

REDESIGNING THE HÜRRIYET NEWSPAPER WEBSITE: A CASE STUDY

by
EMRE PARLAK

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REDESIGNING THE HÜRRİYET NEWSPAPER WEBSITE: A CASE STUDY

APPROVED BY:

Onur Fatih Yazıcıgil, MFA
(Dissertation Supervisor)

Elif Ayiter, MFA

Erkan Saka, Asst. Prof. Dr.

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ABSTRACT

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Emre Parlak,

M.A, Visual Arts and Visual Communication Design

Supervisor: Onur Fatih Yazıcıgil

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Graphic designers possess an essential responsibility to use their skills to offer better solutions to social and informational design problems. This responsibility in shaping information flow has become even more pressing given the evolving historical nature of the digital environment.

The digital age started to create its culture, which frequently grew first from traditional roots. Mass media like newspapers and magazines were transformed into the digital environment in the form of the Web. Millions of websites have been created since the beginning of the Internet; however one of the most critical issues has grown more urgent. The digital culture started to demand new approaches to its problems. Websites are mostly created with methods derived from traditional media approaches, which can lead to complicated and incorrect design problems. Many newspaper websites that are the main provider for delivering information cannot transfer messages directly, efficiently and easily, and they cannot provide accurate responses to the new demands of the digital environment.

In these circumstances, graphic designers should focus on the requirements of the digital environment in order to provide optimum solutions to those new demands like interface, usability, and information architecture. To propose a solution according to the

demands that come from new and unfamiliar conditions of the digital era, the Hürriyet newspaper has been selected as a case study. The principal aims of this study are to explore the conventions of the digital environment, usability, information architecture, typography, and to propose new approaches to the digital environment.

Keywords: web design, usability, information architecture, interface, legibility, readability, typography, graphic design

ÖZ

HÜRRİYET GAZETESİ WEB SİTESİNİN YENİDEN TASARIMI: ÖRNEK ÇALIŞMA

Emre Parlak,
Görsel Sanatlar ve Görsel İletişim Tasarımı Yüksek Lisans Programı
Tez Yöneticisi: Onur Fatih Yazıcıgil
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Grafik tasarımcıların başlıca sorumluluklarından biri, becerilerini, toplumsal ve enformasyon tasarım sorunlarına daha iyi çözümler bulmak için kullanmaktır. Dijital ortamın evrilen tarihsel yapısı dikkate alındığında, bu bilgi akışını şekillendirme sorumluluğu iyice önem kazanmıştır.

Köklerini ilk olarak geleneksel ortamdan alan dijital çağ, kendi kültürünü üretmeye başlamıştır. Gazete ve dergi gibi kitlesel medya organları, internetin dijital ortamına uyum sağlayacak şekilde dönüşmüştür. İnternetin ortaya çıkışından beri milyonlarca site kurulmuştur. Ancak, en kritik sorunlardan biri gitgide daha da öne çıkmaktadır. Dijital kültür, sorunlarına yeni yaklaşımlar talep etmektedir. İnternet siteleri halen geleneksel medyadan miras kalmış yaklaşımlarla tasarlanmakta, bu da karmaşık tasarım sorunlarına ve yanlışlıklarına yol açmaktadır. Bilginin ana sağlayıcısı olan pek çok gazete sitesi, mesajları doğru, etkin ve kolay bir şekilde iletememekte; dijital ortamın yeni taleplerine gereken tepkileri verememektedir.

Bu koşullar altında, grafik tasarımcılar; dijital ortamın arayüz, kullanılabilirlik ve bilgi mimarisi gibi yeni taleplerine olabilecek en iyi çözümleri sunmak için, bu ortamın gerekliliklerine odaklanmalıdır. Dijital çağın yeni ve henüz kanıksanmamış taleplerine

uyan bir çözüm saęlamak amacıyla, Hürriyet gazetesinin internet sitesi çalışma konusu alınmıştır. Bu çalışmanın başlıca hedefleri, dijital ortamın ortak standartlarını, kullanılabilirliğini, bilgi mimarisini ve tipografisini inceleyerek, dijital ortama yeni yaklaşımlar sunmaktır.

Anahtar sözcükler: web tasarım, kullanılabilirlik, bilgi mimarisi, arayüz, okunaklılık, okunabilirlik, tipografi, grafik tasarım

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In 1964, Ken Garland, and twenty-one of his colleagues, published the manifesto, “First Things First”. The document emphasized that graphic designers have a significant responsibility to use their skills and experience worthwhile for social and informational design factors that improve education, culture and overall awareness of the world. “The critical distinction drawn by the manifesto was between design as communication (giving people necessary information) and design as persuasion (trying to get them to buy things)” as Rick Poynor says (Poynor, 1999). In today’s information age, the message established by Garland and his colleagues has only grown more urgent. Using design to communicate is an essential responsibility for visual communication designers.

After the 1980s, the computer age, and advances in technology, allowed people to experience interaction with devices in more close and intuitive ways. Computers and screens became one of the most important tools of mass communication. As a result, personal habits have been shaped and evolved by these new forms of digital environments. In the later part of the 20th century, there has been an important shift in communication. New media terms emerged, and the digital age generated its own culture, which frequently grew first from traditional roots. Traditional media, like newspapers, magazines and books were transformed into the digital environment in the form of the Internet. Afterwards, the digital culture started to demand new approaches to its problems. Since then, visual communication designers have had responsibilities to provide solutions to those new demands like interface, usability, and information architecture. And in order to provide those solutions, the digital environment should be analyzed and understood carefully.

Rapidly, websites became mainstream and a part of daily life. People increasingly use the Internet. As online users, we spend our time in front of the screens and live in the digital culture. One of the most critical problems is that websites are mostly created with methods derived from traditional media approaches, which can lead to complicated and incorrect design. Those approaches, and their resulting problems, affect millions of users who want easy and fast access to information. In modern society, newspapers and press media have been the main provider for delivering

information, but the role and status of journalism, along with other forms of mass media, are undergoing transformations as a result of the Internet. However, in that transformation, many newspaper websites cannot transfer messages directly, efficiently and easily, and they cannot provide accurate responses to the new demands of the digital environment. In the information flow of the Web, newspaper websites are significant transmitters of messages. Therefore, graphic designers should focus on the requirements of the digital environment in order to provide optimum solutions.

To propose a solution according to the demands that come from new and unfamiliar conditions of the digital era, the Hürriyet newspaper has been selected as a case study. In turn, it will be redesigned and an analysis will ensue.

The principal aims of this study are to explore the conventions of the digital environment, usability of websites, information architecture, the typography that forms the information, and to propose new ways of thinking about the traditions of interface and of hierarchy.

In the next chapter, an introduction to graphic design and its principles will be defined. A central focus will be placed on typography as a main element of graphic design. Additionally, as dependent on typography, legibility and readability issues will be described. The chapter will end with a synopsis of traditional media. The third chapter of this thesis will define the digital environment, the Internet and the Web. In this chapter, the elements and rules of web design will be described, and an emphasis will be placed on usability, information architecture, the grid system and typography. The fourth chapter will discuss the Hürriyet website as a case study and will provide an analytical review of the findings.

CHAPTER 2. BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHIC DESIGN

2.1. Graphic Design and Principles

“Design is the synthesis of form and content”, Paul Rand (Youtube, n.d.).

From dots to pixels, graphics can be signs, marks or lines that were the imprint of animal and helped early man hunt for food; or road markings on the highway. Design is an idea that is conveyed on a surface by the arrangement of dots, signs, marks and images all together.

When those dots come together, they can be letterforms and words, or images and photographs, or even a circle, triangle and square.

Graphic designers are form builders. They “create order out of disorder” (Vinh, 2011, p. 1).

The main role of the graphic designer and, conversely of graphic design, is to convey the message (information) by using a form of visual communication design with both expression and quality. Problem solving, organizing of space and shaping the information are also other important goals of graphic design.

Graphic design is a hybrid discipline. Diverse elements, including signs, symbols, words, and pictures, are collected and assembled into a total message. The dual nature of these graphic elements as both communicative sign and visual form provides endless fascination and potential for inventive combination. As Debbie Millman said, designers must balance both the logic and lyricism of humanity every time they design something (Millman, 2007, p.3). Designers transform the idea and the aesthetic value into a tangible, “natural” reality.

Graphic design has a communicative function, and designers seek solutions to public communication problems. Therefore, design is used to communicate, and designers provide better communication.

The designer combines graphic materials – words, pictures, and other graphic elements – to construct a visual communications gestalt – meaning, a configuration or structure with properties not derivable from the sum of its individual parts.

As Philip Meggs described, graphic design shares “universal language of form” (Meggs, 1989, p. 4) with other visual disciplines, like architecture or painting, and it has its own specific visual language. At the end, a designed message arrives to the audience. At that point, the perception of that message, which is conceived by the audience, can change according to audience’s previous history and habits. Like Milton Glaser stated that “the reason new forms usually don’t emerge from the design activity... is that design is in many ways a vernacular language. Design-related work assumes that the audience addressed has an a priori understanding of the vocabulary,” and it “conveys information based on the audience’s previous understanding.” Therefore, the content is formed by those elements that have already been created by the audience (Meggs, 1989, p. 4).

There is an important point demonstrated here which states that the users’ habits affect the understanding of a form, and that form exists in an environment where those users live and make contact with it. Conventions and surroundings construct their perceptions. Here, graphic designers have a role to shape those perceptions in a better way. Through this, surroundings improve with better design.

Graphic design has essential principles which should be known by designers before creating and solving design projects.

Space

“Space is a human need”, Ken Hiebert (White, 2002, p. 15).

Design elements are always viewed in relation to their surroundings. Design is the arrangement of shapes and space is a shape.

Space, also called white space or negative space, is generally ignored by all but the few who consciously manipulate it to establish contrast, to create drama, or to

provide a place of actual or visual rest like musicians, architects or painters. It is not necessarily white colored area in a design work (Figure 1).

Space is not an empty field. It is the field which makes the essential informational content perceived. Forms cannot breathe without it. The designer should use space very carefully and effectively for creating harmonious composition.

White space is a critical component that provides visual pathways and increases visibility.

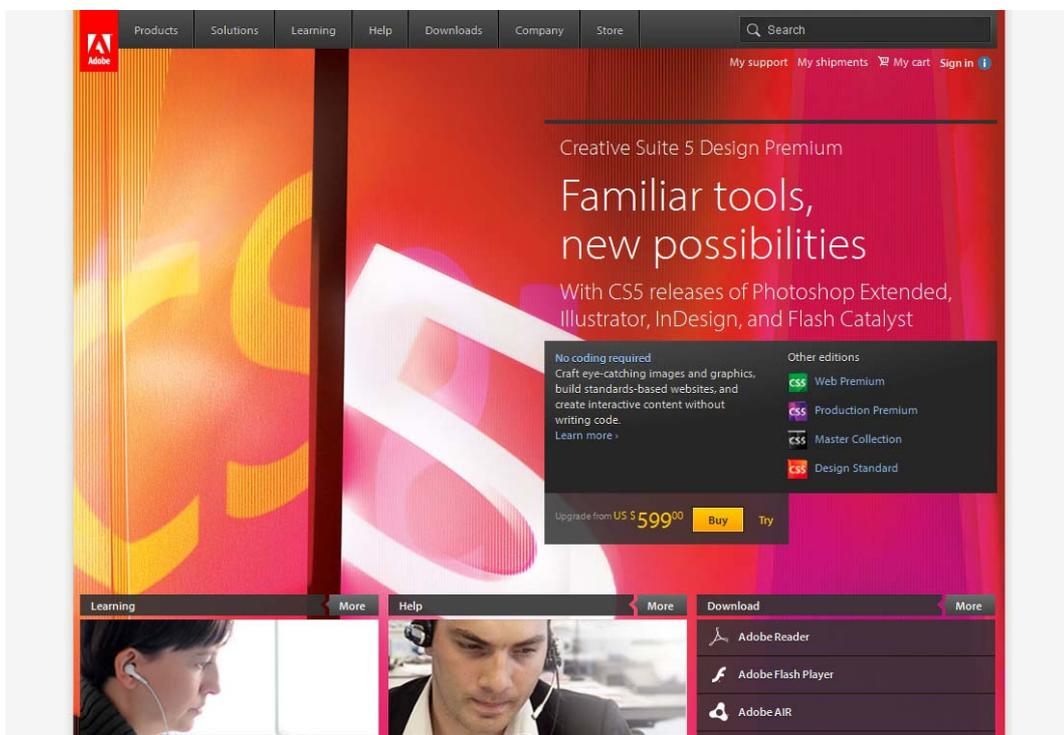


Figure 1. A good example of white space usage from Adobe website. There are both symmetrical and asymmetrical arrangements on the website. (Adobe.com)

According to the arrangement of elements in a space, there are two placements: symmetrical and asymmetrical.

Symmetry is a static and quiet, centered placement of elements in a space. However, *asymmetry* is dynamic and flexible. It is balance between unequal elements.

Unity is consistency and togetherness of all elements in space. In graphic design, the aim is to achieve visual unity or harmony. All visual elements in space should support each other. “Elements must be made to work together with the greatest interest to the reader and with the least resistance from the reader” (White, 2002, p. 51).



Figure 2. A good example of unity and togetherness of elements from Good.is website.

Using similarity and contrast in unity is also important to achieve effective dynamic design.

Hierarchy expresses content in order of importance: most important, least important and equally important. Design gains a meaning for the user with hierarchy. Good hierarchy exemplifies good structure.

Color is also one of the most important elements of graphic design as it directly affects the meaning and importance of the message. Color contrast works with and alters hierarchy. Color should also be used consistency and carefully. Over usage of color can affect the users negatively and can disrupt the harmony.

Page Architecture is, like the architecture in which light switches are always placed at the same height from the floor, a visual consistency that contains typographic style, grid and column structure and margins. To place the information in order and with structure is important.



Figure 3. On Hürriyet website, there are lack of hierarchy, page architecture and unity. Elements on the page appear to be in the air and alignments are random.¹

Grids help to create the structure of content and to put complex information in order. It creates limits and decisions to reach consistency and harmony in its invisible order. Grids facilitate the communication between messages and users. Max Bill, Emil Ruder, and Josef Müller-Brockmann were the first to create a flexible system able to help designers achieve coherency in organizing the page. Using grids effectively is very essential for graphic design².

Baseline grid is the line that serves to anchor nearly all layout elements to a common rhythm.

¹ In Chapter 4, the Hürriyet website will be analyzed in more detail.

² In Chapter 3, grids will be examined in more detail.

The term *line spacing*, also called *leading*, is the vertical distance from the baseline of lines of text. Leading can be a design element in a layout by affecting the lightness of the text block.

In the next section of the paper, there is a brief history of letterforms to give additional details on typography.

2.2. Typography

“Typography at its best is a visual form of language linking timelessness and time” (Bringhurst 2004, p. 17).

Typography, from the Greek words ‘typos’ (form) and ‘grapheia’ (writing), is to provide communication and to convey messages with many different visual forms of geometry (Online Etymology Dictionary).

As a communicative function, typography is the most important element of graphic design. It “exists to honor content” (Bringhurst 2004, p. 17). It directly conveys and affects the message to the audience with visual letterforms. Typography delivers message and form, and creates legibility and readability through its effective usage.

From the movable type to screen typefaces, the importance of typography for graphic designers has been a vital tool in problem solving for centuries. As Ellen Lupton said, “Typefaces are an essential resource employed by graphic designers, just as glass, stone, steel, and countless other materials are employed by architects” (Lupton, 2004, p. 13). From individual letterforms to word and paragraphs, typography plays an essential role to shape, as well as to organization in putting in order mass information.

2.2.1. Brief History of Letterforms

Although numerous systems and subsets exist, the basic system for type classification is: Old Style, Transitional, Modern, Slab Serif (Egyptian), Grotesque Sans Serif and Humanist Sans Serif (Figure 4).



Figure 4. The basic system for type classification.

From Gutenberg's movable type to today's digital typefaces, for centuries many strides were taken to reach the present. After movable type was invented by Johannes Gutenberg in 1456, typefaces were no longer stable; they continued to be under development.

Gutenberg created the handmade manuscript the 42-line Bible that was set in dark gothic handwriting – Blackletter type and consisted of two 42-line columns per page. Blackletter type (also known as *Textura* – the formal script of northern Germany), is a heavy, dark script that was common during the Gothic Middle Ages in Europe (Figure 5).



Figure 5. A close-up part of Gutenberg's Bible (From Digital Gutenberg Images).

During the 1460s and 1470s, Humanist types started to appear. The first roman type, cut in 1470, and had only 23 letters. It was created by the French printer Nicolas Jenson in 1469. The letters contained lighter, rounder and more open forms, and merged with the gothic tradition roman typefaces.

The Old Style types started to represent themselves with their characteristic contrast of thick and thin strokes. The serifs on the ascenders became more wedge-shaped and the positions of letterforms became upright (Figure 6).

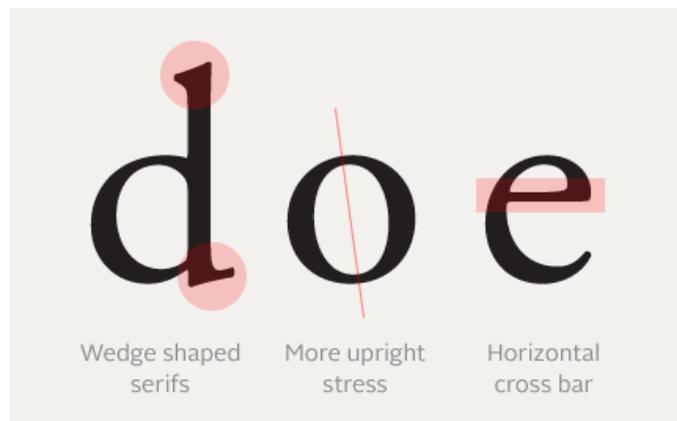


Figure 6. Old style characteristics.

In the Renaissance period, artists, affected by Rationalism, argued that letterforms should be created in the form of the idealized human body. Artists and scientists began working together to analyze the Roman letters. In 1529, the French typographer Geofroy Tory, published a series of diagrams in his Champ Fleury book. The most ideal form of Roman letters was placed into a square of subdivided hundred squares. (Meggs, 1998, p. 107) In 1692, the French King Louis XIV appointed a committee in the French Academy of Science to construct roman type against the grid

system type. Romain du Roi (King's Alphabet) appeared in 1695 and, with its serifs and hairlines, pioneered the way for modern typefaces (Figure 7).

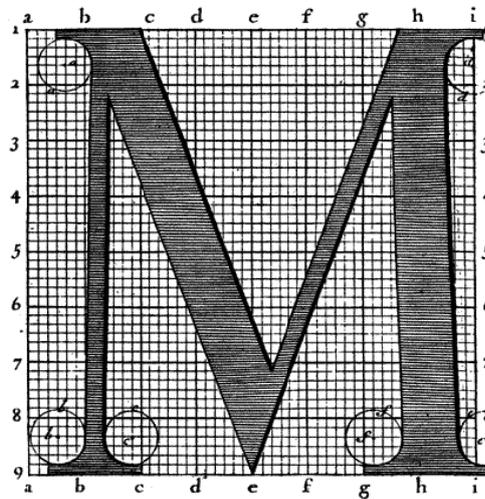


Figure 7. From Romain du Roi. Letter M. (From www.papress.com)

In eighteenth century England, an outgrowth of Enlightenment thinking, John Baskerville created his transitional typefaces which reflected high sharpness and contrast, thick and thin strokes called 'transitional' because of the forms between old style and modern. Letterforms are more geometric and sharp than the unassuming faces of the Old Style period.

Extreme contrast in typefaces appeared later by typographers Giambattista Bodoni and Françoise Didot, who were both heavily influenced by Baskerville. Their typefaces, which have high thick-thin relationships between the stems and the serifs, revealed a new style of typography that differed from calligraphy and old style types of sixteenth century. Bodoni and Didot became the representatives of 'modern' typefaces. Modern letterforms have a high contrast between thick and thin strokes, very thin hairline serifs, a vertical axis, a horizontal stress and a small aperture (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Didot and Bodoni letter “a”.

In the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution directly affected the development of typography. Because of the increasing demands from advertising and commerce, letterforms became scaled, bold and heavy. Display typefaces appeared with the introduction of new tools, like the pantograph and advanced wood-type. The Industrial Revolution caused distortion of letterforms. They emerged in the form of vertical, heavy slab serifs, or Egyptians. Later in the 19th century, sanserif typefaces appeared. In 1816, William Caslon IV created Two Lines English Egyptian, which was the first sanserif type. In 1898, the H. Berthold AG type foundry created the Akzidenz Grotesk sanserif typeface which was the first sans serif typeface to be widely used and influenced many later neo-grotesque typefaces (Figure 9). Later, Max Miedinger at the Haas Foundry used it as a model for the typeface Neue Haas Grotesk, released in 1957 and renamed Helvetica in 1960.



Figure 9. An example of Akzidenz-Grotesk font. (From a type specimen/promotional booklet for Bertold Akzidenz Grotesk)

During the Bauhaus period, typefaces were constructed from basic geometric shapes. In 1927, Paul Renner designed the geometric typeface Futura. And in 1928, Gill Sans, a sanserif typeface based on humanist, roman proportions, was released. In 1954, Adrian Frutiger designed the sans-serif typeface Univers, which is one of a group of neo-grotesque sans-serif typefaces and is based on the Akzidenz-Grotesk typeface (Figure 10).

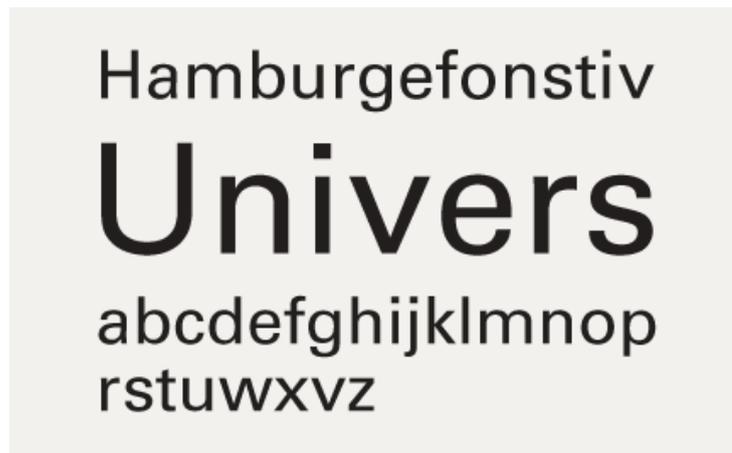


Figure 10. Example of the Univers typeface.

In the mid-1980s, after personal computers and printers, anyone interested in typography could try creating typefaces and typographic design. Designing typefaces was no longer an expensive or hard task. In 1985, Zuzana Licko designed typefaces like Oakland, Emperor and Emigre bitmap fonts, specifically for use on the 72 dot per inch computer screen and dot matrix printer before high resolution outline fonts were available (Figure 11).

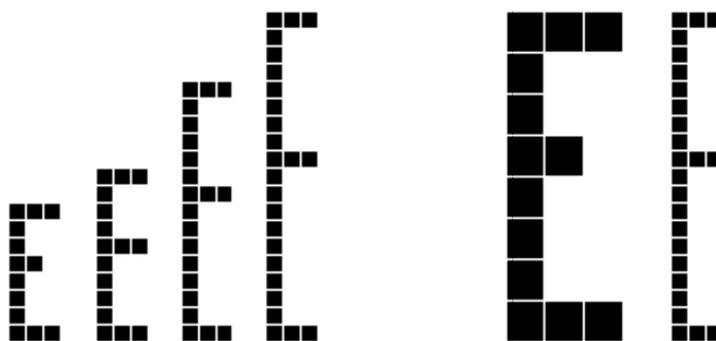


Figure 11. Left: Emperor Eight, Ten, Fifteen and Nineteen. The numbers eight, ten, fifteen and nineteen refer to the number of pixels that compose the capital height. Right: Scaling Emperor Eight (left) to and Emperor Nineteen (right) to the same capital height measure illustrates why a higher resolution is required to render Emperor Nineteen (<http://www.emigre.com/EFoICoaD.php>).

Regardless of resolution, all digital type and images are built out of blocks on a grid structure. These building elements are called "pixels" (picture elements) and the resulting image is the "bitmap," literally the "map of bits."

Pixel-based fonts for screens and digital media appeared as rapidly as advances in technology. In chapter three, digital typography, appearing after the digital revolution, will be analyzed in more detail.

There are several important factors in which typographic clarity come in two flavors: legibility and readability, which affect the readers' experience in good and bad ways, depending on their usage.

2.2.2. Legibility

Generally, the main aim of legibility is for a reader to understand and differentiate typographic forms and characteristics with the least amount of difficulty. Readers should communicate as clearly and appropriately as possible.

Legibility is dependent on three qualities: contrast, simplicity, and proportion. Legibility, which is the ability to recognize individual letters or words, is distinguished

from readability, which refers to entire words, sentences, and paragraphs. Legible typography means that it communicates information objectively. (Carter, Day and Meggs, 2007, p. 73)

If a text type is distinct and large enough to set apart each character and word, then it is legible. Contrary, if a text type is too small or complicated to comprehend then it is an illegible type (Figure 12).



Figure 12. From legible to illegible text example.

After legibility, there is one more step to reaching a successful reading experience. That is readability.

2.2.3. Readability

Readability is one step further of legible text. Type can be conceived and recognized as a unit of characters, but it does not mean that it will be readable, too. Legible text does not mean readable text. To call text readable means that letters, as a whole, should be comprehended and read clearly.

On the article page of the Hürriyet website there is a text size option that allows users to enlarge or lessen the font size. However, there is no limitation for enlargements, so after clicking the enlarge text button five or six times, a good, unreadable text example appears on the page. Although text is still legible, it is unreadable (Figure 13).



Figure 13. An example from an article page of the Hürriyet website.

“Legibility” is concerned with the ease with which a letter or word can be recognized (as in an eye exam), whereas “readability” describes the ease with which a text can be understood (as in the mental processing of meaningful sentences) (Lupton, 2003).

Reading ability comes from our innate pattern recognition behavior. Firstly, people recognize the larger patterns of words as a gestalt, and then they never again read the individual letters. Words are conceived as a whole unit form (Hill, 1999, p.12).

There is storage of pattern database in minds to recognize keywords. Reading, as a system, is an automated process that involves serial pattern recognition.

If the type size is too large and very few words will fit on the line, then word spacing and line endings will break the rhythm of reading and illegibility will occur. Equally so, if the type size is too small and many words fit on each line, then the same illegibility will occur because of a too wide text line, which causes a greater eye span.

A normal eye span is between 12 and 15 picas wide (approximately between 5cm and 6,35cm wide). If a column of text is too wide – slightly more than two eye

spans – we must move our heads as well as our eyes. This is a tiring and inefficient way to read (Binns, n.d.).

Line-length is one of the most important factors for legible text. At an average reading distance, an optimum value is between 55 and 65 letters and spaces per line, in normal type sizes of 10-12 point. For instance, on the article page of the Hürriyet website, there are 136 letters on a line, which causes unreadable text (Figure 14).

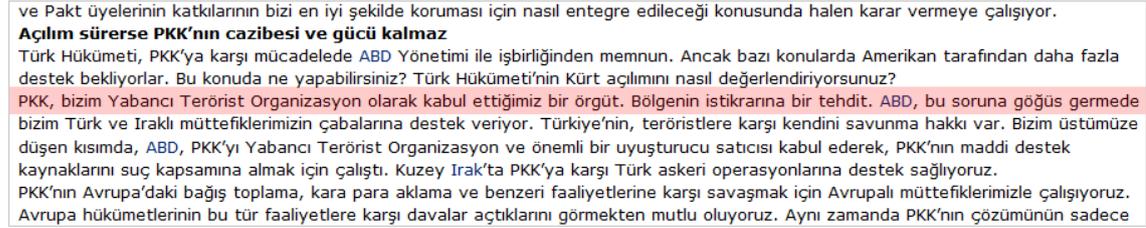


Figure 14. An example from an article page of the Hürriyet website.

According to some research and survey studies about the reading, there are several factors that affect the selection on how text is read better.

One of those factors is habit factor. Type designer Zuzana Licko discusses the habit factor in that, “Typefaces are not intrinsically legible. Rather, it is the reader’s familiarity with faces that accounts for their legibility. Readers read best what they read most. It seems curious that blackletter type styles, which we find illegible today, were actually preferred over more humanistic designs during the eleventh and fifteenth centuries. Similarly, typestyles that we perceive as illegible today may well become tomorrow’s classic choices” (Licko, 1994, p. 12).

On print, there is a wide usage of humanist sanserif and serif typefaces. Conversely, for the screen, grotesque sanserifs, like Arial, Verdana and Helvetica typefaces, typefaces are widely used and may be a result of the habit factor.

Today, reading habits have been affected more by digital environments than in past years. Since technological improvements have led to devices with advanced screens, the reading experience occurs more often on digital screens. People now have many typefaces for text setting, and as a result, differences between the readability of sanserif and serif type on screen have been blurred and have disappeared.

“Readability takes legibility a step further. It is the quality that makes text easy to read, inviting and pleasurable to the eye. Text may be legible, but if the reader is unable to read smoothly and easily and becomes quickly tired and bored, the designer has not achieved readability” (Betty Binns, Readability and Legibility in Text).

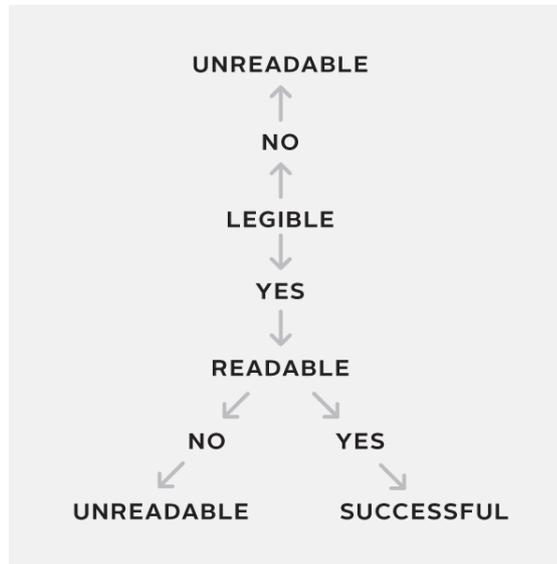


Figure 15. Legible and Illegible chart.

There are some factors that psychologists have discovered about the process of reading and readability. These include: proportion of the type size, line width, and the space between the lines. Two other factors that affect readability are: the proportion of type size to line width, and the ease of horizontal eye movement conditioned by the white space between lines.

We read horizontally from left to right. The eye movement should be made easily without any obscurities. So, there is a need to create adequate space between lines of type.

On print media, serif typefaces can be read easier partially because of their horizontal strokes, which facilitate horizontal eye movement (Hill, 1999, p.38). On the other hand, there is some research about screen type which demonstrates that grotesque typefaces can be read easier because serifs, on pixel based screen technology, become more blurred and cause glitches.

Type designer Zuzana Licko once said “We read best what we read most” (Maria, 2009). This notion rings true in our learned behavior, but also reveals the reason for the typographer’s toughest challenge: Reading is a personal and relative act. Reading a long passage in a Blackletter face, once considered “readable” centuries ago, would take us considerably more time than if that passage was set in a basic serif face. Most of what we read now, whether in print or online, is set in simple serif and sans serif typefaces.

2.3. Traditional Media and Newspaper

The old, or traditional, media are tools of communication that have existed since before the advent of the new medium, the Internet. Industries that are generally considered part of the old media are broadcast and cable television, radio, movie and music studios, newspapers, magazines, books and most print publications and print media.

One of the most important implementation areas of graphic design has been print media and newspapers. For many years, people have used this media to obtain information. It continues still, but has since decreased because of the new media. Reading experiences on print have since been transformed into an experience on screens. Typography is one of the key elements for the print design process. Newspapers demonstrate effective information hierarchy and define an order in which readers will grasp the content. Typography, images, and color are used together to create a harmony that conveys the messages in an order.

After the invention of movable type and the printing press, the first newspapers appeared in Europe in the seventeenth century. Before the invention of newspapers, official government bulletins for business and matters of public interest were circulated, at times, in some centralized empires like, Ancient Rome. One example of a government announcement is *Acta Diurna*, which means "daily acts" in Latin, and was made public by Julius Caesar. *Acta Diurna* was carved on stone or metal and presented in message boards in public places like the Forum of Rome. It was a sort of daily gazette, the prototype of the modern newspaper.

The first recognized newspaper was Johann Carolus's Relation in 1605 Strasbourg. The first newspaper of modern Germany was the Avisa, and was also one of the first news-periodicals in the world. It was published in 1609 in Wolfenbüttel. Later on, other early papers appeared in the Netherlands, England, France and Portugal. By the end of the nineteenth century, the global spread of the printing press, along with the adoption of Western printing technology, allowed for further expansion of the printing process and of newspapers.

The Industrial Revolution provided advances in typesetting and printing technology. Further aided by an increase of communication and transportation systems, newspapers became an even more widely circulated means of information. Developments were adapted to print on both sides of a page at once. This innovation made newspapers cheaper and thus available to a larger part of the population. In the 1850's powerful, giant presses appeared, able to print ten thousand complete papers per hour. At this time the first "pictorial" weekly newspapers emerged; they featured, for the first time, extensive illustrations of events in the news, as woodcut engravings were made from correspondents' sketches or taken from that new invention, the photograph. During this period, appeared the features of the modern newspaper, bold "banner" headlines, extensive use of illustrations, "funny pages," and expanded coverage of organized sporting events appeared. The rise of "yellow journalism"³ also marks this era.

³ Yellow journalism is a type of journalism that presents little or no legitimate well-researched news and instead uses eye-catching headlines to sell more newspapers.

CHAPTER 3. THE DIGITAL ERA AND THE WEB

3.1. Introduction to the Digital Environment: the Internet and Digital Media

Gutenberg's invention of the printing press enabled the production of more book copies in a shorter time. After electricity came into view, radio and television soon appeared. In the early 1960s, the Internet occurred as a result of a need to share information in scientific and military research. In 1969, ARPANET appeared, which initially connected four major computers at universities in the southwestern United States. In 1989, Tim Berners-Lee, and others who worked at CERN (European Laboratory for Particle Physics), proposed a new protocol, which eventually became the World Wide Web in 1991 for information distribution. This protocol was based on a *hypertext system*⁴ of embedding links in text for creating an easy-to-use and flexible format for sharing information over the Internet. Then websites appeared and today's digital environment began to spread.

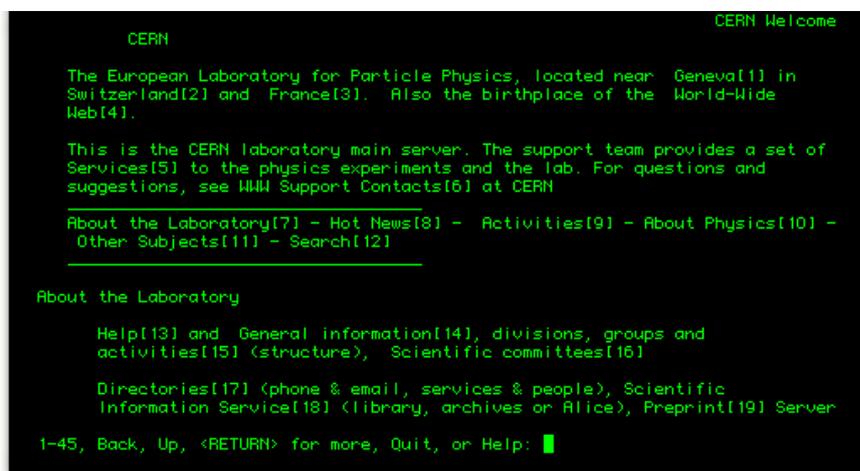


Figure 17. CERN's early homepage would have seen something like this (<http://info.cern.ch/LMBrowser.html>).

The first widely-used graphical web browser was Mosaic, and was developed at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign beginning in late 1992. (Berners-Lee) Fifteen years after

⁴ Hypertext is text displayed on a computer or other electronic device with references to other text that the reader can immediately access, usually by a mouse click or key press sequence.

Mosaic's introduction, the most popular contemporary browsers, Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome, retain many of the characteristics of the original Mosaic graphical user interface (GUI)⁵ and interactive experience.

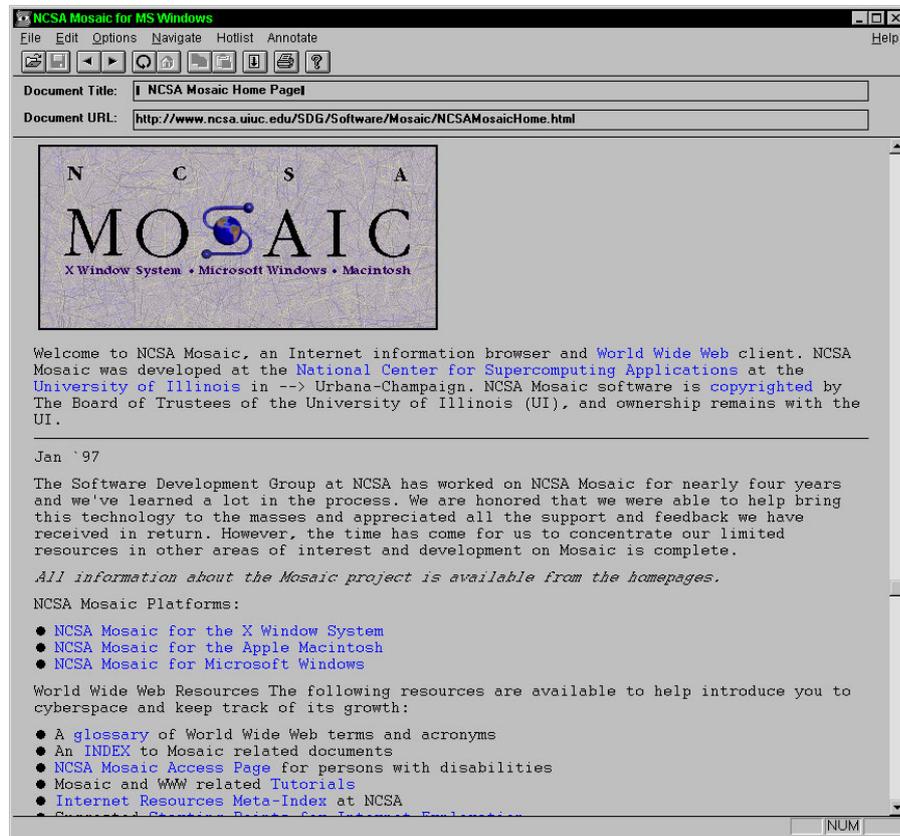


Figure 18. Mosaic graphical browser
(http://www.plyojump.com/classes/internet_era.html).

After that, the term ‘social media’ arose. It is a media for social interaction which uses highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media uses web-based technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogues through the Web 2.0 which allows users to create, interact and collaborate together with user-generated content.

Technology has empowered the consumer to become the Prosumer. The term Prosumer was coined in 1980 by futurist Alvin Toffler in his book, “The Third Wave”, as a blend of producer and consumer. Prosumers create the content like, videos, photos

⁵ A graphical user interface allows users to interact with programs and offers graphical icons, and visual indicators, as opposed to text-based interfaces, typed command labels or text navigation to fully represent the information and actions available to a user.

and writings, and then distribute and share the content to millions of people via social media. This is also known as user-generated content (UGC). The Youtube website is a successful example of user-generated content. All the content on the website are created by its users (Figure 19) (World Wide Words, 1999).

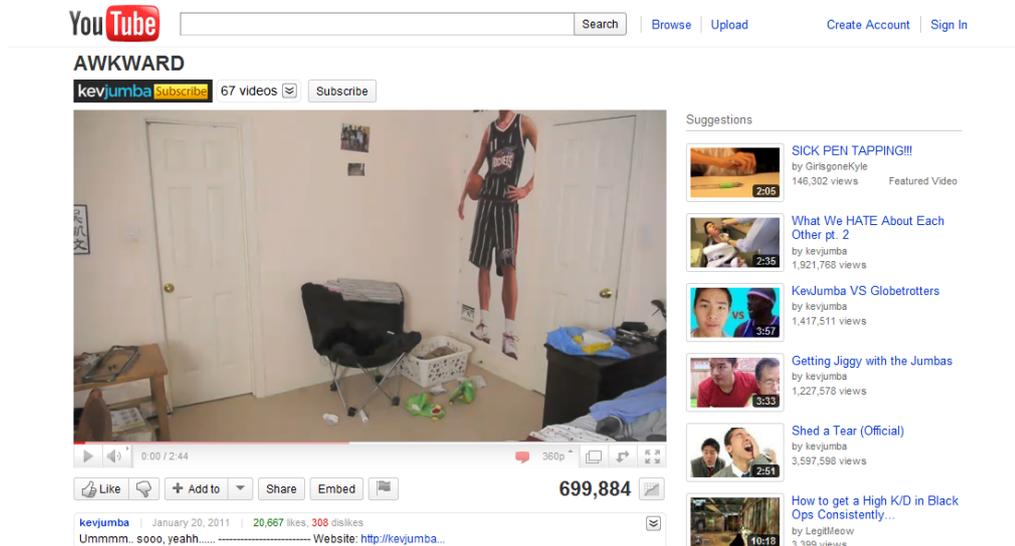


Figure 19. Screenshot from YouTube website (Youtube.com).

User-generated content, which is a two-way process, in contrast to the one-way distribution of the latter, has also been characterized as 'Conversational Media' (or Citizen media)⁶, as opposed to the mass media⁷ of the past century. Conversational or two-way media is a key characteristic of so-called Web 2.0 which encourages the publishing of one's own content and commenting on other people's.

To see the power of the Internet and social media, below are several examples that show the number of years it took a media to reach a market audience of 50 Million:

- * Radio - 38 Years
- * TV - 13 Years
- * The Internet - 4 Years

⁶ The term citizen media refers to forms of content produced by private citizens who are otherwise not professional journalists.

⁷ Mass media refers collectively to all media technologies - including television, newspapers, and radio - which are used for mass communications (delivering messages to a large audience), and to the organizations which control these technologies.

* The iPod - 3 Years

* Facebook - 2 Years

The need for traditional media has decreased since the advent of the Internet because it enabled users to receive, 24/7, instantly updated free content. And when it gives information, it also allows users to participate, evaluate and share. Traditional media is a static and one-way communication; however, digital media is interactive and dynamic.

Sir Tim Berners-Lee stated that the term web became the 'read/write' web. Users became a part of the creative process in a universal medium (BBC, 2005).

In the digital media, there is an increasingly vast information flow from thousands of sources and, consequently, the content is scanned and consumed just as quickly. One of the main, and perhaps the most important, attitudes for using these sources is the need to reach information urgently. Subsequent to that, reading is the other key factor that affects a user's experience to reach this necessity.

As a result of that speed, essential information should be delivered to users in the most direct and efficient way.

Effects of social media on traditional media

In modern society, newspapers and press media have been the main provider of delivering information, but the role and status of journalism, along with other forms of mass media, are undergoing transformations resulting from the Internet. Web 2.0. Social media will especially play a key role in that transformation.

Social media gives any business an interactive channel to communicate with its current and future customers. For newspapers, that channel can increase the chances of survival in a market where commoditized information has diminished the value of individual brands (Mashable, 2009).

Today, the average consumer spends fourteen hours watching TV and fourteen hours using the internet each week, according to a European Interactive Advertising Association (EIAA) report. As a result, the Internet is a very important area for brands to reach and broaden their audience (Understanding Digital Media Consumption, n.d.).

According to reports from Microsoft, by 2012, the population of Europe is projected to surpass the number of people reading a newspaper. 76% of Europeans who both read print publications and use the internet consider that the Web has a more comprehensive source of information. 69% of those said that they can find all of the information they need online. Audience consumption habits are changing and new forms of media consumption has appeared. Although print media still play an important role for brands, online media is rapidly becoming dominant. It provides more dynamic advertising through various formats and channels (Microsoft, 2010).

The newspaper industry currently faces the unique situation of having one form of journalism now split between two separate media: print and online editions.

Today, nearly all newspapers try to catch the attention of a digital audience by using Twitter and other social media sites to share and spread their information.

Newspaper sites should be usable, effective and fast because users have strong options which can lead them to skip immediately to another site just one click away. They should provide an opportunity to their users to personalize the content according to their interests.

Users have begun to use other social media sources instead of newspaper sites to obtain needed information because other sources like Twitter or Facebook, use social media and allow users to be a part the process. Also, those sites are more interactive and reflect the real soul of the Internet. Because the Internet is a non-linear contrast to traditional print media, it interacts with its users.

The website, Mashable.com, asked their users which source they use the most to obtain the news: Twitter or newspapers. The poll totaled 1972 users and resulted in the

following: Twitter 52.3% (1,032 votes), newspapers 21.7% (427 votes), another source 14.9% (293 votes) and both 11.2% (220 votes) (Mashable, 2010).

The poll indicates that mostly Twitter or other social media websites are used to access the news instead of newspaper websites. Those social media websites are successful because of their users' activities and different information flow from them.

The habits of readers have also been changed by big search engines like Google and others. Sources of information on the Web are variable, individual, free, instant and open for contribution. Users can reach many options and alternatives easily.

The internet has enabled thousands of individual commentators to communicate directly with others through blogs or instant message services. Even open journalism projects like Wikipedia have contributed to the reordering of the media landscape, as readers are no longer restricted to established print organizations for information. Wikipedia allows users to edit and create the content (Kristof, 2009).

Newspapers need to keep up with the digital environment and should use their websites more effectively according to the new media order. At that point, the websites should be analyzed and further improved in order to be used as effective mean of communication. In the next section 3.2, web design, its elements and principles will be discussed.

3.2. Web Design: Basics, Elements, Rules

Web design is a broad term used to encompass the way that content (usually hypertext or hypermedia) is delivered to an end-user through the World Wide Web, and how, using either a web browser or other web-enabled software, that content is displayed.

Web design consists of various disciplines such as, graphic design, interactive design, and programming, and it is a visual harmony of all those elements in order and architecture.

User experience designer Darcy DiNucci writes in her article, "Fragmented Future" that, "The Web will be understood not as screenfulls of text and graphics but as a transport mechanism, the ether through which interactivity happens. It will appear on your computer screen, on your TV set, your car dashboard, your cell phone, hand-held game machines, maybe even your microwave oven" (DiNucci, 1999).

Nico Macdonald said that web design has its own dynamism and interaction which improve users' experiences (Macdonald, 2003, p. 6). It is a part of digital environments that encourage and facilitate users' activity, "reflect or adapt to individual voices and content; and change gracefully over time while always retaining their identity" (Zeldman, 2007).

In web design, form and content also exist strongly, as in graphic design. Here the content is the information that is displayed on a website and the form is how the information is displayed. The form is the layout, typefaces, navigation, usability, colors, and so on. The important point is that both form and content merge harmoniously in order for design to be effective. Good form should merge with good content otherwise people may not stay for long; they may find a better alternative. On the web design, both form and content are equally important (UX Movement, 2010).

Web design, like other design disciplines, can be various design styles according to its target audience and the message it conveys. For newspapers and news media the design should be clear and effective. To keep and deliver the information with least amount of noise and obstacles, design should be transparent and balanced. Like Jeffrey Zeldman said that "Great web designs are like great typefaces: some, like Rosewood, impose a personality on whatever content is applied to them. Others, like Helvetica, fade into the background (or try to), magically supporting whatever tone the content provides" (Zeldman, 2007).

There are many factors in which to use the web as a powerful message giving tool.

Accessibility is one the most important factors for the web. Grabbing information is much easier today as there are many sources to create and distribute

information. Consumption culture is more intensive than before, and in the information flow, users want to access the information they need quickly and easily. In this situation, the designers' role is vital in order to provide accurate communication between sender and receiver without any disturbance.

The correct message, which is going to the user, should consist of a harmonious arrangement of visual communication design such as, typography, images, photography and video. It should be transparent as much as neutral.

In "The Language of New Media," Lev Manovich argues that a new dichotomy of content-interface has arisen from the old dichotomy of content-form. After observing that "we are increasingly 'interfacing' to predominantly cultural data" via computers, he defines cultural interfaces as the interfaces used by new media to access the old types of cultural content and examines their evolution. Manovich claims that the cultural interfaces drew heavily on the familiar traditional forms of the printed word, cinema and general-purpose human-computer interface, by using metaphors like index, page or window. For example, web pages in the early years resembled magazine pages of the era, dominated by blocks of text and decorated with few visual elements; the information flowed in a much linear way. It took time for cultural interfaces to develop their own set of metaphors and strategies, which still continues today (Manovich, 2001).

According to Jakob Nielsen's *law of the web user experience*, users spend most of their time on other sites, so that's where they form their expectations for how the Web works. That is *the web convention*. Users' conventions determine all the perception, and users act through the memories that are formed by their experiences on the Web.

Jakob Nielsen determined that there are very crucial mistakes in web design that directly affect users.

The search function is the user's lifeline for mastering complex websites. It should differentiate variations like plurals and hyphens. The best designs offer a simple search box on the homepage and play down advanced search and scoping. For instance, Google is very successful because of its simple layout in which on the center of the page, there is only a logo, a search box and a button at the first glance (Figure 20).

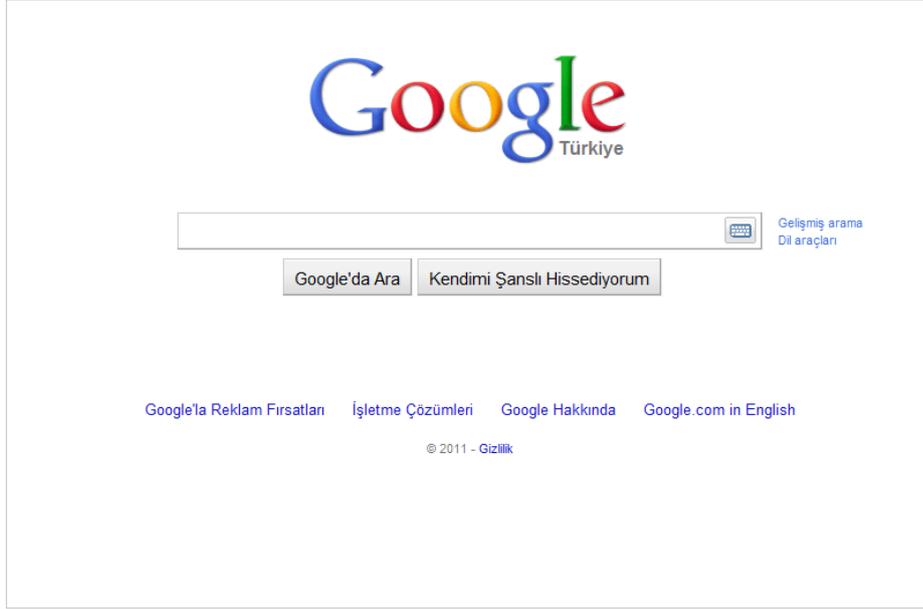


Figure 20. Google homepage (Google.com).

To reduce navigational confusion, visited links should be displayed in a different color. It also facilitates users to remember their activities. On the Web, there is a convention that links are generally in blue, occurring since the first appearance of the Web.

A wall of text discourages reading as it is very boring for users. Reading on the web is different than reading from print. The Web needs shorter, more simplified text and highlighted keywords. On an article page of the Hürriyet website, there is a good example of a wall of text that discourages the reading experience (Figure 21).

müzakerelerin ardından alındı. Sistem, bazı ülkelerde balistik füzelerin yaygınlaşması ya da devlet dışı aktörlerin şimdi ya da gelecekte müttefikleri tehdit edebilmesine bir cevap, bir savunma kapasitesi. Özellikle bir ülkeye yönelik değil. Pakt, bu kararın nasıl uygulanacağı ve Pakt üyelerinin katkıların bizi en iyi şekilde koruması için nasıl entegre edileceği konusunda halen karar vermeye çalışıyor.

Açılım sürerse PKK'nın cazibesi ve gücü kalmaz

Türk Hükümeti, PKK'ya karşı mücadelede ABD Yönetimi ile işbirliğinden memnun. Ancak bazı konularda Amerikan tarafından daha fazla destek bekliyorlar. Bu konuda ne yapabilirsiniz? Türk Hükümeti'nin Kürt açılımını nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

PKK, bizim Yabancı Terörist Organizasyon olarak kabul ettiğimiz bir örgüt. Bölgenin istikrarına bir tehdit. ABD, bu soruna göğüs germede bizim Türk ve Iraklı müttefiklerimizin çabalarına destek veriyor. Türkiye'nin, teröristlere karşı kendini savunma hakkı var. Bizim üstümüze düşen kısımda, ABD, PKK'yı Yabancı Terörist Organizasyon ve önemli bir uyuşturucu satıcısı kabul ederek, PKK'nın maddi destek kaynaklarını suç kapsamına almak için çalıştı. Kuzey Irak'ta PKK'ya karşı Türk askeri operasyonlarına destek sağlıyoruz.

PKK'nın Avrupa'daki bağış toplama, kara para aklama ve benzeri faaliyetlerine karşı savaşmak için Avrupalı müttefiklerimizle çalışıyoruz. Avrupa hükümetlerinin bu tür faaliyetlere karşı davalar açtıklarını görmekten mutlu oluyoruz. Aynı zamanda PKK'nın çözümünün sadece askeri olmadığını vurguluyoruz. Bu, insan hakları ve bütün Türkiye vatandaşlarının yaşam standartlarını geliştirme çabaları ile art arda yürümlü. Türkiye'deki Kürtler ve diğer gruplar için insan hakları ve ekonomik durumun iyileştirilmesi inisiyatifi "Milli Birlik Projesi" türü adımları memnuniyetle karşılıyor. ABD, geçen yıl Kürtçe ve diğer dillerde devlet ve özel TV yayıncılığının başlamasını, Kürtçe ve diğer diller dahil üniversitelerde dil bölümlerinin açılmasını ve Antiterör Yasası'nda yapılan son değişiklikleri de memnuniyetle karşıladı. Bunlar, devam ettirilip ve zaman içinde genişletilirse, PKK'nın cazibesi ve gücünü zayıflatırarak türden adımlardır.

Heybeliada Ruhban Okulu'nu hatırlattı

ABD Dışişleri Bakanlığı, yayınladığı yıllık Uluslararası Din Özgürlüğü Raporu'na göre Türkiye'de Anayasa din özgürlüğünü sağlıyor ama bütünlük maddesi ve laik devletin varlığı, bu hakları sınırlıyor. Sizin yorumunuz nedir?

Devam eden reformlarla, ben Türkiye'nin dini ve etnik azınlıklar ve diğer etnik ile diğer grup mensupları dahil, başarılı, seküler, Müslüman çoğunluklu bir demokrasinin, bütün vatandaşlarının haklarını eşit olarak nasıl koruyabildiğinin etkili bir örneği olabileceğini düşünüyorum. Türk Hükümeti ile Sünni çoğunluk dahil resmi azınlıkların ve diğer grupların din özgürlüğü endişeleri hakkında birçok konuyu görüşüyoruz. Ve tüm Türkiye vatandaşlarına temel haklarını sağlanması için ilave reformları teşvik ediyoruz. Tıpkı Türkiye'deki birçok Müslümanın derin inancı ve dinamizmine gösterdiğimiz saygı gibi, 2009 Nisanı'nda Türk Parlamentosu'nda yaptığım konuşma dahil, din özgürlüğüne olan bağlılığın bir sembolü olarak Heybeliada Ruhban Okulu'nun yeniden açılması için Türk Hükümeti'ne açık çağrıda bulundum.

Esnek darbelerle dayanıklı

Barack Obama, sorulara verdiği yanıtta Türk-ABD ilişkilerini tarif ederken İngilizce "resilient" sözcüğünü kullanıyor. Merriam Webster sözlüğüne göre, "resilient", "kalıcı bir deformasyona uğramadan darbelerle dayanabilen" demek. Eşanlamlısı flexible (esnek), elastic (elastik). Redhouse Türkçe-İngilizce Sözlük'te ise "geriye fırlayan, uzanıp kısalan, elastik, çabuk iyileşir" diye tarif edilmiştir.

İran'la diplomatik çözüm yoluna bağlıyız

GÖREVE başladığımdan beri, ABD'nin İran İslam Cumhuriyeti ile yeni bir müzakere faslı başlatmaya hazırlandığını dile getirdim. İran Hükümeti'ne net bir seçim önerdik. Uluslararası yükümlülüklerini yerine getirir ve daha güvenli, dünyayla daha derin bir ekonomik ve politik entegrasyon ve tüm İranlılar için daha iyi bir gelecek gerçekleştirebilirdi. Bu konuda diplomatik bir çözüme bağlı kalmayı sürdürüyorum. İran'ın barışçı nükleer enerjiye hakkı olduğuna inanıyoruz ama bu hak derin sorumluluklar da getirir. Buna karşın İran, yasadışı nükleer faaliyetlerine devam etti ve UAEA'yı (Uluslararası Atom Enerjisi Ajansı), programının tam anlamıyla barışçı amaçlar için olduğu konusunda ikna edemedi. Ciddi bir şekilde müzakere edip nükleer programının yalnızca barışçı amaçlar için olduğunu ispatlamak İran'ın elinde. İran'ın bunu Ocak ayında Türkiye'deki P5+1 görüşmelerinde yapma fırsatı var. İlerleyebileceğimiz alanlar var ama tarafların yapıcı yaklaşımlar benimsemek için hazırlanması gerek.

Figure 21. A section from a news article page of the Hürriyet website.

The ability to resize text is an important feature for any website, especially for those with vision impairments. However, it is a very significant point that when resizing text, line-height should also change according to text size proportionally. From a typographic point of view, this ability should be limited by some text sizes to keep the optimum line-width and line-height relationships for readability.

Users can predict what will happen based on their prior experiences. Therefore, conventions should be consistent. "The more they will feel in control of the system and the more they will like it" (Nielsen, 2007).

The opening of new browser windows creates complexity and confusion. It disables the Back button; the second-most used navigation feature following hypertext links. Links should replace the current page with new content. For instance, on many newspaper websites, as well as on the Hürriyet website, users can experience that

problem. Users have to guess when they click the link because it is not clear and causes confusion.

Websites have to provide the information and answer questions users need, urgently. Users visit sites because there's something they want to accomplish (Nielsen, 2007).

3.2.1. Information Architecture

In a world of communication, there are messages and there are users. And there are scores of message transfers between users. In that immersive information traffic, there is a fundamental need to shape and organize the content.

From ancient times to the present, messages have always been delivered person-to-person. Delivering information has transformed from smoke to ones and zeros. However, the importance of message and content is still the same, and even more important today due to the information age: people are under thousands, millions of messages every day, every hour.

At that point, information architecture is crucial in organizing the hierarchy of content, plan and set-up design.

Websites need a definition. Information architecture can provide this definition through a clarification of the mission and vision, and by determining the content and functionality of organizing the information. The relationship among intangible elements like, navigation, organization, labeling, indexing, searching and other metaphors that comprise a website, are known as information architecture (Rosenfeld & Morville, 1998, p. 11).

Information is knowledge of facts and events. Communication is the transfer of information between people. In a world of communication, there is a constant action of sending and receiving messages, gathering and disseminating information. With the

development of twentieth-century communications technology, a theory of communications or information transmission has evolved.

Providing communication between sources of information and users is based on many communication theories. One of them is a basic theory of communication by Shannon and Weaver that is called "mother of all models" (Hollnagel & Woods, 2005). This theory is based on a general communication system that includes: an information source, a transmitter, a channel, the receiver or decoder and the recipient or destination. In this theory, the graphic designer becomes the transmitter and the Web becomes a channel used to deliver a message.

Web navigation, included in web architecture, is a fundamental area for web design and it has an important role in shaping users' experiences on the web. The best navigation is invisible, or transparent, in that it is not noticed. It just should work. Consistent navigation lets the users know where the information is in the conceptual mental hierarchy. Web navigation is about communicating with the user. It has three parts which are used to communicate to the user about their past, present, and future. Users should know where they are and how they go to another page. As web consultant Derek Powazek indicates, "If the navigation quietly reminds the user where they are, they'll never have that 'Am I lost?' panic moment" (Powazek, 2006).

Successful websites provide their users with effective navigation. Like James Kalbach said, "A "cool" site with lots of interactivity and user participation will still be lousy if the navigation doesn't work" (Kalbach, 2007, p. 4). According to James Kalbach, Web navigation, as a part of web architecture, has three main goals:

1. How users move from one page to another.
2. Web browsing.
3. Assisting users to orient themselves within links, labels and all other elements that provide access to pages.

According to the web usability expert Nielsen, there are two different design levels in the information architecture: the invisible way the site is structured and the visible way users understand and manage that structure. On web design, structure and

navigation must support each other. There are critical information architecture mistakes that websites have (Nielsen, 2009):

Search and structure are not integrated with each other. When users search for something and then go to that page, and the navigation does not indicate the users' current location, users become lost in the site.

Websites should have a series of categories which link to their own landing page to give users a section overview. Breadcrumbs, a term used to describe a secondary navigation aid which gives users a way to keep track of their locations, can be used for that purpose⁸. It works best at the top of the page. For example, the Guardian newspaper website uses breadcrumbs efficiently (Figure 22).



Figure 22. An example of breadcrumbs from the Guardian website.

There is significant lack of structure on some websites, especially on some news websites where each article is treated as a stand-alone unit without connections to related items. As a result of that users leave those sites quickly. Additionally, users ignore legitimate design elements that look like prevalent forms of advertising. For instance, on the news page of the Hürriyet website, there is weak connection to related news. It is hard to comprehend the related section box, which looks like an advertisement and causes *banner blindness*⁹ (Figure 23).

⁸ The term comes from the trail of breadcrumbs left by Hansel and Gretel in the popular fairytale.

⁹ The term 'banner blindness' means that the ignorance of banner advertisements leads to the user taking the first option that appears to fulfill their immediate need.



Figure 23. A section from a news article page of the Hürriyet website. On the page, there is a related news box confused with banners and causes banner blindness.

Extreme polyhierarchy, meaning too many classification options and dimensions causes confusions for users acting to move forward. On the navigation part of the Hürriyet website, there is a polyhierarchy that causes users to be confused to find the content or topic they need (Figure 24).

Integrated sub-sites or micro-sites should work well within the overall site structure. Poorly integrated sub-sites cause damage to the users' experience and usability.

Invisible navigation problems are one of the worst mistakes for websites. Navigation should be permanently visible and consistent. Inconsistent navigation makes users feel out of control. Users should be able to immediately understand how to find their way easily.

Uncontrollable navigation elements cause user frustration and detract from usability. Users should focus on where to go and not how to control the interface. For instance, on the Hürriyet gallery page, users may be frustrated because of uncontrollable navigation elements.



Figure 24. A section from a gallery page of the Hürriyet website. Navigation of the page seems uncontrollable.

Navigation terms should easily and simply be understandable by the users.

The idea, or discoverability, is also an important factor for web learners who are curious to explore other techniques rather than orderly, hierarchical navigation. The navigation should be learner friendly, and should allow users to move from topic to topic easily within the psychological flow. The environment should be a discoverable one like the Wikipedia website where self referential links allow users to move from topic to topic (Figure 25). Related items also encourage this activity. On the web architecture, discoverability should be provided effectively and easily (Simmons, 2009).



Figure 25. A section from an article page from Wikipedia. In this article, links allow users to move from topic to topic (Wikipedia.com).

Before creating the navigation and structure, a target group should be determined and analyzed well. According to Nielsen, there are different types of Web

users. Some of them are search-dominant users who will almost always look for a search box as they enter a site. Others are link-dominant users who always browse first. For those, the most important element of a website is navigation. If the navigation works well for many kinds of users, the website will be easy to use (Krug, 2006, p. 55).

According to the users' needs, the website design and the content should be shaped and transformed into new forms. In the past, news websites contained pages with only written text, however, now multimedia enhances like, video, sound and pictures, have improved the page content (Figure 26). These elements provide users a broader and deeper understanding of the news articles (Lee, 2007).

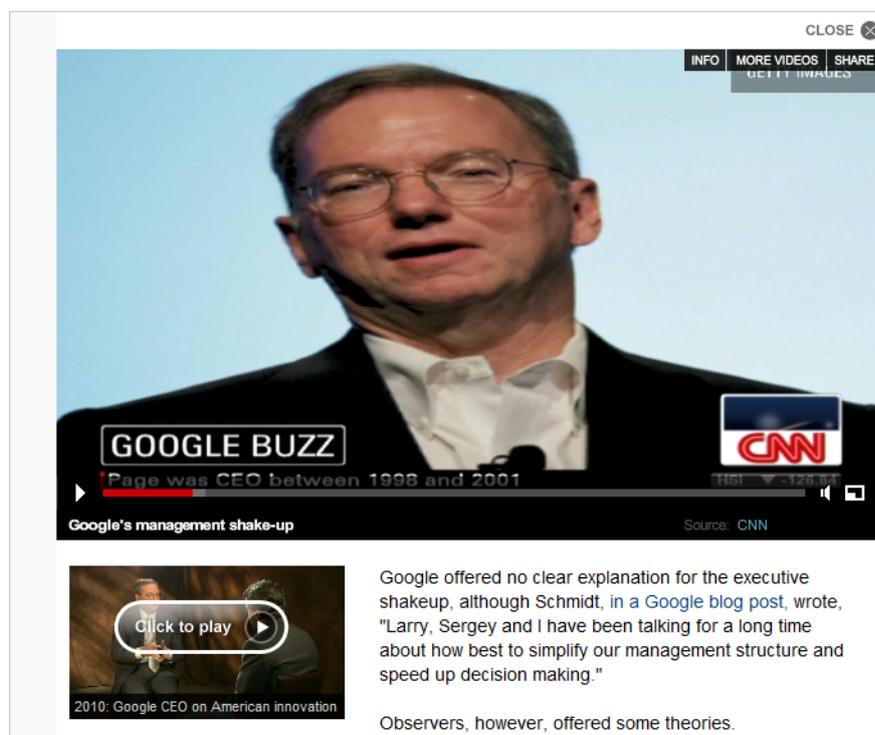


Figure 26. An example of a news page from the CNN website. On the page, there are related videos that improve the page content. (cnn.com)

Websites can easily lose their users if they have not carefully planned and organized the information architecture. Confused and dissatisfied users can easily go to another site. On a website well-designed information architecture enhances usability.

3.2.2. Usability

“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.” Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519).

To create a successful website, every web design principle like, web architecture, navigation, interface, layout and usability, should work well together with harmony and consistency. Each element supports and depends on the other. The main purpose of a website is to be easy to use. As usability is one of the most important elements for all design disciplines, it is especially so for web design. Steve Krug describes usability as the means of making sure something works well, and that a user with average ability or experience can use the designed thing for its intended purpose without getting hopelessly frustrated (Krug, 2006, p. 5).

One of the main objectives of usability is to figure out what users need and to make it easy for them to achieve their objectives. Users are highly goal-driven on the Web. They visit sites because there's something they want to accomplish.

In product design or software design users experience usability after they buy a product. However, on the Web, users experience usability first and act later. That is why usability has become a vital tool for web design.

In the digital age, users play the main role. Usability is important because websites should be easy to use in order to retain the audience. Due to this, websites should be more user-centered now than in the past because today there is a user-generated internet media in which the user has a key role in shaping the content. As Nielsen mentioned, “The Web is the ultimate customer-empowering environment. He or she who clicks the mouse gets to decide everything. It is so easy to go elsewhere; all the competitors in the world are but a mouse-click away” (Nielsen, 2000, p. 9).

With about 234 million sites on the Web in December 2009 ¹⁰, users have more choices than ever. As a consequence, users do not want their time spent online confusing, slow or unsatisfying.

There is a correlative relationship between user and content. Usability is most important in determining that relationship. Users are impatient and require information quickly; therefore websites need to be effective and dynamic in order to respond those demands immediately and accurately.

Website users have different expectations than users of print. Ellen Lupton states, “they expect to be in search mode, not processing mode” (Lupton, 2005). The motivation of web use is often to save time. As a result, web users tend to act like sharks. They have to keep moving or they’ll die. Users should perceive the site and the structure easily right after they enter. However, this does not mean that everything should be simple and direct. Otherwise, users can be lost and breathless if they find the information bombarding. It is important to believe that less and more co-exist rather than believing that less is more.

Generally, people don’t like to puzzle over how to do things. When users visit a website, it should be self-evident, obvious and self-explanatory. Sometimes, websites can be innovative, original and perceived as complicated at a glance, at that point, they should be self-explanatory in which it takes only a little thought to understand (Krug, 2006, p. 18).

It is important to eliminate the questions that users may spend their time thinking about like, where am I? or where should I begin?

Users visit websites for their contents. The design is there to allow people access to the content. Usually users do not want to read long texts on the Web.

¹⁰ "Royal Pingdom - Internet 2009 in numbers." Royal Pingdom .
<http://royal.pingdom.com/2010/01/22/internet-2009-in-numbers/> (accessed September 10, 2010).

According to a study conducted by John Morikes and Nielsen, users generally look at web pages fast and scan the layout. In that study, 79 percent of test users scanned any new page they came across; only 16 percent read word-for-word. Users try to find the information that they need quickly. The processes can change according to the kind of page (“kind” is used to describe the design or the page content/purpose), the user is trying to do, the haste that the user is in, and so on (Nielsen, 1997).

When users look at a web page, what they see depends on what they have in mind. They focus on elements that match with their current needs (Figure 27).

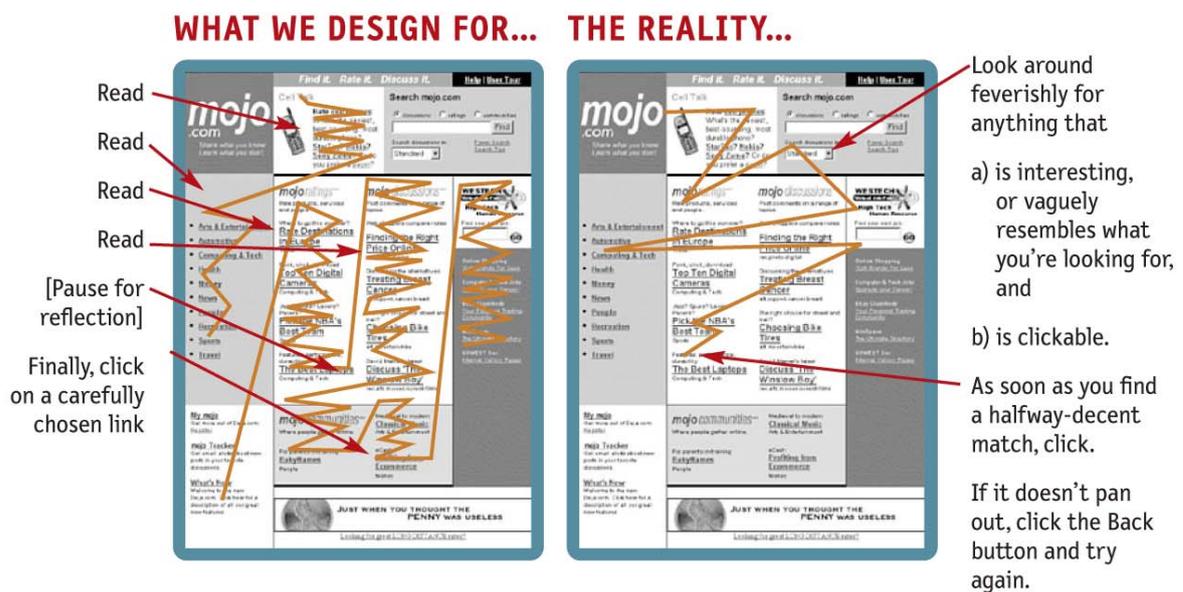


Figure 27. Users’ attitudes when they look at a website (Krug, 2006, p. 21).

According to Gary Klein’s studies on decision-making people prefer satisficing instead of making optimum choices (Klein, 1999).

Another important point is that for most people, it doesn’t matter whether they understand how the website works, as long as they can use it. And if those websites work well for users’ necessities, then users tend not to look for a better way until they have to. The awareness of web structure or usability is not so much important for them, and they act and use because they can. For instance, the Hürriyet website is a good

example for this situation although there are many problems in terms of web design and usability, people still choose to use this website ¹¹.

According to Steve Krug, there are five important steps for a website to be more useful (Krug, 2006, p. 31):

1. The appearance and relationship of elements on the page should create a clear visual hierarchy. For instance, on the news page of the Hürriyet website, there is a lack of visual hierarchy, which causes unsupportive separated elements around the page (Figure 28).



Figure 28. An example of a news page from the Hürriyet website.

2. Conventions can determine the users' behaviors. If one idea works well enough, other sites imitate it quickly, especially on the Internet, and if people see that idea on enough sites, then it needs no explanation. Before the Internet, people gained their habits from traditional media, especially from newspapers. These gave people visual thoughts about hierarchy and layout. Users' conventions gained from other sources before the Internet are changing according to the new medium's habits and necessities. Web conventions also give users familiarity, and they are easily conceived. For example, on the Web, there are common conventions for some elements like search

¹¹ The Hürriyet website, which has 3.5 million unique users and 540 million page views as of November 2010, is in the first place within newspapers and on 11th place within a total 100 sites, according to Google statistics.

box that is generally on the right top corner of a page, scroll bar, sharing icons and so on.

3. According to several early eye-tracking studies of web page scanning, users decide very quickly which parts of the page are useful to them and which parts they can ignore. For example, an eye tracking study of 232 users was recorded by Norman Nielsen Group in 2006. It demonstrates that the dominant reading pattern looks like an F shape¹² (Figure 29). Therefore, the pages should be divided into clearly defined areas to allow users to decide with ease.



Figure 29. F-Shaped Pattern for reading web content (Nielsen, 2006).

4. On a page, links should be distinguishable from the content. Users should be able to see what is clickable without challenges or confusion.

5. Minimizing visual noise is very important for websites. Complexity and distractions affect users' attentions directly. When everything on the page is clamoring for attention the effect can be overwhelming. "Lots of invitations to buy! Lots of exclamation points and bright colors! A lot of shouting going on!" (Krug, 2006, p. 38). The Hürriyet website is a good example for this step. Everything on the page is clamoring for attention and this causes a decrease in the impression of the website (Figure 30).

¹² F-shaped pattern issue will be also mentioned and defined in Chapter 4, Redesigning of the Hürriyet Website.



Figure 30. An example from the mainpage of Hürriyet. (hurriyet.com)

According to researches by Nielsen, web readers are less patient than print readers because they are in scan mode and search for the information they are interested in. Many people also believe that digital displays are inherently more difficult to read than ink on paper. Yet human-computer interaction (HCI) studies¹³ conducted in the late 1980s proved that crisp, black text on a white background can be read just as efficiently from a screen as from a printed page. The impatience of the digital reader arises from culture, not from the essential character of display technologies. Website users have different expectations than print users. They expect to feel “productive,” not contemplative. They expect to be in search mode, not processing mode (Lupton, 2005, p. 74). Users also expect to be disappointed, distracted, and delayed by false leads. The cultural habits of the screen are driving changes in design for print, while at the same time affirming print’s role as a place where extended reading can still occur.

¹³ Human-computer interaction is the study, planning and design of the interaction between users and computers, which occurs at the user interface (or simply interface), and which includes both software and hardware.

3.2.3. Interface

Computer interfaces are not intuitive, they are learned. Web interfaces are also learned and conceived over time, but when users enter a site their learning process changes according to the website's interface. Users' pattern recognition ability and usability experience can also affect the understanding of the interface.

The way to make the complex feel painless is to design with flow in mind. By designing a site that is fluid, intuitive and inspires flow, websites can help new users get up-to-speed faster, reduce the chance that existing users leave the site, and create users that evangelize the site to other people. That results in more users, increased activity, and greater awareness of the site. According to the Hungarian psychology professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's book *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, there are four rules that improve the flow experience in users (Ramsey, 2007):

1. Setting clear goals help users to understand their current location and how to return to a previous one.

2. Providing immediate feedback allows users to conceive the current situation. For example, on the Flickr website, users can see the upload process with the loading graphic symbol and know that photos are being uploaded with the symbol (Figure 31).

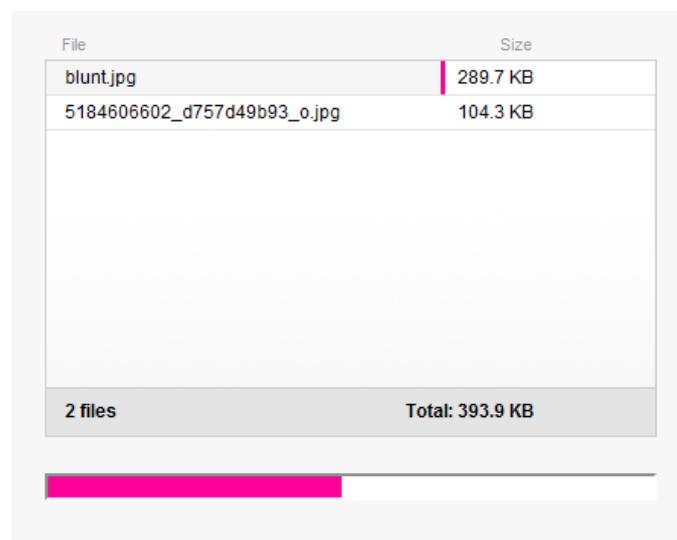


Figure 31. An example from an upload screen on the Flickr website. (flickr.com)

3. Maximizing efficiency provides users with fast and effortless experience without any disruptions. For instance, in Google Reader, with the endless scroll feature, a user's reading experience is never disrupted (Figure 32).

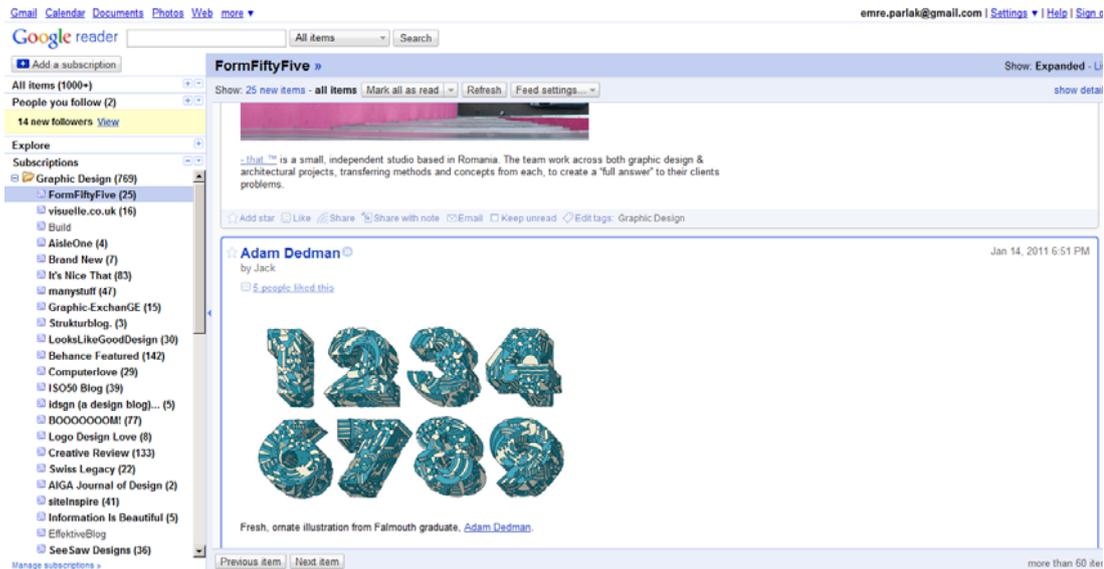


Figure 32. The interface of Google Reader.

4. Allowing for discoverability helps users to grab various information that they are interested in like, the most popular, the most blogged about or the most searched items like on the Wikipedia.

Good interface design should provide simplicity, clarity, encouragement, satisfaction, accessibility, flexibility, and personalization. Sometimes websites can have complex contents. However, simplicity should not be confused with the need of complexity. Although, a website can have a complex content and structure, it can also be conceived as simple and clear at the same time (Lee, 2007). For instance, on Facebook, at the first glance, the site has complex content and structure, but at the same time is easy to understand and use after some time.

The goal for a website should be to easy to use no matter how complex it is. The importance of a successful design is to solve a complex problem. “Designers have a hard time to keep it simple, because simplicity is not something that is there from the beginning, it has to be elaborated” (Reichenstein, 2006).

According to some ideas, well-designed websites give users an impression that the site is easy to use, whether it is or not. It demonstrates that the importance of a good-looking interface design affects users' perceptions in a good way when they visit a website. "Also, it is more probable that the design will be used because the human psyche is inexorably drawn towards beauty" (Lee, 2007). Professional looking design can also increase users' trust levels for the websites.

Today, web interfaces are required to be fluid, flexible and responsive layouts tuned to each resolution range of screens. As a result of those flexible resolutions, responsive web design is becoming a very important factor for web interfaces because of the many various devices like, laptops, tablets, mobile phones and game consoles, which are increasingly being used for web browsing. There are many variable resolution sizes provided by those devices, and instead of creating a different design for each, it is more efficient to enhance layouts progressively within different viewing contexts (Marcotte, 2010).

For instance, according to the example, when screen resolution is wide, a website will look like Figure 33. However, when the resolution or browser is narrow, the example will look like Figure 34.



Figure 33. The elements of website are placed according to the current screen size. (Marcotte, 2010)



Figure 34. An example of responsive web interface. When the screen size changes, the elements of the page are placed according to that size. (Marcotte, 2010)

As conventions affect users' decisions in everyday surroundings they also create a visual and mental shape. Even a cheeseburger has an interface, according to Oliver Reichenstein's *The Interface of a Cheeseburger*. He declares that McDonald's interface looks the same the world over, and it is as simple as possible, like a simple burger. At McDonald's there is no language skills needed to buy something. Everything is prepared to be understood easily and simply. At fast food restaurants, users do not want to wait, they need only a simple food, urgently. This condition is also the same for the Web where users hate to wait and only need the information quickly. The burger is like the information on the Web, but the web environment is crueller than a fast food restaurant because other options are just one click away. For the most part, people don't analyze usability, they just use. That is to say, for the customer, usability is a matter of well-being when using. And being well means not needing to think in order to act (Reichenstein, 2006).

For example, those among the strong online brands like, Flickr, Craigslist, Ebay or Youtube, have unique, simple and recognizable interfaces (Figure 35). The interface is the product itself. The term branding does not mean pretty, it means strong. "Usually

strong usability, simplicity and a clear focus automatically lead to a strong identity” (Reichenstein, 2006).



Figure 35. The homepage of Craigslist.com

On web interfaces, texts can often provide a more specific and understandable cue than a picture. In the age of code, text has become a more common denominator than images—searchable, translatable, and capable of being reformatted and restyled for alternative or future media (Lupton, 2005, p. 74).

Nielsen explains several basic principles for user interface design (Nielsen, 2005).

Informing users about the current situation they are in and giving them instant feedback is important.

The information that is given by the system should appear in natural, real world conventions and in logical order. It should be familiar to users.

Supporting undo and redo functions is important. On websites, users can sometimes be lost or confused. The interface should provide them with emergency exits or means to find their ways easily.

Consistency means that the elements of the interface should be visually consistent. Objects that act same should be same.

3.2.5. Typography and Grid

“Typographic arrangement should achieve for the reader what voice tone conveys for the listener.” El Lissitzky (1893-1941) (White, 2002, p. 103).

In 1969, Swiss typographer, Emil Ruder, said that a typographer’s task is to divide-up, organize and interpret the mass of printed matter in such a way that the reader will have a good chance of finding what is of interest to him. By replacing “print” with “online”, that sentence can also be used for the information designer for the Web. The designer organizes and forms the masses of information, and typography is the key tool to provide solutions.

In the information age, information design is typography. Most of the information on the web is written language and, as a consequence, typography gained a key role to deliver those messages on target, in order and accurately. Typography is for providing communication directly between the website and the audience (Reichenstein, 2006).

Reading is a key factor that affects the users’ website experience, and good typography allows for a successful reading experience. Ideally, the reader should be unaware of the act of reading. Typography should be transparent. Transparent typography means that the text should set in correct rules and principles and users just read the text fluently. Successfully designed websites deliver the content accurately and as simple as possible. For example, on Jakob Nielsen’s website useit.com and Oliver Reichenstein’s Information Architects website, typography is a key element and users just read the text fluently without any disturbance (Figure 36).

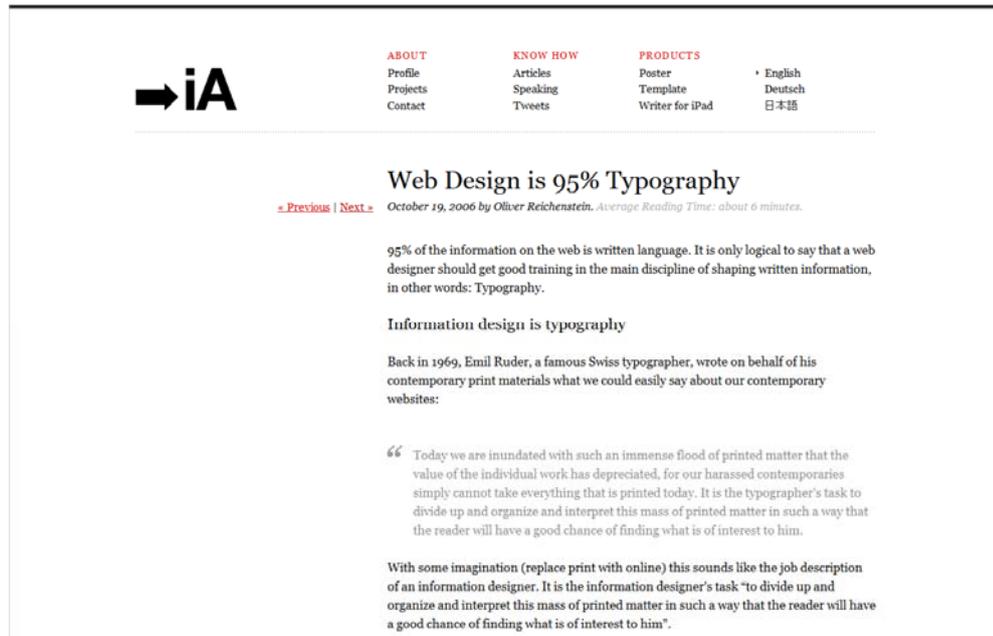


Figure 36. An example of an article page from the Information Architects website. (informationarchitects.jp/en)

There is a difference between using good typefaces with good typography. And there is a difference between using text for content and using text for the user interface.

Using good typography affects the communication process and legibility directly. However, as David Carson said in the documentary film, *Helvetica*, legibility should not be confused with communication. “Just because something is legible doesn't mean it communicates and, more importantly, doesn't mean it communicates the right thing” (Helvetica, 2007). To communicate, messages should be accurate and on target, at which point, the importance of readability occurs. Readability improves the information flow for better understanding by the audience.

Letterforms as seen on screens are generated by individual pixels that come together and create a shape. “Digital type consists simply of letterforms reduced to a binary state: patterns of pixels turned on and off by a computer and arranged on a rectilinear grid” (Carter, 1990, p. 55-64).

More and more content is being viewed on screens. From computer monitors to mobile devices like cell phones and tablets, reading is a significant part for users’

experiences. Without good typography usage, websites cannot be legible and readable, and thus cannot provide usability.

To use typography in a good and efficient way, principles of typography should be determined and analyzed carefully. Briefly, those are line spacing, alignment and hierarchy. One of the essential tasks of the graphic designer is to interpret and communicate the tone, tempo, logical structure, size and other all possibilities of typographic form. “The typographer is to the text as the theatrical director is to the script, or the musician to the score” (Bringhurst, 2005, p. 20).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, *Line Spacing* is the vertical distance from the baselines of text. Leading can act as a design element in layout by affecting the lightness of the text block (Figure 37).



Figure 37. Line Spacing variations (Lupton, 2004).

Font size, line spacing and the amount of characters on each line together create the vertical rhythm on the layout. Optimal leading (line spacing) is generally multiplying the body text size value by 1.5, which will give the optimal line height for paragraphs. When the balance is correct, the eye will move along the line instead of down the lines. The CNN website is a good example of optimal line-length and line-spacing which enhances the reading experience (Figure 38).

As Tunisia's army quells chaos, will it hinder democracy?

By **Khairi Abaza**, Special to CNN
January 22, 2011 -- Updated 1358 GMT (2158 HKT)



Editor's note: *Khairi Abaza is a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a non-partisan policy institute that aims to promote democracy.*

(CNN) -- The fear and chaos that follows the fall of the Tunisian dictator Zine El Abedine Ben Ali on January 14 raises uncertainty about the country's future. Already, it can be said that Tunisia will never be the same.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Khairi Abaza says dictator Ben Ali's fall brought chaos and uncertainty for Tunisians
- He says military helping keep order, but will it lead to "soft" dictatorship, not democracy?
- He says army seemed to side with the people in Ben Ali ouster; should it be seen as patriotic?
- Abaza: The West must stand with Tunisian people as they reach for democracy

The best-case scenario is a move toward a liberal democracy. The worst case is a perpetual state of chaos, followed by another autocratic or even theocratic regime. Whatever the final result, it is clear that the Tunisian army will have a significant role in shaping the future of this North African state.

The Tunisian army, more than any other institution, is helping the country overcome its current state of chaos. When it finally succeeds (chaos cannot endure for too long before exhaustion sets in), an important question looms: What role will the army play in the shaping of the new political order?

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Will it genuinely support a liberal democratic order? Or will it help establish a "softer" style autocratic rule -- what we might call "dictator light" -- that will ultimately renew the familiar cycle of Arab autocracy that is a façade of stability, propped up by the West as a counterweight to the threat of an Islamist regime?

Figure 38. An example of a news page from the CNN website.

If the text lines are too narrowly set, they impair reading speed because the upper and lower lines are both taken in by the eye at the same time. The eye cannot focus on excessively close lines as the reader expends energy in the wrong place and tires more easily. The same also holds true for lines that are too widely spaced (Reichenstein, 2006).

Line length is another important issue that affects readability. Text should be dynamic and not boring for readers. In order to avoid the drawbacks of too long and too short lines, but still energize readers and keep them engaged, 55 to 75 is an optimal number of characters per line. The width of the column must be proportioned to the size of the type. As Josef Muller-Brockmann said, "The width of the column must be proportioned to the size of the type. Overlong columns are wearying to the eye and also have an adverse psychological effect" (Reichenstein, 2006).

Most websites are set with small text, which creates unreadability. There is no reason for squeezing so much information onto the screen. However, instead of squeezing excessive information onto the screen, it can be better and more effective to use scrolling as it is useful and an ordinary web convention. Conventions like scrolling or flipping pages in books are very important and easily conceived by users (Reichenstein, 2006).

Alignment is choosing to align text in centered, justified, flush left and flush right. Those four modes are the basic grammar of typographic composition.

Centered text gives simple and intuitive way to layout. It looks staid, mournful, and static. Justified text creates clean graphical shape and is efficient, especially for newspapers and books. However, ugly gaps, mostly termed ‘rivers,’ appear if justified text is not correctly set (Figure 39). Flush left text provides the organic flow of language. Flush right text can be used for captions or side bars, but not for continuous text.



Figure 39. Example of four modes of typographic composition.

Hierarchy indicates the organization of content through emphasizing some elements and subordinating others. A visual hierarchy allows users to scan the content easier, to conceive where to enter and exit, and how to pick and choose among its offerings. Typographic hierarchy is the decision to set type in different sizes or weights. On the Guardian website, there is a good example of typographic hierarchy (Figure 40).



Figure 40. A section from a news page on the Guardian website.

In the sixteenth century, European typographers developed a series of typeface sizes that scale six to seventy two point, which has remained pretty much intact for over four hundred years (Figure 41).



Figure 41. A series of typeface sizes.

Using these values for the size of the headings creates a natural relationship between them. This scale of sizes has been used for centuries. Type set in this scale will appear more pleasing to the eye and, therefore will be more legible and the typography more harmonious.

According to Robert Bringhurst's *Elements of Typographic Style* book, there is a diagram that indicates the hierarchy of type weights (Figure 42).

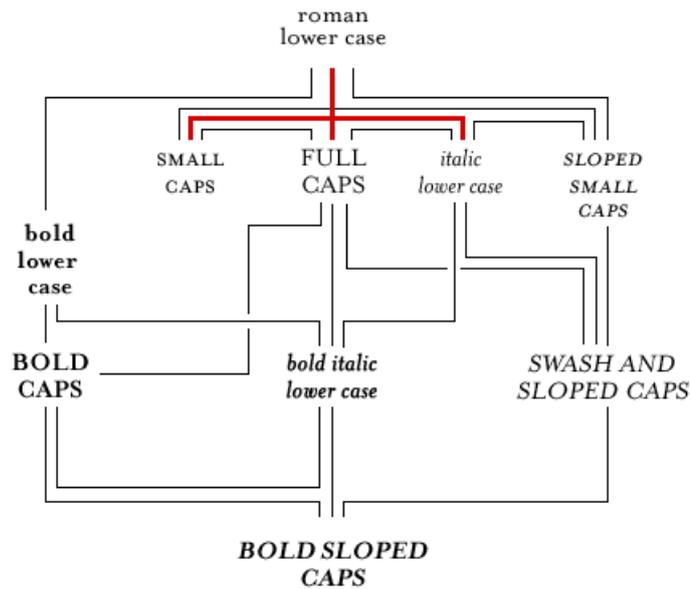


Figure 42. The diagram that indicates the hierarchy of type weights according to Robert Bringhurst's *Elements of Typographic Style* book.

According to the diagram, if the designer sets type in bold lower case, then they could go on to add bold caps, or a bold italic lower case without much bother (Boulton, 2005).

Web Typography: @font-face

In the past, there were two main arguments against typographical discipline: that there were only a few fonts available and that the screen resolution was too low, which made it hard to read pixelated or anti-aliased fonts. However, today, both of the arguments have ended because of current technologies on both the Web and the screen. Technical issues that were limited on websites disappeared through web type technology, which has been provided by the font-face feature of CSS3 (Cascading Style Sheets) ¹⁴ many professional typefaces are available with a new palette of fonts specifically for the web (Figure 43).

¹⁴ Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) is a style sheet language mechanism for adding style (e.g., fonts, colors, spacing) to Web documents.



Figure 43. A sample page from Edenspiekermann, the communication design agency of typographer Erik Spiekermann. Professional web types are used on the website instead of standard web fonts provided by operator systems. (edenspiekermann.com/en/)

Although the choice of fonts shouldn't be a major concern, like what typographers did in past centuries: they had just one font to work with and yet, they created successful typographic works. Using the best typography is the key factor for web design. It has a major effect determining legibility, readability and thus usability.

There are fonts that were made specifically for screens like Matthew Carter's Verdana and Georgia typefaces. Beside that, CSS3 and its new @font-face feature, allows designers to specify a font or fonts for the page that may not already be on the user's computer system. It is a great opportunity in which typographic design gains more options to present specific solutions to specific projects.

Until now, most websites that were developed on HTML¹⁵ had a small list of 'web safe' fonts – Tahoma, Verdana, etc. which are native to most operating systems. Font-face will allow the browser to download a font for rendering the page; a link is

¹⁵ HTML (HyperText Markup Language) is the mark-up language and basic building-blocks for web pages. A mark-up language is a set of mark-up tags like <html>, and HTML uses mark-up tags to describe web pages.

given to either a remote site or a folder on the local site which the browser will access, download, install and render, so the site can be viewed in the way the designer desired. Now, the screen is a replica of a paper by using a wide range of typography.

Ten years ago, because of limited screen technology, it was a challenge for websites to get people to spend time in front of a computer screen for pleasure. However, today, screens are much better and typefaces are more various. There is much research that improves screen reading. One of them is Microsoft's ClearType font enhancement technology that improves the readability of text on screens. By this way, letterforms are sharper and clearer, and it increases reading speeds from screens by 5% (Figures 44 and 45) (Microsoft, 2002).

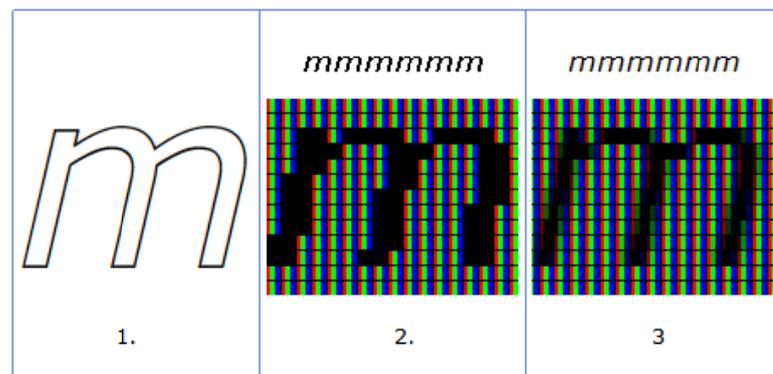


Figure 44. ClearType works by altering the vertical color stripe within a pixel, allowing for changes in how the text looks at fractional levels (www.microsoft.com/typography).

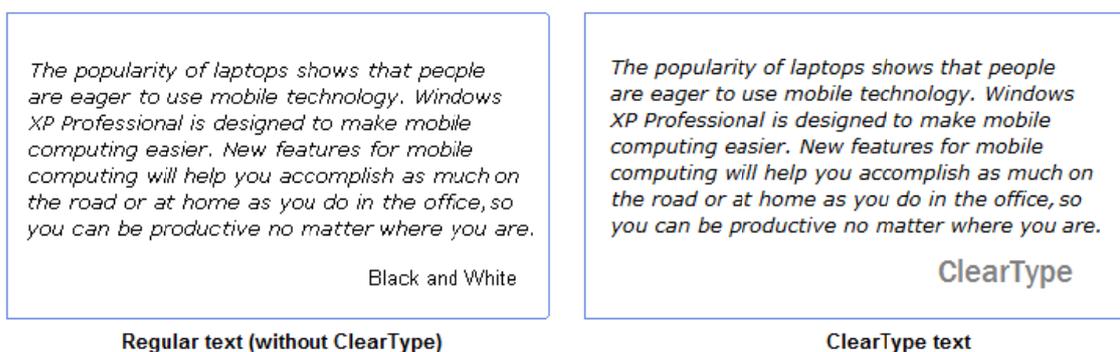


Figure 45. An example of ClearType text (www.microsoft.com/typography).

Resolutions are increasing and screens are becoming sharper and clearer. For instance, the iPad provides 132 dpi (dot per inch, pixel density of the screen) ¹⁶ screen resolution, and even the iPhone4's resolution is 326 ppi, which the human eye is unable to distinguish the individual pixels. As a consequence of those technological developments, screens are sharper, and more pixel density provides better shapes for letterforms that are formed by more pixels on screens. Therefore, the reading experience is becoming better and conventions transform into more digital experiences.

Grid

The grid system is a very essential part of web design and typography. They create order, continuity and harmony to the content of a website.

Before the digital era, grids, a reflection of universal principles rooted in nature, mathematics, and the rise of industrialization, have a long historical origin. According to the art historian Hannah B. Higgins, and her *The Grid Book*, the first grid, in the form of a brick wall came from 9000 BCE as a reflection of man. "Bricks formed walls to organize the immediate environment" (Vinh, 2011, p. 17).

The Greek philosopher Pythagoras is credited with being the first to recognize the golden ratio or golden section, which describes harmony between two numbers of a specific relationship (approximately 1:1.618) (Figure 46). It has been a source of inspiration to artists and architects for centuries. In the thirteenth century, an Italian mathematician introduced the Fibonacci sequence, which is tied to the golden ratio, and each number is equal to the sum of the two numbers that precede it, as in: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21 and so forth.

¹⁶ Dots per inch (DPI) is the number of individual dots that can be placed in a line within the span of 1 inch (2.54 cm).

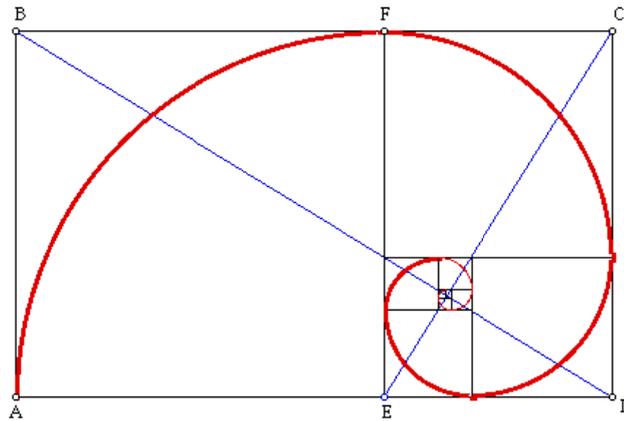


Figure 46. Golden Ratio.

The rule of thirds, a compositional rule-of-thumb, came from the eighteenth century or earlier, and helps painters, photographers, graphic designers to create aesthetically harmonious compositions by dividing any image into three columns of equal width and three rows of equal height (Figure 47). The intersection of the dividing lines forms four local points, a maximum of interest, or tension, to which the human eye is naturally attracted.

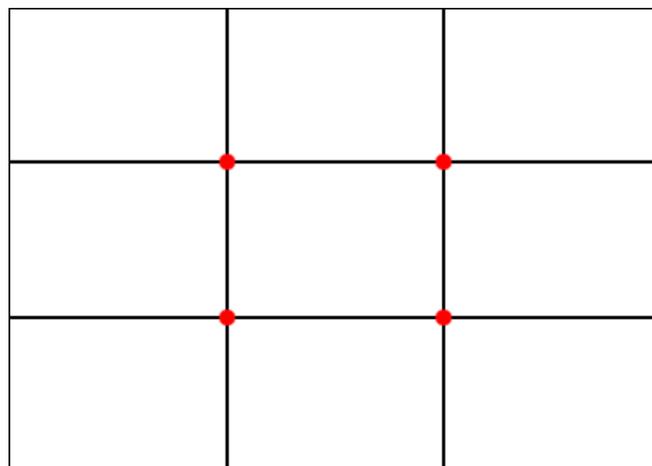


Figure 47. The rule of thirds.

In twentieth century, El Lissitzky, Jan Tschichold, Paul Renner and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, who were mostly from the Bauhaus school in Germany, introduced a new paradigm that was a systematic thinking; the idea that form follows function as a result of mechanization and the industrial era. Those created a sense of order in every

design. Swiss designer Josef Müller-Brockmann used grids in his every design decision; geometric forms became more visible and emphatic.

Grids provide users with the ability to find information easily within the order and paths. It facilitates the managing of the website content and provides a focus for design solutions without confusions. Grids also help designers to place that information correctly where it can be found.

Grids, as a component of the user experience and a type of any ordering systems, work on two levels. Users first perceive the grid and then experience it, use it. The grid should provide the user with control of his own experiences (Vinh, 2011, p. 15).

A grid should focus on problem solving first and aesthetics second. A grid gets its beauty from how well it resolves problems.

Simple grids are more effective than complex grids. Designers should always strive to create the simplest grid possible. On the Guardian website, there is an effective and flexible grid system formed by twelve columns (Figure 48).



Figure 48. The grid system of the homepage of the Guardian website.

There is a terminology used within the grid system. It contains: Units, Columns, Regions, Fields, Baseline Grid, Horizontal vs. Vertical Orientations, Gutters, Margins and Padding, Elements, Modules (Vinh, 2011).

Units are the building blocks of a grid system and the smallest vertical division of the page.

Columns are groups of units. They are combined together and create areas for the content.

Regions are groupings of similar columns that form parts of the page.

Fields are horizontal divisions of the layout and provide designers to place the elements of a website on the Y-axis. Mostly, the golden ratio can help to calculate these fields in an effective way.

Baseline grid is, similar to that in typography, the invisible line that provides a grid for text that rests and creates a vertical rhythm.

Horizontal vs. Vertical Orientations are divisions of the page.

Gutters are the empty spaces between units and columns.

Margins are the empty space outside a unit or column, and *padding* is the space within a unit or column. Margins create gutters.

Elements are any components of a layout like texts, images, videos and so on.

Modules are groups of elements which use various elements to create a specific content such as, user forms that consist of texts, buttons, and a form field.

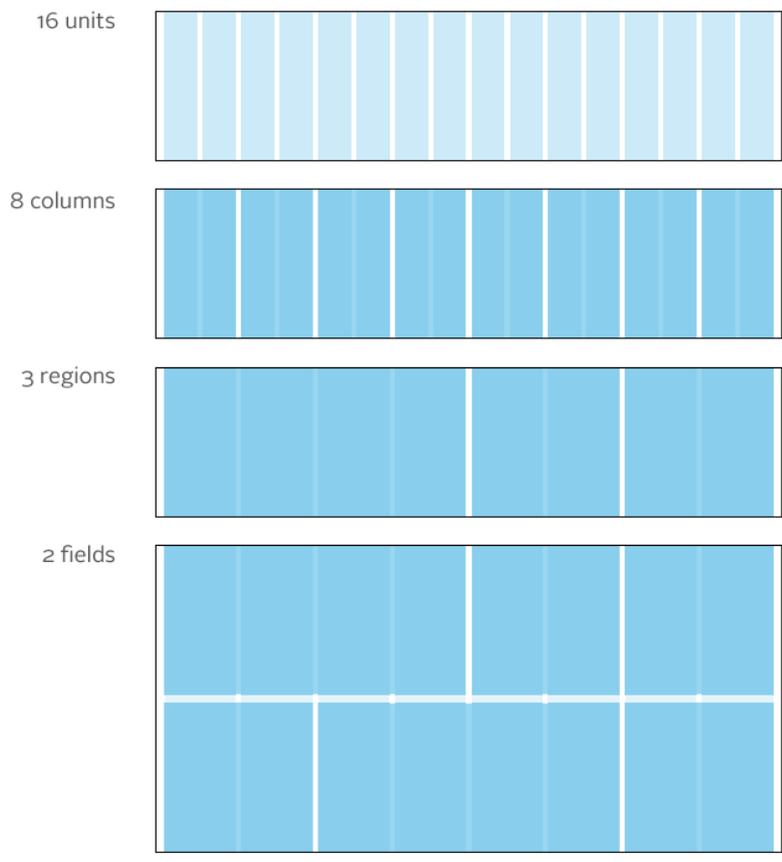


Figure 49. Examples of units, columns, regions and fields.

CHAPTER 4. REDESIGNING THE HÜRRİYET NEWSPAPER WEBSITE: A CASE STUDY

4.1. Introduction to the Case Study

Problems provide designers an opportunity to create better alternatives for the audience. Those alternatives have a potential to present new ways that shape users' habits in a better way. Instead of talking about problems, the main principle should be providing solutions.

As a result of that, the main purpose of the case study is to provide an alternative approach to the Web environment, which is formed by social and digital circumstances and their audience.

There is a significant shift in communication. After the Internet and the World Wide Web, the digital age created its own culture that mostly came from traditional roots, and this culture demands new approaches to its problems. Designers should reconsider and reshape their solutions according to these new demands. As Paul Rand said design, especially web design, is the synthesis of form and content (Conversation with Paul Rand). Consequently, form and content integrate to each other and the problem cannot be solved just by graphic designers; it needs also information architects, developers and content editors. Collaboration is a key word for the digital environment solutions.

In the beginning of the computer age, the important step is metaphors like icons, folders, sheets, and the recycle bin, which have provided people with intuitive ways to interact with the computer. This has also helped to translate the alien language of the computer into something that everyone can understand. But in time, the metaphors used in the translation of the digital environment changed. It began to develop its own cultural interface that drew heavily on the familiar traditional forms of the printed word, cinema and general-purpose human-computer interfaces by the use of metaphors like index, page or window, as Lev Manovich said (Manovich, 2001, p. 78–83). For instance, in the early years websites formed by blocks of text and decorated with few

visual elements resembled magazines of the era. The information flow was in a much more linear way. The digital environment has developed their own set of metaphors and approaches, and the process still continues today.

The digital era has caused its own interfaces and approaches as there is no need to simulate traditional nature anymore. Like media theorist Erkki Huhtamo said, “Technology is gradually becoming a second nature, a territory both external and internalized, and an object of desire. There is no need to make it transparent any longer, simply because it is not felt to be in contradiction to the 'authenticity' of the experience...” (Penny, 1995, p. 171).

On the redesign of the Hürriyet website, there is a new way of thinking to the traditions of interface and of hierarchy. The metaphors of interface are not directly drawn from traditional media, but from the new media itself, allowing the user to be more in touch with the content itself, in a hypermediated way ¹⁷. The information flow determines the visual form of the site as the user sees it.

The functional and visual structure of the site is close to a non-hierarchical hypertext model. Each content element is treated by the same rules and has equal rights and an equal amount of influence on the overall visual and semantic structure. The individual elements of categories are all represented in the same visual system, which are differentiated by vertical columns, titles and color coding.

The redesigning the Hürriyet website is a suggestion and an ongoing project. In the near future, through collaboration, this framework will be alive and after some usability tests and survey studies, it will be revised and finalized.

First of all, the beginning of the design solution is defining and analyzing the problem and establishing the main structures for the site.

¹⁷ Hypermedia is a term used for hypertext in which graphics, audio, video, plain text and hyperlinks intertwine to create a generally non-linear medium of information. Hypertext is text which contains links to other texts.

4.2. Analysis of the Current Website and Equivalent Websites

The Hürriyet newspaper was founded by Sedat Simavi in 1948 and began publishing in May 1948. Hürriyet is one of the largest and oldest newspapers in Turkey. According to circulation rates, Hürriyet is in third place¹⁸.

The Hürriyet newspaper is the most widely-read newspaper in Turkey, and is the mirror of a diverse society. As a newspaper of the masses, Hürriyet has a diverse reader base, from coffeehouses in the remotest corner of Turkey to household kitchens. Hürriyet reaches more than two million people daily, 60% of which are regular readers. More than 65% of its readers have college degrees and belong to the high-income segment of the population (Hürriyet Kurumsal, n.d.).



Figure 50. The Hürriyet Newspaper in 1950 (left) and in 2011 (right).
(<http://dosyalar.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivdenbugun/>)

The vision of the Hürriyet newspaper is to play “an active role in Turkey’s modernization,” according to its corporate website. Hürriyet has social responsibility to improve public awareness and consciousness. “Hürriyet has always been and will

¹⁸ <http://www.bik.gov.tr:8080/web/kasim-2010-donemi-resmi-tiraj-raporu>

continue to be guided by its commitment to serving the public good and maintaining its role as a pioneer” (Hürriyet Kurumsal). In this sense, the website of the Hürriyet newspaper is a good example for this case study, which proposes a new design approach to newspaper websites.

According to statistics, the Hürriyet website has 3.5 million unique users and 540 million page views as of November 2010, and is in first place within newspapers and eleventh place within a total 100 sites (The 100 most-visited sites: Turkey).

One of the main problems in the digital environment – especially for online newspapers that have a long history of print origins and traditions – is to present information to users in complicated ways that cannot fulfill the requirements of the digital environment. Consequently, there are problems of readability, information architecture, and usability, which cause unsatisfied users and a bad reputation. Good design can affect the users’ perceptions in a good way by increasing the website’s reputation.

Users play the leading role in the Web environment. They decide everything as it is easy for them to go elsewhere, which is only a mouse-click away. Users’ urgent needs and demands have to be a priority for websites. On news websites, those demands depend on the pure news flow.

First of all, on the homepage of the Hürriyet website a hierarchy exists, as well as separation of contents, but, due to a lack of information architecture and navigation, unnecessary complexity and disorder appear, which directly affects usability. Users can perceive the site structure when they enter but, as mentioned in the usability section, this does not mean that everything should be simple and direct. Otherwise, users can be lost and breathless from the bombardment of information.

On the Hürriyet website, there are lacks of space in which users need to breathe. So much information is squeezed onto the page in order to provide content visibility. However, without white space, an over crowded structure decreases visibility. White space is a critical component that provides visual pathways and increases visibility.



Figure 51. The homepage of the Hürriyet website (top part).

As mentioned in the information architecture section, minimizing visual noise is very important for websites. Unnecessary complexity and distractions directly affect users' attentions. When everything on the page is clamoring for attention the effect can be overwhelming. Like Jakob Nielsen says, "Lots of invitations to buy! Lots of exclamation points and bright colors! A lot of shouting going on!" (Krug, 2006, p. 38). The Hürriyet website exactly suits this description.

One of the main problems is a complicated navigation placed on the top and on the left side of the page. It is very hard to conceive the whole navigation structure at first glance. Navigation should be simple and placed under some main groups to facilitate the usage. Users can be lost easily when they try to find some menu links. Scattered navigation causes unfocused and lost users. The interface should provide them with emergency exits to go back or find their ways easily. However, the navigation on the Hürriyet website cannot provide it.

When users visit a website, they should easily conceive the structure and understand how they find information and where the navigation is without any confusion or waiting. When users enter the Hürriye homepage, at first glance it is very hard to conceive the latest news section. However, it is one of the most important elements for a news site. Once users can see the latest news section, another problem arises in which they cannot read whole sentences of the latest news because of limited space (Figure 52).



Figure 52. The latest news section cannot show a complete sentence because of limited space.

On navigation, there is extreme polyhierarchy which causes confusions for users acting to move forward. As one of the basic problems, uncontrollable navigation elements cause user frustration and detract from usability (Figure 53). Users should focus on where to go and not how to control the user interface.

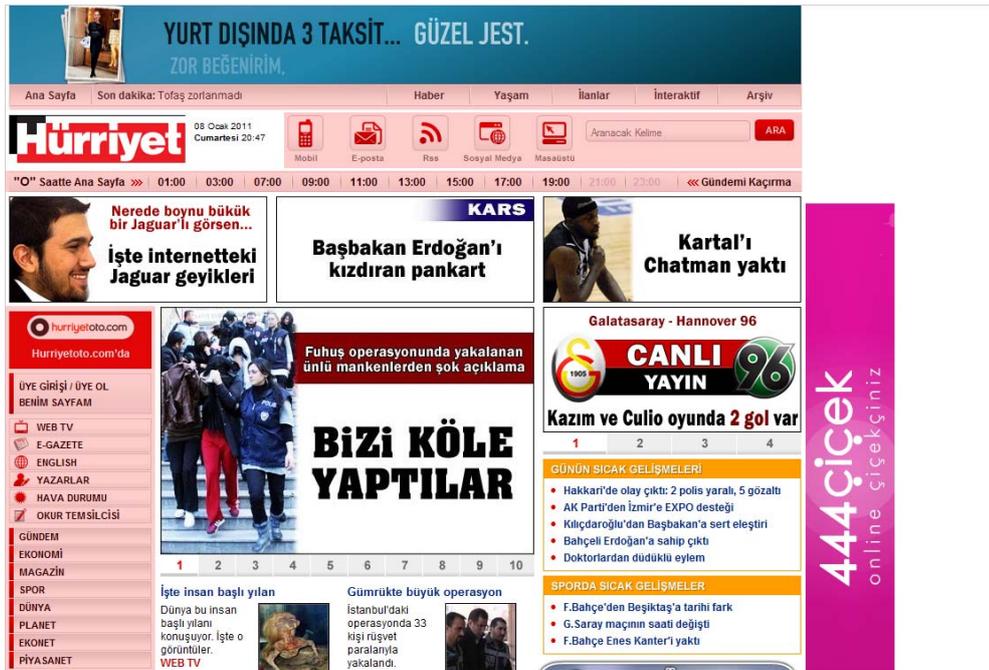


Figure 53. Red areas indicate the navigation areas of the website.

Furthermore, on the succeeding pages the main left side navigation disappears (Figure 54). Consistency is very significant for website navigation. Without consistency, usability disappears.



Figure 54. A news article page from the Hürriyet website. The main left side navigation disappears on the news article pages.

Using the right navigation technique is very important for a website. There are many navigation techniques, but websites should not use different techniques. Each approach has its own usability advantages and disadvantages. On the Hürriyet website, users cannot see all navigation elements at a glance when they enter the site. They have to scroll to see the left-side, main navigation.

One of the main reasons that disorder occurs on the Hürriyet website is due to an alignment problem. There are no consistent alignment decisions on the pages. Some elements are centered and some of them are left aligned. In addition, there is no consistent grid structure on the pages. Elements seem to be placed according to what ever necessity occurs at that moment (Figure 55).

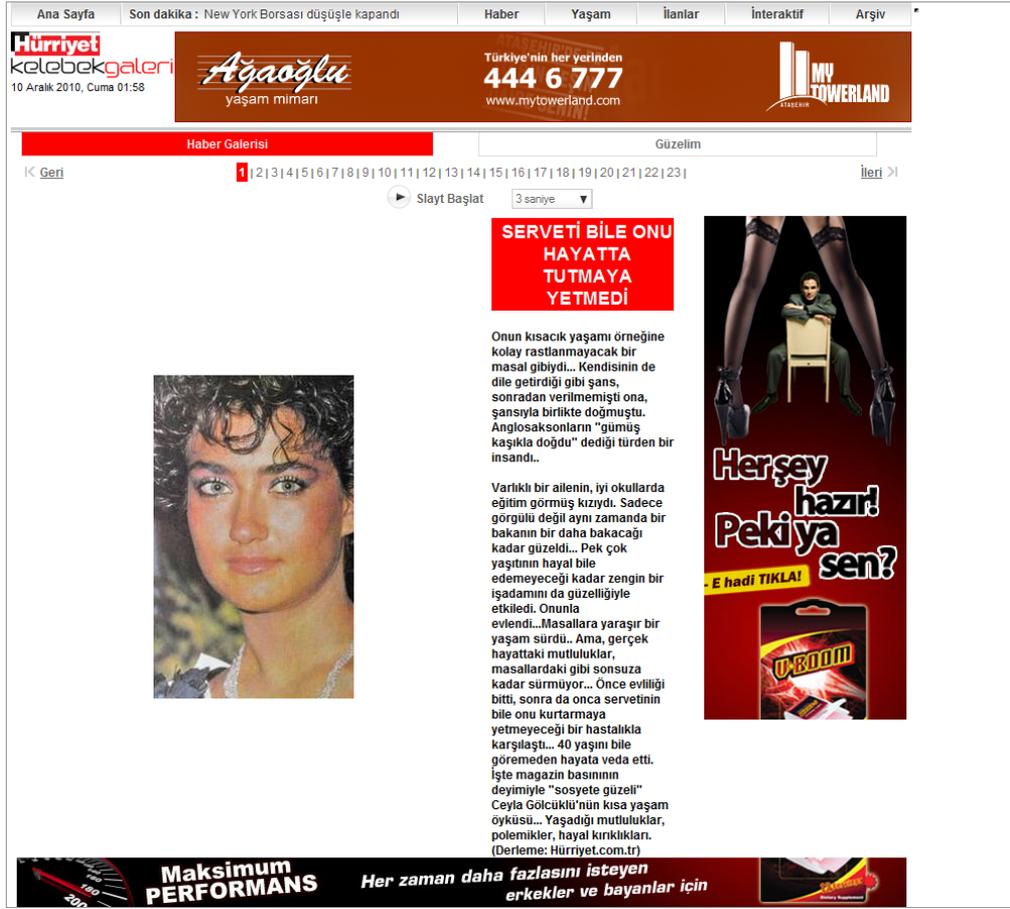


Figure 55. An example from the Hürriyet image gallery page. Elements on the page seem to be placed randomly.

Grids create order, continuity and harmony to the website content. If there is no proper grid structure on a website, then content and elements cannot sit in an invisible structure. Grids provide users with the ability to control their own experiences, as well as a focus on problem solving and aesthetics. Margins and padding are also very problematic because they irritate and disturb the users' experience.

From a typography point of view, the situation is, overall, worse than the navigation problems. On the website, mostly the sanserif font Verdana is used with the sanserif font Arial. These fonts are often integrated and used together. On the showcase area of the homepage, a black, all caps slabserif font is used to highlight the important news, however, over use of this type of emphasis decreases the users' attention (Figure 56).



Figure 56. The top part section from the homepage of Hürriyet.

The slab type is used only there and has been modified for the Turkish language with weird and incorrect Turkish characters “Ğ” and “İ”. This all caps slabserif font has been illegibly squeezed to fit into the area. There is also no grid or alignment visible on the showcase images. Typography on these images is sometimes center aligned and other times left aligned. Inconsistency is one of the biggest problems on this page. There is no consistent typographic hierarchy and language (Figure 57).



Figure 57. Examples of showcase images from the homepage of Hürriyet.

On the gallery page, there is continuous text set in bold weight with a too short line length and a too close line spacing that all cause unreadable text. This is accompanied with a highly saturated red box containing centered text in all caps. (Figure 58). This is a good example indicating that legible text does not mean readable text. There is legibility somehow, but no proper text consistency, alignment or margins.

**SERVETİ BİLE ONU
HAYATTA
TUTMAYA
YETMEDİ**

Onun kısacık yaşamı örneğine kolay rastlanmayacak bir masal gibiydi... Kendisinin de dile getirdiği gibi şans, sonradan verilmemişti ona, şansıyla birlikte doğmuştu. Anglosaksonların "gümüş kaşıkla doğdu" dediği türden bir insandı..

Varlıklı bir ailenin, iyi okullarda eğitim görmüş kıızıydı. Sadece görgülü değil aynı zamanda bir bakanın bir daha bakacağı kadar güzeldi... Pek çok yaşının hayal bile edemeyeceği kadar zengin bir işadamını da güzelliğiyle etkiledi. Onunla evlendi...Masallara yaraşır bir yaşam sürdü.. Ama, gerçek hayattaki mutluluklar, masallardaki gibi sonsuza kadar sürmüyor... Önce evliliği bitti, sonra da onca servetinin bile onu kurtarmaya yetmeyeceği bir hastalıkla karşılaştı... 40 yaşını bile göremeden hayata veda etti. İşte magazin basınının deyimiyle "sosyete güzeli" Ceyla Gölçüklü'nün kısa yaşam öyküsü... Yaşadığı mutluluklar, polemikler, hayal kırıklıkları.
(Derleme: Hürriyet.com.tr)

**Herşey hazır!
Peki ya sen?
E hadi TIKLA!**

U-ROOM

**ha fazlasını isteyen
erkekler ve bayanlar için**

Figure 58. A section from a gallery page of the Hürriyet website.

Good typography creates a legible user interface and improves usability, while inadequate typography creates unreadability and deficient interfaces.

On the news article page, there is a good example of bad typography usage. There is a mass of typography having too long line-lengths and too close line-spacing that causes unreadable text (Figure 59). The Editorial part is also important for websites. Users on the Web do not read long text, therefore content is becoming shorter. In order to sustain users' reading attention there should be typographic contrast and textual flow. Because of inadequate typography usage users have to struggle to read the text, causing unreadability. Conversely, information design on the Web is consists entirely of typography. Most of the information on the web is written language, and as a consequence, typography has to be tended to because it is a necessity for providing direct communication between the website and the audience.

Furthermore, Hürriyet picture usage is also very inadequate, as most images can be easily confused with banners. Multimedia elements like, video, sound and pictures enhance the page content. These elements provide users a broader and deeper understanding of the news articles. However, on the Hürriyet website, there is a very weak usage of multimedia on the news article pages.

Figure 59. An overview from a news article page from Hürriyet. A wall of text discourages reading as it is very boring for users. Reading on the web is different than reading from print. The Web needs shorter, more simplified text and highlighted keywords.

The Hürriyet website is left aligned, which is generally not suggested for use because of focusing issues and readability. Additionally, all web pages have very little

margins (just 6px.) from left, which also causes unreadability and disturbances for the users (Figure 60). Again, there is a lack of white space. Using good typography directly affects the communication process and legibility of a website.

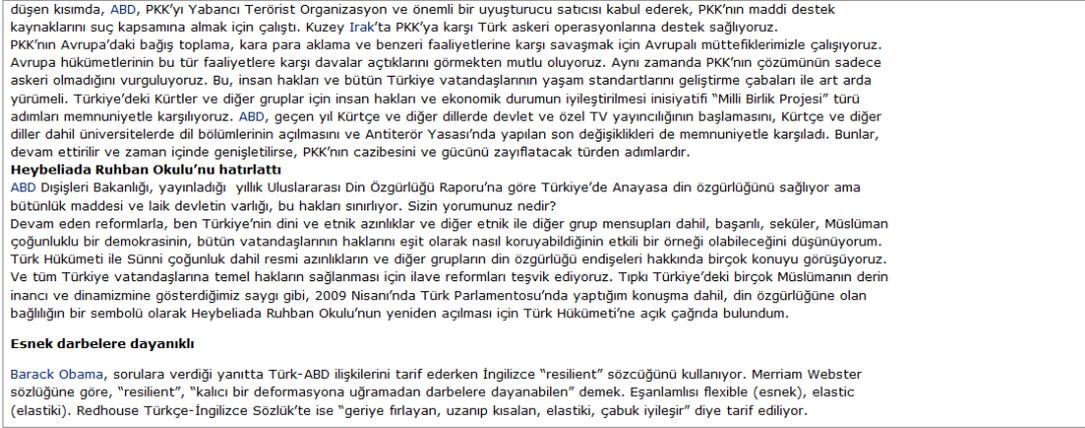


Figure 60. A section from the news article page.

On the article page, there is no 'most popular' or 'most searched' news content. At the end of an article, there are arrows that demonstrate 'previous' and 'next' news articles; however users have to guess before they click because there are no keywords or information about that particular news (Figure 61). Additionally, there are social media icons located between the two arrows, but again there is no information about those icons. Websites provide users the ability to grab various information that they are interested in like, related, most popular, most blogged or most searched items.



Figure 61. The bottom part of a news article text.

Multimedia elements provide users with extra information, allow them to find interesting things, and increase their web experience. However, on Hürriyet, especially on article pages, there is lack of multimedia and related media elements.

Videos on the site are on different sub site. On the video page, same navigational and architectural problems continue. Too much information is stuck in a little space, as well as there being a lack of space, margins between sections, and contents that cause a complicated structure (Figure 62).



Figure 62. A page from the video section of the Hürriyet website, WebTV.

This crowded structure is consistent on all pages of the Hürriyet website. However, it has become a consistency of mistakes.

Advertising is other important issue for a website. On the Web, advertisement is very important because it provides direct incomes of websites. So, websites should use ads very carefully and effectively. If they use them in bad and inefficient ways, users never react to those ads and never click on them. Also, there is a tendency of web

visitors to ignore banner ads, even when banners contain information visitors are actively seeking. This is known as “banner blindness.” Additionally, many people use ad blocking software that does not even allow for graphical advertisements. Some people surf the Web with all graphics off, while others merely disable animations. On the Hürriyet website, advertisements are placed in very inefficient ways and cause banner blindness, disturb users’ experience and decrease readability (Figure 63). According to Google's AdSense ad locations heatmap, ads closer to the center of the page tend to perform better, oppositely, ads away from the center and closer to edges perform worse (Figure 64) (Google Ad Map).



Figure 63. An example from a news page. Banner advertisements are inefficiently placed in areas that users can easily ignore.

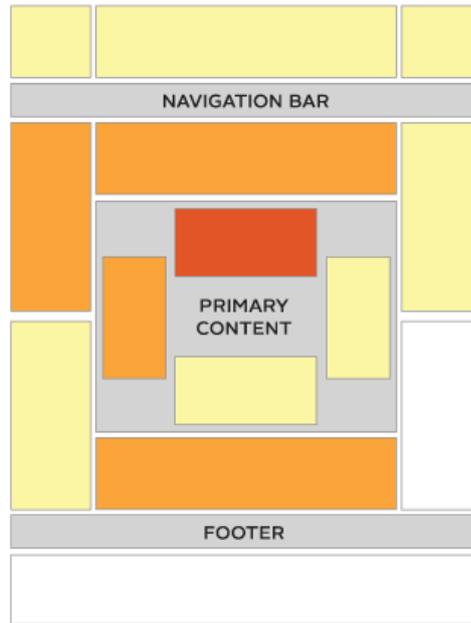


Figure 64. According to the Google Ad Map, dark areas indicate the most efficient places for the ads while light areas are inefficient places.

Also there is an animation avoidance that makes users ignore areas with blinking or flashing text or other aggressive animations. Motion does takes attention however, overuse of motion causes disomfort for users.

Equivalent Sites

On the Web, there are various examples for news sources from around the world. Some of them are Guardian, USA Today, BBC and CNN websites.

The website of an English newspaper the Guardian is a good example of a grid system, of information architecture and navigation, and of typography and white space. Contents and categories are conceived and used easily (Figure 65). The website is structured with twelve columns and three regions. According to the importance of news hierarchy, regions are divided into three parts. Navigation is on the top of the page, and is very clear, visible and consistent. Color is used as a functional element and facilitates navigation in that each category has its own color.



Figure 65. The homepage of the Guardian website. (guardian.co.uk)

In center of the homepage, there is a showcase that highlights the latest, most important news. The separation of showcase images and typography works well and is consistent with other elements of the website. Consequently, this creates a visual harmony and good legibility. Margins and white spaces are used efficiently and allow users to breathe, additionally facilitating with site navigation. The Guardian website also uses color effectively. Red is used to highlight the news, while the conventional blue is used to indicate links. Since users can perceive each section with its own color, they are able to remember and act easily. Color facilitates users' short term memory to recognize categories and navigation systems.

On the detail news page, a grid system provides flexibility for the placements of the contents. A six column structure allows information to be placed easily with flexibility. The main content area takes four columns and a second content area takes two columns. The title font is Georgia and the body text is Arial, which is set in 14 pt. and creates a typographic contrast which further creates harmony. The line weight is optimum in which there are around 65-75 characters per line, as well as the line spacing

which is optimum for readability. It allows users to read easily and efficiently without any disturbance. Compared the Hürriyet, image and other multimedia usage is better. Related contents are placed in the next column and allow users to find information they need or are interested in. Sharing options are noticeable in the top sections, near the headline, and there is better social media integration as Twitter content box is visible.



Figure 66. A news article page from the Guardian.

Multimedia usage is more efficient on the Guardian website. On this news article page, there is embed a video from YouTube which is related to the news. It improves the content and informs the users about any latest news developments (Figure 67).

Domodedovo airport hit by deadly bombing
 Moscow's main airport target of suspected suicide attack in which at least 31 people died and another 130 injured

Luke Harding and Tom Parfitt in Moscow
 guardian.co.uk, Monday 24 January 2011 15.54 GMT
[Article history](#)

Взрыв в Домодедово



Warning: contains graphic footage

At least 31 people were killed and 130 injured in a suspected suicide bomb blast at Moscow's biggest airport, Domodedovo, Russian officials confirmed today.

Tweet 0
 Share
 A larger | smaller

World news
 Russia - Global terrorism
 Air transport

More news

Related

24 Jan 2011
 Deadly suicide bombing hits Moscow's Domodedovo airport

24 Jan 2011
 Timeline of Russian terror attacks

24 Jan 2011
 Moscow airport explosion – live updates

6 Feb 2004
 Moscow metro blast kills 39

Figure 67. A section from a news article page of the Guardian.

The USA Today newspaper is another good example. The USA Today website, like many comprehensible websites today, has a similar structure to the Guardian in that it contains a six column structure with three regions used for the content areas. When users enter the homepage, they can easily comprehend the navigation and content hierarchy. Images are used as part of grid system and facilitate users to focus on the content (Figure 68).

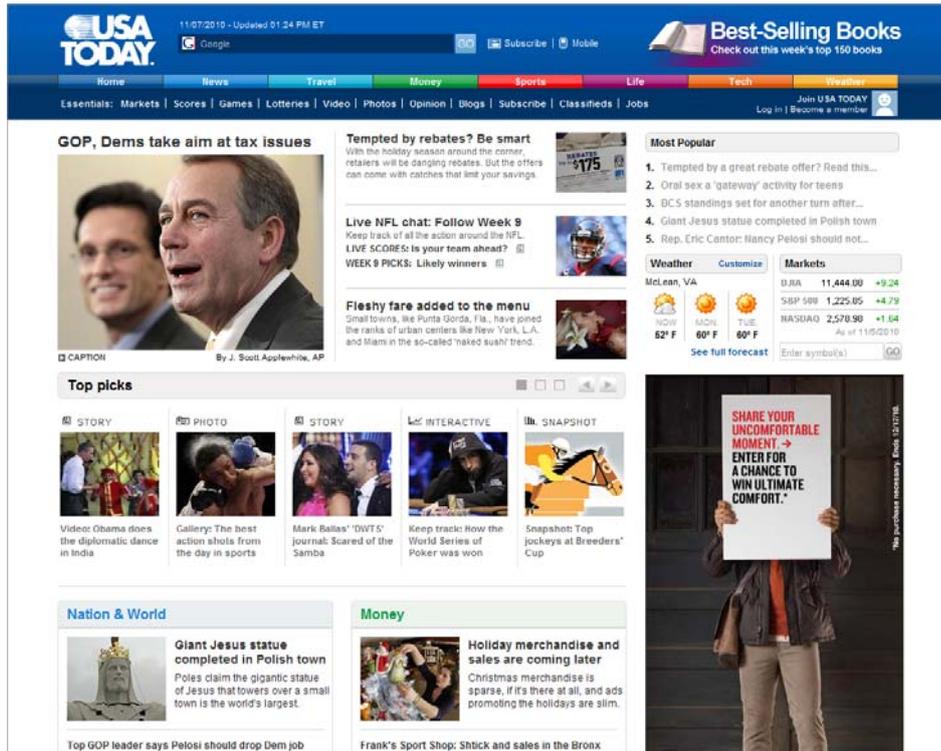


Figure 68. Homepage of the USA Today website. (usatoday.com)

Color is one of the distinguishing elements on the page to facilitate the finding of information. On the news article page, as similar to the Guardian, font size (Georgia 15px), line-width and line-spacing are optimum for readability (Figure 69).

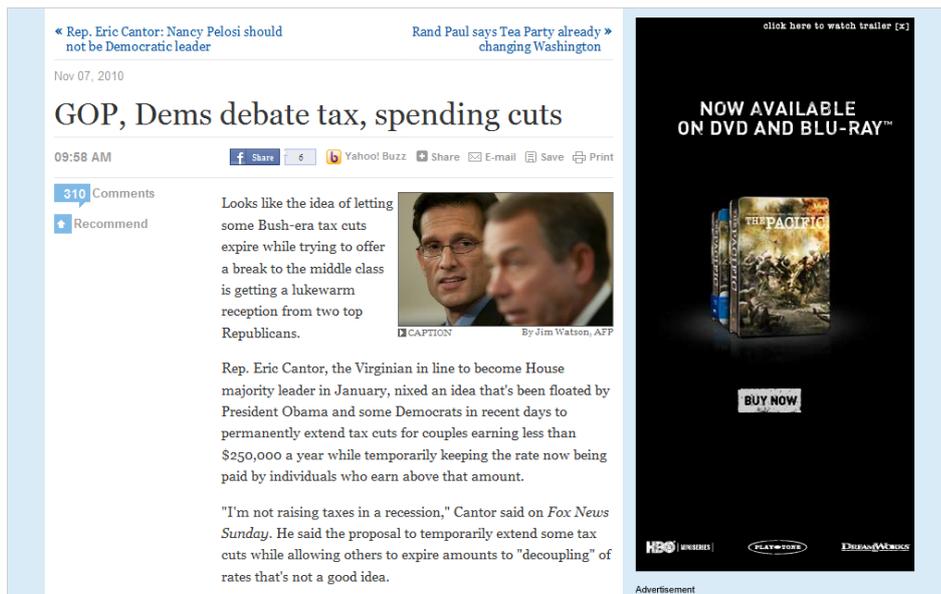


Figure 69. A section from the news article page of USA Today.

One important point for both the Guardian and the USA Today websites is that they use banner ads very efficiently without bombarding or disturbing. By this way, users are not irritated and it does not cause banner blindness. Also, they use large, square banner formats (300 pixels to 250 pixels and 300 pixels to 600 pixels) that are more effective and preferred more by advertisers.

There is a better solution in terms of usability on the news article pages in which at the top and end of each article, listed are 'next' and 'previous' news topics so that users do not have to guess the news (Figure 70). Also at the end of each article, related news contents are placed effectively.

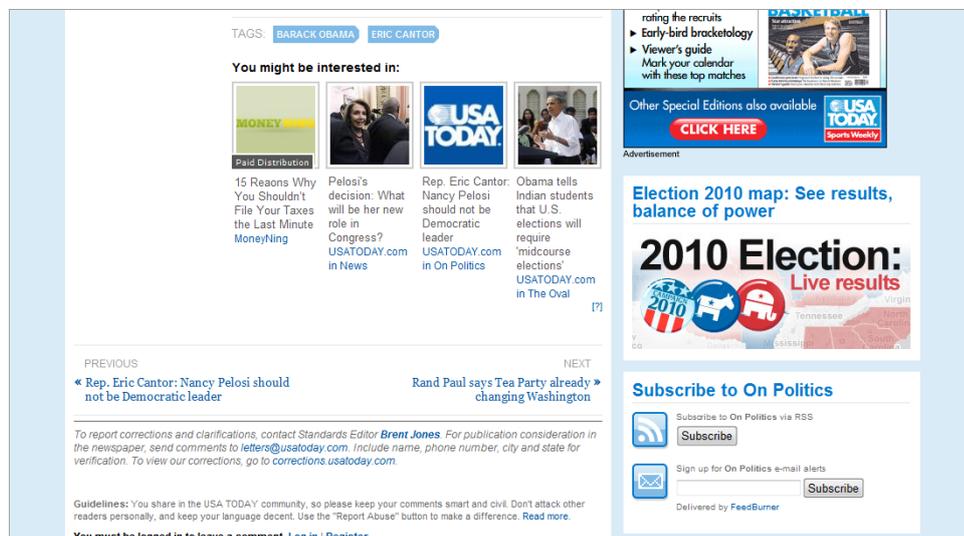


Figure 70. Example of a news article page from USA Today.

The USA Today photo gallery section is another good example for multimedia pages in which content should be presented at its own needs. On the news article pages, the background is white because for better readability however, the photo page background becomes black in order to highlight the image (Figure 71). The New York Times website's video section is also another example of that kind of approach. Users can specifically focus on videos or images easily (Figure 72).

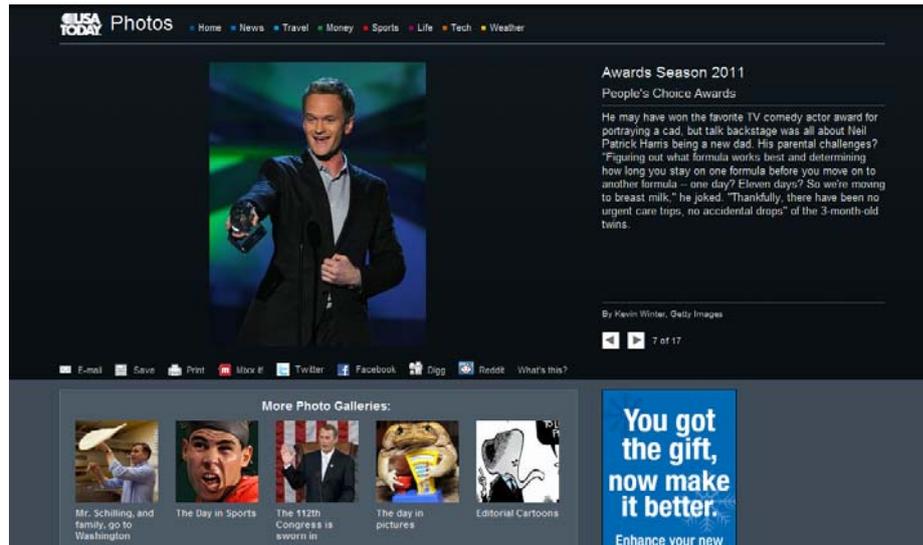


Figure 71. A photo news page from USA Today.

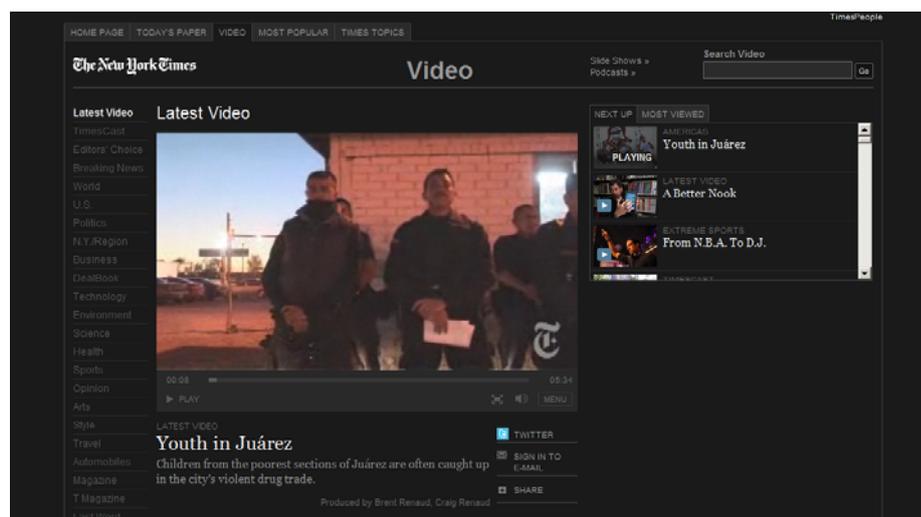


Figure 72. The video page of the New York Times.

On the Web, users can change the news flow according to their interests and needs. Websites have become more user-centered and allow their users to customize the content within the determined layout structure. The largest broadcaster in the world, BBC, has a website that is good example allowing users to customize the homepage. Users can drag the category boxes anywhere they desire according to the website's grid structure. Also, they can edit the content in the box according to their choices (Figure 73-74). It is a very flexible and user-centered structure that allows users to be a part of the site. The BBC homepage is a good example for some of the new conventions emerging from the digital environment.

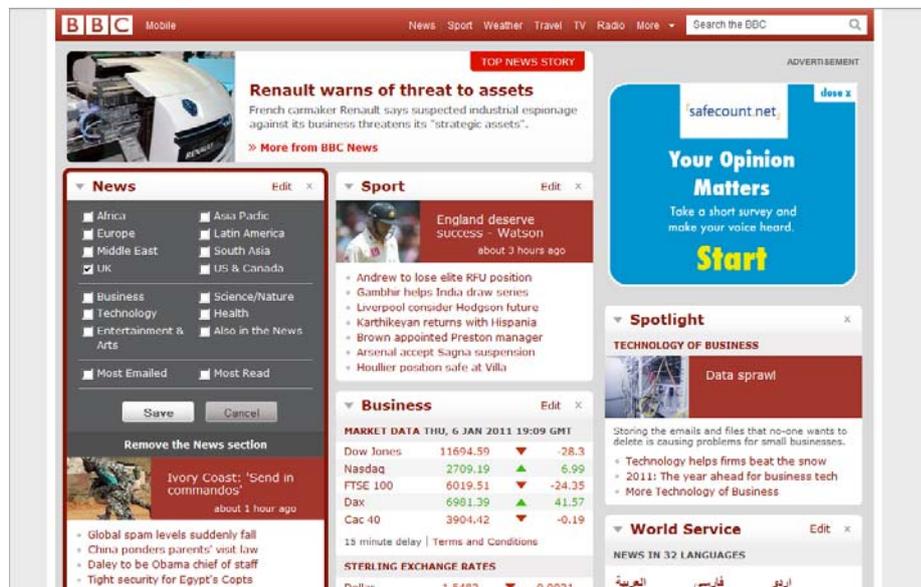
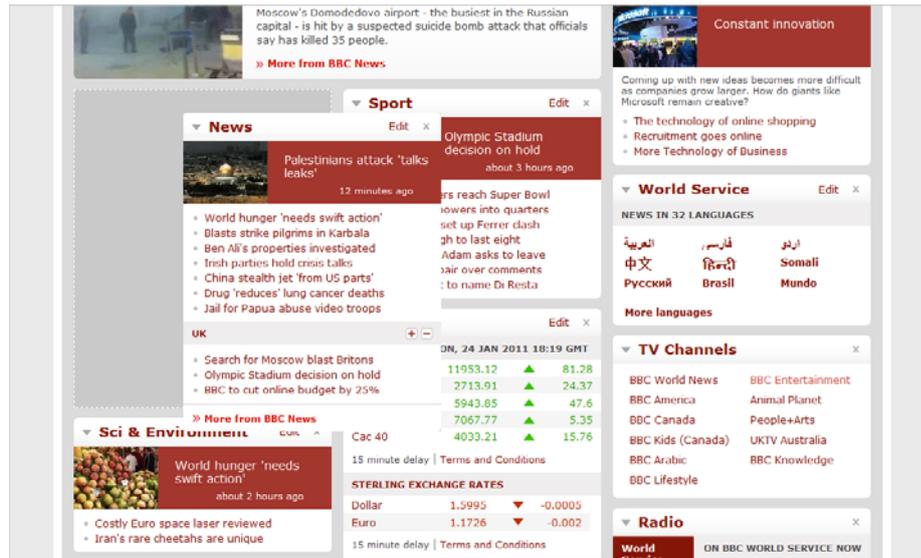


Figure 73-74. At the top, users can change the content order according to their interest. Near the bottom image, users can edit the content topics. (bbc.com)

Another example of a well organized and structured website is the CNN International website. CNN launched its new website NewsPulse in 2010. The new sub-site NewsPulse beta ¹⁹ provides a contemporary approach to news websites and reflects the new approaches of the digital era. In the information flow, users' main demand is to reach the information quickly, and the most important purpose of a news website should be to provide this request and response immediately without any obstacles or noises. On

¹⁹ A beta term means that it is still in testing versions with a limited release of the product in order to find bugs and errors before the final release.

the website, users can select or unselect the topics according to their interests and can easily see the filtered news flow in time and popularity order (Figure 75). When users click the news, the bar and picture enlarges and spot text appears (Figure 76). To see the full story users have to click the link which takes them to a detail news page.

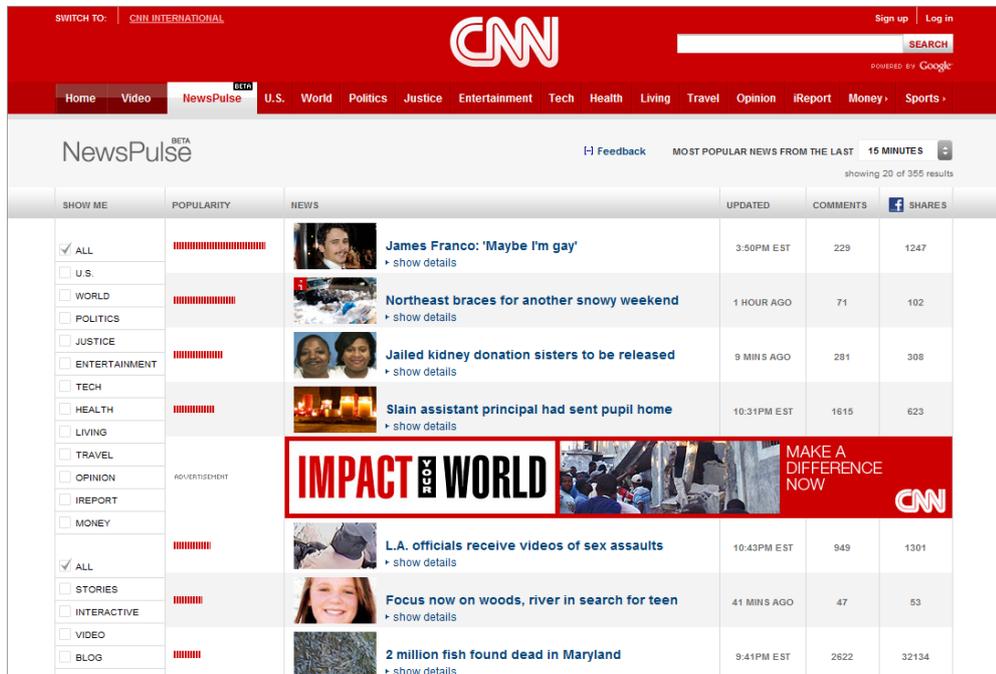


Figure 75-76. The homepage of Newspulse. (newspulse.cnn.com)

4.3. Redesigning the Hürriyet Website

According to Dieter Rams, good design is as little design as possible; it is one of the key points for the design decision of the project. There is an important point that in the complex information flow, messages are required to be delivered as simple as possible. The message should be clear, simple, transparent and direct. The main idea of the project is to communicate through simple and effective ways. The important point is to communicate the message aesthetically.

Most websites today are a chaotic mess of texts, images and advertisements with poorly designed layouts, all battling each other for prominence. The approach is to eliminate overuse of redundant information and design pollution as much as possible.

Another important point for this project is to think innovatively, as opposing a sometimes return to current 'old' habits and conventions.

One of the main points of the project comes from users' habits over the most used websites. Today, millions of people use websites like Facebook and Twitter. When users' actions are analyzed on those websites, what is found is that users consciously or unconsciously experience, and get used conceiving the main structure of the information architectures. In those information architectures, there is a new style of information flow that is a vertical and automatically updated message flow where users can see the latest news, feeds, events or any other information on the top of the row with other information under that and placed in time order (Figure 77).

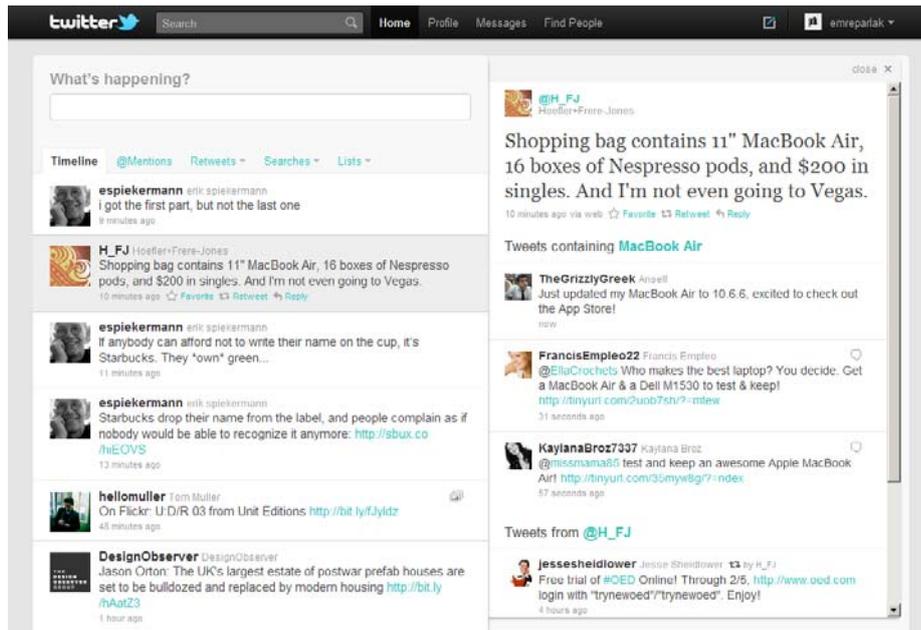


Figure 77. A section from the Twitter website. (twitter.com)

Today many people follow websites from their RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds²⁰, which are a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated entries. Reader websites or applications provide users to read those RSS feeds on browsers. This has gradually affected Web conventions. On the Reader sites like Google Reader or applications that work on the Web, there is a simple information flow, which easily and effectively obtains information quickly and allows users to share and archive effortlessly.

According to those new conventions and experiences, the redesigning of the Hürriyet website project will contain the new approaches as outlined that occur due to the necessities of the digital environment and users' habits.

²⁰ RSS is used to publish frequently updated works such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video in a standardized format.

The Grid and the Layout

The first important step for a good functioning website would be the grid structure. All the contents and elements of the website will be formed and placed into the grid system.

On the redesign site, there is twelve columns layout that is combined into three regions. Twelve is ideal, because it is a multiple of three and four (Figure 78).

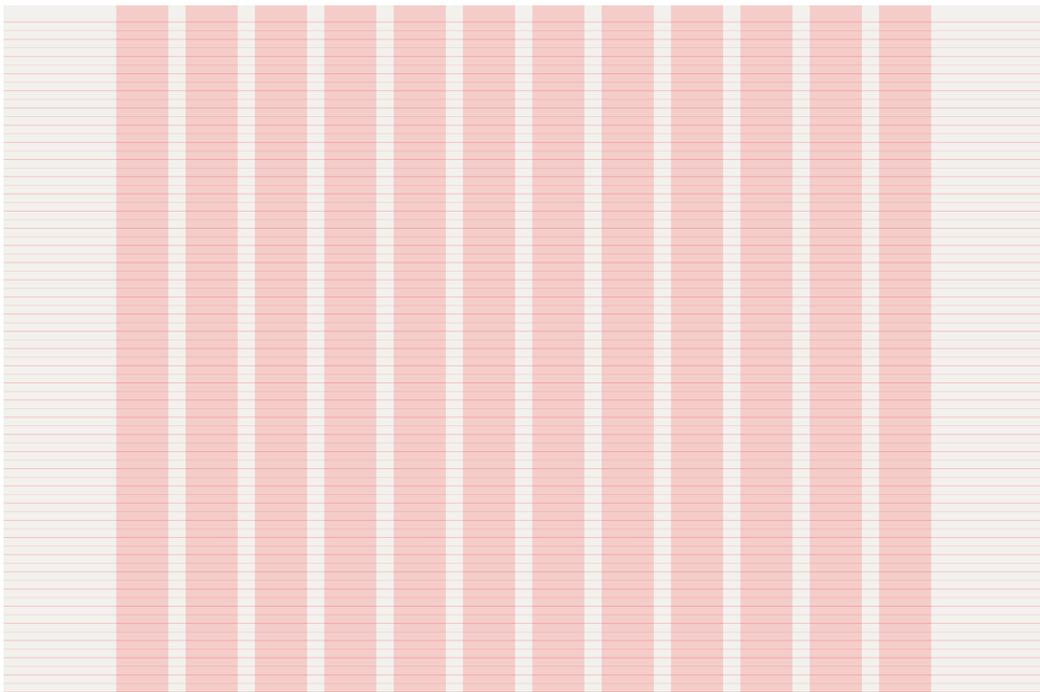


Figure 78. The grid structure of the redesigned project.

The main page of the site reflects Manovich's depiction of the new media culture as "an infinite flat surface where individual texts are placed in no particular order" with no implication on the hierarchical "master-slave" relationship (Manovich, 2001, 86). There is a vertical column order on the homepage. When users click the arrows on the page or press the arrow keys on the keyboard, the new categories come to the page one-by-one (Figure 79-80).

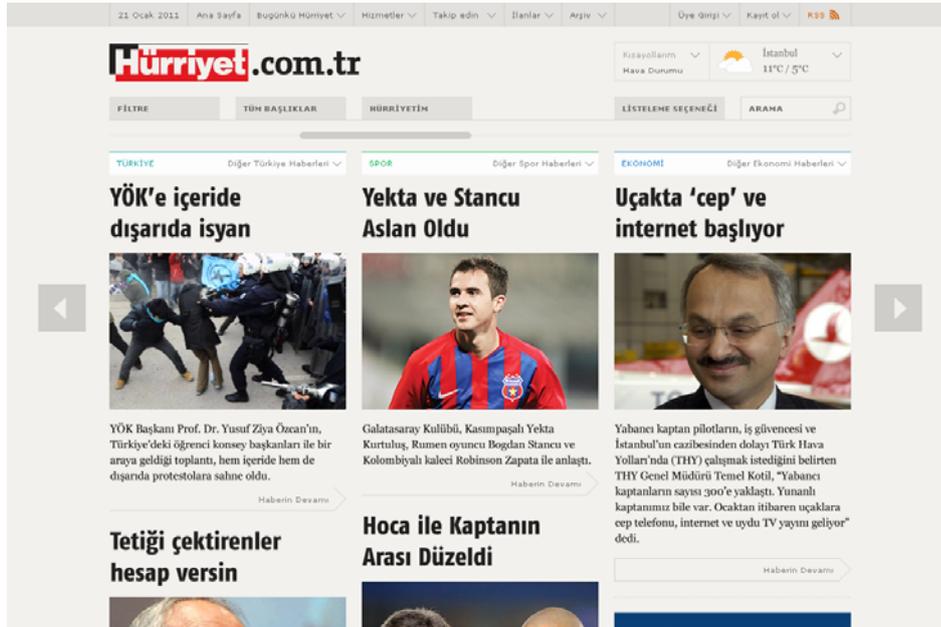
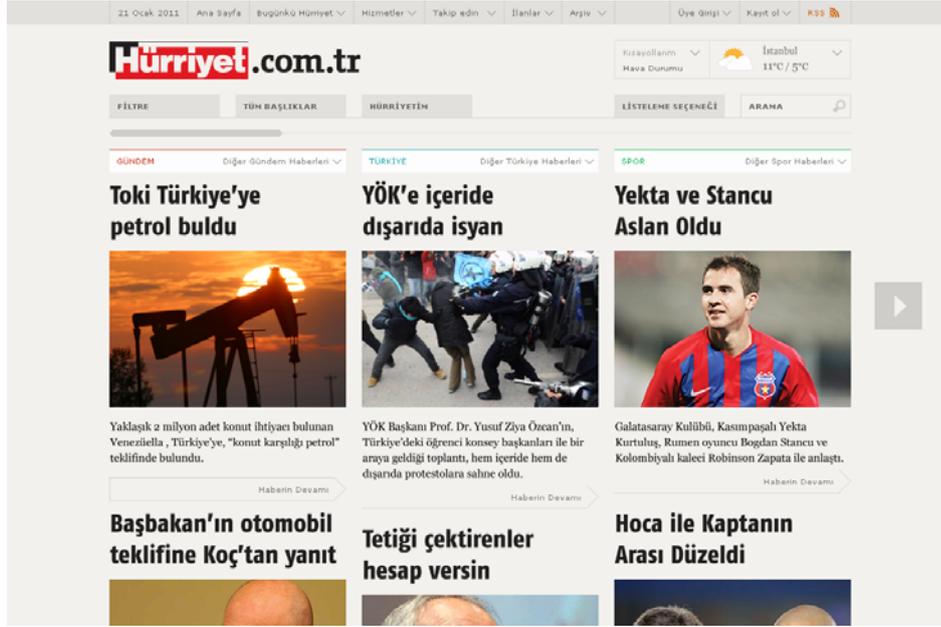


Figure 79-80. The homepage of the redesigned Hürriyet website. Users can use the right arrow button or keyboard to see other topics.

The baseline grid provides a structure for text to rests and also creates a vertical rhythm. The baseline grid establishes constraints and orders, which are the key elements of design. On the redesigned site, baseline grid is formed by body text line-height. Consequently, the distance between the baseline grids is constructed into 20 pixels. It creates the vertical rhythm of the site, affects the visual harmony directly and facilitates the placements of the website elements (Figure 81).



Figure 81. The baseline grid of the redesigned project. It is constructed into 20 pixels and half of it, 10 pixels. All elements fit into the grid.



Figure 82. A section from the homepage with grids.

Typography

Typography has a major effect by determining legibility, readability and thus, usability. It affects the users experience on a website. Typography should be transparent as much

as possible and should also be used as a functional element, like a part of the user interface.

Typography determines the layout and grid structure and “sets a tone for the experience” (Brown, 2010).

Firstly, body text should be determined and according to the body text other elements are formed. For the body text Matthew Carter’s serif font Georgia is used. Georgia is designed specifically for computer screens. Even at small sizes, partially effective due to a large x-height that facilitates readability. Georgia takes the complexity of serif characters and they are slightly wider and have blunter, flatter ends (Figure 83). According to research conducted by Smashing Magazine the most used typeface on the Web is Georgia, on a survey of the 50 popular websites. Therefore, users are very familiar with Georgia (Martin, 2009).



Figure 83. An example from Georgia type.

According to the studies on the Web, small font sizes are out of style, and more websites are turning to large font sizes. There is a clear tendency towards sizes between 12 and 14 pixels. The most popular font size (38%) is 13 pixels, with 14 pixels slightly more popular than 12 pixels (Martin, 2009).

On the redesigned site, the body text size is 14 px. that is in between large (16px) and medium (13px) values to provide optimum readability and efficiency. The line height (leading) for the body text is 20 px. It is nearly the 1.5 value (line height

(pixels) ÷ body copy font size (pixels) = 1.43) that is commonly recommended in typographic styles.

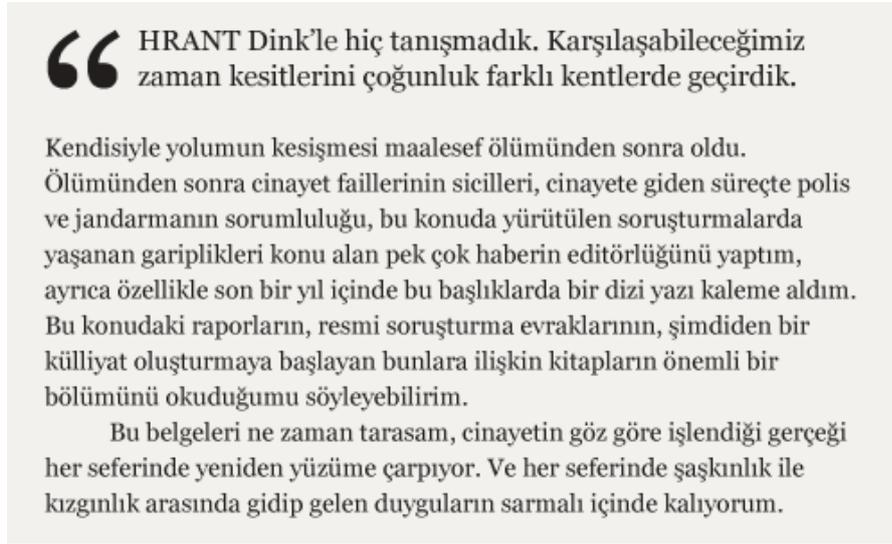


Figure 84. An example from body text.

For secondary texts especially in small sizes like on buttons or extra news information, the sanserif typeface Verdana is used. It is very sharp, clean and efficient, especially in small sizes like 9 and 10 pixels because it was made specifically for screens.

On the Web, users don’t read, instead they scan. For this reason, typographic contrast and flow emphasize certain text. Contrast is important because not all the content within a page have the same value; some have greater significance than the others. It directs users’ attention to the important messages and at the same time enhances the visual appearance.

On the website, for heading texts, the FF Fago Web font is selected. FF Fago Web is optimized specially for screens as it is a condensed, bold sanserif type that is more efficient on less space. It is a legible font and in between grotesque and humanist styles (Figure 85). Heading text size is 32 pixels. Heading to body font-size ratio is 2.2. Heading emphasizes the importance of the content and provides contrast with the body text.

YÖK'e içeride dışarıda isyan



YÖK Başkanı Prof. Dr. Yusuf Ziya Özcan'ın, Türkiye'deki öğrenci konsey başkanları ile bir araya geldiği toplantı, hem içeride hem de dışarıda protestolara sahne oldu.

Haberin Devamı

Yekta ve Stancu Aslan Oldu



Galatasaray Kulübü, Kasımpaşalı Yekta Kurtuluş, Rumen oyuncu Bogdan Stancu ve Kolombiyalı kaleci Robinson Zapata ile anlaştı.

Haberin Devamı

Figure 85. FF Fago type for titles, Georgia for body texts and Verdana on the continue buttons.

The number of characters per line (line weight) on the article page is around 70 as the optimal numbers of characters per line is between 55 to 75 (Figure 86).

çocuklar için açılan Tuzla'daki kampın yöneticiliğini yaptı, zamanını onlara vakfetti.

“ Yaşamöyküsündeki nihai etap, özellikle son dönemi yargılamalar ve linç kampanyalarıyla geçen Agos Genel Yayın Yönetmenliği dönemine ait. Ve 19 Ocak 2007 günü Agos'un önünde sıkılan üç kurşun...

Kendi Biyografisinin Anlatıcısı
Tüba Çandar, bu biyografide değişik bir anlatım tekniği kullanıyor. Hrant Dink'in yaşamöyküsünü ustaca tasarlanmış bir kurgu üzerinden ailesi, yakınları, arkadaşlarının anlatımları aracılığıyla aktarıyor.
Kitabın akışı içinde herkes sırası geldiğinde kürsüye gelerek spesifik bir olayla ilgili tanıklığını anlatıyor. Çandar'ın kitabı, bu haliyle bir imcece

Figure 86. A section from a news article page. There are spot sentences which provide movement and space to the text as well as emphasizing the important points.

For the case study, the background color is a light gray as this provides a better readability. A pure white background and pure black text exhausts users' eyes and causes flickering. Other elements use soft gray color tones that ease viewing. Each news topic has a specific color that reminds the user of the section.



Figure 87. A section from an article page.

Structure

The structure of the redesigned website is based on a horizontal and vertical movement, which functions with arrows and keyboard navigation. Users can use either the left and right arrows on the page or the left and right keys on the keyboard to see 'next' and 'previous' headlines. It facilitates and encourages users to reach the information faster and easier without using the mouse.

According to an eyetracking study on 232 users, recorded by the Norman Nielsen Group in 2006, the dominant reading pattern is in an F shape and has the following three components: Users first read in a horizontal movement, usually across the upper part of the content area. Then, users move down the page slightly and read

across in a second horizontal movement which typically covers a shorter area than the previous movement. Finally, users scan the content's left side in a vertical movement (Figure 88).



Figure 88. F-Shaped Pattern for reading web content (Nielsen, 2006).

As a result of those findings, on the redesigned website, the navigation, with sections in vertical order, works well with the F-shaped reading pattern. The vertical content structure provides users with the opportunity to focus on the information both horizontally and vertically. Today most screens, especially computer screens, are wider than they are tall. In order to use the horizontal space efficiently, the layout should facilitate a horizontal movement. Users can see other news articles of a topic by scrolling. When the mouse hovers over a column, the up and down arrows appear. Instead of scrolling, the users can use those arrows to see the whole content (Figure 89).

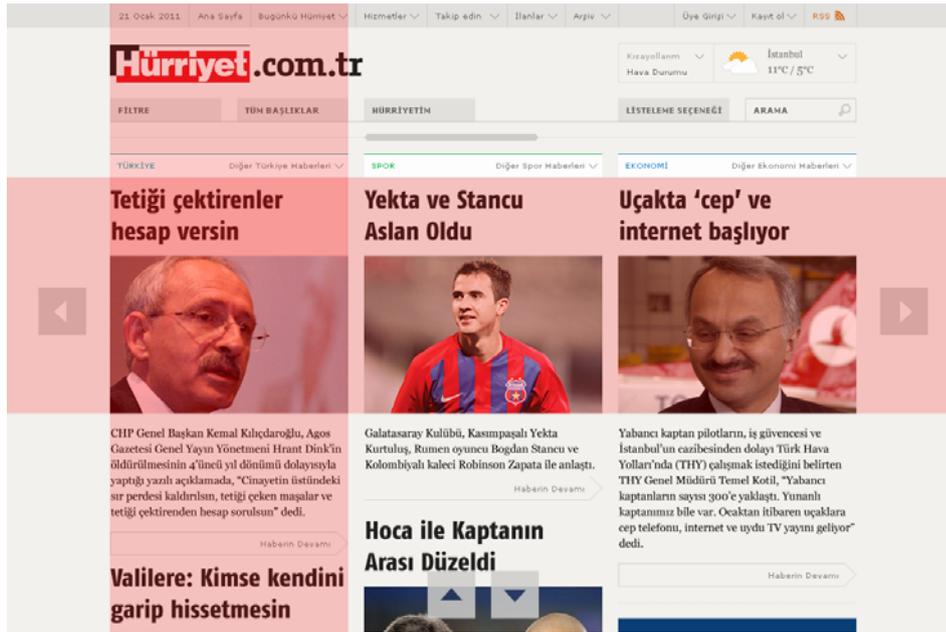


Figure 89. An example from the redesigned homepage. When users hover a topic, arrows appear which can be used to see other news.

Drop-down menus have been placed at the top of page ²¹. On the top of the logo, there is a secondary navigation bar that contains a ‘user login,’ ‘registration’, ‘RSS button’ and other elements that do not belong in the primary navigation. Under the logo, there is a primary navigation area that contains ‘Filter’, ‘All Topics’, customized user menu: ‘My Hürriyet (Hürriyetim)’, ‘Listing Options’ and ‘Search.’ The purpose is to keep only the most important links in the primary navigation and leave the rest for the secondary navigation (Figure 90).



Figure 90. Primary navigation (under the logo) and secondary navigation (top of the page).

²¹ Drop-down menu allows the user to choose one value from a list. When a drop-down list is inactive, it displays a single value. When activated, it displays (drops down) a list of values, from which the user may select one.

Today, it is significant that every user has different interests and needs, so websites should provide them with the option to customize the content according to their demands. For the 'Filter' section of the primary navigation, users can change the order of topics on the page according to their interests and needs. They can remove or add the topics by selecting (Figure 91). Additionally, users can filter the news by date. They can select a two days, three days and one week time period. Consequently, when users enter to the site, they can see their own filtered topics in horizontal order.



Figure 91. When users hover the filter menu, they can see all the topics, they can select or unselect the topic they want and change the order of the topics on the page.

On the 'All Topics' section, users can access all topics easily if they do not want to click an arrow to reach the topic immediately. When they select a topic from the 'All Topics' menu, all the news on the page will become that specific topic, accessed with either arrows or the keyboard (Figure 92).

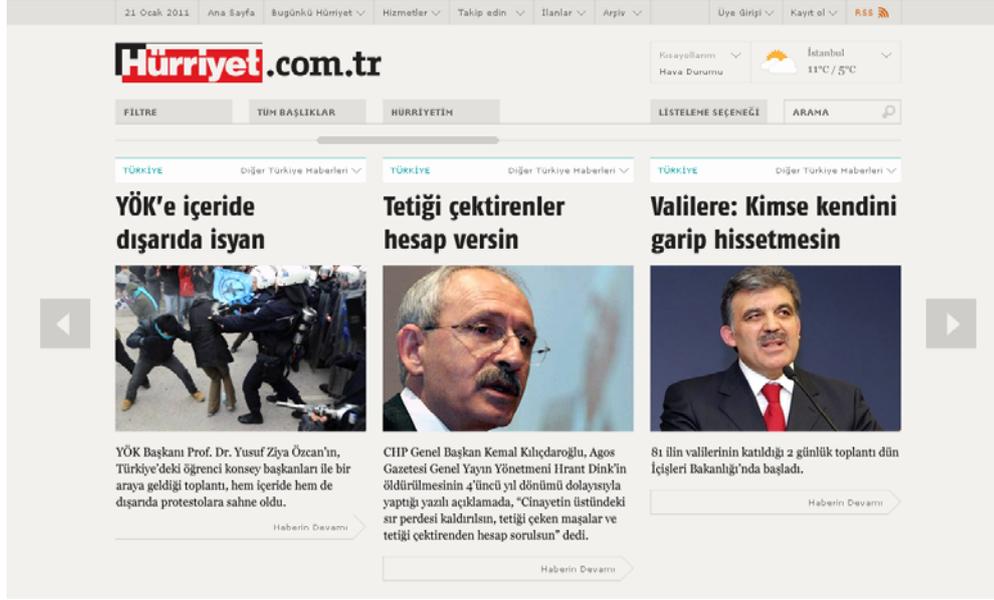


Figure 92. An example of a topic list on the page.

On the Hürriyetim (My Hürriyet) section, users can access or edit their profile and member information, favorite news, and their filtered topics. On the Listing Options section, users have two options to change the view of contents: One option is to have larger news images with a summary of the news. The other option is to have small images which allow users to see more news at first glance (Figure 93). When users hover over any news, they can see the summary text of that article (Figure 94).

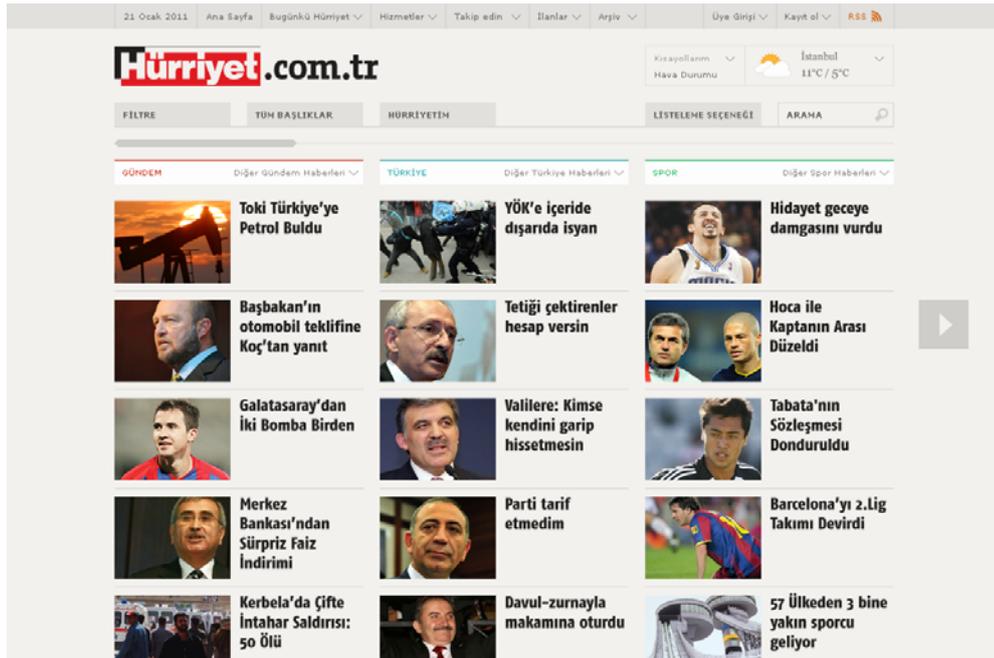


Figure 93. With the other listing option, the page layout changes.



Figure 94. When users hover a news article, they can see the summary text of that article.

On the top right side of the page, there is an editable shortcut section that provides weather, market values information and so on. Users can add a topic to that section for quick access (Figure 95).



Figure 95. Users can access information quickly and add additional topics.

The top part of the vertical columns, in which the category title is placed, contains a button function for accessing other, similar news stories. Under that title menu, users can access the latest, most popular, most shared and most commented news. That feature allows users to reach the information they need easily and fast (Figure 96).



Figure 96. Users can access the latest or most popular news of a particular topic by hovering over the button.

When users click any content from any section, that content takes two columns. Users can see detailed information by scrolling (Figure 97).



Figure 97. An example of the redesigned news article page. Users can click on the Social Media button from the right navigation column, and they can see the latest information flow from Twitter according to article's keywords.

Today social media integration is very essential for websites, especially for news websites. There are millions of people using social networks daily to share their opinions. Each individual has his own power as an intimate reporter as there is significant news flow from social networks, which creates its own potential to determine the agenda and manipulate it. Therefore, the redesigned website shows that when users read the detailed news, they can see instantly updated reactions about that news from social media.

Users can see the related news on the right column and also at the end of the article (Figure 98). Additionally, located here are 'next' and 'previous' news headlines. When users hover over the 'next' or 'previous' news links, after one second, the detail info box appears, which provides users with additional information about the news before they click (Figure 99).



Figure 98. At the end of the article, users can see related and popular other articles.



Figure 99. When users wait over the next or previous news article links an additional info box appears after one second.

On the gallery page of the redesigned website, the content is placed in the same structure, within a two column area. Videos are placed on a dark background in order to provide more attention to the content. Users can access the latest, most popular and most shared videos from the right side of the title (Figure 100). On the redesigned website, titles on the top of the columns also have a button function that accesses additional news quickly. When users understand the navigation structure of the website, they can easily use the system to access the content. Users also can access the related, latest and most popular videos at the end of the page.

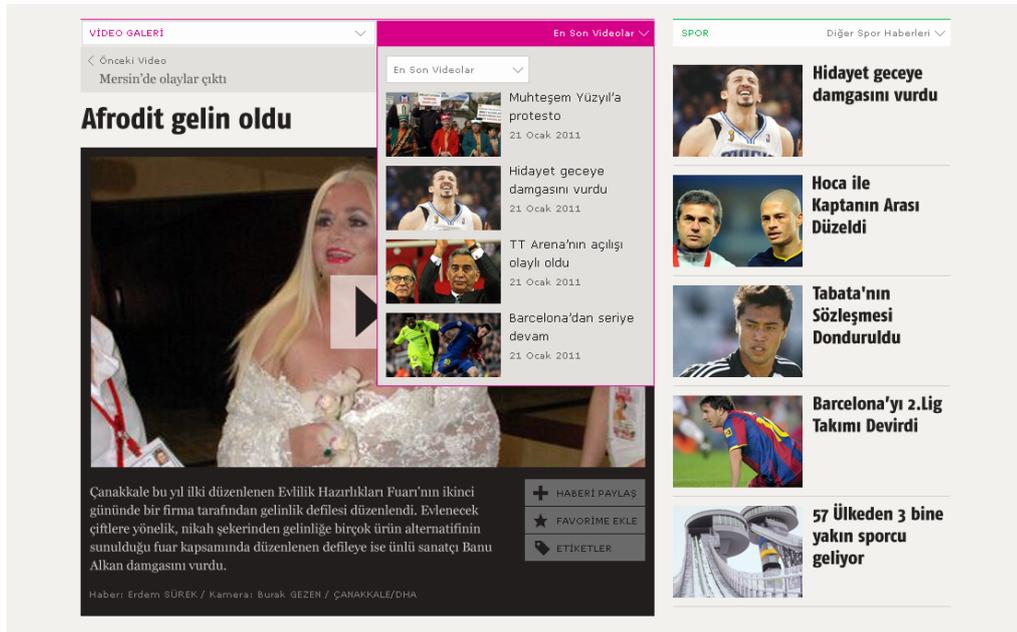


Figure 100. An example from the video page of the redesigned website.

In order to maintain consistency, the image gallery section is similar in structure to the video section. When users come to the right side of the photo, the 'next' button appears, when they come to the left side of the photo and click, they go back to the previous photo. In addition, users can use the keyboard's right and left arrow keys to access 'next' or 'previous' images (Figure 101).



Figure 101. An example from the gallery page of the redesigned website.



Figure 102. A section from the bottom part of an article page.

Responsive design is very significant for websites today because there are a variety of devices with different screen sizes. On the redesigned website, the layout can arrange itself by adding or removing vertical columns, according to the screen size at that moment. For instance, if the screen resolution is 1200 pixels wide, there are three columns on the page, however if the resolution is 1600 wide, there are four columns (Figure 103).

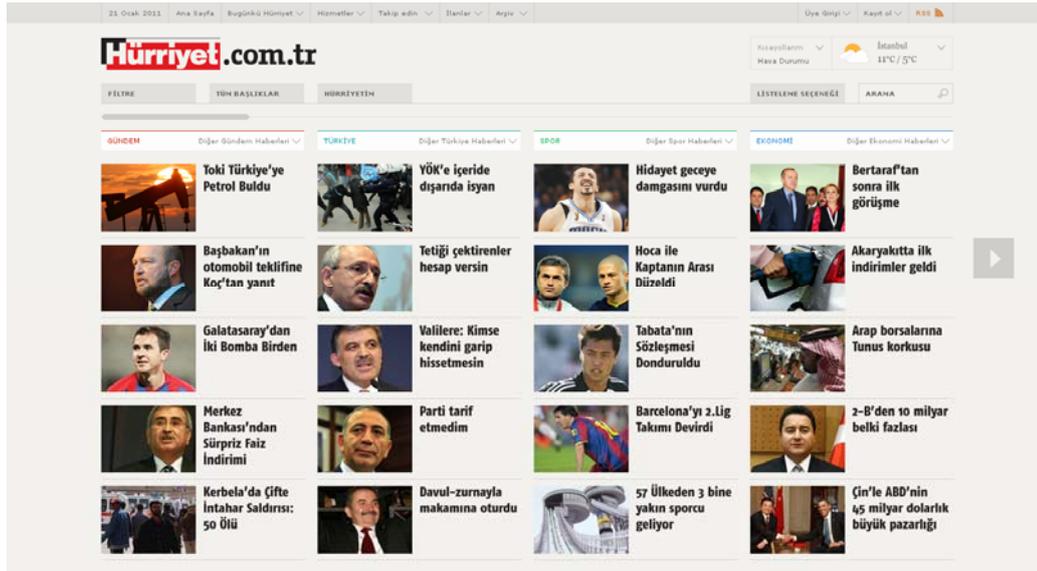


Figure 103. The homepage arranges itself by adding a column according to the screen size.

Laptops will overtake desktop PCs as the dominant form of computers in 2011, according to a report by analysts IDC (BBC, 2007). Further more, tablets will overtake desktop sales by 2015, but laptops will still reign, according to Forrester Research Inc. (The Inquisitr, 2010). Morgan Stanley analyst Katy Huberty stated about the increasing usage of tablets that "Based on our experience with iPad Web browsing, we would not be surprised to see tablet daily Internet usage exceed traditional PC Internet usage in the coming years" (Patrizio, 2010).

Those findings demonstrate that in the near future, tablets will be one of the most used devices for information accessing. That is also a paradigm shift. Tablets mean touch pads. As a consequence of that, the mouse cursor will transform into the users' fingers. That information gives some clues about the redesigning process of the Hürriyet website: The new layout can also work on tablets, like the iPad, without any changes (Figure 104). It will be a cross-platform, flexible layout.

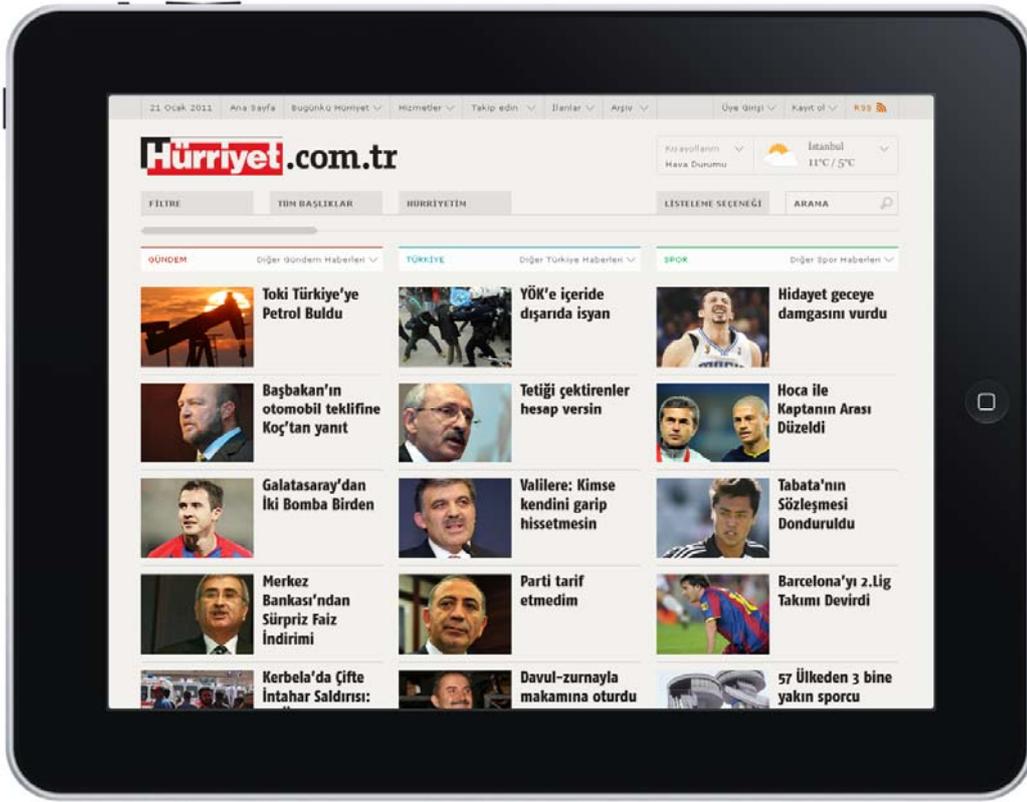


Figure 104. The redesigned website can be viewed on the iPad tablet device without any change. Layout and navigation can be easily controlled by fingers.

Advertisements

Web users have learned to pay no attention to advertisements, which obstruct their goal-driven navigation. When users first come to a page, they scan the pages rapidly, and often experience banner blindness. However, advertisements are very important for websites because of income, so it is important to harmonize and integrate ads into the content without causing banner blindness. The content and ads should work well together. Ads should not disturb or discourage users and their reading experience (Kalbach, 2007).

As a result of that, the redesigned the website contains banners placed into the content with enough margins and empty space so that they will be more effective and work well within the page content. Instead of a vertical 768 x 90 px banner, there are

square banners (300 x 250 px), which are more efficient and more preferred. Phoebe Ho of Google AdSense's Optimization team reports in a Google AdSense Optimization Webinar ²² that the best performing ad sizes that users see are 336x280; the 300x250 medium rectangle; and then the 160x600 wide skyscraper.

While each site is unique and needs to be considered with that in mind, certain locations do tend to be more successful. Google's AdSense ad locations heatmap shows these positions, with darker orange giving the strongest performance and light yellow giving the weakest performance (Figure 105).

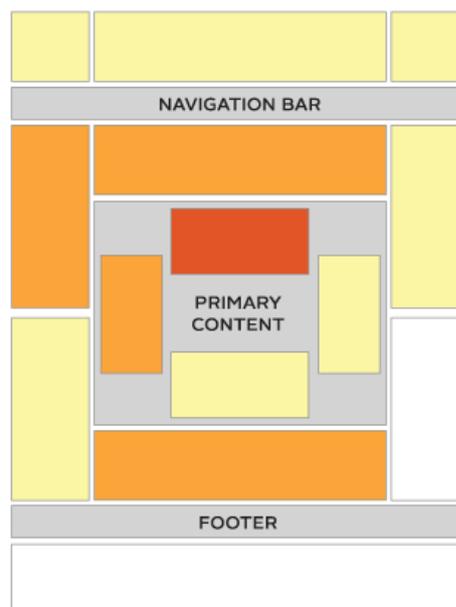


Figure 105. According to the Google Ad Map, dark areas indicate the most efficient placement for advertisements; light areas are the most inefficient locations (<http://websitetips.com/articles/marketing/banneradsizes/>).

The aim for the ads on the redesigned Hürriyet website, is for them to work harmoniously together with the content and with minimum disturbance. It should not cause banner blindness and should not disturb the users' reading experience (Figure 106).

²² "Google AdSense Optimization Webinar." Google. http://www.google.com/services/adsense_webinar.html

Tetiği çektirenler hesap versin



CHP Genel Başkan Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Agos Gazetesi Genel Yayın Yönetmeni Hrant Dink'in öldürülmesinin 4'üncü yıl dönümü dolayısıyla yaptığı yazılı açıklamada, "Cinayetin üstündeki

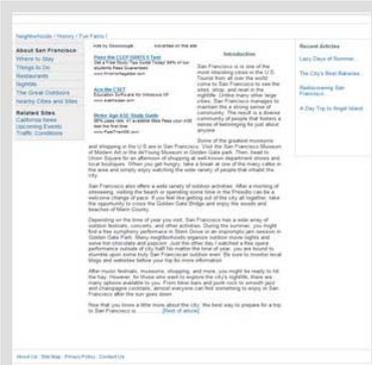
cep telefonu, internet ve uydu TV yayını geliyor" dedi.

Haberin Devamı >

reklam

Figure 106. An example of a banner on the homepage.

To reduce this disturbance, newspaper and ad companies should also work together in designing and preparing the advertisements according to the web page, which will create more effective and targeted feedback. According to the Google AdSense report²³ the best performance for ad placements tend to be from ads that blend in with the content (Figure 107). Ad placements should be effective and close to the primary content.



Blend



Complement



Contrast

Figure 107. The best performance for ad placements tend to be from ads that blend in with the content.

²³ <https://www.google.com/adsense/support/bin/answer.py?answer=17957>

On the redesigned website, banners are placed within the content as much as possible to provide optimum efficiency (Figure 108).

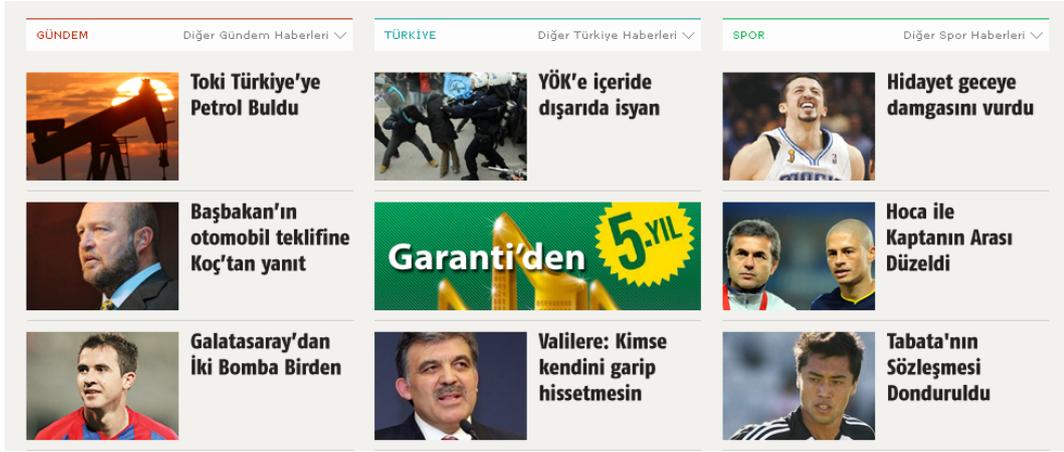


Figure 108. An example of different banner placements.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Graphic designers have an essential responsibility to use their skills and experiences worthwhile for social and informational design factors that improve education, culture and overall awareness of the world. This responsibility in shaping information flow has become even more pressing given the evolving historical nature of the digital environment. In today's information age, using design to giving people necessary information

After the 1980s and the advent of the Internet, the digital age started to create its own culture, which frequently grew first from traditional roots. Computers and screens became one of the most important tools of mass communication. Mass media like newspapers, magazines and books were transformed into the digital environment in the form of the digital environment. Millions of websites have been created since the beginning of the Internet however one of the most critical issues has grown more urgent. Websites are mostly created with methods derived from traditional media approaches, which can lead to complicated and incorrect design problems. Many newspaper websites, which are the main provider for delivering information to the modern society, cannot transfer messages directly and efficiently, and they cannot provide accurate responses to the new demands of that environment. Those approaches, and their resulting problems, affect millions of users who want easy and fast access to information.

Graphic designers should focus on the requirements of the digital environment in order to provide optimum solutions to those new demands like interface, usability, and information architecture.

To propose a solution according to the demands that come from new and unfamiliar conditions of the digital era, the Hürriyet newspaper has been selected as a case study. The principal aims of the redesigned study are to explore the conventions of the digital environment, usability, information architecture, typography, and to propose new, alternative approach to the digital environment.

On the redesign of the Hürriyet website, there is a new way of thinking to the traditions of interface and of hierarchy. The metaphors of interface are not directly drawn from traditional media, but from the new media itself, allowing the user to be more in touch with the content itself. Redesigning the Hürriyet website is a suggestion and an ongoing project. In the near future, through collaboration, this framework has a potential to be alive and after some usability tests and survey studies, it might be revised and finalized.

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