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Design instructions for external agencies

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See notes here for version control

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Purpose

1. Have an instruction for external design agencies, so they have a checklist to check if they have designed everything we need. This is helpful for developers and save time during the development process.

Roles Involved

1. Web designer of external design agency
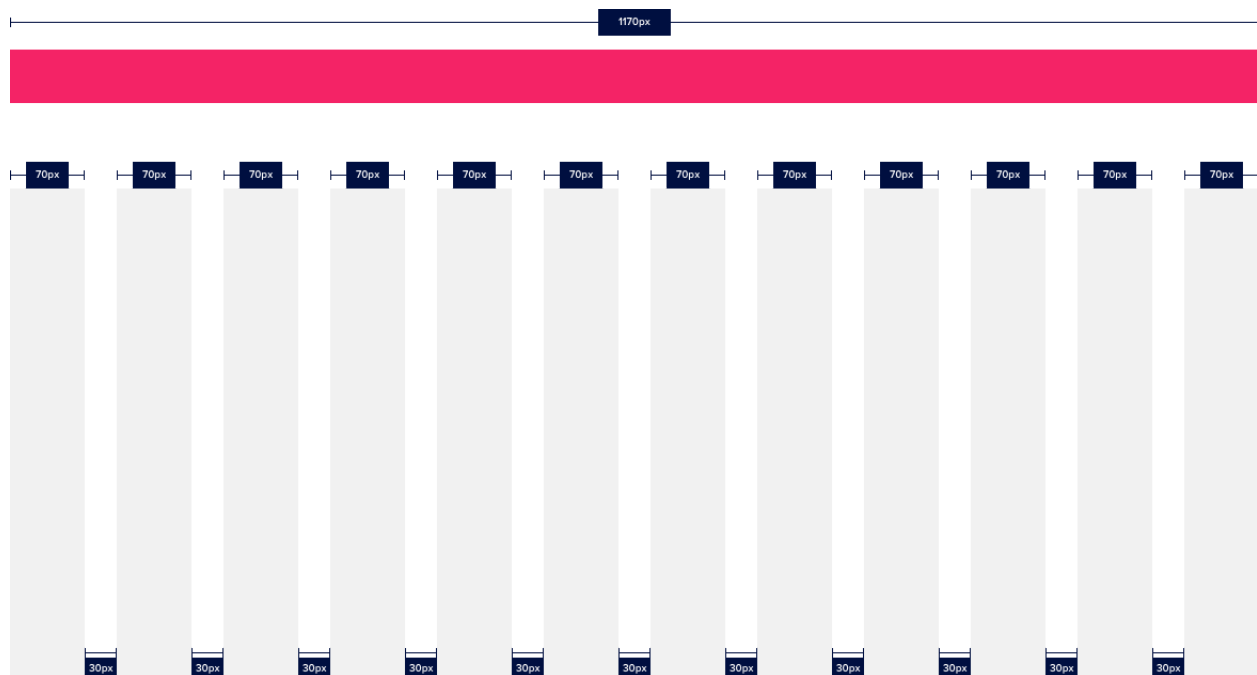
Practice Description

Grid

To make sure the website will be responsive, it is important the webdesign is aligned on a grid. The grid is a technical calculator which divides the website in different columns. Normally this will be 12 or 24 columns for desktop. Depending on the screen you have, the website will show you a number of grids next to each other.

For example: On desktop the grid shows 12 columns in a row, on tablet there will be 4 columns in a row and on mobile there are 3 columns in a row.

What different grids do you have?

There are a lot of different grids. It depends on the width of your grid and how many columns you want. Normally we pick 12 columns, because in that way you have the most options available. You can make sections of 1x12 columns, 2x 6 columns, 3x 4 columns, 4x 3 columns, 6x 2 columns or 12x 1 columns.

Our preference goes out to the 1170px, 12 columns, 70px column width, 30px gutter width. This makes the development process go faster and easier.

1170px

70px 70px 70px 70px 70px 70px 70px 70px 70px 70px 70px 70px

30px 30px 30px 30px 30px 30px 30px 30px 30px 30px 30px

What options do you have in a grid?

There are 4 things you have to set up:

Max width: This means how wide the grid will be. If you pick a grid which is around 1170px your design will fit in most of the screens.

Columns: This is how many columns you want. We recommend 12 columns.

Gutter width: This is the space between the different columns. It depends on your design, but a gutter of 30px is a solid choice.

Margin / Outer Gutter : This space can't be used in the design. It's some kind of buffer between the content and the border of the screen. If you don't add this margin it could be possible on mobile screens the text begins directly at the border of the screen. It is prettier if there is a little bit of whitespace between it. A lot of 'frameworks' (= the technical system the website is built on) do add margin themselfs, so you don't have to add this manually.

How to make a grid?

We've made some screenshots of the layout settings in the 3 most used web design applications.
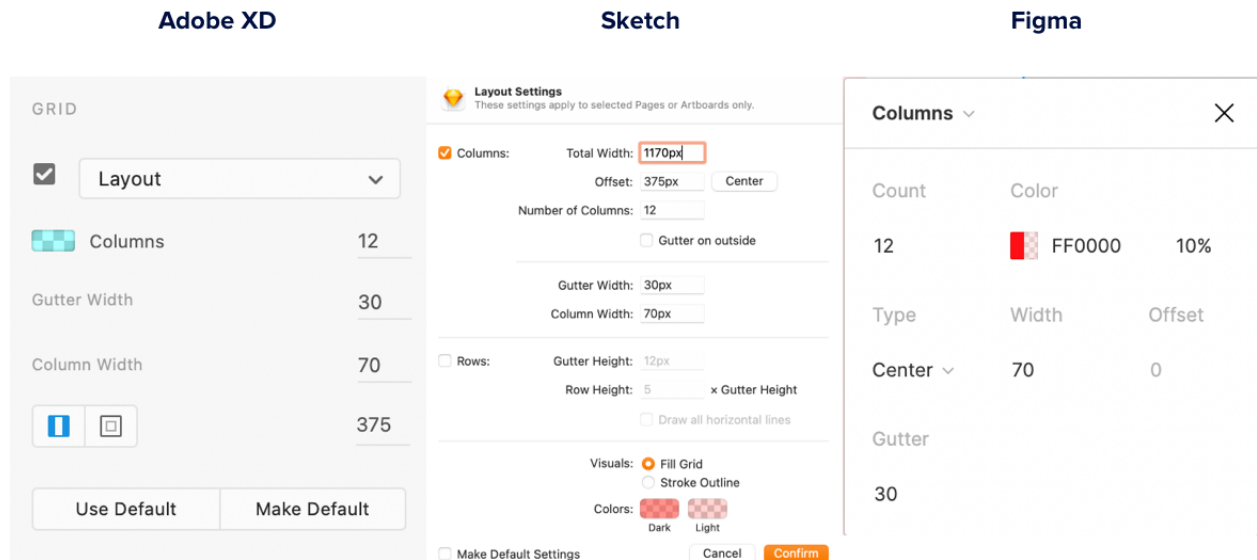
Important: If you also make separate designs for different screen sizes (like mobile or tablet), you have to make grids for these views as well.

HTML Style Guide

Make sure a lot of 'general' HTML elements do have a styling in your design. This makes sure your website does have a good consistency throughout all the pages. (For example: the headings on every page do have the same font-family and color and the bullet-lists looks the same every time you use it.) We recommend to even make a separate style guide where all these HTML elements are explained.

Make sure these elements should at least have a styling:

- H1 - H6 headlines
- Default paragraph text
- Other text styles like intro text, sub titles etc.
- Link + Link hover
- Button + Button hover
- Unordered List (bullet list)
- Ordered List (1. Item 2. Item 3. Item etc.)
- Form (Single line, multiple line, file upload etc)

You can view our style guide as an example [here](). Keep in mind that the style guide is custom made for your project. You can remove items if you don't use it in the design, like quotes.

Icons / vector images

If you are using vector icons or other svg images, please ensure they are exportable in the design file or send them separately. Otherwise our developer can't use these vector images.

Vector icons / svg images make sure the images will look good on every device. If you use regular images for it, you will have a change the images will look unsharp at certain screens.

Fonts

- Using fonts on a website is different from using fonts on your computer in Photoshop/Sketch/Figma/Adobe XD. Not every font on your computer can be used on a website. You need special web fonts for this (woff, woff2, truetype, opentype).
- If you want to be sure your favorite font can be used on a website, pick a font from Google Fonts (fonts.google.com) or Adobe Fonts (fonts.adobe.com). These fonts always can be included in the website.
- The more fonts you use, the more the visitor has to load when they open the website. We would advise to use max 2 font families.
- Please be aware the font-size of websites nowadays is bigger than in websites ten years ago. Normally the minimal font-size is 16-18px for paragraph text. We recommend to use these settings to make sure the text has a good readability. Also on mobile screens.
- Don't forget to set a good line-height. Otherwise the text rows don't have enough space, which is bad for readability. Normally paragraph text do have a line-height around x1.5 or x1.6. For headlines you can take a line-height around x1.25
- Watch out with using light variants for font types, it may look good in your design but most of the times it can be hard to read for the user, we would advise to use a regular variant to be sure the readability is good for the user.

Templates and flexible sections

We want to make our websites as reusable as possible. This decreases the development time and is also better for our client. They can use parts on all different pages. Our designer doesn't design each page in the site, but creates templates. For example:

- Home
- Default template (with flexible sections)
- Nieuws overview
- Nieuws detail

Flexible sections are blocks/parts in the site that can be added in the admin and filled with content. You can choose your own order on each page. Each flexible section has its own design and functionalities. Here are some examples:

- Default text section
- Text + image section
- Video section
- Form section
- Nieuws section

Keep in mind that each section takes extra development time.

Briefing

To make sure our developers will develop your site just the way you have imagined, it is important to let us know how the website should work. You can use the tools you want, but we love to use InVision for this: www.invisionapp.com. You can also set comments in the 'Share'-tool of Adobe XD.

Now we want to know for every section what it is, what it does and how it should work. Let's take our homepage for example. We can tell something like this:
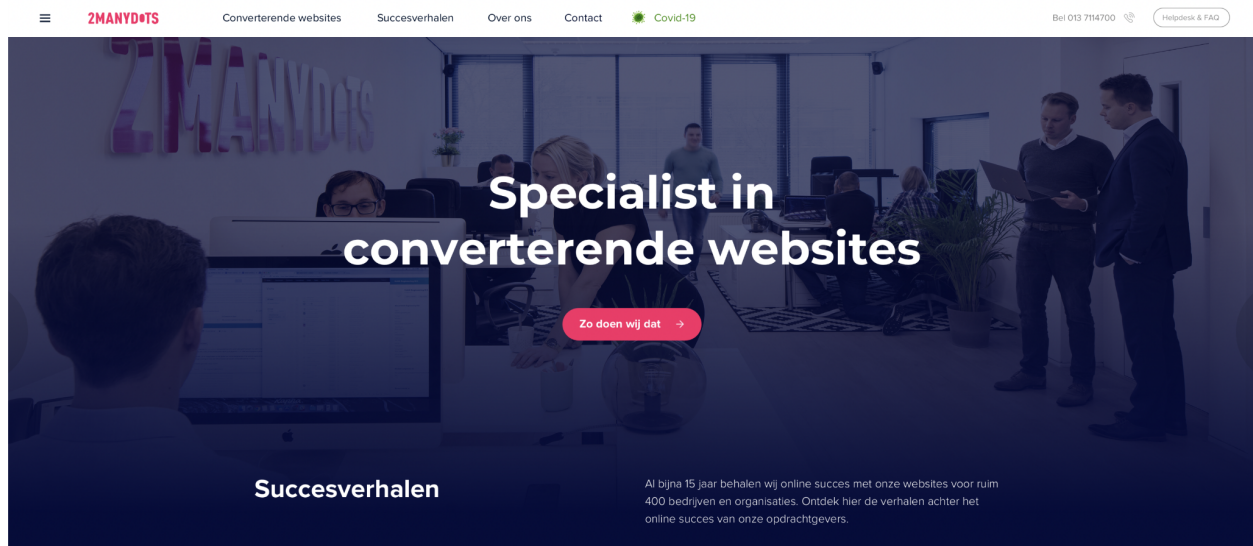
"This is the homepage template. The background-image should be full-screen on every device. On the desktop we want to have a title and one button. This should be horizontally aligned in the middle of the screen. Underneath you see the title and description of the 'Succesverhalen'."

It is important for us to know how specific sections behave. What happens if you click on them / scrolls on it / etc. etc.

We know, this sounds like a lot of work. And it is a lot of work ;-) But if we build sections the wrong way, then it takes a lot of extra time to make changes to it. So we better think about it before we start developing.

Revision History

Version	Effective Date	Significant Changes	Who?
0.1	2017-07-24	First Draft	Job Hoop
0.2	2021-04-19	Changes based on new boilerplate	Anthony de Rooij & Finn Ruijter