Day 11: Web Design Principles

Start with the end in mind.

Plan ahead for your website to cut down on time spent building and re-building. This will also give you a clear path to follow while working on your website.

Develop a clear goal and objective. Decide what you want to accomplish with your website and stay on course.

Your graphic elements should support your objective. If you have a children's website you should use colors and images that convey that your website has information pertaining to children.

The structure of your website should support your objective. Be sure that the information on your pages flows well from one page to the next.

Prepare for search engine optimization ahead of time. Decide how you want your viewers to find you and structure your website information around this.

Don't Bury Your Offering.

In this fast paced world today you only have 3 seconds to convince your visitors to stay on your website. Your message needs to be clear and uncluttered by too many graphics or unessential information.

Avoid "splash" pages. Splash pages are "intro" pages before your viewers get to see your website. They can contain videos or flash animations or graphics. If you believe that your objective for your website would benefit from and splash page or that your clientele would appreciate your splash page go ahead and use one.

Easy Navigation is Good Navigation.

- Best locations are across the top or down the left.
- Do not put the navigation above the header graphic.
- Be careful of multiple navigation locations.
- No more than three clicks to get anywhere.
- Rule of Sevens
- Use important words in navigation.
- No "back" clicking needed.
- Make it easy to learn about you or contact you.
- Use a "search" feature if you have a large website.

Keep a consistent, keyword rich navigation on all pages of your website to avoid back clicking and to make your navigation search engine friendly. Be sure to follow the Rule of Sevens for your main navigation. If you have more than seven pages consider using a drop down menu or a secondary navigation. For very large sites

with many pages and/or products we recommend adding a search feature on all pages.

Make it easy to understand your message.

Use fonts that are easy to read.

Use good contrast between the text and the background.

Have a consistent look and feel to all of your pages.

- Consistent navigation
- Consistent graphical elements
- Consistent layout.
- Pages should load quickly.
- Easy to order.

Keep a consistent look and feel throughout your website. Be sure to use easy to read web-safe fonts and a good contrast between your text and background colors. Be sure to optimize all photos and graphics for faster page load times. Make it easy for your customers to order from any page on your website to increase sales.

- Build site for older technology.
- Base page width on the monitor you purchased two years ago.
- Don't assume visitors have a super fast internet connection.
- Avoid using the latest plugins.

Not all of your viewers will have the latest technology and if you design and build your website for only the newest technology you may be limiting your number viewers and customers.

Make it easy for people to find you.

Use text directly on your pages not just text on a graphic or graphics alone.

- Search engines have a difficult time seeing graphics.
- Make your text keyword rich.
- Consider text links that are keyword rich.
- Use "alt" text containing keywords for all graphics.
- Use keywords in file names and folders.

Most internet users looking for products, services or information will use a search engine to find what they want. Be sure that your website is easy to find on the search engines by using keyword rich text on your pages as well as "alt" text on all graphics. Aviod using text on a graphic if possible as the search engines cannot read it.