

Usability Guidelines for the Web

Orientation/Navigation

- Navigation should be organized to match the site's *information architecture*.
- Link text should be descriptive enough so that users can easily predict what they will find when they click it.
- On every page, the user should be able to determine:
 - what page they are on,
 - where they are in relation to other pages
 - how to get to other pages

[Better Labels for Website Links \(2:51mins\)](#)

Consistency

Design elements should be meaningful and consistent throughout a site. This helps users to recognize what each element means or does from one page to another.

Conformity

[Users spend most of their time on other sites. \(1:56 mins\)](#)

A good website should conform to accepted design principles for web and document publishing, particularly with regard to the location of components on the screen. Don't force the user to learn new *patterns* for your website.

Visibility

Important elements of websites (e.g. those for navigation) should be visible and prominent. Users should be able to understand immediately what they can and can not do.

Accessibility

Websites should be designed so that people with disabilities can use them. Users should be able to perceive, understand, navigate, interact with and contribute to the web regardless of their abilities.

[Introduction to Web Accessibility](#)

Findability

Users should be able to find the information they require, both from outside the website (e.g. search engines) and while they are browsing the website itself.

[Findability, Orphan of the Web Design Industry](#)

Legibility/readability

Text should be logically presented and easy to read.

Techniques which can aid this:

- Simple layout
- Short sentences
- Simple vocabulary (instead of jargon or technical terms)
- Simple sentence structure

<https://usability.yale.edu/web-accessibility/articles/readability>

Appropriateness of design

The design of a site should be appropriate for its intended audience and subject matter

Aesthetics of design

A website should not be ugly!

Technical performance

A website should load quickly and not produce errors.

<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/progress-indicators/>

Feedback

A good website should provide feedback to users in response to their interactions.

For example, when the user performs an action, confirmation should appear that the action was successful or unsuccessful.

Responsive/Adaptive

A website should adapt its layout to suit the environment in which it is viewed.

For example, the layout for small screens is normally different to the layout used on larger screens.

Further Reading

- <https://www.nngroup.com/topic/web-usability/>
- <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/usability-101-introduction-to-usability/>
- <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/top-ten-guidelines-for-homepage-usability/>
 - A very old, but still very relevant document about homepage design
- <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/the-need-for-web-design-standards/>
- <https://www.nngroup.com/videos/top-10-web-design-mistakes/>
- <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/top-10-enduring/>