
FIGMA SITES AS A RESPONSIVE WEB DESIGN SOLUTION: AN ANALYSIS OF PRODUCTIVITY AND VISUAL CONSISTENCY IN DIGITAL DESIGN PRACTICE

Nur Muthia Rahma

Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia

E-mail: nurmuthia271@gmail.com

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Abstract: *In the increasingly dynamic digital era, the need for responsive, efficient, and consistent web design has become crucial. Figma Sites, the latest feature of the Figma platform, offers a visual-first approach that integrates the design, prototyping, and publishing processes within a single, cloud-based collaborative ecosystem. This study aims to analyze Figma Sites' contribution to increasing designer productivity and maintaining visual consistency in digital interface development. Using a qualitative approach based on literature, data was reviewed from scientific articles, professional publications, and documentation of UI/UX design industry practices. The analysis results show that Figma Sites can reduce design iteration time, strengthen cross-functional coordination, and maintain uniformity of visual elements through the use of integrated design components and design systems. This study concludes that Figma Sites not only technically addresses modern design challenges but also offers an efficient collaborative work model in the context of digital transformation.*

INTRODUCTION

Responsive web design has become a necessity in the era of digital transformation, along with the increasing use of mobile devices for internet access. According to a report by We Are Social (2023), more than 55% of global internet users access websites via mobile devices, making display flexibility a pressing need in interface design. In this context, the role of an adaptable design platform that supports cross-functional collaboration is crucial. Figma, a cloud-based UI/UX design platform, introduced a new feature called Figma Sites. This feature allows users to design, visualize, and publish websites directly within a single design environment, without switching to another platform or relying on complex coding processes (Figma Inc., 2023). This innovation shortens the workflow between the design and publication stages and enables real-time

collaboration between team members.

The component-based approach in Figma Sites supports the use of a design system, which helps maintain visual consistency and user experience. A study by Gordon and Biddle (2019) showed that implementing a design system can improve display uniformity and work time efficiency. It is in this context that this study focuses on the role of Figma Sites in increasing designer productivity and ensuring visual consistency in responsive web design. Despite the continued advancement of digital design technology, many design teams still face the classic challenge of a gap between the design and implementation stages. Traditional work practices often involve lengthy handoffs between designers and developers, leading to miscommunication and discrepancies between the final product and the initial design (Kumar & Raj, 2020). Furthermore, the use of multiple, non-integrated tools prolongs development time and increases the risk of visual inconsistencies between web pages.

A McKinsey study (2018) highlighted that companies that integrate design comprehensively into their business processes tend to experience faster growth. However, the implementation of integrated design is often hampered by the limitations of design platforms that do not support efficient cross-team collaboration. Therefore, an academic study is needed that examines the role of design platforms like Figma Sites in addressing this issue. Based on the background and problems outlined, this study poses two main questions:

1. How does the use of Figma Sites affect designer productivity in the responsive web design process, based on a literature review?
2. How does Figma Sites contribute to maintaining visual consistency in digital design practices according to available literature?

Based on these questions, the main objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the impact of using Figma Sites on design workflow efficiency based on a literature review.
2. To examine the contribution of visual features in Figma Sites to the consistency of appearance and quality of web interfaces, based on evidence from academic and professional literature.

This research is significant academically and practically. Academically, this study adds to the literature in the field of UI/UX design, particularly those discussing the integration of visual technology in the digital design process. This research also bridges the theory of system design and responsive design with the practice of using current design tools. The results of this study can serve as a reference for designers, digital product teams, and educational institutions in understanding and implementing a visual-first design approach. This study also provides insights for design software developers in evaluating the effectiveness of the features they develop. As mentioned by Lee (2021), understanding end-user needs is a crucial factor in developing cloud-based design

platforms. Thus, this study not only expands scientific research in the field of digital design but also provides a tangible contribution to professional practice, which is undergoing transformation due to advances in design technology.

LITERATUR REVIEW

The literature review in this study was conducted using a systematic approach to various secondary sources relevant to the theme of responsive web design and visual-based design technology. The literature selection process focused on academic works, professional reports, industry case studies, and technical documentation published between 2018 and 2024. Using an integrative literature review approach, the reviewed literature serves not only as a reference but also as an object of analysis to uncover trends, gaps, and potential for further development in the field of visual-tool-based digital design. This research is based on responsive design theory and design productivity theory in a digital context. Responsive design, as explained by Marcotte (2011), is a web development approach that ensures optimal interface appearance and functionality across devices with varying screen sizes. This principle is supported by flexible grid structures, media queries, and percentage-based layouts.

Design system theory serves as another framework underlying the analysis of visual consistency. According to Frost (2016), a design system is a set of rules, principles, and UI components used to maintain design consistency across digital products. The implementation of design systems has been shown to improve design efficiency and coherence in large, interdisciplinary teams (Gordon & Biddle, 2019). Design workflow theory plays a crucial role in productivity. Norman and Nielsen (2020) emphasize that digital design tools that support real-time collaboration, parallel editing, and visual communication can increase productivity and reduce unnecessary iterations. Figma, as a cloud-based design platform, combines these elements into a unified ecosystem. Cross-functional collaboration theory highlights the importance of synchronization between designers and developers in the digital product creation process (Brown et al., 2020).

Figma Sites can be positioned as a solution that unifies design and presentation workspaces, thereby reducing communication barriers often encountered in traditional handoff processes. By combining responsive design theory, systems design, design workflows, and cross-functional collaboration, this theoretical framework forms a strong conceptual foundation for examining how Figma Sites can improve efficiency and quality in contemporary digital design practice.

As the need for adaptive and efficient digital interfaces grows, a growing body of literature has examined the role of cloud-based design tools in enhancing collaboration and productivity. A study by Zhang and Zhao (2020) emphasized that transitioning from traditional design tools to collaborative platforms like Figma not only accelerates design iteration cycles but also reduces the risk of miscommunication between functions. In practice, Figma allows designers, developers, and other stakeholders to work simultaneously on a single document, promoting transparency and work efficiency

(Figma Inc., 2023)

Figma Sites is an extension of this concept, bringing visual design functionality directly into the site creation process without the need to export to another platform. An internal Figma study noted that integrating site design and publishing within a single platform can reduce launch time by up to 30% (Figma Inc., 2023). However, there is little academic research specifically evaluating this feature. An article by Lee (2021) attempts to review the concept of visual-first design and emphasizes the importance of a direct connection between UI design and the final site outcome. However, Lee also notes that functional limitations in coding and accessibility could be barriers to the widespread adoption of visual platforms like Figma Sites.

Visual consistency in UI design is also a key topic in the literature. Frost (2016), in his Atomic Design concept, emphasized that a component-based approach not only speeds up page creation but also maintains visual uniformity. This is reinforced by Gordon and Biddle (2019), who, in a design system case study, demonstrated that design platforms with the ability to create reusable components significantly reduced visual errors and improved interface quality. In the context of Figma Sites, features like auto-layout, components, and design tokens enable the systematic implementation of these principles.

Several other studies also provide critical insights into the adoption of all-in-one design tools. For example, Brown et al. (2020) state that while integrating design and development within a single tool promises efficiency, concerns arise regarding limited technical control and flexibility in customization. This highlights the importance of balancing visual efficiency with the complexity of back-end development. In terms of collaboration, various literature agrees that cloud-based platforms like Figma support better cross-functional work dynamics. Norman and Nielsen (2020) note that real-time collaboration can reduce bottlenecks in the design-prototyping-testing process. However, they also caution that over-reliance on synchronous collaboration can create distraction and information overload if not accompanied by effective communication management.

In general, the available literature supports the premise that tools like Figma Sites contribute to increased productivity and visual consistency. However, most of these studies are still in the early stages of exploration, with evidence predominantly coming from industry reports or limited case studies. Therefore, this literature-based research is important to broaden understanding of the effectiveness of Figma Sites by compiling and synthesizing existing data.

Based on the previous literature review, the conceptual framework in this study is constructed by referring to the relationship between Figma Sites features and two main variables: design productivity and visual consistency. This framework combines several key theories, including responsive design theory (Marcotte, 2011), design systems (Frost, 2016), and cross-functional collaboration theory (Brown et al., 2020). Design productivity in this context is defined as time efficiency and output quality in the digital interface design process. Meanwhile, visual consistency refers to the conformity of appearance

between pages, the use of uniform elements, and regularity in the interface structure. Figma Sites features such as auto-layout, components, and live preview capabilities are assumed to simultaneously strengthen both aspects. Thus, this framework illustrates a causal relationship: the use of Figma Sites affects work efficiency and contributes to design consistency. This framework serves as the basis for theoretical exploration in subsequent chapters and serves as a tool for organizing understanding of the literature in answering the research questions.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach with a literature review method, aiming to synthesize knowledge from various academic and professional sources regarding the use of Figma Sites in responsive web design practices. This approach is exploratory and interpretive, in line with the constructivist paradigm, which recognizes that knowledge is constructed through the interaction between the researcher and the data being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of digital design phenomena through a diverse literature review. This study focused not on quantification or hypothesis testing, but rather on extracting meaning, mapping concepts, and identifying emerging patterns from scientific texts and professional reports. This method was deemed appropriate for answering the conceptual and descriptive research questions regarding the impact of Figma Sites use on visual design productivity and consistency.

This research design adopted an integrative literature review, a type of literature review that not only collects and summarizes information but also organizes, compares, and synthesizes findings from various sources to generate new insights (Torraco, 2005). The primary objective of this design is to develop a comprehensive conceptual narrative regarding the effectiveness of Figma Sites in supporting responsive web design. By using this design, the research is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the development of knowledge in the field of digital design.

The data in this study comes entirely from secondary sources, primarily literature relevant to the topics of responsive web design, productivity in UI/UX design, and visual-first technologies like Figma Sites. A literature search was conducted using keywords such as "Figma Sites," "responsive web design," "design systems," "visual-first tools," and "UI/UX productivity." The search process was complemented by a snowballing technique, which involves identifying references from primary articles to find additional relevant secondary sources. Inclusion criteria included literature published within the last five years (2018–2024), relevant to the research question, and open access. Sources containing personal opinions without a clear empirical basis or not having undergone peer-review were excluded from the analysis.

The analysis in this study was conducted using a thematic analysis approach, a method used to identify, organize, and interpret important patterns or themes within a set of text data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the context of this literature study, key themes

were determined based on their frequency of occurrence, relevance to the research question, and logical relationships between concepts found in the sources studied. The analysis process was carried out in several stages. First, relevant literature was read thoroughly to understand its content and context. Second, an open coding process was conducted to identify key terms or phrases related to productivity and visual consistency in design. Third, the coding results were organized into thematic categories such as "cross-functional collaboration," "use of design components," and "design-publication integration."

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Literature analysis found that Figma Sites plays a significant role in accelerating the responsive web design process and maintaining visual consistency across interface elements. This is because Figma Sites unifies the design, prototyping, and publishing processes within a single, cloud-based collaborative environment, eliminating the need for platform switching or manual handoffs between designers and developers (Figma Inc., 2023). The literature shows that using features such as component-based design, auto-layout, and real-time collaboration can reduce design iteration time by up to 30% and reduce visual design error rates by 40% compared to traditional approaches (Zhang & Zhao, 2020; Gordon & Biddle, 2019). Furthermore, direct integration with site hosting allows for direct presentation of designs to clients or stakeholders, improving cross-team communication efficiency (Lee, 2021).

Design productivity is a crucial aspect of modern web development. In this context, Figma Sites significantly contributes to design workflow efficiency. As explained by Zhang and Zhao (2020), using a design tool that combines wireframing, prototyping, and visual publishing features in a single platform can reduce design cycle time by 25–30%. Figma Sites, as part of the Figma ecosystem, simplifies the design phase by integrating all these processes without having to switch tools. Figma's real-time collaboration feature allows multiple team members to work simultaneously on a single design file. According to research by Norman and Nielsen (2020), this reduces communication bottlenecks, accelerates design validation, and increases transparency. A study by McKinsey (2018) also confirmed that companies with strong design coordination experience higher growth in digital team productivity.

Furthermore, Figma Sites allows users to directly publish sites as final visuals, eliminating the need for prior file conversion to HTML/CSS. This supports a visual-first work model, where visual design is the primary foundation for digital product development. This efficiency not only increases product launch speed but also reduces operational costs associated with design iterations (Figma Inc., 2023). Thus, Figma Sites directly addresses the needs of modern design teams for fast, integrated, and collaboration-oriented tools. This efficiency makes Figma Sites a relevant solution in

today's fast-paced and competitive digital design environment.

Visual consistency is a key element in creating an intuitive and professional user experience. Figma Sites supports design consistency through the use of reusable UI components and design system integration. Frost (2016), in his theory of Atomic Design, states that visual consistency can only be achieved if a design is built from the smallest, uniform, and systemically interconnected units. Figma deeply embraces this principle in its Sites feature. Through a globally stored component structure, changes to one element can be automatically applied to all pages of a site that use that component. Gordon and Biddle (2019) note that this practice can reduce visual inconsistencies by up to 40% in large design projects involving multiple contributors.

Furthermore, Figma's auto-layout and style tokens support consistent grids, colors, and typography across the entire site's layout. A study by the Nielsen Norman Group (2020) showed that the use of a comprehensive design system directly increases user satisfaction and reduces the cognitive load of navigating digital interfaces. Figma Sites also facilitates live site previews, allowing designers to see in real time whether the overall appearance adheres to uniform and user-friendly design principles. This reduces the need for repeated visual testing and speeds up the internal design validation process. With all these features, Figma Sites provides a solid foundation for design teams to maintain visual quality and cohesion across pages, making it a superior tool for supporting consistent UI/UX design.

One of Figma Sites' key advantages is its ability to integrate the design process with publishing, enabling instant presentation of final designs to clients, developers, or stakeholders. This integration is key to facilitating cross-functional collaboration, a common challenge in the digital design process. According to Brown et al. (2020), effective collaboration between designers, developers, and product managers requires

Discussion

The literature review findings indicate that Figma Sites plays a transformative role in modern web design workflows, particularly in enhancing design efficiency, cross-functional collaboration, and visual consistency. These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing the integration of design and development environments as a critical factor in reducing communication barriers and iteration costs

Design Efficiency and Workflow Optimization

The integration of wireframing, prototyping, and publishing within Figma Sites addresses a long-standing fragmentation problem in traditional design workflows. Designers no longer need to switch between multiple tools, reducing time loss and human error during handoffs. This supports Zhang and Zhao's (2020) assertion that unified design platforms can reduce design cycle times by 25–30%. The reduction in visual design error rates, as mentioned by Gordon and Biddle (2019), also highlights the significance of automation features such as component-based systems and auto-layout in maintaining

consistency and reducing redundant tasks.

Moreover, the cloud-based collaboration inherent in Figma Sites enables real-time co-editing, aligning with McKinsey's (2018) finding that higher digital coordination correlates with improved design productivity. In the context of agile web development, this accelerates iteration speed and promotes design validation at earlier stages, thus shortening the overall product delivery timeline.

Enhancing Collaboration and Communication

Figma Sites' collaborative nature directly addresses one of the most common issues in digital design — communication gaps between designers, developers, and clients. By integrating live preview and instant publishing features, Figma Sites allows all stakeholders to access and review current design states without the need for external documentation or manual exports. This finding supports Brown et al. (2020), who emphasize that effective design outcomes depend on transparent communication channels and shared visual understanding across roles.

The ability to publish live site prototypes also enhances stakeholder engagement during review sessions, reducing ambiguity in design intent. Consequently, project teams can achieve consensus faster and minimize the feedback cycle. This integration aligns with broader trends in designOps and continuous design delivery, where design is treated as an iterative and collaborative process integrated with development pipelines.

Maintaining Visual Consistency

Visual consistency remains a cornerstone of user experience quality. Figma Sites' implementation of component-based design and global style tokens aligns with Frost's (2016) *Atomic Design* principles. The system ensures that updates to a single UI element propagate throughout the project, minimizing inconsistencies that often arise in large, multi-designer projects. The 40% reduction in visual inconsistency rates observed by Gordon and Biddle (2019) underscores how design system centralization contributes to coherent user interfaces.

Additionally, the built-in auto-layout and design token mechanisms simplify adherence to uniform grids, typography, and color systems across pages. This supports the Nielsen Norman Group's (2020) argument that structured and consistent design systems enhance usability and reduce user cognitive load. As such, Figma Sites not only improves the efficiency of the design process but also elevates the end-user experience quality, a vital consideration in web design and development.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Figma Sites plays a crucial role in enhancing responsive

web design through two main contributions: improving design productivity and ensuring visual consistency. Integrated features such as real-time collaboration, auto-layout, and reusable components significantly streamline workflows and minimize design inconsistencies. By unifying design, collaboration, and publishing within a single platform, Figma Sites enables a seamless and efficient process that supports visual-first development and strengthens cross-functional collaboration.

The findings highlight practical implications for professionals, developers, and educators. Practitioners can adopt Figma Sites to simplify workflows and enhance teamwork efficiency, while software developers should emphasize integrated and collaborative design systems. Educational institutions can also update their UI/UX curricula to reflect these collaborative, visually driven practices.

Future research should include empirical or comparative studies to measure Figma Sites' real-world effectiveness and its advantages over other platforms like Webflow or Framer. Overall, Figma Sites represents a paradigm shift in digital design—moving from fragmented tools to a unified, collaborative ecosystem that redefines efficiency and consistency in modern web design.

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