

## V.

A mash-up is a Web 2.0 concept – that bring together information from various sources on the web into a dashboard-like view – making use of Web standards, JavaScript, Ajax, open APIs, RSS and Atom feeds. Map creators in Google now have the option of using free tools to do this.

### **Back to the Drawing Board: The Importance of Design**

The World Wide Web has unleashed millions of "interfaces" on unsuspecting users, most created by people with no knowledge of, or training in, usability. From the frustrated consumer to the office worker whose productivity suffers, bad design costs far more money than it would take to do the job right. The number of return visits users make to a Web site - and Web site profits - are tied directly to how easily users can accomplish their business.

Most experts agree on basic goals:

- Web interfaces need to be made simpler.
- They should closely match the task the user wants to accomplish.
- The 'brains' of the site should work to adapt to the user and the task, not vice versa.

Sounds easy enough, but the experts said they often feel they are swimming against a strong current. Real change won't come without a fundamental change in an industry that gives engineers primacy over designers, and that relegates usability to late-stage testing under tight time limits. No such change is likely, they said, unless users refuse to buy poorly designed products or patronize aggravating Web sites. If not, only a generation raised on badly designed products will be able to figure them out.

The fundamental problem is we have been a bunch of guys designing for guys.

### **Caught In the Web**

The Web, design experts said, has multiplied the problem a thousand-fold. The browser, developed by researchers to let them plow through the work of colleagues in distant places, became the default tool for all sorts of diverse activities, like e-commerce. Yet, compared to the operating system of a PC, a browser imposes severe limits on programmers and lacks interactivity, critics said. The browser we have today is a sort of accidental development

Part of the reason is that the huge demand for Web sites by every conceivable business has meant that tens of thousands of people have become instant Web developers. With almost no rules to guide them and a rush to get something online fast, many developers threw up their best guesses about what would work - and in the process turned users into guinea pigs.

It's called launch and learn. Let's just ship it and see what the reaction is. The reaction is you build a company that pisses people off.

Amazon.com's Web site is the one most often mentioned by usability experts when asked to name a good, popular commercial site. They point to the organization of information using tabs across the top of the page and a search engine that often returns appropriate results on the first try.

Experts generally give bad marks to sites that make more than passing use of flash animation, which designers often use in an effort to grab users' attention. But a high degree of blinking and movement on a Web site not only degrades performance; it can be overwhelming or confusing to users as well, they

said. Many users don't bother to look at anything that is moving or flashing on a page - assuming it is an advertisement.

Hard-to-use Web sites can drive customers away - for good, Mayhew said, no matter how much was spent on development. One client came to her after spending \$2 million to develop a Web site that usability tests showed would be highly unpopular with potential customers. In another case, she placed a client's proposed Web site in front of a test group of target users - physicians - to find that seven of eight stopped using it after 30 seconds and said they would never go back to the advertising-based site.

The reason the Internet is so popular, experts said, is that it provides users with things they want in spite of the interface, not because of it.

The tools that are available to develop for it are nowhere near those for creating a multimedia presentation you'd put on a PC. The interface has crude elements and the tools give us much less control. But I can put something up there and people in the Ukraine can see it three seconds later. That's the trade-off.

### **Mastery, Mystery, and Misery: The Ideologies of Web Design**

See <http://www.fastcodesign.com/3039402/the-history-of-web-design-explained-in-9-gifs>

See Web literacy standards:

<https://wiki.mozilla.org/Learning/WebLiteracyStandard/CompetencyDescriptors>

Simple unobtrusive designs that support users are successful because they abide by the Web's nature – and they make people feel good!

Behind a website's superficial appearance lies its fundamental **understanding of user behavior in an interactive service**. Choices such as whether the "buy" button is red or orange or whether the navigation menu runs across the top or down the left side are much debated, but make at most a few percent difference in usability. In contrast, the **design ideology** can make or break a site.

I see three contrasting approaches to design, which I have dubbed mastery, mystery, and misery.

#### **Mastery: Empowering Users**

The **original ideology of hypertext** and the World Wide Web, as expressed by Vannevar Bush (1945), Ted Nelson (1960), and Tim Berners-Lee (1991) makes individual **users the masters** of the content and lets them access and manipulate it in any way they please. User empowerment requires perfect usability and simplicity: only if users know what every design element means will they feel in control of the medium.

Search engines are the archetypical embodiment of the mastery ideology. They place users firmly in the driver's seat and take them where they want to go. You can get anywhere on the Web using a subservient interface that accepts any words you throw at it and serves up a simple, linear list of rank-ordered choices.

In the mastery ideology, the designer's job is to provide the features users need in a transparent interface that gets out of the way and lets users focus on the task at hand. Leading e-commerce sites

typically understand this; they sell more when users focus on products rather than on puzzling out the design's surface manifestation.

### **Mystery: Obfuscating Choices**

Many Web designers prefer more "exciting" designs that challenge users to explore sites using novel interaction elements: more in-your-face than useful.

A **simple user interface is not boring**. It *excites* users because it lets them connect with the content and engage the company behind the site.

Website designers stare at their designs all day, every day. In contrast, users visit for four minutes and then leave. Very different experiences in terms of what's boring and exciting. Don't aim at an exceptional experience for yourself and your team members.

### **Misery: Oppressing Users**

The third prevailing ideology of Web design is oppression, as mainly espoused by certain analysts who wish the Web would turn into television and offer users no real choices at all. Splash pages, pop-ups, and breaking the *Back* button are typical examples of the misery ideology.

Most misery designs feel miserable. People recognize when they're being manipulated, and they resent it. They resent it even more on the Web, where they're used to freedom of movement.

### **What Makes A Good Website? Answer These Ten Design Questions:**

What is the **purpose** of the site? It should be clear, with a strong identity and catchy name.

Who is your **audience**?

Is it easy to **read**? The site design should encourage people to use it.

How easy is it to **transact** business? Pages should download fast. (under 10 seconds)

Do the web pages **print** correctly?

Is navigation visually **consistent** throughout site?

Does the site have a title, webmaster, revision or update date, copyright info, links, and institutional **affiliation**?

Is content **current** and concise?

Does the site have **search** capabilities, frequently asked questions; or help function?

Can you easily **contact** the website to provide comments or ask questions?

### **Know your Audience**

How do I ensure the website is what my users want? Ask them! Usability testing doesn't need to be elaborate or expensive. According to a widely cited study by Jakob Nielsen, three to five people who match the profile of the intended audience will identify the majority of a site's usability problems. Test no one, and operate with no insight.

Individuals read web pages in a "F" pattern – they're more inclined to read longer sentences at the top of a page and less and less as they scroll down.

A usable site is organized and designed so that visitors get the information they need quickly and efficiently -- and in language that makes sense to them. To do this, look at a site from a user's perspective. Here are a few questions to ask when you evaluate a site:

## Site Organization

- ☐ Is my site organization based on my users' needs rather than my own or my organization's org. chart?
- ☐ Are the most important pages/sections of my site accessible directly from the home page?
- ☐ Does my search engine return useful results?

## Page Layout

- ☐ Is content organized logically?
- ☐ Can users quickly identify the most important messages?
- ☐ Are color and typography used tastefully? Do my text and background color combinations enhance (rather than reduce) legibility?
- ☐ Is all "noise" (intricate background patterns, annoying animations) eliminated from the pages?
- ☐ Do all plug-ins, large graphics or anything that slows down my visitors and/or their computers serve a valid communications/content purpose?

## Navigation

- ☐ Does the site have a clear, intuitive navigation scheme?
- ☐ Is the navigation scheme used consistently?
- ☐ Do visitors always know where they are and where they can go?

## Content

- ☐ Is the content fresh and useful?
- ☐ Does the site's text use vocabulary that visitors will understand? Is the site rid of all jargon and acronyms with which users may not be familiar?
- ☐ Are all interactions and processes streamlined so that visitors never have to read (or click) more than necessary?

**Incrementally revamp your Web site for your customers** -- not for you. Most folks hate it when sites go through major design changes, even when the current design reeks; the idea of learning to use another design is simply not appealing. And so, incremental design improvements are a necessity.

Whereas a change in the business model is the driving factor behind massive redesigns, changes to your site that are too drastic can be an invitation to your customers to check out the competition.

The degree to which you redesign your site can be determined by answering the following: **Is your site meeting the needs of its intended users?** Most Web sites fail to meet users' needs because the sites are designed based on the organization's needs. It's an easy, but fatal, mistake to make. For example, many sites build primary and secondary navigation systems that resemble their organizational charts.

The proven way to avoid these kinds of mistakes is to follow the user-centric design approach. All Web site development should be user-centric, which includes evaluating the design in line with user requirements.

The first step to designing a site is to **1) clearly define the "business" objectives**: Why are you developing this site, what are the site's objectives, and how will they be measured? It is important to bring together the right set of folks to help create a common vision for the site. It is also important to establish the available budget for attaining your site's goals.

The next logical phase is to **2) determine your users' requirements**. What's driving your customers, and what are their needs and goals? What are they looking for? What's their level of expertise? How will they use the information on your site? What are their technical requirements? It is imperative to define usage scenarios; provide examples and carefully describe how, where, when, and why a particular user will come to your site. Be sure to prioritize these scenarios so that your most important customers come first.

You must also establish usability requirements. How will you determine user satisfaction for the scenarios created? Be sure to capture data that relates to understandability, knowing what will happen when you push a button; and transparency, being able to quickly access the information you need. You should also capture data that relates to your site's visual appeal.

### **Usability Problems Turn Off Customers**

When customers can't find information on a web site, they often just leave. Usability problems such as bad links and hidden information are the top reasons people drop off sites. **What issues would cause you to leave a web site?**

84%: Links that take too long or don't work

68%: Cannot find information needed

31%: Company info cannot be found

23%: Search function is limited

16%: Links are poorly labeled

(Survey of 2,263 consumers by Jupiter Media Matrix)

Once you have completed these steps, you can then **3) focus on your site's structure and content**. The goal: Structure your content so that it is most meaningful to those whom you have identified as your key customers. Be sure to deliver the level of detail that your user would expect, but remember that the more content you provide, the greater the need for navigation. Help your customers get around and let them know their whereabouts. Make sure that your navigation systems are consistent and that you provide a search application that will suit your users' needs.

Finally, focus on page design. Make sure your users won't get lost when they come to the site for the first time after the design change. Make the improvements obvious so that users can quickly benefit from the new design. Don't give your customers an invitation to leave. If you've done the work, your new design will better support your customers' needs, and your business will benefit.

### **Top Ten Web Design Mistakes**

Because these mistakes continue to be so common, it makes sense that people continue to complain about them the most.

**1. Legibility Problems:** small font sizes; low contrast between text and background.

#### **2. Non-Standard Links**

Following are the five main guidelines for links:

- Make obvious what's clickable: for text links, use colored, underlined text (and don't underline non-link text).
- Differentiate visited and unvisited links.
- Explain what users will find at the other end of the link, and include some of the key information-carrying terms in the anchor text itself to enhance scannability and search engine optimization (SEO). Don't use "click here" or other non-descriptive link text.
- Avoid JavaScript or other fancy techniques that break standard interaction techniques for dealing with links.
- In particular, don't open pages in new windows (except for PDF files and such).

### 3. Flash

Flash is a programming environment and should be used to offer users additional power and features that are unavailable from a static page. Flash should not be used to jazz up a page. If your content is boring, rewrite text to make it more compelling and hire a professional photographer to shoot better photos. Don't make your pages move. It doesn't increase users' attention, it drives them away; most people **equate animated content with useless content**.

Using Flash for navigation is almost as bad. People prefer predictable navigation and static menus.

### 4. Content That's Not Written for the Web

Writing for the Web means making content:

- short,
- scannable, and
- to the point (rather than full of fluffy marketese).

Web content should also:

- answer users' questions and
- use common language rather than made-up terms (this also improves search engine visibility, since users search using their own words, not yours).

### 5. Bad Search

Everything else on this list is pretty easy to get right, but unfortunately fixing search requires considerable work and an investment in better software. It's worth doing, though, because search is a fundamental component of the Web user experience and is getting more important every year.

### 6. Browser Incompatibility

Today, however, enough people use Firefox (and various other minority browsers, like Opera and Safari) that the business case is back: don't turn away customers just because they prefer a different platform.

### 7. Cumbersome Forms

People complained about numerous form-related problems. The basic issue? **Forms are used too often** on the Web and tend to be **too big**, featuring too many unnecessary questions and options. There are five basic guidelines to this end:

- **Cut any questions** that are not needed. For example, do you really need a salutation (Mr/Ms/Mrs/Miss/etc.)?
- Don't make fields **mandatory** unless they truly are.
- Support **autofill** to the max by avoiding unusual field labels (just use Name, Address, etc.).
- Set the **keyboard focus** to the first field when the form is displayed. This saves a click.
- Allow **flexible input** of phone numbers, credit card numbers, and the like.
- Forms that violate guidelines for internationalization got dinged by many overseas users. If entering a Canadian postal code generates an error message, you shouldn't be surprised if you get very little business from Canada.

## 8. No Contact Information or Other Company Info

Even though phone numbers and email addresses are the most requested forms of contact info, having a physical mailing address on the site might be more important because it's one of the key credibility markers. A company with no address is not one you want to give money to.

## 9. Frozen Layouts with Fixed Page Widths

Complaints fall into two categories:

- On big monitors, websites are difficult to use if they don't resize with the window. Conversely, if users have a small window and a page doesn't use a liquid layout, it triggers insufferable horizontal scrolling.
- The rightmost part of a page is cut off when printing a frozen page. This is especially true for Europeans, who use narrower paper (A4) than Americans.

## 10. Inadequate Photo Enlargement

## 11. Not Mobile-Friendly

A majority of users are accessing your website on a mobile device.

## Back to Basics in Web Design

Users don't care about technology and don't especially want new features. They just want **quality improvements in the basics**:

- text they can read;
- content that answers their questions;
- navigation and search that help them find what they want;
- short and simple forms (streamlined registration, checkout, and other workflow); and
- no bugs, typos, or corrupted data; no linkrot; no outdated content.

## The Importance of Good Design -

Here's an example of a well-designed website: <http://www.Neimanmarcus.com>

## Page design & layout

From both graphic & text perspective, site is 1) bright 2) clean 3) simple 4) uncluttered. Visual structure and screen organization is well-thought out. Your eye takes you to one point on the screen - eliminating

visual competition. Once eye lands, eye flow takes over and you're drawn gracefully throughout the page.

### **Navigation**

Home page leads the navigation invitation, which is readable, intuitive & consistent throughout the site. More than one way to navigate is a bonus.

### **Info Architecture**

Info is well-categorized and tailored for the site. Text is clear and concise.

### **Integrated Functionality**

Search is the deepest functional application and it works very well. Search by category, designer or material. Easy to contact online personal shopper - answered in less than 5 minutes. Page load less than 2 seconds.

### **Consistent Strong Brand Image**

Overall design and page details clearly portray the brand - fashion, elegance, flair, quality & focus on customer.

### **Basic Design Principles: CRAP**

Robin Williams (no, not that Robin) a skilled web designer emphasizes four key principles Contrast, Repetition, Alignment and Proximity.

**Contrast**, the difference between elements on a page, uses color, text, shading and images to emphasize some things and de-emphasize others, to create focal points to catch your eye.

**Repetition** can pull your site together so that pages appear to be clearly connected to one another: concerns shared elements: the same colors, graphics, fonts, etc. This creates a theme that will separate your site from others.

**Alignment**: how text lined up on the page (left, centered, right). Choose one and stick to it.

**Proximity**: the distance between two objects on a page. The more related the content, the closer it should be to each other.

### **Design Dos and Don'ts**

- Color: keep color use to a minimum. Five or fewer per page (except for pictures of course).
- Use structure such as headings, font sizes & styles to organize content, not color.
- Black text on white background is still the best for readability. In this context, black & white are colors too!
- Blinking text is terrible. Moving text is hard to read.
- All motion on your page competes with the rest of your message. Use animation only for a specific purpose and not just because it looks cool.
- Opening pages should fit completely on a standard browser window and not require scrolling.
- As much as possible, avoid sideways scrolling.
- Shorter pages are better. Do not make your audience scroll down more than 4 screens.



- Provide content valuable to your audience. Analyze them, determine what they need and what knowledge you have and provide it.
- Check spelling and grammar.
- Note when you update content.
- Think twice about adding a counter. Let the value of the content speak for itself. There are more sophisticated ways of tracking.

**LabWork:** Evaluate REI.com

## Case Studies in Web Design

### Fighting Clutter

Internet retailers find themselves in a dilemma: how to pair the desire to expand into new markets with the need to maintain an uncluttered, easy-to-navigate Web site. The quandary is especially acute at <http://Amazon.com> which has gone from selling books to offering a dizzying array of products (many from retail partners), all without an increase in the storefront's virtual space.

Amazon's website used tabs to identify different product categories. As products increased, the danger was the website would become an overwhelming row upon row of tab upon tab. Initially, Maryam Mohits of Amazon, eliminated a second row of tabs that had appeared on the home page. With even more new businesses contemplated, she realized the current design was in trouble. She created something called 'Chiclets' after the square candies. Ditching the double row of tabs, she kept only 2 tabs – one displaying a welcome message to visitors and one that let users click onto a site with a complete directory of product areas. At the end of these tabs, she added five boxes lined up horizontally and representing a rotation of Amazon departments. Amazon tested the changes and found them a big improvement with users. A year later, though, it moved to a slightly different design that proved to be even easier to navigate – out went the Chiclets – in came a single row with a broad menu of rotating tabs ending with a button to click to 'see more stores'. The design has drifted again.

### Emergency Makeover

When Hillary Billings began her job as chief marketing officer of an internet retailer <http://911gifts.com> – use Wayback Machine at <http://archive.org> to see it – there wasn't much about the she liked – the name conjured up ambulances and really negative ideas. She changed the site's name – the new name <http://RedEnvelope.com> alludes to an Asian tradition in which gifts are often presented in red envelopes. The merchandise was radically overhauled as twists on the conventional – including floral and plant offerings and jewelry. The results have been successful.

### Extreme Makeovers

Here's a look at three e-commerce websites that used to have a '2001 look' to them.

[Staples.com](http://Staples.com) – customer research sets this one apart. Key discovery: customers lacked a standard process for inventorying and ordering office supplies. They needed easy way to access previous orders and organize purchases. 'Easy Reorder' 'Easy Rebate'

[Budget.com](http://Budget.com) –infrastructure upgraded to avoid downtime. Added 'natural language queries' to search with frequent review of new searches. Set to merge infrastructure with Avis.

[Newegg.com](http://Newegg.com) – known for aggressive price competition – added RSS feeds for customers to be notified of pricing changes.

### **Faking it: Jellyvision**

Go to <http://Jellyvision.com>. They create interactive ads and websites. Their website offers slick demos of future possibilities: a sarcastic virtual tour guide, a simulated phone operator assisting a customer, or an online investment counselor – in each case, the dialogue involves you interacting with a series of pre-recorded phrases – but the discourse sounds and feels natural. They take an anti-Tellme approach – not writing algorithms to automate responses, but more of an AV / TV approach. They think they're pioneering a new form of communication...What do you think?

### **Another Design Phenomenon: Blogs**

Weblogs, or "blogs" for short, are a form of grassroots online diary publishing that give ordinary people with limited technical knowledge the ability to update personal Web sites. A blog consists of short, frequently updated postings that are arranged chronologically, highlighting the latest material. It is a website where an individual records her thoughts, opinions, comments from others, and links to other Web resources. Most are public and searchable. See <http://blogger.com> for free, ad-supported software to write your own blog.

Blogging has mushroomed in recent years to attract hundreds of thousands of passionate writers who range from teen diarists to vanity publishers to music fans to well-known celebrities. Bloggers came to the attention of the mainstream media when helping topple Sen. Trent Lott (R.-Miss.) from his position of Senate Majority Leader after several Washington pundits used their Weblogs to highlight racially divisive comments Lott had made in praise of South Carolina Sen. Strom Thurmond (R) -- comments overlooked by mainstream journalists. About 40% of the Web population has read one - do blogs make information so ubiquitous, it becomes almost useless?

Interesting, just over 99% of the 150 million blogs out there get no hits in a course of a year. Most blogs are started and abandoned. About 5-15 percent are spam blogs – splogs – created just to skew search engine results. They are mostly 'link farms' with various nefarious ends.

A Weblog is just a web page with a long scroll of time and date-stamped entries, written and posted by the blog owner. There are several different types of blogs:

- 1) Linkage Blogs: this is the most classic, it links to other sites embroidered with brief descriptions. If the person operating it has similar interests, you're in luck because they've done all the work of sorting interesting sites.
- 2) Info Blogs: used by schools, companies and local businesses to keep folks informed.
- 3) Boswell Blogs: this is a street-level account of an individual life – like reading someone's diary.
- 4) Barbie Blogs: Like Boswell, except the entries are of interest only to the writer and an immediate circle of friends.

5) Spam Blogs: unfortunately, the fastest growing area; about half of all blogs are spam. Splogs try to game search engine rankings by creating bogus networks of interlinked sites. Splogs and their cousins: sportals attempt to lure users to their pay-per-click links. The larger the network, the higher the rankings

6) Networking Blogs: Work like a group meeting point, with superb privacy controls, a sort of virtual kiosk.

7) Placeblogs: that focuses on a neighborhood, city or region.

Blogs continue to morph from online diaries to publications that rival the reach of traditional media.

Why are some many blogs abandoned? There seems to be a sort of gene for keeping this going.

### **So You Want to be a Blogger?**

Pick a specific topic and stick to it. Keep your design simple and your posts concise. Let links and photos speak for themselves. Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. Post often – frequent updates keep people coming back. Check your facts before posting.

### **Global Web Design and the Dimensions of Culture**

Rarely do globalized websites incorporate the nuances of a culture's social hierarchy, individualism, gender roles, time-orientation, or truth-seeking attributes. Geert Hofstede published Cultures & Organizations in 1997, a seminal work that elaborates on these issues. He rated 53 countries on each dimension.

### **Who's First / Who's Last**

A culture's concept of power distance – the extent to which a culture expects and accepts unequal power distribution among individuals – should determine the following aspects of a website

- access to information (highly vs. less-highly structured)
- hierarchies of information (tall vs. shallow)
- emphasis on social and moral order (e.g. nationalism or religion as significant or not)  
focus on expertise (strong presence of authority, experts, official stamps or logos or not)
- social prominence (leaders vs. citizens, customers or employees)
- security (restrictions vs. transparency)
- social roles used to organize info (manager's section vs. not)

See the difference in these power-distance relationships by examining websites from two very different countries: <http://www.utp.ac.pa/> and <http://www.tue.nl>

### **But Enough About Me...**

Individualism implies loose ties among people who are expected to look out for themselves. Collectivism implies people are integrated into strong cohesive groups in exchange for loyalty. These differences may influence web design in the following ways:

- personal achievement (maximized vs. underplayed)
- success (materialism vs. achievement of socio-political agendas)
- rhetoric (controversial speech and tolerance of extremes vs. official slogans with minimal hyperbole)

- imagery (youth vs. aged, activities vs. state of being)
- social prominence (individuals emphasized vs. simple images of groups or product)
- goals (personal goals vs. official group goals)
- morality (truth vs. relationships)
- change (new and unique vs. tradition & history)

See the difference between <http://www.nps.gov> and [http://panamatours.com/Rainforest/Rainforest\\_intro.htm](http://panamatours.com/Rainforest/Rainforest_intro.htm)

### **Gender Neutral?**

In masculine cultures, the focus is on assertiveness, competition and toughness and feminine orientation to tenderness, home and children. In feminine cultures, both men and women exhibit modesty, tenderness and quality of life issues. Japan gender difference rating: 95. US: 62; France: 43; Sweden: 5. Masculine cultures focus on

- distinctions (clear roles)
- accomplishments (finite tasks and mastery)
- control (navigation oriented to exploration and user control)
- sport (games and competition used to gain attention)
- utility (graphics, sound, animation used for utilitarian purposes)

Feminine cultures focus on

- ambiguity (blurred roles)
- cooperation (teamwork, support vs. winning)
- artistry (aesthetics, unifying values used to gain attention)

Example: [www.excite.co.jp](http://www.excite.co.jp)

### **Anxiety Attack**

Cultures vary in avoidance of uncertainty. High avoidance cultures want:

- simplicity (limit choices and amounts of data)
- results (let users know implications of their actions before they act)
- comfort (structure focuses on reducing user error)
- clarity (design supports navigation and reduces ambiguity)

Low uncertainty-avoidance cultures want:

depth (allow wandering, risk taking)  
 choice (maximize options and content)  
 surprises (less control of navigation, links open new windows away from original location)  
 help (focus on content index compared to task-oriented help procedures)  
 variety (design focuses on maximizing info)

See <http://www.sabena.com> and <http://www.britishairways.com>

### **A Little Patience**

Long-term time orientation is important in Asia. A stable society requires unequal relations, family focus, treating others as you'd wish to be treated, and working hard, persevering, being frugal and patient. China rank: 118, US: 29, Pakistan: 0. According to Hofstede and other analysts, Asian nations

desire virtuous behavior vs. Western nations oriented toward belief and search for truth. Long term time orientation favors

- value (content has practical value)
- credibility (personal relationships are sources of info)
- investment (patience in achieving goals)

Short time orientation favors

- certainty (content based on truth and close-held beliefs)
- structure (rules are source of info and credibility)
- urgency (want immediate results toward goals)

Look at two versions of the same corporate website designed for two nations:

<http://www.siemens.com.pk> and <http://www.siemens.com.cn>

### **What's More**

Other web design questions to explore:

Should online teachers or trainers act as friend or guru?

What motivations should you offer: money, fame, honor or achievement?

What role exists for personal vs. group opinions?

What roles should community values play in individualist vs. collectivist cultures?

How does the objective of distance learning change in individualist vs. collectivist cultures?

Should websites focus on tradition, skills, expertise or earning power?

How would job sites differ in individualist vs. collectivist cultures?

Should you develop different sites for men and women?

How well is advertising hyperbole tolerated?

How is ambiguity received?

What differences might permeate Western vs. Asian sites regarding 'truth' vs. virtuous practice?

### **Other Web Design Resources**

Web Style Guide <http://webstyleguide.com>

This web site, by the authors of the Web Style Guide, provides most, but not all, of the content of the printed version of the book. Especially useful for viewing the full color graphics that are only black-and-white in the book.

Writing for the Web <http://www.sun.com/980713/webwriting/>

Writing for the Web is very different from writing for print, find out why in this report.

Jakob Nielsen's Website <http://www.useit.com>

The web site of one of the foremost authorities on web site design. Contrast the advice at this site with that found at Web Style web site.

### **Getting to Know HTML**

An acronym for Hypertext Markup Language, HTML is the computer language used to create Web pages. It is the basic language that specifies where elements (pictures, text, etc.) go on a page – and what they should look like. The Bare Bones Guide to HTML – see <http://werbach.com/barebones/> is intended to give neophytes an easy-to-follow overview of HTML. It is designed to be as concise as possible and doesn't go into depth, but it is a great starting point for us beginners.

## Why HTML is Great

HTML resolves system incompatibility issues. It works regardless of the computer and network you use.

HTML is authored in plain text as compared to ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) text. Remember that computers deal with electrical currents that are converted to binary numbers – if the current is off, it's a 0, if it's on, it's a 1. ASCII uses a seven-bit long binary code for each letter – the letter a is 1100001. Ugh.

HTML uses that plain text to create 'tags' recognized by all browsers. A 'tag' is the symbols used to manipulate content on a webpage.

HTML formats text allowing complicated text to be viewed by any computer.

HTML makes documents interactive through hyperlinks. A 'hyperlink' is the selectable text or graphic on a webpage that tells your browser to retrieve other content located online.

HTML allows multimedia content.

HTML allows data to be placed within a global context: any combination of data can be disseminated through any combination of media to any combination of audiences.

## Building a Web Site

We're going to build websites this week and next. Many web pages are created by firms that employ experienced coders and designers, but a good portion of the sites were designed by people just like you and me. And where do you think most of them learning to create Web pages? On the Web, of course.

Web sites are essentially organized with a structured hierarchy like this:

Home Page / *Topic* / File Name

Link 1: *Introduction* / File Name

Link 2: *Content* / File Names

Link 3: *Other Links*

Link 4: *Email*

In general, Web sites use three kinds of organizational structures to organize their pages. In a tree structure, a pyramid or outline format (as above) makes it easy for users to navigate through the site. In a linear structure, one page leads to the next, which leads to the next, and so on, in a straight line. Finally, in a random structure, pages are connected to each other seemingly at random.

- Your Web site should have at least 5 pages- a home page, relevant links, contact email and **lots** of content. These can be organized as four *levels* of links. More levels are not necessarily better.
- Include at least four image files (either JPEG or GIF).
- Include background color and different font sizes as relevant

## CourseWork

Break into small groups to discuss your website topic and design hierarchy. Then go to a website host that offers a free option like <http://weebly.com> or <http://www.tripod.lycos.com> – choose the Free option and sign up.