

Color Aesthetics for Web Graphics Creation

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Abstract

Color has long played an essential role in successful visual design, but the web has some distinct constraints and considerations that warrant further study by the web graphics and SIGGRAPH community. The objective of this lecture is to establish what special constraints related to color exist, share design principles and techniques to address those constraints, and critique existing examples of web design on the success or lack thereof of color communication.

1 Web Color Constraints

There are numerous conditions that affect web developers. Some have to do with cross platform and hardware issues, such as gamma, bit depth, and color calibration. Having an understanding of these issues helps web developers on any platform using any technology understand what the potential conflicts are towards building successful color design. The web-safe palette will be discussed, as well as its impending (if not already impended!) obsolescence.

2 Color Aesthetics and Design Principles

Many web developers have no training in color theory or understanding of how to create color hierarchy in a web document. Color systems of primary, secondary, tertiary, complimentary, tertiary and analogous are important reference points, but often lack practical application. Once the starting point of color systems is understood, paying attention to value and contrast in color schemes is what allows a designer to create a hierarchy of information. Since so much of the challenge in web design and development revolves around information design, color can play a critical role in ensuring that importance is paid to important information.

3 Techniques

Using Photoshop, the most commonly used imaging editor for web developers, the lecture will cover techniques to create swatches and color lookup tables that promote the ability to create good contrast, color latitude for many different levels of information design, and be shared among teams of developers and designers. Practical techniques will also be covered that show how to colorize web images, from photographs to type to vectors to 3D. Files for the lecture will be available at <http://www.lynda.com/siggraph02/color>.

4 Critiques and Examples

It's important not to simply define the problems and solutions to successful color design, but to look to examples and references. Studies will be presented that show how to work with color systems, such as analogous and split compliments, warm and cool colors, and making hierarchy with color. As well, looking to examples on the web of existing html, flash, java, svg, and vml is important to establish a vocabulary to define the success or lack thereof of color communication on a web publication.

About the Presenter

Lynda Weinman is the co-founder of lynda.com, an education company for creative professionals. She has worked professionally in design and animation for the past 20 years, and has been teaching digital design for the past 12 years. Lynda has been a faculty member at Art Center College of Design, San Francisco Multimedia Studies, American Film Institute, UCLA, and at numerous conferences and workshops throughout the world before forming her own workshops in Ojai, California. Lynda is the author of a series of books on web design, and writes for numerous magazines, including: MacWorld, How, Adobe, Step-by-Step Graphics, Web Techniques, Dynamic Graphics, Animation, Full Motion, New Media and Diem.