



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

COMPUTER SCIENCE & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
SCHOOL OF FUNDAMENTAL SCIENCES

# Web Site Design Principles

**Based on:** Joel Sklar (2012), *Principles of Web Design*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Cengage, Chapter 2

# Topic Outline and Objectives

In this topic, you will learn to:

1. Understand the Web design environment;
2. Design for multiple screen resolutions;
3. Craft the look and feel of the site;
4. Create a unified site design;
5. Design for the user; and
6. Design for accessibility.



# Understanding the Web Design Environment



# Understanding the Web Design Environment

- External factors that affect Web design
- Many variables affect how Web pages appear
- New screen resolutions
- Wide-screen formats
- New devices
- Your designs must be portable and accessible



# Understanding the Web Design Environment

- Code to standards
- Test for compatibility
- View in multiple browsers
- Test on available operating systems
- Test on different devices



# Browser Compatibility Issues

- Designing for multiple browsers is a challenge
- Test your work in as many browsers as possible
- Test with both older browsers and new browsers
- Try to minimize differences across browsers
- Newer browsers have better adherence to Web standards



# Browser Compatibility Issues

Follow these guidelines:

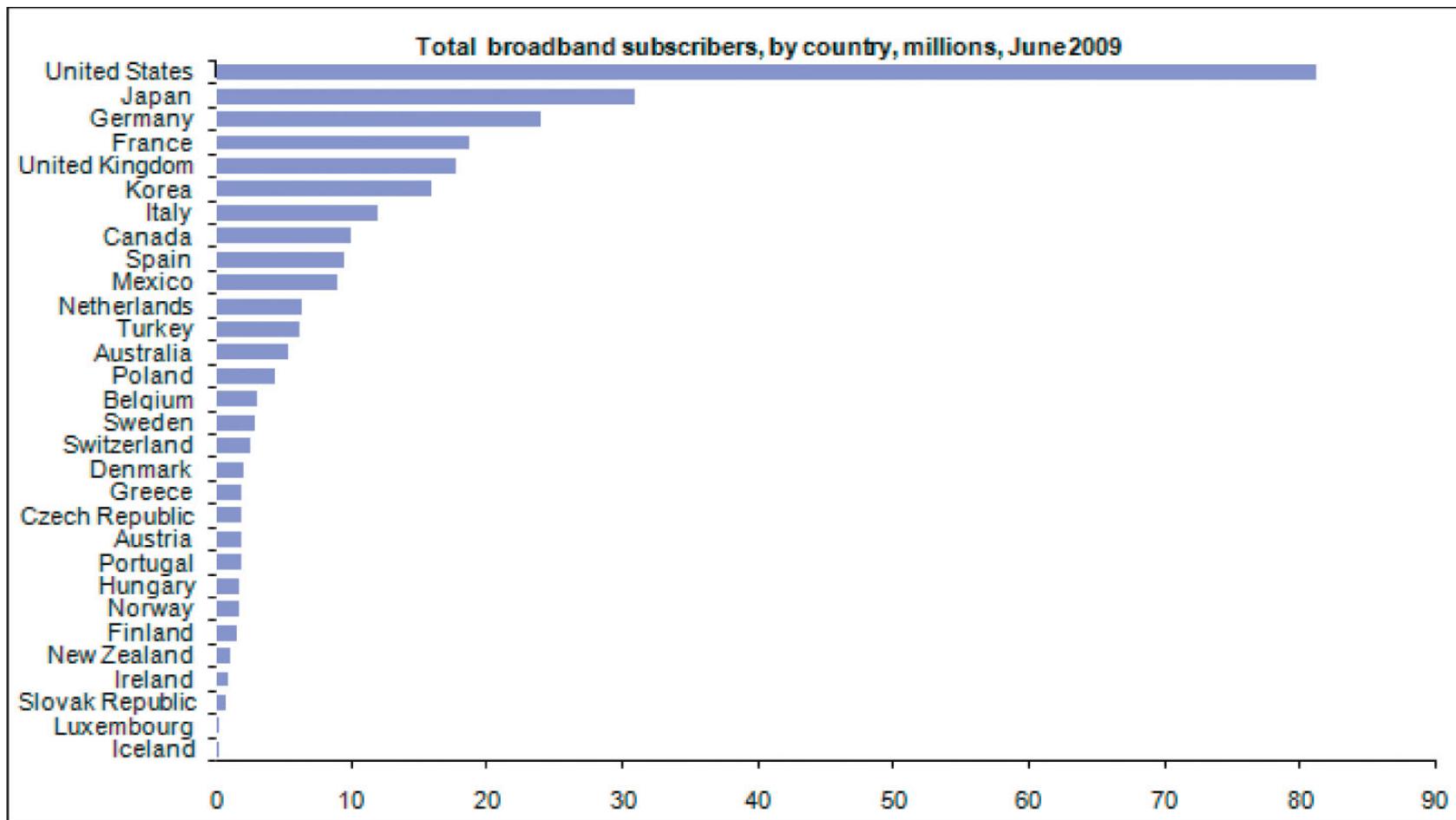
1. Follow W3C standards
2. Validate your code
3. Know your audience
4. Test your work in multiple browsers and devices



# Connection Speed Differences

- Bandwidth has always been a challenge for Web designers;
- Users do not like waiting for content;
- In the US, broadband access has increased;
- Broadband access is not universal around the world;
- Plan your pages for a variety of connection speeds;
- Test your pages at different connection speeds.





**Figure 2-1** Total number of broadband subscribers, by country, millions, June 2009



# Browser Cache and Download Time

- Web pages are stored on computers called Web servers
- Web addresses connect to a specific Web server
- The server serves up the file for download
- All text and images are downloaded
- On return visits, your computer loads the files locally unless content has changed
- Local files are stored in the browser cache
- Take advantage of the cache by reusing graphics



# Device and Operating System Issues

- ❑ Users' computers vary widely in equipment and design
- ❑ This is a design variable you cannot control
- ❑ Test your content on as many system types as possible
- ❑ Keep the following in mind:
  - ❖ Monitors and display software
  - ❖ Browser versions
  - ❖ Font choices

# Designing for Multiple Screen Resolutions



# Designing for Multiple Screen Resolutions

- ❑ Screen resolution is the width and height of the computer screen in pixels
- ❑ Most monitors have many screen resolutions to choose from
- ❑ This is a variable you cannot control
- ❑ The current most common resolutions are 1024 x 768 and 1280 x 1024
- ❑ Wide-screen resolutions such as 1366 x 768 and 1200 x 800 are popular as well



# Designing for Multiple Screen Resolutions

| Resolution (pixels) | Percentage of Users (%) |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1024 × 768          | 26.76                   |
| 1280 × 800          | 19.98                   |
| 1280 × 1024         | 10.46                   |
| 1440 × 900          | 8.81                    |
| 1680 × 1050         | 5.53                    |
| 1366 × 768          | 4.69                    |
| Other               | 22.36                   |

**Table 2-1** Popularity of Screen Resolutions



# Wide-Screen Displays

- The new wide-screen monitors have changed the page design
- Fixed layouts have become more popular
- Flexible layouts have to account for expanded horizontal layout space



The screenshot shows the Amazon.com homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Hello' and 'Sign in', 'Start here', 'Your Account', and 'Help'. Below the navigation is a search bar with the placeholder 'Search All Departments' and a dropdown menu set to 'All Departments'. To the right of the search bar are buttons for 'GO', 'Cart' (containing 0 items), and 'Wish List'.

The main content area features a large advertisement for the Kindle, which is labeled '#1 Bestselling Product on Amazon'. It includes a small image of the device showing a book page. Below the Kindle ad is a yellow 'Order now' button. To the right of the Kindle ad is a promotional box for 'Strathwood Patio Furniture' with a 40% discount offer, followed by a 'Shop now' link and an image of a wooden lounge chair.

On the left side of the page, there's a sidebar titled 'Shop All Departments' containing a list of categories: Books, Movies, Music & Games, Digital Downloads, Kindle, Computers & Office, Electronics, Home & Garden, Grocery, Health & Beauty, Toys, Kids & Baby, Clothing, Shoes & Jewelry, Sports & Outdoors, and Tools, Auto & Industrial. Each category has a right-pointing arrow next to it.

Below the sidebar is a section titled 'Check This Out' with two boxes: one for 'Selling on Amazon' (listing items for free and sell to millions) and another for 'Tax Software' (order or download now).

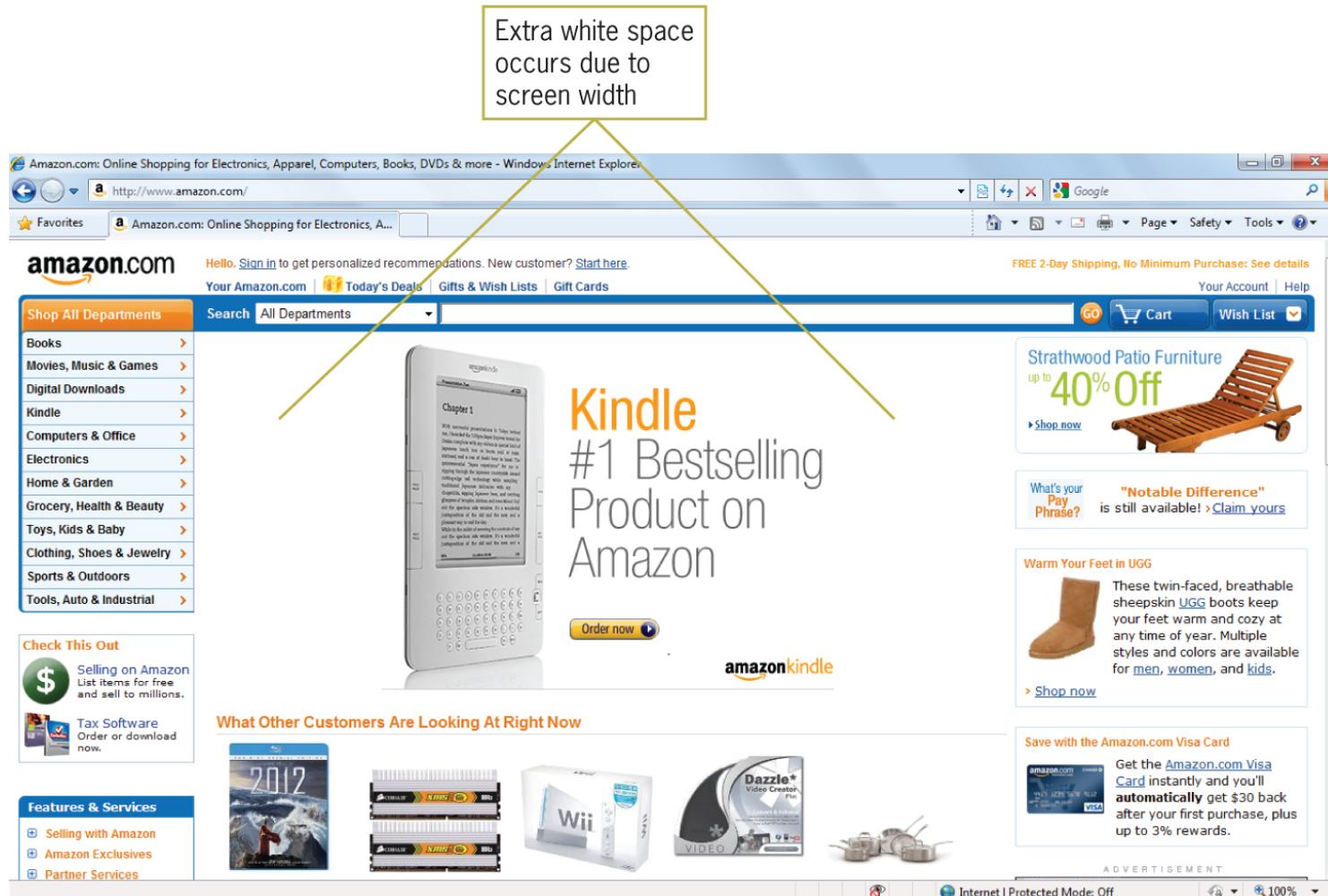
At the bottom of the sidebar is a 'Features & Services' section with links for 'Selling with Amazon', 'Amazon Exclusives', 'Partner Services', and 'For Businesses'.

The main content area also features sections for 'What Other Customers Are Looking At Right Now' with images of a Toshiba DR420 DVD player, a Kindle Wireless, and a copy of 'The Twilight Saga: New Moon'.

On the right side of the page, there's a box for the 'Kodak Pulse' digital frame, a section for saving with the Amazon.com Visa Card, and an advertisement for 'BEST PRICE GUARANTEED FOR 2 YEARS!'.

**Figure 2-2** The Amazon Web site at 1024 × 768 resolution





**Figure 2-3** The Amazon Web site at 1366 × 768 resolution

# Handheld Devices

- Many users now have handheld devices for Web browsing
- Must test on these devices as well
- Designing for handheld devices has many challenges
- Many Web sites now offer content designed for handhelds
- CSS Media Queries let you specify style rules for different device types

# Flexible Page Layouts

- Adapt to different screen resolutions
- Work especially well for text-based content
- Can pose a variety of design challenges
- The design must account for the movement of elements on the screen at different resolutions
- At high resolutions, your content can break apart



Width of columns  
at 1024 x 768 resolution

The screenshot shows the Wikipedia homepage as it would appear in a browser window at 1024x768 resolution. A yellow triangle points from the top center down to the main content area, which includes the 'Welcome to Wikipedia' message, featured articles, and news sections. The sidebar on the left contains links for navigation, search, interaction, and toolbox. The main content area is designed to be flexible and fit within the window's width.

**Figure 2-6** Using flexible design, content fills window at  $1024 \times 768$  resolution

Columns expand,  
text wraps to fit

The screenshot shows the Wikipedia homepage at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page). The layout is designed to be flexible, with columns expanding to fit the content. A yellow callout box points to the text "Columns expand, text wraps to fit". The main content area includes a featured article about the Kinzua Bridge, a "Did you know..." section, and a "In the news" section with a list of recent events and a thumbnail image of a stampede.

**Figure 2-7** Using flexible design, columns expand to fit at 1366 × 768 resolution



**Fixed columns**

**Flexible columns**

The Broads Authority - Mozilla Firefox  
File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help  
Homepage - Broads Authority http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/index.html  
Google Search: Go

Thursday 4 March | Sign In | Sitemap | A to Z | Help

**Broads Authority**  
The Broads - a member of the National Park family

**Home**  
**News**  
**Authority**  
**Visiting**  
**Boating**  
**Managing**  
**Education**  
**Projects**  
**Planning**  
**Contact**

**Looking after The Broads**

**Have Your Say**  
What do you think about the Broads Authority website? We would welcome your views and comments so that we can make your online experience as easy and enjoyable as possible.

**News**

**Major Broads tourism campaign to be launched at Boat and Caravan Show**  
The biggest collaborative campaign ever to promote the Broads as a leading UK tourism destination has been launched at the Caravan and Boat Show.

**Quick Links**

- ▶ Urgent Boating News
- ▶ Urgent Environmental News
- ▶ Vacancies
- ▶ Get Involved
- ▶ Photo Gallery
- ▶ Publications
- ▶ Broad Sheet February 2010
- ▶ Polkey's Mill Lottery Video
- ▶ 20 Years of the Broads Authority
- ▶ National Parks Passport
- ▶ How to find us
- ▶ Map of the Broads
- ▶ Met Office Weather
- ▶ Tide Tables
- ▶ Important Environmental Information
- ▶ Parish Pop In Sessions
- ▶ Whitlingham Parking Permits
- ▶ Winter Boating Guide
- ▶ Annual Accounts

**Events**

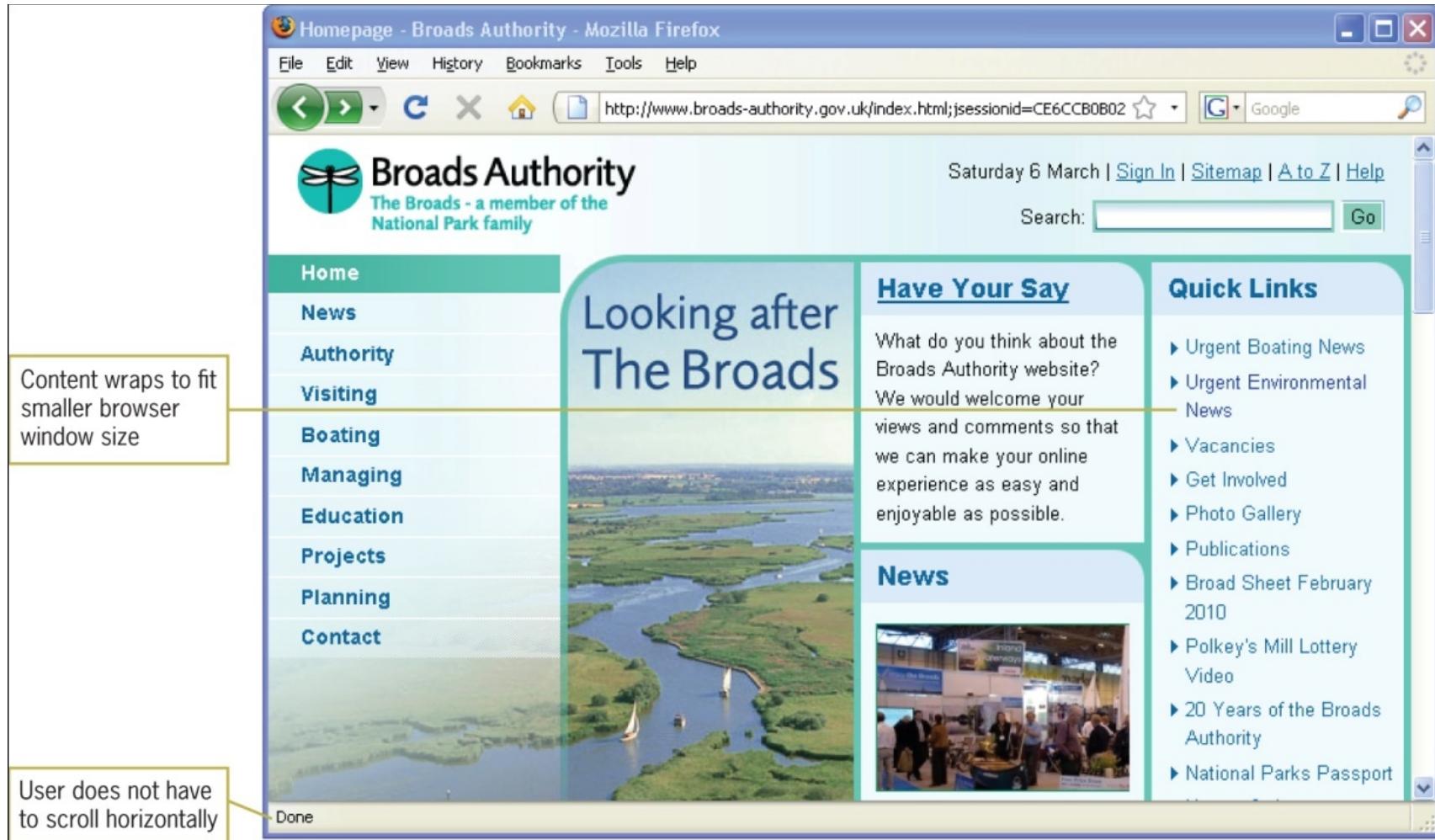
**Figure 2-8** Broads Authority Web site at 1024 × 768 resolution

**Flexible columns expand**

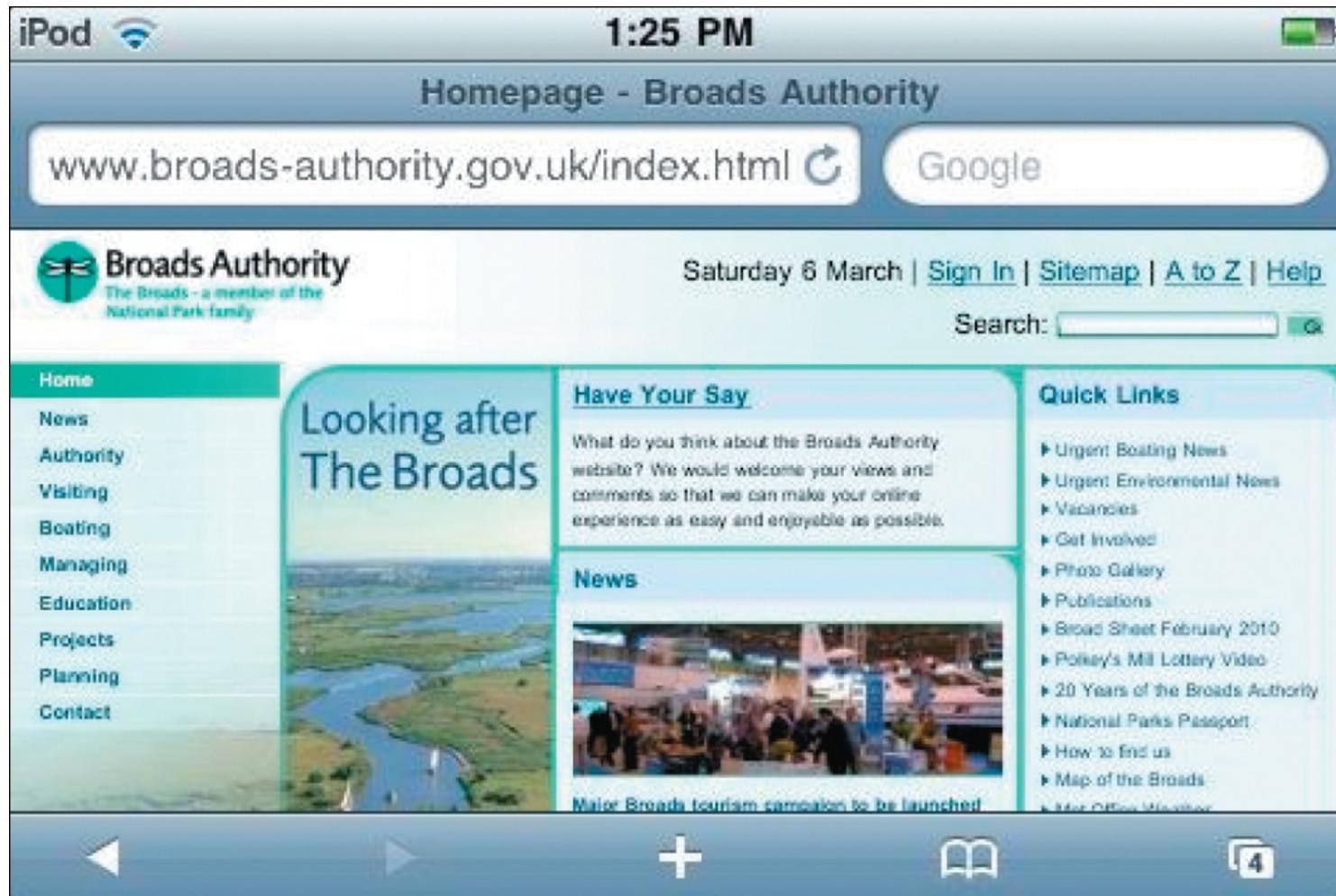
**Extra white space occurs due to screen width**

**Figure 2-9** Broads Authority Web site at 1366 × 768 resolution





**Figure 2-10** Broads Authority Web site at 800 × 600 resolution



**Figure 2-11** Broads Authority Web site on the iPhone

# Fixed-Width Page Layouts

Allows Web pages to be designed like print pages

Have consistent width and height

Designed to center in the browser window regardless of screen resolution

Easier to design than flexible layouts



Figure 2-13 Fixed-width design at 1366 × 768 resolution

# Suggestions for Solving the Screen Resolution Dilemma

## Flexible designs:

- User controls the view of the content
- Less chance of horizontal scrolling
- More flexibility for multiple devices
- Better suited to text-based layouts and simpler designs

## Fixed-width designs:

- Designer controls the view of the content
- Allow more complex page layouts
- More control over text length



# Crafting the Look and Feel of the Site



# Balance Design and Content

- Access to your content and user needs should guide your design
- Many sites have unnecessary design elements
- These factors can distract the user
- A Web site's design should complement the content and support the reader
- Always choose simple and direct designs that showcase content and allow easy access



# Plan for Easy Access to Your Information

- ❑ Information design is the most important factor in the success of your site
- ❑ Determines how users access content
- ❑ Organize your content
- ❑ Presented as a navigable set of information
- ❑ Provide navigation choices to the user
- ❑ Users may browse or look for specific information
- ❑ Anticipate and plan for user actions
- ❑ Provide direct links to your most popular pages



# Plan for Easy Presentation of Your Information

- Design information to be easy to read and legible
- Break text into reasonable segments
- Provide contrasting colors that are easy on the eye
- Use plenty of white space
- Readers have different online reading habits
- Include plenty of headings
- Control the width of your text



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Let's Go Travel Guides website. The page features a header with the site's logo and a banner for TopTrips.com. A navigation menu at the top includes links for Home, Destinations, Stories, Videos, Photos, Hotels, Deals, Books, and 50th B'DAY. Below the menu, a sidebar lists 'Stories by Destination' with categories for Asia & Pacific, Europe, and North America. The main content area displays an article titled 'Tales From The Crypt' by LetsGoEditors in Hungary (Magyarország) on Nov 23, 2009. The article text describes the legend of Echo Hill near Lake Balaton. Callouts highlight several design features:

- Search tool:** Points to the search bar in the header.
- Consistent navigation menu shows current location:** Points to the 'Destinations' dropdown in the header.
- Legible, easy-to-read article content:** Points to the main article text.
- Organized, hierarchical navigation links:** Points to the 'Stories by Destination' sidebar.

Figure 2-15 Clear presentation and easy access



# Creating a Unified Site Design

- Plan the unifying themes and structure for your site
- Communicate a visual theme with your design choices
- Consider more than each page
- Plan smooth transitions
- Use a grid to provide visual structure
- Include active white space



# Plan Smooth Transitions

- Plan to create a unified look
- Reinforce identifying elements
- Consistency and repetition create smooth transitions
- Place navigation elements in the same position on each page
- Use the same navigation graphics throughout the site



**Utility links—  
search, contact us,  
administrative**

Search: Google™ Custom Search Go

Los Angeles Zoo Administration | Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association | FAQ | Press Room | Contact Us | En Español

**BECOME A MEMBER!**  
Free Admissions  
Discounts and more!  
Find out how  
to become a  
Zoo member!  
[CLICK HERE ▶](#)

**flickr** **facebook**  
**YouTube** **twitter**

**Get Connected with the Zoo!**  
A variety of social networks make it easy to stay in touch - and the Zoo has gotten into the act so your Zoo experience doesn't have to end when you pull out of the parking lot.  
From Twitter to YouTube, you can get your wildlife fix wherever you are!  
[» Click here to learn more!](#)

**Check it Out!**  
Have you visited our amazing flamingos? These birds' most noticeable features are probably their long, skinny legs—which are longer in relation to body size than any other bird. They often stand on just one leg, even while sleeping, with the other tucked up close to their body. Besides being comfortable for the animal, this posture helps reduce heat loss through the legs and feet.  
[» Click here to learn more about the Chilean flamingo!](#)

**HOURS:**  
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
every day  
(except December 25)

Visit L.A.'s Zoo & Aquarium for ONE great price!  
Click here now for this limited time offer.

**ZOO CAMP SPRING 2010**

**Education**

**Membership**

**Support**

**Consistent logo  
and site navigation**

Figure 2-16 Los Angeles Zoo Web site main page

Logo appears in the same place on each page, providing consistency

Navigation shows current section and choices

The screenshot shows the Los Angeles Zoo & Botanical Gardens website. At the top left is the logo. At the top right is a search bar with 'Google Custom Search' and a 'Go' button. Below the header are links for 'Los Angeles Zoo Administration', 'Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association', 'FAQ', 'Press Room', 'Contact Us', and 'En Español'. A banner image of a seal and a cactus flower is at the top. Below it is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Animals & Plants'. The main content area has a red header 'Animals & Plants'. It includes sections for 'Birds' (with a parrot image), 'Mammals' (with a lion image), 'Reptiles' (with a lizard image), 'Invertebrates' (with a tarantula image), 'Amphibians' (with a frog image), and 'Botanical Gardens' (with a yellow flower image). Each section has a brief description and a link to 'Click here to find out about [category] at the Los Angeles Zoo'.

**Figure 2-17** Los Angeles Zoo Web site secondary page

# Use a Grid to Provide Visual Structure

- The structure of a Web page is imposed by the grid
- The grid is a conceptual layout device
- The grid aligns your content into columns and rows
- Impose a grid to provide visual consistency
- You can break out of the grid to provide variety and highlight information
- The grid provides page margins and gutters between elements



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News UK World United States Politics Media Education Society Science Technology Football Guardian Observer

**Breaking news:** GOP senator urges Obama to shift on Iraqis cast their votes amid rocket attacks that killed 25 today

## Iraqis brave bombs and rockets to go to the polls

Turnout expected to be high despite rocket attacks that killed 25 today

- Iraqis cast their votes amid insurgent violence
- Ranj Alaaldin: Iraq leaving sectarianism behind

## MoD to replace Snatch Land Rovers

Fleet of new armoured vehicles costing £100m seen as admission that existing Snatches not up to the job

- Brown accused over Henin and visit
- Regiment suffers third death in five days

## Venables in prison 'over child porn'

Straw refuses to comment on reports Bulger killer was recalled due to alleged sex offences

- Venables revealed identity to others before recall
- Venables and Sutcliffe: prisoners of the past

## Family linked to UK boy's abduction

Pakistani minister repeats police claim that 'someone close to family' helped kidnapers of Sahil Saeed, five

## Queen and Blair dragged into tax row

Ashcroft row casts shadow over advice given to monarch as more details emerge about his role

- Ashcroft goes from Tony's favour to election liability
- Andrew Rawnsley: you can smell the anxious sweat

**FA Cup**  
Chelsea 2-0 Stoke City

## Three dead in Glasgow flat plunge

Police called to high-rise Red Road complex after three people fell to their deaths this morning

## Briton jailed in US for £50m fraud

Cancer victims and celebrities among victims of conman who played role of upper-class businessman

## Energy-saving bulbs 'left in drawers'

Millions of green lightbulbs sent out by overzealous energy companies are not being used, survey reveals

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Live coverage

## Football – LIVE

Everton v Hull

## Celebrity style

Cheryl Cole

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Find 1,000s of offers

Today's paper

The Observer

Observer Sport

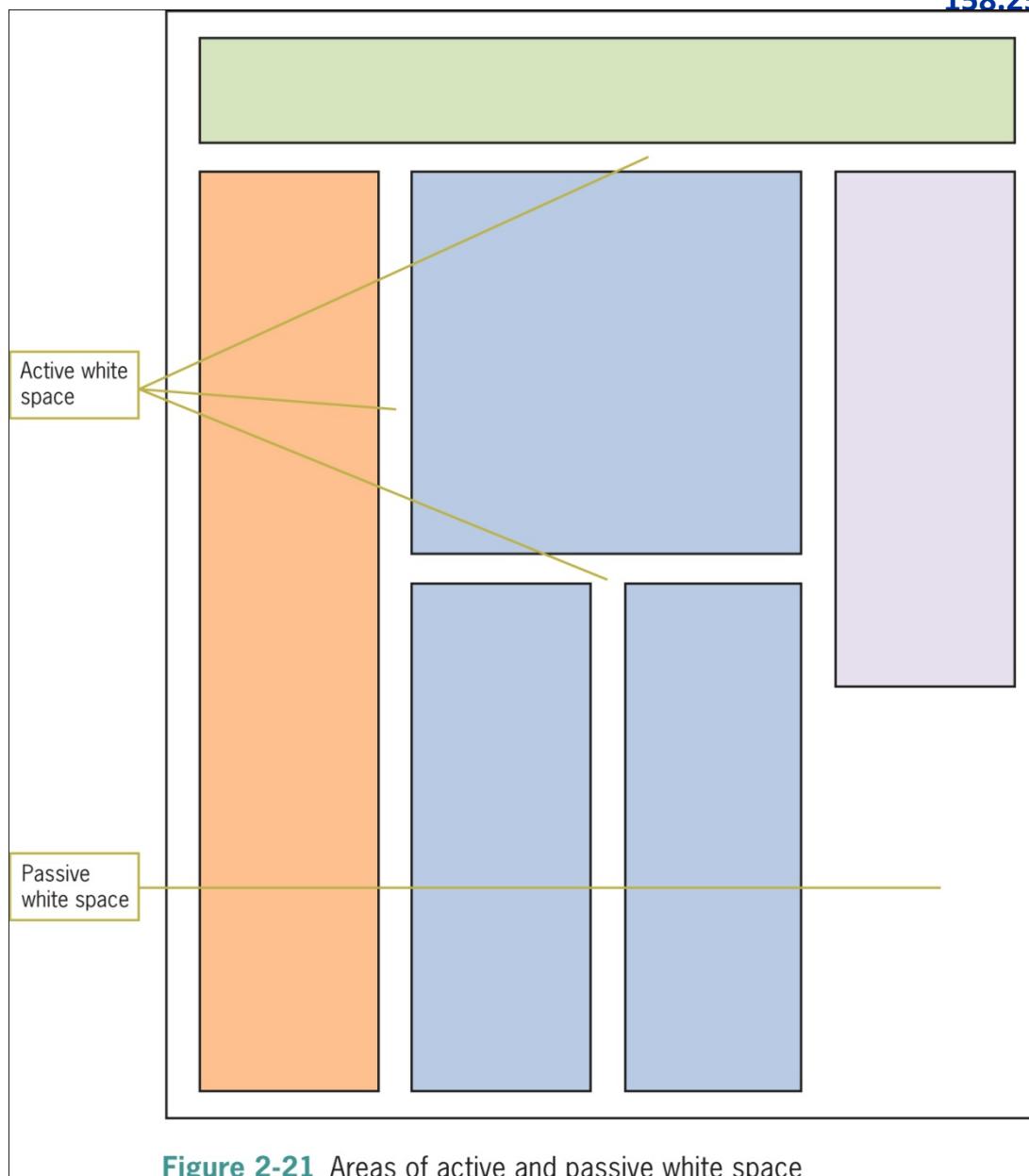
Observer Review

Figure 2-20 Grid provides visual structure

# Use Active White Space

- White spaces are the blank areas of the page
- Use white space deliberately
- Good use of white space guides the reader
- White space that is used deliberately is called active white space
- Passive white space is the result of mismatched shapes
- Plenty of active white space reduces clutter and clarifies organization





**Figure 2-21** Areas of active and passive white space

Smithsonian  
National Air and Space Museum

Membership | E-newsletter | Help | SEARCH | Advanced Search

Visit | Museum | News & Events | Exhibitions | Collections | Education | Research | Get Involved

# MOVING BEYOND EARTH

New Exhibition  
First Stage Now Open

1 2 3 4 5

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- March 07 - "Hell Hawks" and "Air Force One"
- March 07 - "Captain Jepp" and "Turbulence Before Take-off"
- March 10 - From Night Bombing to the Outer Solar System: 60 Years of Imaging Radar

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**Heritage Family Days**  
Special Family Days celebrate ethnic & cultural diversity in aviation & space history. Next event March 13.

**Exploring Space Lecture**  
Where the Hot Stuff Is: Volcanoes of the Earth and Solar System. Request tickets or watch live webcast March 11.

**Hubble 3D in IMAX**  
New IMAX film starts March 19 at the Lockheed Martin IMAX Theater.

**Planetary Tectonics by Tom Watters**  
This new book exploring tectonics throughout the solar system is an essential source for planetary geologists.

**AirSpace Blog**  
Get an insider's look at what goes on behind-the-scenes at the National Air and Space Museum.

**VISIT THE MUSEUM**

The National Air and Space Museum  
NATIONAL MALL BUILDING

The National Air and Space Museum  
STEVEN F. UDVAR-HAZY CENTER

**GIVING**

- Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center Phase Two
- Membership - Join or Renew Online!
- Wall of Honor
- Special Events
- Donald S. Lopez Memorial Fund

**CONNECT**

Facebook National Mall Building  
Facebook Udvar-Hazy Center  
Twitter Flickr YouTube

National Air and Space Museum Home | Terms of Use | Privacy | Contact | Links | Smithsonian Institution

Figure 2-22 Active white space enhances legibility



# Designing for the User

- ❑ Keep your design efforts centered solely on your user
- ❑ Find out what users expect from your site
- ❑ If you can, survey them with an online form
- ❑ Create a profile of your average user
- ❑ What do users want when they get to your site?



# Design for Interaction

- Think about how the user wants to interact with your information
- Design for your content type
- Decide whether the user is likely to read or scan
- Design pages for reading or scanning based on the content type



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March 7, 2010

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**Icelanders Reject Payback No Matter The Cost**  
The strident refusal to pay back debt may actually create another obstacle to economic recovery.  
On Weekend Edition Sunday

**Low Rates Keep Savers Suffering For Borrowers' Boon**  
These days, CD interest rates are so low, many investors feel cheated.  
On Weekend Edition Sunday

**Naps May Improve Performance Later In The Day**  
A Berkeley researcher says taking naps helps your brain absorb information.

**more news**

- Iraqis Defy Violence, Intimidation To Vote
- Companies 'Named And Shamed' For Bad Behavior
- Nigerian Violence Claims More Than 200
- Jerry Brown's Inside-Out Bid to Run California Again
- Unemployed Keep Busy As Weeks Become Months
- School's Bid To Punish Off-Campus Acts Draws Suit
- Top Pakistani Taliban Leader May Be Dead
- Moving Sept. 11 Trial May Have Political Implications

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**STRANGE NEWS**

**One Fish, Big Fish, Old Fish: 'Buttkiss'**

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**this week's challenge**

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must hear

**When Oscar's Best Picture Really Isn't (And Why)**  
All Things Considered, March 6, 2010

"Academy tends to shy away from things that are either overtly sexual or are really violent. ... That's because the folks who are voting for these tend to be a good deal older than the general public."

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Article abstract

Meaningful headings

Figure 2-26 Page designed for scanning

March 10, 2010

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News > U.S. > Education

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## Proposed Set Of Academic Standards Unveiled

March 10, 2010

text size A A A

A group of governors and school superintendents released a proposed set of academic standards Wednesday that lays out what students should be learning in math and English every year from kindergarten through high school.

The plan is part of a push to iron out the jumble of state standards and raise expectations for American schools. Forty-eight states and the District of Columbia joined in the effort to develop national standards, leaving Alaska and Texas as the lone holdouts.

**School Standards**

- [Read The State Education Standards Blueprint](#)

If proponents have their way, third-graders across the country will understand the function of adjectives and adverbs, while eighth-graders will be introduced to the Pythagorean theorem. More broadly, the standards are meant to prepare kids for the possibility of college.

The proposal, backed by President Obama, was unveiled by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. It emerged with surprisingly broad agreement after years of bitter debate between the federal government and the states over who should set academic standards.

Chris Minnich, director of standards and assessment for the Council of Chief State School Officers, told The Associated Press that the process of coming up with the new standards put a premium on consensus-building.

But some education experts have criticized the process, saying adoption of the new standards will not be voluntary.

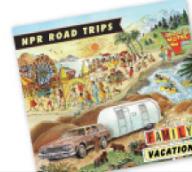
"First they tried to tie it to Race to the Top money ... now they're trying to tie it to Title I funds," said Robert Scott, Texas' commissioner of education.

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Generous main article

Sidebar links to related content

Figure 2-27 Page designed for reading

# Design for Location

The user can traverse a page in a variety of ways  
Consider the different ways your user could be viewing your Web pages



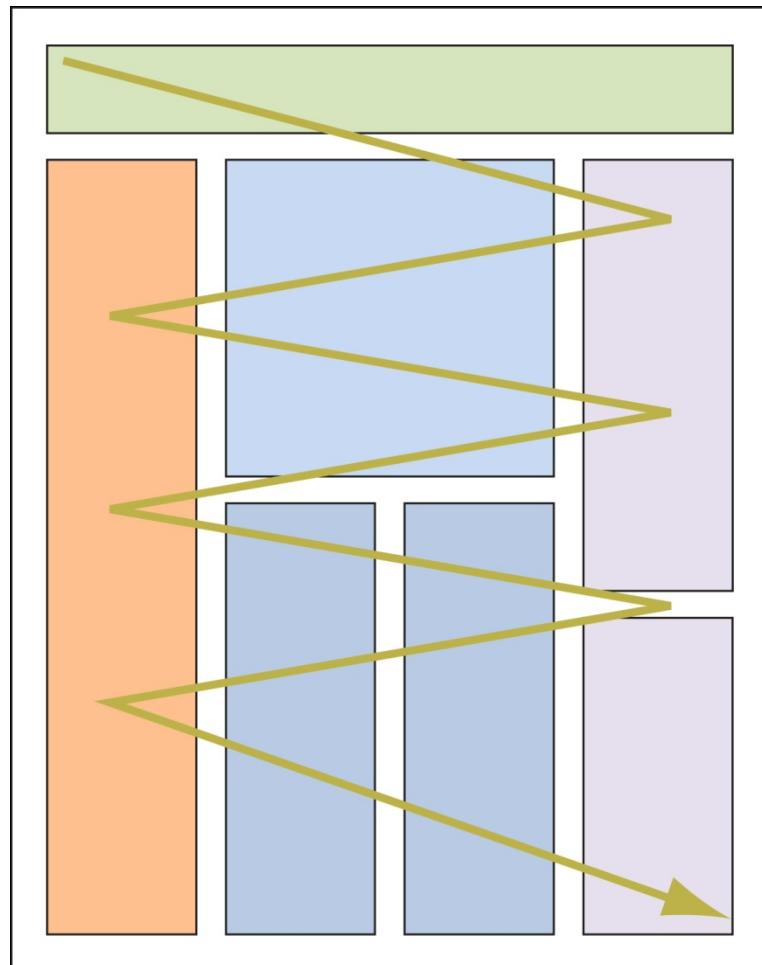
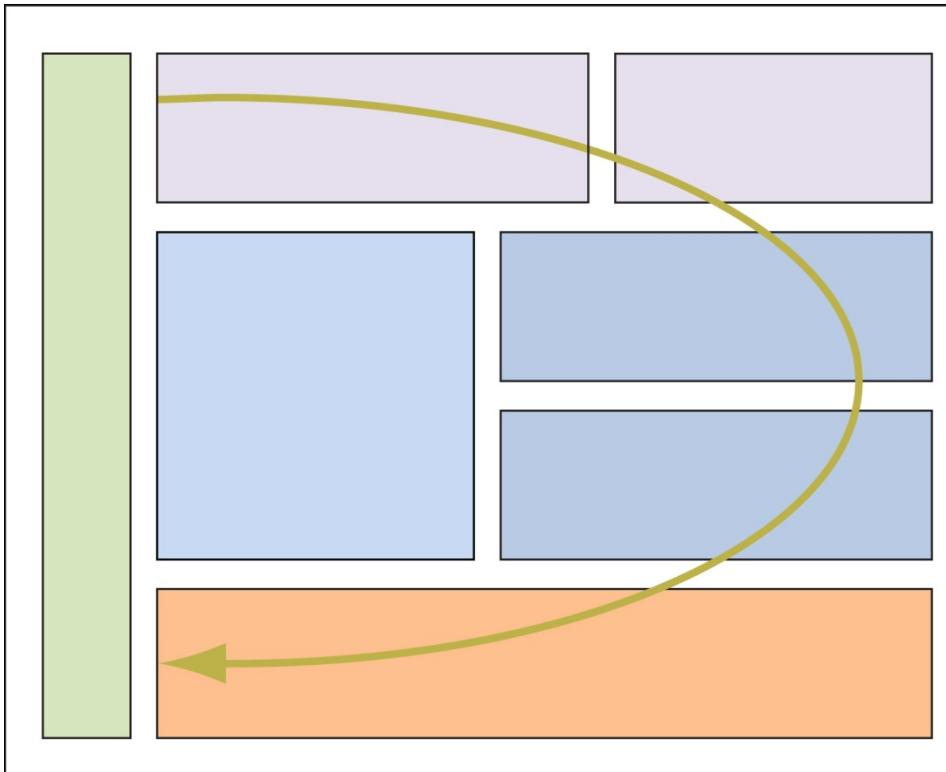


Figure 2-28 Paper-based reading pattern





**Figure 2-29** Landscape-based viewing pattern

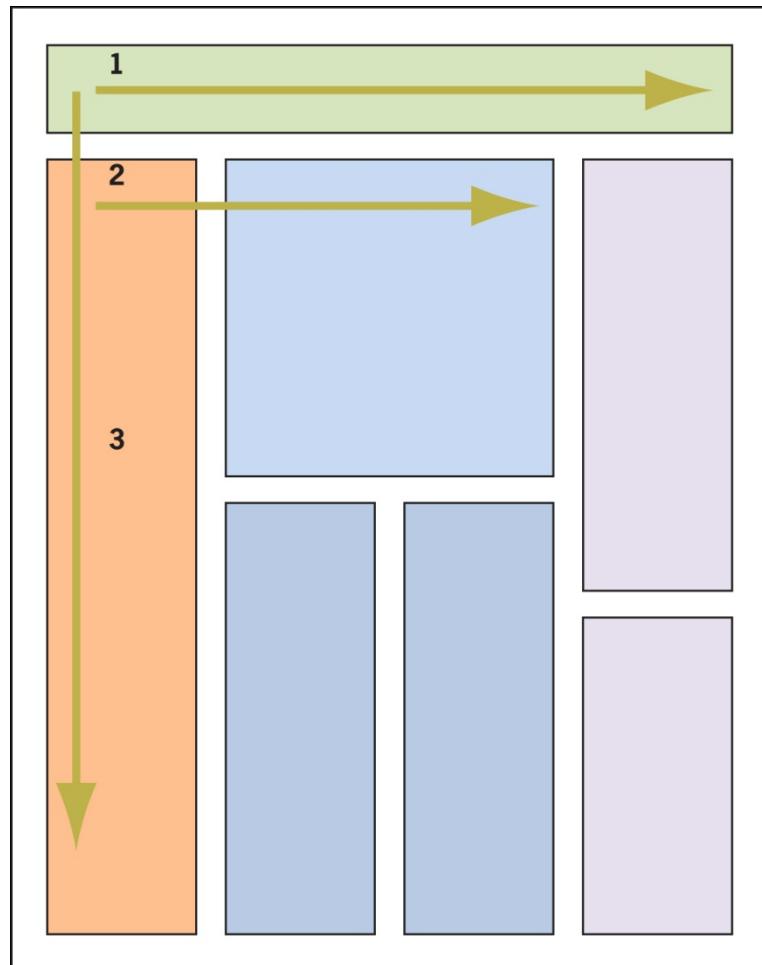
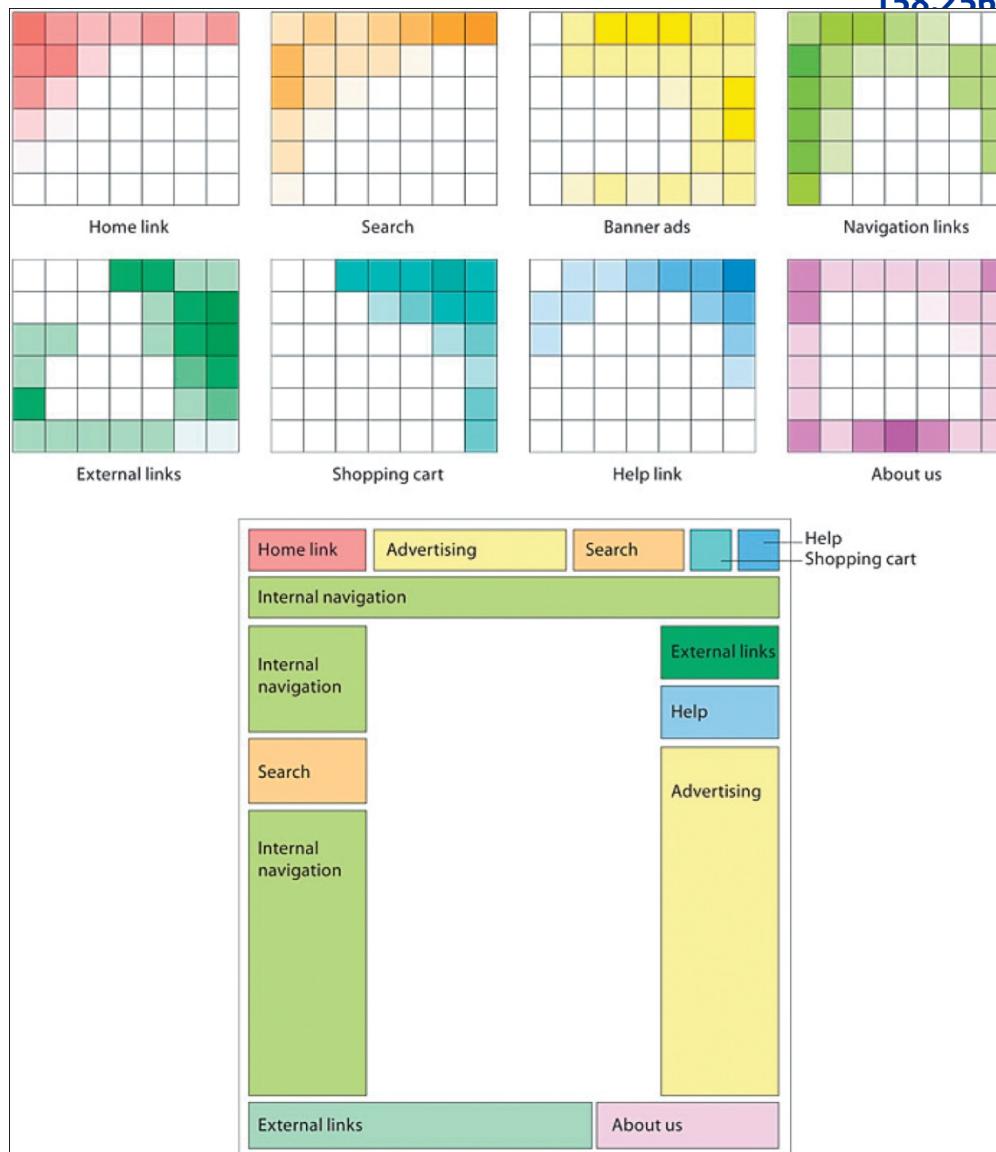


Figure 2-30 F-based viewing pattern

# Design for Location

- Know what expectations your user might have about your navigation and content
- Users have come to expect common elements of a Web page in certain locations





**Figure 2-31** User expectations of Web page element locations  
(Source: Courtesy of Patrick J. Lynch and Sarah Horton)

# Keep a Flat Hierarchy

- ❑ Do not make users navigate through too many layers of information
- ❑ Includes section on topic-level navigation pages
- ❑ Create content sections organized logically by theme
- ❑ Follow the three clicks rule
- ❑ Use consistent navigation
- ❑ Consider providing a site map



# Use Hypertext Linking Effectively

- You determine where users can go on your Web site
- Let users move from page to page or section to section as they please
- Use contextual linking
- Avoid the use of “click here”
- Provide plenty of navigation options



# How Much Content Is Too Much?

- ❑ Don't overcrowd your pages with information;
- ❑ Be conscious of the cognitive load of the user;
- ❑ Carefully divide content into smaller sections;
- ❑ Present content in a structured manner;
- ❑ Provide plenty of navigation cues.



# Reformat Content for Online Presentation

- Cannot post print documents directly online
- Text length, font, and content length do not transfer well
- Re-design paper content for online display



# Designing for Accessibility

- ❑ Your audience includes users who have physical challenges;
- ❑ Design your pages to be accessible to users with disabilities or technological barriers;
- ❑ Common accessibility features can be unobtrusive additions to your site;
- ❑ Developing accessible content naturally leads to creating good design; and
- ❑ Follow W3 Accessibility Initiative guidelines at [www.w3.org/WAI/](http://www.w3.org/WAI/) .



# Designing for Accessibility

- **Perceivable** — Information and user interface components must be perceivable by users
- **Operable** — User interface components must be operable by users
- **Understandable** — Information about the user interface and its operation must be understandable by users
- **Robust** — Content must be robust enough to be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies



Accessibility features

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# ENGLISH IN CHESTER

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING SPECIALISTS

The School    Chester    Courses    Travelling    Accommodation    Excursions    FAQs    Apply

## Welcome to English in Chester!

English in Chester, established in 1976, is a medium-sized, owner- managed School. We are a team of professional and caring people dedicated to providing a first class experience for every student.

### Why study with us?

- We put you at the centre of our thinking
- We are the only accredited, year-round English language school in Chester
- We are in the centre of a fantastic, very English, city in a wonderful region
- We are easy to get to from our local airports
- We offer an excellent service at sensible prices
- We have many different courses to meet your needs

new courses for 2010



Figure 2-37 English in Chester Web site accessibility features

# Summary

- Craft an appropriate look and feel;
- Make a design portable;
- Plan for easy access to your information;
- Design a unified look for your site;
- Use active white space;
- Know your audience;
- Leverage hypertext linking;
- Design text for online display;
- Test your work continually as you build; and
- Build accessibility from the start.