



Web Site Considerations

*Basic Concepts and Ideas for
Developing a Web Site*



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Web Site considerations

Basic Concepts and Ideas for Developing a Web Site can be subdivided into a number of specific areas:

1. Purpose
2. Audience
3. Content
4. Layout

1. Purpose

The purpose of the web site needs to be identified clearly. From the purpose the vision and goals of the site can be identified, and the site can be designed and developed in the context of the original goals.

We have found that a site can have one or several purposes, it can be used to:

- Provide A Good Presentation Of The Company ;
- Provide Quick And Efficient Access To The Company ;
- Provide Office Location Maps And Details;
- Give Event Schedules;
- Provide Product/Service Information;
- Offer Consumer Support Information;
- Give Detailed Information About The Company
- Receive Consumer/User Input;
- Provide Downloadable Material
- Take And Process Orders, Requests And Other User Information;
- Conduct User Polls And Surveys;
- Offer An on-line Service;

In fact, a web site can and will serve any purpose that is served by the media's of print, radio and television. In addition, an interactive site can serve as an automated sales and support office. The real limit to the uses of a web site is not the technical design and development issues, but the imagination.

Whether the purpose is to reach local consumers, or the globe, a properly designed web site will serve any organisation well. In determining the purpose, the content and layout of the site can be properly developed.

2. Audience

The design of the site needs to consider the expected users of the site. Will most be users looking for specific product and service information? Or will many be visiting the site for general information and be more interested in facts and details of a non-specific nature? Will

users expect detailed technical information, or will they prefer rather general descriptions?

Is the site's purpose to serve a local client base then adding links and facts of a local interest will help attract users (and potential clients/customers) to the site.

This same thinking applies to a global site for users sharing a common interest, links and facts pertaining to that interest will attract those users.

The site should contain both general and detailed information, and both specific and non-specific data. But, the level of each of these, and the extent of how detailed and specific the information is, will depend on the nature of the audience. Knowing what your typical user will expect and want is needed in order to develop the appropriate content and layout of the site.

An additional consideration is the speed of connection the expected users will have. Typically many consumers still access the Internet through a dial-in connection. If the audience is a business one you can expect them to have much faster access.

The speed of the connection will influence the graphical nature of the site.

By determining who the expected user of the site will be, the content and layout of the site can be developed. Knowing the, abilities and expectations, of the audience will help ensure that the site is successful and useful.

3. Content

To serve its purpose, the website must contain complete and relevant content.

Site content can be broken into general and detailed categories.

The general content provides a brief overview of the site, the company, the products and service, and other items. Brief descriptive information aids users in determining if what they seek are available, or directs them to the appropriate specific data. The general content should give the user a feel for the content and layout of the site.

The detailed content provides users the specific detailed information on the site, company, products and services, and other items. The layout of the site must ensure easy access to the detailed information. It is important that users be able to easily locate and get the specific information they seek.

Information not related to the purpose of the site, but which maybe of interest to users can, and possibly should, be provided. It is important that this information does not obscure the other information at the site, nor hinder ready access to the other information. Examples of information that may not be relevant, but useful include: links to other sites, public notices, and general information on the web, and other items of interests to the expected visitors to the site.

Ensuring that the right information, both general and detailed is available and easily accessible ensures that site can serve its intended purpose. A web site is a valuable tool for businesses and other companies, as with other tools, when made to a high standard it can make big difference.

4.3 Presentation

The visual appeal of a site is important. Having a well-laid out structure and good graphics invites users to explore the site further. Even if a user visits for a specific bit of information, an attractive well-constructed site is likely to have the user stay longer, look at more of the content, and return to the site more often than a less appealing site whole.

4.5 Graphics

Graphic files still tend to be rather large, even with the advanced compression techniques used today. If a large graphic needs to be incorporated into the site, it is best to place a scaled down version on the page. Then provide a link to the full size version (also indicate file size next to the link). Thus the user can decide whether or not to wait for the image to download.



4.6 Advanced Features

Version 5 and 6 Browsers have a number of advanced features built in. Many of the features greatly add to the page, while other features will only work on one type of browser and may actually hinder page presentation on others. Some of these features include, Shockwave Multimedia Presentations, Flash and RealPlayer.



4.7 Interaction

Allowing a user to input information, perform searches, place orders and interact with the site in a variety of ways, increases the appeal and useful of the site.