Research, Write, Communicate | Web Site

Web Design

Key Concept
Billions of Web pages are on the Internet, but how many are really effective? Creating a Web page is similar to producing a publication like a brochure or newsletter. The tools are different but the goal is the same—you want to communicate a message to an audience.

Web pages also have a lot in common with multimedia presentations. An effective multimedia presentation is entertaining as well as interesting and informative. An effective Web page uses multimedia to achieve the same goals, but Web pages must also display quickly and correctly in a variety of browsers.

The Web allows you to communicate a message to anyone with Internet access. Just like publications and presentations, effective Web pages are not accidents. Graphic design is the art of creating publications, presentations, and Web pages that capture and hold the attention of readers and viewers.

HTML and a text editor provide the technology you need to create a Web page. Graphic design provides the knowledge and skills to use the technology tools effectively. You can use graphic design to make your Web page more visually attractive and easier to read. Web pages with quality content and effective designs are interesting, informative, and entertaining.

Look Ahead

Task: Make your Web page as visually appealing and easy to read as possible.

Goal: Show that you understand how to apply the principles of effective Web design.

You may want to review an example of a Web page design before you begin.

See the example: Web Page Design
Vocabulary

**Words to Remember**

This page gives basic definitions for some important terms that can help you learn about using peer review to revise an essay. You can get a more complete definition of each term from [Fact Monster*](#).

**New Words**

**Alignment:** Specific arrangement of type and graphics in a publication.

**Balance:** Overall distribution of type and graphics on a page to create a desired effect.

**Contrast:** Type or graphics that work together to create a desired effect; also, study two (or more) people, groups, places, events, ideas, actions, or objects to identify distinctive characteristics.

**Graphic Design:** The art of using type and graphics to communicate information with a desired effect.

**Proximity:** How close together type or graphics are arranged in a publication or presentation; usually used in design to create a desired effect.

**Repetition:** Type or graphics used more than once to create a desired effect.

**Type:** A style of letters and numbers used in a publication or presentation.

**White Space:** An area of a publication with no type or graphics.

**Review Words**

**Audience:** The people who read a publication or view a work of art, performance, or presentation.

**Browser:** A computer program that uses HTTP and HTML to display hypertext documents.

**Graphics:** Using pictures and other visual elements to communicate information.

**HTML (Hypertext Markup Language):** A set of commands (also called *tags*) that tells a browser how to display a file or set of connected files as a Web page.

**HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol):** A set of rules that controls how computers on the Internet exchange hypertext.

**Hyperlink:** A command that connects related information in hypertext or hypermedia.
Hypermedia: A method of storing multimedia on a computer so that related information is connected by links.

Hypertext: A method of storing documents on a computer so that related information is connected by links.

Internet: A network that connects millions of computers in more than 100 countries around the world.

Multimedia: Combining more than one type of information, such as words, numbers, images, audio, and video.

Network: A system of computers connected either by wires and cables or wirelessly by antennas and towers.

Protocol: A set of rules that controls how computers on a network exchange information.

URL (Uniform Resource Locator): The address of a Web page consisting of the protocol and domain name and sometimes the path and filename.

World Wide Web (WWW): The part of the Internet that uses HTTP to transfer hypertext and hypermedia from one computer to another.
Exploration

Learning from the Web
How can you make your Web page capture and hold the attention of your audience? Explore some Web sites about effective Web pages and graphic design. Learn how to use graphic design to make your Web page more visually attractive and easier to read.

While you explore the following Web sites, think about the guiding questions. You may want to take notes to help you answer the questions. If you think of other questions about Web design, keep those in mind too.

Guiding Questions
- What should you do when designing a Web page?
- What should you not do when designing a Web page?
- What design principles can you use to improve your persuasive Web page?

Web Sites

Visual Design
- Top 9 Tips for Students* from About*
- 10 Tips for Designing Effective Presentation Visuals* from 3M*
- Principles of Design* from About*
- Examples of Principles of Design* from About*

Web Design
- Web Design* from W3 Schools*
- Web Design Tips* from Lissa Explains It All*
- Dos and Don'ts for Achieving Usability in Design* from Usability First*
Information

What to Know
This page summarizes some of the information from the Web sites you explored. This information helps you learn what you need to know for this activity about Web design. You may want to take notes to help you remember the most important points. You can return to the Web sites for more exploration if you want to learn more.

Design Principles
Six basic design principles can help you create a quality Web page. These principles are guidelines, not rules. Creative graphic designers often “break the rules” to create interesting effects. However, the six principles can help you design a Web site that captures your audience’s attention and is easy to read and understand.

The six principles of graphic design are:

- **Alignment** makes your Web site easy to see and read. Well-aligned type and graphics complement each other without obstructing other elements. Balance sets the tone for a Web site. An even distribution of type and graphics can make a Web site more soothing or serious. An uneven distribution of type and graphics can make the Web site more active or amusing.

- **Contrast** directs a viewer’s attention to a specific place or idea. Differences in size and appearance of type or graphics can create eye-catching contrast.

- **Proximity** uses space to show how type and graphics are related. Placing two elements close together suggests a close relationship or agreement. Placing elements far apart shows a weaker relationship or tension.

- **Repetition** helps a viewer follow the logic of a Web site. If every type and graphic looks different, a viewer may get lost quickly. If similar elements have the same look, viewers can follow along easily.

- **White space** gives a viewer’s eyes a rest. If every inch of a Web site is filled with type or graphics, the viewer may become overwhelmed. White space does not have to be white. It can be any color as long as the space is empty and a reader does not have to focus on it.

Web Page Dos and Don’ts
You can apply the principles of design to what you learned about HTML and Web pages. Misuse or excessive use of any HTML element can make a Web page look cluttered, unattractive, and difficult to read or view. A poor visual design can scramble the message of any Web page, no matter how interesting and persuasive the content.

Some basic “dos and don’ts” can help you design a quality Web page:
What to Do When You Design a Web Page

- Use key phrases from your main points as headings
- Maintain a consistent look and feel by repeating colors and fonts
- Use contrasting colors for text and background
- Use fonts that are easy to read on any kind of display
- Create contrast by using different fonts and style
- Use the alt attribute with image tags to provide alternate text
- Align type and graphics so that they are easy to view
- Leave white space and balance the content of the page
- Add multimedia that conveys information about the issue
- Check spelling
- Use consistent punctuation
- Proofread the Web page

What Not to Do When You Design a Web Page

- Use too many colors or fonts
- Use colors or fonts that are difficult to read
- Use too many different fonts or styles
- Have more than a few words in bold or italics
- Fill up every inch of the page
- Add multimedia that is unrelated or weakly related to the issue
- Add very large multimedia files that take a long time to download online
- Use too many animated GIF images
- Think that spelling and punctuation are unimportant in a Web page
Task

What to Do
Complete the following task to show what you have learned about Web design. While you work through the task, think about whether you are achieving the goal. You may want to review an example of a Web page design before you begin.

Task: Make your Web page as visually appealing and easy to read as possible.

Goal: Show that you understand how to apply the principles of effective Web design.

See the example: Web Page Design

1. Open the plain text file that contains your Web page.

2. Use the principles of graphic design to improve the appearance and usability of your Web page. Make the Web page as visually appealing and easy to read as possible.

3. Remember to save your Web page often while you work.

4. Check with your teacher to make sure you followed the basic guidelines for creating an effective Web page.

5. Check the spelling and grammar of your Web page.

6. Double-check your work by reading the Web page carefully one more time.

7. Review the checklist and revise your Web page to make sure it is complete.

8. Ask someone to read your Web page. Discuss the reader’s reaction to your page. You may want to ask the following questions during your discussion:
   - What parts have the most and least visual appeal?
   - Are any parts difficult to read?
   - What argument is made in the Web page?
   - Does the reader find the argument interesting, convincing, and entertaining?
IS THE UNITED NATIONS STILL RELEVANT?

Introduction

The United Nations is unusual in that it consists of 191 nations with 191 differing histories and 191 perspectives that are all bound by the terms of the same Charter. How can this work? According to John Negroponte the answer is, “Promoting policies that support the freedom and well-being of people in their own nation-state, not by pursuing the illusions of world government.”

The United Nation’s mission statement states that its purpose is to keep peace throughout the world, to develop friendly relations between nations and to work together to help people live better lives by eliminating poverty, disease and to stop environmental destruction. In spite of these lofty goals, many people feel that the United Nations has not accomplished what they set out to do. They point to the failure of the UN in dealing with the genocide in Rwanda, failure to deliver food to starving people in Somalia, and the recent Oil-for-Food scandal. In spite of these problems, I feel that the United Nations is still a vital organization that gives countries facing difficult situations a world stage to deal with their problems.

The Children of the Middle East

Who will stand up for the children of the world? How will their voices be heard? Thanks to the United Nations, an official concluded a two-week mission to Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel. Radhika Coomaraswamy, the UN Special Representative for children and armed conflict, found the children to be plagued by fear, anxiety, anger, and feeling of hopelessness. The objective of the visit was to see first hand the situation of the children and ensure greater protection for them. The UN addressed their concerns with the countries involved and helped plan a course of action. Some feel that the UN should not be involved in the internal problems of countries, but the UN has the ability to bring the problem back to all the members and challenge them to make a difference. In doing this, the children will have the International community involved, and the problems will be addressed. If not for the UN, the world may not know of the plight of the children in these war-torn areas.

Machu Picchu and the Environment

Machu Picchu. Peru might not seem important to us, but, in 1983, it was added to the World Heritage List. It is an outstanding Andean archaeological center. The UN met with government officials to monitor implementation of a master plan for the area. They will try to protect the natural environment of flora and fauna and try to halt mudslides and fires which have had a disastrous effect on Machu Picchu. The world belongs to all of us. It is the responsibility of all of us to make sure that we leave it as we found it, if not better. The UN has been challenged by some of its members to spend less time worrying about environmental issues and more time addressing world peace. However, the UN is able to bring these issues and many others to the attention of the world. It is likely we would not know about the problems facing the environment in different parts of the world without the UN highlighting them and bringing them back to the member nations. It is very easy to think locally, but the UN forces us to think and act globally.

Darfur, Sudan Conflict

Darfur. Sudan may be half way around the world for many of us, so it would be unlikely that we would know what is happening there. The National Security and Intelligence Service of the UN again brought the conflict to the attention of the world. The commission found that more than 70,000 people died as a result of violence and maltreatment. They found that more than 1.6 million people have been displaced because of the violence. The UN is responsible for bringing it to the attention of the world and monitoring the policies set down by the members of the United Nations. Without the help of the UN, this might have been an atrocity half way around the world that went unnoticed. Click to see to learn more about the conflict in Darfur.

In the United Nations, even the smallest and least powerful nations are given a voice. Despite the problems that arise when nations attempt to reach decisions on world affairs the UN is still a significant force in world affairs. In a report published in the Oxford University Press (2000), it is believed that Oxford University press, mostly spearheaded by the UN, has been the main cause of the Cold War decline in armed conflict. The report singles out these particular achievements: A fourfold increase in the number of UN Peacekeeping operations, an 80% drop in genocide, and an elevenfold increase in the number of economic sanctions against problem nations. These are impressive numbers and should speak for themselves. In 1945, President Franklin Roosevelt declared: “The structure of world peace cannot be the work of one man, or one party, or one nation.” Peace is the responsibility of every nation and every generation. The UN is not perfect, but they have been a force in helping nations and people who can not help themselves. It is also an important stage for all peoples who need to be heard by the International community.

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