Planning Layouts

Layouts

- Arrange page items into a logical, consistent scheme

- Site & Page purpose is starting point

  - Determines space allocations

  - Assigns necessary visual prominence of items

Your layout design should arrange your page elements into a single, cohesive presentation. The design of your layout should be guided by the purpose of your site and the purpose of each individual page of the site. Space allocations are key considerations in layout design as they, along with the choice of colors and styles, assign visual prominence of items to users. In every case, the purpose of the each page should be reflected in specific choices in design-- these choices should enable the user to better access and interact with the information conveyed on the page. With this said, however, consistency is also important as the user should always be able to identify a single page as a smaller piece of the whole website.

All in all, make every design decision a deliberate one.

Page Items

- Containing block

- Heading/Banner/Logo

- Navigation

- Content

- Aside/Sub-content

- Footer

This is a list of the primary elements that a page might have. The choice to include some of these items will again be governed by the purpose of the page and site.

Page Items in Detail

- Containing block

  - Container for all of the page's items

  - May define visible borders

- Heading/Banner/Logo

  - Contains branding information

  - Identifies the site to the user

The function of the containing block is quite self-explanatory. It is the element that contains all of the other page elements and may or may not define a concrete transition (i.e a visible border) between the screen and the page. It is important that we are only considering this element from a design perspective, not yet attributing it to a specific HTML element.

The header is typically an element that establishes the identity of the page, indicating that the page (or site) is a member of a larger site or network of sites. This is often repeated among many, if not all, pages to solidify this sense of belonging. Having this element consistent also enables the user to focus on other elements on the page.

Page Items in Detail

- Navigation

    - Orients the user within the site

    - Provides a uniform method for locating content

    - Should be a prominent item on all pages

- Content

    - Primary information to be conveyed by page

        ➡ Most prominent in layout

The navigation element is a tool that typically enables the user to simultaneously determine their location within the site and how to "navigate" to find additional content that they might be seeking to find. Having a consistent navigation design creates a perceived sense of reliability as the user can always use the same methods to access different areas of the site. This element should be easy to find and therefore a prominent item on pages so that the user is able to interact with the element as intended (and so that there is not frustration when the current page is not quite what the user is looking for).

The content is the defining element of the page, it is the purpose of the page and quite typically the purpose of the site. The page's content may range from text, to images, to other types of media (music, video) or any combination of these. In all cases, however, this should be the focal point of the page-- the page and site design should attempt to showcase and draw the eye to the site and page's content.

Page Items in Detail

- Aside/Subcontent
  - Contents may be related to main content
- Footer
  - Provides parenthetical information about the site or page
  - Typical examples: Copyright, Contact Info

The aside, or subcontent of the page, can range from a simple note related to the content or an entire subsection directing the user to related pages or sites. These elements are seen quite frequently in sites with a large amount of content spread across multiple pages, such as YouTube, media sharing sites, or even search engines. In some cases, the subcontent can be just as important as the content, such as in online manuals where the subcontent can note caveats, prerequisites, or pages or concepts related to the current content.

The footer, generally the last element on the page, will provide parenthetical or contextual information about the site or page, providing information such as Copyright information, contact and location information, sponsors, and corporate information. Current trends in the internet are seeing footers being increasingly utilized for smaller versions of the main navigation as well as for including substantial descriptions of the site and/or site author(s).

Aside/Subcontent

Main content with several notes related to page focus

http://www.hostingrails.com/dedicated_hosting