

admit that for this issue of ATPM, I was so excited about Photoshop's newest version that I didn't really concentrate on the art section. However, one of our dear readers sent me an e-mail asking for some Web design guidelines. It was then that it hit me: I remembered compiling a list of Web tips to help me design better Web sites (if only I could read my own chicken-scratch handwriting...err here.. :P). After some tweaking around, they shaped up enough to be published. The more you stick to these guidelines, the more efficient your site will be. Enjoy...

1. Visually Appealing
2. Easily Navigable
3. Timely
4. Useful
5. Innovative

Visually Appealing: It is a Joy to Behold

- Images should be simple, yet convey immediate meaning.
- Text should be clear.
- Animations can be very eye catching.
- Overall color of text and images should contrast nicely.

Pitfall: Webmasters tend to opt for beauty over clarity. Always make sure that your first concern is to keep everything clear and easy-to-read.

Example of a visually appealing site: <<http://www.metatools.com>>

easily Navigable: Simple and Accessible

- Avoid frames whenever possible.
- Make sure you provide text links in addition to the graphical ones.
- Try to have an intuitive on-page navigation system.

Pitfall: Frames, Frames, Frames, Frames, Frames, and more frames. Ever heard of tables? :D

Example of an easily navigable site: <<http://altavista.digital.com>>

timely: The Web Site is Speedy

- Smaller images make for faster downloading.
- Avoid unnecessary Java applets, sounds, and other time-consuming items.
- Animations can be fun but don't over do them.
- An image may convey a million words but it also downloads a million times slower.

Pitfall: New technologies may be spiffy, but how much interest does an end user have in a video life-stream of the back of your bedroom?

Example of a timely site: <<http://www.apple.com>>

Useful: The Web Site is Useful

- The only reason an end user will keep coming to your site, is if he/she finds it useful (depending on the purpose of your site).
- Make sure that your site serves its purpose instantly. If you are selling cars, you don't have to show the corporate identity of your company first; show the prices! Anyway, whoever considers buying from you will probably go through the corporate identity anyway.

Pitfall: Give end users what they want and not what you want them to see.

Example of a useful site: <<http://www.downloadnow.com>>

Innovative: Thrill Me

- Always have in mind that the end user has seen it all. A ready made Java applet won't be enough to make you site innovative.
- Always try to bend the rules. Example: You learned about animated GIFs, but have you ever tried them as a background for you page? Check out <<http://www.atpm.com/4.08/example>> for a cool example.
- Everyone raved about Apple's "Toasted" campaigns, because they were head-on collisions with Intel-based machines. Although I loved them myself, I still think "Think Different" campaigns were good, at least different. If that doesn't do it, think "iMac"!

Pitfall: There is a fine line between being different and being confusing. Make sure that even with the heluva of chaos that you design, everything is comprehensible.

Example of an innovative site: <<http://www.ozones.com/~drozone/>>

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Hope you found it an interesting read! Please feel free to drop me an e-mail at <jghandour@atpm.com> with any comments, thoughts, criticisms, or simply topics you would like discussed in here.

Copyright © 1998 Jamal Ghandour, <jghandour@atpm.com>. Jamal Ghandour is currently the Executive Manager at SwiftAd international. His motivation for completing his masters degree in computer science was to research a device to clone many Guy Kawasakis! The research continues...