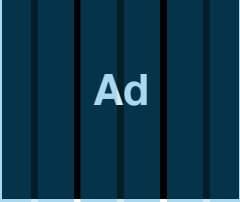







We can follow this thinking as we design the formatting for editorial promos in these columns. As the most important article, the promo at the top of the left column will be the largest, with an accompanying image that spans the full width of the column. We can then design a secondary level of editorial promos that uses a two-unit-wide thumbnail image.

In fact, we can use this secondary promo style in the second column as well, employing the same typographic and thumbnail specifications but simply adapting the layout to the narrower width. The effect is that there is both consistency and variety in the display of these editorial elements; the eye is encouraged to scan the page for bits of interest, but the consistency within the design makes the variety easy to consume and minimizes any sense of disorder.

<p><a href="#">HOME</a></p> <p>WELCOME TO</p> <h1>DESIGNERY.US</h1> <p>Wednesday, December 22, 2010</p>	<p><a href="#">ARTICLES</a></p>	<p><a href="#">BROWSE</a></p>	<p><a href="#">ABOUT</a></p>	<p>SEARCH <input type="text"/> <a href="#">GO</a></p> <p>Designery is a public square for design practitioners, students and fans. <a href="#">LEARN MORE</a></p> <p> Signed in as <a href="#">Khoi Vinh</a>   You have <b>7</b> new messages <a href="#">Log Out</a></p>
<h2>Typography's Lost Weekend</h2> <p>By <a href="#">Sheba Shayne</a></p>  <p> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mollis tortor nulla eu tortor. </p> <p>17 Comments</p>	<h2>Logos, the Next Wave</h2> <p>By <a href="#">Chuck Tatum, Editor</a></p>  <p> Lorem ipsum dol or sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mol. </p> <p>12 Comments</p>			
<h2>Will They Pay for It? Publishers Make a Last Stand</h2> <p>By <a href="#">Nick Garcos</a></p>  <p> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mollis tortor nulla eu tortor. </p> <p>22 Comments</p>	<h2>The Bigger They Are...</h2> <p>By <a href="#">Mary Bristol, Editor</a></p>  <p> Lorem ipsum dol or sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mol. </p> <p>12 Comments</p>			
<h2>Web Design Techniques of the Damned</h2> <p>By <a href="#">Mike Figlis</a></p>  <p> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel. Ut nibh turpis, dictum ac eleifend et, consequat in velit. Aliquam faucibus congue pretium. In mollis dolor eu </p> <p>54 Comments</p>			<p>© 2011 by <a href="#">Khoi Vinh</a>   <a href="#">Site Map</a>   <a href="#">Advertise</a>   <a href="#">Contact Us</a>   <a href="#">RSS</a>   <a href="#">Mobile</a></p> <p><a href="#">DESIGNERY</a>.US</p>	

Adding article promos to the first two columns.

We can think of these five promos as presenting the most recently published content on Designery.us, but each is large enough to require a fairly healthy share of screen real estate, so a more space-efficient promo style could come in handy as well. At the bottom of the first column, we can create a third level of editorial promos that omits summaries and therefore takes up less space. These promos will use the same two-unit thumbnails we've employed in the secondary-level promos, but we'll arrange them three across.


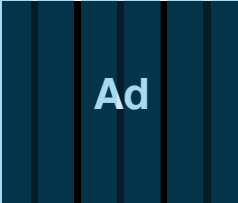





<p>HOME</p> <p>WELCOME TO</p> <h1>DESIGNERY.US</h1> <p>Wednesday, December 22, 2010</p>	<p>ARTICLES</p>	<p>BROWSE</p>	<p>ABOUT</p>	<p>SEARCH <input type="text"/> <span>GO</span></p> <p>Designery is a public square for design practitioners, students and fans. <a href="#">LEARN MORE</a></p> <p> Signed in as <b>Khoi Vinh</b>   You have <b>7 new messages</b> <a href="#">Log Out</a></p>
<h2>Typography's Lost Weekend</h2> <p>By Sheba Shayne</p>  <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisi imperdiet orci, in mollis.</p> <p>12 Comments</p>	<h2>Logos, the Next Wave</h2> <p>By Chuck Tatum, Editor</p>  <p>Lorem ipsum dol or sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisi imperdiet orci, in mol.</p> <p>12 Comments</p>			
<h2>Will They Pay for It? Publishers Make a Last Stand</h2> <p>By Nick Garcos</p>  <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisi imperdiet orci, in mollis tortor nulla eu tortor.</p> <p>22 Comments</p>	<h2>The Bigger They Are...</h2> <p>By Mary Bristol, Editor</p>  <p>Lorem ipsum dol or sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisi imperdiet orci, in mol.</p> <p>12 Comments</p>			
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<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="112 871 185 927">  <p>Holding on to Offset Printing</p> </div> <div data-bbox="197 871 270 927">  <p>CSS and the Man on the Street</p> </div> <div data-bbox="282 871 355 927">  <p>Listening to Your Mom</p> </div> </div>				
<p>© 2011 by Khoi Vinh User agreement and privacy policy</p>			<p><a href="#">Site Map</a>   <a href="#">Advertise</a>   <a href="#">Contact Us</a>   <a href="#">RSS</a>   <a href="#">Mobile</a></p>	

Adding more promos at the bottom of the leftmost column.

Because they're succinct, the placement of these promos at the bottom of the column has a useful logic to it; they suggest that there is more of this kind of content available throughout the site. And in fact we can reinforce that by adding a "More Articles..." link at the bottom of the column.

Our wireframe now calls for several elements that should be familiar from other templates. In the middle column, we can duplicate our email subscription form from the article page as well as the list of users from the profile page.












<p>HOME</p> <p>WELCOME TO</p> <h1>DESIGNERY.US</h1> <p>Wednesday, December 22, 2010</p>	<p>ARTICLES</p>	<p>BROWSE</p>	<p>ABOUT</p>	<p>SEARCH <input type="text"/> GO</p> <p>Designery is a public square for design practitioners, students and fans. <a href="#">LEARN MORE</a></p> <p> Signed in as <b>Khoi Vinh</b>   You have <b>7</b> new messages <a href="#">Log Out</a></p>
<h2>Typography's Lost Weekend</h2> <p>By Sheba Shayne</p>  <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mol.</p> <p>12 Comments</p>	<h2>Logos, the Next Wave</h2> <p>By Chuck Tatum, Editor</p> <p>Lorem ipsum dol or sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mol.</p> <p>12 Comments</p>			
<h2>Will They Pay for It? Publishers Make a Last Stand</h2> <p>By Nick Garcos</p>  <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mollis tortor nulla eu tortor.</p> <p>22 Comments</p>	<h2>The Bigger They Are...</h2> <p>By Mary Bristol, Editor</p> <p>Lorem ipsum dol or sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mol.</p> <p>12 Comments</p>			
<h2>Web Design Techniques of the Damned</h2> <p>By Mike Figlis</p> <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel. Ut nibh turpis, dictum ac elefend et, consequat in velit. Aliquam faucibus congue pretium. In mollis dolor eu</p> <p>54 Comments</p> <div data-bbox="114 871 358 924">  <b>Holding on to Offset Printing</b></div> <div data-bbox="197 871 268 924">  <b>CSS and the Man on the Street</b></div> <div data-bbox="282 871 353 924">  <b>Listening to Your Mom</b></div>	<p>GET UPDATES VIA EMAIL</p> <p><input type="text" value="Your email address"/> <input type="button" value="SUBSCRIBE"/></p>			
<p><a href="#">More Articles...</a></p>	<h3>TOP PEOPLE ON DESIGNERY</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Jerry Warriner</b> Last Updated December 22, 2010</li> <li> <b>Kathy Hale</b> Last Updated December 22, 2010</li> <li> <b>Francis Dollarhyde</b> Last Updated December 21, 2010</li> <li> <b>Hildy Johnson</b> Last Updated December 21, 2010</li> <li> <b>Dix Handley</b> Last Updated December 21, 2010</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">More People...</a></p>			
<p>© 2011 by Khoi Vinh <a href="#">User agreement</a> and <a href="#">privacy policy</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Site Map</a>   <a href="#">Advertise</a>   <a href="#">Contact Us</a>   <a href="#">RSS</a>   <a href="#">Mobile</a></p>			

Elements familiar from other pages, like the email subscription form and a list of people and avatar icons, are easily placed in the middle column.

In the far-right column, we can borrow the display of projects we created for the profile page. This column is also six units wide, so that element fits in nicely.

The wireframe also calls for a list of links to help users find the projects that are most popular, most discussed, most recently updated, and so forth. We'll want these to appear above the projects so users can find them easily (rather than below the projects, which would be too far down the page). Looking again to the category page, we designed links similar to these that appeared within a column that was narrower than the six-unit column we have here. Though we actually have more width than we did on the category page, here we have less height for the vertical display of these links, so we can divide the list into two narrower sub-columns of three links each, with less generous line-spacing than we used before.

<p>HOME</p> <p>WELCOME TO</p> <h1>DESIGNERY.US</h1> <p>Wednesday, December 22, 2010</p>	<p>ARTICLES</p>	<p>BROWSE</p>	<p>ABOUT</p>	<p>SEARCH <input type="text"/> GO</p> <p>Designery is a public square for design practitioners, students and fans. <a href="#">LEARN MORE</a></p> <p> Signed in as <b>Khoi Vinh</b>   You have <b>7</b> new messages <a href="#">Log Out</a></p>			
<h2>Typography's Lost Weekend</h2> <p>By Sheba Shayne</p>  <p> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mollis tortor nulla eu tortor. </p> <p>17 Comments</p>	<h2>Logos, the Next Wave</h2> <p>By Chuck Tatum, Editor</p>  <p> Lorem ipsum dol or sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mol. </p> <p>12 Comments</p>						
<p> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mollis tortor nulla eu tortor. </p> <p>17 Comments</p>	<h2>The Bigger They Are...</h2> <p>By Mary Bristol, Editor</p>  <p> Lorem ipsum dol or sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mol. </p> <p>12 Comments</p>	<p>EXPLORE PROJECTS ON DESIGNERY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most Popular</li> <li>• Most Blogged</li> <li>• Most Recently Updated</li> <li>• Most Commented</li> <li>• Most Discussed</li> <li>• Random &amp; Interesting</li> </ul>					
<h2>Will They Pay for It? Publishers Make a Last Stand</h2> <p>By Nick Garcos</p>  <p> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mollis tortor nulla eu tortor. </p> <p>22 Comments</p>	<p>GET UPDATES VIA EMAIL</p> <p><input type="text" value="Your email address"/> <input type="button" value="SUBSCRIBE"/></p>	<p>Trouble in Paradise</p> <p>Ellen Lipsey Last Updated Dec 18, 2010</p> <p>Holiday Fun</p> <p>Gal Morgan Last Updated Nov 8, 2010</p>					
<h2>Web Design Techniques of the Damned</h2> <p>By Mike Figlis</p>  <p> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel. Ut nibh turpis, dictum ac eleifend et, consequat in velit. Aliquam faucibus congue pretium. In mollis dolor eu </p> <p>54 Comments</p>	<p>TOP PEOPLE ON DESIGNERY</p> <p> <b>Jerry Warriner</b> Last Updated December 22, 2010</p> <p> <b>Kathy Hale</b> Last Updated December 22, 2010</p> <p> <b>Francis Dollarhyde</b> Last Updated December 21, 2010</p> <p> <b>Hildy Johnson</b> Last Updated December 21, 2010</p> <p> <b>Dix Handley</b> Last Updated December 21, 2010</p>	<p>Chapter IX</p> <p>Gas Snider Last Updated Dec 18, 2010</p> <p>Calculated</p> <p>Accidentalium Daniel O'Neefe Last Updated Nov 8, 2010</p>					
 <p>Holding on to Offset Printing</p>  <p>CSS and the Man on the Street</p>  <p>Listening to Your Mom</p>	<p>More People...</p>			<p>Big Weel BBQ</p> <p>Phyllis Debschaon Last Updated Dec 18, 2010</p> <p>Hurrling Towards Hipsterism</p> <p>Water Neff Last Updated Nov 8, 2010</p>			
<p>More Articles...</p>		<p>More People...</p>			<p>More Projects...</p>		
<p>© 2011 by Khoi Vinh   <a href="#">Site Map</a>   <a href="#">Advertise</a>   <a href="#">Contact Us</a>   <a href="#">RSS</a>   <a href="#">Mobile</a> <a href="#">User agreement and privacy policy</a></p>				<h1>DESIGNERY.US</h1>			

Adding projects to the far-right column.

Like the editorial articles, the lists of users and projects are intended to lead users to more of the same content. Again, this is the purpose of the home page: to show a sampling of what's available on Designery.us. So we can use the convention we created for the "More Articles..." link for both users and projects at the bottom of the second and third columns. This suggests that the page has a simple ordering principle: articles in the left column, users in the middle, and projects on the right. Though that's actually not exactly true—we're mixing content within columns more freely than that—it's true enough in that it *appears* orderly. In many cases, that's plenty.

HOME
ARTICLES
BROWSE
ABOUT

WELCOME TO

# DESIGNERY<sup>US</sup>

Wednesday, December 22, 2010

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## Typography's Lost Weekend

By Sheba Shayne

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit erat.

17 Comments

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## Will They Pay for It? Publishers Make a Last Stand

By Nick Garcos

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22 Comments

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## Web Design Techniques of the Damned

By Mike Figlis

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54 Comments

**Holding on to Offset Printing**

**CSS and the Man on the Street**

**Listening to Your Mom**

## Logos, the Next Wave

By Chuck Tatum, Editor

Lorem ipsum dol or sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mol.

12 Comments

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## The Bigger They Are...

By Mary Bristol, Editor

Lorem ipsum dol or sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam tristique, odio vel facilisis hendrerit, erat nisl imperdiet orci, in mol.

12 Comments

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GET UPDATES VIA EMAIL

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### TOP PEOPLE ON DESIGNERY

**Jerry Warriner**  
Last Updated December 22, 2010

**Kathy Hale**  
Last Updated December 22, 2010

**Francis Dollarihyde**  
Last Updated December 21, 2010

**Hildy Johnson**  
Last Updated December 21, 2010

**Dix Handley**  
Last Updated December 21, 2010

SEARCH

GO

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Signed in as  
**Khoi Vinh**

You have 7 new messages

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Ad

---

EXPLORE PROJECTS ON DESIGNERY

- Most Popular
- Most Recently Updated
- Most Discussed
- Most Blogged
- Most Commented
- Random & Interesting

**Trouble in Paradise**  
Ellen Lacey  
Last Updated Dec 18, 2010

**Holiday Fun**  
Gat Morgan  
Last Updated Nov 8, 2010

**Chapter IX**  
Gus Snider  
Last Updated Dec 18, 2010

**Calculated**  
Accidentalism  
Daniel O'Keefe  
Last Updated Nov 8, 2010

**Big West BBQ**  
Phyllis Dietrichson  
Last Updated Dec 18, 2010

**Hurting Towards Hipsteriam**  
Walter Neff  
Last Updated Nov 8, 2010

More Projects...

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The final home page design.

## ADDITIONAL PAGES

The four templates we've created so far—article page, category page, profile page, and home page—offer four distinctly different layout approaches within our grid system. These are also the pages that users will probably encounter most often, and so in many ways they provide a substantially diverse base on which to build out the rest of the site.

However, in a site rich with content and interactions, we want to be mindful not to blindly recycle layout conventions when other pages on the site pose different constraints and therefore call for different approaches. Our job is not simply to design on a page-by-page basis without regard for the overall combination of pages a user might encounter. Even though it's impossible to know the exact sequence any particular user might follow while browsing Designery.us, we can anticipate some models. A user might move from home page to article to article and perhaps back to the home page, for instance, or move from category page to profile page to other templates we have not yet designed, such as project pages.

In acknowledging this reality, we understand that the *sequencing* of our designs is part of our job. As the user moves from page to page, our goal is to help him acquire a kind of spatial understanding of the parts of the site, so that the various interfaces oriented around social networking resemble one another and the kinds of editorial content are similar. At the highest level, however, we must do our best to ensure that the layouts he encounters are consistent where appropriate and divergent where appropriate. Here are some examples of how we might use the groundwork we've already laid to create a diverse and surprising but easily navigable and consistent experience.

HOME
ARTICLES
BROWSE
ABOUT

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DESIGNERY US

**DESIGNERY WRITERS**


**Walter Burns**

Biography Present adipiscing, est vitae posuere lacrima, augue et fructus nulla. Quis curare sit lacibus quis et Mauris et ligula est.

Location Chicago, IL

Twitter [burner.com/](#)

Facebook [burner.com/](#)



**Ad**

Signed in as [John Doe](#)

You have 7 new messages [Log Out](#)

**ARTICLES FROM THIS WRITER**

- Dec 13, 2010 **Making vs. Selling**  
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Duis lorem eros, vestibulum eget convallis eget, convallis a nibh.
- Nov 8, 2010 **Stock Photography Reinvigorates itself Again**  
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- Nov 2, 2010 **Designers, Developers and the Art of Transliteration**  
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- Oct 26, 2010 **A Brief History of Every Single Design Application Adobe Ever Made**  
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- Sep 21, 2010 **Reconsidering the 1980s**  
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- Nov 7, 2010 **Murting Towards Irrelevance: Design Students and the New Economy**  
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- Aug 4, 2010 **The Beauty of Design Routes**  
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**GET UPDATES VIA EMAIL**

**RECENT ARTICLES**

**Information Architecture of the Internet**  
Summary of what this article is about Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur. Read full article.

**Standards on the Age of Twitter**  
Summary of what this article is about Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur. Read full article.

**Desktop and Software: Post-App Software Architecture**  
Summary of what this article is about Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur. Read full article.

**React.js: Taking Over Facebook**  
Summary of what this article is about Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet adipiscing consectetur. Read full article.

**More articles...**

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**About Us**

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Who We Served What We Served

What's Next for Us

**These are the people behind Designery.**

**Shika Shayne**  
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Mauris lacibus ligula a lacus ornare portitor. Vivamus fructus nulla et mauris volutatis et amet. Mauris ac magna at ipsum adipiscing portitor et opt nisi. Vestibulum enim leo, suscipit et fructus vitae, volutatis sed lorem.

**Nick Carlson**  
Mauris non quam et amet volutatis fringit porta. In fructus, erat at rhoncus varius, eros sit consectetur ante, opti conuendo lacibus dui que ipsum. Maecenas mollis nulla conuilla nulla vehicula volutatis suscipit tortor, ac venenatis massa elementum a. Praesent litora id, volutatis et tempus a, tristique que justo. Donec lacibus opta nibh, sit amet gravida ante, sagittis ut amet.

**Dixi Handley**  
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DESIGNERY US

**AUTHOR PAGE**

An author page is conceptually similar to our profile page, and it would be tempting to base its design on that existing template. However, the kind of content offered on this page is actually closer to our article template; it's editorially focused, not social network-focused. So it makes more sense to create a design that is principally based on the layout we created for the article template.

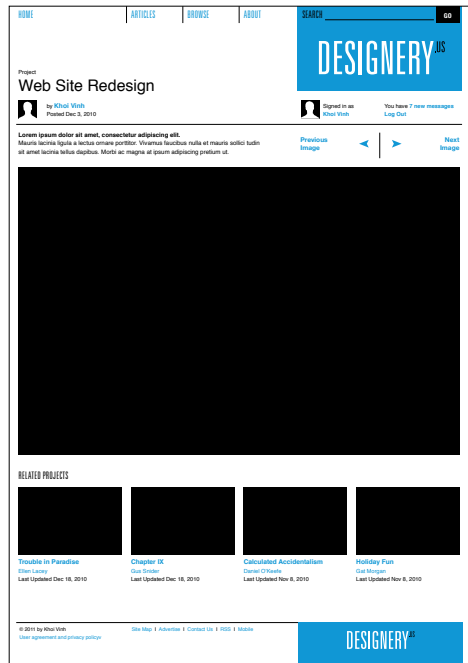
**ABOUT US PAGE**

We can take the same approach to designing the about us page, which offers the site's mission statement, history, and short biographies of its founders. Again, we'll borrow the article template's two-thirds/one-third layout. This page will be a bit more spare, though, so we'll omit the vertical dividing rule that demarcates the two main content areas from biographies of the founders in the right-column.



## ARCHIVES PAGE

Not every editorially focused template needs to follow the same model as the article page. We can imagine that a date-based archive page would follow an entirely different approach. It would use the calendar as its central metaphor for organization—and as its central metaphor for layout.



## PROJECT PAGE

The projects featured on the Designery.us templates we've created so far must go somewhere, and that destination is the project page. In actuality, it's nothing more than a simple, slideshow-style interface that allows users to peruse the various images within a project.





## LIQUID LAYOUTS

The layout templates we've created have all been based on the idea that they will have a fixed width; that is, the width of units, columns, regions, and so on will remain constant even in cases where the user might expand his browser window to a much greater size than the design itself. In fact, most commercially viable websites have followed this pattern for the better part of the Web's existence. It has proven to be the most effective and successful layout technique for bringing thoughtful design values to a medium that isn't always conducive to such things.

However, I would be remiss if I didn't discuss the alternative notion of *liquid layouts*, or layouts that expand and contract with the user's viewport.

If, as designers, we are charged with creating experiences that truly respect our users' preferences, there is a valid argument *against* fixed-width layouts and *for* liquid layouts. In effect, a fixed-width layout reflects the imposition of the designer's penchant for control over real-world usage, while designs that grow in width or even in height to accommodate the user's viewport can be said to truly reflect each user's requirements.

For users with large monitors, you could argue, a design should expand to capitalize on the available real estate, while for users with smaller monitors or devices, the design should condense appropriately. It might not be quite accurate to say that liquid layouts attempt to be all things to all users, but the aim is similar. The Web is a medium in which systems try to serve broad swaths of people in ways that are most appropriate to each of their needs. But no two people will experience a given website's content or functionality in exactly the same way, so why should the same layout apply to all of them? In many ways, liquid layouts really are more native to the medium—more faithful to its strengths and weakness—than fixed-width layouts. And, as we discussed earlier in this book, the more native the solution, the more effective it's likely to be.

Until very recently, the state of Web design didn't allow us to live up to the ideal presented by liquid layouts. Advancements in browser capabilities, coupled with innovations in CSS and newly reliable JavaScript techniques for creating experiences that are more thoroughly device-aware, have begun to allow designers to create much more dynamic layouts.

Ambitious designers can now practice so-called “responsive Web design,” which, according to prominent proponent Ethan Marcotte, opens up new possibilities:

“We can design for an optimal viewing experience, but embed standards-based technologies into our designs to make them not only more flexible, but more adaptive to the media that renders them.”

These breakthroughs are incredibly new and evolving rapidly, which is why I have chosen not to address them in this book. Best practices are still being written in the realm of responsive Web design.

However, some basic design principles will stand regardless of how this new approach develops. In particular, it will remain true that while designers must continue to share control over the experiences of their products with users, those users want *guided experiences*. It’s a mistake to assume that responsive Web design means giving users full control, because in reality what every user wants is only *some control*. Users expect the designer not only to have embraced the medium, but also to have mastered it sufficiently to be able to exert some control over it.

It will always remain the designer’s job to make some decisions for the user—not every decision, but enough to provide guideposts within the experience that the user can turn to. The designer must empower the user to feel in control of the aspects of the experience that are critical to accomplishing his goals, but the user must also feel that the entire experience has an underpinning of stability and reliability.

Responsive Web design doesn't make that job simpler. In fact, it makes it more complex. There will be even more states for the designer to anticipate, more combinations of user interface elements in varying states presenting unique but critical challenges to the user's understanding of the experience. In this respect, the grid will become even more important to the overall design; establishing a strong grid system that underpins a responsive Web design solution can only help it feel more rooted and trustworthy.

The same basic grid principles can apply in this world of liquid layouts and responsive Web design. Units can be combined into columns and regions, and elements can be sized according to the basic mathematics of the grid. Those elements should grow and condense according to those same mathematics, but it's important to remember that not everything needs to change. Some things can remain fixed; in fact, some things must remain fixed. In an environment where elements can assume an endless combination of sizes and scales, it's even more important to maintain some constancy, to establish some guideposts to help orient users. As this school of thought continues to gain momentum, it promises to create great opportunities for designers working in this medium. At the same time, it doesn't change the designer's central role as the arbiter of the user's experience.

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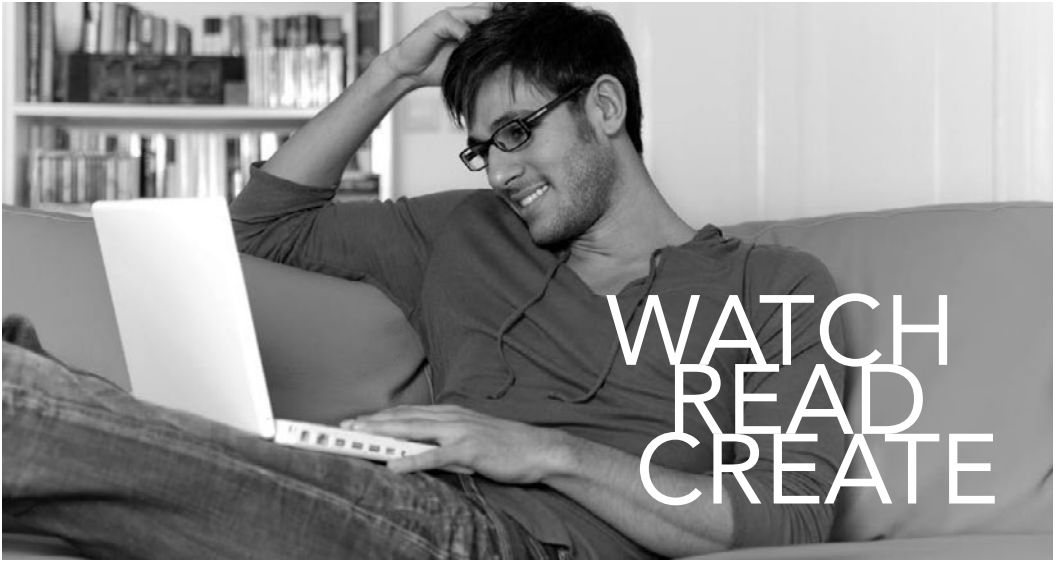
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