

# User Friendly Web Design for Small Business

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## Today

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- Introduction
  - (Who is this guy?)
- What is Web Design?
- Aspects of Good Design
- Legal Considerations
- The Web Development Process
- Review



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## Introduction

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Who is this guy?



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**Education**

- Originally self-taught
- Trained in...
  - Database design/development
  - Graphic Design
  - Several languages (CFML, JavaScript, etc.)
  - Various Content Management Systems (CMS)
    - Rhythmyx, Ektron, etc.
  - B.S. in Information Technology and Visual Communications

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**Education**

- Short list of programming languages
  - Web-based
    - ColdFusion, ASP, PHP, JSP
  - OOP
    - ASP.NET, VB.NET, C#, Java
  - Scripting
    - JavaScript, ActionScript, SMIL
- Continual learning process

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**Experience**

- 13+ years of experience
- Full range of development
  - Project Management
  - Environmental Metrics
  - Graphic and User-Interface design
  - Coding
  - Content Writing
  - Database design/management
  - Server Development

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### Experience

- 3 years - Mercy Hospital - Webmaster
- 6 years – Iowa Public Television – Webmaster
- 3 years – Ovation Marketing – Web Manager
- Southeast Technical College
  - Webmaster/Developer
- Teaching @ Western Technical College
  - Dreamweaver I, II, III
  - E-Commerce
  - Lecture Series
- Continued Freelance projects




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### Some of My Clients




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### Who are you?

What do you hope to learn?




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# What is Web Design?

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Defining an obscure term



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## Web Design is...

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- Graphic look and feel
  - Graphic Design
- The structure of pages
  - User Interface (UI)
- The structure of the site
  - Site Map



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## Good Design...

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- Keeps the user in mind
- Makes things easy to find
  - For all users
- Supports the *brand*
  - Looks like **your** site
- Involves structure, UI, and graphics
- Let's look at each
  - In reverse order



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How pages relate

# STRUCTURE



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## Aspects of Site Structure

- Site structure is how pages relate
- Ease of finding content in site
- No set formula
  - Based on developing conventions
- Developed based on needs
- Expressed in *site maps*



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## Site Maps

- Site Map
  - Visual Structure of the site
  - Drawn during production
  - Changes only slightly over time



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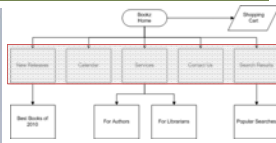
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## Site Maps



- Begins at home page
- First rows shows the main navigation
  - Called "Level 2"




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## Types of Structure

### Tall Structure



### Broad Structure




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## Tall Structure

### Advantages

- Limits decisions
- More focused
- In-depth content
  - Less on each page
- Easier user tracking

### Drawbacks

- Limits options
- Less inter-page linking
- Harder to find things
  - (Relies on search)
- Adding items requires extra content (pages)




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## Broad Structure



- Advantages**
  - Many options up front
  - Abundant choices throughout
  - Easier to add items
- Drawbacks**
  - May confuse users
  - Requires shifting navigation
  - New items not as noticeable

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## Examples

- Tall Structure**
  - Many Blog Sites

blog.twitter.com
- Broad Structure**
  - Portal Sites

yahoo.com

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## Site Structure Best Practices

- Map your site!
  - Now and at redesign
- Choose a balance between tall and broad
- Above all, keep the user in mind

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User Interface (UI)

## PAGE STRUCTURE

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### Aspects of UI

- Mixture of usability and aesthetics
- Considers the technology used
- Based on cognitive psychology
- Often applied to software
- Is the *true* breaking point
  - Good UI, good site
  - Bad UI, bad site

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### UI Considerations

- Intuitiveness
  - 10-second decision
- Learning curve
  - All sites have them
  - Best when emulated
- Integrates with graphic design
- Looks at the *Lowest Common User*

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## UI Principles

- Structure
  - Content is well organized
- Simplicity
  - Communicates simply, in user's language
- Visibility
  - Doesn't overwhelm or distract
- Feedback
  - Users know when things change and why
- Tolerance
  - Mistakes are caught and corrected (e.g. forms)
- Reuse
  - What works one place, works the same throughout

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principles\\_of\\_User\\_Interface\\_Design](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principles_of_User_Interface_Design)



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## Bad Web UI

- Difficult to navigate
- Confusing
- High learning curve
- Distracts from content
- Doesn't consider all users
- Uses the emerging technology



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## Good Web UI

- Is consistent
- Easy to navigate
- Intuitive
- Works across browsers
- Explains the rules
- Groups things appropriately



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## UI Mantra

- Each page has a purpose
- 90% of the page supports a purpose
- 80% of the Home page supports a purpose
- Examples...



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## UI Best Practices

- Don't confuse the user
  - Avoid frames and pop-ups
- Use text with icons
- Avoid non-standard widgets
- Don't let anything move
  - Including advertising
- Emulate how similar sites operate
  - (e.g. BN.com v. Amazon.com)
- Avoid confusing language
  - Abbreviations, lingo, etc.

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More than just paint on the walls  
**GRAPHIC DESIGN**

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## Aspects of Graphic Web Design

- Supports the brand identity
  - It looks like **your** site
- Uses color effectively
  - Pays attention to *Web-safe colors*
  - Stays within a palette
- Looks good in all browsers/platforms
- Accessible to all visitors
- Follows graphic design principles
  - Balance, organization, flow, etc.



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## Number One Rule

No Web site is ever designed...  
...they are developed



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## Bad Web Design

- Isn't branded
- Looks wrong in different browsers
- Confuses users
- Ignores impaired users
- Is inconsistent
- Falls in love with itself
- Requires a particular browser, setting, etc.



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## Good Web Design

- Is well-branded
- Puts the user first
- Follows design principles
- Conveys a mood
- Stays consistent
- Puts function before form



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## Best Graphic Design Practices

- Brand well!
  - Play design off your logo
  - Make sure all your material looks related
- Don't stick to templates
  - Good starting points, however
- Keep alternative browsers in mind
  - Alternative users too
- Test in multiple browsers/platforms
- Remember, not everyone has that font
- Avoid music and Flash
  - Rarely necessary, seldom beneficial

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## Legal Considerations

Why this isn't just fun and games

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## Legal Considerations

- Revolves around accessibility
- All users - nearly identical access
- Techniques involved help all users
- Active legislation is in place
- Lots of resources top help



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## Legislation

- Section 508 of the RA (1998)
  - Specifically addresses Web Usability
  - Use as the bellwether for usability
  - [www.section508.gov](http://www.section508.gov)
- American's with Disabilities Act (ADA)
  - Does *not* specifically address the Web
  - Brick/Mortar + Web site
    - Both are then covered



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## Cases

- Department of Justice v. Ticketmaster 
  - December 2005
  - Web users w/o disability had advantage
    - Could access tickets in advance
  - Ticketmaster agreed to phone updates
    - Update Web site in next year
  - Charges dropped

More info: <http://www.ada.gov/news/tr0206.htm>



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### Cases

- National Federation of the Blind v. Target Corporation
  - February 2006
  - Difficult for visually impaired users
  - Settlement
    - \$6,000,000 + \$3,740,000 in legal fees



More info: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Federation\\_of\\_the\\_Blind\\_v.\\_Target\\_Corporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Federation_of_the_Blind_v._Target_Corporation)

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### Users to Consider

- Visually impaired (1.5 million Web users)
- Color-blind users
- Hearing impaired
- Keyboard navigators
- Alternative Browser users
  - Smart Phones
  - PDA's

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### What to look for...

- Table-less design
  - Cascading Style Sheet (CSS) based
- "Alt" text for each image
- Text paired with icons
- Good contrast in color usage
- Labels for form fields
- Synchronous captioning for video
- Very careful use of Flash
  - Flash is getting much better

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## Check Your Site

- WebAIM.org
  - <http://wave.webaim.org>
    - Exceptionally useful!
- W3C Accessibility Initiative
  - Leaders in Web progress
  - <http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/accessibility>
- Web developers
  - User tools to test usability
  - Good practice = good usability




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## Web Development Process

The basic steps




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## Web Workflow

Analysis	Project Definition	Design & Develop	Content	Coding	Test & Launch
Needs Assessment	Project Requirements	Site Mapping	Write Content	Planning	Internal Testing
User Analysis	Technical Definitions	Database Design	Content into Site	Database	Beta Testing
Technological Analysis	Maintenance Schedule	Creative	Metadata	Coding	Launch
	Content Requirements	Develop Pages		Confirmation	Beyond
<i>Activities</i>					
Conduct Client Survey	Requirements Document?	Database Design	Internal Content Review	Site - Ready for Testing?	Site - Needs Enhancement?
Conduct Client Survey	Functional Design Document?	Site Map?	Content Provided	Content in Code?	Site - Needs Completed?
Project Summary?	Maintenance Plan (MMP)?	Wire Frame?	Content in Code?	Content in Content?	Site Live?
	Deliverables Schedule?	Internal Creative Review	Content in Content?	Content into Site	Maintenance Schedule (MMP)?
		Create Content in Code?	Content into Site		
		Create Content in Content?			
		Create Content in Product?			
		Database Structure (if necessary)?			




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## Analysis

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<b>Needs Assessment</b> Outline current functionality Determine new requirements Overview client initiatives	<b>5% of Project Budget</b>
<b>User Analysis</b> Define customer/user Product/company perception Outline expected use Conduct interviews	<b>Milestones</b> Send Client Survey* Completed Client Survey Project Summary*
<b>Technological Analysis</b> Define current technology Define available technology Determine final hosting Outline database needs	

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## Project Definition

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<b>Project Requirements</b> Determine deliverables and schedule Outline testing plan Define metrics for success	<b>10% of Project Budget</b>
<b>Technical Definitions</b> Outline functionality Determine required technology Define hosting requirements Define database requirements Define coding specifications	<b>Requirements Document*</b> Functions (scope) Document* Maintenance Plan (draft)* Deliverables Schedule*
<b>Maintenance Schedule</b> Outline maintenance needs Draft maintenance schedule	
<b>Content Requirements</b> Outline content areas Audit existing content	

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## Design & Development

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<b>Site Mapping</b> Determine user needs Define Web site sections Outline Navigation	<b>20% of Project Budget</b>
<b>Database Design</b> Develop database schema Determine database integration Identify data sources	<b>Creative Brief</b> Site Map* Wire Frame* Internal Creative Review Creative Concepts to Client* Creative Concepts Finalized Database Schema (if necessary)
<b>Creative</b> Write Creative Brief Develop concepts Internal review & updates Present concepts to client Finalize creative	
<b>Develop Pages</b> Create CSS and style guide Create templates for all levels	

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## Content & Coding

45% of Project Budget

Internal Content Review	Site - Ready for Testing*
Content Proofed	
Content to Client*	
Completed Content	
Content into Site	
Client approval of content	Migrate data
	Input new data as necessary

**Content Into Site**

Content placed in pages	<b>Coding</b>
Content moved to database	Determine methodology
Final proofing for data entry errors	Define coding requirements
	Code pages

**Metadata**

Audit content for SEO	<b>Confirmation</b>
Write keywords/metadata	Check data I/O
Keywords/metadata into pages	Final check of all pages

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## Testing & Launch

10% of Project Budget

<b>Internal Testing</b>	
Identify testing agents	
Develop internal schedule	
Conduct internal testing	
Make updates/repairs	

**Beta Testing**

Identify beta testers	
Write up task list and schedule	
Conduct beta testing	
Address issues	

**Launch**

Move site/database to live location	
Confirm DNS and server settings	
Confirm page functionality	

**Beyond**

Finalize maintenance schedule	
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Beta Testers Determined  
Beta Testing Completed  
Site Live\*  
Maintenance Schedule (final)\*

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## What about the other 10%?

Marketing!

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## Review

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The important points to remember



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## Tips for Small Business

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- Site Structure
  - Map your site!
  - Keep the user in mind
- User Interface
  - Consistency, Simplicity, Reuse
  - Don't confuse the user/browser
- Graphic Design
  - Be consistent with your brand
  - Use good design principles



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## Tips for Small Business

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- Getting the Job Done
  - Consider your user
  - Do the groundwork
  - Don't skip to the pictures
  - Don't be taken in by cheap scams
  - Be unique, be you!



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Questions

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