

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [\[LEGENDS\] Design Trends of 2016](#)

Rivalry - April 9, 2016, 3:09 pm

[img]http://s9.postimg.org/57pm7cwxr/LEGENDS_2_0_HEADER.png[/img]

"Others toil their entire lives to make a name for themselves, some are just born LEGENDS."

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It's an important and often overlooked fact that design on HF lags behind trend by about 2 years. This is because the Marketplace is plagued by people who are just there to make money selling the same rehashed crap they made months and months ago in a different colour. This thread aims to show you what 2016 is bringing design, and some of the really exciting styles and techniques you could adopt to freshen up your work.

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01

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Alternatives to Flat Design do Exist!

[Flat design isn't going anywhere any time soon](#), but thankfully Google have come to save us from the doldrums of lazy, thoughtless, and just plain awful flat design. Their response is [material design](#), which looks a bit like flat design but uses lots of shadows and animation to add depth and variety. However, even material design is a little bit old-school these days; some [cutting edge style is pushing back towards incorporating glows and vibrant gradients](#) in stunning form, and they're starting to pop up across the board in both material and flat layouts. In other words, what's in is design that looks clean, but [pops a lot more effectively than flat design does](#) and appears to have a lot more detail and vibrancy.

KEY STUDIES -

https://www.behance.net/gallery/34962045/NikeLab-Sock-Dart-Fleece-_-Microsite-concept

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/34846429/CIMR-Website>

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/32244083/Baianat-Website-UXUi>

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/35206643/RocketDroid-Landing-page-Website>

02

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Gradients Are Back!

Yes! They died for a few years (thoroughly murdered by Apple's ghastly iOS6 and Android), but subtle yet bright gradients are making a comeback in a wide range of designs. [Flat designers are learning that they can still make a flat site and incorporate gradients](#), whilst more out of the box designers are using them across the board.

They make a site much more engaging if used effectively in conjunction with block colour, and should be considered by any serious designer.

Meanwhile, [glows have reappeared out of nowhere](#). They're cropping up on less flat designs to give absolutely breathtaking lighting effects when used carefully, whilst maintaining a clean aesthetic. It all helps to maintain viewer engagement.

KEY STUDIES -

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/21722849/Pixar>
<https://www.behance.net/gallery/32153427/Website-design-part-3> (first one)
<https://www.behance.net/gallery/29767303/Widher-weather-app-concept>
<https://dribbble.com/shots/2415240-CPU-test-app>
<https://dribbble.com/shots/1940341-Dashboard-WIP>
<https://dribbble.com/shots/2443933-Landing-Page>
<https://dribbble.com/shots/2417453-Speed-Test-Full-Preview>
<https://www.behance.net/gallery/35599143/Twitter-Live-Concept>
<https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=5193993> (first one, shameless self-promotion)

03

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You Can Break the Grid!

The grid system has been sacrosanct for the past few years. It's been next to impossible to break it stylishly; I've got a thread design tutorial on HF from a couple of years ago that advises aligning literally everything, for example. Although margins tend to remain (mostly) consistent, [many designers have begun playing with grids](#). Content we don't expect to pop up in places appears there and the design appears more chaotic and unstructured; the art, of course, is in maintaining order and a system even though it appears you're renouncing a formal grid.

Additionally, [layout as a whole has started to be bent](#) as designers discover they can arouse interest in a design precisely through being unpredictable, without sacrificing UX. This continues the ongoing theme of design in 2016 of designers coming out of their shells and seeing what new techniques they can introduce into their work whilst still keeping it clean, functional, and professional.

KEY STUDIES -

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/33742162/WOODER-Free-PSD-Template>
<https://www.behance.net/gallery/33166863/Deals-App>
<https://www.behance.net/gallery/35334297/Q-Tarantino>
<https://www.behance.net/gallery/34547545/Chantelle-Winnie-Personal-Website>

04

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Pictures & Using Space!

Earlier (web 2.0) design tended to prioritise cramming content onto the page. This is no longer an issue; internet speeds are now much quicker so web pages load complex designs faster, and we spend a lot of time on our phones (so we can scroll down allowing content to be more spread out). That's allowed designers to use vast amounts of empty space to [highlight images and text](#). This manifests itself on HF as big 'hero' images, usually containing mountains and generic text.

It's particularly apparent [when selling products](#), and can be a really efficient tool on websites.

KEY STUDIES -

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/34712323/Logitech-Website-Concept-Design>

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/35501957/Upton-MMXV-Launch-Website>

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/35334297/Q-Tarantino>

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/34190201/Asos-Redesign-Rethinking-Concept>

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/30821759/Long-Life-Wood>

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/27982413/Sorel>

05

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Animation is King!

Fast internet (and fast PCs) has also enabled designers to get crafty with animation. You'll likely have noticed super slick loading and interface animations on your phone, and sometimes they're not even accompanied by text; [we simply infer the meaning through the animation itself](#). Again, this was spearheaded by Google.

This means it's time for designers to get learning After Effects as well as Photoshop...

KEY STUDIES -

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/35452259/D-D-Play>

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/35452305/Google-Education>

Literally any decent app

cortz - April 10, 2016, 2:36 am

Text is way too small to read comfortably.

RumbleFrog - April 10, 2016, 4:41 pm

Very detailed guide man, just make the font a little bigger.

Rivalry - April 11, 2016, 5:25 am

(Apr 10, 2016 04:41 PM)RumbleFrog Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Very detailed guide man, just make the font a little bigger.

It's larger than standard HF text? ?

You guys confuse me

sHAY - April 11, 2016, 12:35 pm

Great thread man, a lot of people will find this usefull, i did at least!

?Meda - April 12, 2016, 7:56 pm

Posting here to remind myself where to find this thread tomorrow when I wake up. Thanks for the quality post, Rivalry! I skimmed the thread and it definitely looks like a good read, excited to get some new insights from your findings ?

Atom™ - April 15, 2016, 2:32 am

(Apr 11, 2016 05:25 AM)Rivalry Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) It's larger than standard HF text? ?

You guys confuse me
No bruh, it isn't.

Anyways, really detailed guide. Loved every bit of it! Will have to sub to it so I can come back again when I get the time to fully explore, busy with exams y'know.

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Arryn - April 15, 2016, 2:38 am

Love this guide, especially how you put some examples of what you're talking about as a visual aid for people like me ?

James Burnham - July 18, 2016, 7:45 am

A quality thread that needs a bit more attention.

Draako - July 20, 2016, 10:49 am

Very good tutorial, a lot of people will find this usefull, i did at least!

Xzity - July 22, 2016, 8:12 pm

I actually like Flat designs, they're easy on the eye and yet simple.

On the other hand flashy always attracts more people.

johnwd - September 19, 2017, 4:17 am

Super useful post dude, great work! I especially like that website by Roney Gibson, his use of gradients and shadows are super cool. Thanks very much for this!