

Information Architecture

The arrangement of content elements to facilitate human understanding

Web Conventions (*what users have come to expect*)

Logo

- Top left-hand corner
- On every page
- Links to the homepage

Case Study: www.hulu.com

Navigation

- Left-hand rail or directly below header (global navigation only)
- Appears like navigation, not content
- Gives feedback

Case Study: www.kcrw.com

Adding Emphasis with Visual Hierarchy

Location

- The upper content area, below the header is a high priority area

Contrast

- Bigger and bolder type, underlining or colored type, communicate importance. But there is a balance to be struck, if type is over designed, it can communicate it's a promotional advertisement and to be ignored

Negative Space

- Even an understated area can look like a high-priority spot if the area around it is clear of clutter

Case Study: www.dwr.com
www.crateandbarrel.com
www.potterybarn.com

Usability

How easily can users learn and use an interface to achieve their goals

Why Usability is Important?

On the Web, usability is a necessary condition for survival. If a website is difficult to use, people leave. If the homepage fails to clearly state what a company offers and what users can do on the site, people leave. If users get lost on a website, they leave. If a website's information is hard to read or doesn't answer users' key questions, they leave. Note a pattern here? There's no such thing as a user reading a website manual or otherwise spending much time trying to figure out an interface. There are plenty of other websites available; leaving is the first line of defense when users encounter a difficulty. *Jakob Nielsen's Usability 101: Introduction to Usability*

What does Usability Measure?

Ease of learning	How fast can a user who has never seen the user interface before learn it sufficiently well to accomplish basic tasks?
Efficiency of use	Once an experienced user has learned to use the system, how fast can he or she accomplish tasks?
Memorability	If a user has used the system before, can he or she remember enough to use it effectively the next time or does the user have to start over again learning everything?
Error frequency and severity	How often do users make errors while using the system, how serious are these errors, and how do users recover from these errors?
Subjective satisfaction	How much does the user like using the system?

Trunk Test

1) Where are you?

What site are you at?

Graphics

Good: www.citruscollege.edu

Bad: www.orangecoastcollege.edu

Logo

Good: www.guggenheim.org

Questionable: www.moma.org

Text

Where are you within the site?

Page Titles

Okay: www.lacma.org (Inconsistent)

Good: www.nortonsimon.edu

Bread Crumbs

Good: www.lacma.org

2) What can you do?

3) How can you get there?

Navigation

Rollovers

Good & Bad: www.cnn.com (Well designed in some areas but not in others)

Acceptable: www.annenberg.spaceforphotography.org (Efficient but requires interactivity)

Tolerable: www.abbotkinneyonline.org (Rollover doesn't match Feedback)
Unacceptable: www.cbs.com (Very large rollover, very confusing, inconsistent)

Consistent Navigation

Good: dma.ucla.edu (Consistent throughout)
Unacceptable: www.artinstitutes.edu (Too many designs)

Persistent Navigation

Good: www.art.ucr.edu (Lots of links accessible on almost every page)
Okay: www.otis.edu (Many links accessible from every page but requires interactivity)
Unacceptable: www.schoolofvisualarts.edu (Not enough global links)

Efficiency/Ease of Use

Home page designed for site's main purpose

Good: www.sigalert.com
Bad: www.blockbuster.com

Reducing click-throughs

Traditional: Ritz-Carlton
Better: Ihotelier online reservations system – Loft 523

Portal

Questionable: www.ups.com
Good: www.webex.com
Bad: www.easterncolumbialofts.com

Splash Page

Unacceptable: www.dagwoods.com
Unnecessary: www.kumhotire.com

Case Study: www.cherryandmartin.com
www.birchlibralato.com

Resolution

Scrolling Issues

Unacceptable: dma.ucla.edu (Too large of a homepage)
Unacceptable: www.thehorizontalway.com (No horizontal scrolling)

Liquid vs. Fixed vs. Elastic/Fluid

Acceptable: www.us-paris.com
Good: www.corvusart.com (Adjusts slightly to various screen resolutions)
Good: www.amazon.com (Adjusts fully to various screen resolutions)

Trends

2009.legworkstudio.com (One page websites)

Other Tips

Speed: Homepage should be fast loading
Global Links: Should include a "home" link

Resources

www.professordaybell.com -> Resources -> UX & Usability