

Styleguides for the Web

Paul Robert Lloyd

Oxford Geek Night 21
13 April 2011

Big Clients



- At Clearleft we work with a lot of big organisations
- Working on projects of this scale means having to think differently than you would on smaller projects
- You **can't design all the pages** that will appear on the site
- Therefore we think a lot about **design systems** that can outlast our time on the project

Brasília

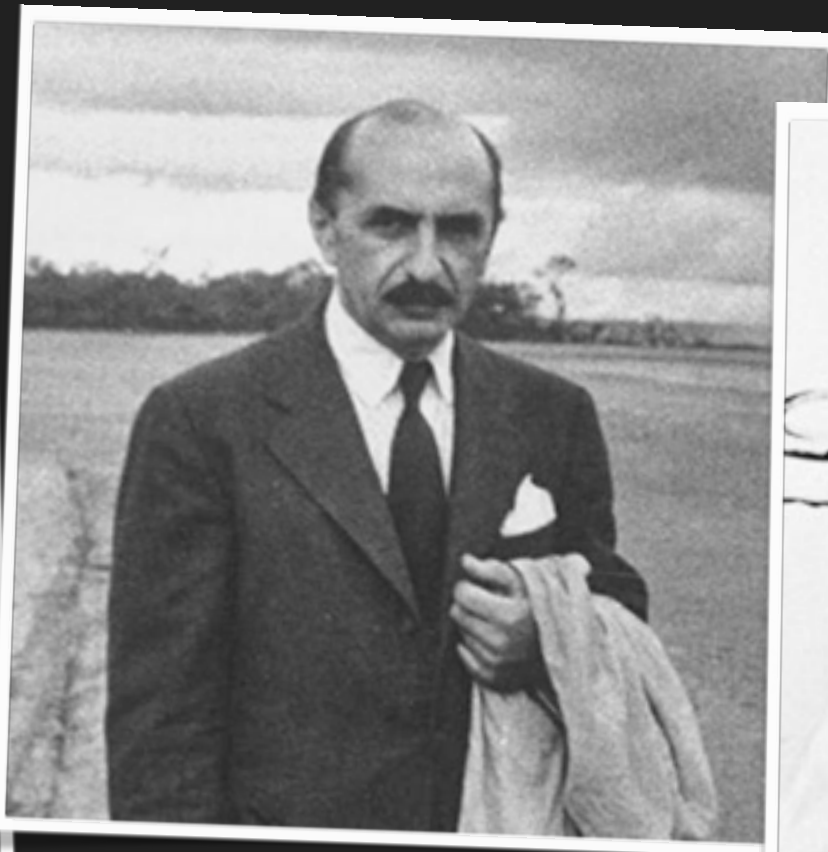
Design on a grand scale

- Last month I travelled to Brasília, the capital city of Brazil that was purpose built during the mid-1950's
- Built in the very centre of the countries sparse interior
- Completed in just 41 months, inaugurated in April 1960

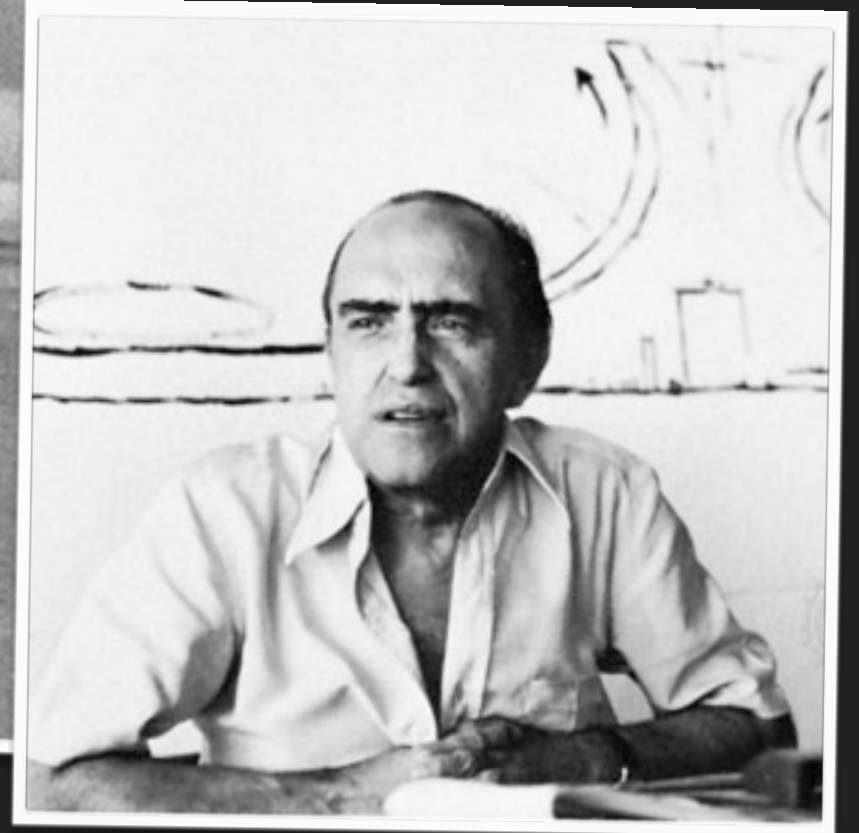
'Fifty years progress in five'



Juscelino Kubitschek
President



Lúcio Costa
City Planner



Oscar Niemeyer
Architect

- Honoured a campaign pledge of **President Juscelino Kubitschek** who promised 'fifty years of progress in five'
- Street layout devised by **Lúcio Costa** resembles an aeroplane or bird, with the city divided into different sectors
- Modernist architecture attracts most attention, with all its major buildings designed by **Oscar Niemeyer**.
- For the first time an architect was able to design on the scale of a city
- By designing on this grand scale, he was able to apply patterns

Lines



- Of course most buildings are rectangular or cuboid, but here the forms are exaggerated
- **National Congress, Brasilia Palace Hotel** and the **National Library**

Curves



Strong lines often contrast with soft curves (Niemeyer said these curves are symbolic of the curves of Brazilian women!)

- **Chamber of Deputies** (upturned dish), **Federal Senate** (Dome) and **Museum of the Republic**.

Reflection



- Largely concrete buildings are often softened by being sat next to pools of water, creating these strong reflections
- **National Congress, Itamaraty Palace** and the **Presidential Residence**

Suspension



- One of Niemeyer's favourite tricks is show his buildings suspended off the ground
- Accomplished by using these very distinctive pillars
- Here at the **Supreme Court**, at the **Presidential Residence** and at the **Presidential Palace**.

Entrances



- Perhaps the most notable feature of his buildings is how you enter.
- Long, sometimes winding ramps
- **Museum of Indigenous People, Museum of the Republic, and at the National Congress.**
- Not always external, can be internal too, the best example is at the **Metropolitana Cathedral...**

Entrances



- Here you decent down a long ramp into darkness...
- ...before arriving under the beautiful stained glass roof, with light flooding in.

The very definition of user experience!

Common identity

- Utilising these patterns (and more) ensured the new capital had unique but distinct identity
- Tying all the major buildings together
- Niemeyer is still working at the age of 103, and is still Brasilia's go-to-man for many of their key building projects.
- Upon passing away he will have left a living breathing style guide for the city

BBC

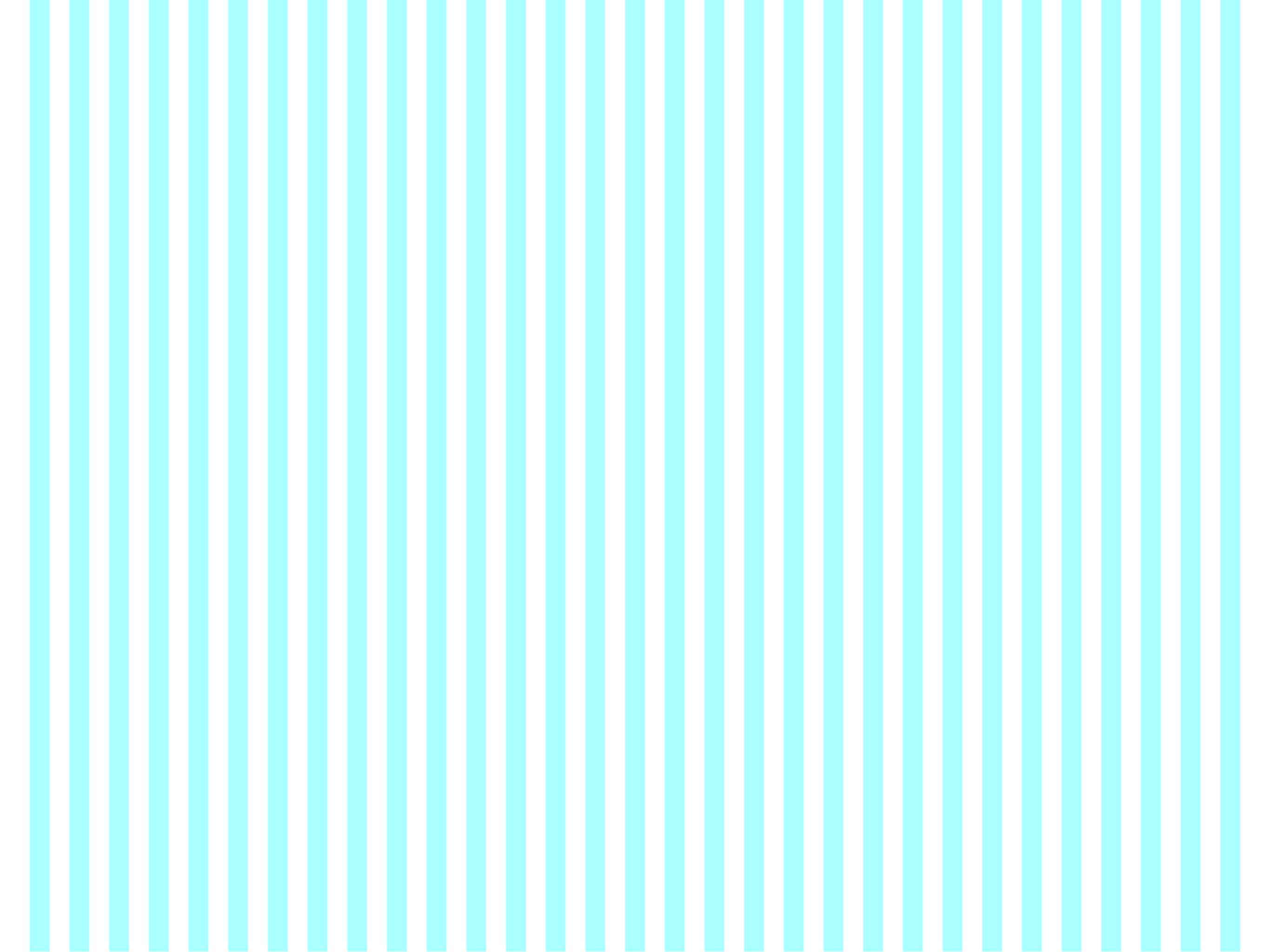
Global Visual Language

- The BBC for a long time had a **segregated and disjointed website** at cost of brand and user experience
- Expensive **redesigning the wheel for every new website**
- Started using visual design guidelines called the GVL, which was essentially a global header and footer and simple grid
- Last year the BBC announced GVL3, third version of its Global Visual Language

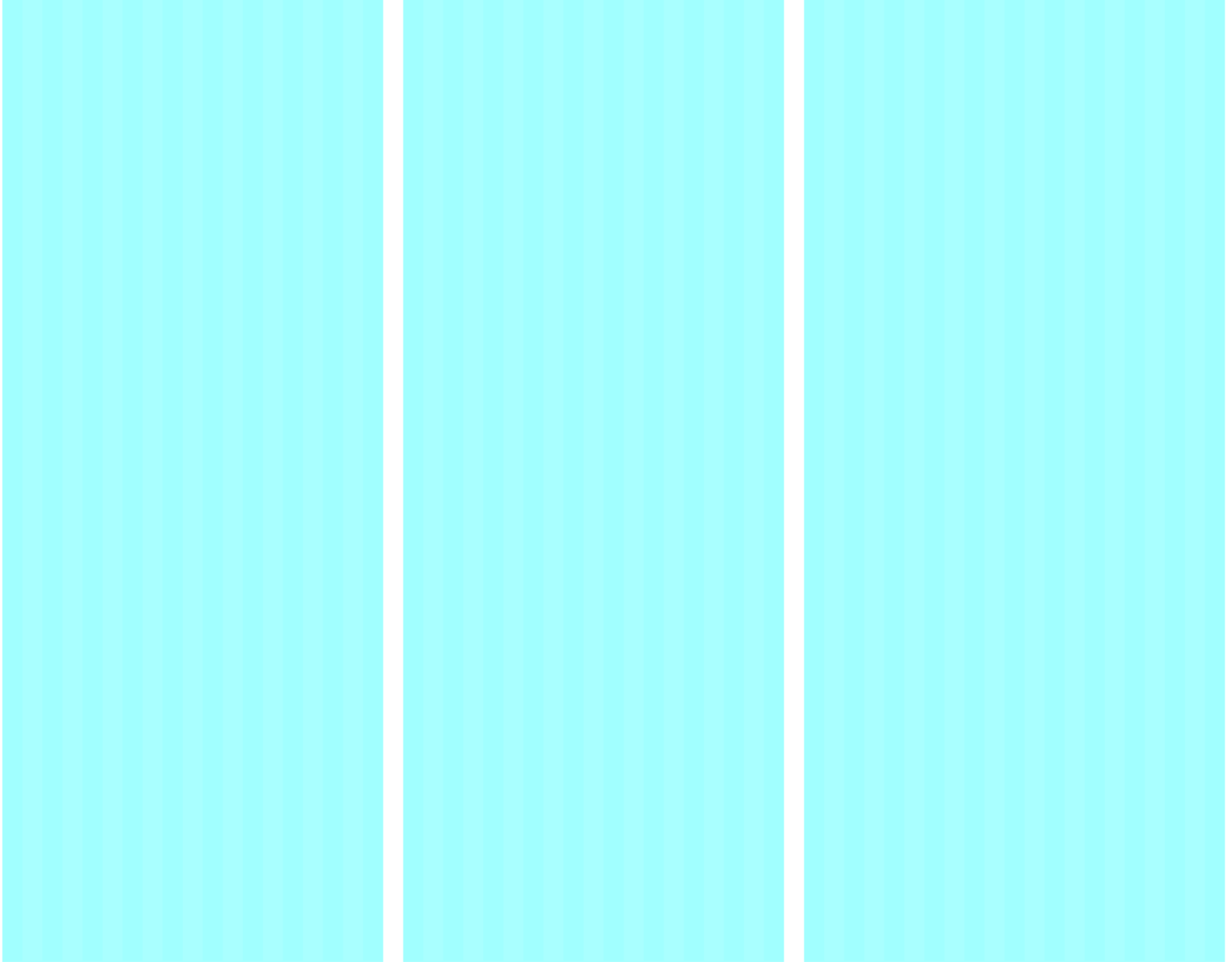
BBC

Global Experience Language

- Later renamed GEL—Global Experience Language
- Contained design pattern library as well as visual design guidelines, took into account interactions and behaviours as well
- An acceptance that visual design on the web is one part of a larger experience



- There is an underlying grid of 61 vertical 16 pixel wide units



- On top of which large columns can be formed, typically three like these
- The right column is slightly larger to accommodate ads on international versions of the site

- There is also a baseline of 8px which encourages horizontally alignment of typography and different elements...

- ...such as the global header and footer

LATEST: Ballabriggs wins the 2011 Grand National ahead of Oscar Time and Don't Push It

Bomb ‘could have caused carnage’

Police say that a 500lb bomb left in a van under the main Belfast to Dublin road near Newry may have been destined for a town centre.

Police officer on Newry bomb

Ballabriggs seals National glory

Ballabriggs, ridden by Jason Maguire and trained by Donald McCain, produces a superb display to win the 164th Aintree Grand National. [SPORT](#)

Ed Miliband urges hacking probe

Army in Egypt protest crackdown

Six killed in Dutch mall rampage

Services

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Sunshine changes
Britain's mood

US building implodes
in planned blast

BBC News Channel

BBC Radio 5 live

Features & Analysis

In pictures

Photos from the action at Aintree on Grand National day

Royal wedding quiz

Which royal bride didn't promise to 'obey'?

- There are now clearer guidance around type usage with recommend sizes, letter spacing and spacing.
- The primary font is Arial with Gill Sans reserved for the local headers.

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Which royal bride didn't promise to 'obey'?

- Images and videos align with the underlying grid


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Services



News feeds



Mobile



Podcasts



Alerts



E-mail news

- A custom icon set was created, so all these sites share the same iconography
- Consistent placement: left of text, top left of images

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Watch/Listen



LIVE [BBC News Channel](#)

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Features & Analysis



In pictures

Photos from the action at Aintree on Grand National day



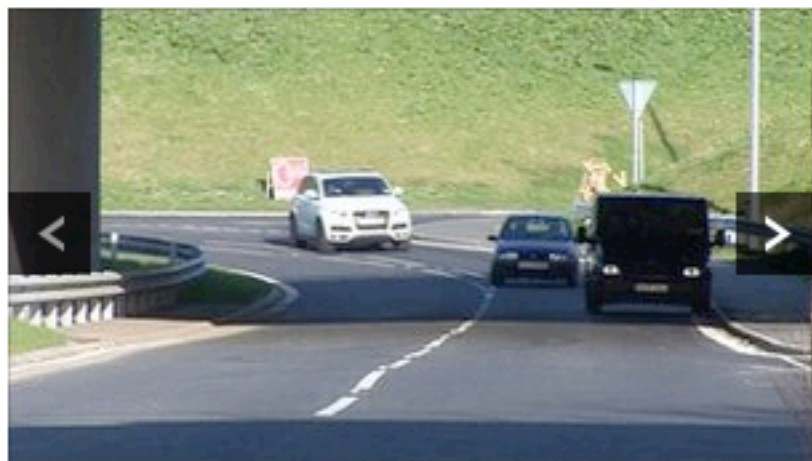
Royal wedding quiz

Which royal bride didn't promise to 'obey'?

- There are also common design patterns

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Pattern Library

A light gray rectangular card with a folded top-left corner, representing a pattern library entry for Local Navigation.

Local Navigation

A light gray rectangular card with a folded top-left corner, representing a pattern library entry for Carousel.

Carousel

A light gray rectangular card with a folded top-left corner, representing a pattern library entry for Autosuggest.

Autosuggest

A light gray rectangular card with a folded top-left corner, representing a pattern library entry for Overlay Panel.

Overlay Panel

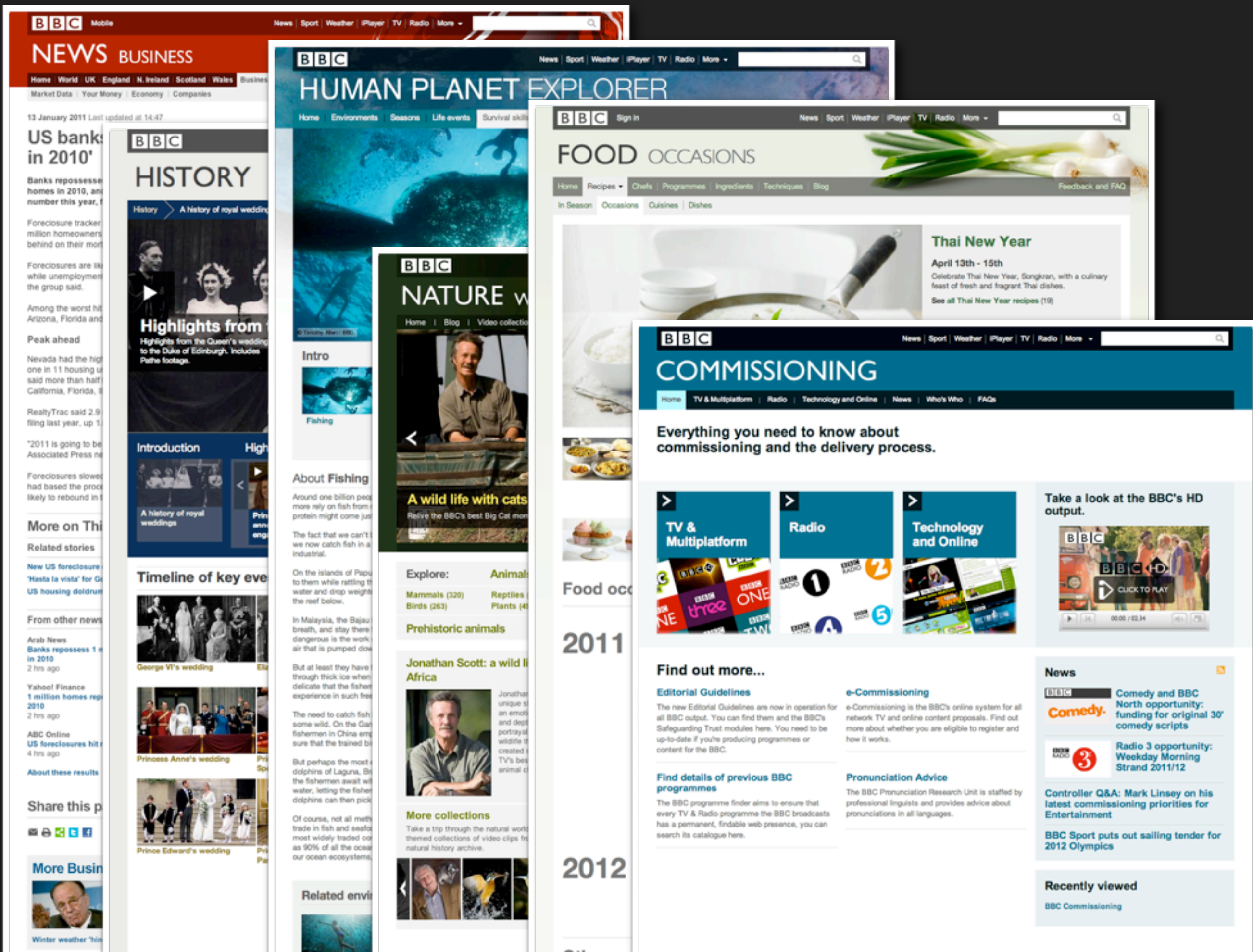
A light gray rectangular card with a folded top-left corner, representing a pattern library entry for Tool Tips.

Tool Tips

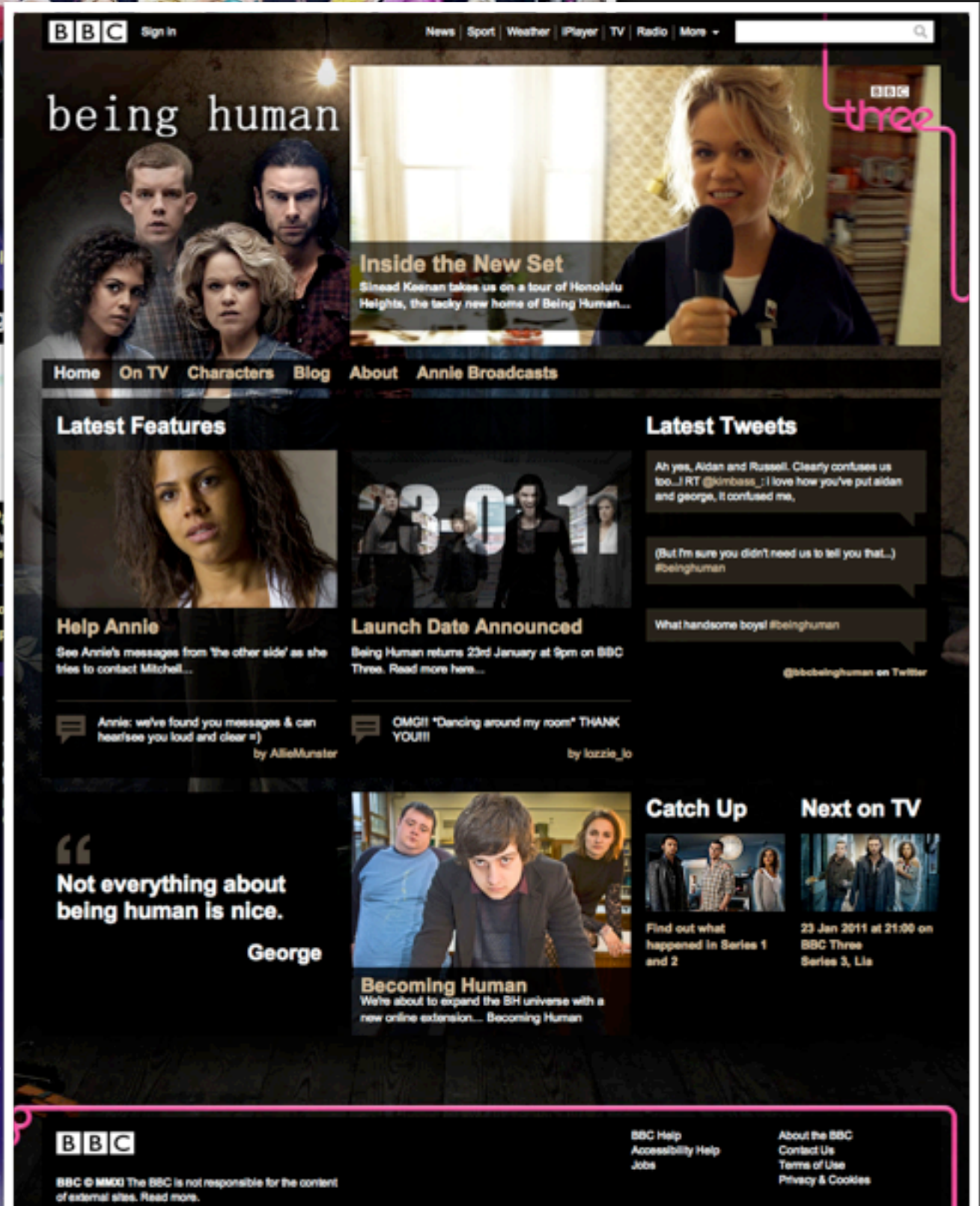
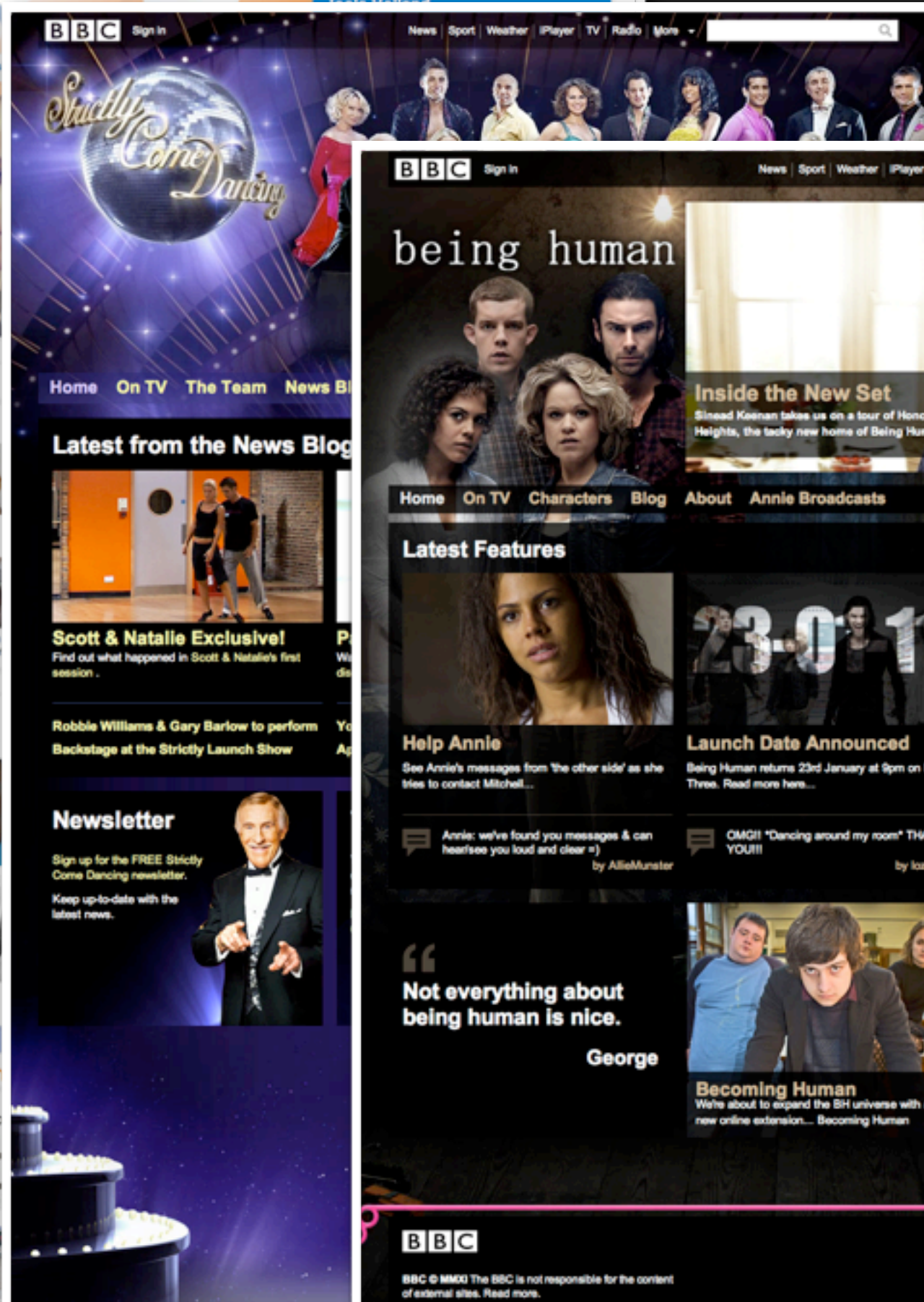
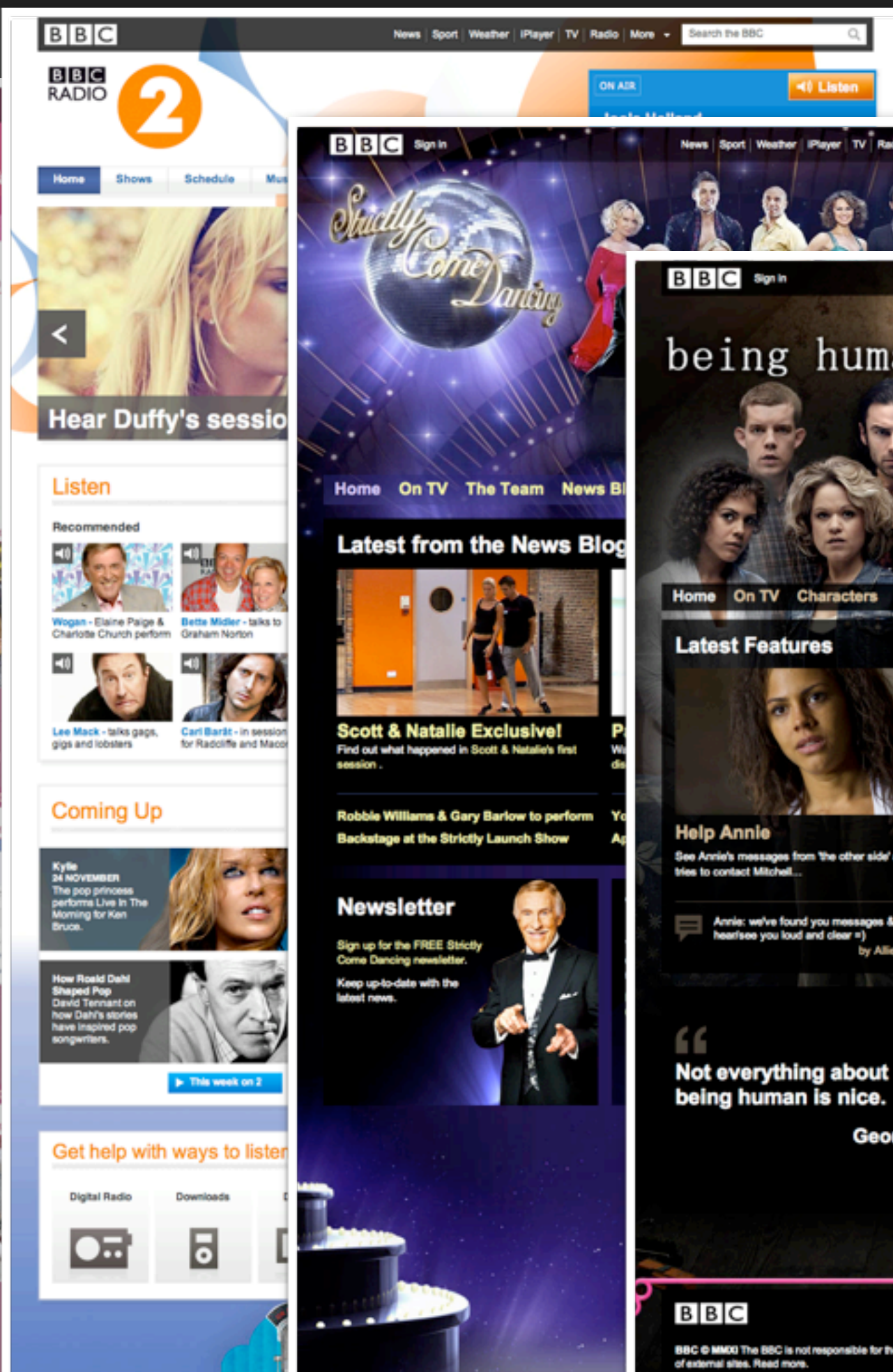
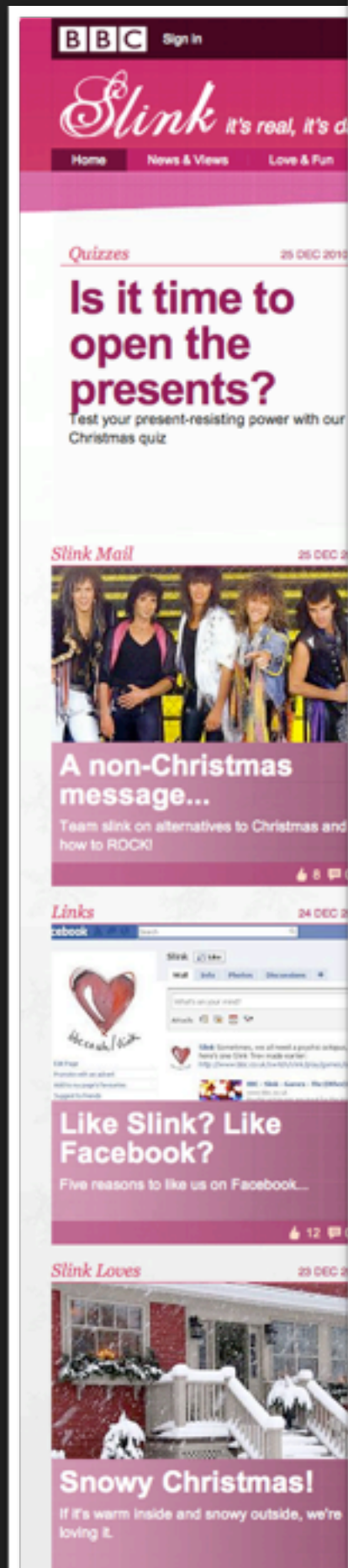
A light gray rectangular card with a folded top-left corner, representing a pattern library entry for Slideshow.

Slideshow

- A pattern library documents key interactions used across the site
- Auto suggest, Navigation, Carousels, Auto suggest, Tooltips, Slideshows
- ‘A comprehensive set of re-usable page components’



- Built upon common components and design elements
- Fits in with other sections of the website, even though they may have been designed by different people



- Yet brands can still express themselves within this framework too

Built-in flexibility

We wanted to create something that is flexible enough to allow our brands their full expression whilst uniting them into a coherent user experience.

Bronwyn van der Merwe

Head of Design and User Experience, Central Team, FM&T

- The existence of guidelines **doesn't mean strict conformity**
- Guidelines can remain flexible enough to allow for different brand expression

Common foundation

- **Separate design agencies** or groups can build different websites yet have them work as part of a greater whole.
- It also makes it **easier for users to use** the site; experiencing common interactions, navigation, placement of content.

It’s like trainspotting for BBC websites!



1 December 20101 note

Music Showcase

Launched: November 2010

Music showcase brings together all of the BBC’s audio and video music clips and allows you to browse them in collections compiled by presenters and staff. This idea of aggregating content from across the corporation is a recurring theme, and one I endorse.

The site is currently in alpha, and the BBC is asking for feedback. Here’s mine.

Experimentation

The visual design of this site is fantastic, and I imagine we’ll eventually see it rolled out across the rest of */music*. From a GEL perspective it’s interesting they’ve chosen to accent the typography with Georgia Italic—whilst it adds a bit more typographic depth, I wonder if this is the first of many exemptions from the GVL3 guidelines.

The level of experimentation and innovation that has gone into this site is to be admired also. There are some really interesting interactions that I’ve not seen elsewhere so it’s great to see the BBC pushing the boundaries of the medium. That said, since I’ve uninstalled Flash on my computer, it’s a shame not see HTML5 `<audio>` and `<video>` used as a fallback mechanism for media playback. I imagine it’s absence is inline with [current BBC policy on HTML5](#)—a reversal of which can’t come soon enough.

Home page and overall IA

Whilst there is a lot to like, in terms of usability I think the website falls woeful short. I get the impression the opportunity to play with new technologies available on the new Forge platform dictated much of the IA and user experience.

To give one example, I expected that selecting a collection on the homepage would take me to a new page, but instead an AJAX request is performed. Clicking on an image and seeing a spinner appear over it made me think the image was updating, not the entire page. Given that clicking on images elsewhere in the site plays audio/video content, this behaviour is even more confusing.

Continuing with the home page, I initially thought artist names listed under ‘including artists’ would take me to content around that artist; the design suggests this content is available yet the functionality is different (the entire block is a link). As a side note, I think it would be really useful to see content around a particular artist.

The Play Bar

There is further confusion around the ‘Play Bar’. On clicking ‘Play Queue’ you are taken to a new page, yet it is hard to immediately understand this. Given how other pages appear on the site, I’m unsure if I’ve visited a new page or the bottom of an existing page where the view has changed. The miniaturised video is an interesting idea, but it’s unclear that this is associated with list view, and that the expanded view dismisses this element. The problem is that controls at the top of page effect the play bar and vice versa. Perhaps clearer signposting and labelling would help, especially as the play bar is an entirely new concept to understand.



In conclusion, wonderful visual design, yet confusing IA, not helped by the use of what I think is an overuse use of AJAX. Sometimes a page refresh is a helpful way to transition users from one page to another (‘oh, clicking on this takes me to a new part of the site’). The use of progressive enhancement, meaning the site still works with JavaScript disabled hasn’t gone unnoticed however.

Further Reading

- [Music Showcase now live for testing](#) — BBC Internet Blog
- [BBC Music Showcase: UX&D perspective](#) — BBC Internet Blog
- [Music Showcase, a development perspective](#) — BBC Internet Blog

#music #alpha

1 note

-  zonovo liked this
-  gelled posted this

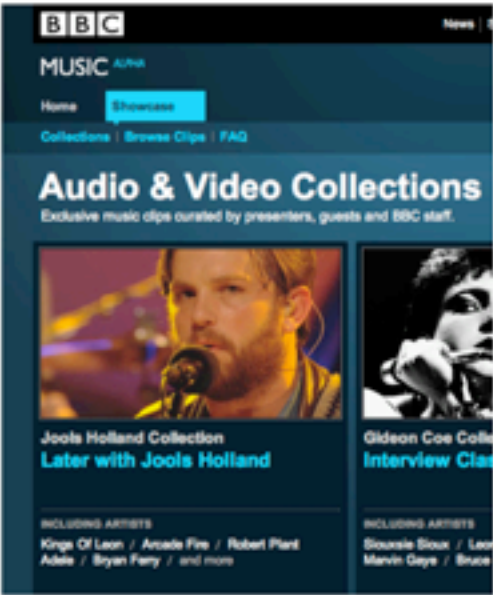
Next Post

Previous Post



BBC GEL Guidelines
BBC Internet Blog

About
Archive

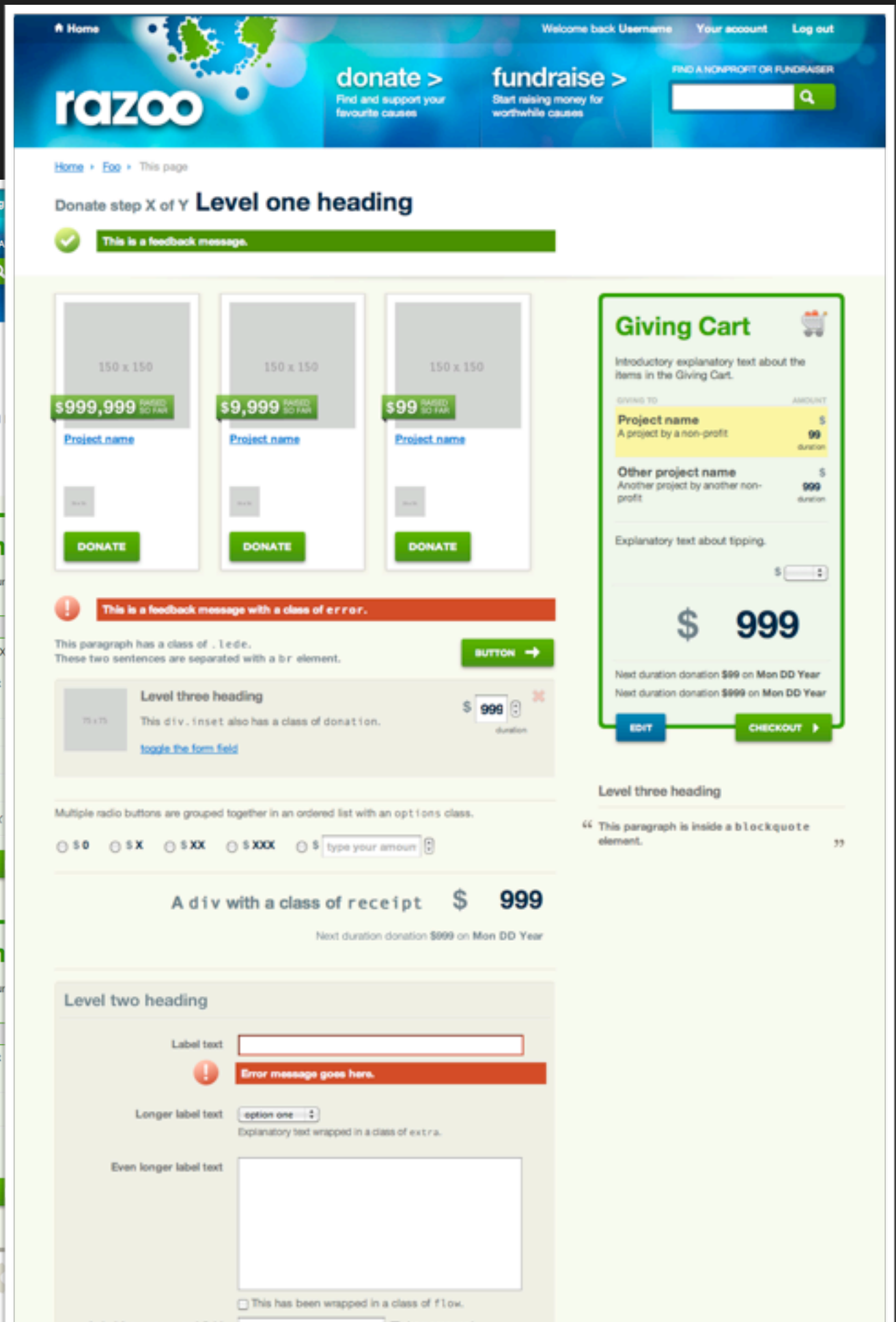
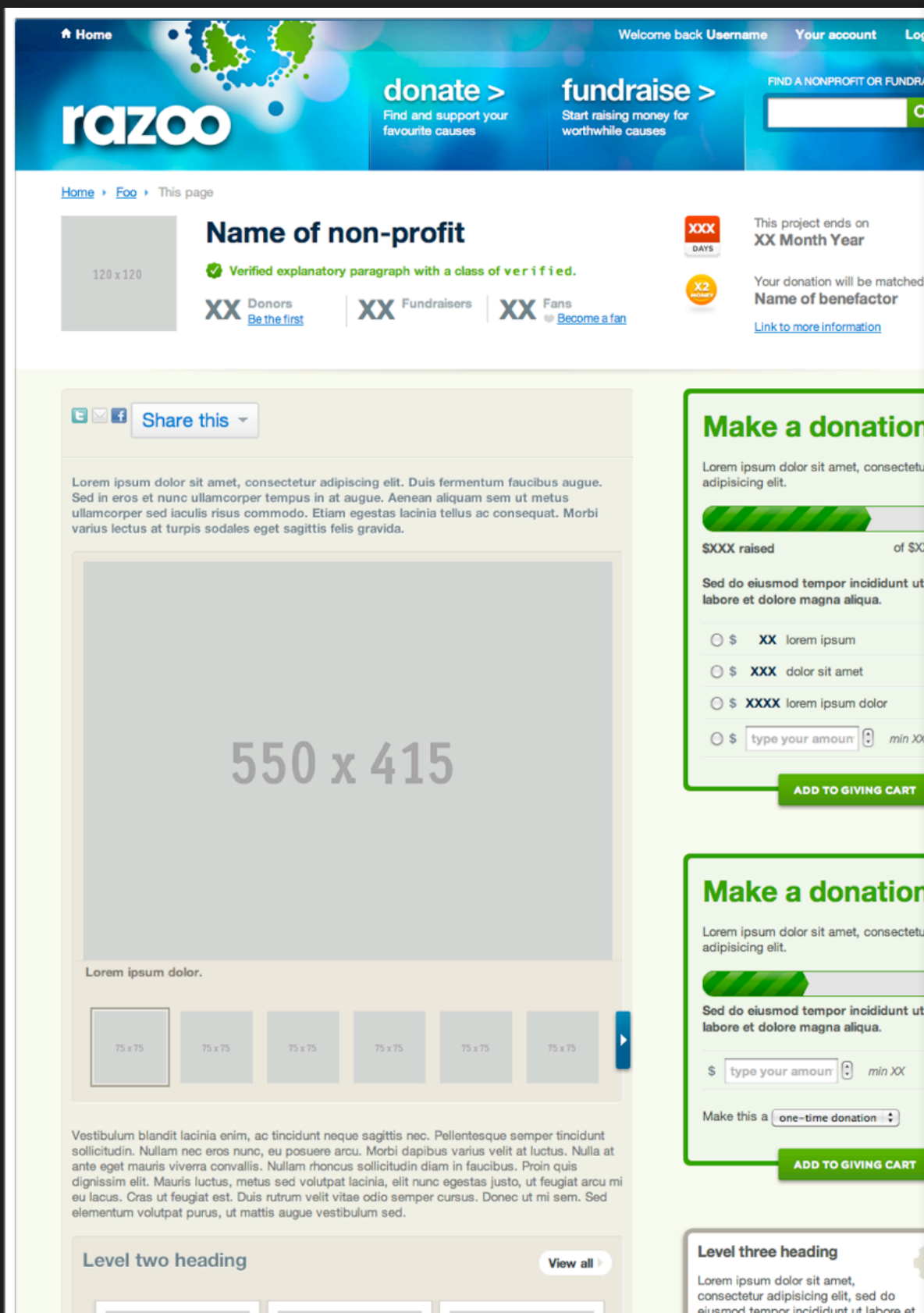


Clearleft

Thinking in patterns

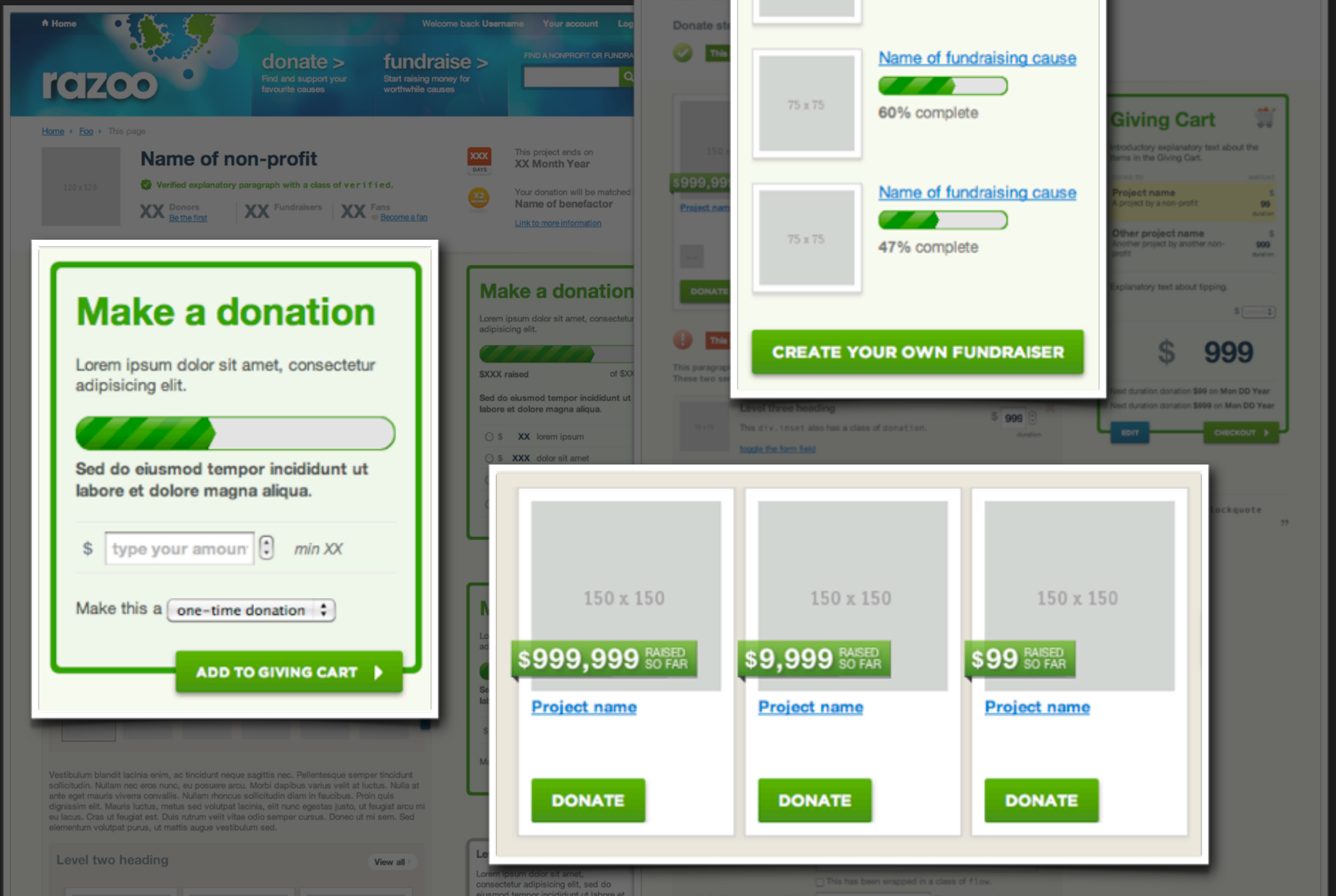
- When we are asked to deliver HTML code, we now take a modular approach

Pattern Portfolio



- We develop individual modules and elements first, and provide these together in what we term a pattern portfolio
- This is not a single page design, but a page of elements
- We might also provide examples of pages constructed with these modules

Pattern Portfolio



- Pulled out some examples contained in the Razoo pattern portfolio
- Sometimes designs a reference for building pages, sometime wireframes

Pattern Primer

Pattern Primer

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit.

Level two heading

Level three heading

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit.

Level two heading

Level three heading

Paragraph text. Lorem ipsum dolor.

50 x 50

X days ago
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

Level two heading

Level three heading

This is a feedback message.

This is a feedback message with a class of error.

Level two heading

50 x 50

[Firstname Lastname](#) Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

DAY AT HH:MM

```
<p class="lede">Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,
consectetur adipisicing elit.</p>
<p class="explanation">Lorem ipsum dolor sit
amet, consectetur adipisicing elit.</p>
<p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur
adipisicing elit.</p>
<p class="extra">Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,
consectetur adipisicing elit.</p>
```

[text.html](#)

```
<div class="overlay">
<span class="pointer"></span>
<div class="overlay-content">
<div class="gutter">
<h2>Level two heading</h2>
<h3>Level three heading</h3>
<p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur
adipisicing elit.</p>
</div><!-- /.gutter -->
</div><!-- /.overlay-content -->
</div><!-- /.overlay -->
```

[overlay.html](#)

```
<div class="inset">
<div class="gutter">
<h2>Level two heading</h2>
<h3>Level three heading</h3>
<p>Paragraph text. Lorem ipsum dolor.</p>
</div><!-- /.gutter -->
</div><!-- /.inset -->
```

[inset.html](#)

```
<ol class="hfeed">
<li class="hentry">
<span class="vcard author">
<a href="/path/to/profile" class="url">

</a>
</span>
<abbr class="published entry-title" title="YYYY-
MM-DDTmm:hh:ss">X days ago</abbr>
<p class="entry-content">
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur
adipisicing elit. sed do eiusmod tempo
```

[hatom.html](#)

```
<div class="heading">
<h2>Level two heading</h2>
</div><!-- /.heading -->

<div class="heading">
<h3>Level three heading</h3>
</div><!-- /.heading -->
```

[heading.html](#)

```
<div class="feedback">
<p>This is a feedback message.</p>
</div><!-- /.feedback -->

<div class="feedback error">
<p>This is a feedback message with a class of
<code>error</code>.</p>
</div><!-- /.feedback .error -->
```

[feedback.html](#)

```
<div class="inset wall">
<div class="gutter">
<h2>Level two heading</h2>
<form method="post" action="/path">
<div class="gutter">
<div class="field">
<input class="message" type="text" name=""
placeholder="placeholder text">
</div><!-- /.field -->
<button
class="edit"><em>Post</em></button>
</div><!-- /.gutter -->
</form>
```

[wall.html](#)

- We have started to take this approach further, starting with what we term a pattern primer
- This shows even finer detail, showing code snippets for the major underlying components
- Combined they can create different patterns

Pattern Primer

Pattern Primer

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit.
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit.
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit.

```
<p class="lede">Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,  
consectetur adipisicing elit.</p>  
<p class="explanation">Lorem ipsum dolor sit  
amet, consectetur adipisicing elit.</p>  
<p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur  
adipiscing elit.</p>  
<p class="extra">Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,
```

Level two heading

Level three heading

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit.

```
<div class="overlay">  
<span class="pointer"></span>  
<div class="overlay-content">  
<div class="gutter">  
<h2>Level two heading</h2>  
<h3>Level three heading</h3>  
<p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur  
adipiscing elit.</p>  
</div><!-- /.gutter -->  
</div><!-- /.overlay-content -->  
</div><!-- /.overlay -->
```

[overlay.html](#)



This is a feedback message.



This is a feedback message with a class of error.

```
<div class="feedback">  
<p>This is a feedback message.</p>  
</div><!-- /.feedback -->  
  
<div class="feedback error">  
<p>This is a feedback message with a class of  
<code>error</code>.</p>  
</div><!-- /.feedback .error -->
```

[feedback.html](#)

[heading.html](#)

BUTTON TEXT

BUTTON TEXT ►

BUTTON TEXT →

BUTTON TEXT

```
<p><button type="submit">Button  
text</button></p>  
<p><button type="submit"><em>Button  
text</em></button></p>  
<p><button type="submit"><strong>Button  
text</strong></button></p>  
<p class="action"><button type="submit">Button  
text</button></p>  
<p class="action"><button  
type="submit"><em>Button  
text</em></button></p>
```

[button.html](#)

- We have started to take this approach further, starting with what we term a pattern primer
- This shows even finer detail, showing code snippets for the major underlying components
- Combined they can create different patterns

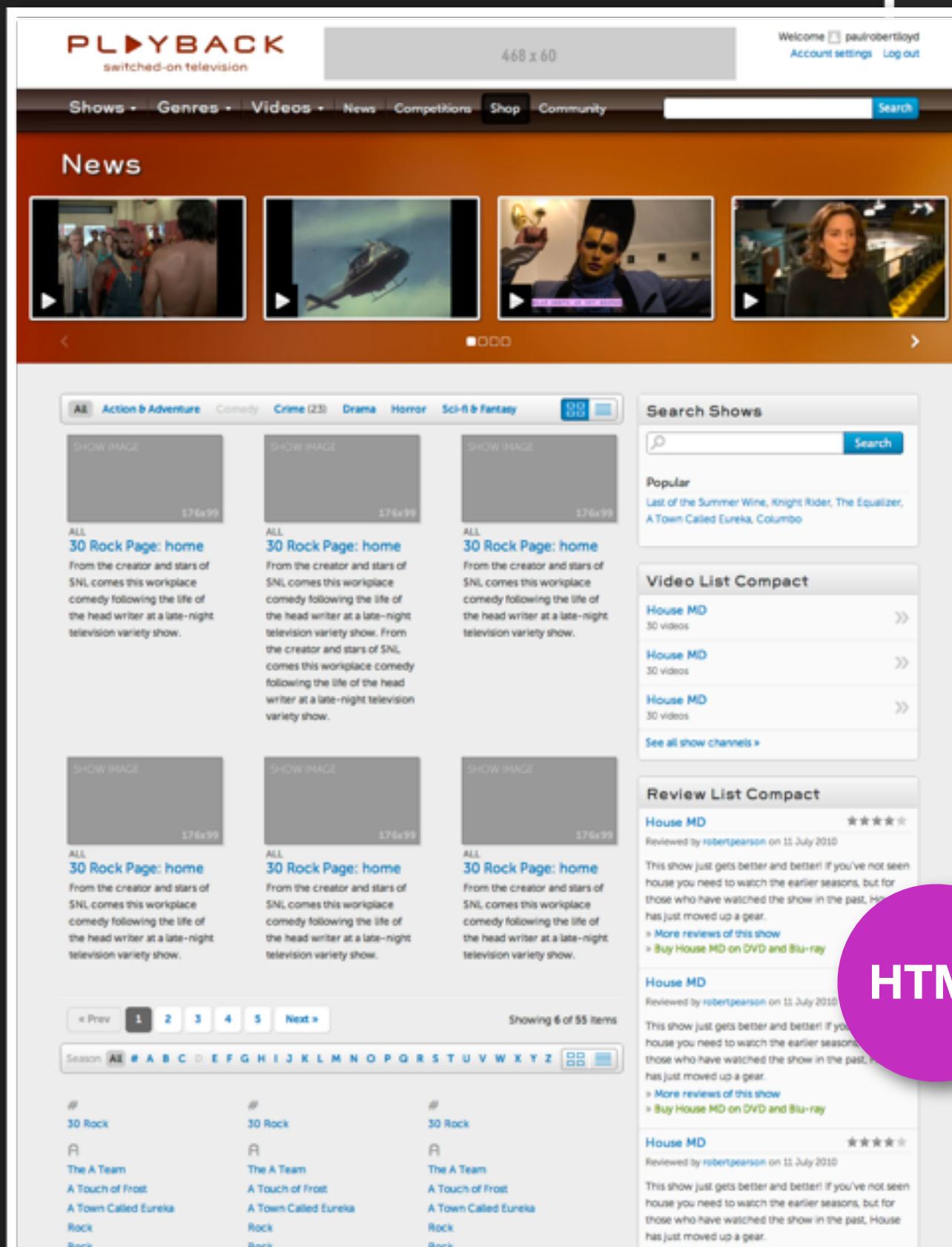
An extensible system

- Allows the developers to run with this code, develop new pages on their own
- Transparent, not providing a closed-off final product, something that can be built upon over the lifetime of the site
- Moves away from the notion that a website redesign is a one-time fixed length project

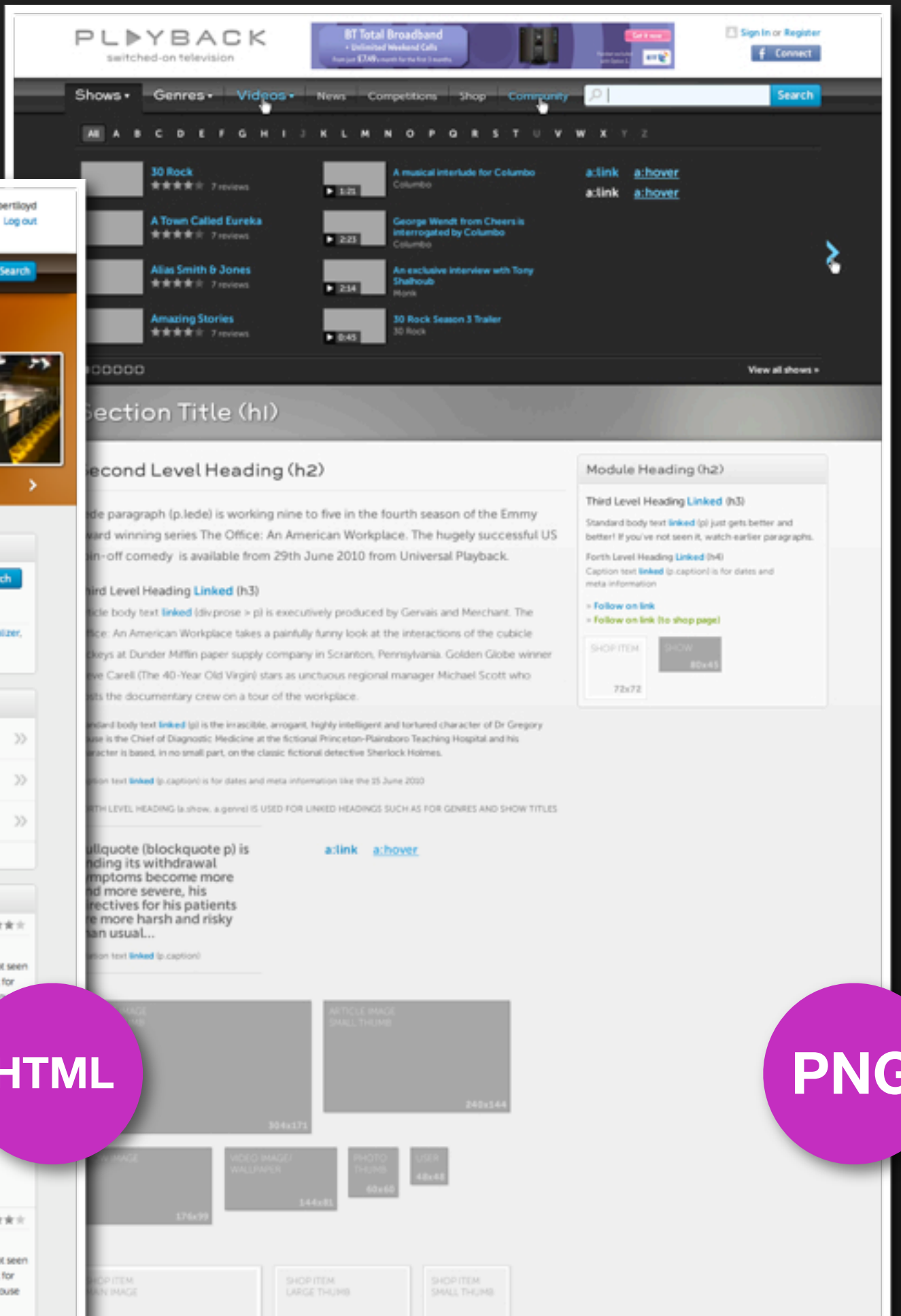
Final Thoughts

Taking this further

Visual Styleguide



HTML



PNG

- Starting to think along similar lines further up the design process
- Last few projects, pulled together different patterns in Fireworks towards end of the design stage
- Forces you to think about the design and help you apply styles consistently
- Starting point for front-end development, and to compare the final build with the original design.

Developer Friendly

- Like to think how we can bridge the gap between design and development (there shouldn't be a gap)
- Encourages discussion earlier in the design process (naming conventions etc.)
- Thinking in terms of components as a designer closely aligns with how a front-end developer might build a site
- But shouldn't we be thinking in this way even earlier?

Responsive Design

In order to embrace designing native layouts for the web we need to shed the notion that we create layouts from a canvas in. We need to **create layouts from the content out.**

Mark Boulton

‘A Richer Canvas’

- This modular, holistic approach echos some of the thinking behind responsive design
- Mark Boulton has been speaking about designing from the content out
- May still need a phase in which you define an overall look and feel
- Think about the design of individual components, modules and elements earlier in the design process
- Reduces the chances of a layout-centric approach

Consistent experiences

- By focusing on those parts of the sites that are shared, ensures that different parts of the site tie together
- Parts of the design where we can bring the brand through to all pages
- Allows thinking on a holistic scale without having to design every aspect of it

Just the beginning...

- Ideas still pecculating in my mind
- Would love any feedback you have

Credits



Lu Monte

[flickr.com/photos/48555438@N00/2683556544](https://www.flickr.com/photos/48555438@N00/2683556544)



Chris Diewald

[flickr.com/photos/chris_diewald/2657599016](https://www.flickr.com/photos/chris_diewald/2657599016)

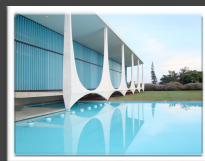
[flickr.com/photos/chris_diewald/2656782975](https://www.flickr.com/photos/chris_diewald/2656782975)

[flickr.com/photos/chris_diewald/2656781421](https://www.flickr.com/photos/chris_diewald/2656781421)



Florian Knorn

[flickr.com/photos/el_floz/1424610618](https://www.flickr.com/photos/el_floz/1424610618)



Francisco Domingos

[fotopedia.com/items/79doga0qi4mic-9MsmKS0UNyl](https://www.fotopedia.com/items/79doga0qi4mic-9MsmKS0UNyl)



Vitor Sá

[flickr.com/photos/19967853@N00/18391299](https://www.flickr.com/photos/19967853@N00/18391299)



AC Moraes

[flickr.com/photos/26022184@N03/2488214984](https://www.flickr.com/photos/26022184@N03/2488214984)



Bruno Coutinho

[flickr.com/photos/coutinhobr/3979927536](https://www.flickr.com/photos/coutinhobr/3979927536)



Palácio do Planalto

info.planalto.gov.br/exec/inf_fotografiagrande.cfm?foto=05042006P00028

- Sadly most of my photos weren't as good as those I found on Flickr!

Thank-you.

 paulrobertlloyd.com

 @paulrobertlloyd