# VISUAL COMMUNICATION FOR THE WEB

LUKE WROBLEWSKI VIZTHINK, SAN JOSE 2009





# Luke Wroblewski





#### Yahoo! Inc.

•! Senior Director, Product Ideation & Design

#### **LukeW Interface Designs**

- •! Author & Founder
- •! Web Form Design: Filling in the Blanks (Rosenfeld Media)
- •! Functioning Form: Web applications, product strategy, & interface design articles
- •! Site-Seeing: A Visual Approach to Web Usability (Wiley & Sons)

#### Previously

- •! eBay Inc., Lead Designer
- •! University of Illinois, Instructor
- •! NCSA, Senior Designer

#### http://www.lukew.com





# **VISUAL** COMMUNICATION **ONLINE**

WHY DOES IT MATTER? HOW DO WE APPLY IT? **EXAMPLES, EXAMPLES, EXAMPLES...** 



# How We Use the Web



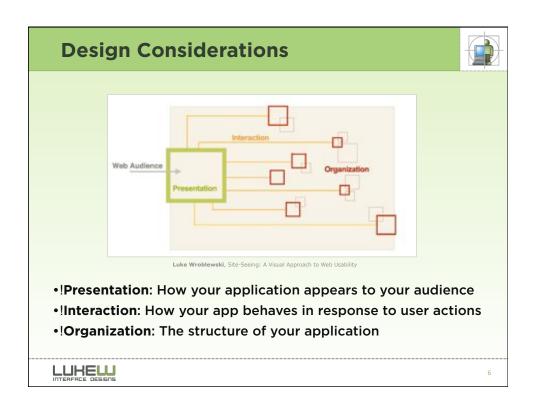
"Look around feverishly for anything that is interesting or vaguely resembles what you are looking for, and is clickable." -Steve Krug



-Steve Krug, Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability

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#### **Presentation**



- •! All interactions occur through the presentation
- •! Inform users
  - •! Establish relationships between content
  - •! Guide users through actions
- •! Make organizational systems clear
  - •! Provide situational awareness
  - •! Maintain consistency to create a sense of place
- •! Effectively convey appropriate personality
  - •! Emotional impact
  - •! Engage and invite
  - •! Communicate brand message



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#### What Makes a Great Presentation?



#### •! Visual Organization

- •! Communicates the relationships between user interface elements
- •! Enables Interaction Design
- •! Information Design

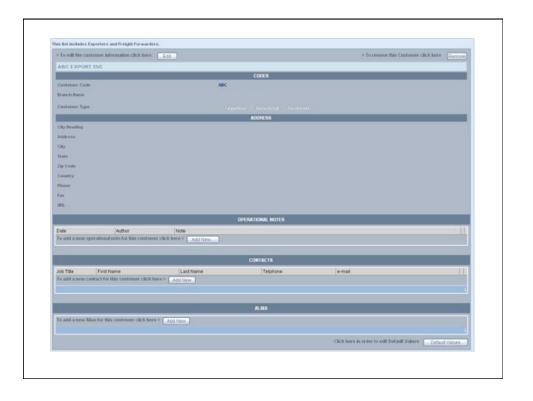
#### •! Personality

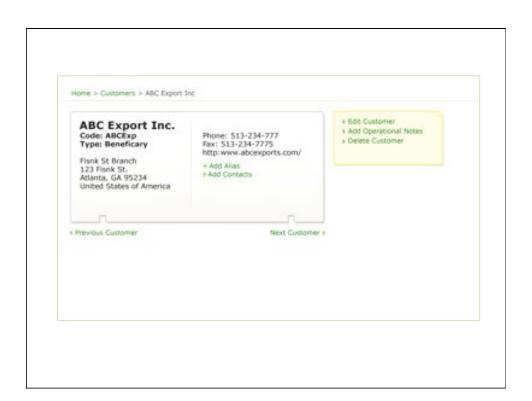
- •! Communicates the brand essence of a product
- •! Visceral design
- •! Color, font, image, pattern selection

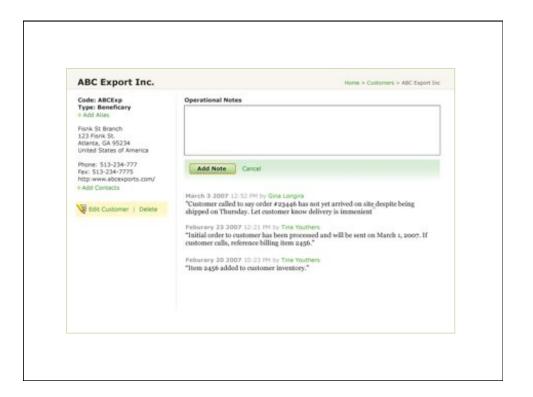


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# The End Goal Quickly Communicate •! What is this? Usefulness •! How do I use it? Usability •! Why should I care? Desirability

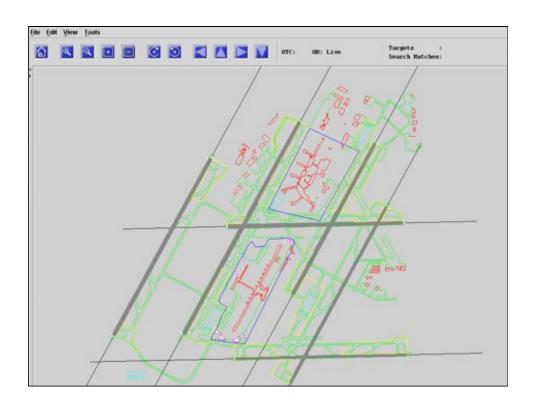




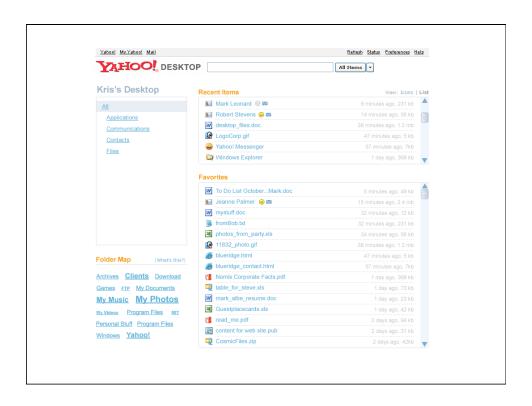


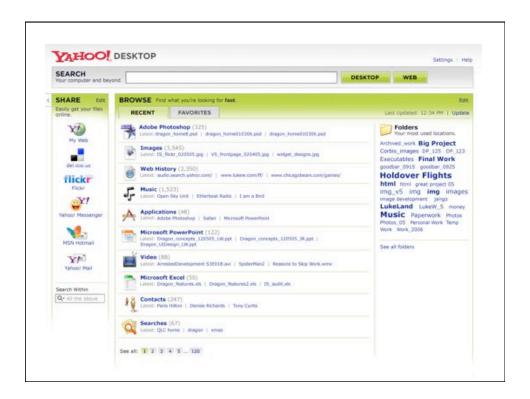
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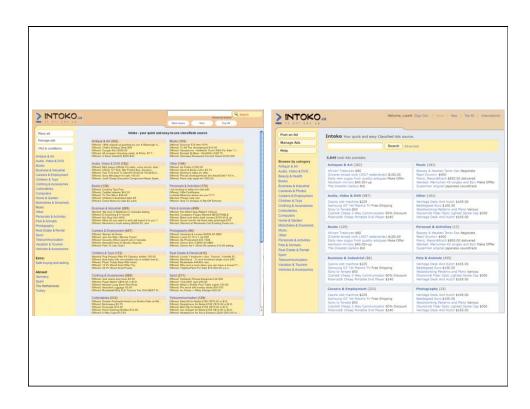
















# HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE VISUALLY?



PHOTO BY MATTEO PENZO



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# **How We See**



- •! How we make sense of what we see
  - •! Recognizing similarities & differences
  - •! This allows us to group information
  - •! And give it meaning

# •! Relationships

- •! Between individual elements
- •! To the whole (story)



Flickr: Uploaded on August 19, 2006 by Tom-Tom

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# **Understanding Perception**





Luke Wrobiewski, Site-Seeing: A Visual Approach to Web Usability

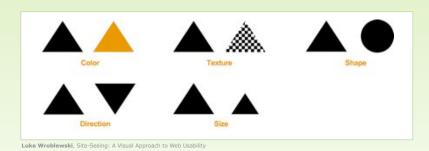
- •! Several principles tell us how (why) we group visual information
  - •! Proximity -elements close together perceived as a group
  - •! Similarities -of shape, size, color can group elements
  - •! Continuance -grouped through basic patterns
  - •! Closure -group elements by space filled between them



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# **Forming Relationships**





- •! Creating relationships requires an understanding of what makes things different
- •! Introducing variations in one or more of the above categories creates **visual contrast**
- •! Also created through positioning



# **Using Relationships**





# **Type**



- •! Use visual relationships to
  - •! Add more or less **visual weight** to objects
  - •! Difference is created by contrast between objects
  - •! Why do we want to vary the visual weight of objects...

Luke Wroblewski, Site-Seeing: A Visual Approach to Web Usability



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# **Visual Hierarchy**



- •! Creates a center of interest that attracts the viewer's attention
- •! Creates a sense of order and balance
- •! Establishes a pattern of movement to guide a viewer through a composition
- •! In other words, it communicates meaning

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# **Hierarchy Applied**



- •! Visual weight guides you through
  - •! Image
  - •! Title
  - •! Date & Location
  - •! Ticket Information
- •! Building an effective hierarchy
  - ! Involves use of visual relationships to add more or less visual weight to elements





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# **Building Effective Hierarchies**





- •! Distribution of visual weight
  - •! Visually dominant images get noticed most
  - •! Focal point, center of interest
- •! Distinct visual weight guides you through narrative
  - •! Essential to keep it balanced

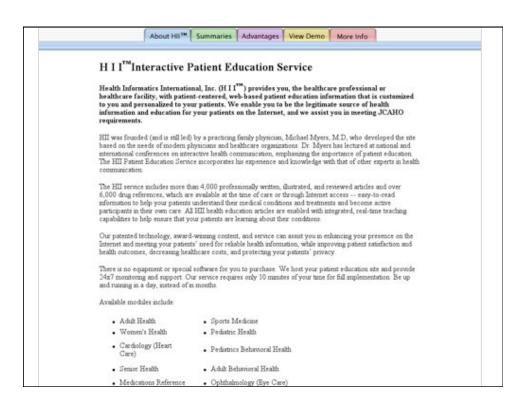


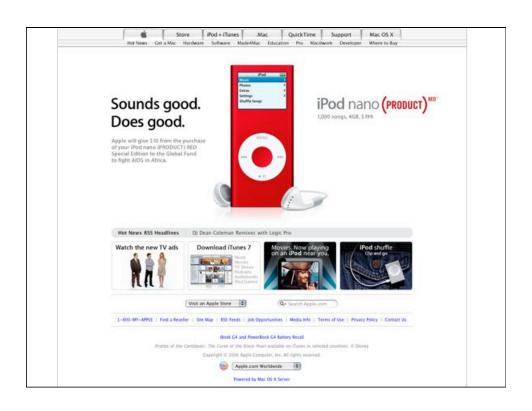
Luke Wroblewski, Site-Seeing: A Visual Approach to Web Usability















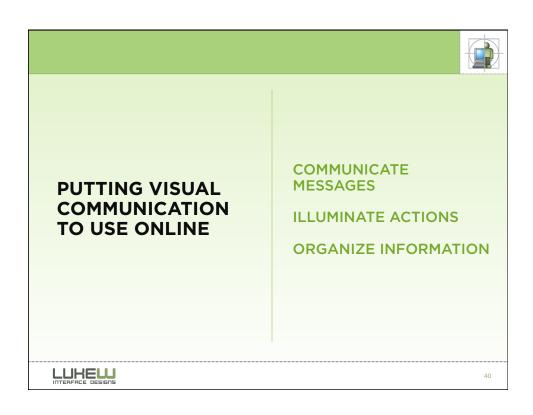
# **To Summarize**

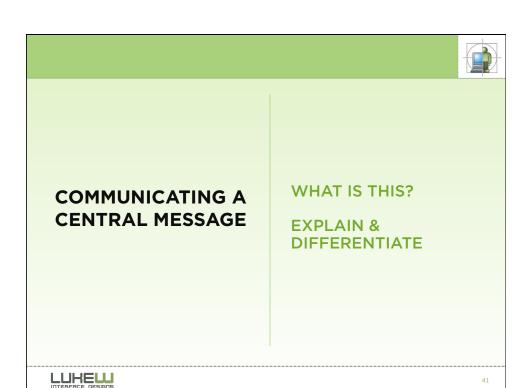


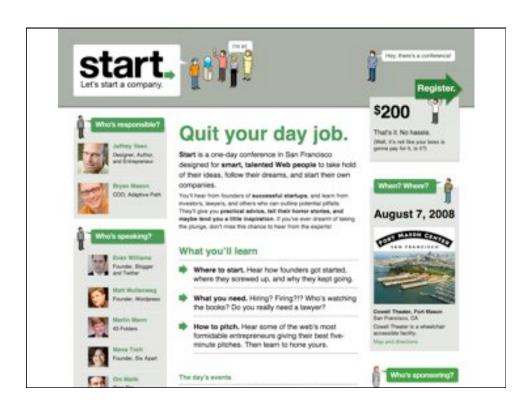
- •! Visual Communication is part
- •! Visual Organization and part personality.
- •! Visual Hierarchy is a deliberate prioritization of
- •! Visual Weight enabled by the manipulation of
- •! Visual Relationships to create
- •! **Meaning** for users.





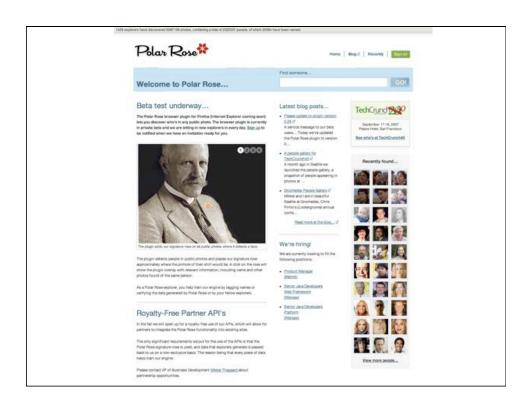


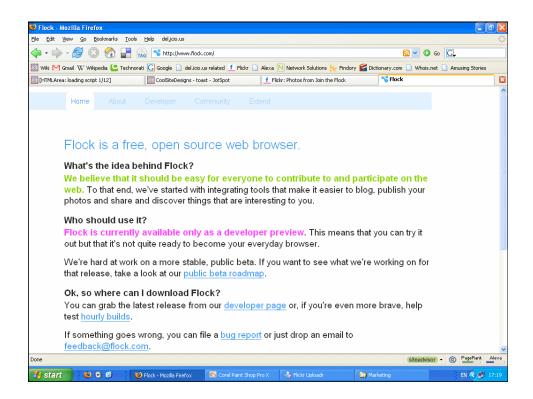


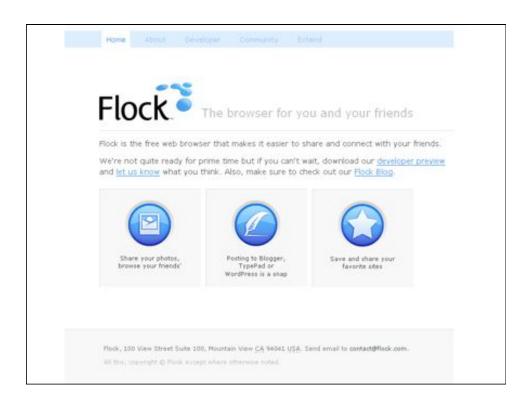












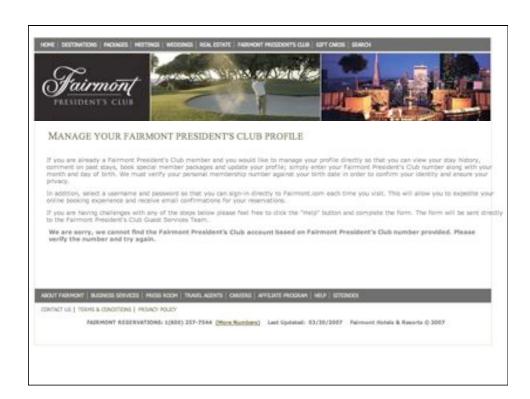






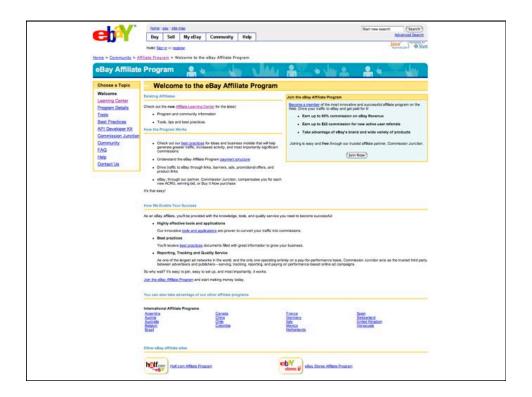












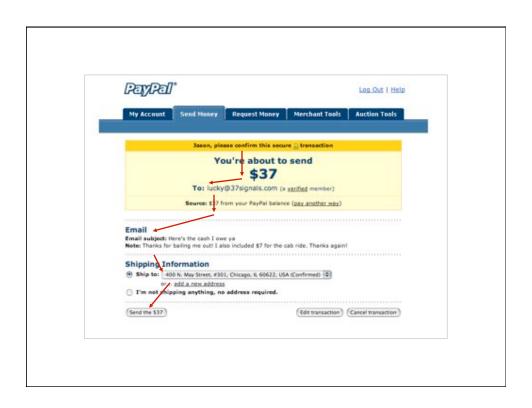








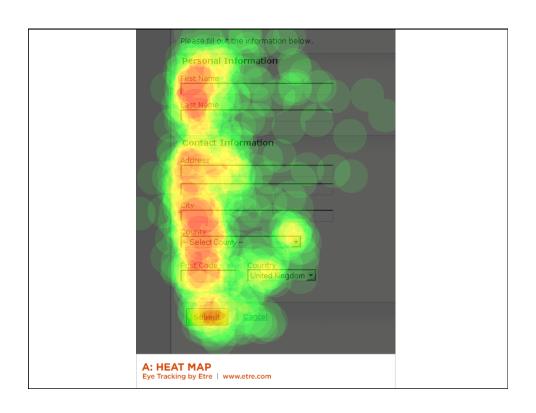








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For	Service/Other
Item amount	\$250.00 USD
Gifts and Discounts	Enter Redemption Code
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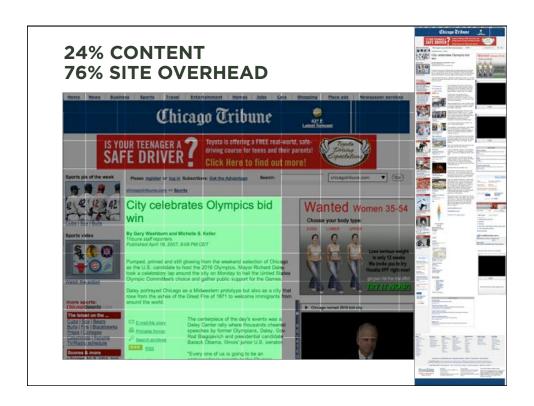
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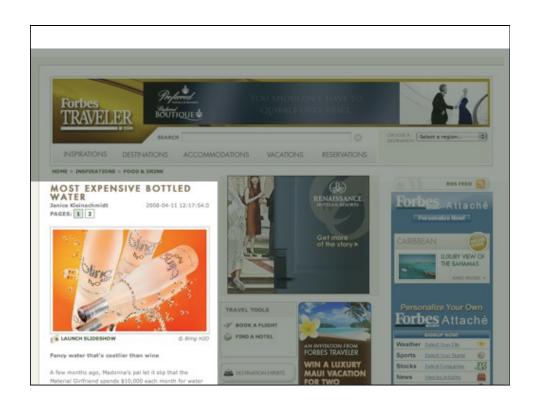


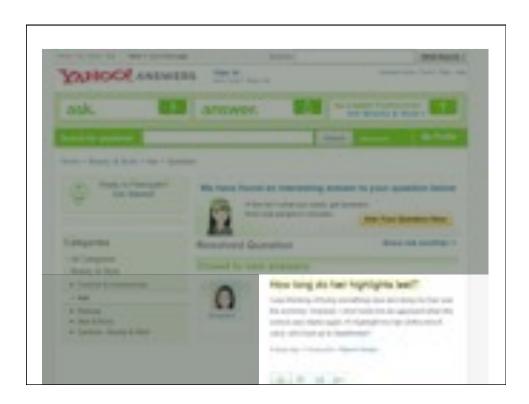






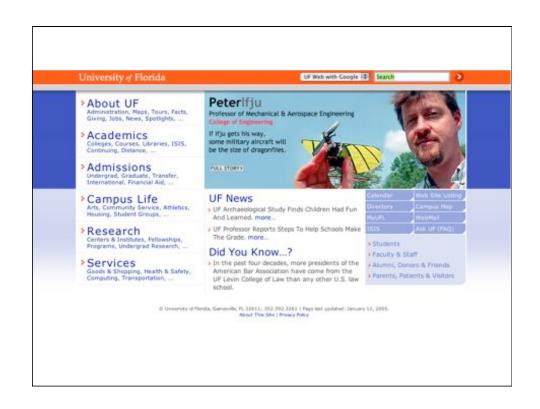












# **A Simple Table**



General Statistics			
Current Caseload:	10		
Number of Admissions Today:	5		
Number of Admissions This Month:	35		
Number of Admissions Last Month:	30		
Number of Discharges Today:	3		
Number of Discharges This Month:	22		
Number of Discharges Last Month:	34		

General Statistics	
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Current Caseload	10
New Admissions:	5 today 35 this month 30 last month
Discharges:	3 today 22 this month 34 last month

LUHELLI INTERFRICE DESIGNS

#### **After Visual Communication?**



•! "I think I found an even better solution to simplify this part of user interface." -One Creative Director's Journal



•! "This way I think users will need even less time to see all the information presented in the table especially frequent users. For new users or users in doubt once they rollover the number for which they don't know the meaning, they will see a description."



http://andreysmagin.com/blog/redesigning-a-simple-table



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# **After Visual Communication?**





Current Case Load - 10					
	Today	This Month	Last Month Mar 2006		
New Admissions	5	35	30		
Discharges	3	22	34		

- Labels and their values have been divided into rows and columns
  - •! Requires horizontal and vertical movement
  - Need to look across for one label and up for the second label
  - •! Compounded by the increased separation of the data - the labels are further away from their values.
- Potentially better for looking up a particular value in the table
- ! Makes taking all the data in at once more difficult.

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# **After Visual Communication?**





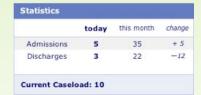
- ! Are people looking for a specific value (i.e. discharges this month)
- •! Do they simply need a sense of all the information at once?
- •! Is there a prioritization of the data?
- •! Is everything equally important?
- Introducing size and color variations might add visual noise instead of bringing extra attention to really important data



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# **After Visual Communication?**

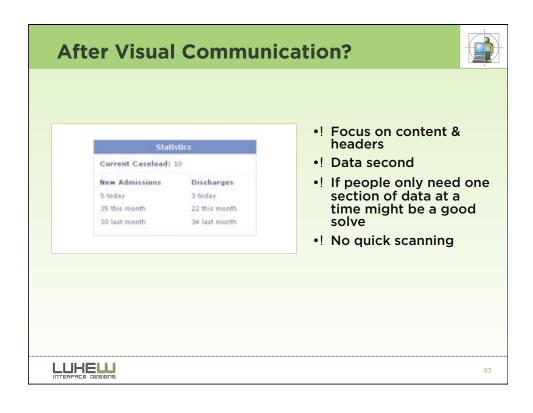


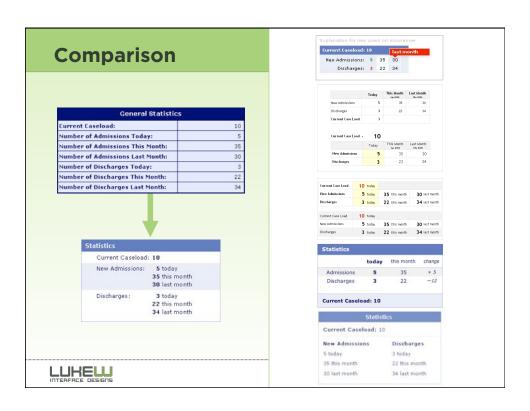


- If the purpose of the "last month" data is to calculate the monthly mutation
  - •! Last column offers faster satisfaction.
- •! Styling the row and column groups provides
  - •! Further importance
  - •! Emphasizes the data relations
  - •! Gives more meaning to the structure of the grid
- •! The footer contains the single most important statistic for this table

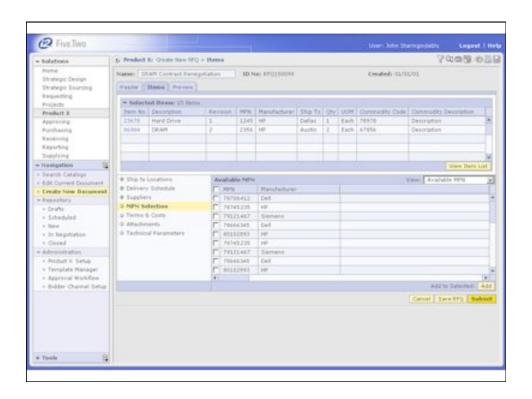
http://www.ict-id.nl/CSSshed/website/html/tablebility\_part1.html

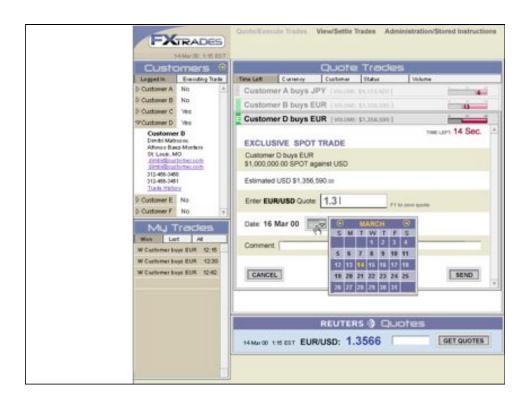


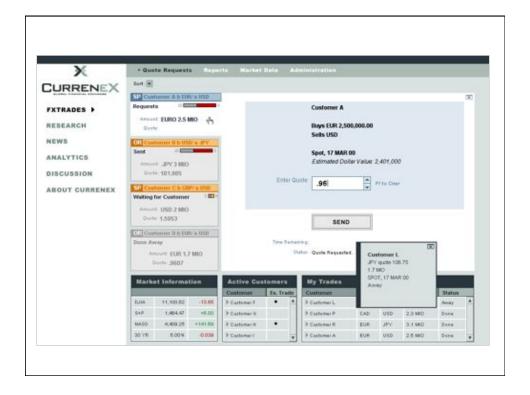












# **To Summarize**



- •! Visual Communication is part
- •! Visual Organization and part personality.
- •! Visual Hierarchy is a deliberate prioritization of
- •! Visual Weight enabled by the manipulation of
- •! Visual Relationships to create
- •! **Meaning** for users.
  - •! Communicate messages
  - •! Illuminate actions
  - •! Organize information



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