Objective
To locate and analyze the visual design of a corporate identity on the web

Documentation

The IBO website

IBO logo
Design Analysis

- Simplicity & Elegance
  - Approachability
    With clear page titles, navigation buttons, and pleasing color scheme, the International Baccalaureate Organization website is approachable due to its simplicity. There are no extraneous elements on the site, such as web banners or ads, to distract from the content.
  - Recognizability
    The simplicity of the IBO logo lends to its recognizability. By utilizing three letters and three horizontal bars, the logo is distinctive. As users navigate through the site, they will notice the subtle lavender palette. The use of the color scheme is not sporadic; it is found on every page throughout the site.
  - Immediacy
    The immediacy of the IBO logo is apparent. Its form is minimal and its impact is immediate.
  - Usability
    The designers of the web site succeed in making the website usable by combining the above techniques.
  - Reduction
    The IBO logo is reduced to its essential qualities. The same can be said for the website. All of the information presented is pertinent to the mission and goals of the IBO.
  - Regularization
    The design utilizes this technique in several ways. In terms of the logo, three bars are aligned horizontally to form a half circle. The spacing is repeated and each bar carries the same line weight and orientation. According to the corporate identity guidelines, Adobe Garamond is the chosen typeface for stationary items. However, the company decided to utilize the Verdana typeface for web use. This change is obvious, as it is easier to read san-serif fonts on a web page. The designers further use regularization by dividing the content area into two columns. The left column holds the main content while the right column is designated for call-out boxes. The design also used the same palette – lavender and yellow, throughout the website. This can be found consistently throughout the website.
  - Leveraging
Corporate Identity Analysis

The design uses the leverage technique in small ways. For instance, the main navigation bar uses a secondary IBO logo on the opposite end of the corporate logo. The “I” and “B” are somewhat integrated, affording the two letters into a single element.

- **Unity**
  - There is coherence in the overall design of the website. Harmony is established through the use of a lavender color scheme to highlight navigation menus; yellow is used to highlight special feature call-out boxes.

- **Refinement**
  - Organization of important content could be improved. There are too many breaks page titles and content categories. Also, sub-head navigation is not apparent. More space is needed to differentiate the text as navigation.

- **Scale, Contrast, and Proportion**
  - **Scale**
    - The designers have taken into consideration scale, contrast and proportion. For instance, the main navigation bar is scaled as taking up the most real estate on the page. Its size relates its importance. Buttons are scaled to show they are category headers.
  
  - **Contrast**
    - Contrast is evident throughout the web site. The designers have used a mix of black or white text against a lavender or white background. It is quite easy to distinguish between figure and ground.
  
  - **Proportion**
    - The IBO logo is appropriately proportioned for the website. Its presence is clear but not domineering.

  - **Visual Variables**
    - Selective perception was utilized in the main navigation bar, specifically in the category tabs. By making the tabs the same rectangular size, value, lavender color, and orientation, users are immediately aware of the functionality.

  - **Perceptual Layering**
    - Perceptual layering has been minimally used to facilitate selective and associative visual interpretation. Again, this is only apparent in the main navigation bar.

- **Bertin’s Visual Variables**
The design utilizes form, color, position and size. In particular, the logo incorporates these variables to establish its presence on the website. The corporate identity standards dictate the logo use its color of red, purple and yellow on websites. The guidelines state, “For use on websites, the logo appears using web safe colors.” However, the actual logo on the website does not incorporate the colors directly. Instead, the three colors hang over the logo as small bars. The position, form, and size of the logo adhere to the guidelines.

**Presentation Analysis**

The designers employed several methods to achieve consistency and localization. To maintain a general look and feel for the site, the corporate identity guideline outlines key steps to ensure this. For instance, the use of the logo is consistent across the entire website. Its simplicity is not altered in any way; there is no distortion through the use of rotations or drop shadows. Also, the corporate identity guideline suggests a maximum of two type faces per page. The IBO website complies by using the Verdana and Arial type faces.

Navigation is constant throughout the site, thus reinforcing a user’s mental model. After the main page, a user is not forced to relearn the website. This is achieved by keeping navigation buttons uniform and in the same place. The only problem with sub-navigation is the lack of apparent visual clues to indicate text that are hyperlinks. On first glance, the size of the sub-navigation merely looks like descriptive text. The text does change color when scrolled over, but a user’s first impression could hinder him or her from actually performing this task. The designers could improve this greatly by improving the size of the sub-navigation links and allowing more spacing in between.

The designers did not always adhere to the guidelines establishing corporate identity. For instance, the guidelines states, “An adequate amount of white space must be preserved around the logo.” However, the logo on the website is surrounded by a purple box. There is no white space around the logo. Further, it states that “The colours must always appear in the correct order.” The website logo does not display the colors at all.

The designers did adhere to guidelines regarding the punctuation and capitalization of the various program names: Diploma Programme, Middle Years Programme, and Primary Years Programme. The website is consistent with its use of these wordings and its acronyms.

The three localization answers can be answered on each page of the IBO website. Page titles are apparent to let a user know where he or she is. Some files are available as PDFs and a user can perform searches if they cannot locate the appropriate information. Hyperlinks are apparent with the use of underlining.
Conclusion
The International Baccalaureate Organization has a clearly established brand identity. This is translated on its website by employing methods of approachability, recognizability, immediaic, and usability. If the interface were to be packaged in another multipage environment, designers would encounter problems of space. Since there are large blocks of text, content would have to be repackaged to fit a smaller environment. Designers would also have to take into consideration a monochromatic scheme. Without the color scheme, designers would be forced to layout a better sub-navigation text. However, the IBO logo would still be a clear indicator to the user exactly where they are.