

DESIGNING FOR THE WEB: VISUAL PRESENTATION

Presented by Jacques Walker


Objectives

- Learn web design principles, key issues, and recommendations
- Practice evaluating websites and brainstorming revisions for visual design and usability
- Practice working collaboratively on web design
- Define next steps in creating your site

Outcomes


- Principles and best practices of web design
- Understanding of the importance of creating mock-ups and sitemaps
- Ability to work collaboratively on website designs
- Ability to recognize effective features and common mistakes in website design

Audience



Insiders	Outsiders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Friends, family, colleagues □ Want to see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ News and updates ▣ Photos ▣ Calendar of events ▣ Contact Info 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ People who want to check you out □ Want to see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Who you are ▣ What you do ▣ Samples of work ▣ Contact Info

Audience



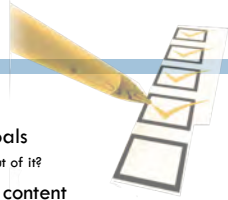
How Designers Look at Web Pages	How Your Users Look at Web Pages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Move slowly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Stare long and hard ▣ Take in the whole page ▣ Enjoy looking at designs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Appreciate balance, depth, richness, and surprises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Move quickly □ Easily distracted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Scan text for clues ▣ Look for what they came there to do or random points of interest □ Impatient <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Prominent Links ▣ Page loading time

Organization and Navigability

The GPS said turn left but the exit's on the right???

Homepage Musts

- Convey your identity
- Convey your purpose and goals
 - ▣ What do you want your users to get out of it?
- Provide current and relevant content
- Use graphics effectively
 - ▣ Don't just put it there cuz it's pretty
- Make sure everything is complete
 - ▣ If it's not done, don't post it.



Navigation

- Should answer:
 - ▣ Where:
 - I am
 - Have been
 - Can go
 - ▣ Where's the home page?
- Should be:
 - ▣ Clear
 - ▣ Simple
 - ▣ Consistent
 - ▣ User-Centered



Common Mistakes:

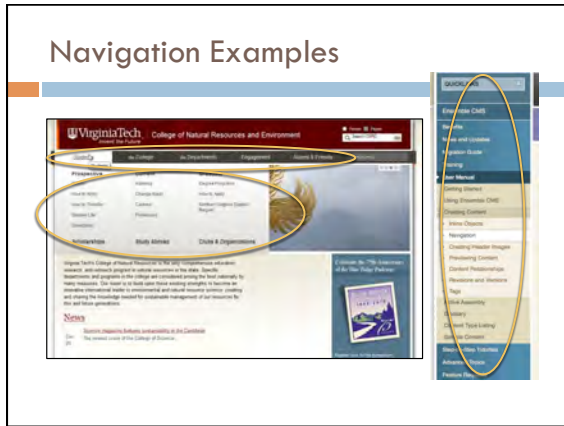
- ▣ Different navigation types/formats on same site
- ▣ Poorly worded links
- ▣ No links/confusing links back to homepage

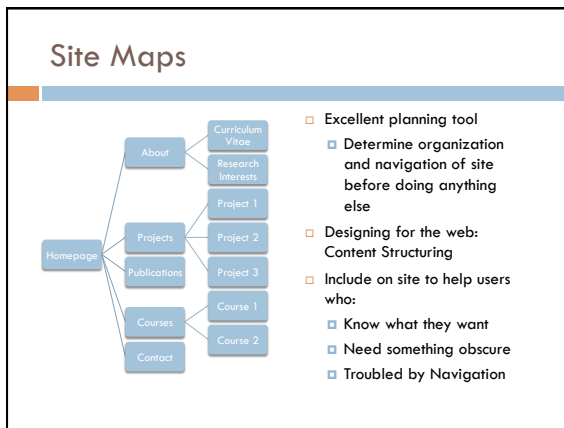
Navigation

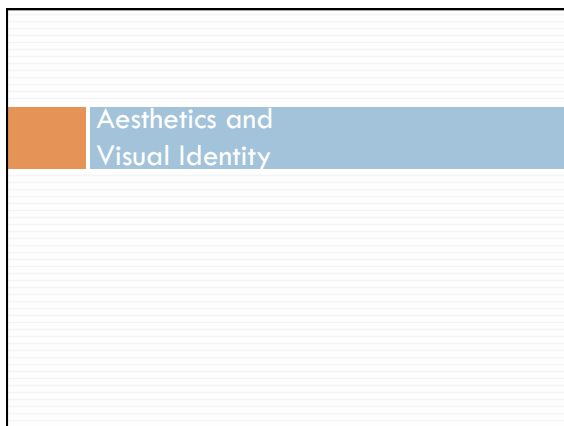
Not everything can be one click away!

- One click away
 - ▣ Frequently updated
 - ▣ Freshest
- Two clicks away
 - ▣ Static
 - ▣ Unchanging
- Three clicks away
 - ▣ Archives
 - ▣ Obscure









Layout Consistency

- Coordinate everything
 - ▣ Coherent vision for colors, font family, and graphics
- Inconsistencies lower the perception of quality
- Make design decisions early
- A logical modular design (like a newspaper) is the best way to start
 - ▣ <http://designshack.net/articles/layouts/10-rock-solid-website-layout-examples>

Choosing Colors

- Web tools allow you to experiment with color combinations
 - ▣ Gradient Generator:
<http://www.grsites.com/generate/generator/5000/>
 - ▣ Color Scheme Designer:
<http://colorscamedesigner.com/>
 - ▣ CSS Menu Creator:
<http://www.webmaster-toolkit.com/css-menu-generator.shtml>



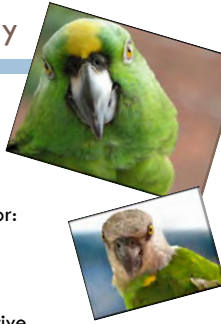
Official University Colors

- University Relations Color Palette
 - ▣ Maroon should be prominent,
 - ▣ Enhanced by orange
 - ▣ Supplemented by complimentary and secondary colors
- <http://www.unirel.vt.edu/web/guidelines/web-palette/index.html>



Using Photos Effectively

- Tell stories or capture emotions
- Promote ideas or identity
- Are the best of the best
 - 90% rejection rule
- Are well-selected and edited for:
 - Composition
 - Clarity
 - Color
- Include interesting and informative captions



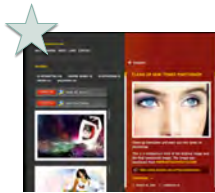
Designing with C.R.A.P.

- C – Contrast
- R – Repetition
- A – Alignment
- P – Proximity



+ Contrast

- Color, shape, size, etc. signify how pieces relate or don't relate
- Effective use of contrast makes sites appear crisp and organized
- Lack of contrast creates a sea of similarity
 - No differences between elements
 - Visually boring



<http://thinkvitamin.com/design/how-contrast-in-your-site-design/>

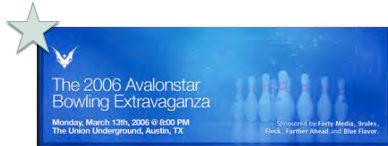
+ Repetition

- ❑ Similar items should be formatted similarly
- ❑ Repeat styles down the page for cohesion and consistency
- ❑ Guides user's eye
- ❑ Reinforces meanings



+ Alignment

- ❑ Nothing should look out of place
- ❑ Clean and organized looks
 - ❑ Aligning items
 - ❑ Symmetrical Padding
 - ❑ Relative Sizing
- ❑ Precision is key
 - ❑ 5px does not equal 7px



<http://thinkvitamin.com/designs/how-crap-is-your-site-design/>

+ Proximity

- ❑ Similar and related should be grouped together
- ❑ A few pixels can make all the difference
- ❑ Example
 - ❑ Weblog headings should appear close to the paragraphs to which they apply




<http://thinkvitamin.com/designs/how-crap-is-your-site-design/>

Group Work Exercises

Practicing what we preach


Group Exercises

- Apply the concepts mentioned earlier to a live site
 - Flaws may be obvious or subtle
 - Have fun with it
- Divide into equal groups
 - Discuss and notate
- Explore and critique each site
 - Design flaws
 - Navigation and organization issues
 - Color problems
 - Grammar, sentence structure, and spelling
 - Things they did right
- Share your ideas



The Sites

- Group 1
 - Breakout Results, LLC
- Group 2
 - Extractable
- Group 3
 - Kansas City Web Design/Hosting
- Group 4
 - Vista Professional Outdoor Lighting
- A couple extras ☺



Our Tools

- Own experience, each other
 - ▣ First impressions
 - ▣ What stands out
- Laptops
 - ▣ Our electronic notepad
 - ▣ Collective voice
- The elements of C.R.A.P.



Site 1 Thoughts

"Breakout Results, LLC"

- The Good
 - ▣ Powerful use of:
 - Contrast
 - Graphics
- The Bad
 - ▣ Constrained text wells
 - ▣ Distracting design elements
 - Scrolling text
 - Sounds
 - ▣ Unnecessary introduction



Site 2 Thoughts

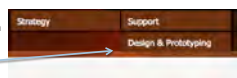
"Extractables"

- The Good
 - ▣ Good Layout
 - ▣ Consistency in design



- ▣ Contrasting Elements
- ▣ Good Balance of Images and text


- The Bad
 - ▣ Ambiguous logic behind navigation
 - ▣ Some pages could be shorter
 - ▣ Alignment Issues
 - ▣ Hard to figure out what they do based on imagery



Site 3 Thoughts

"Kansas City Web Hosting and Design"


- The Good
 - Effective layout and structure
 - Consistent
- The Bad
 - Navigation
 - Which is the primary navigation?
 - Unclear format across very top
 - How do I get back?
 - Can we get any more stuff on it?
 - Poor contrast and color choices
 - Distracting floating text



Accessibility and Propagation

Accessibility

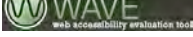
- Affected by combination of:
 - Organization
 - Navigation
 - Layout
 - Design
 - Browser Compatibility
 - Design for most popular browsers
 - IE 7 and above
 - Firefox 5 and above
 - The way a site looks on IE 9.0 may be different from the way it looks on Firefox, Opera or Chrome.



Accessibility – ADA Guidelines

- http://webdesign.about.com/od/accessibility/Web_Accessibility_Web_Usability.htm
- Text-Only Link
 - Text-only version for screen-readers for those with visual impairments
- Alt Tags
 - Name and/or description given to image in source code so users with visual impairments can interpret what the image conveys
- Sound Files
 - Provide link to a text transcript of the sound file for the hearing impaired
- Tables
 - Text-only browsers and screen-readers able to read table cells from left-to-right (headings go down left-hand side, not across the top)

Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool (WAVE)

- <http://wave.webaim.org> 
- Shows original web page with embedded icons and indicators that reveal the accessibility of that page with regards to Section 508 compliance
- Make your site more accessible: <http://sixrevisions.com/usabilityaccessibility/10-simple-web-accessibility-tips-you-can-do-today/>

Search Engines (SE)

- Basic Popularity Formula:
 - Number of hits
 - Number of sites linking to your site
 - Popularity of sites linking to your site
- SE submission services
 - Waste of time and money
- Meta tags are useful but not necessary
 - Current SEs read your text as well
 - Highlight keywords in your site.



Propagation

- Publishing site on the web gets you listed, your content will help get you noticed
 - Regularly update your content
 - Be interactive
 - Ask for feedback



“New” Considerations

HTML5, mobile devices, and recent trends in web design

Mobile Devices

- Big Issues:
 - Layout
 - Screen size is a factor
 - Avoid fixed widths and heights
 - Content
 - Less is more. Avoid a huge amounts of text
 - Coding
 - Basic HTML and CSS is best
 - Images
 - Keep them small and in standard formats
 - Page Size
 - 30KB or less, unlimited data plans are disappearing
 - Page Links
 - Give them backlinks and avoid dead ends



More Mobile Considerations

- Be careful with flash, javascript and other dynamic coding languages
- Test on multiple different platforms or web emulators
 - ▣ Feature phones [<http://emulator.mtld.mobi/emulator.php>]
 - ▣ Blackberry
 - ▣ iPhone [<http://iphonetester.com/>]
 - ▣ Android Device
 - ▣ Emulators
 - <http://www.mobilexweb.com/emulators>
- <http://www.webtemplatesblog.com/archives/2010/05/26/25-shining-examples-of-mobile-websites/>

HTML5

- Not formally adopted
 - ▣ No browser uses all the tags
 - ▣ Some tags work in some browsers and not in others
 - ▣ No HackTML 5
- Best used as an accent
 - ▣ Have fall back code



Next Steps

- Check out the following FDI courses offered this summer:
 - ▣ Dreamweaver CS5 Course Suite
- Other web development courses you may be interested in include:
 - ▣ Designing for the web: Content Structuring
 - ▣ Courses for Ensemble CMS

Questions?

Go!

Resources

FDI Courses for Building a Website

- Designing for the web: Content Structuring
- Dreamweaver CSS Short Course Suite:
 - Webpage creation and HTML Coding
 - An Introduction to CSS
 - Intermediate CSS, Templates and Multimedia
- Ensemble CMS Training Course Suite

Further Web Design

- <http://thinkvitamin.com/design/how-crap-is-your-site-design/>
- <http://www.webdesignfromscratch.com/>
- <http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/Guide/>
- <http://www.webreference.com/dlab/>
- <http://browsershots.org/>

www.fdi.vt.edu/evals

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