

Crash Course in Design

A little bit of graphic design, ready for Web Developers

Good Design ...

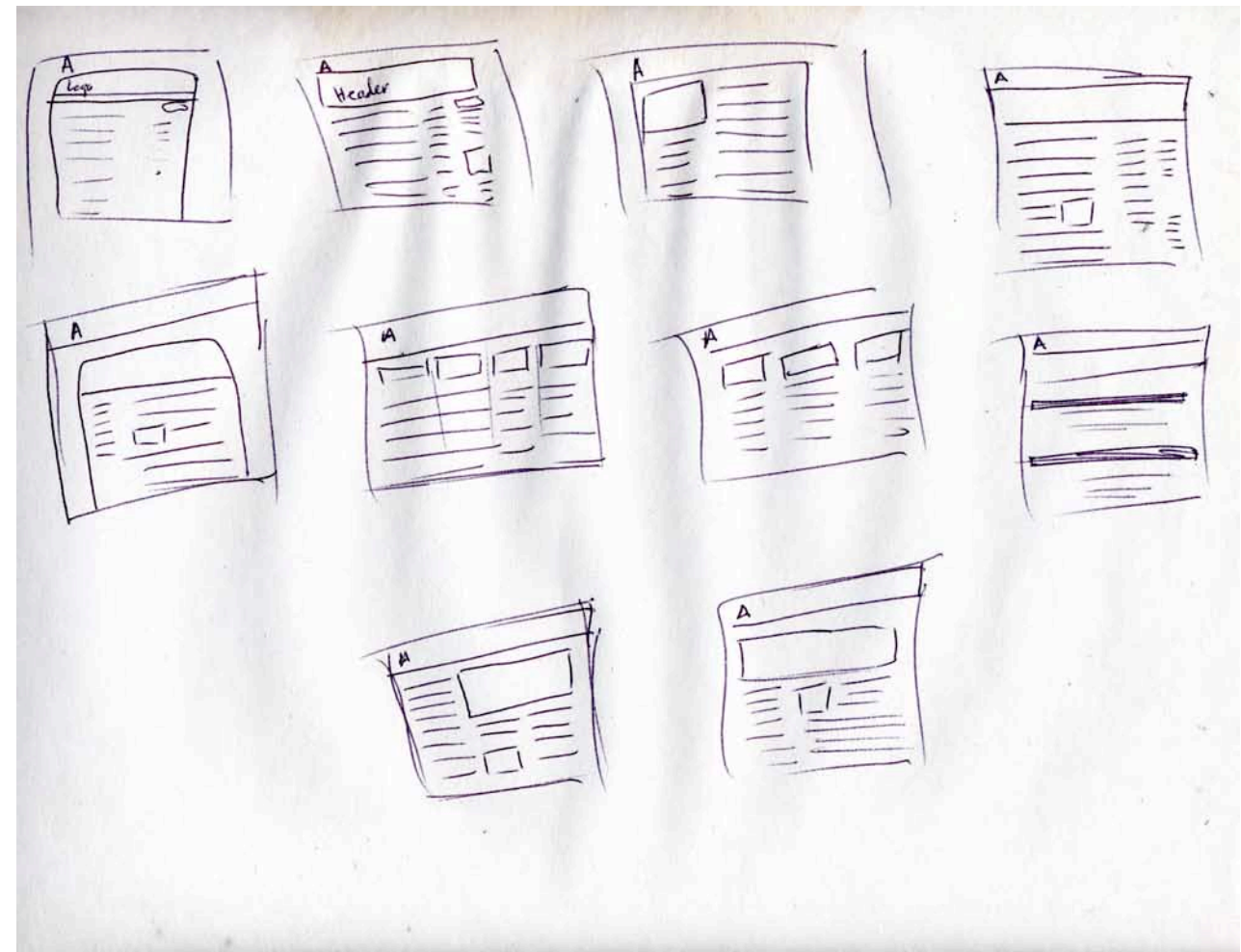
- is Invisible
- uses Structure
- uses Contrast
- is Simple

The Process of Design

Ways to refine your design

Using thumbnails

- Create 10-20 thumbnails
- No detail, spend 10-30 seconds on each at most
- Choose the top five



Refining the thumbnails

- Take the top five thumbnails
- Work on larger paper
- Still no extreme detail - abstract representation of elements
- Going for concept, not perfection

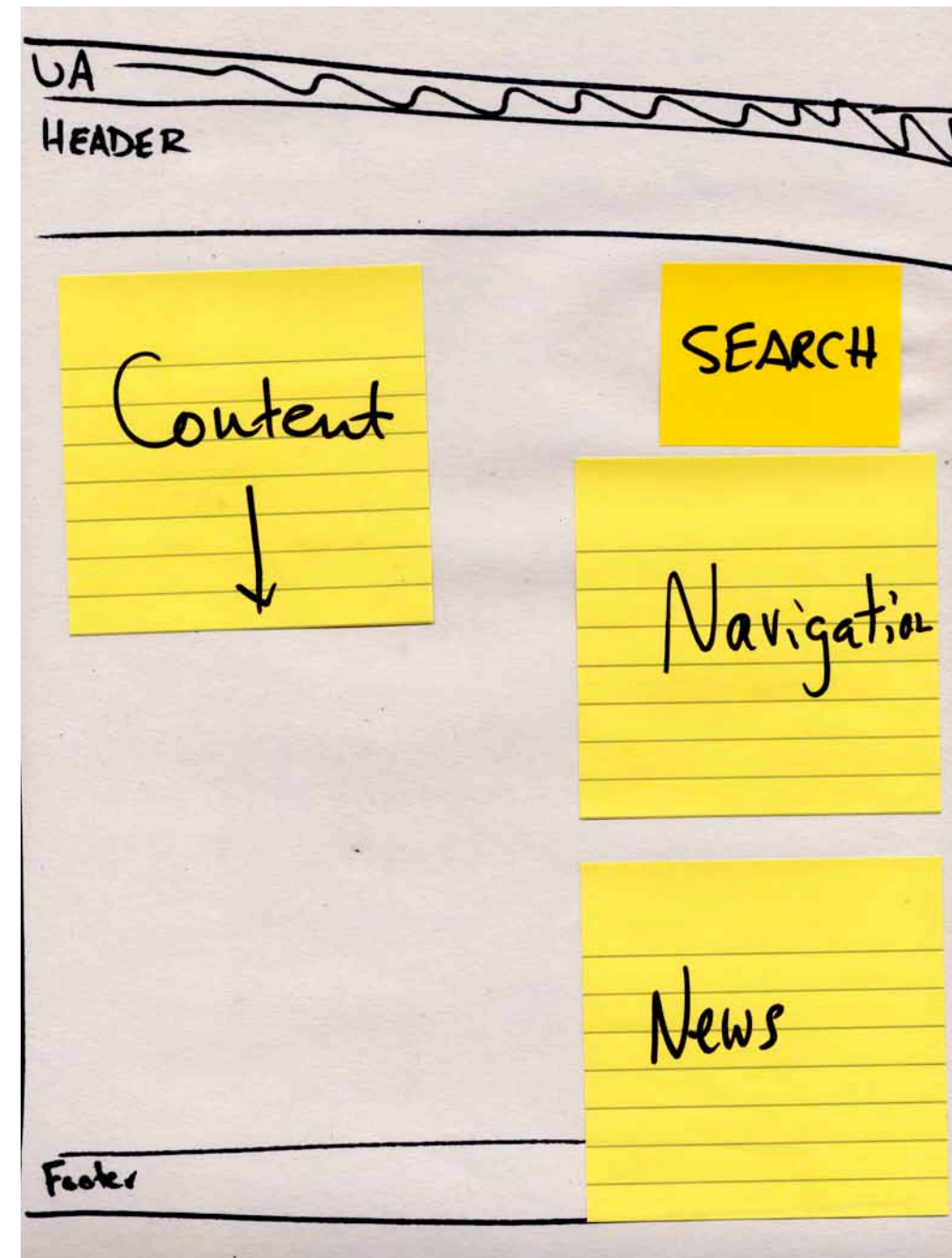
Quick rules for comping

- Focus on interior pages first, then homepage
- Take top 2 to 3 drawings, create flat image in image editing program of choice
- Program needs to be able to place Guides



Sticky Notes!

- Instead of thumbnails/roughs, use large paper and sticky notes
- Work out 5-10 different options
- Take top 2-3 into image editor
- More useful for revamping an existing design



A quick note about usability

- Logo in upper left
- Search on right (upper left, or right beneath any header images)
- Navigation can be left, right or top
- Users are already interacting with the scrollbar, which is on the right
- No navigation images!

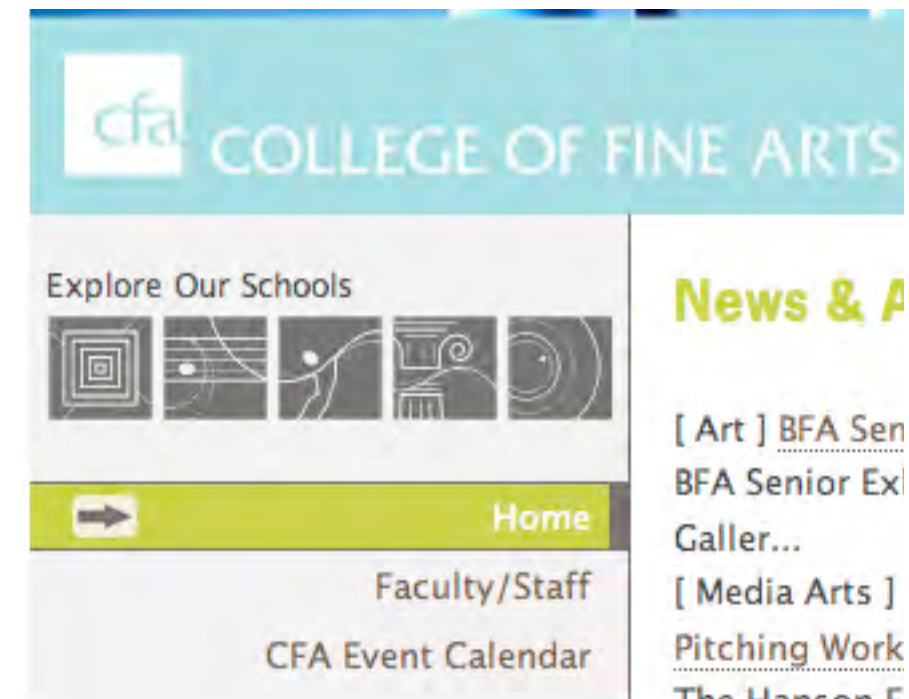
More usability

- Users start in upper left
- Zig-zag down the page, scanning content, or in F-Pattern
- Prioritize content



Where am I?

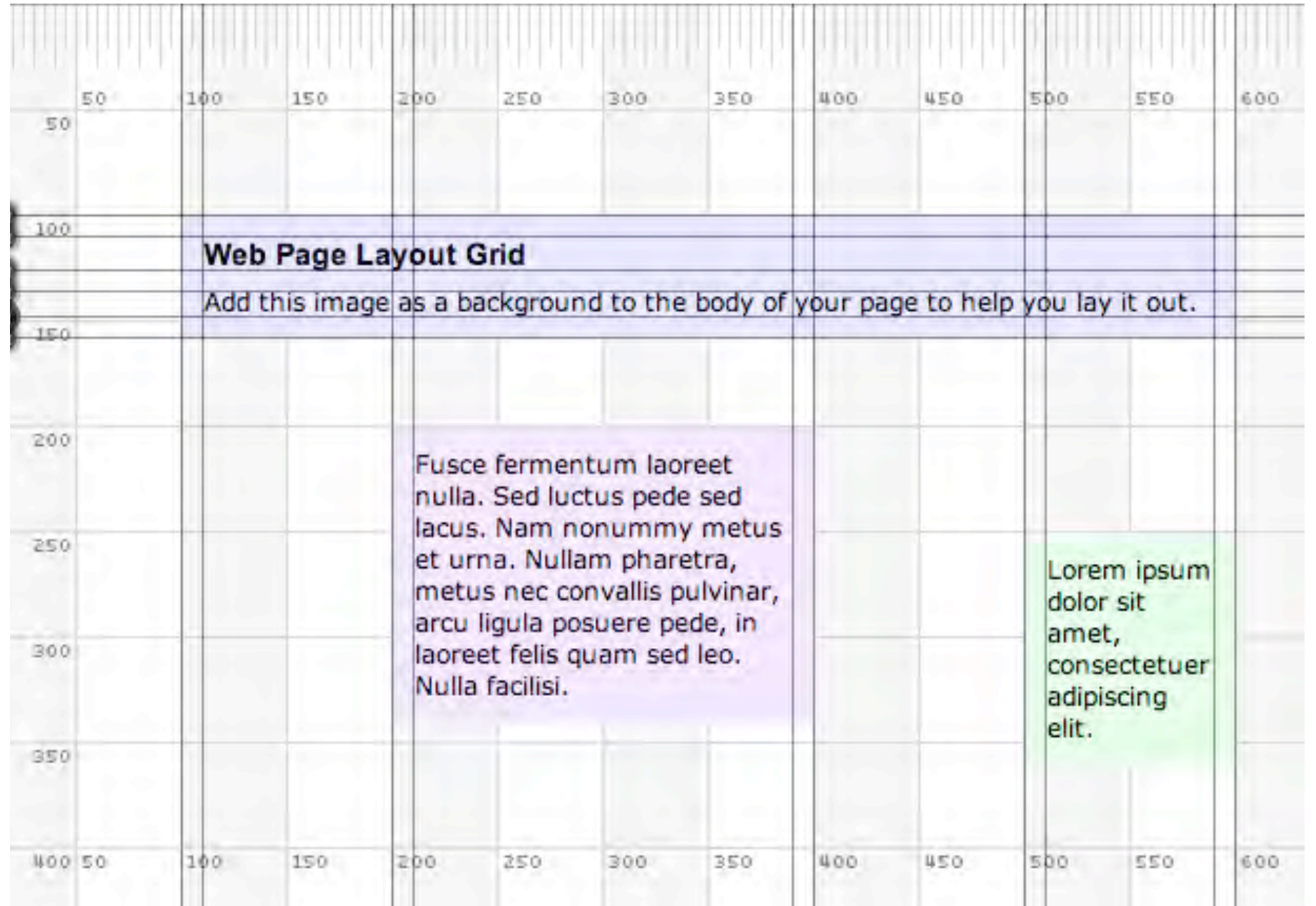
- Tell visitors where they are
- Most are coming from search engines
- Place indicators on home page too

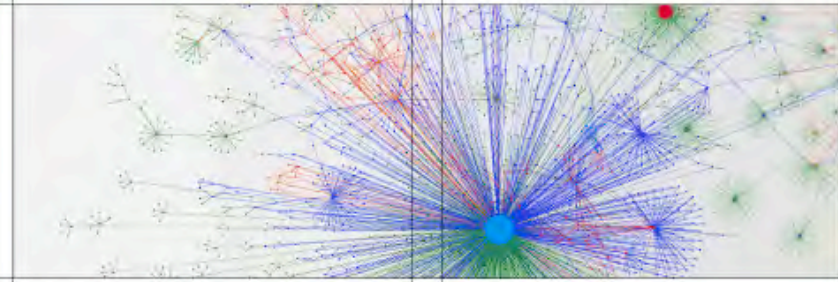


Grids

Give me structure and hierarchy!

- Grids establish structure
- Grids establish clarity
- Grids ensure consistency





COMPUTER SCIENCE
UASCIENCE

Department of Computer Science
College of Science
The University of Arizona

Employment Opportunities

Department Head
Faculty Position

Featured

Computer Science Plays Critical Role in iPlant Collaborative

Computer Science faculty will play key roles in the recently-announced iPlant Collaborative. Greg Andrews is one of the co-principal investigators under lead investigator Rich Jorgensen of Plant Sciences. Four other computer science faculty have leadership roles, and four more will participate on special projects.

The National Science Foundation awarded \$50 million over five years for a global center and computer cyberinfrastructure to help answer plant biology's grand challenge questions. For the first time ever, the project will unite plant scientists, computer scientists, and information scientists from around the world to provide answers to questions of global importance.

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Events & News



Thursday: [Richard Jorgensen](#)

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Research

Our department has a distinguished record of influential publications and software distributions, and has been ranked best of its size among public universities by the National Research Council.

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Undergraduate Info

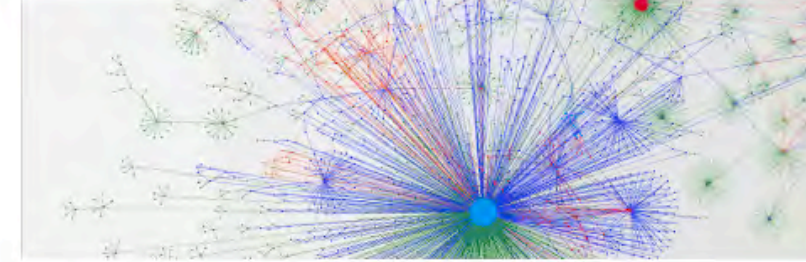
Our undergraduates study ways to design computer networking protocols, create and distribute innovative software, develop wireless and mobile computing, create novel programming languages, develop computational biology algorithms, invent highly efficient algorithms for computer graphics, and push the limits of high-performance computing.

>Learn more

Graduate Info

Our dynamic program of graduate study integrates quality research and teaching. Our alumni include researchers at AT&T Labs, HP Labs, and IBM Almaden, and faculty at Davis, Purdue, and Virginia.

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Tue 12 Feb 2008

The Power of the Printed-on-Demand Word

11:34 PM
REMARKS (11)

Digital evangelists: if you have any doubt about the convincing power of print, then order yourself a book of your own making over at [Lulu.com](#) — remember to put your name prominently on the cover — and show it around to your friends. That's what I did for a project I'm working on with **Steven Heller**; I wrote and designed a ten-page spread (illustrated by my good friend, the incomparably hilarious **Oiso Davis**) and created a PDF in which the pages are repeated over and over again about fifteen times, then sent it off to Lulu.com for a single hardcopy.

The effect I was going for was a kind of bookish *trompe l'oeil* in which I create the impression of a real, full-length book. But more on that when the project actually comes to fruition.

In the meantime, I'm very pleasantly surprised and delighted by my first experiment with Lulu.com. I just got the end product in the mail last week, and when I opened it up I saw it was really just a bunch of laser prints hardbound together — nevertheless, it's convincing as heck. When I show it to friends and colleagues, their eyes light up with amazement at my name on the cover. I mean, it stops people in their tracks. Sadly, Web sites don't do that.

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1261 posts since July 2000.

Date

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About Me

I work as the Design Director at [NYTimes.com](#), and I have a dog named **Mister President**. [Read more.](#)

Please Note

Some things that may interest you.



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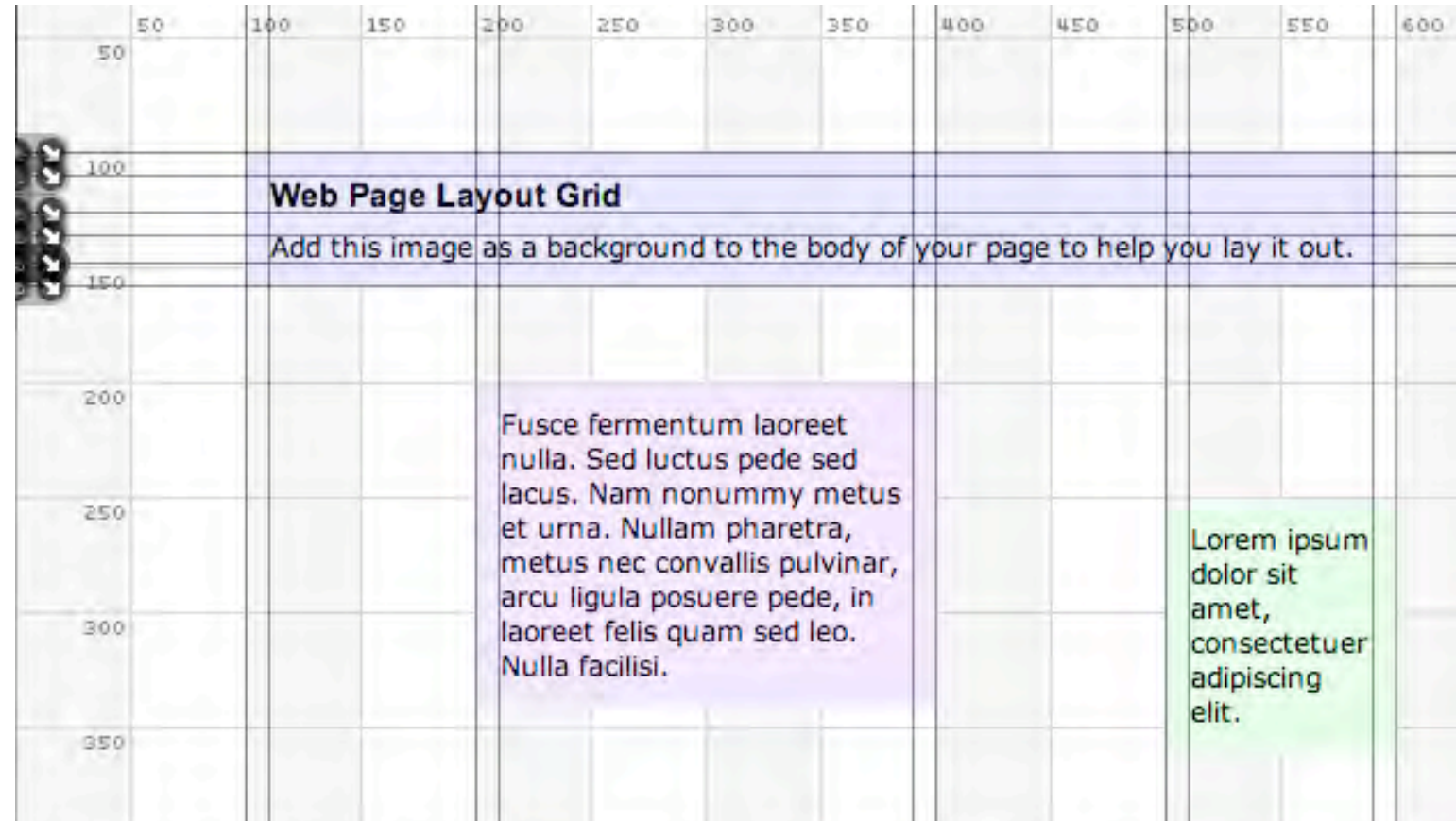
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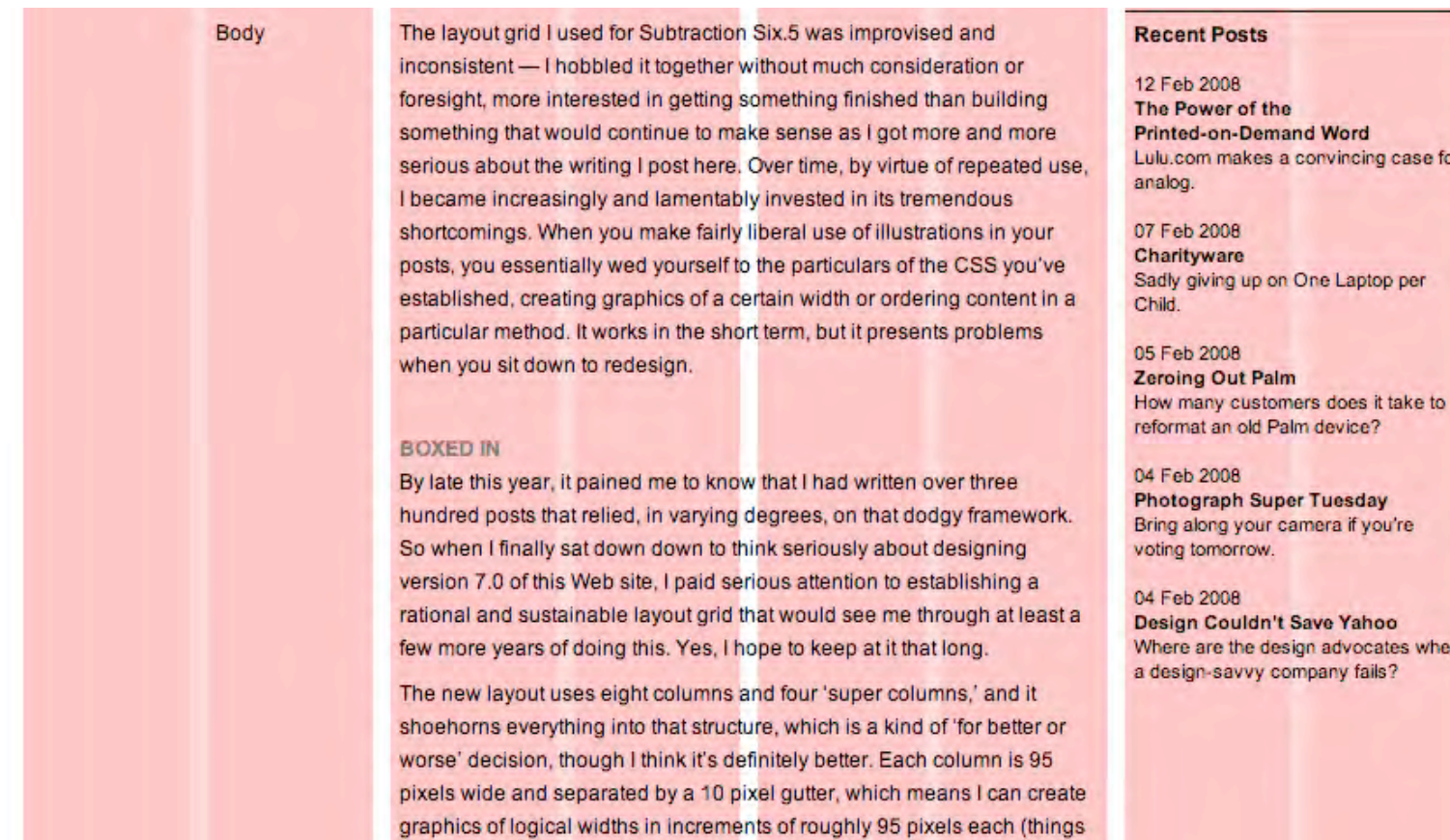
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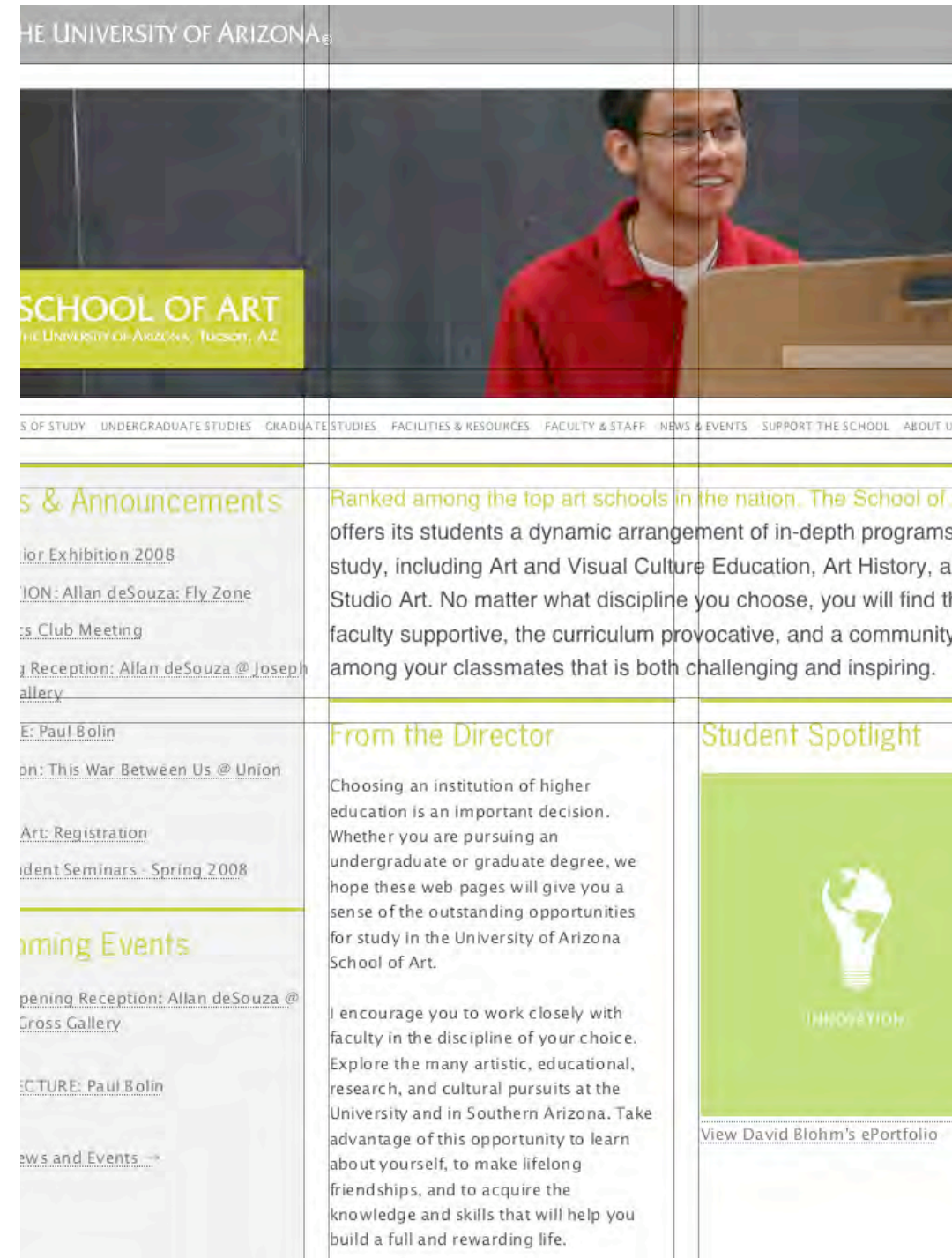
HTML, conveniently, interprets everything as a box. This makes grid-building easier.



The space between columns is known as a “gutter” and can be built using margin and padding in CSS

Line it up

- Make sure all major elements line up with something else
- Columns don't have to be blatant
- Keep it less than 4 columns



Pixels to ems

- Don't forget to translate from pixel measurements to em-based measurements
- $16\text{px} = 1\text{em}$
- $\text{Width}/16\text{px} = \text{size in ems}$

Typography

- Type when done right will be invisible
- Don't use more than 2 fonts
- Best: use 1, and vary size and weight
- Logos count too!

Variation

- Serifs (Georgia, Times New Roman) are good for headlines (h1, h2, h3, etc)
- Sans-serif (Helvetica, Verdana, Arial, Lucida Sans/Lucida Grande) are good for content
- Georgia, Helvetica, Verdana all work with Friz Quadrata (UA logo type)

I've got rhythm...

- The pattern of type on whitespace is called “rhythm”
- Rhythm is created by the line-height selector (known as “leading”)
- Establish a paragraph rhythm, then set the headings within that

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur elit.

Proin est quam, tempor iaculis, tristique a, quis, felis. Curabitur nisl quam, viverra id, pulvinar et, condimentum nec, tellus.

Setting the line-height

- Formula: font-size x 150%
- Thus, 10px (0.625em) font-size gets a line-height of 15px (0.75em).
- Some recommend 120% line-height, but that seems to close
- Too big a gap makes it hard to read
- Use either xScope or omnidea to ensure proper rhythm, or create a background image with the proper spacing on it to verify the rhythm
- Headings and images need to fit in the rhythm
- Images should line up the top edge with the top of the line of type they're nearest

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur elit.

10px

15px

Proin est quam, tempor iaculis, tristique a, quis,

felis. Curabitur nisl quam, viverra id, pulvinar et,

condimentum nec, tellus.

Don'ts

- Don't set everything in tiny type
- Browser defaults are 16px
- Recommended: no smaller than 0.85em (approx. 14px)

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur elit.
Proin est quam, tempor iaculis, tristique a, quis,
felis. Curabitur nisl quam, viverra id, pulvinar et,
condimentum nec, tellus.

10px, 15px line-height

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur
elit. Proin est quam, tempor iaculis, tris-
tique a, quis, felis. Curabitur nisl quam,
viverra id, pulvinar et, condimentum nec,
tellus.

12px, 18px line-height

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,
consectetur elit. Proin est
quam, tempor iaculis, tristique
a, quis, felis. Curabitur nisl
quam, viverra id, pulvinar et,
condimentum nec, tellus.

16px (browser default),
24px line-height

Color & Imagery

Contrast!

- Color is an easy way to establish contrast
- Also, it's easy to lose proper text-based contrast so be careful!
- Ideal contrast: type at #333333 (dark gray) and background at #ffffff (white)

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet

Color inspiration

- Existing logos (UA, College/School, etc)
- Photos
- Keep a balance of warm (reds, oranges, yellows, etc) and cool (blues, blacks, purples)



About the U of A Colors

- The University's colors are a good pair for each other, but make using additional colors tricky
- UA Cardinal Red is a very dominating color - good for borders, underlines, and generally as an accenting color (bad for type - it turns pink in a hurry)
- UA Navy Blue is good for backgrounds, type colors, basically as a primary

Images and Photos

- Consistency is key
- Theme the photos - only students doing activities, etc.
- Images of people are best - visitors will associate quickest with another person

In conclusion...

- Design is planned
- Start with structure
- Be consistent, clear, and simple
- Large type paired with whitespace will emphasize your message