

User Friendly Web Design for Small Business

Western Technical College

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Today

- Introduction
 - (Who is this guy?)
- What is Web Design?
- Aspects of Good Design
- Legal Considerations
- The Web Development Process
- Review



Introduction

Who is this guy?



Education

- Originally self-taught
- Trained in...
 - Database design/development
 - Graphic Design
 - Several languages (CFML, JavaScript, etc.)
 - Various Content Management Systems (CMS)
 - Rhythmyx, Ektron, etc.
 - B.S. in Information Technology and Visual Communications



Education

- Short list of programming languages
 - Web-based
 - ColdFusion, ASP, PHP, JSP
 - OOP
 - ASP.NET, VB.NET, C#, Java
 - Scripting
 - JavaScript, ActionScript, SMIL
- Continual learning process



Experience

- 13+ years of experience
- Full range of development
 - Project Management
 - Environmental Metrics
 - Graphic and User-Interface design
 - Coding
 - Content Writing
 - Database design/management
 - Server Development



Experience

- 3 years - Mercy Hospital - Webmaster
- 6 years – Iowa Public Television – Webmaster
- 3 years – Ovation Marketing – Web Manager
- Southeast Technical College
 - Webmaster/Developer
- Teaching @ Western Technical College
 - Dreamweaver I, II, III
 - E-Commerce
 - Lecture Series
- Continued Freelance projects



Some of My Clients



Who are you?

What do you hope to learn?



What is Web Design?

Defining an obscure term



Web Design is...

- Graphic look and feel
 - Graphic Design
- The structure of pages
 - User Interface (UI)
- The structure of the site
 - Site Map




Good Design...

- Keeps the user in mind
- Makes things easy to find
 - For all users
- Supports the *brand*
 - Looks like **your** site
- Involves structure, UI, and graphics
- Let's look at each
 - In reverse order




How pages relate

STRUCTURE





Aspects of Site Structure

- Site structure is how pages relate
- Ease of finding content in site
- No set formula
 - Based on developing conventions
- Developed based on needs
- Expressed in *site maps*




Site Maps


- Site Map
 - Visual Structure of the site
 - Drawn during production
 - Changes only slightly over time

Site Maps




- Begins at home page
- First rows shows the main navigation
 - Called "Level 2"





Types of Structure

Tall Structure



Broad Structure







Tall Structure

Advantages


- Limits decisions
- More focused
- In-depth content
 - Less on each page
- Easier user tracking

Drawbacks

- Limits options
- Less inter-page linking
- Harder to find things
 - (Relies on search)
- Adding items requires extra content (pages)

Broad Structure




<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Many options up front □ Abundant choices throughout □ Easier to add items 	<p>Drawbacks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ May confuse users □ Requires shifting navigation □ New items not as noticeable
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Examples

<p>Tall Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Many Blog Sites 	<p>Broad Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Portal Sites
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blog.twitter.com



yahoo.com

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Site Structure Best Practices

- Map your site!
 - Now and at redesign
- Choose a balance between tall and broad
- Above all, keep the user in mind

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User Interface (UI)

PAGE STRUCTURE

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Aspects of UI

- Mixture of usability and aesthetics
- Considers the technology used
- Based on cognitive psychology
- Often applied to software
- Is the *true* breaking point
 - Good UI, good site
 - Bad UI, bad site

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UI Considerations

- Intuitiveness
 - 10-second decision
- Learning curve
 - All sites have them
 - Best when emulated
- Integrates with graphic design
- Looks at the *Lowest Common User*

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UI Principles

- Structure
 - Content is well organized
- Simplicity
 - Communicates simply, in user's language
- Visibility
 - Doesn't overwhelm or distract
- Feedback
 - Users know when things change and why
- Tolerance
 - Mistakes are caught and corrected (e.g. forms)
- Reuse
 - What works one place, works the same throughout

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principles_of_User_Interface_Design

Bad Web UI

- Difficult to navigate
- Confusing
- High learning curve
- Distracts from content
- Doesn't consider all users
- Uses the emerging technology



Good Web UI

- Is consistent
- Easy to navigate
- Intuitive
- Works across browsers
- Explains the rules
- Groups things appropriately



UI Mantra

- Each page has a purpose
- 90% of the page supports a purpose
- 80% of the Home page supports a purpose
- Examples...



UI Best Practices

- Don't confuse the user
 - Avoid frames and pop-ups
- Use text with icons
- Avoid non-standard widgets
- Don't let anything move
 - Including advertising
- Emulate how similar sites operate
 - (e.g. BN.com v. Amazon.com)
- Avoid confusing language
 - Abbreviations, lingo, etc.

More than just paint on the walls
GRAPHIC DESIGN

Aspects of Graphic Web Design

- Supports the brand identity
 - It looks like **your** site
- Uses color effectively
 - Pays attention to *Web-safe colors*
 - Stays within a palette
- Looks good in all browsers/platforms
- Accessible to all visitors
- Follows graphic design principles
 - Balance, organization, flow, etc.

Number One Rule

No Web site is ever designed...
...they are developed

Bad Web Design

- Isn't branded
- Looks wrong in different browsers
- Confuses users
- Ignores impaired users
- Is inconsistent
- Falls in love with itself
- Requires a particular browser, setting, etc.



Good Web Design

- Is well-branded
- Puts the user first
- Follows design principles
- Conveys a mood
- Stays consistent
- Puts function before form



Best Graphic Design Practices

- Brand well!
 - Play design off your logo
 - Make sure all your material looks related
- Don't stick to templates
 - Good starting points, however
- Keep alternative browsers in mind
 - Alternative users too
- Test in multiple browsers/platforms
- Remember, not everyone has that font
- Avoid music and Flash
 - Rarely necessary, seldom beneficial

Legal Considerations

Why this isn't just fun and games


Legal Considerations

- Revolves around accessibility
- All users - nearly identical access
- Techniques involved help all users
- Active legislation is in place
- Lots of resources top help

Legislation

- Section 508 of the RA (1998)
 - Specifically addresses Web Usability
 - Use as the bellwether for usability
 - www.section508.gov
- American's with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - Does *not* specifically address the Web
 - Brick/Mortar + Web site
 - Both are then covered

Cases

- Department of Justice
v. Ticketmaster 
 - December 2005
 - Web users w/o disability had advantage
 - Could access tickets in advance
 - Ticketmaster agreed to phone updates
 - Update Web site in next year
 - Charges dropped

More Info: <http://www.ada.gov/news/tf0206.htm>

Cases

- National Federation of the Blind
v. Target Corporation 
 - February 2006
 - Difficult for visually impaired users
 - Settlement
 - \$6,000,000 + \$3,740,000 in legal fees

More Info: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Federation_of_the_Blind_v._Target_Corporation

Users to Consider

- Visually impaired (1.5 million Web users)
- Color-blind users
- Hearing impaired
- Keyboard navigators
- Alternative Browser users
 - Smart Phones
 - PDA's

What to look for...

- Table-less design
 - Cascading Style Sheet (CSS) based
- "Alt" text for each image
- Text paired with icons
- Good contrast in color usage
- Labels for form fields
- Synchronous captioning for video
- Very careful use of Flash
 - Flash is getting much better

Check Your Site

- WebAIM.org
 - <http://wave.webaim.org>
 - Exceptionally useful!
- W3C Accessibility Initiative
 - Leaders in Web progress
 - <http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/accessibility>
- Web developers
 - User tools to test usability
 - Good practice = good usability

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Web Development Process

The basic steps

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Web Workflow

Analysis	Project Definition	Design & Develop	Content	Coding	Test & Launch
Needs Assessment	Project Requirements	Site Mapping	Write Content	Planning	Internal Testing
User Analysis	Technical Definitions	Database Design	Content Into Site	Database	Beta Testing
Technological Analysis	Maintenance Schedule	Creative	Metadata	Coding	Launch
	Content Requirements	Develop Pages		Confirmation	Beyond

Milestones:
Audit Client Survey*
Completed Client Survey*
Project Summary*

Requirements Document*
Functional Scope Document*
Maintenance Plan (draft)*
Deliverables Schedule*

Site Map*
Wire Frame*
Internal Creative Review*
Creative Concepts to Client*
Creative Concepts Finalized*
Database Schema (if necessary)

Internal Content Review*
Content Hosting*
Content to Client*
Completed Content*
Content on Site

Site "Ready for Testing"
Web System Determined*
Beta Testing Completed*
Site Up*

Web System Determined*
Beta Testing Completed*
Site Up*
Maintenance Schedule (draft)*

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Analysis

Needs Assessment
Outline current functionality
Determine new requirements
Overview client initiatives

5% of Project Budget

Milestones
Send Client Survey*
Completed Client Survey*
Project Summary*

User Analysis
Define customer/user
Product/company perception
Outline expected use
Conduct interviews

Technological Analysis
Define current technology
Define available technology
Determine final hosting
Outline database needs

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Project Definition

Project Requirements
Determine deliverables and schedule
Outline testing plan
Define metrics for success

10% of Project Budget

Technical Definitions
Outline functionality
Determine required technology
Define hosting requirements
Define database requirements
Define coding specifications

Maintenance Schedule
Outline maintenance needs
Draft maintenance schedule

Content Requirements
Outline content areas
Audit existing content

Requirements Document*
Functions (scope) Document*
Maintenance Plan (draft)*
Deliverables Schedule*

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Design & Development

Site Mapping
Determine user needs
Define Web site sections
Outline Navigation

20% of Project Budget

Database Design
Develop database schema
Determine database integration
Identify data sources

Creative
Write Creative Brief
Develop concepts
Internal review & updates
Present concepts to client
Finalize creative

Develop Pages
Create CSS and style guide
Create templates for all levels

Creative Brief*
Site Map*
Wire Frame*
Internal Creative Review*
Creative Concepts to Client*
Creative Concepts Finalized*
Database Schema (if necessary)

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Content & Coding

45% of Project Budget

Internal Content Review	Site - Ready for Testing*
Content Proofed	
Content to Client*	
Completed Content	
Content into Site	
Client approval of content	Migrate data
	Input new data as necessary
Content Into Site	Coding
Content placed in pages	Determine methodology
Content moved to database	Define coding requirements
Final proofing for data entry errors	Code pages
Metadata	Confirmation
Audit content for SEO	Check data I/O
Write keywords/metadata	Final check of all pages
Keywords/metadata into pages	

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Testing & Launch

10% of Project Budget

Internal Testing	
Identify testing agents	
Develop internal schedule	
Conduct internal testing	
Make updates/repairs	
Beta Testing	
Identify beta testers	
Write up task list and schedule	
Conduct beta testing	
Address issues	
Launch	
Move site/database to live location	
Confirm DNS and server settings	
Confirm page functionality	
Beyond	
Finalize maintenance schedule	

Beta Testers Determined
Beta Testing Completed
Site Live*
Maintenance Schedule (final)*

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What about the other 10%?

Marketing!

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Review

The important points to remember

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Tips for Small Business

- Site Structure
 - Map your site!
 - Keep the user in mind
- User Interface
 - Consistency, Simplicity, Reuse
 - Don't confuse the user/browser
- Graphic Design
 - Be consistent with your brand
 - Use good design principles

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Tips for Small Business

- Getting the Job Done
 - Consider your user
 - Do the groundwork
 - Don't skip to the pictures
 - Don't be taken in by cheap scams
 - Be unique, be you!

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Questions