

Basic Visual Design Principles

From Robin Williams' *The Non-Designer's Design Book*

[aka...the c.r.a.p. principles]

Proximity

- Group like items together
- Move related items into close physical proximity in order to form a cohesive group
- Items that are *not* related to each other should *not* be in close proximity

Alignment

- Every item on the page should have a visual connection with something else on the page.
- Nothing should be placed arbitrarily
- When items are aligned on the page it creates a stronger cohesive unit
- The principle of alignment is what tells readers that even though items are not close to one another, they belong to the same piece.
- Gives a sense of order and intent

Repetition

- Repeat some aspect of the design throughout the entire piece
- Gives a sense of consistency to the page
- Repetition unifies all parts of a design
- Gives the mind a pattern to follow
- A unifying element that gives the mind a way to make meaning of the overall piece

Contrast

- If two items are not exactly the same, then make them distinctly different
- This is one of the most effective ways to add visual interest to the page
- Examples of contrasting elements:
 - Large type with small type (18pt with 10pt)
 - Graceful oldstyle font with a bold sans serif font
 - Horizontal element [like a long line of text] with a vertical element [a tall, narrow column]
 - Widely spaced lines with closely packed lines