

# 12 ways bad web design can hurt your online business

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## ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)

[...]whether you hire a professional web designer or plan to design your site yourself, if you want your online presence to look professional - and keep potential customers from bouncing - avoid these web design no-nos. Having an inconsistent style "If your site has a dissonant color palette, does not follow typographical best practices ([regarding] kerning, leading, tracking, etc.) or uses inconsistent typography [multiple fonts and font sizes], it will not project professionalism to your audience," and it will likely turn off prospective customers, says Pamela Webber, CMO, 99designs. Not making your logo clickable/go to the home page "According to KoMarketing, 36 percent of visitors will click the company logo to reach the home page," says Laura Casanova, creative director, ONTRAPORT. Using obviously fake or stock images "While the use of stock photography may enhance elements of your website's design, using these photos to represent your people [or products can come across as cheesy or inauthentic]," says Russell Frazier, digital marketing specialist, Visigility. Legal disclaimers will still be allowed, of course, but [sites] trying to get your email address before allowing you to read a blog post [or whatever content you were searching for] may start to [see a] drop...

## FULL TEXT

Today, thanks to a number of DIY tools and services, just about anyone can design a website. But that doesn't mean everybody should. However, whether you hire a professional web designer or plan to design your site yourself, if you want your online presence to look professional - and keep potential customers from bouncing - avoid these web design no-nos.

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### 1. Using a splash page

"Splash and [entrance] pages really have no value in today's online world," says Janyer Dominguez, vice president of web development, iPartnerMedia. "They [just] run up your website's bounce rate because users can't [immediately] find what they're looking for, so they [leave]."

Instead of using a splash page, "your website should have a standard home page," he says. "If you want to communicate a message or trigger an interaction, then use a modal or popup window. Using a standard home page [also] helps with SEO."

### 2. Having an inconsistent style

"If your site has a dissonant color palette, does not follow typographical best practices ([regarding] kerning, leading, tracking, etc.) or uses inconsistent typography [multiple fonts and font sizes], it will not project professionalism to your audience," and it will likely turn off prospective customers, says Pamela Webber, CMO, 99designs. To avoid style conflicts and create a consistent look for your web or ecommerce site, "be sure to create a brand style guide first and follow it consistently throughout your website design."

### 3. Confusing navigation

Don't make it hard for visitors to navigate your site and find what they are looking for quickly (in just a click or two). Keep navigation simple by using a horizontal menu with short descriptive labels (typically no more than seven items) across the top of each page, with one level of dropdown menus. Also, be sure to include a search box at the top of each page, either in the upper-left or upper-right corner.

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#### 4. Not making your logo clickable/go to the home page

"According to KoMarketing, 36 percent of visitors will click the company logo to reach the home page," says Laura Casanova, creative director, ONTRAPORT. But if the logo isn't clickable, they may think the site is broken and leave. "To easily make your logo clickable, just put your <img> tag between an opening <a> tag and a closing </a> tag, and it becomes active and clickable."

#### 5. Using too many (big) images (or animations or videos)

"Images [and animations and videos] are weighty, and too many on a web page can significantly slow down your site," says Webber.

And "an Adobe study found that 39 percent of people will stop engaging with a website if the images take too long to load," says Casanova. "At the risk of losing almost half your visitors, use a free online image optimizer, such as Optimizilla, to reduce your image's pixel count without compromising quality, ensuring a shorter load time for visitors."

You should also consider "offering optimized/lightweight versions of pages for those with slow connections," says Webber.

#### 6. Using graphics for text

"All text on a website should be crawlable by search engine bots," says Dominguez. However, "having images as text prevents search engines from crawling your website, which in turn will reflect negatively on your SEO. Images as text will also make your website slower. [So] refrain from using images as text at all cost."

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#### 7. Using obviously fake or stock images

"While the use of stock photography may enhance elements of your website's design, using these photos to represent your people [or products can come across as cheesy or inauthentic]," says Russell Frazier, digital marketing specialist, Visigility. "We all know the smiling lady with the headset does not work for you. Pull out your own camera or hire a local photographer to take real photos of your team [and products]. Your prospective customers will find this far more authentic" and will be more likely to trust and buy from you.

#### 8. Not embracing white space

"By using white space, your content delivers a greater impact to the reader," says Sarah Matista, marketing manager, Vistaprint Digital. "We've all seen sites that are chock full of text and graphics. They're distracting, and you end up retaining very little, if any, information. That's the opposite of your website's purpose. [Instead] use discretion and include more white space."

#### 9. Having automated music or sound

"Sites should not have automated music or sound," states Ed Brancheau, CEO, Goozleology. "Yes, it's sometimes okay to have a video be automated to catch the visitor's attention, but automated audio is jarring and problematic. In split tests that we ran, automated audio so drastically reduced on-page time that we never even consider it anymore."

#### 10. Overusing interstitials

"Interstitials are web pages displayed before or after an expected content page," says Adam Gingery, SEO specialist and copywriter, DMi Partners. "Not only are interstitials unbelievably annoying, but Google recently announced a penalty for overly intrusive interstitials. Legal disclaimers will still be allowed, of course, but [sites] trying to get your email address before allowing you to read a blog post [or whatever content you were searching for] may start to [see a] drop in [their] rankings," and an increase in their bounce rate.

"Stuffing a page with too many interstitials - [whether] full-screen, pop-ups [or] slide-in - in a bid to raise ad revenue... is a major design flaw, [which] hampers UX," says Ankita Gohain Dalmia, founder & digital marketing strategist, AnksImage. "To fix this, interstitials should [only be used if required by your] content strategy, not [by] ad revenue strategy."

Better yet, says Gingery, "just get rid of the interstitial and earn subscribers some other way."

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#### 11. Not checking for cross-browser compatibility

"Some designers forget to check their designs across different browsers, and visitors end up looking at odd or simply broken websites on different browsers," says Gohain Dalmia. "One way to fix this is by using [a cross-browser compatibility testing tool] before going live."

#### 12. Not making your site mobile friendly

"In 2015, mobile users surpassed desktop users and Google told us that they are giving higher priority to websites that have some type of mobile experience," says Mark Tuchscherer, president, Geeks Chicago. "Yet we still have designers and developers allowing clients to only have a desktop version of their websites. Everyone must have a responsive website in 2017, and trying to pass off your desktop site to mobile users is the biggest no-no. Not only will this make you look bad to visitors but search engines will also not be your biggest fan."

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