

“Bread & Butter” Web Layouts

While we can imagine all kinds of way to present information on a website, visiting popular and successful webs we tend to see some common layouts. These are designs that work. They work because the form of the design follows the objectives, goals, and functions of the website’s owner.

There are predictable ways people look at websites. Research shows us that we look at webs in the following sequence:

1. The top left corner
2. Across the top, but probably not all the way to the extreme right edge
3. To the bottom left.

Web designs based on layouts that people are used to seeing and using provide a more intuitive experience. We don’t have to look for or study the navigation structure or site map. Good websites meet users’ expectations in-terms of how a site and its content is organized.

Modern designs focus on “*the golden triangle*” – the areas of the screen that scientific research demonstrate get people’s attention.



Mobile devices, however, are beginning to change this. It is common to visit webs on smartphones using the portrait/upright orientation. This *aspect ratio* (the shape of the box) happens to be how we typically use personal devices for phone calls. Mobile users, according to recent research, tend to not look across their narrow displays and instead look and swipe/scroll down.

Let’s look at an excerpt from *The Principles of Beautiful Web Design, 3rd Edition*, by Jason Beaird & Jamie George

The Three Quintessential Layouts

Left-column Navigation

Regardless of whether we’re talking about liquid or fixed-width layout design, the left-column navigation format is a time-honored standard.



Left-Column Navigation

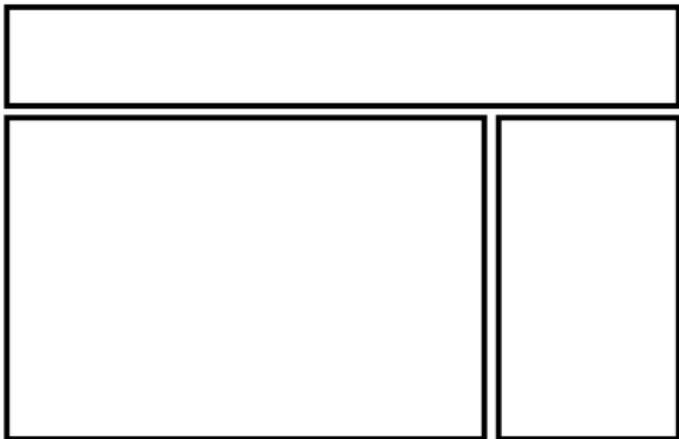
Many sites that fit into this mold don’t necessarily use the left column as the main navigation block—sometimes you’ll see the navigation along the top of the page—but they still divide the layout below the header into a narrow (one-third or less) left column and a wide right column.

It’s like a security blanket, or that comfortable shirt with holes in the armpits that you wear once a week—even though it drives your spouse crazy. For those reasons, a layout featuring left-column navigation is a safe choice for most projects.

The downside to sites that use left-column navigation is that they can appear to lack creativity. It’s been done so many times, in so many ways, over so many years that they tend to look the same. That’s not to say you should avoid using a left-column navigation layout. At a guess, I’d say that 75% of the sites I’ve designed have a secondary left-column navigation, but I do try to mix it up a little when I can.

Right-column Navigation

If you're going to restrict your main content to one side of the page, it's more widespread these days to push it to the left, placing navigation, advertising, and subsidiary content on the right.



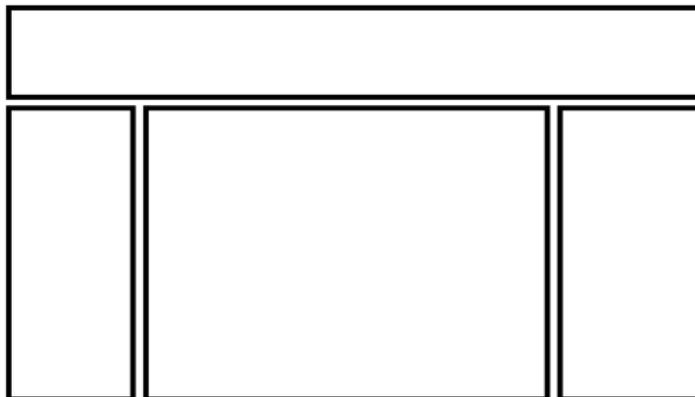
Right-Column Navigation

This is an especially common configuration for news sites, social networks, and websites with expansive navigation schemes that are unable to be contained within a simple top navigation. By keeping the secondary navigation on the right, it stays out of the way of visitors who, if they're this deep already, are looking for some very specific content.

Ultimately, the decision on whether to put a navigation column on the left or the right is a judgment call that's really about the amount and type of content you have to organize. If it's a simple site that doesn't require any secondary navigation, consider a narrow, column-less layout. Good design is often more about what you leave out than what you put in. If you do need a secondary column, just remember that the content is what your visitors are there for ... and more and more, they're looking for it on the left.

Three-column Navigation

The typical three-column layout has a wide center column flanked by two diminutive navigational columns. Although three columns may be necessary on pages that have a ton of navigation, short bits of content, or advertising to display, whitespace is essential if we're to keep a layout from appearing cluttered.



Three-Column Navigation

Finding Inspiration

Just because the left-column, right-column, and three-column layout configurations are the bread and butter of most web page designs, there's no need to feel confined to these layouts. A plethora—yes, a plethora—of design showcase and design pattern sites have been created to feature new and innovative ideas that might help you think outside the box

Source: *The Principles of Beautiful Web Design*
By Jason Beard & James George

Assignment

Artists and designers of all types learn their trade by studying the work of others. This allows us to examine what layouts and designs work. It also lets us decide what layouts and design elements we may not want to use.

Web designers need to persuade clients that their proposals will deliver. Not only does keeping-up with successful design trends keep our own designs “fresh” and modern, but it helps us explain to clients what we are proposing and why the new design/layout will work.

1. Create a project directory on your Z drive named *webDesignExamples*.
2. Find 3 sites each for the following four types of webs: (1). Retail, (2). Sports, (3). Music/Movie/Tv Show, (4). News
3. Use the Snipping Tool to make a quick screen grab of the 12 examples.
4. Insert each in MS Word document
5. Draw text boxes captions below each example (NO OUTLINE) and identify the basic layout format. If you do not see “bread & butter”, then create a label for that design.

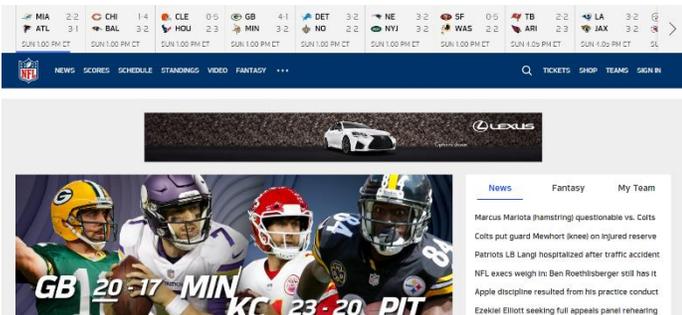
Examples, by YOUR NAME

Tips 'N Tricks



Craigslist: 4-column design

1. This project will be easiest and most-helpful to your design project if you choose webs that are “bread & butter” designs or which can be considered variations of these designs.
2. If you find a web that does not seem to relate to commonly used layouts, it may be easier to find another web that does reflect these design concepts than to try and classify an unusual design.
3. If you find an unusual layout, please show it to Mr. B and let’s see let’s review how the design works or can be classified.
4. Remember, mobile devices are used very differently – PLEASE USE YOUR DESKTOP COMPUTER & MONITOR FOR THIS PROJECT.
5. The challenge in web design today is to create designs that work on mobile devices and computers. As of 2017, there is approximately a 50/50 split between desktop/laptop usage and tablet/smartphones (A slightly higher percentage is tablet/smartphones as of October 2017)
6. If you have not had a DESKTOP PUBLISHING class (it has not been offered for a few years), please review Mr. Breitsprecher’s MS Word Quickstart Guide so that you can easily place images and textboxes down the 2-column layout.



NFL: Right Navigation



Walmart: Multi-Column with Scrolling Product Bands



Facebook: 3-Column

- Once you create 2-columns, the easiest thing to do is hit ENTER repeatedly down the page (both columns)
- This lets you click and insert pictures anywhere and avoids problems with the way MS Word “anchors” graphics to text.
- You will need to use IN FRONT OF or BEHIND TEXT wrapping options to avoid having problems placing object in near proximity.