

Gestalt Principles Studio Task #1 (Individual)

Due: Thursday, October 25, 2012

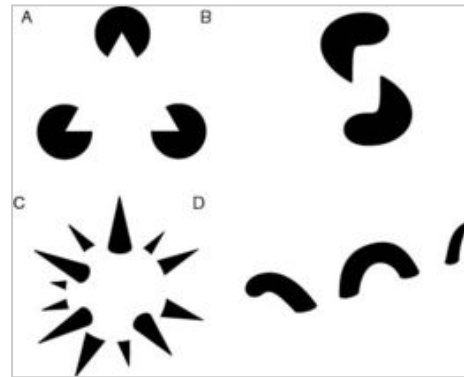
Goals

The goal of this assignment is to emphasize the form-shaping capabilities of the human visual perceptual system, particularly with regards to how designers may use these effects to create interesting designs.

Gestalt Theory

The Gestalt approach attempts to define principles of perception—a list of “perceptual laws” which determine the way humans perceive objects. It has formed the basis for further research into the perception of patterns and objects and has been used as a theoretical backdrop to inform the design of interfaces.

For example, in the figure on the right, note how a triangle is perceived in object A, while a 3D sphere with spikes emerges in object C. Object D appears as one long shape although it's made up of three disparate sections.



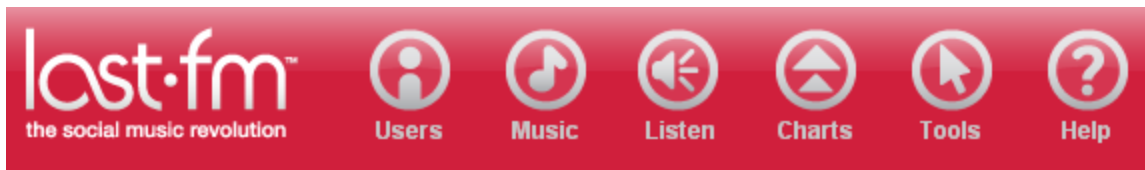
(Figure from
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gestalt_psychology)

Assignment

Read the Gestalt excerpts from the Universal Principles of Design. You can find the restricted link [here](#). The reading covers five Gestalt principles:

1. **Closure (p. 34):** A tendency to perceive a set of individual elements as a single, recognizable pattern, rather than multiple, individual elements.
2. **Good Continuation (p. 98):** Elements arranged in a straight line or a smooth curve are perceived as a group and are interpreted as being more related than elements not on the line or curve.
3. **Proximity (p. 160):** Elements that are closer together are perceived to be more related than elements that are farther apart.
4. **Similarity (p. 184):** Elements are similar are perceived to be more related than elements that are dissimilar.
5. **Uniform Connectedness (p. 200):** Elements that are connected by uniform visual properties, such as color, are perceived to be more related than elements that are not connected.

For this homework, we would like you to find examples of the **last four principles** (2-5) online in an existing interface. For example, Last.FM used to utilize the Good Continuation, Proximity, Similarity, and Uniform Connectedness principles for their top-level menu bar:



Place a screenshot of each example in an html or PDF document. You should have 4 (or more) screenshots in your write-up—one for each principle (even if a given interface utilizes more than one Gestalt principle like Last.FM, emphasize one for each example). Accompany the screenshot with a short textual description along with the original source link. The description should include which Gestalt principle (or principles) occur in each screenshot and a small critique of the interface.

Deliverables

1. Four Examples

Your four examples should be collected in an html page online or a PDF file. The link to the page or PDF file needs to be emailed to Nikki by 9 AM Thursday. Please include screenshots of each example, as well as a short textual description. A “live link” to the source of the example should also be included for thoroughness.

2. Presentation

You must be prepared to present your work in class as Nikki will be calling on people in class.

Grading (100 Points)

These studio assignments are meant to inspire your creativity, flex your design muscles, and give you a chance share your own designs in class. The assignments are meant to be rather lightweight and fun. It's also an opportunity to earn points—but only if you do the work.

For this assignment, you will be graded on:

- [20] Emailing the assignment to Nikki by 9 AM on Thursday morning.
- [80] An html/pdf file for this assignment, which covers at least one example per Gestalt principle including a screenshot, textual description, link to the original (20 points per example).