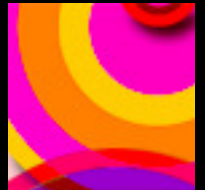


web design issues

interface design and navigation issues



- > the marketplace
- > problems with current design
- > considerations to implement good interface design
- > navigational elements
 - how to structure
 - > working examples
 - > vertical menu
 - > horizontal menu



According to Nielsen (2000, p. 11) "On the web, your competition is not limited to the other companies in your industry. With all the other millions of sites out there you are in competition for the users' time and attention".

Nielsen, J. (2000) Designing web usability. New Riders.



> website competition not limited to companies in one sector

> product and brand diversification

> Amazon (originally an online bookstore)

> expanded into CD, DVD, electronics, shoes and jewellery markets

> Asda, Tesco and many others now competing with Amazon



- > interfaces must be
 - > visually appealing, appropriate, logical
 - > these aspects can be identified by:
 - > metaphor
 - > clarity
 - > consistency
 - > orientation
 - > navigation

“A company’s homepage is its face to the world and the starting point for most user visits. Improving your homepage multiplies the entire website’s business value, so following key guidelines for homepage usability is well worth the investment.”

Nielsen, J. (2002) Home Page Design Guidelines. Available at: <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20020512.html> . (Accessed: 27 February 2009).



- > using **metaphors** throughout
 - > consistent graphics – similar style i.e. if you are using a header with a drop down shadow, this should be consistent with other headers
- > maintaining consistent colour palette for major parts
 - > www.colorlovers.com
- > arrangement of navigation – stop confusion
- > working carefully with fonts
- > CSS aids
 - > consistency
 - > presentation management



so why is some current web design incorrect?

> fundamental errors are common on all levels:

> **business model**

> using the web as a brochure & not a way to conduct business

> **information architecture**

> structuring the site to mirror the way the company is structured.

> the site should mirror the users' tasks

> **page design**

> pages that look gorgeous in-house – test, test, test!

> internal demos don't have the same time delays – consider the user with a 33/56k modem

> **content authoring**

> writing the same linear content style

> need to write in a new style to enhance scan-ability

> **linking**

> treating your site as the only one that matters! without proper links to other sites

> locking your visitors in



navigation

types of common navigation structures



> adopt the 3-click rule

- > all content accessible within 3 clicks of the homepage

> orientation:

- > visitors must know where they are every step
- > ask yourself - **where am I?**
- > solved by; metaphors, clarity and consistency - example – Amazon

> to keep visitors orientated use:

- > title pages - **<title>**, headers - **<head>**
- > use footer – information such as; name, location, copyright, image maps and e-mail



- > current location relative to higher-level concepts
- > users understand where they are
- > one-click access to higher site levels
- > never cause problems in user testing:
 - > small design element but users rarely:
 - > misinterpret them or
 - > have trouble operating them
- > take up very little space on the page

Nielsen, J. (2007) Breadcrumb Navigation Increasingly Useful. Available at: <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/breadcrumbs.html> .
(Accessed: 27 February 2009).



- > **site structure**
 - > not linear-based pages
 - > use information hierarchically
- > **navigation location**
 - > important – prototype with users
 - > predominantly on the left-hand side
 - > changing with the power of CSS
 - > be consistent
- > **navigation media – increased dynamics available**
 - > check accessibility – offer alternatives
 - > i.e. <alternative text tags>
- > **management of growing data**
 - > as the site grows, keeping the logical approach



- > utilises CSS
- > horizontal tab menu
- > tolover effects
- > central design
- > clear structure
- > content is grouped
- > easy to 'scan' content



- > utilises CSS
- > vertical menu
- > rollover effects
- > strong focus on icons
- > central design
- > clear structure
- > content is grouped
- > easy to 'scan'



- > make use of **browser features** i.e. <title>
- > let user know **where they are** - headings
- > provide **multiple** paths. Users should be able to see a navigation options wherever they are on the page
- > highlight **new** and **special** content on your homepage
- > **label** buttons, images that are links etc
- > employ anchor tags
- > follow **usability** gurus but retain some flexibility
- > the navigation structure **identically reflects** the site structure!
- > be **consistent** – the same throughout!



```
<div id="navigation">
<ul>
  <li><a href="index.htm">Home</a></li>
  <li><a href="contact_us.htm">Contact Us</a></li>
  <li><a href="products.htm">Products</a><!--no closing </li> tag here-->
  <ul>
    <li><a href="tables.htm">Tables</a></li>
    <li><a href="chairs.htm">Chairs</a></li>
    <li><a href="mirrors.htm">Mirrors</a></li>
    <li><a href="screens.htm">Screens</a></li>
    <li><a href="storage_boxes.htm">Storage Boxes</a></li>
  </ul>
  <!--no opening <li> tag here-->
  <a href="useful_links.htm">Useful Links</a></li>
</ul>
</div>
```



```
<div id="navigation">
<ul>
<li><a href="index.htm">Home</a></li>
<li><a href="site_design.htm">Site Design</a></li>
<li><a href="css_resources.htm">CSS Resources</a></li>
<li><a href="graphics.htm">Graphics</a></li>
</ul>
</div>
```

```
#navigation {
font-family: "Trebuchet MS", Verdana, Arial, sans-serif;
font-size: 0.9em;
}
#navigation ul {
list-style: none;
margin: 0 0 0 200px;
padding: 10px 0px 0px;
}
#navigation li {
display: inline;
}
#navigation a:link, #navigation a:visited {
padding: 3px 10px 2px 10px;
color: #FFFFFF;
background-color: #FF9900;
text-decoration: none;
border: 1px solid #999999;
}
#navigation a:hover {
color: #FFFFFF;
background-color: #33CCFF;
border: 1px solid #990066;
}
```



Please take a look at the following websites:

> Max Design (Australia)

<http://css.maxdesign.com.au/>

> Smashing Magazine

<http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2007/03/14/css-based-navigation-menus-modern-solutions/>

> CSS Vault

<http://cssvault.com/>

> CSS Juice

<http://www.cssjuice.com/30-free-css-based-navigation-menus/>

