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Colors |_Define the system's color palette T296995

https://phabricator.wikimedia.org/T296995

☝️ The proposal is to detach the number in the colors' name from the colors' HSL value, and instead present a more **abstract scale** (all colors are, after all, replaceable) that represents and reinforces the relationship between colors in a more intuitive way: the higher the number, the darker the color.

ℹ️ The whole process to decide the new colors nomenclatures and numerals will be explained here.

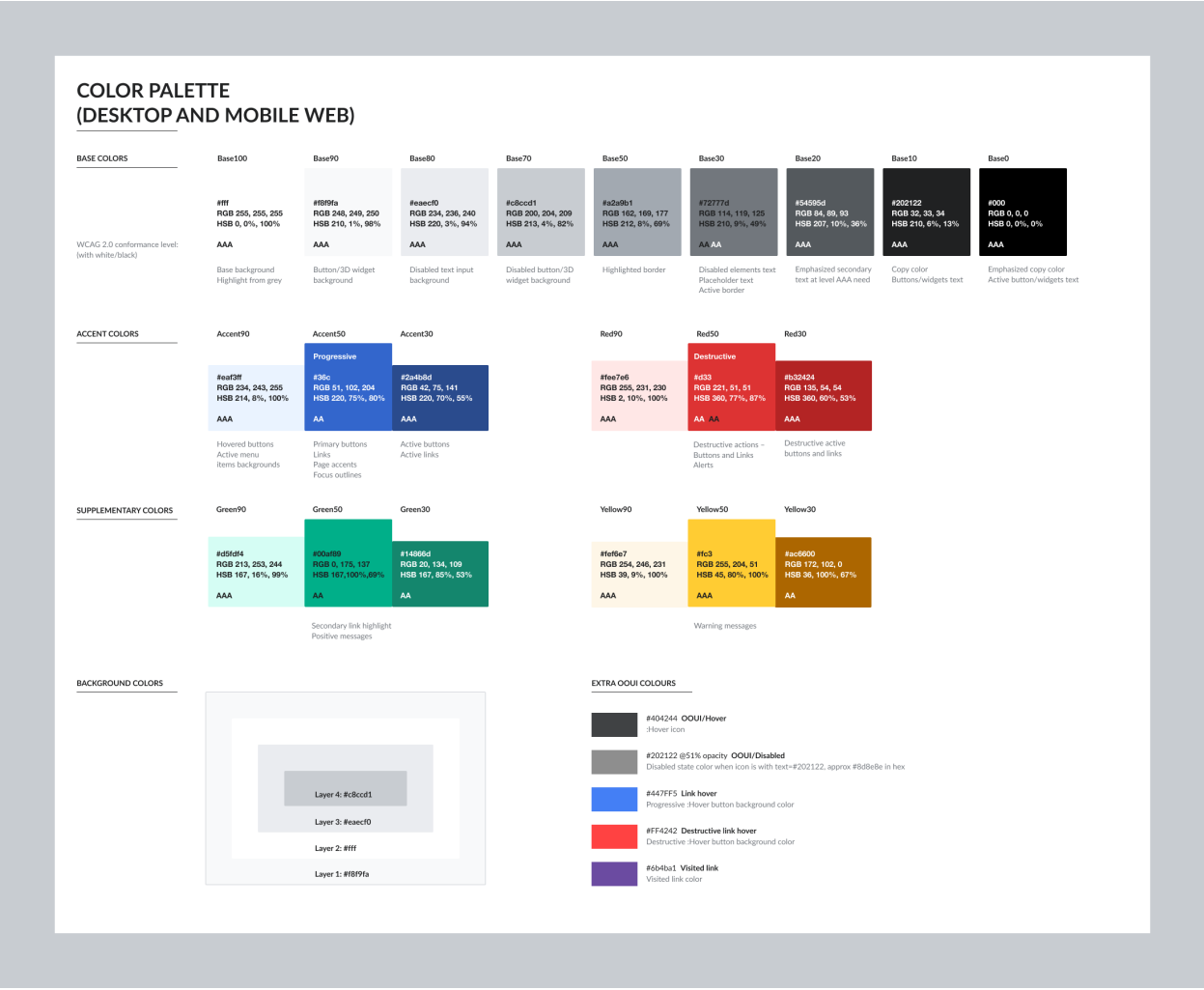
In this Figma you will find all the explorations with colors nomenclature:

https://www.figma.com/embed?embed_host=notion&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.figma.com%2Ffile%2FE6hxGwEOs9YFVF4fFRyqSv%2FColors-Tokens%3Fnode-id%3D99%253A4551

Process to decide the colors nomenclature

1. Deciding color names

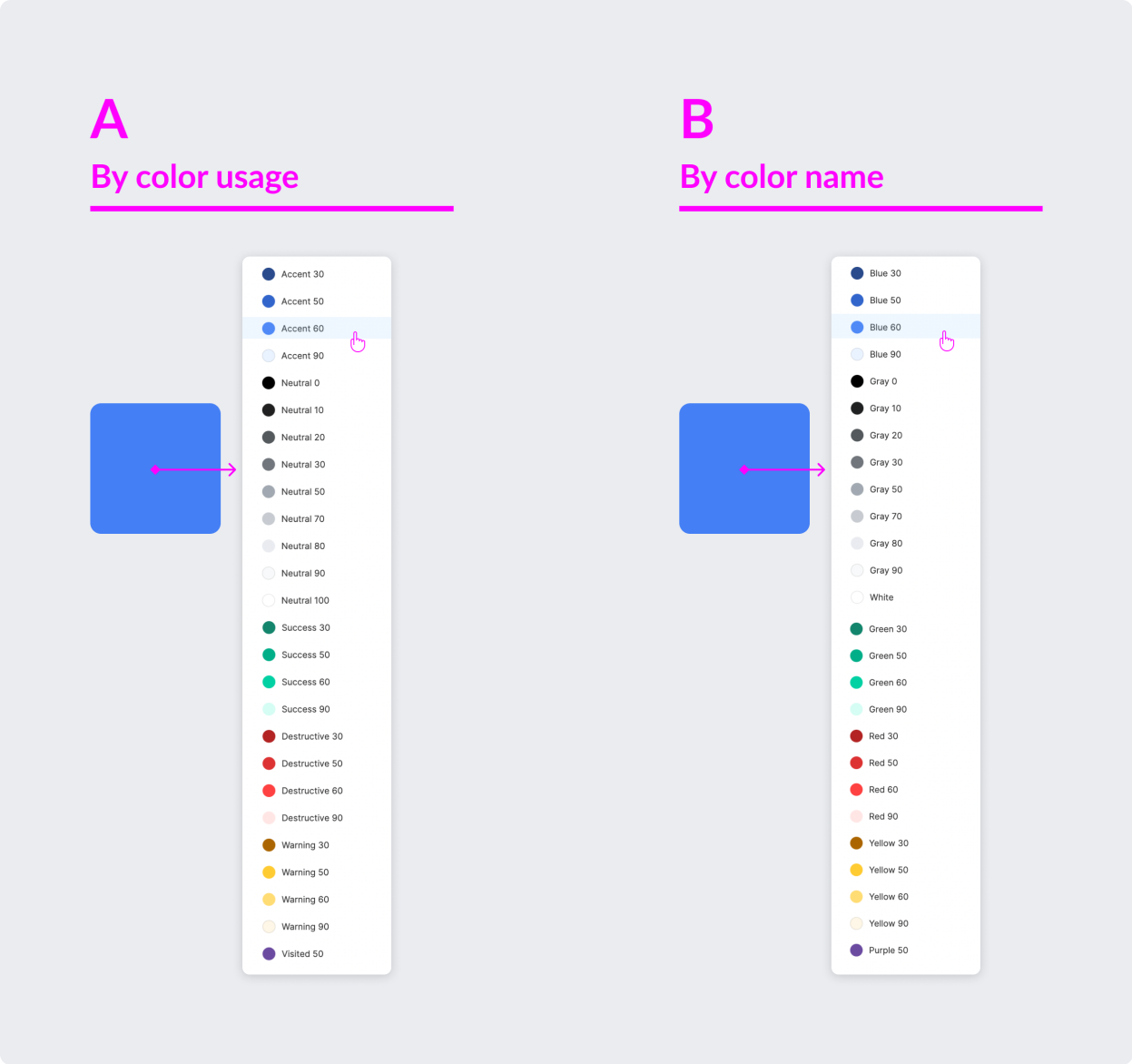
Studying our current color palette we realized that it was mixing concepts: some colors were organized by color usage names (Base, Accent) and others by simple color names (Green, Red).



It was supposed that our current numbers were defined by the lightness of the color (HSL) but

For this reason, we wanted the color palette nomenclature to have only one of these concepts applied. Therefore, I built these 2 palette proposals with each concept:

- **Option A:** color names ordered by color usage (Accent, Success, Destructive)
- **Option B:** color names ordered by simple color name (Blue, Green, Red)



During the Design Review on December 9th we presented quickly this Test A/B where the designers had to decide which of these 2 options were easier to understand for them and more coherent.

☝ All designers in the Design Review agreed that **option B is more clear** and simply to use, and they said that option A was not clear enough because, for example, “Destructive” is not only used for delete, but for error and validation messages. So we decided to move forward with Option B.

Also, during this meeting we collected the following feedbacks about the gray scale organization: separate Black and White from the gray palette as they are not gray colors.

You can view all feedbacks written in this doc and all the recording meeting here (Bárbara).

2. Deciding color numerals

As we moved forward with colors organized by simple color names (Blue, Red, Green) the second step of the process was to organize the number of the projects.

Currently, our color palette numerals was organized with the lightest color the highest number, because this number pointed the brightness value (HSL model).

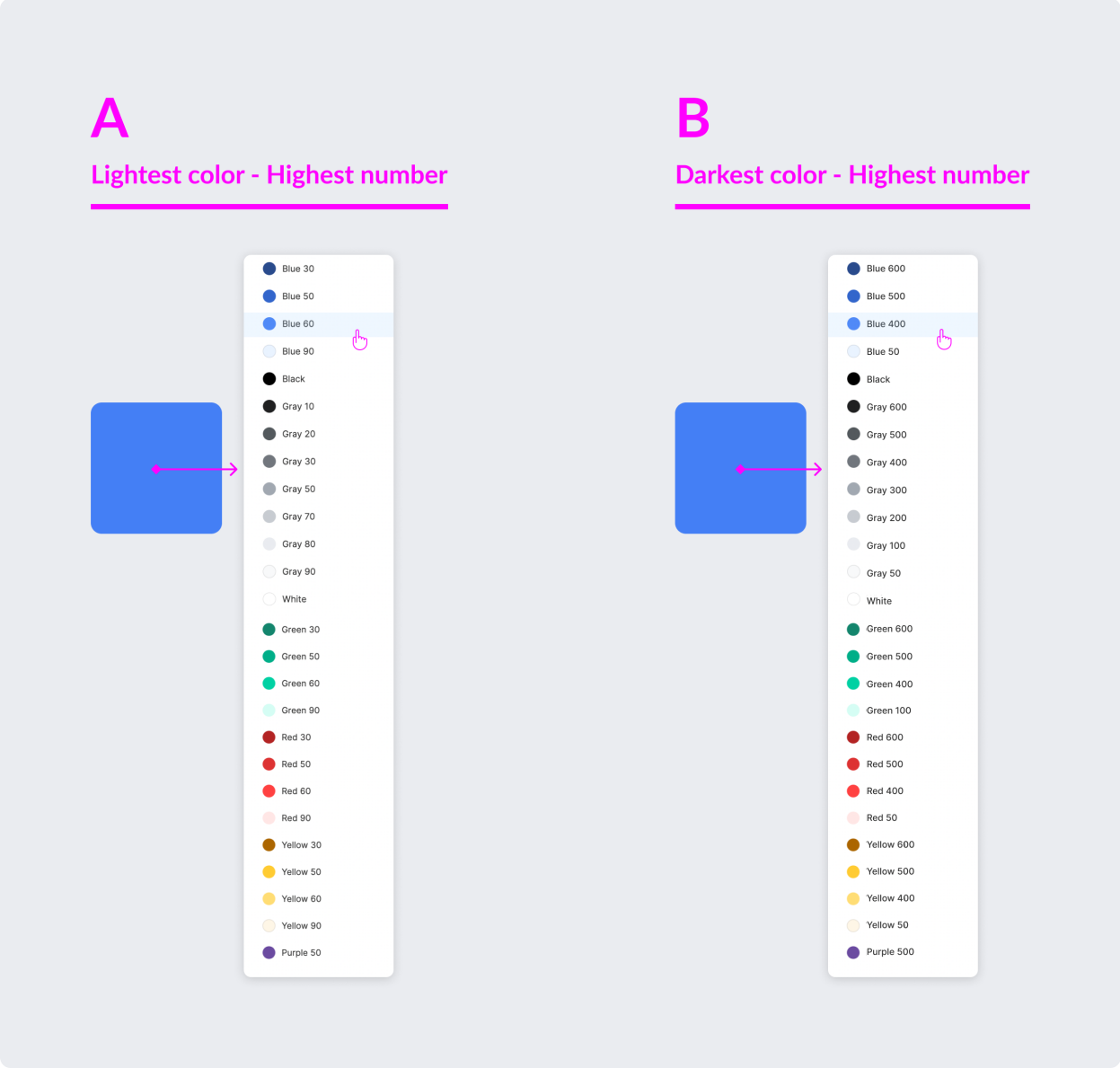
Our first thought when we viewed this order was that it was super confusing and talking with some designers, they felt the same. The number of the colors usually are ordered from lightest (0) to darkest (100) so the higher the number, the darker the color. The problem with our numbers is that we are doing the opposite (the highest number is our lightest color) and it creates confusion.

You can view here some Design System examples where the numbers are ordered from lightest (0) to darkest (100):
- Material (Android)
- Carbono (IBM)
- Base (Uber)

Test (1)

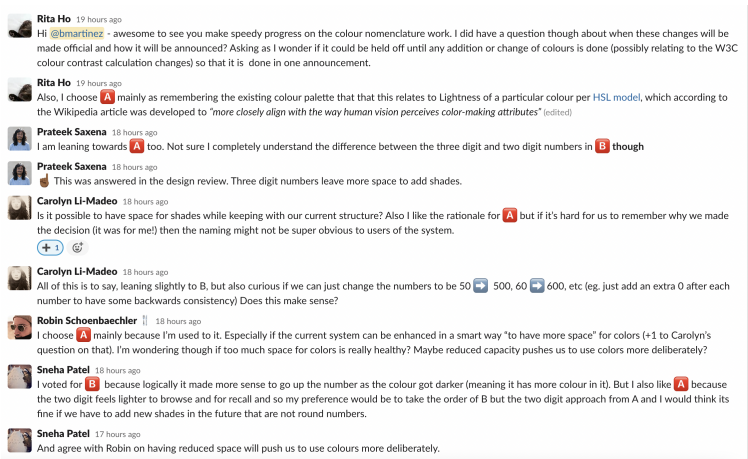
For this reason, we decided to make new versions of the colors nomenclature working on the numerals. We created this new proposals for study the color numerals:

- **Option A:** Lightest color corresponds to the highest number (current number order of our
- **Option B:** Darkest color corresponds to the highest number (0-900)



WMF designers feedback

We tested this 2 options in a new quickly Test A/B in #designprivate slack channel and we received the following feedbacks:



It is no clear which option was better because people reacted with the same number of votes to both options. Some feedbacks were the following:

> *I choose A mainly because I'm used to it.*

> *I voted for B because logically it made more sense to go up the number as the color got darker. But I also like A because the two digit feels lighter to browse and for recall and so my preference would be to take the order of B but the two digit approach from A.*

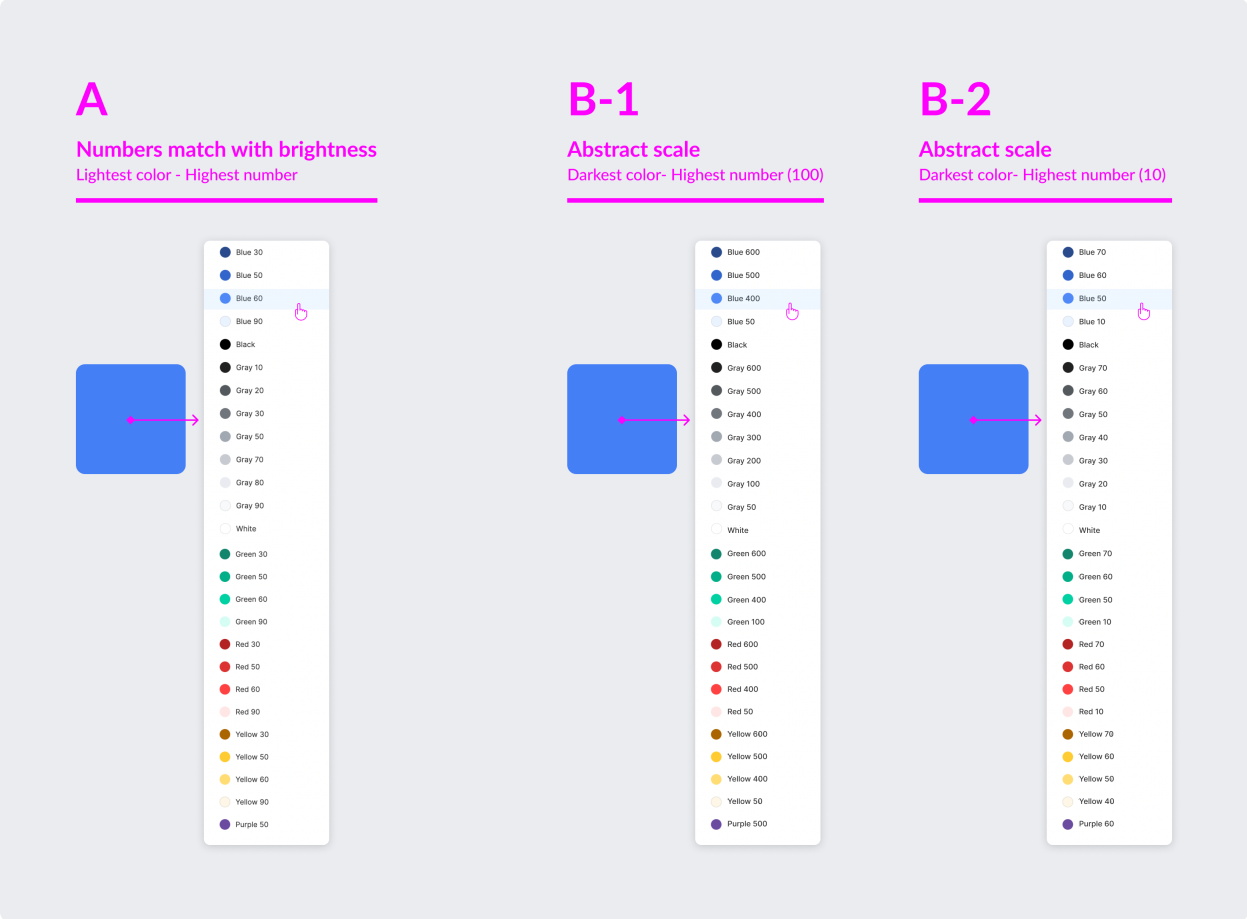
WMDE designers feedback

Feedback on numerical values of color palette. Both Elisha (German Wikipedia) and Erdi (Wikidata) from WMDE would rather go for what they consider the more intuitive approach, even if the number is not specifically tied to anything: the higher the number, the darker color. Elisha in particular mentioned:

> *I had been confused many times when using the existing palette.*

Test (2)

As the first test results weren’t enough clear, we decide to make a second test updating all the feedback collected from the first test. As many designers commented that the version with hundred numbers seemed complex, we decided to make a version with abstract scale (the darkest color the highest number) but using numbers from 10-90. So we tested the following options:



Designers were agree that B-2 option was much clear than B-1, and they commented that the order of the numbers (the darkest color the highest number) with only one 0 was much clear for them. They were agree with this new option that the new color scale could work for them.

You can read all the feedbacks collected during the *Design Practice & Systems Meetup* with this proposal in this doc.

☝️ So we decided to move forward with the **B-2 option**. And with this decision, color nomenclature was decided: simple names (Blue, Green, Red) and numerals with darkest-higher scale.