

PRINCIPLES OF WEBDESIGN

ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED BEFORE DESIGN.

1. Purpose of the site: what is the site meant for. That is what is the aim and objectives of website you are designing.
2. Audience: you know the effective use of the site when you know the number of people coming and going. Use of language should be taken into consideration, for instance, if your site is an international site, mind the use of language.
The type of audience determines your choice of speech.
3. Content of the site: ensure the website is rich with information, adequate and it is updated.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF WEBSITE DESIGNING

- A. **Site Planning:** Decide the architecture and the functioning of the site. How is it going to be running. The effective use of a site is known by the number of people visiting the site. Planning of a site is done on paper.
- B. **Site designing:** All the pages should wear a common look. The first page should have all the information. If you go to another page, it should indicate where you are.
Use the same image on the same portion of the page. People access your site by the time it takes to load. The same image should be used on multiple pages to make pages download faster. Ensure consistency from page-to-page by using the same logo; a symbol in the same location on each page and of the same size throughout the site. Determine the hierarchy of the site by making sure important features are identified- how large or small and where they should be placed.
- C. **Page designing:** graphic elements must be of small sizes. Page layout should be simple and logical so that readers can find what they want quickly and easily. Ensure that pages are simple with little cluttering along with intelligent navigation schemes. There are 4 things to consider when designing a page.
 - a) *Planning the content:* the first page should be able to tell what the site is about. The content should be spread across all pages and they should be linked to the main page. Each page should be independent in its own content without presuming that the reader has read the previous page.
 - b) *Fix the writing strategy:* the style must be less formal and the writing should be attractive. Highlight the keywords using bulleted lists or hyperlinks in order to catch the attention of your readers. Headings should be meaningful. Use simple sentences. Avoid using local proverbs and idioms because they may not be understood by international viewers. Update the site regularly with the latest information. A single paragraph should be used for a single idea. Highlight with colors the keywords on the page.
 - c) *Creating a grid layer for page design:* You can re-use logos, title banners without creating another one, it will make your site to be compact and fast.
 - d) *Deciding the design of the pages*

Four ways / methods of designing web pages

- i. *Linear design for multiple pages:* is a kind of design in which pages flow sequentially from one to another, you can't decide to go from one page to another. Users might have to scroll through many pages to locate required information. Each page has a link to the next and previous page.
- ii. *Linear design for single pages:* It's the simplest. It is a single stretched page. All information is presented on a single page in a logical order with no links, i.e. every page is continuous with no hyperlinks, you continue to scroll to get to the particular page you are looking for. It is

advantageous for short pages but not for a lot of information as readers would have to navigate through the entire page to read something at the end of the pages.

- iii. *Non-linear design for multiple pages:* This is a page with multiple links for multiple pages. The links are on the first page and you continue to click the links to give you the page. You can navigate from one page to another in any order. This page is advantageous when we need to move randomly to search for information. The demerit is that unless a sensible guide to the links is provided, the users would not be able to locate the desired information.
- iv. *Non-linear design for single page:* The feature of the page is on top and they are hyperlinked. For example, a page that uses
Back —→ Top

It provides links to content within the same page. Users have the benefits of quickly going through the entire page to search for specific information. Advantageous in situations in which a list of topics has to be presented and the user is given the option to navigate to any chosen topic.

Other Design Principles include:

Using appropriate colour schemes

- ✓ Keep the target audience in mind while using colours.
- ✓ Colours should be used consistently to build continuity of thought and meaning. For example, if a particular colour have been used to indicate an unvisited link, the same colour should be used everywhere to indicate unvisited links.
- ✓ Contrasting colours should be used for the background and foreground objects. This increases legibility.
- ✓ More than five colours should not be used in the web design.
- ✓ Colour combinations that create misleading colour illusions should not be used.
- ✓ The inability of colour blind users to distinguish between certain colours should be considered e.g. combinations and gradations of red, green, brown, green, grey and purple should not be used together as these might appear the same. However, combination colours like blue, yellow, white and black can be used for this category of users.

Optimising the use of Graphics

Good graphics can add a list of visual appeal to the site.

- ✓ Only the graphics which are very important to the content should be used.
- ✓ JPEG files are not always supported by all browsers.
- ✓ The background should not conflict with the colour of the graphics being used.
- ✓ In case the graphics being used takes a long time to load, warning should be displayed to the user.

Tables

Nested tables [table within tables] can slow performance drastically. Hence they should be avoided whenever possible. Also long vertical columns of tables slows loading. Instead, stack tables on top of each other. This way, the top table loads first and users can read while waiting for the others to be displayed.

Navigation tips

Users must know where they are on the website and must be comfortable navigating the site. That is, it must be easy for users to navigate from page to page and easy to return to the homepage. There should be clues that help users remember where they came from and find clear suggestions on where to go next. Navigation toolbars should be simple, uncluttered and immediately visible. Navigation links should be brief and to the point. The words used for the links should be chosen carefully and should convey what the reader can expect on the other end of the hyperlink.