



Dwell.com

Visual Design Goals Overview

11.24.08

Visual design objectives



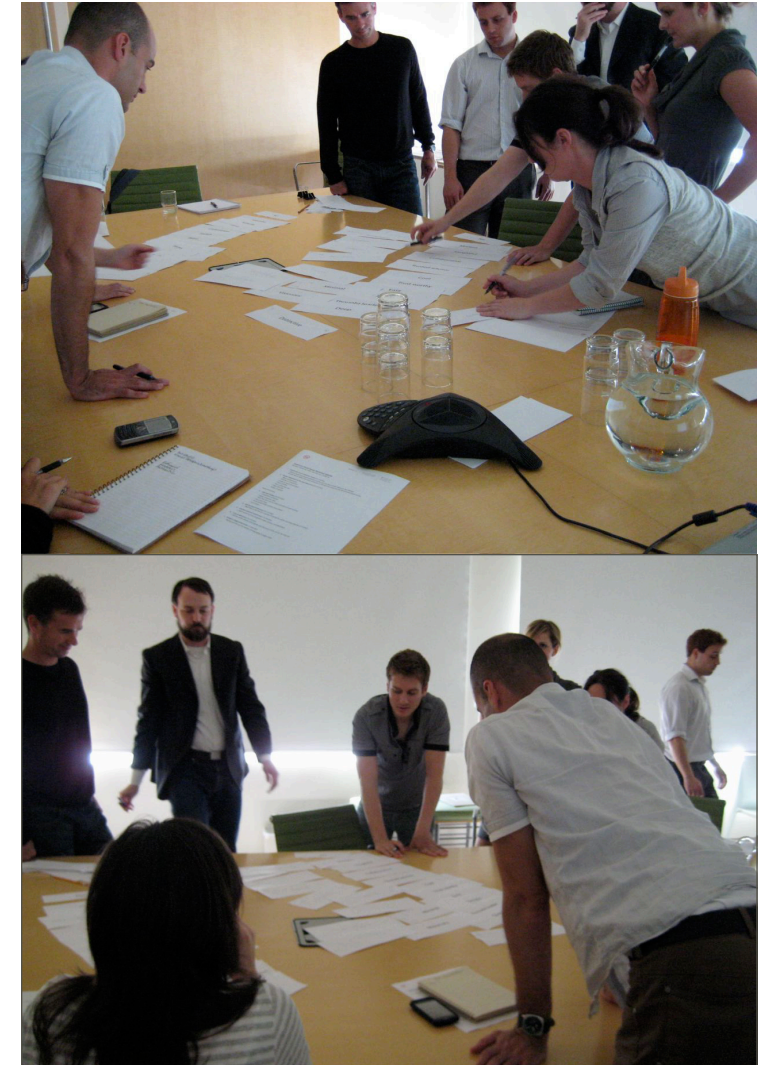
The following high level objectives are intended to focus the design explorations as well as help the group collaboratively evaluate the design work on the new site.

High level objectives:

- Visually presents an image of Dwell that is in alignment with the attributes identified during the visual design workshop (fresh, motivating, contemporary, lush, personal, etc.).
- The site design should align with the core values of the organization.
- Create a design that reflects the Dwell voice which also works in concert with the visual voice of Dwell's communities.
- The overall visual experience should be an example of friendly modernism and clean contemporary design.
- Create a visual interface (and presentation of content) that is easy and intuitive to use.
- Creative layouts that allow the content to be relevant, hierarchical, and easy to understand.
- Present rich media (images, slideshows, video, audio) that is large, not overly dense, clean and elegant.

The website should NOT be:

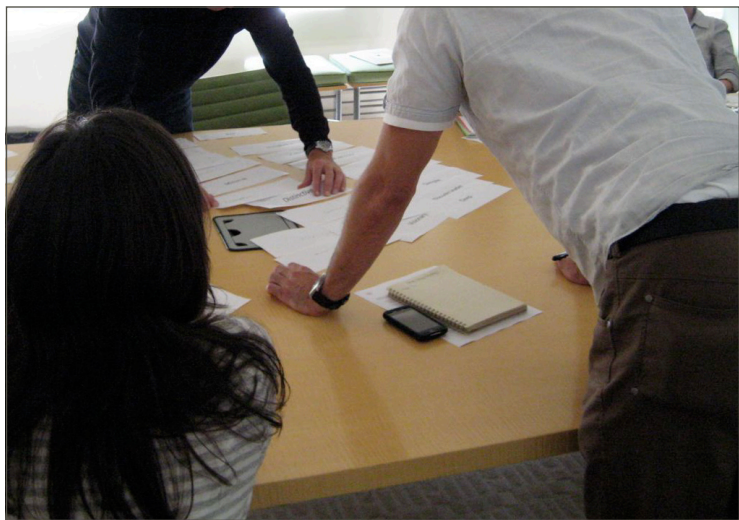
- Overly "corporate looking" (boring, strictly formal)
- Graphics should not be overly decorative and/or gratuitous
- Overwhelming or visually dense (visuals or content)
- Decorative, overtly trendy, or stylish
- Incongruous with the visual voice of the magazine





These attributes serve as a descriptive target for the overall visual character for the new Dwell.com. The prioritized visual design attributes were established during the visual design workshop.

While these words may initially seem somewhat intangible—or elusive—they are extremely important in guiding the design exploration and selection process.



Primary visual attributes

1. Modern

- Clean, simple use of photographs, good color palette, gridded and good hierarchy.

2. Authentic

- Not pandering; original, accessible, and approachable.

3. Refined

- The site design should not be complicated or have any decorative embellishments.

4. Timeless

- The site should be able to stand the test of time, like any well-designed modern piece of furniture or home.

5. Minimal

- In the way that modernism is based on the simplicity of form and function, the site should also be clean, clear, and without elements that are purely decorative or cluttering.

6. Evolving

- The design should be sufficiently flexible to allow for the continual updating and evolution of the site. The visual system of the site should consider scalability.

7. Distinctive

- The site should have a look and feel that makes it unique compared to its competitors. The site should look “fresh” and new, and avoid any graphical elements that can quickly become “trendy”/outdated.

8. Innovative

- The site should be easily usable by both novice and advanced web users. The graphical cues for interactions should be clear.

Secondary visual attributes

- Accessible
- Contrarian
- Visionary
- Insightful
- Collaborative
- Deep
- Thought leader
- Trusted advisor

Tertiary visual attributes

- Simple
- Easy
- Trustworthy
- Cool
- Architectural
- Fresh

Current visual vocabulary of Dwell

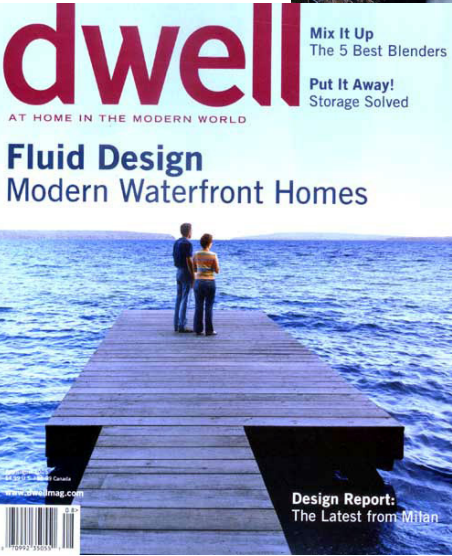
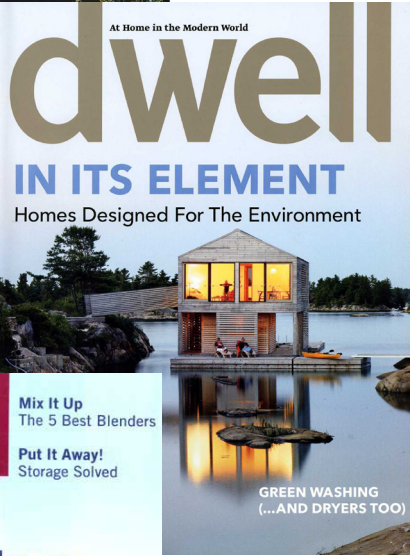
In order to understand the direction of the new site, it is important to see the broad context in which audiences experience Dwell. By looking at both online and offline expressions of Dwell, one can see the eclectic visual vocabulary that crosses the organization.

Clearly, there are challenges created by this variety of styles, but there are also many positive elements of the individual pieces, elements that can be incorporated into aspects of the new site.

The collection shown on this page is a small sample of current offline Dwell “branded” materials.

Specific elements that have been mentioned as particularly successful include:

- Online photos/slideshows
- Product of the day



Current visual vocabulary of Dwell



Perfect presenter



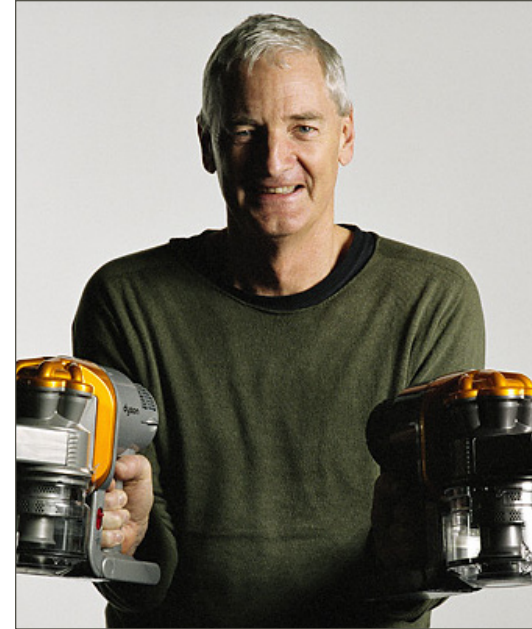
John Hodgman

Smart and intelligent, but down to earth; humor, resident expert, irreverent.



Charles and Ray Eames

Curious, regimented in process, innovative, iconic.



James Dyson

Innovative, aesthetic and functional combined, balanced.



Cameron Sinclair

Articulate, democratic, accessible, socially responsible, innovative.



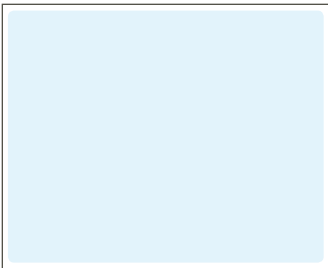
Dwell magazine has a specific color palette.



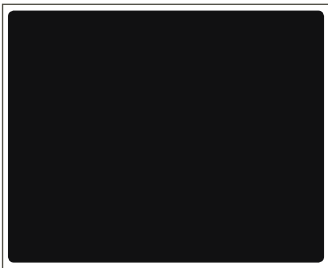
HEX: #00A3DB
RGB: 0, 163, 219



HEX: #D70B7D
RGB: 215, 11, 125



HEX: #E1F3F9
RGB: 225, 243, 249



HEX: #121212
RGB: 18, 18, 18



HEX: #D81F27
RGB: 216, 31, 39



HEX: #FDF0D5
RGB: 253, 240, 213



HEX: #FFFFFF
RGB: 255, 255, 255



HEX: #F4C4AE
RGB: 244, 196, 174

Color preferences

Visual Design Workshop



HEX: #000000
RGB: 0, 0, 0



HEX: #69B34B
RGB: 105, 179, 75



HEX: #5E5C5F
RGB: 94, 92, 95



HEX: #462164
RGB: 70, 33, 100



HEX: #9FB1B4
RGB: 175, 177, 180



HEX: #BBD9F1
RGB: 187, 217, 241



HEX: #CB1131
RGB: 203, 17, 49



HEX: #E87C32
RGB: 232, 124, 50



HEX: #EDD6B9
RGB: 237, 214, 185



HEX: #15113D
RGB: 21, 17, 61



HEX: #2E2B72
RGB: 46, 43, 114



HEX: #6E9FD5
RGB: 110, 159, 213



HEX: #FACD2D
RGB: 250, 205, 45



HEX: #F4F4F4
RGB: 244, 244, 244



HEX: #9F0F5E
RGB: 159, 15, 94



HEX: #FFFFFF
RGB: 255, 255, 255

Color preferences

Core Web Team



HEX: #000000
RGB: 0, 0, 0



HEX: #80236D
RGB: 128, 35, 109



HEX: #C02531
RGB: 192, 37, 49



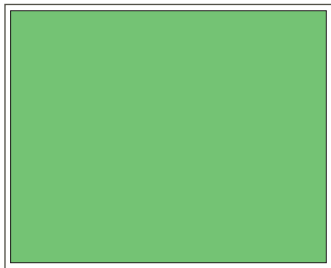
HEX: #87B8B8
RGB: 135, 184, 184



HEX: #2D7FB5
RGB: 45, 127, 181



HEX: #FCCD5A
RGB: 252, 205, 90



HEX: #7BC576
RGB: 123, 197, 118



HEX: #F5E1AA
RGB: 245, 225, 170



HEX: #F0E3CC
RGB: 240, 227, 204



HEX: #F9F3E6
RGB: 249, 243, 230



HEX: #F3F5F9
RGB: 243, 245, 249



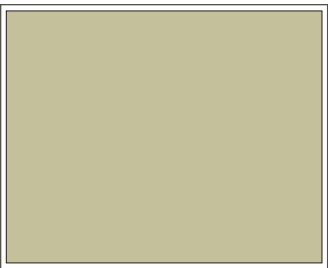
HEX: #E5D2AC
RGB: 229, 210, 172



HEX: #CCB889
RGB: 204, 184, 137



HEX: #A5A597
RGB: 165, 165, 151



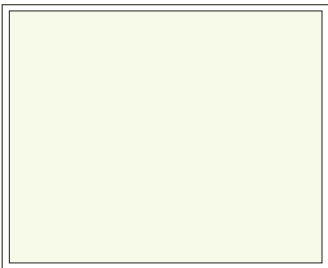
HEX: #C3C19D
RGB: 195, 193, 157



HEX: #EBEBE8
RGB: 235, 235, 232



HEX: #9D9EA1
RGB: 157, 158, 161



HEX: #F7FAE8
RGB: 247, 250, 232

Photography preferences



During the project kickoff and visual design workshop, the content, philosophy, and style of photography for the web site was discussed. Clearly, the magazine provides a wealth of examples of the type of imagery that are appropriate for the site.

However, as the presentation of imagery on the site has a few additional considerations, the following criteria should also be kept in mind:

- Imagery should be large enough for clear on-screen viewing; current images are too small; text should be bigger for articles.
- Intergrate slide shows into content.
- Images should have an element of humans within the setting. For example, children's toys casually placed within a beautifully designed modern bedroom.
- Featured designed objects can be silhouetted for emphasis.
- Soft light sources are often used on interior photographs, while natural lighting seems to be frequently used on exterior shots.



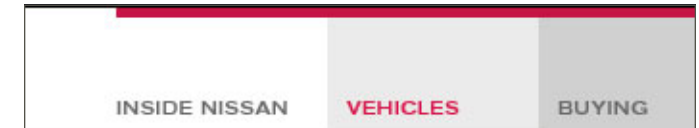
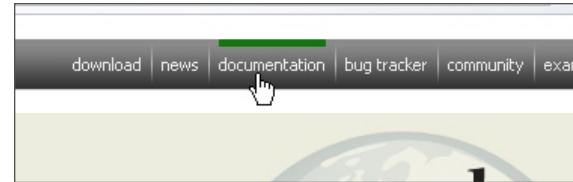
Global navigation preferences



Navigation is a pervasive element of the user interface, so it is important to design it in a way that its function and status is easily recognizable, yet doesn't overpower the information displayed inside and around it.

In reviewing a range of sample styles, the following trends emerged:

- Inactive navigation should look distinctly different from active.
- The rollover state should not look like the active tab.
- Icons within a tab were perceived as too busy.
- There was a general resistance to over-stylized navigation type.
- Exposed site map-like navigation works well in page footers.
- The group did not like tabs as much as non-tab navigation.



Website likes and dislikes

Competitive landscape (direct and indirect)

As part of the visual design workshop, the group of stakeholders reviewed a large collection of web sites that ranged between a focus on art, design, and rich media. The following pages highlight the sites that were deemed as “liked” and “disliked,” with brief explanations of elements that can serve as inspiration during the design of Dwell.com

Additionally, gaining an understanding of what the collective group considers good web design is useful to build consensus around baseline biases and visual preferences.

Stakeholder Likes and Dislikes

Nancy Alonzo
Associate Publisher

- TED
- ESPN
- Martha Stewart

Amanda Dameron
Online Coordinator

- Chow
- Flavorpill
- Shelterrific

Greg McElroy
Creative Services Manager

- Apple
- Discovery Channel
- Monolab

Nicole Parente-Lopez
Marketing Creative Director

- Epicurious
- Humble Voice
- National Geographic

Justin Reid
Technical Producer

- UX Magazine
- NY Magazine
- Creative and Live

Kathryn Schulz
Producer

- NY Times
- Wired
- Food TV

