2.1.5 Guidelines for Design

2.1.5 Design Approaches

- In this session we will be looking at a sample of website design approaches, using both good and bad examples

- We will be constructively critical about them in order to find out what we might avoid doing

- We will try to define some useful guidelines for getting things done

2.1.5 Caveats

- This isn't a lesson in design, illustration or graphics

- This isn't a lesson in user-centred approaches either

  - We are just learning to be critical about websites so we can understand and avoid common mistakes

2.1.5 Different approaches

- We will mainly draw from two basic approaches

  - Cognition / Evidence-based principles (e.g. Edward Tufte)

    - What is the **information**? How do we make the **information** clear?

  - User-centric approaches

    - Who are our users? What do they want? How do they get the information?

2.1.5 User Experience First

- Both these approaches are about as opposite as you can imagine, but they share one important thing in common :

  - **<u>USER EXPERIENCE must come BEFORE any code is written</u>**

  - **<u>USER EXPERIENCE MUST BE CONSISTENT</u>**

    - Sites that contain radically different design in different areas are very confusing for users. Stick to your template

- This is the cause of many major mistakes in most kinds of software development

  - Software is often written with no clear idea how it will be used. This is **worse than not doing anything.**

2.1.5 WTF (what's this for?)

- When presenting **information**, you need your visitors to grasp what the **information** is.

- You can judge a good design by how long it takes to understand what it is about

  - Most users visit a website looking for content

  - You should understand and clearly signpost the content

2.1.5 Obfuscation Vs. Simplicity

- The worst kind of designs are those that look like '**corporate annual reports**' (Tufte).

- **Confusing** content **padded** by **generic imagery**.

- **Not designed to be read by anyone.**

2.1.5 Obfuscation Vs. Simplicity

- **Simpler** websites are **better**.

  - What is it?

    - A news item, a product, a download.

  - Where can I get it?

    - **Minimum number of clicks to get to content**

  - Why is this here?

    - If it's not helping users to do the above, cut it out. That includes colour! Why are you using colour? WHY? Because it looks nice? What kind of reason is that?