

What should you know before beginning the design process?

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There's a whole process that you should go through before you start to design a website. If you were to make a video, if you were to make a movie, you wouldn't start by planning sets and scenery and costumes and then decide what people will say. You always start with writing a script first. And websites are no different.

So, even though we have this tendency in the web world to start with a design and then figure out what we're going to say, we're actually doing that backwards. It's far better to start with what it is that we're going to say, which means that we need to plan for the goals for the website. Who are our users, and what do they want to do? We need to think about the information architecture: How is that website designed? The features and functionality that we want to have on that website.

Write all of our content before we start to plan. And then maybe even draw things out with little wireframes (little sketches of what we might want to do and what we might want to put where) before we actually get to all of the pretty colors and the beautiful layouts.

So, that is what I would recommend. You have a whole system before you start--it's often referred to as user experience--before we actually get into the building process.