

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly in Web Design

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Characteristics of a good web site

- Well-organized
- Easy to navigate
- Attractive
- Useful
- Up-to-date

Characteristics of a bad web site

- Disorganization
- Obvious lack of direction
- Out-of-date information
- All show and no substance

Note: Surveys of World Wide Web users
show that what the user wants is ...

CONTENT!

How to guarantee a good site

- Have a goal
- Target your audience
- Create a plan
- Try it out
- Maintain it

Have a goal for your web site

- What were you put on earth to accomplish?
 - ◆ review your mission statement
- Do you want your web site to accomplish all or some of those things?
 - ◆ the more goals, the more difficult the task becomes

Identify your target audience

- Who are you supposed to serve?
 - ◆ Can you serve all of those audiences or some?
- What are you supposed to provide to them?
- What are their needs?
- What are their habits, characteristics, culture, etc.

Plan it out

- Identify types of information you already disseminate to the target audience that meets your goal
- Identify types of information you would like to disseminate to the target audience that meets your goal
- Identify providers & potential suppliers of content and train your providers

Plan it out continued

- Share your vision with your colleagues and your bosses
- Train your internal users & your staff

Try it out

- Test it out in house
- Test it on a sample audience
- Test it on lots of types of computers with many types of monitors
- Test it using various modems and connections
- See if it meets our good web site characteristics

Maintain it

- Dates need to be correct
- Services need to be up-to-date
- Hours must be correct
- People's names, email addresses & phone numbers need to be correct
- Prices need to be correct

Back to the Characteristics ...

Make your site well-organized

- Decide how you want to organize your information based on your user and what you know about them

Ways to organize a site

- By Org chart
 - ◆ intranet or internal web
- By audience type
 - ◆ marketing
- By subject
 - ◆ all other

Make your site easy to navigate

- Your organization should make this obvious
- Keep scrolling down to a minimum
- Always have links back to your home or major sections
- Use color to identify for users where they are in your site

Make your site easy to navigate

- Never have more than two - three frames!
 - ◆ a banner
 - ◆ a navigation bar

Make your site attractive

- Choose simple colors that compliment each other & work on most web browsers
- Keep graphics less than 50K to make them download reasonably on a home modem
- Keep animated gifs to one per page
- Use graphics sparingly and only when they enhance your image

Make your site useful

- If you are unique, you're already useful!

Make your site useful continued

- If not, what are you doing differently from every other site on your topic on the World Wide Web?
 - ◆ Is your content unique?
 - ◆ Is your approach unique?
 - ◆ Is your audience unique?
 - ◆ Are you doing a better job?
 - ◆ Are you more comprehensive?

Keep your site up-to-date

- In an organization, make this part of someone's job. Pay them to do it. It's worth it.

Ways to present content

- Hierarchical organization
- Image maps
- Tables
- Frames

Hierarchical organization

- Menus in progressive order of most general to more specific
- Pros
 - ◆ always gives impression of organization
- Cons
 - ◆ Not really necessary unless you have a collection of something
 - ◆ Makes user travel through a number of levels to get to their information



Image Maps

- Links are in an image or picture
- Pros
 - ◆ Allows for greater artistic creativity
 - ◆ Don't need to use browser-dictated fonts
- Cons
 - ◆ Take a long time to download
 - ◆ Tricky to set up



Tables

- Links (text, data or images) are arranged in tabular format with or without borders
- Pros
 - ◆ Allows creator to place items on a page
 - ◆ Looks neat
- Cons
 - ◆ Few if any





Frames

- Divides the browser's window into two or more scrollable areas
- Pros
 - ◆ Can provide an area that makes updating or changes very simple
 - ◆ Can help with navigation
- Cons
 - ◆ Used improperly can make a huge mess!

Tips for frames

- Use in a site that rarely, if ever, goes out to other links on the World Wide Web
- Use as a banner at the top or bottom
- Use as a navigation bar at the top, side or bottom



DO ...

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| ■ Design with your objective in mind | ■ Use graphics that enhance your image |
| ■ Design for your audience | ■ Arrange links and information to make finding things easy for your user |
| ■ Plan your site on paper first | ■ Keep it simple |
| ■ Emulate a site you like | ■ Use "alt" tags for graphics |
| ■ Try out your color scheme | |

Do continued

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Provide a search function if your site is large | ■ Keep your information fresh and correct |
| ■ Ask for feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Collect demographic data with a form | ■ Advertise <i>your</i> company or service |
| ■ Add value to the Internet | ■ Choose one really cool multimedia application |
| | ■ Provide text under icons |

DON'T

- Use very large graphics
- Use too many graphics
- Overuse links embedded in text
- FLASH! BLINK!
- Use wallpaper or backgrounds that obliterate your text
- Have one long page with no links at all
- Force the viewer to fill out a form or register first (unless you have a fee-based service)
- Put up anything just to have a presence on the web

Don't continued

- Use frames unless you are or you hire an expert navigation designer, have no external links and have few text-only users
- Use a counter unless your numbers are pretty impressive
- Tell your user to [click here](#)
- Have more than one spinning, whirling, clicking, moving icon or graphic
- Have links to a future service that doesn't work yet

Don't continued

- Use Under Construction signs
- Advertise Netscape
- Advertise Microsoft
- Advertise any other sundry software companies that have marketing budgets!
- Advertise sites that gave you an award (along with 50 million other sites)
- Advertise anyone but yourself unless they paid you!

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