

Web Page Design

by
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Design Can determine . . .

- how long a visitor will stay at your page.
- the comfort or frustration level of visitor.
- if your visitor will return.
- if your visitor will contribute.

My Resources

- Mike Markel's Web Page Design [tutorial](#)
 - Bedford/St. Martin's, a college publisher specializing in the humanities.
- Supported by research
 - [useit.com](#): Jakob Nielsen's Website
- Other web page design Internet sites
 - Including USGenWeb and IAGenWeb [guidelines](#).

1. Know Your Audience

- What age are they?
- Does the age need special consideration?
- Why do they visit your site?
- Do you want visitors to return?

Genealogy Audience

- Middle-age to older adults
- **Research** on “seniors” ages 55+
 - Current websites are **twice as hard** to use for seniors than for non-seniors.
 - Among the obvious physical attributes often affected by the human aging process are:
 - eyesight
 - precision of movement
 - memory

Readability for Older Adults

Font

- Allow user to change font size in browser by not freezing text to a specific size.



Readability for Older Adults

- Use at least **12-point** type as the default for text.
- San-serif fonts are easier to read on a monitor while serif fonts are easier to read in print.
- Script is most difficult to read.

Readability for Older Adults

Which of these is easiest to read?

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

History and Heritage

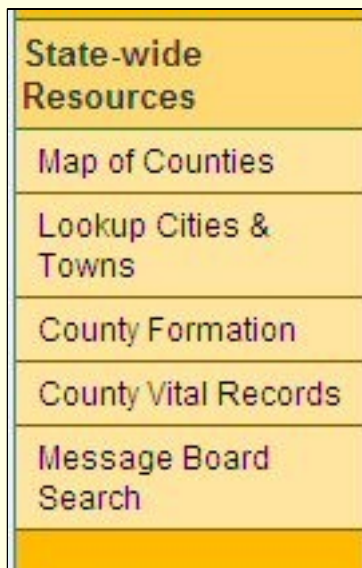
HISTORY AND HERITAGE

History and Heritage

Research shows that ALL CAP SERIF
FONTS are the most difficult to read.

Click-ability for Older Adults

- Large text size – for easier reading.
- Need space around link or icons – for users who are not steady with the mouse.



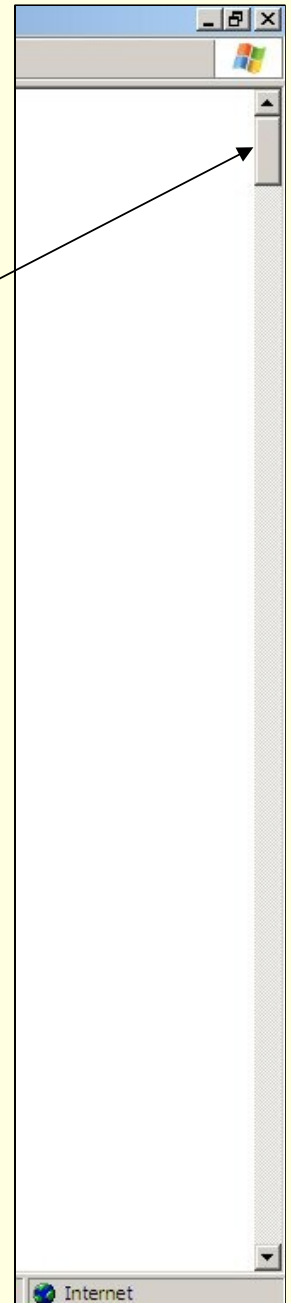
Larger size and space



Smaller size and space

Click-ability: Scrolling

- The need to scroll down a page to find information may be difficult for older adults who have trouble with tasks that requires precise movements.
- This GenWeb site has 20 screens to be clicked through to read all of the information.



More on Scrolling

- Users generally don't like to scroll (my new book discusses this in detail, giving statistics for how many users scroll various types of pages).
- So, when you design, you should consider how much users can see if they scroll only a screen full or two. [By Jakob Nielsen](#)

Iowa Counties Home Screen Lengths

1 screen lengths = 1 county

2 or 3 screens = 31 counties

4 to 6 screens = 41 counties

7 to 10 screens = 20 counties

11 to 12 screens = 5 counties

20 screens = 1 county

Two-thirds of our counties have home pages that need 4 or more scrolls.

Click-ability: Use standard link colors

And distinguish between visited and unvisited links.

- [This link](#) color is standard and changes to [this link](#) color after used. This is close to the industry standard.
- [This link](#) color is **not** standard and does not change color after used ([This link](#)) . This is not standard.

2. Know Your Purpose

- The IAGenWeb Project is dedicated to **gathering and presenting** Iowa genealogical and historical information for free, online access by researchers.
(IAGenWeb Bylaws)
- A professional web designer once said, “**If visitors want to find out the time and temperature, they’ll go to a weather site.**”

Comments by Iowa CCs

- “When I open a county page (in any state) I don't like seeing the history of how GenWeb got started or an “all about me” introduction or thank yous to those who have gone before.
 - That's not why I went to that page.
 - I'm there to learn about my ancestors.
 - I want to know what resources are available on that site that might help me.”

More Comments

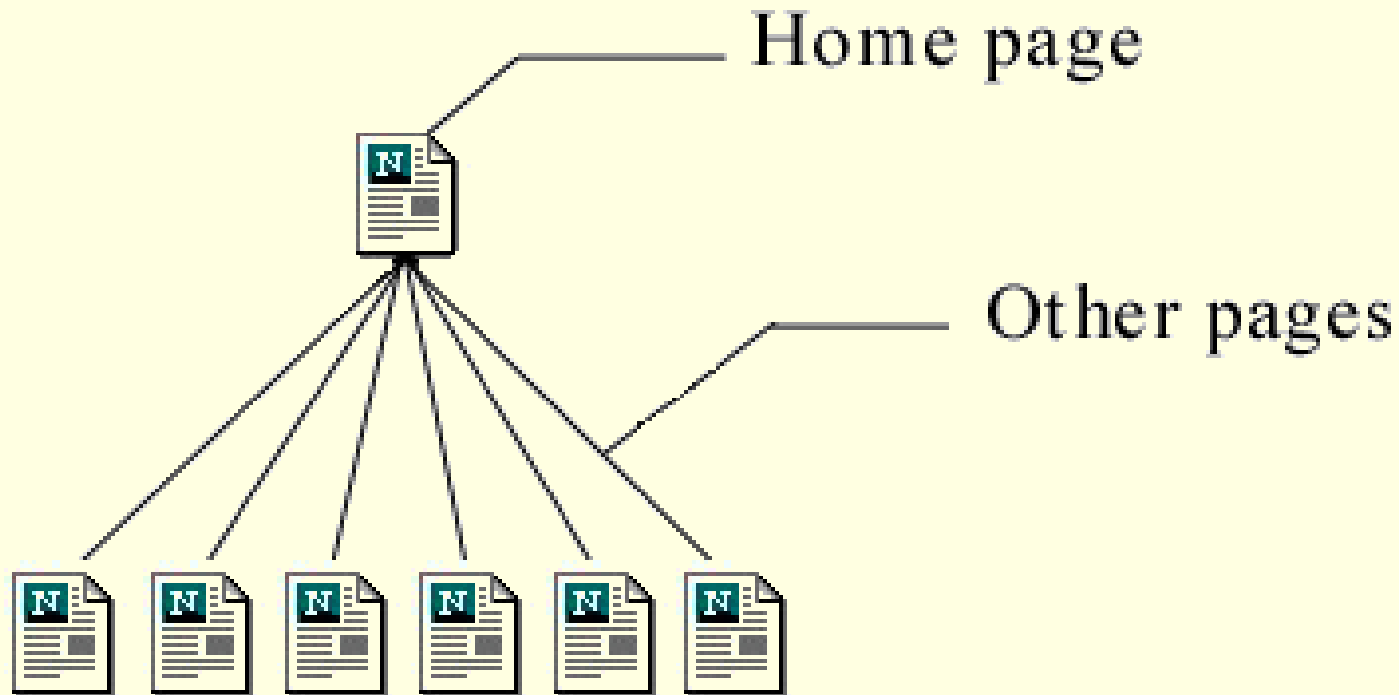
- “When the page loads I want to see the header and logos and below that the site menu. Just get right down to it.”
- “When I am researching I really don't care who is constructing the site. I am looking at the site as a resource file.”

3. Design Site and Its Pages

- Design of the site is as important as designing the individual pages.
- The **site design** depends on the amount of data you have.
- Design for download time. Most people will not wait more than **10 to 14 seconds** for a page to open.

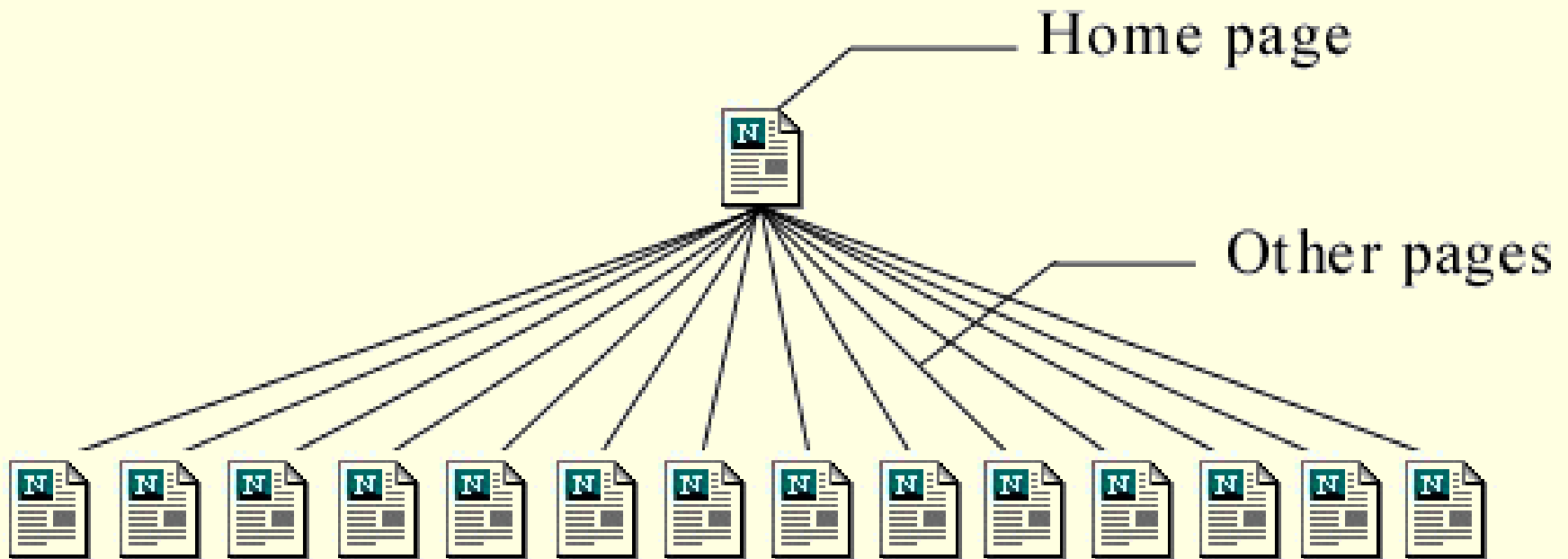
Shallow Site Design

Use when you have relative few pages.



Too Many Links on Home Page

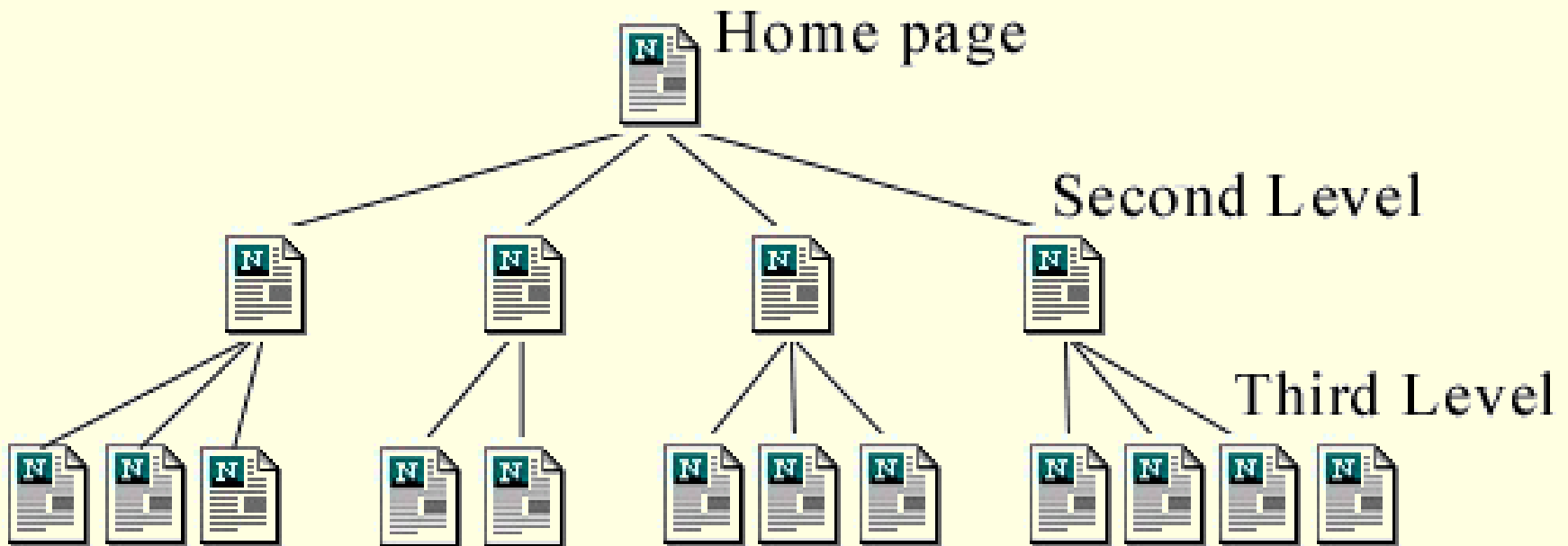
- Some readers are overwhelmed when they see all the links represented by this home page.



- This translates into how long the page is and length of time it takes to scroll to find information

Deeper Site Design

- A deeper design lets you create a hierarchy of information that makes the site easier to navigate.



Page Design

- Eye tracking visualizations show that users often read Web pages in an **F-shaped pattern**:
 - Users first read in a **horizontal movement**, usually across the upper part of the content area.
 - Then drop down a bit and read across in another **horizontal movement**.
 - Finally users scan the content's left side in a **vertical movement**.

[Research report](#)

Implications for Design

- **Users won't read your text thoroughly** in a word-by-word manner.
- **The first two paragraphs** must state the most important information.
- **Start subheads, paragraphs, and bullet points with information-carrying words** that users will notice when scanning down the left side of your content in the final stem of their F-behavior.
 - They'll read the third word on a line much less often than the first two words.

Basic Design Principles

1. *Use contrast.*

- Make your text stand out against the background.
- Use graphics or colors **ONLY** to signal important information.

Contrast

Need sharp contrast between text and background.

Plain Color Examples

Black on light yellow is one of the most contrasting.

Low Contrast

- Low contrast, whether it is dark or light colors are difficult to read.
- This is a better contrast
- Or Even this.
- But in general, dark backgrounds are more difficult to read.
- Bright colors such as this can cause eye fatigue.

Patterned Backgrounds

- Often make it nearly impossible to read the text.
- A patterned background needs to offer contrast and not interfere with the text.

Design Principles

1. Use spatial relationships to present information clearly.

- Items next to each other appear related to each other.
- Items in a bulleted list or table are related to each other.
- Use left to right orientation.

Design Principles

1. *Establish patterns.*

- The navigation links should appear in the same place on each page, and have the same design.
- Headers and footers should also be the same from page to page.

Basic Design Principles

1. Use moderation.

- Using too many colors **will confuse readers.**
- Filling every inch of the screen with information **will overwhelm readers.**
- Including meaningless graphics or sounds **will annoy readers.**

Basic Design Principles

1. Present a balanced look.

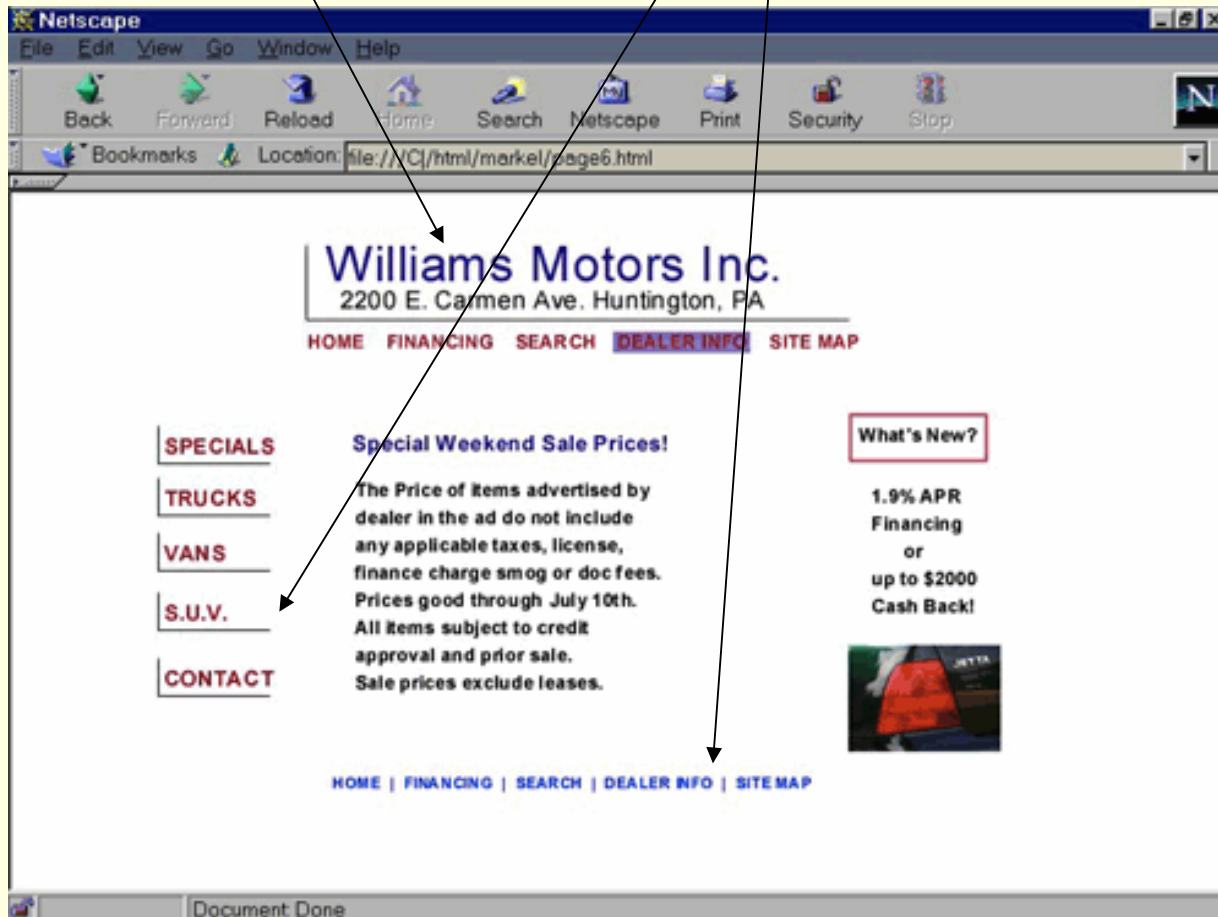
- Elements on a page should be placed so that the page appears visually balanced, not tilting precariously in one direction.

Good Home Page Design

- Fit on one screen.
- Quick download
- Easy to read
- Think of it as the Table of Contents in a book.

Good Web Page Design

- The **banner head** and the **navigation buttons** will appear on all pages, helping readers understand where they are and how to get around on the site.



Sample IAGenWeb home page on next slide
has the same elements:

Banner head

Simple navigation Buttons

Sample IAGenWeb Web Page

IAGenWeb Genealogy Project - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

IAGenWeb
Sample County

Project

Allows change of font size

Fits on 1 screen - barely

What's New

Records

People

Places

Local Resources

Surrounding Counties

Use our Boards for Research and to Submit Your Material

Download speed of this page
56K modem – 14.8 seconds
28 K modem – 30 seconds

To Volunteer

Menu links are size 12 font & double spaced

Uses size 12 font

What's new on this site... Please use the search information. I invite you to submit information for the site by using the IAGenWeb boards or contacting me directly with other types of files. [Barbara Hug](#), County Coordinator

pico search Search

Find ANY word Help

Site Search by PicoSearch

Courtesy of Steve William

Minnehaha Rock Nobles
Lyon Osceola
Lincoln Sioux O'Brien

Rice

Docs

Obits

Queries

IAGenWeb
IOWA IOWA
Gravestone Photo Project

Friends of
IAGENWEB

Support for IAGenWeb

JOIN OUR TEAM!
IAGenWeb Project

Download Speeds


- The number and size of graphics on the page directly affects the download speed.
 - Resize photo.
 - Use [Easy Thumbnails](#) and link to larger image.
 - [Example 1](#) – linked to larger photo on a separate web page
 - [Example 2](#) - linked directly to the photo.
 - Break up images so there are just a couple on each page.
 - Use FREE [Web Page Analyzer](#) to determine download speed.

Resized Sample IAGenWeb Web Page

IAGenWeb Genealogy Project - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Media



IAGenWeb Sample Count

Welcome to the best **free** genealogy site on the web and/or look around the site to find information. You can also contact me directly through the IAGenWeb boards or contacting me directly through the IAGenWeb Coordinator.

Search this site powered by [FreeFind](#)



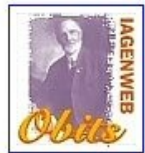


Find! Site Map

[What's New](#)
[People](#)
[Places](#)
[Records](#)
[Resources](#)

Surrounding Counties

- [Mahaska](#)
- [Marion](#)
- [Marshall](#)
- [Polk](#)
- [Poweshiek](#)
- [Story](#)

Use our Boards for Research and to Submit Your Material

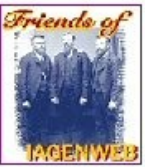


Page Last Updated 07/29/2006 18:47:44


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Support for IAGenWeb



To Volunteer

My Computer

Reduced board graphics from large to small and removed neighboring county map.

New download speed

56K modem – 9.4seconds

28K modem – 18.8 seconds

Avoid Web Cliches

- *Don't tell visitors to "check out" your site.* If the information looks interesting and useful, they will.
- *Don't say your site is "under construction."* If the site is a mess, don't launch it. If you want to tell visitors that you update the contents periodically, state when the site was last revised.
- *Don't call anything on your site "cool."* Very uncool.
- *Don't invite visitors to "come back often."* If their visit was worth it, they will. If it wasn't, they won't.

Summary

- Design for the visitor's needs, **NOT** your needs or likes.
- Just because YOU think
 - lavender is the best background color,
 - music on your site is neat,
 - animation is cute,
 - red and green link colors are cool,doesn't mean your VISITOR will.

Summary

- Believe that design IS important.
- Remember who your audience is and how to design for them.
- Keep your knowledge up to date by continuing to learn.
- Keep your site maintained and updated.
 - Use tools like [WC3](#) – Link Checker and [Web Page Analyzer](#)

Additional Information

- [Top Ten Mistakes in Web Design 1996-99](#)
- [Top Ten Web Design Mistakes in 2003](#)
- [Top Ten Web Design Mistakes in 2005](#)
- [How to make a terrible web page \(and why you shouldn't\)](#)

