Aesthetic Analysis

I picked Yelp and Instacart because our final deliverable (whatever it ends up being) will likely have to balance between an information-heavy mapping tool and an aesthetic with a positive, lightweight, and healthy flavor.
Yelp

With a large amount of text-heavy data to convey to users. Yelp certainly favors usability over aesthetics. In particular, they seem to rely on a consistent layout to help users establish expectations on where to find certain information. For example, users can always expect to find the location information on the upper left of the business page and business hours in the right sidebar. This consistent layout exemplifies a way to use design to help users get to the information they want faster.

Overall I wouldn’t immediately say Yelp takes many design liberties for aesthetic reasons. They offer a fairly straightforward interface, like the IBM of websites. Perhaps the only thing I might point out is there intentional management of photos. They intentionally place the photos at the top of the page to make the page more visual, and in their “Yelp Sort” ratings, they seem to favor posting the reviews that also include pictures.

Yelp’s consistent layout and ease of usability are what make it so successful. I would not call the appearance beautiful on an aesthetic level, but its usability makes it a thing of beauty.
Analysis 1
Examples

01 - Label
The search interface most people get to quickly upon visiting the site.

02 - Label
The profile page for individual businesses with the information sorted into a standard layout with pictures at the top, reviews to the left, and extra information to the right.

03 - Label
The picture gallery that many users visit in order to get an impression of the business based on visual cues.
Objectives

Yelp

To offer a large amount of information to users without overwhelming them

To offer consistency of design so that users can navigate to their desired information quickly

To encourage users to explore and quickly browse between different businesses
Yelp

Yelp most likely has a very large and diverse user base. It’s such a popular website that even individuals who don’t use the Internet much have probably at least heard of the site. That being said, its largest user group is probably young (20s/30s), tech-savvy, and social individuals who frequently use the site to look up business information (e.g., business hours), browse through options they are already familiar with, and discover new businesses.

Although Yelp offers a wide array of business types to explore, I would imagine the bars and restaurants are the ones searched most frequently since socialites visit these frequently (more than plumbers for example). Thus, I would imagine Yelp is referenced most frequently at night and perhaps on mobile devices.

Yelp allows users to explore options through crowdsourced knowledge. Rather than asking their friends or neighbors, users can find a wide array of options on their own. On the one hand, this enhanced browsing ability gives users the benefit of more choice, but on the other hand, it can overwhelm users and lead them to wasting time debating between the numerous options.
Analysis 1
Color Palette

Yelp

Labels

The white and red of Yelp stand out the most, while the orange and blue offer highlights. Overall, the palette is fairly simple, basic colors.
Yelp

I think Yelp intentionally stuck with basic colors everyone is familiar with to give the interface that sense of uniformity and commonality. The primary colors also somewhat bring out the playful childish feeling the site aims for. This color palette overall seems both aesthetic in that it aims to create that playfulness and functional in that the colors are easy for users to process.

The color choice is a bit more functional though when they use some of the less common colors, like orange and blue, to highlight certain parts of the text, making it easier to skim the text. Overall, the colors fit well with both the straightforward and exploratory brand.
Typography

Yelp

Type Inventory:

Swiss 721

I only can spot one fairly consistent font type – Swiss 721. There seems to be something like 8+ different font sizes indicating things like:

- headlines
- location information
- detail information
- buttons
- sidenotes
- highlighted reviews
- regular reviews
- user minor details

Overall, the type and variations seem quite consistent across the UI.
I imagine the designer chose this typeface because it is incredibly easy to read. With such a large of information for users to read, they presumably wanted to make the text easy to easily skim. The Swiss 721 definitely is easy to read so the designers succeeded at meeting their functional goal.

That being said, there’s something a bit childish about how round the typeface is. It makes the site look like it was made with a cliché template website builder. The shadows in the box also perpetuate that association. I would aim to find a slightly more brusque, but still readable font if I were them.
Yelp

Analysis

Assets

Best of Yelp: Berkeley

Restaurants
10,202 reviewed

Food
7,015 reviewed

Nightlife
2,497 reviewed

Shopping
11,282 reviewed

Bars
1,538 reviewed

American (New)
806 reviewed

Breakfast & Brunch
513 reviewed

Coffee & Tea
1,612 reviewed

Beauty & Spas
6,138 reviewed

Health & Medical
8,190 reviewed

Home Services
6,632 reviewed

Automotive
3,177 reviewed

Local Services
4,852 reviewed

More Categories

Yelp is totally portable.
It's like carrying around your phonebook in your hand. No login required. Download now.

Enter your number and we'll set you up.
Standard messaging rates apply.

+1 (212) 456-7890

Search reviews

Recommended Reviews

Richard N.
Oakland, CA
9 friends
131 reviews

Your trust is our top concern, so businesses can't pay to alter or remove their reviews. Learn more.

10/5/2014

Not only does this place have a perfect ambiance, you can slip on a perfectly brewed beer and hold a conversation with your friends but you can also enjoy the infectious music that is playing. This is the concept of the "best lounge".

The in house amber and saison were smooth and refreshing, I think that the owner is the brewer an easily be seen and tasted that he has a masterful touch. They also have guest beers on tap and a selection of local brews and wine.

But what a spot, easily one of my favorite bars in the area.

You hip hop? You like beer? You want to hang with a cool unpretentious crowd that just gets it. WOOF your spot hand down, ill see you there.

Was this review...?
Analysis 1
Imagery

Yelp
Yelp

I never noticed until now how colorful the icons and images of Yelp were. I suppose with such a text-heavy interface that this was there one opportunity to play with a bit more creativity.

Some of the images seem fairly functional. For example, the share, friend, like, and compliment images are fairly comparable to other sites’ and they use a uniform color. This is probably intentionally designed so users immediately understand the function of the image.

Other images, however, seem a bit more playful and aesthetically based. For example, there was no need to include a truck next to the delivery information, but that small addition gives the site a childlike sense of fun and play.
Instacart

Overall, Instacart does a great job of balancing usability and aesthetics. I find the aesthetics very appealing and befitting to the business. I also find the usability quite intuitive. Perhaps I’m biased though as a new user and haven’t fully tested out the intricacies of the usability.

It’s interesting for me to note that the design feels quite light and spacious, yet I don’t feel like there’s information missing. I will say though that in the lightbox for specific items, the “Details” text is so spacious that it’s a bit hard to read and requires unnecessary scrolling.

The site strikes me as a success due to the beautiful aesthetics but could perhaps use a few usability fixes here and there.
Analysis 2

Examples

01 - Label

Once first time users have created an account and selected a store this is the central store page they are taken to.

02 - Label

Upon selecting a category of items, users get an array of items and can filter based on characteristics and brands.

03 - Label

When a user selects one specific product, a lightbox appears with more information on the product and a button to select the item.
Objectives

Instacart

To make the shopping process simple and stress-free

To allow users to receive groceries at a time convenient for them

To allow users to quickly find the items they desire
Instacart

The Instacart users are probably tech-savvy early adopters who don’t mind trying a new service. They probably are quite busy, hard-working people who value efficiency and completion. They use Instacart to eliminate a necessary to-do from their long list of tasks.

Instacart would allow users to have more time on their hands and potentially allow them to eat healthy, homecooked meal over takeout more often. However, it also likely removes from their lives a social, communal activity that potentially connects them to their local community.

I’d guess most users log in and shop while they are at work and schedule the deliveries to arrive for later in the night when they are home and ready to cook.
Analysis 2

Color Palette

Instacart

01 – Label
R – 194
G – 193
B – 188

02 – Label
R – 252
G – 252
B – 252

03 – Label
R – 96
G – 171
B – 89

04 – Label
R – 247
G – 155
B – 64

Labels

The predominant colors of the interface are white, gray, and green. But there’s an occasional splash of orange or red.
Instacart

These color choices seem both aesthetic and functional minded. They seem aesthetic because the simplicity of the white, gray, and green create a natural clean aesthetic. This clean aesthetic in turn proves functional by implying to customers how simple, clear, and easy it is to shop online.

Overall I found the color palette calming and fitting for the brand. Sometimes the interface seems a bit too simplistic given how rich, beautiful, and colorful groceries and food can be. But some groceries are more naturally beautiful than others, so it’s smart not to simply let the groceries be showcased as the primary visual content.
There seem to be at least 4 different fonts:

Fedra Sans Book
Corporate S Demi
Endurance Pro Cond Light
FF Meta Pro Hair

At least 6 different font sizes:

Location tag
Location smaller details
Category header
Product name and price
Store heading
Header buttons

Again, fairly consistent UI except for the change in font types.
I never would have guessed there were so many different typefaces in the site. That makes me think that the designers did a great job of picking different typefaces suitable for the kind of information but consistent enough that the change is not overtly noticeable.

I imagine they decided to change the typeface to suit the kind of information. For example, the store title typeface looks heavier, like a road sign, while the product details are very light. The typeface selection seems well done and I’d like to try changing fonts subtly on my next interface.
Instacart

Analysis 2

Assets

Popular Lists & Recipes

Casa Sanchez Thick & Crispy Tortilla Chips

$4.19

ADD

Lemon Mint Chia Refreshes

Roasted Beet Hummus

Overnight Slow Cooker Apple Pie Steel Cut Oatmeal

Bacon Wrapped Chicken Breasts with Strawberry Butter BBQ Sauce

1. Berkeley Bowl

$3.89

Next Delivery: Today, Feb 28, Noon - 1 PM

Sort By

Popularity Price

Search Berkeley Bowl...
Looking at the assets and imagery, I can see where my impression of lightweightness and cleanness came from. Everything is surrounded in large amounts of white. All of the lines are thin. This is particularly apparent in the icons, which use a lot of white space. This imagery seems to be aesthetically-motivated to create a light design.