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Food For Thought

"Every child is an artist.
The problem is how to remain an
artist once we grow up."

Pablo Picasso

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White Space 101

White space, also known as negative space, is the term describing open space between design elements. It can be between letters, words, or paragraphs of text; space in and outside of graphics, and between all of the elements of the page. It is essential for providing special relationships between visual items, and actually guides your reader's eye from one point to another.

White space is an important layout technique often overlooked by the inexperienced designer. While some artists concentrate heavily on what to put in, they can overlook what to leave out. A design that is to be visually appealing must also be easy on the eyes. Without an adequate amount of white space, text would be unreadable, graphics would lose their emphasis, and there would be no balance between the elements on a page.

White space takes on an added importance on the web because more of a strain is placed on the eyes than with print material. You'll find that going through the same amount of web pages as print pages can be more visually demanding, one of the reasons being that you usually find yourself staring up at monitor flickering pixels coarser than printed ink. White space provides our brains with much-needed breathing room to absorb the material displayed before us.

Treat white space as more than just a background. Treat it as an integral part to your page design. You'll find it increases your layout's appeal with less visual "noise," while augmenting the visual power of your message.

How to Make a Screenshot

Making a screenshot is a simple process, and an easy way to explain to others any problems you may be having with a website. Here's how you can make screenshots of anything on your computer:

- On a PC, press the "Print Screen" button on your keyboard (you may have to press ALT or some other function button along with "Print Screen", depending on your keyboard). Then, open up Paint, Photoshop, or some other graphics program, and create a new document. Paste the contents of the clipboard into the new document, and save the file in the format of your choice.
- On a Mac, press Apple—shift—3 simultaneously. The screenshot will be produced as a file, called "Picture 1 (or some other number, depending on how many screenshots you've taken)" in your main hard drive. It will be a PICT file, which you can open in Photoshop, QuickTime, or another graphics program.

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