Internationaler Versöhnungsbund

LOOK HERE!

DESIGN TIPS & TOOLS FOR ACTIVISTS

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ABOUT THIS WORK

This introductory guide to design and tools for activists was realized and written in October 2023 during the project “Learning from each other in the 'revolution for life' – the contributions of social & political movements to the transformation of society”.

The guide is not meant as a comprehensive resource for the principles of design or available tools. Rather it is meant to help activists improve their outreach by employing simple rules and methods and be inspired to look for available tools online and employ them accordingly.

Everyone looking for support in their activism is welcome to have a look and be inspired!

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Project lead on this resource

Internationaler Versöhnungsbund

Project partner

Internationaler Versöhnungsbund
Seit 1914 gewaltfrei aktiv gegen Unrecht und Krieg

PREPARATION

WHAT AM I DESIGNING?

The format of the final product determines many important parameters of your design.

WHO DO I WANT TO REACH?

The target group plays an important role in the choice of language, color and many other aspects.

WHAT DO I WANT TO CONVEY?

Content, emotions and values should be specified and weighted against each other.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

These questions need to be answered before you start your design!

OUR BRAIN SORTS AND ARRANGES ALL STIMULI.

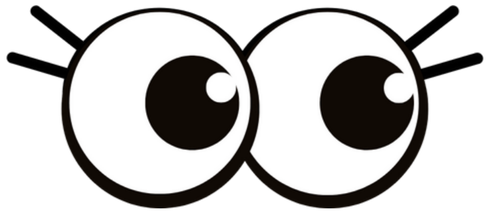
PERCEPTION

FOCUS POINTS

Our eyes first look for focus points in the design, i.e. headings, contrasts, signal colors

DIRECTION OF PERCEPTION

The information is then taken in (in our culture!) from top left to bottom right.



AN EXAMPLE FOR DIRECTING THE LINE OF SIGHT

You will eventually read this (maybe).

THIS IS WHAT YOU WILL READ AT FIRST

Then this line will be brought to your attention.

You will only read this if the eye catching phrases and titles were interesting enough and you are ready to invest in this piece of work. If there are no elements drawing your attention this might seem to much work to read anyway. So I can celebrate that you commited to my work thus far.

Chances are you read this before the paragraph.

LAWS OF PERCEPTION

Law of Proximity
What is close together, belongs together.

Law of Equality
Similar elements belong together.

Law of closure
We close gaps.

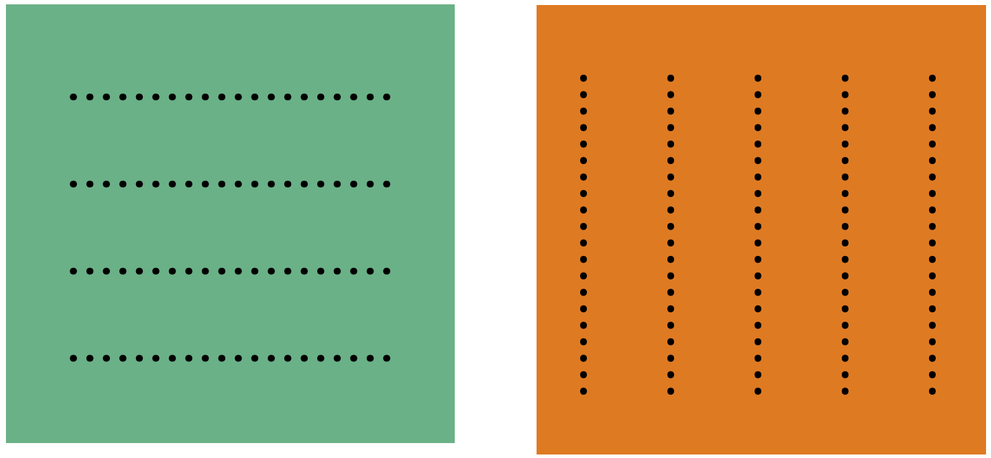
Law of continuity
We assume a steady progression.

Law of symmetry
Symmetry is aesthetic, asymmetry often is an eye-catcher.

WE USE THESE PROCESSES TO KEEP SOMEONE'S ATTENTION.

Law of Proximity

What is close together belongs together.



We perceive horizontal lines (green) and perpendicular lines (orange). **There are no lines**, but our brain groups the dots together because they are closer together.

Law of Equality

Similar elements belong together.

What do you see?

Three squares
and a circle.

Law of Equality

Similar elements belong together.

What do you see now?

Three yellow squares and a blue one.

Law of Equality

Similar elements belong together.

And what could this be?

That's a blue person.

Our brain looks for patterns and things it recognizes. The similarity of elements is one of its guides.

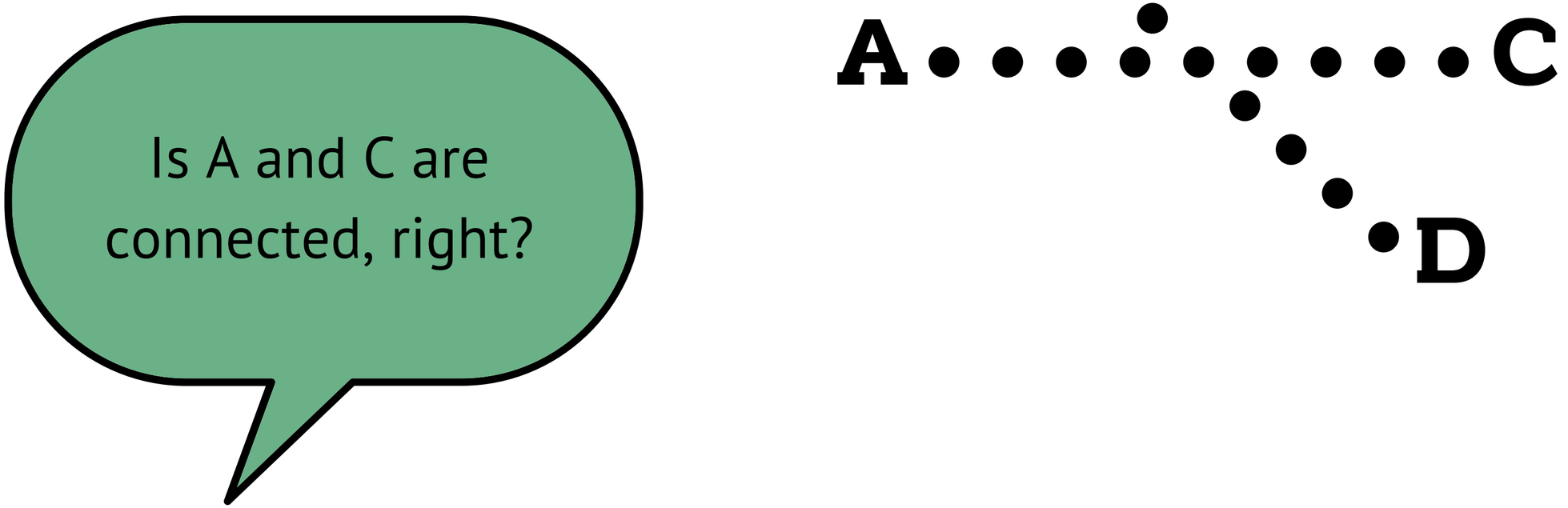
Law of closure

We close gaps.

Even though there are interruptions of the orange line, we see a star.

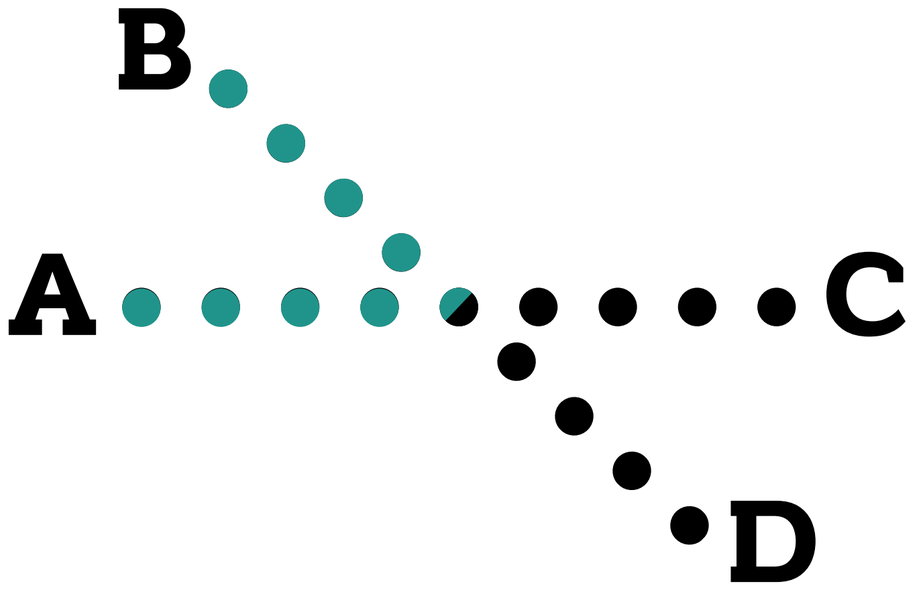
Law of continuity

We assume a steady continuation.



Law of continuity

We assume a steady continuation ... as long as there are no other influences.



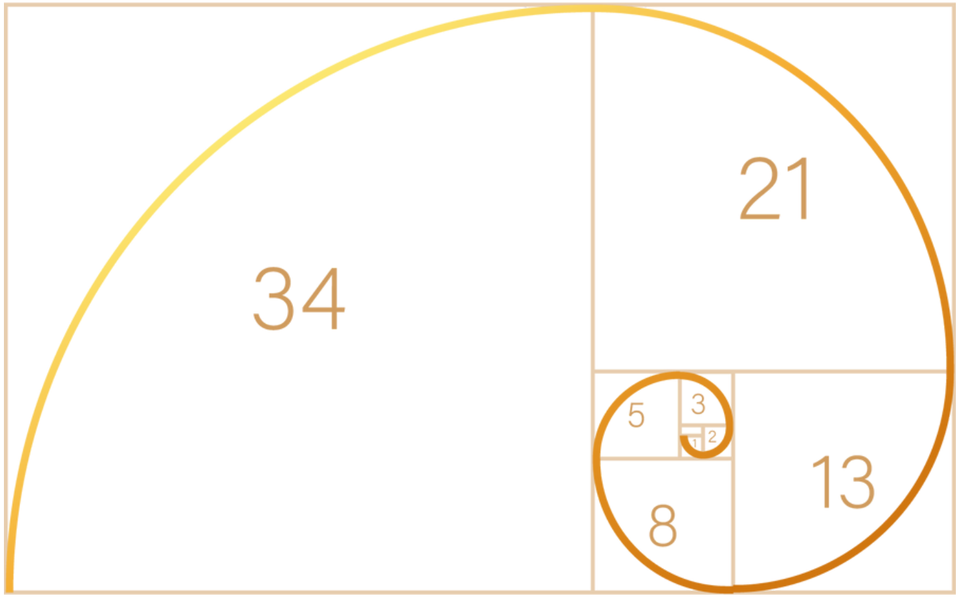
Well, now it looks as if A is connected to B.

Law of symmetry

Symmetry is aesthetic, asymmetry often is an eye-catcher.

THE GOLDEN RATIO 1: 1.618

The ratio of the whole to its larger part is equal to the ratio of the larger to the smaller part. This can be used to compose a pleasing image.



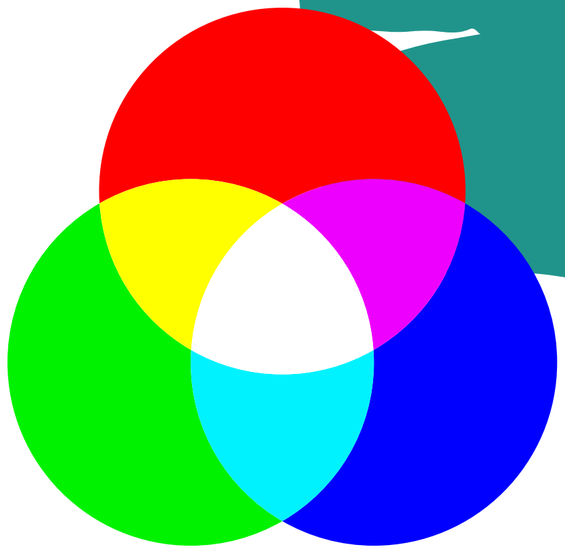
RULE OF THIRDS

The rule of thirds involves mentally cutting the image into nine parts. The subject to be photographed is placed at one of the four intersection points, but you can also place it along a line.

COLORS

- Color systems
- Colors & emotions
- Color combinations

Color systems



RGB (32,148,139)

Red-green-blue
mixed for **screens**

HEX (#20948B)

Hexadecimal colors are also based on an RGB mix where two characters make up one color, **especially used online**

CMYK (78,0,6,42)

Cyan-Magenta-Yellow-Key (Black) for **printing**

OTHER COLOR SYSTEMS

Pantone, HSL and HSB (Hue, Saturation, Lightness and Hue, Saturation, Brightness)...

Color systems

USEFUL RESOURCES

- **CONVERT COLORS**
  To switch between color systems, e.g. RGB to CMYK
  https://convertacolor.com/

- **PICK A COLOR FROM A PICTURE**
  Can determine the color of individual pixels from an image
  https://imagecolorpicker.com/

Colors & emotions

INFORMATION

Colors are information carriers, e.g. RED is established as “stop” or “danger”

Be aware of these aspects:
cultural, political, active & passive colors

Colors & emotions

ATTENTION!

Associations with colors change in different cultural regions.

RED
stop, love, excitement, energy

ORANGE
confidence, warmth, agreeableness

YELLOW
confidence, warmth, cheer

GREEN
nature, freshness, quality

BLUE
peace, loyalty, clean

PINK
sweet, love, kindness

PURPLE
royalty, luxury, ambition

BROWN
simple, dependable, trustworthy

BLACK
sophistication, dramatic, formal

WHITE
innocence, clean, honest

Colors & emotions

You can always look at what others are doing!

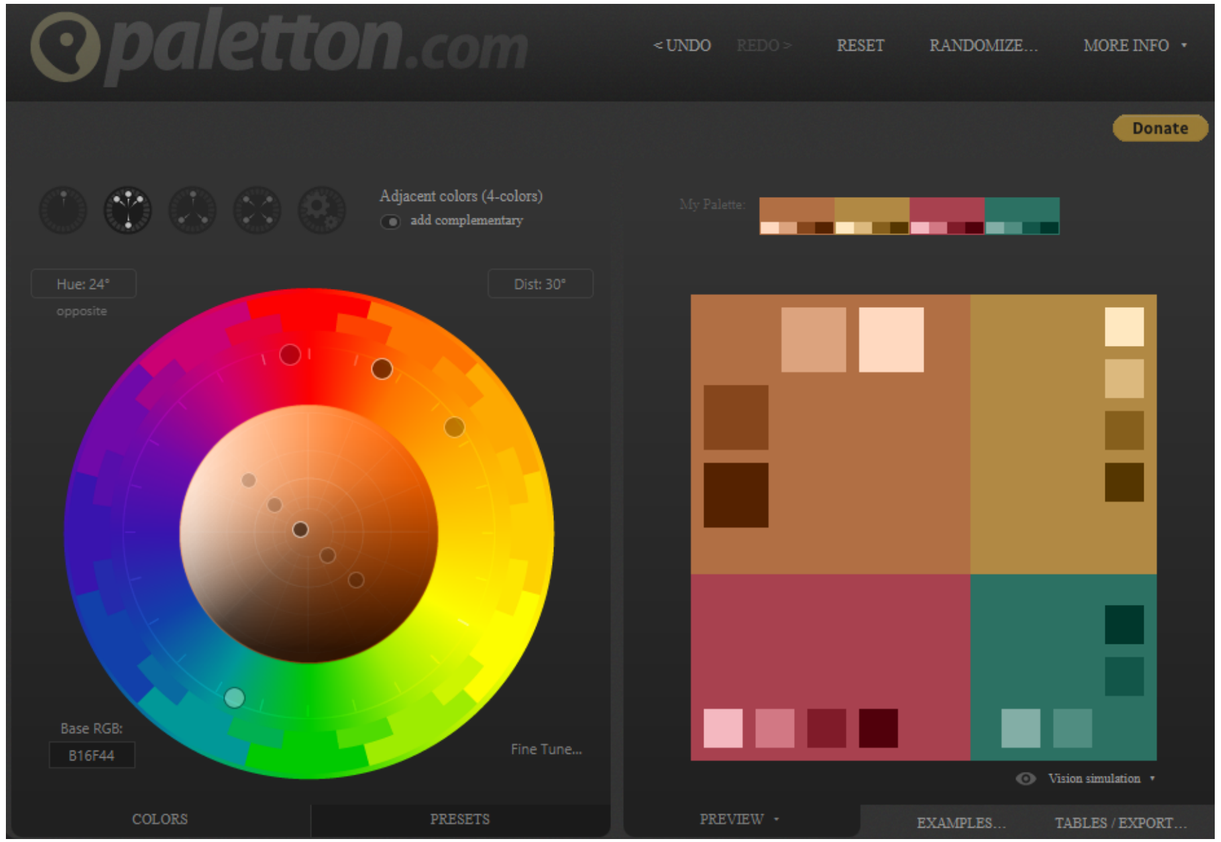
Source: https://www.canva.com/logos/color-psychology-the-logo-color-tricks-used-by-top-companies/

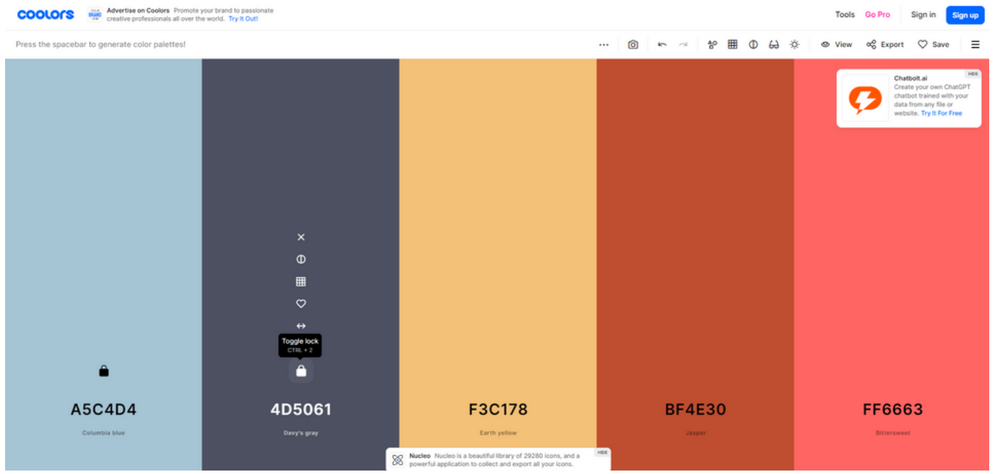
Color combinations

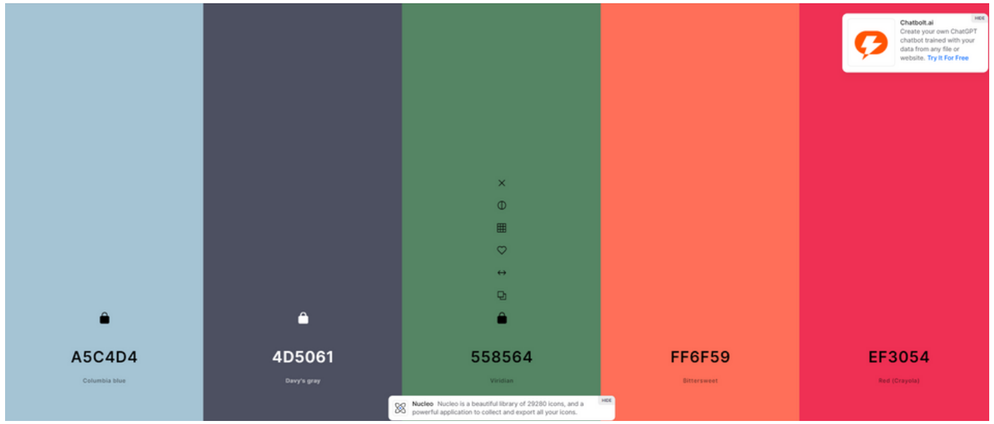
Find your own color combinations

https://paleton.com/

https://coolors.co/







Color combinations

Ready-to-use color combinations

- Search for color palette + inspiration word (e.g. summer, dark, active...)
- Instagram accounts e.g. ocean.ui, the.colour.lab, colors.cafe
- Pinterest
- Blogs e.g. https://digitalsynopsis.com/?s=color+palette
- From a photo: https://imagecolorpicker.com/

Source: ocean.ui on Instagram

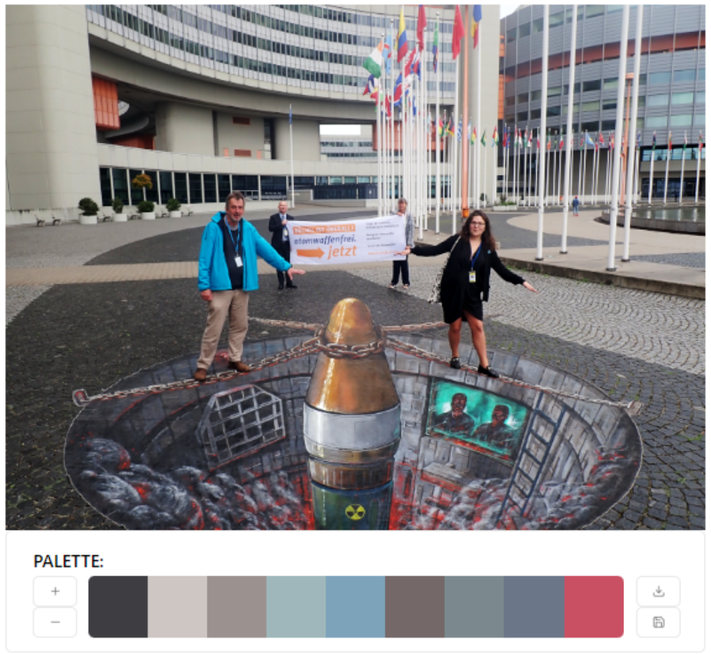


Image: Int. Versöhnungsbund
Color Palette: https://imagecolorpicker.com/

Color combination of this guide

#F4CC70

#DE7A22

#20948B

#6AB187

ATTENTION!

If you write with one color on top of another, you should check the contrast for readability!

https://www.siteimprove.com/de/toolkit/color-contrast-checker/

TYPOGRAPHY

ATTENTION!

Fonts with serifs appear smaller, you should keep that in mind when designing!

A

TYPEFACE & FONT

Typeface refers to a set of characteristics of a font, the specific shape is a font.

AA

SERIF VS SANS SERIF

A serif is a short, thin line on the lines of letters and characters

TYPOGRAPHY

BE AWARE THAT...

- Fonts convey emotions & values

handwriting Fracture

GRAFFITI

- you should always combine fonts within a font-family or with great contrast, never too similar

Happy Birthday
MY FRIEND!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
to my friend

ABOUT READABILITY

- **Don’t use too many different typefaces and fonts**
- **Leave enough white space!**
  No, you don’t have “space left”!
- **Adjust line spacing**
  Don't make the text too close, but don't let it fall apart either (often 120%, up to 140% ok)
- **Adapt the text to the medium**
  Ragged margins online (always!), justified typesetting in print (usually)

The wrong design can stop people from reading your text.

Don't use too many different typefaces and fonts

WRITING IS GREAT
changing it up is fun
what do you mean this
is hard to read?

DO THIS INSTEAD

Be clear about headlines and paragraphs and have a clean, structured design that guides your readership.

ATTENTION!

This also applies to flyers, posters and banners!

Leave enough white space!

No, you don't have "space left"!

Lorem ipsum
dolor sit amet, consetetur sadipscing elitr, sed diam nonumy eirmod tempor invidunt ut
labore et
dolore magna aliquyam erat, sed diam voluptua. At vero eos et accusam et justo duo dolores et ea rebum. Stet clita kasd gubergren, no sea takimata sanctus est Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consetetur sadipscing
elitr, sed diam
nonumy eirmod tempor invidunt ut labore et dolore magna aliquyam erat, sed diam voluptua. At vero eos et accusam et justo duo dolores et ea rebum.

Lorem ipsum
dolor sit amet, consetetur sadipscing elitr, sed diam nonumy eirmod
labore et
dolore magna aliquyam erat, sed diam voluptua. At vero eos et accusam et justo duo dolores et ea rebum. Stet clita kasd gubergren, no sea takimata sanctus est Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet. Lorem ipsum
elitr, sed diam
nonumy eirmod tempor invidunt ut labore et dolore magna aliquyam erat, sed diam voluptua. At vero eos et accusam et justo duo dolores et ea rebum.

TYPOGRAPHY

RESOURCES

- **Inspiration for font pairing**
  https://www.onlineprinters.de/magazin/schrift-misch/
  or search with a search engine

- **Free fonts to download**
  https://www.fontspace.com/popular/fonts
  or search with a search engine

- **Identify fonts from an image**
  https://www.whatfontis.com/

CONTENT

MUSIC

PICTURES

GRAPHICS/ICONS

VIDEOS

INFOGRAPHICS

PICTURES

SOURCES FOR IMAGES

- **WEBSITES (Free Images)**
  https://pixabay.com/
  https://unsplash.com/
  https://www.pexels.com/

- **List for more resources**
  https://morethandigital.info/17-top-webseiten-fuer-gratis-lizenzfreie-bilder-2020-update/

- **FLICKR**
  There are often photos of actions, demonstrations and events.
  Please pay attention to the LICENSE!

READ THIS:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_Commons

Licensed media that can be used (sometimes with restrictions) often runs under a Creative Commons license.

IMAGES

IMAGE EDITING (FREE)

- **ONLINE**
  https://pixlr.com/

- **PROGRAMME FOR DOWNLOAD**
  https://www.gimp.org/
  https://www.artweaver.de/de

TIP:

Search for tutorials as an introduction to the programs or for certain edits.

VIDEOS

SOURCES FOR VIDEOS

- **WEBSITES (Free Clips)**
  https://coverr.co/
  https://pixabay.com/de/videos/

VIDEO EDITING

- **Adobe Express**
  https://www.adobe.com/de/express/feature/video/editor

- **Davinci Resolve (only for advanced users)**
  https://www.blackmagicdesign.com/at/products/davinciresolve

- **Phone apps**
  PowerDirector
  Promeo

MUSIC

RESOURCES

- **WEBSITES**
  https://www.musicfox.com/info/kostenlose-gemafreie-musik/
  Youtube: Audio-Mediathek

GRAFICS/ICONS

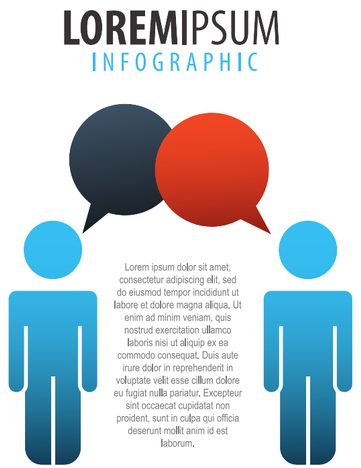
RESOURCES

- **WEBSITES**
  https://www.flaticon.com/
  https://de.freepik.com/

INFOGRAFICS

RESOURCES

- **WEBSITES TO CREATE INFOGRAFICS**
  https://www.easel.ly/
  https://piktochart.com/ (with account)



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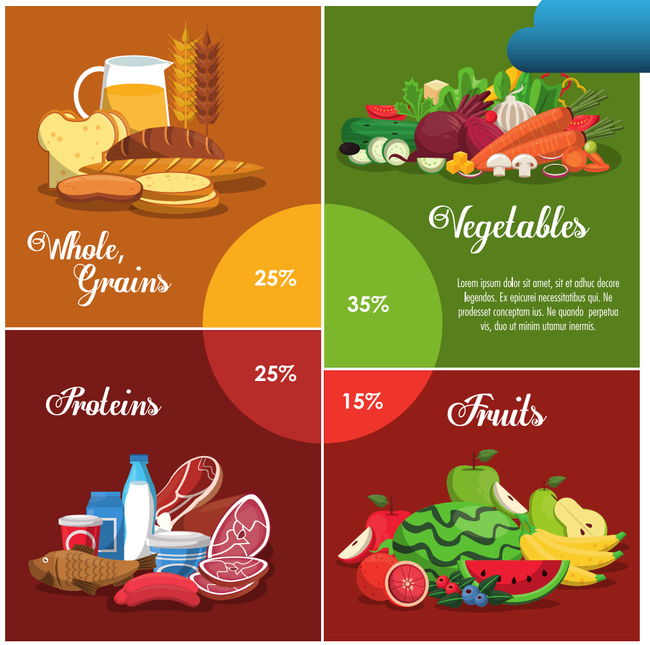


PROGRAMS (ONLINE)

There are design programs online where many of the resources mentioned are already brought together. Templates for social media posts are also available here.

WEBSITES

- **CANVA**
  https://www.canva.com
- **VISTACREATE**
  https://create.vista.com
- **PIXLR**
  https://pixlr.com/x/#template

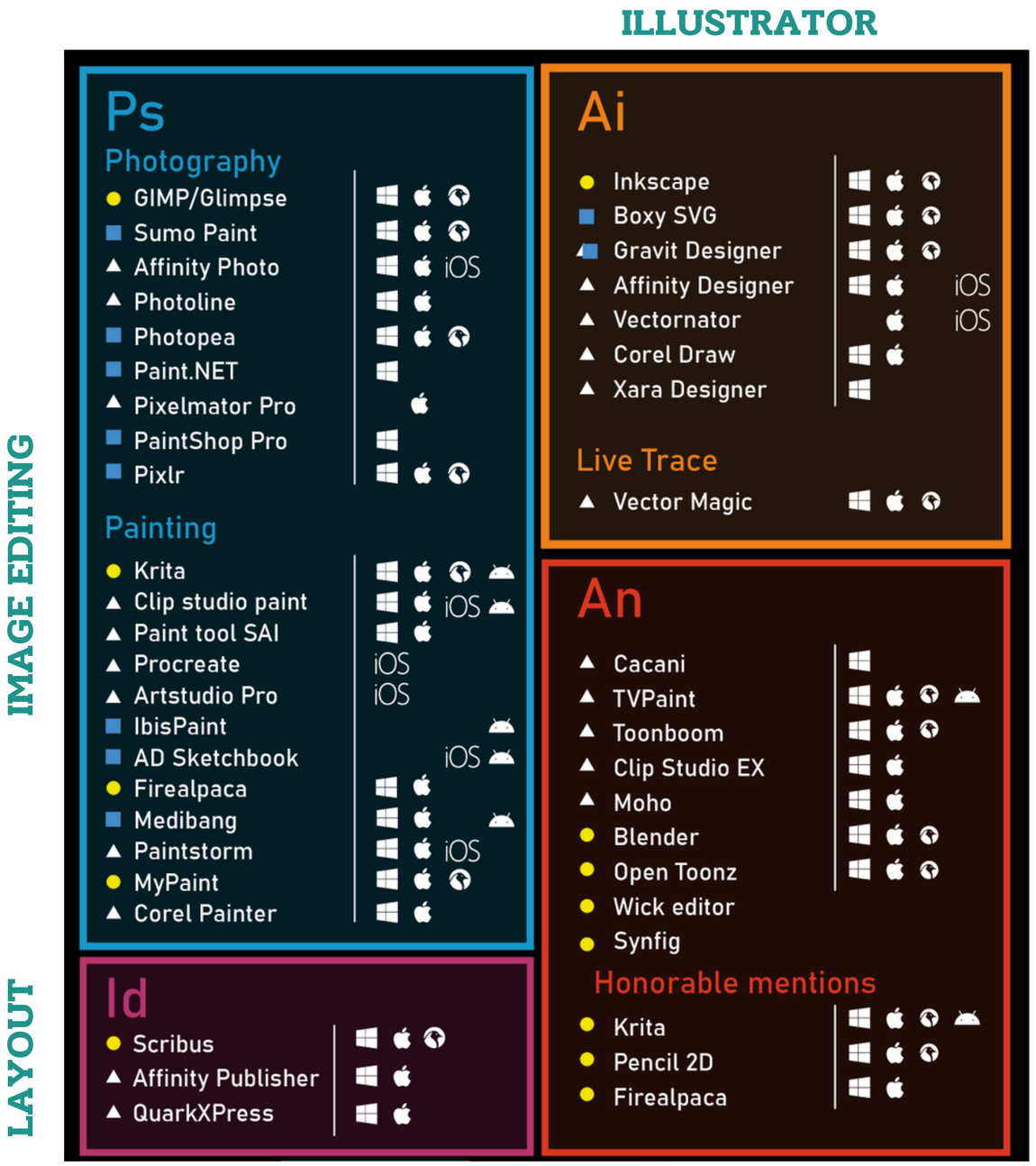
Blogpost about more programs:
https://themeisle.com/blog/canva-alternatives/

TIP: **Full/professional versions are often available at a reduced price or even free of charge for NGOs!**

PROGRAMS (ONLINE & DOWNLOAD)

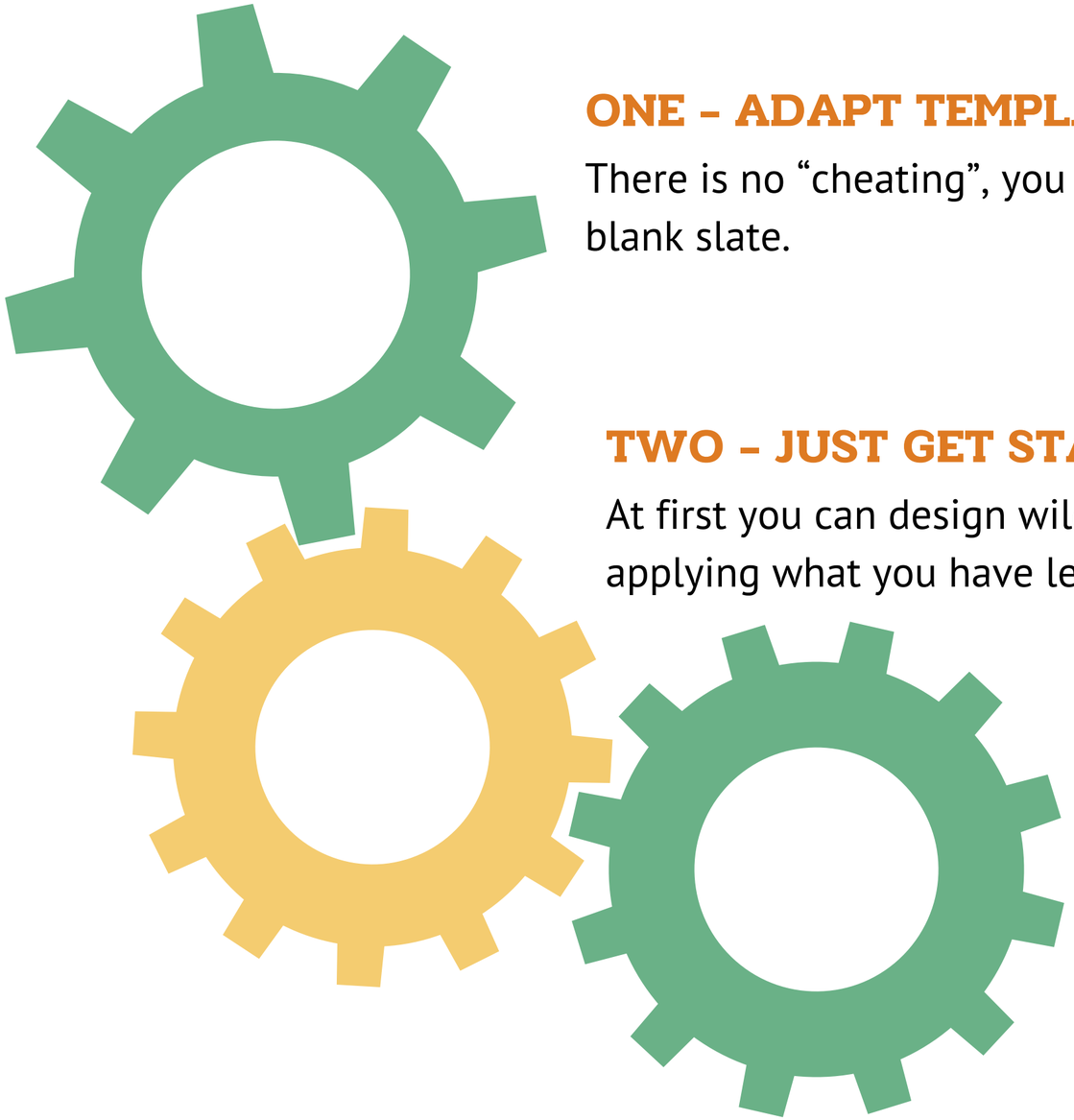
In the area of design, the Adobe Creative Cloud is considered the “industry standard”. NGOs can often get a reduced price on these programs.

However, there are some lists of alternative programs on the Internet that can be cheaper (or free) and are more than sufficient for individual smaller projects!



Source: https://twitter.com/XdanielArt/status/1434611199140896772

3 FINAL TIPS



ONE – ADAPT TEMPLATES

There is no “cheating”, you don’t have to start with a blank slate.

TWO – JUST GET STARTED

At first you can design wildly, then improve your design by applying what you have learned here.

THREE – WHATEVER WORKS!

Don't believe the snobs - use the programs you can work with, not the ones that are considered the "best"!

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