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Family Place Website Design Analysis

Introduction

Our client, Shonna, referred us to the Family Place website (<http://thefamilyplaceutah.org/>) as an example of good website design she'd like us to emulate when we redesign the CVNSA website. This paper discusses the strengths of the Family Place website design, based on the design principles, as well as points out some areas for improvement.

Visual Perception and Contrast

Visual perception and contrast go hand in hand, because while not every kind of contrast is preattentively processed, preattentive processing does rely on certain kinds of contrast. The Family Place website utilizes this principle to direct users' attention to the most important elements on the page. For example, in the top bar, the orange color of the social media icons contrasts with the blue color, which makes the icons stand out. Furthermore, the difference in shape between the star icons and the rectangular donate box means the donate link is preattentively processed. The Family Place wants users to donate to their cause, so by making the donate box stand out in this way, it helps direct users attention to the most important information on the page.

Similarity

While the donate box uses contrast to denote it's importance, the rest of the social media link use the principle of similarity to show users that they are all of the same kind and importance. Each icon is an orange star, so while each has a unique logo in the center, users still know that the set of icons go together and are alike in purpose, which is to direct users to their difference social media pages.

Proximity

One place I'd criticize the website's use of proximity is in the superhero camp section of the moving photo banner. The text is much too close (or has too much proximity) to the top of the picture, making the text harder for users to see or understand. Increasing the proximity a little bit would make the design a little bit clearer.

Alignment

The Family Place website used alignment conventionally throughout their website. For example, all of the links in the navigation bar are aligned. This is standard in web design, and it helps users to understand that all of the links are part of the same item, in this case the navigation bar.

Order

Another area where the Family Place website uses convention is in the order of the page. The navigation is at the top of the screen, exactly where the user expects to find it. This is placed first on the page as it's the most important element of the site. This use of order helps the user quickly locate the information they need, meeting both the goals of the Family Place and of the user.

Enclosure

The Family Place website used enclosure very well in their design. They enclosed each section of information in a distinct colored box, which helps the readers understand which information is alike in kind and purpose. It helps user skimming and looking for certain information because readers understand that they only need to read a part of the enclosed area to understand what the whole enclosed area is about, helping them know which information is okay to skip.

Conclusion

While there are some potential areas for improvement, the Family Place website generally utilizes the design principles well. This helps them to accomplish their goals, and well as making the site easy to understand and use for users.