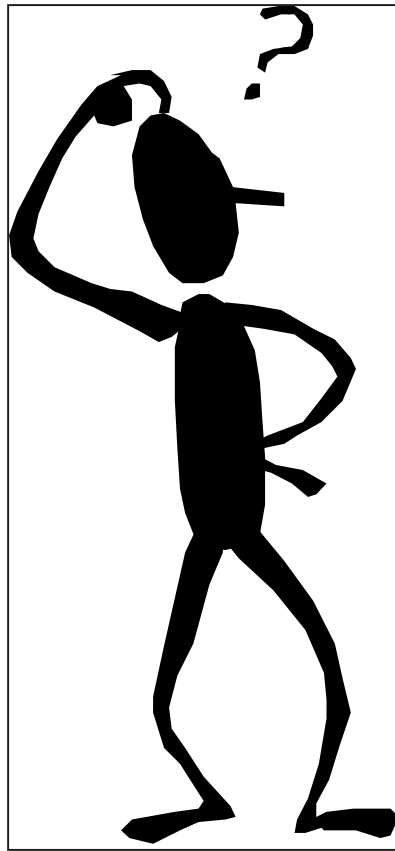


Thinking About Web Site Design



Thinking About Design

Questions?;

Web Site Assessments Due by 5 p.m.;

Site Panning Tips (from CNET)

- **Plan the site before designing it**
- **Build successful teams**
- **Manage your clients**
- **Establish clear naming conventions**
- **Use storyboards**

Audience

Purpose

Interface

Conclusions

**Web Site Design Tips (from CNET):
Plan the site before designing it**

You should always define the site architecture and its proposed function before even opening your design software.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of Web sites (not mutually exclusive). Determining which type you're building can help you plan out your design.

Web Site Design Tips (from CNET): Plan the site before designing it

Entertainment or artistic sites

Readers come to these kinds of sites to see something cool, to read something thought-provoking, to have fun, or maybe even to learn something. On these sites, the design may be as important, or even more important, as the written content. Site developers for entertainment and artistic sites encourage exploration ... On these kinds of sites, it's more acceptable to make design changes and push the envelope.

Web Site Design Tips (from CNET): Plan the site before designing it

Informational sites

These sites are intended to deliver useful information. Their primary goal is not to be entertaining, per se. Users of these sites want information fast, and in an easy-to-digest format. They don't want to wade through unusual design – no matter how interesting – to get to what they're after.

Web Site Design Tips (from CNET): Plan the site before designing it

For this kind of site, you don't want to distract users with unnecessary GIFs. It's important to arrange the elements in a logical order by importance, using size, color, and contrast to make it clear what's available. Consistent layout, navigation, and design will help keep readers from getting confused.

Although many sites mix the entertainment and informational approaches, it's helpful to decide where your site fits in before you start designing. Otherwise, you could end up obscuring important information with an inappropriate user interface.

Web Site Design Tips (from CNET): Build successful teams

Assess the personnel needs of your project before you begin. Try to avoid pulling new people in halfway through: late arrivals often don't feel the same dedication as the original crew members.

To develop teamwork, you need a good producer as the liaison between the client--internal or external--and the Web development team. (If you're building an original content site, like the ones at CNET, think of the audience as your client.) You also need Web developers, content editors, copy editors, HTML producers, information and graphic designers, and, if it's a large-scale effort, a project manager.

Web Site Design Tips (from CNET): Manage your clients

If you're working with external clients, make an effort to figure out the client's purpose in creating the site before you begin the design process. Build a list of the basic points the client wants to communicate. Then catalog the specific elements you need to accomplish the client's goal. Be sure to agree ahead of time and get it in writing, so the client can't throw in additional functionality when you're already deep into the project.

Web Site Design Tips (from CNET): Manage your clients

Deadlines must mean the same thing to the creative team as they do to the client. Everybody must have the same understanding of such words as alpha, mockup, and concept. Clearly define the end of the planning phase and the beginning of the building phase. Once the building process is underway, don't let the client request more functionality unless they're willing to pay for it and accept the corresponding delays.

Web Site Design Tips (from CNET): Establish clear naming conventions

Decide on clear naming conventions for images, and stick to them.

Images should be identified with a naming convention that is site-wide and, if possible, department- or company-wide. That way, people are less likely to get confused.

Web Site Design Tips (from CNET): Use storyboards

Create a thumbnail storyboard for every section and every page you design. At CNET, we use the term *storyboard* to refer to a sheet of paper with squares marked off for each online page. You fill in a rough sketch of what goes on each page in the appropriate box.

Storyboards are a terrific way to get a clear conception of what goes where and what you need before you actually need it. They're an essential tool for maintaining design consistency across multiple pages.

Web Site Design Tips (from CNET): Use storyboards

Whether you're laying out a single page or a series of pages within a section, think of each page or section as a minisite. It should have a front door that people see first and that serves to orient them (that may be part of a page or a whole page in the case of a multipage section). And it should have clear navigation to direct users from page to page in both linear and nonlinear order. Storyboards help you plan this out clearly and keep you on track.

Web Site Design Criteria

Purpose

- **Identify your target audience;**
- **Offer a clear purpose for the site (stated explicitly or clearly implied);**
- **Know your main objectives;**
- **Have a concise outline of the information your site will contain.**

Audience

Web surfers

Home pages aimed at browsers should be analogous to magazine covers.

Less than 10% of Web readers ever scroll beyond the top of Web pages.

Novice and occasional users

These users depend on clear structure and easy access to overviews that illustrate how information is arranged within your Web site.

Audience

Expert and frequent users

These users depend on your site to obtain information quickly and accurately. Expert users are very impatient with multiple low-density graphic menus that only offer two to six choices at time. Power users crave stripped-down, fast-loading text menus. Graphic fru-fru drives them nuts.

International users

Remember that you are designing for the World Wide Web. Your readers could be the people down the street, or people in Australia or Poland.

Interface Design

- **Web pages versus conventional document design**
- **Design precedents in print**
- **Make your Web pages free-standing**
- **Who, What, When, Where**
- **User-centered design**
- **Build clear navigation aids**
- **No dead-end pages**

Interface Design

Give users direct access

The goal here is to provide the user with the information they want in the fewest possible steps, and in the shortest time.

Bandwidth and interaction

Users will not tolerate long delays. Human-factors research has shown that for most computing tasks the threshold of frustration is around 10 seconds.

Interface Design

Simplicity and consistency

Users are not impressed with complexity that seems gratuitous, especially users who may be depending on your site for timely and accurate work-related information.

Design stability

Feedback and dialog

Your Web design should offer constant visual and functional confirmation of the user's whereabouts and options, via graphic design, navigation buttons, or uniformly-placed hypertext links.

Interface Design

Design for the disabled

Not every user of your site will be able to take advantage of the graphics you offer on your pages, and a number of users may be visually impaired. One of the beauties of the Web and HTML is the ability to build in "alternate" messages ("ALT" tags in HTML) so that users without graphics capabilities can still understand the function of graphics on your pages.

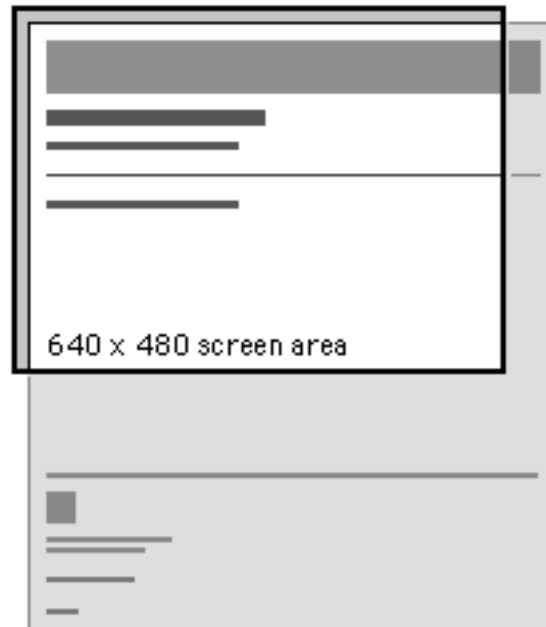
Interface Design

Provide context or lose the reader

Readers need a sense of context, of their place within an organization of information.

In paper documents this sense of "where you are" is a mixture of graphic and editorial organizational cues supplied by the graphic design of the book, the organization of the text, and the physical sensation of the book as an object.

Interface Design



Interface Design

"Going back" and going to the previous page

All hypertext systems share a common problem that has no direct precedent in print media: going "back" through a series of links you have previously visited is not the same as paging "back" through the preceding pages of an ordered sequence of pages.

Interface Design

Why button bars are useful

For the information designer hypertext links are a mixed blessing. The radical shifts in context that links create can easily confuse Web users, who need organized cues and interface elements if they are to follow and understand hypertext links from one Web page to another. This is particularly true when you want users to be able to follow (or at least recognize) an ordered sequence of documents.



Interface Design

Fixed versus relative links

By providing the user with paging buttons and links to local home pages and tables of contents you give your users the tools to understand how you have organized your Web site information, even if they have not entered your web of pages through a home page or table of contents page.

Conclusions

Plan your web site before (and while) assembling pages – consider look and feel; navigation

The considerations you make in drafting a text are translate into web- site and page design:

Audience;

Purpose;

Context;

Relationship.