M01 Module 1 Discussion: Atomic Design: What is it and why should we use it?

We are beginning to read Atomic Design. In no way is a comprehensive knowledge, since we are on chapter one, but what are your early reactions to his theories? Have you designed similarly or not in the past?

I completely agree with the author's stances in the first chapter of the book. He discusses different design theories and his analysis of each one. One of the first he talks about is the concept of modularity- where different components of an item work differently and do not interfere with other modules. This relates to the design of a computer my sister and I built over the summer. We purchased different parts and created the computer. Each part works independently, so if the computer isn't functioning, we just have to assess the problem and change one component rather than buy an entirely different computer. He also addresses the problems with massive redesign changes. This was something that I completely agree with his opinion on. He touches upon the failure of redesigns when things are placed completely differently and interferes with the user's adaptability and experience.

In the first chapter the author makes several points about how important it's is to not only redesign something but alter the process in which it functions as well. A simple redesign of something does not fix any and all issues it once had, in fact it could just pile new ones on. I agree that a "shiny redesign" is not always the answer. However I don't necessarily agree or disagree with his point on modularity. I believe that a systems components are important when separated, but after they are brought together the way they work with one another is crucial. Just one piece of the puzzle could be useless without the rest. Just as discussed above, a shiny new part does not overpower the way it functions as a whole. Applying this theory to my work I would say when I'm creating a piece I do pay close attention to all the components; size, legibility, color, font, etc. but the final composition in my opinion, is by far the most important because it is the outcome.

After chapter one, reading his theories about web design he mentions an important concept known as modularity. Modularity design is when you design a system and then it can be broken down into other groups such as its features and you only have to change one part instead of the system as a whole so it is easier to understand that part. In the past I have built my own website and remember it is important to break it down because some designs will not work whether it was the size of image or if the font was too big or having interactive components etc. and trying it to be functional on all devices. As he said it is important to pay attention to the strategy, development, content and design when designing. Whether it is is in web design but all design. He also mentioned the importance of   "design atmosphere" and how plays a big role in web design. I believe this is true It gives the user and overall mood or visual identity when viewing a website and that is one of the keys to web design. In which I try to bring into my own designs.

After reading the first chapter, the author explains how web design is accomplished by using the basic elements of chemistry. He talks about atoms, molecules, organisms, templates, and pages. Different chemical theories represent various design theories and are well explained. I didn't participate in or do this kind of design myself, because some of the design materials are already in my mind. I don't need to search too much for new design materials, ideas, and styles. But I couldn't completely disconnect from looking for new design material. I quite agree with the author that the advantages derived from design, atomic design can be quickly converted in different situations. Through reading this article, I learned about the "design atmosphere" described by the author. The feeling and atmosphere provided by the web itself is crucial when consumers are browsing different web pages. The website itself attracts consumers, and the products sold on this website will make more people enjoy and pay attention.

When I finished the first chapter, I had a deeper understanding of modular design. Modular design is a crucial product thinking. It is to decompose the design into small modules, then design it independently, and finally combine them into a more extensive system, just like the building blocks played by children. It is composed of some simple parts into small modules and then incorporated into various model styles. Similarly, in experience design, designers can also regard words, colors, icons, pictures and so on as one element, and then these elements can be combined into a small module. Finally, these modules are combined to form various interface styles. It's the first time I knew it. In the future design, I will pay more attention to this aspect.

In chapter one, the author mentions his many theories on web design. Modularity is one of the more important concepts for the author and it is the term that comes up the most. Although I am familiar with the term, I never thought about it in terms of design. He explains that modulation in design is to break it into many different parts. While I think this is a good idea to pursue , it is important to be careful to make sure everything is consistent. The author also brings up the fact that websites are no longer designed for computer screens only. He says that this brings out many problems and modularity is a helpful tool with this. I can relate to this as I have encountered this problem myself when my designs looked inconsistent on different digital devices. In the voice and tone section, the author brings up how everyone in the web world wants things the same way, but this is simply not how humans work. He mentions how these diverse needs and goals of web projects lead to different solutions, yet designers need to know which tools to use. Overall this chapter gave me an introduction to many web design theories that I was not familiar with.

After I read Chapter 1, "Change is the only thing won't change" come to my mind. So he is right, in order to change my work a little bit once a time (like Apple improves iOS), I better divide my work into several parts to make the audience better receive. I never do design like this, all my work is "one time work", and sometimes I merge all the layers to one for don't know what

reason...So it is really hard for me if I want to renew my work. I better realise this problem and change from now on.

There's one particular topic that the author discusses in chapter 1 that really caught my attention. Before Frost introduces style guides and how they are a key component of a design system, he touches upon the concept of mock-up designs for websites and/or apps. Frost says that creating full-on comps of page mock-ups isn't realistic because all it provides is a pretty picture, or as he puts it, a 'design atmosphere'. The best way to create page mock-ups is by developing what is called 'style tiles', a single page that shows or summarizes what the type, color, and texture would be. I really enjoyed this concept of style tiles because it makes it easier for designers to create a 'design atmosphere' that's more realistic and better approaches the exploration of an overall design direction. I have designed web page mock-ups for a project in one of my previous design classes and I was very focused on making it look pretty, which did take a lot of effort and time, and now I do see how designing like that presents a very unrealistic picture. I agree that it is important to keep in mind the functionality and overall design direction over the pretty designs because in the end that is what will continue to drive the project.

After having read chapter one of Atomic Design, I started to really realize how important functionality can be, well, modularity as Frost describes it. It's not enough to have something simply look nice, especially in the aspect of refreshing what already exists. The ability to adapt and make more functional is important in a changing world, and especially to adapt existing products to a changing landscape of new technology, designing or redesigning the look alone won't do. Being someone who's unfortunately been majorly focused on the aesthetics of things this is very eye opening to me, and Frost's reference to the modernization of automobile production, especially Ford's assembly line helped this become more clear. It's important to create something aesthetically pleasing and functional, but when refining an existing product, sometimes a simple enhancement of function can make more of a difference.

In chapter one, the author mentions his many theories on web design. Modularity is one of the more important concepts for the author and it is the term that comes up the most. To be honest this is my first time reading this, I never knew much about Modularity. I Remember when i made my first website, I had a lot of issues with keeping images clear but always kept getting buggy. After looking deeper in the code i was able to fix it. The author also mentions the importance of "design atmosphere" and how plays a big role in web design. I think this means to make a user feel focus and feel around the design to make sure its perfect to their own ideal vision. This is what i kind of do when i try to make my designs perfect or complete from my own point of view.

His theories in chapter one resonate a lot with my own process of designing. I have learned in order to come out with the best result, I need to break down the process rather than come up with something right off the bat. This is what the author of Atomic Design talks about throughout chapter one. He speaks on the Modularity Process, where you break down your task into smaller steps/components, which end up saving designers a lot of time, and also gives clients a better view of any issues that may be at hand or anything they may want to include/improve on. When starting right off the bat, designers and clients alike may not see any issues as they may get too focused on a beautiful design rather than functionality. It also keeps things organized which is good in any type of work process. He also mentioned style tiles/element collages, which I know to be called Mood Boards. Those have been proven to be incredibly helpful with the design process and help me to feel less lost throughout my work.

"Ultimately, a project's level of effort is much better determined by the functionality and [components (Link will open in new tab.) (Links to an external site.)](#) contained within those pages, rather than on the quantity of pages themselves."

A few semesters ago, I worked in a group project to redesign MTA's metro card machine. The statement above reminds me of the professor informing us not to think too much into the number of pages but rather to focus on creating an easier and faster interface. It was from this project I learned the

importance of modularity. I went to the station to figure out the workflow and structure of the machine by recording myself go through each section and taking notes. This helped the group break down every component and built a new system with slight changes.

The manageable strategy mentioned is something I've noticed around me. I've been around a few people of different ages who aren't always pleased with certain changes on their apps. Some feel there are too many changes in their devices that are sometimes overwhelming or causes their apps to crash frequently.

I feel some companies who make these drastic changes think that creating an entirely new interface is the best solution when in reality, listening to users minor complaints solves more than they may imagine.

 "The cornerstones of good design systems are *style guides*, which document and organize design materials while providing guidelines, usage, and guardrails." This section in chapter one stood out to me because through out last semester I spent a lot of time creating a style guide to help as a foundation for designing a business card for a beauty salon. Also ' Brand Identity' guidelines is something that would make a company or business unique. It all depends on the color theme, logos, or typography that is established in order to distinguish the company.

Its seems like Atomic Design is a formula for a designer to bang out fresher designs that stay relevant, easy to use, and quick to make. This keeps the user happy so they aren't having to learn a whole new layout everytime a website is updated and makes the designer happy because it's faster and easier to put together. So far I'm following the process and see how it's as innovative as Ford's model for the Assembly Line. I can't say I've done anything like this in the past, but I have seen the changes made to reflect this in websites like twitter for example.