

checklist for websites

Load Time

Does the site's load time seem reasonable?

If the site entrance is a Flash animation, is a skip intro option available?

Is an HTML version of a Flash site provided?

Appearance

Visual appeal is nearly always influenced to some degree by personal preference. However, there are specific design qualities that can be evaluated:

Is the page layout and use of color, fonts, and images consistent throughout the site?

Are there less than three fonts used in the design?

Are there a moderate number of colors used in the design?

Is the design appropriate for the purpose of the site and for the intended audience?

Will the design appeal to the target audience?

Is the page layout balanced, clean, and uncluttered?

Are the images smooth and properly anti-aliased to the background?

Are the graphics appropriate and relevant to the content of the site?

Are your eyes directed to the content or important page elements?

Are the color combinations pleasing and appropriate for the site's purpose?

Is the text clearly legible?

At an 800x600 resolution, is important content (such as navigation, search boxes, site and page identification) visible without scrolling?

Is copyright and contact information easily located?

Is the page short enough that it doesn't require a great deal of vertical scrolling? (Especially important on the front page of the site.)

Is the purpose of the site (and each page within it) immediately clear?

Structure and Navigation

Is the content of the site logically organized?

Is navigation located in the same place on each page of the site?

Is the navigation clearly recognizable as navigation?

Are all links clearly labeled and their destination obvious?

Is the navigation simple to understand and use?

Is the use of the browser back button unnecessary (no dead end pages)?

If icons or other images are used for navigation, is their meaning clear?

If icons or other images are used for navigation, are text links also provided?

Is the purpose of each page easily identified?

Is any essential information directly linked to in the navigation system (for instance, a contact page)?

Can users get to information with a minimal number of clicks (a good rule of thumb is no more than 3 clicks)?

Does the navigation allow the user to easily backtrack or return to upper levels in the site?

Is there an obvious method of navigating between related pages on the site?

Is there an obvious method of navigating between different sections of the site?

Content

Does the content reflect the purpose of the site?

Is the content appropriate for the intended audience?

Is the content sufficient to meet user needs and expectations?

Is text content free from spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors?

Are short sentences, short paragraphs, headings, and bulleted lists used so that the content can be easily scanned?

Are lines of text too long to be easily read?

Is information correct and current?

Can specific content be easily found?

For sites with large amounts of information, is a search function available?

Usability

Is the site cross-browser and cross-platform compatible? (At a minimum, does the site work for users of both IE and Netscape browsers, using either Mac or Windows operating systems?)

browser compatibility

This chart from Webmonkey tells you what each version of the major browsers supports, including AOL, NN, IE, Opera, and many more.

Are form fields arranged in a logical order?

Are all components of the site functional? (Links, forms, scripts, etc.)

Is information concerning any special browser or plug-in requirements clearly visible and easily understood?

Are interactive features clearly explained?

Are the skills required to use the site's features appropriate for its intended audience?

Is there an off switch for music?

Alttext

Include alternative text for each image?

This is the text that goes in the alt attribute of the img tag.

Referencing graphics

This is a mistake nearly every beginner makes. Graphics loaded into cache on your computer will display in your browser, even if the graphic has not been uploaded to the server. Also, you will see the graphic in your browser if its HTML path points to your local hard drive. The problem, of course, is that everyone but you will see a broken image.

To check that graphics are linked correctly, clear cache, close your browser, open a new browser window, and visit your site. Even then, the cache is still not necessarily cleared -- another reason for testing with multiple browsers

Search Engine Optimization

Look your pages over like the search engines do. Have you included relevant titles, meaningful page descriptions, and meta keyword phrases? Is the content of your pages optimized for desired keywords? Is relevant keyword-rich content near the top of the page?

Overall Design Goals

Simple
Clear
Consistent
Appropriate
Appealing
Usable