The Elements of Graphic Design: Space, Unity, Page Architecture, and Type

Alex W. White

The Elements of Graphic Design: Space, Unity, Page Architecture, and Type

Alex W. White

The Elements of Graphic Design: Space, Unity, Page Architecture, and Type Alex W. White
Approach page design in a revolutionary new way! Unlike other graphic design books, **The Elements of Graphic Design**reveals the secrets of successful graphic design from the unique perspective of the page's "white space." With the help of carefully selected examples from art, design, and architecture, the book illuminates the role of each design element and how it can be rendered more effective by including white space in the page architecture. The book also demonstrates how white space can lend "sound" to typography or shift the "weight" of a page. Clear, insightful comments are presented in a dynamic page design, and interactive design elements, thought-provoking captions, and scores of illustrations challenge designers to "think out of the box.".

The Elements of Graphic Design: Space, Unity, Page Architecture, and Type Details

Date   : Published November 1st 2002 by Allworth Press (first published January 1st 2002)
ISBN   : 9781581152500
Author : Alex W. White
Format : Paperback 149 pages
Genre   : Design, Nonfiction, Art, Reference

Download and Read Free Online The Elements of Graphic Design: Space, Unity, Page Architecture, and Type Alex W. White

From Reader Review The Elements of Graphic Design: Space, Unity, Page Architecture, and Type for online ebook

Karen says

My one problem with this book is that I found it hard to read--it was difficult for me to latch onto and remember the content. I think this was due to the busy, overstimulating design, which made me feel that I had to process everything at once. That said, it is a visually rewarding book with plenty of good examples. One lesson in particular that benefited me was the discussion of whitespace. Perhaps if the book design had followed through on this I would have had an easier time.

Adam Gilbert-Cole says

For a book about graphic design, the interior was a MESS. There was no white space, no breathing room, nothing that wasn't jam-packed with graphics and text. It was overwhelming. I'm much more enjoying Design Elements: a Graphic Style Manual. The layout is clearer, the graphics and illustrations are given more space when paired with descriptive text, and the pace of the information is better.

Marilyn says

I didn't read this book cover to cover. I found it on a list of 10 books for graphic designers & got it from the library. The text seems aimed at people who design commercially (advertising, magazines). As someone interested in graphic design as a hobby I didn't find myself compelled to read all of it. At first I liked the design of the book but there are so many captions describing the images that it disrupts the flow of the information, especially since you don't know if the example images apply to content you already read or haven't read. This may be a more useful book for professional designers looking to create magazine ads. I found the author had clear ideas of what was "good" design, but I liked his "bad" examples and found them artistic.

Bryan says

Some good info, but its buried in pages of disorganized filler. Readability is sacrificed for visual flare on each page which makes for a hard read. (Ironically, this is what White instructs designers not to do). He introduces terms without defining them until chapters later. He can't seem to decide whether he is writing a guide for beginners or his grand treatise as a designer with years of experience. Generally his tone is pedagogical and snobby.

Travis Fantina says

A little too academic to make it really enjoyable but there is a lot of really good information in here. I only

wish whoever designed the layout of the book had taken the advice of the book, lots of the graphics were hard to follow and confusing, some were very low resolution as well. Strange for a book on graphic design.

Tom says

As the other reviewer stated, for a book about graphic design, this book has lots of visual clutter. Sidebars, topbars (is that a thing?), and full-page examples distract from the text and obscure the point that the author is trying to make. I could barely follow the text through because my eye didn't know where to go. I'm not a graphic designer, but I felt that the layout could have been a lot better. The text was well-written, though I felt it read more like an academic paper than a textbook, and it was theory-focused with minimal explanation of why the presented examples work or how to create them.

Bubu Drago? says

To be honest, I think it's an overrated book which lacks substance and is difficult to read because of the format chosen to display the information. The explanations from the glossary are more useful than the general definitions, examples until that point. I can't recommend this book to someone else.

Manuel Frias says

Good reference to learn the basic principles of design with a lot of examples. This should be a good thing but I have however mixed feelings. The reason is that every page has so many of them that sometimes it was difficult for me to either focus on the main text or on the examples. Plus, some are crammed at the top of the page and sometimes too small.

DeAnna Knippling says

Okay. Book on graphic design. You expect it to be well-designed.

I'm not sure if this one was or not: maybe that was the purpose. It was incredibly informative (especially on typesetting, for some reason), but the layouts and graphics seemed to break a lot of the rules that he was trying to get across. You'd look at a page and have no idea where to start reading, there were so many text boxes on it. And yet it wasn't hard to read, or boring, or confusing--you just had to dance around a lot.

Recommended?

David says

I am an Educator and I found this book to be worth the time reading. I would categorize it ad an introductory book on design. Also, it is important to understand that this book is not a typical read and cannot be

approached in the same way as other non fiction.

The unique layout was engaging. It gives the reader an experience with the topic. There are many examples throughout that illustrate the authors points, along with various quotes that add emphasis. There is plenty of imagery and even some compare and contrast.

I can see this book being beneficial for anyone spending time creating documents, presentations, or visuals of any kind. If you commit to the read it will help you connect with your audience. Any audience.

Robbie says

Concise introductory design tips focused mostly on use of white space and typography.

I'll agree that this has a lot of visual clutter, but I think it was going for a textbooky look—which does tend to run heavy on the visual clutter. There was a bit of a "do as I say, not as I do" aspect to it.

Tom says

NOW I UNDERSTAND

Sammy says

This is probably the best book on graphic design I've ever read. Usually, Graphic Designers are fairly incommunicative verbally. They will try to show you; ask you whether you "see" it or "feel" the harmony or balance or whatnot of some design. Of course, I don't see it. If I did, I wouldn't have to ask in the first place. Thankfully, this Alex W. White doesn't do that. His prose is clear about every concept Graphic Designers have ever introduced me to and neglected to explain.

Majority of the book is actually devoted to the idea of Active White Space ... or the unprinted portions of a page that is left intentionally blank. The author believes that while content is important, whitespace is equally important to contribute.

The book mixes the theoretical and the practical. There is the usual precepts to have 50-60 characters in a line. But there are also little gems like, "Total lack of controlled white space produces visual noise."

I also liked, "Sequencing information is among a designer's most essential tasks. Book designers, for example, structure their typography into title, chapter and section headings, subheading, text, and captions. Such typographic structure helps the reader scan for generalities and, at least initially, ignore details until they commit themselves to the text."

The big turn-off for me is that the body text is set in a sans serif font. Why does he do that? I don't know. But it is not important.

read this book!

Understanding the grammar of visual design is almost a second form of literacy in our consumer driven society.

Rossella says

If you are starting a career in graphic design this book can give you a short but effective overview of the basic principles professional designers follow in their work, and the aesthetics behind it.

But if you are simply someone that, for some reason or the other, needs to build some graphical skills, and apply what you learn to some practical work, you are going to find this book just too theoretical.

The only part which seemed to me to be a bit more down-to-earth is the last section (the fourth) about type, and even in that case, as in the rest of the book, there are no such things as instructions, practical examples, exercises, hints, tips, tricks or anything that might help a beginner to actually start designing in a less clumsy way. The first three sections, in case you wonder, are about space, unity, and page architecture.

Bottom line: if you are already in some serious way into graphic design, or would like to be, go for this book. If you aren't, what this book will give you is at best a better understanding of other people's work.

A says

The actual text portion of this book I would give 4 stars, as it is chock-full of useful information and really helps cement basic design principles. However, I'm giving it 3 stars because the structure and *design* of the content makes gleaning the information at times a challenge.

The content itself is pretty basic graphic design principles, how to think about them, how to use them. Size, color, proportion, white space, grids, typography, etc. While is could have been organized so there was a little less repetition and clarity, most of it was well explained and demonstrated. Much of it was not new to me, but then I have a BFA, worked a good deal in the graphic art side of printmaking, and have spent a good deal of time with typography. I didn't study design, however, and much of this is framed as a teacher might cover it in a class, therefore quite welcome. I'm especially grateful for the checklist of questions to ask about a design, which is extremely helpful for clarifying potential issues in my design work that I'm not always good at identifying or articulating.

The design of the information, though following the kind of order and internal logic described in the text, is often too busy, overloaded with examples and quotes. All quite helpful indeed, but the lack of white space and inclusion of 3-4 threads of information makes everything difficult to parse. You could argue that the author is drawing attention to these elements by using them in a more heightened way, but then that begs the question of whether it really helps the reader to grasp the actual content. I don't really mind design that challenges presumptions of good design and pushes the limits, but within the context of just conveying best use principles, this may not be the best approach.

This is certainly a great-looking book, and I'll be keeping it on my shelf for the general guidelines and checklist, but personally I would prefer something with a more straightforward approach to the content.