

How To Create A Successful Web Page Layout

Free, Simple, Comprehensive Information

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A web page may seem like a puzzle, but keeping the layout simple and conventional will help your visitors finding what they need. You may be tempted to be more creative and unique, but keep in mind that web surfers will thank you for conforming by coming back to your website. To stand out, plan to use creative and unique colors and graphics instead. Here is an example of a simple and conventional layout that works well for most websites.

This article provides free, simple, and comprehensive information, hints, tips, and tools that will allow you to create a successful website. If you have time to learn, it will show you how to get the best of your website and how to run a successful internet business.

Top Header - Common identifier area

Every page of your website must let the visitors know that they are at your website. Here you may decide to feature your logo, banner, business name, or other graphic. Pay attention to the height of this area; if it is too tall, your content will be begin too low on the screen.

Navigation bar area

The navigation bar helps visitors finding their way through your website. Side navigation bars support an unlimited number of items while horizontal navigation bars leave more width for the content of your web pages. If practical, I always recommend the use of a horizontal navigation bar. Larger websites may need multiple navigation bars.

Web surfers are not very patient and will quickly leave your website if they do not find what they are looking for. Think your navigation system thoroughly to make it simple, efficient, and to minimize the number of clicks required to navigate through your website.

Bottom Footer - Common notes area

Every page must let the visitors know some key information about your website and who to contact in case of a question or problem. This area is also often used to repeat some or all of the links found in the navigation bar.

Main content area – Content is king

The main content area is what your visitors actually come to see. A useful and content rich website will convince your visitors about the seriousness of your business and will invite them to return to your website. Plan ahead and don't make your content an after fact simply to fill up empty spaces. Work and rework the text of your web pages, especially your home page.

Be aware that readers are uncomfortable with extremely short or extremely long lines so plan to use a two or three column layout, a bit like on a newspaper. Short paragraphs like on this page work well too.

Secondary content area - Flasher

A secondary content area is sometimes used for advertising or for highlighting some content that needs to be more visible. If you don't need it, leave this space for your main content.

Background and Colors

The newspaper industry figured out a long time ago that black letters on white paper are easy to read. Other dark font & light background color combinations work well but are a bit more risky. Light font & dark background color combinations often look strange. Do you want your website to look strange?

Pictures, logos, and artwork

Find pictures, logos, and artwork for your web pages. Save time and money by scanning printed documents you might already have. Use a digital camera and take your own pictures. Many websites including [Microsoft](#) offers great royalty free pictures.

Large picture and clips take time to download. Impatient visitors might be tempted to leave your website if it takes to long to download. Use judgment and balance.

Flash animations

Flash technology is sometimes used to create animations or sounds effects on web pages. While it can sometimes be cool, some people (like me) find them extremely annoying and will leave your website as soon as they start. Flash animations take time to download and distract your visitors from the main content of your website. Do you still want to use flash?

Outbound links

You worked hard to get a visitor to your website and the last thing you want is to loose them through outbound links. Providing non-competitive related links is great but make sure outbound links open up a new window so your web pages are still opened.

Page width

Each web browser can be set differently so web pages can look differently for different users. I always recommend a fixed page width of 775 pixels. Those pages look good for the vast majority of your visitors and will print well on a regular 8½" X 11" sheet of paper when the left and right margins are minimized.

Alain Houle owns and operates Alco Web Design which provides affordable website design and hosting services for small business owners. He strongly believes in effectiveness through education, simplicity, elegance, functionality, and affordability. For more details, visit <http://alcowebdesign.com>

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