**Definitions on a good home page**

A **home page**, **index page**, or **main page** is a page on a [website](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Website). A home page usually refers to:

* The web page or local file that automatically loads when a web browser starts or when the browser's "home" button is pressed; this is also called a "home page". The user can specify the of the page to be loaded, or alternatively choose e.g. to re-load the most recent web page browsed.
* In the 1990s the term was also used to refer to a whole web site, particularly a personal web site.

A home page can also be used outside the context of websites, such as to refer to the principal screen of a [user interface](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User_interface), which is also referred to as a home screen on mobile devices .

* **y Elements of an Effective Website**

**Functionality**

Every component of your site should work quickly and correctly. Broken or poorly constructed components will only leave your visitors frustrated and disillusioned with your company. Across the spectrum, everything should work as expected, including hyperlinks, contact forms, site search, event registration, and so on.

Error-free copy: Remember the exposure your website will get. Double-check your facts and figures, as you don't know who may be quoting you tomorrow. Nor do you want to be recognized or remembered for typos, incorrect grammar and punctuation, or misspellings. Spelling mistakes and bad grammar are as unforgivable on a website as they are in other company materials.

**Usability**

A critical, but often overlooked component of a successful website is its degree of usability. Your site must be easy to read, navigate, and understand. Some key usability elements include:

* **Simplicity:** The best way to keep visitors glued to your site is through valuable content, good organization and attractive design. Keep your site simple and well organized.
* **Fast-loading pages:** A page should load in 20 seconds or less via dial-up; at more than that, you'll lose more than half of your potential visitors.
* **Minimal scroll:** This is particularly important on the first page. Create links from the main page to read more about a particular topic. Even the Search Engines will reward you for this behavior.
* **Consistent layout:** Site layout is extremely important for usability. Use a consistent layout and repeat certain elements throughout the site.
* **Prominent, logical navigation:** Place your menu items at the top of your site, or above the fold on either side. Limit your menu items to 10 or fewer. Remember, your visitors are in a hurry -- don't make them hunt for information.
* **Descriptive link text:** Usability testing shows that long link text makes it much easier for visitors to find their way around a site. Long, descriptive link text is favored by Search Engines, too. Back links are important to give users a sense of direction and to keep them from feeling lost. Use a site map, and breadcrumbs, if necessary.
* **Cross-platform/browser compatibility:** Different browsers often have different rules for displaying content. At a minimum, you should test your site in the latest versions of Internet Explorer, as well as Firefox and Safari.
* **Screen Resolution:** Screen resolution for the typical computer monitor continues to increase. Today, the average web surfer uses a resolution of 1024 x 768 pixels. However, you need to make sure that what looks good at this setting will also work nicely for other resolutions.

**Search Engine Optimized (SEO)**

There are hundreds of rules and guidelines for effective search engine optimization, and this isn't the place to cover them all. For starters, follow these simple rules:

* Include plenty of written content in HTML format. Don't use Flash, JavaScript or image-only objects for your navigational items.
* Use your important keywords frequently and appropriately in your copy.
* Minimize the use of tables and use Cascading Style Sheets for layout and positioning; keep your HTML code clutter-free.
* Leverage your links -- make them descriptive and use your keywords in the link text

Many, many books have been written about Search Engine Optimization, and its scope is too broad to cover here. You can find more information on this important topic on our

We've barely scratched the surface of what makes a website most effectively. However, by following these simple guidelines, you will be headed in the right direction. Visit our section on for more information, or send us an e-mail. We'd be happy to answer your questions!

* **Guidance on how to build an aesthetically pleasing website**

In several of our blog articles, we have mentioned the importance of website aesthetics. A website that is attractive to the eye will have many positive effects such as: an increase in the length of time a visitor spends on the site, a decrease in its bounce rate, and an increase in returning visitors. All these effects will help you earn more advertising revenue. Here are some basic tips on building an aesthetically pleasing website.

***Clarity***

Make sure the purpose of your website, especially on your homepage, is absolutely clear to your visitors in a matter of seconds upon their arrival. As an example, if your site is a local newspaper, design the website to make that very apparent. As always, first impressions are immensely important. Research shows that visual first impressions can be made in less than one second! Hence, make it obvious to your visitors that they have come to the right place.

***Page Layout***

There are a lot of things you should consider with respect to the layout of your website. The size of the pages is an important aspect. Most pages on your website should be short and concise. Furthermore, configure the web pages so that visitors never have to scroll horizontally on your site. Also, in terms of vertical length, few pages should exceed two pages in length. Not only will this make the site aesthetically pleasing but it will also improve the load time which remains crucial for visitor retention.

Many website designers use a grid-based layout. This way, the pages are more structured, balanced, and uniform. Updating the pages with new material becomes quicker and simpler, and best of all, the overall layout stays the same. Some designers believe grid designs give readers more confidence in the website. The more confident they are in your website, the more likely they will become a repeat visitor and a loyal member.

***Clutter***

It is extremely important that your web page does not appear to be cluttered. If you have a lot of static advertisements, rotate your ads using a comprehensive ad management solution like AdSpeed Ad Server. Avoid overloading your web pages with irrelevant information, including: visible hit counters, random links, animated and flashy icons, or anything else that adds very little value.

***Content and eye appeal***

Choosing the right colors and fonts are essential to creating an alluring website. Keep in mind that colors convey emotion. For example, red can mean danger, stop, hot, exciting; while gray can mean old, historical, gloomy, boring. Choose colors that match your website’s theme and tone. Also, research and understand the demographics of your visitors. If you mostly have young women on your site, tailor to them and consider using slightly brighter and more feminine colors. Similar to the choice of colors, make sure your font matches your theme and demographics.

The content, including the writing style, should match the expectations and demographics of your visitors. For instance, if your demographics are that of an older age group, make sure your content and writing is more formal and avoid using modern slang.

**The characterstices of goodhomepage**

* **Emphasize the Site's Top High-Priority Tasks**

Your homepage should offer users a clear starting point for the main one to four tasks they'll undertake when visiting your site.

* **Include a Search Input Box**

[Search](http://www.nngroup.com/articles/search-visible-and-simple) is an important part of any big website. When users want to search, they typically scan the homepage so your search should be a box.

**Reveal Site Content**

* **Show Examples of Real Site Content**

Don't just describe what lies beneath the homepage. Specifics beat abstractions, and you have good stuff. Show some of your best or most recent content.

* **Begin Link Names with the Most Important Keyword**

Users scan down the page, trying to find the area that will serve their current goal**.**Links are the actionitems on a homepage, and when you start each link with a relevant word, you make it easier for scanning eyes to differentiate it from other links on the page. A common violation of this guideline is to start all links with the company name, which adds little value and impairs users' ability to quickly find what they need.

* **Offer Easy Access to Recent Homepage Features**

Users will often remember articles, products, or promotions that were featured prominently on the homepage, but they won't know how to find them once you move the features inside the site. To help users locate key items, keep a short list of recent features on the homepage, and supplement it with a link to a permanent archive of all other homepage features.