

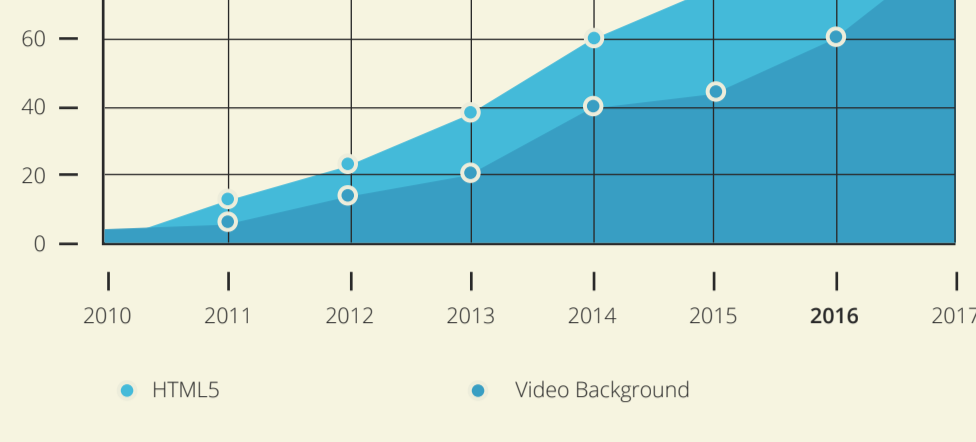
Top Web Design Trends to Watch in 2016



In the previous year the web experienced major design swings. The flat design movement smoothed three-dimensional styles and added expansive white space to websites everywhere. Multi-page websites were converted to long single pages with fancy scrolling effects. This year, we'll see these extremes be tempered with a focus on improving user experiences, which ultimately means a more engaging website where your visitors will stay, learn, convert and buy. Savvy business owners and their web designers will spot and leverage the following trends:

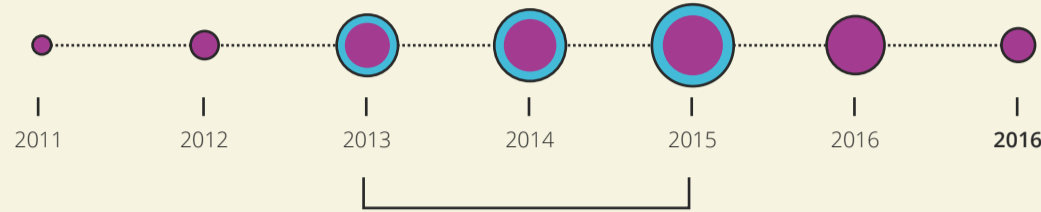
01 Background videos are playing for you

Several major websites have incorporated background videos. Videos can now be displayed with HTML 5, so there is little concern for technology limitations.



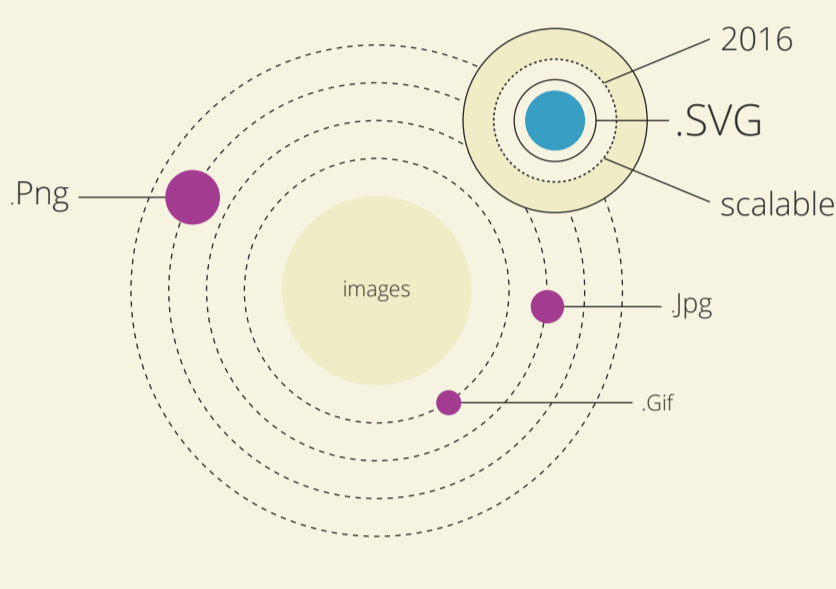
02 The era of the home page slider is over

The pervasive home page slider just doesn't work and I hope companies give it a final goodbye in 2015. To clarify, the home page slider is a slideshow-type series of images, often with captions. No newly designed website should be dragged down by a slider. They take a long time to load. They can be confusing to users. They have low click-through rates. People are so used to seeing them, they are easily ignored.



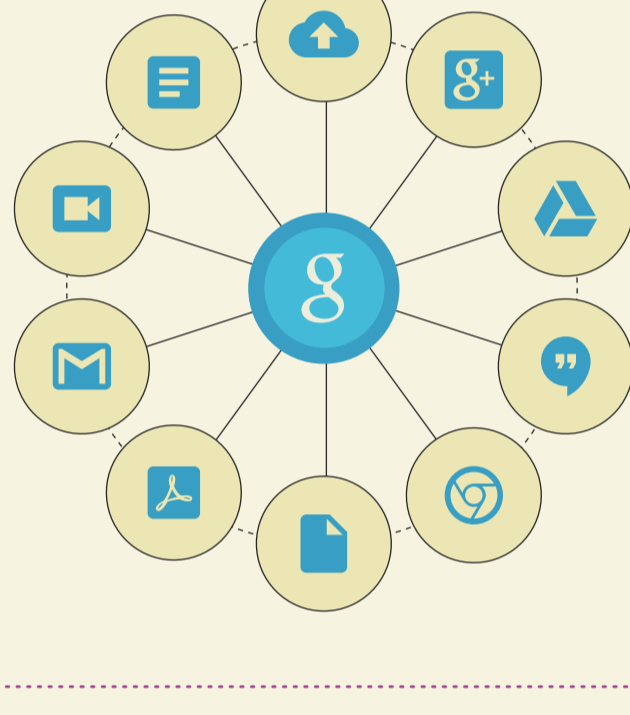
03 Scalable vector graphics (SVGs) may not be noticeable, but you'll like what they do

SVGs (scalable vector graphics) deliver lots of pixels and beautiful images for retina displays. In previous years, web designers and developers moved to sprites to capture individual images, and then to fonts. However, SVG is even more awesome. SVG translates to faster loading, more beautiful graphics, and easily bringing a little more color back to icon sets since vector isn't limited to one color like a font.



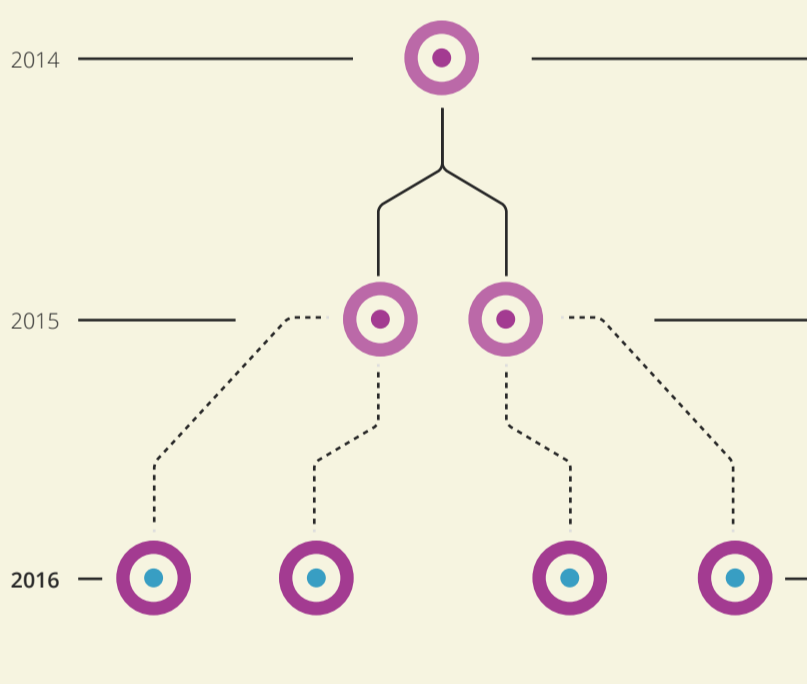
04 Google's Material Design is infiltrating everywhere

For the average web user, Google's Material Design is likely new terminology. Material Design is a design language created by Google and announced mid-2014. Google's Material Design is about consistency, functioning and interacting in same-place style between apps.



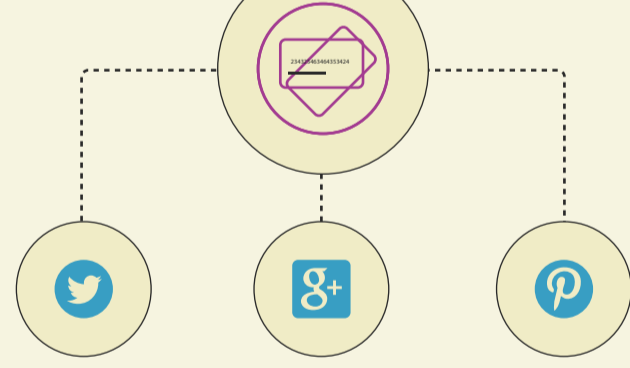
05 Fewer websites will be built as a single page, but you'll still use plenty of scrolling

We've watched a move toward scrolling instead of clicking, with long, single pages in which numerous sections of content are visually differentiated. This arose out of increased use of mobile devices and brands that wanted to use storytelling to guide the user. The extreme result was one long page that comprised an entire website. However, that extreme has been refined so that a typical-sized company website may have several long pages for different types of content and goals.



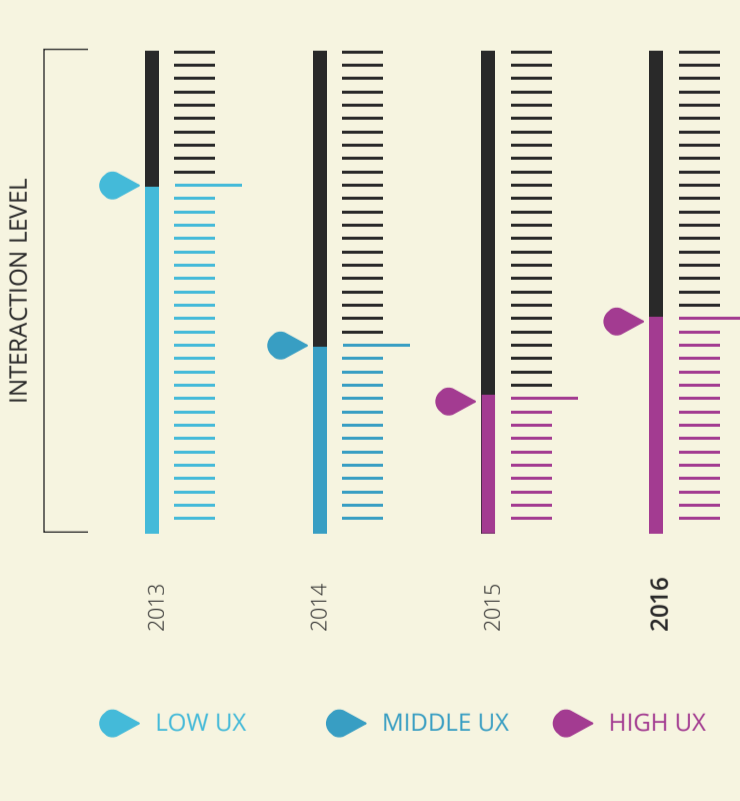
06 Card design will become ubiquitous

If you use G+, Pinterest, or Twitter, you've seen card design. This design pattern is comprised of a grid of individual boxes, often white rectangles on a gray background. These rectangles have repeatable elements (like title, author, tags and an image). It is becoming a standard way to showcase content instead of a traditional "list" format, being easier to skim, digest and process.



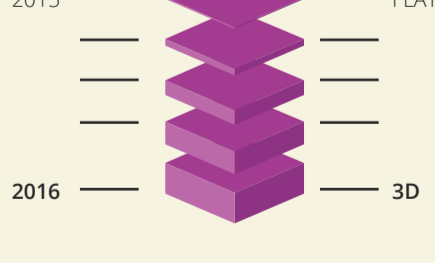
07 More micro-interactions will imbue warm fuzzy feelings

Micro-interaction is the "in-the-know" term for a single, small action performed on a website, such as logging in or "favoriting" some content. This year, expect to see more of these used on websites of all stripes to make a fluid, enjoyable user experience.



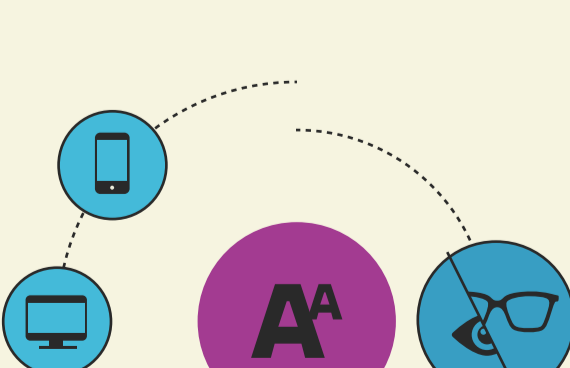
08 Flat design won't be quite so flat

The extreme of "flat" design has been reached. Designers' obsession to flatten user interfaces as a backlash to skeuomorphism, drop shadows, 3D bubbles and excessive gradients was a welcome reset. This year, website designers will settle on a better balance for design with cleaner, less-cluttered layouts with subtle patterns or small amounts of shadows and gradients to identify buttons and functionality.



09 Readable text will be on more devices thanks to responsive typography

Responsive Web Design is here to stay. On a basic level, responsive web design lets page contents slide into a vertical orientation. However, typography has not received the care required for optimal reading experiences. This year, responsive typography will be more fully embraced and integrated into responsive web design development. Web designers need to take into account the distance at which a user holds a device for optimal font sizing - it's different for phones, tablets and laptops.



Being natural experimenters, some web designers will start employing some of the design approaches outlined above out of a sense of "fun" or to make their clients feel like they have "trendy" sites. But these trends will have the most impact in the hands of a designer who has gained a keen understanding of their client's brand, model and business strategy, so that tools and tricks align with their mission and do what clients want all websites to do: engage, educate and convert.