

WEBSITE PLANNING & USABILITY ADDENDUM

CS120



1

DESIGN BRIEF: JUSTIFY THE PROJECT AND IDENTIFY GOALS



What is the site/business/organization?



What is the business model for the business (how do they make money / measure success)?



What is the business goal for the site? How is it monetized? How is ROI achieved?



Who is the user? Who is the site for?



What is the user's goal?



How can the site entice the user to take action to meet the business goals?



2

CONTENT: LAYER INFORMATION

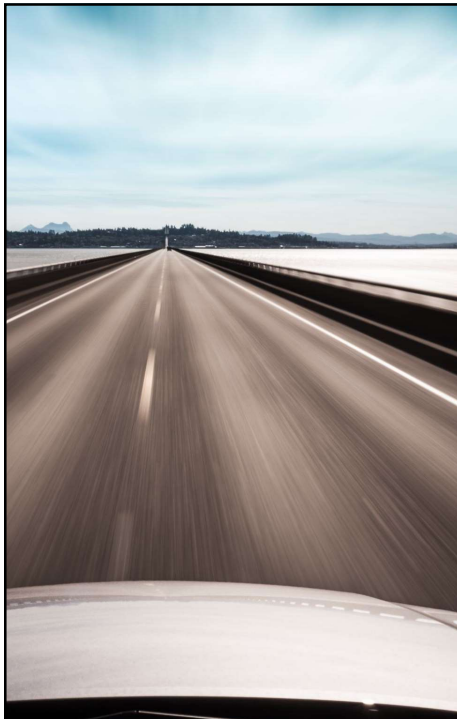
- What are the key messages? What is the call to action (CTA)?
- Start at the header
 - Logo?
 - Site navigation
 - May be helpful to identify list of pages
- Banner/hero section
 - Tagline
 - CTA
- Content sections
 - Identify content individually
 - Provide a “teaser” to the detailed pages
 - Suggestion: set up content in a table in a word or google doc
- Footer
 - Contact info



3

LAYOUT: TAKE THE USER ON A JOURNEY

- Think of layout as “stage direction”
- Identify elements such as
 - Columns
 - Images
 - Headings
 - Cool effects
- The layout should help the user flow through the information
 - To get to the action
 - To be curious to learn more
 - To get the information they need to be successful



4

UI/UX AND USABILITY

- A website/web app should be designed for the user, not the developer
- Three criteria for usability:
 - Easy to figure out the first time
 - Easy to remember and use on subsequent visits
 - User can achieve their goals
- Always think about what the user wants- i.e., *solve their problem*
- Best/Worst Websites
 - Worst: <https://www.lingcars.com/>
 - Some inspiration:
 - <https://zentry.com/>
 - <https://ctrl.xyz/>
 - <https://butterinsurance.com.au/>



5



TIPS TO MAKE A SITE USABLE

6

MAKE IT SCANNABLE

- Use headings to create a hierarchy for your content. Many users will not read everything, but most will scan to get the gist!
- Use your home page as an overview for your site/organization.
 - Put the key messages on the home page
 - Use action buttons to lead users to details placed on inside pages.



7

USE WHITESPACE

- Nothing is something!
- Have a generous amount of whitespace so that the page does not feel cluttered or overwhelming.
- Column width should usually not exceed 800-900px if there is only one column
- Move things away from the edges of the page
- Allow space after headings and between paragraphs
- Allow for space adjacent to images



8

BE PREDICTABLE

- Users will “learn” your site if you make it easy for them
- Take advantage of fixed page items – ie, have similar functionality in the same relative position on every page
- Match menu items labels to page titles
- Be logical: use labels that make sense. This is not a good place to be clever.
- Be consistent with other sites: use terminology that competitors use to avoid being misunderstood
- Use a consistent color scheme. Suggested: choose 4-7 colors as your palette and use those throughout the site
- <https://color.adobe.com/create/color-wheel>
- <https://www.adobe.com/express/feature/design/color-palette>



9

LESS IS MORE

- Rewrite content several times until it says what you want with the least number of words
- Focus on the goal of the site and ask the user to take action rather than continuing to add content
- Focus on the target demographic and say what they need to hear



10

“MUST ... GO ... FASTER”

- Performance is important because slow sites get ditched if a user becomes frustrated
- This is exacerbated for sites that are used heavily on mobile
- One easy way to improve performance is to size images
- Set the image size to match the expected size of the page
- Reduce the file size as much as possible – use a lossy format such as JPG when you can
- Suggested file sizes
 - Icons: under 20k
 - Small images: 30-50k
 - Banner sized images: less than 120k
- Beware of cute features that take a long time to load such as event calendars or elements that require API access
 - Check your site performance: <https://pagespeed.web.dev/>



11

MAKE IT READABLE

- Watch for colors that do not go well together
- Watch out for text over a busy background
- Use fonts that are legible. Increase the size if needed.



12

MAKE A LIST

- Bulleted and numbered lists are a great way to condense information
- Use color, borders, or proximity to group information
- Give a group of items similar styling



13

BE RESPONSIVE AND MOBILE FRIENDLY

- A website must look great at ALL browser sizes.
- The ONLY exception is special purpose apps that are intended for only one type of device
- Remove content on smaller devices to improve the experience where it makes sense



14

CONSIDER ACCESSIBILITY

- Account for users that have visual challenges
- There are several great sites with accessibility guidelines
- Accessibility checker: <https://www.siteimprove.com/toolkit/accessibility-checker>

