

User Interface Design

Chapter 6

FWD

Overview

- Developing the Interface
 - elements
 - color schemes
 - typefaces
 - page layout
- Incorporating a client's style guide
 - brand identity
- Usability

Interface

- What a user sees:
 - GUI (gooey) *Graphical User Interface*
- How a user gets around
 - Navigation
- Ease of use:
 - Usability

GUI

- Essence of any software or website
- Surface appearance
- Interactive mechanisms
- Active Graphical Environment

- Navigation can fail if the interface does not convey the purpose of the site.

- Interface & Navigation can fail if usability loses effectiveness & efficiency

Interface Elements & Basics

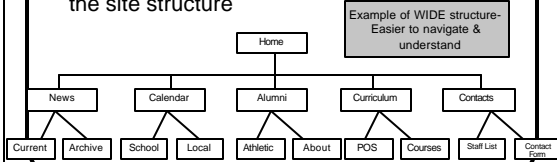
- Implementation of site branding – using metaphors or themes, navigational schemes, page layout & site structure
- Interface must maintain Design Principles
 - Clarity
 - Consistency
 - Contrast
 - Simplicity
 - Structure
 - Emphasis

Interface- Site Branding

- Branding controls both how a customer relates to and feels emotionally about a company & ensure consistency and recognizability for the company's products
 - ✓ How do you want your brand perceived by the public, industry, and media?
 - ✓ How is your target demographic?
 - ✓ Who do you view the competition?
 - ✓ How do you want your business to differentiate itself from the competition?
- tied to logo
- corporate identity
- style of company

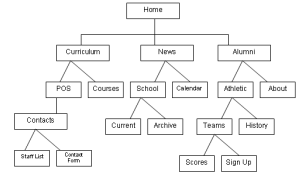
Interface – Site Structure

- Organize info in a way that makes sense to your users for your site
- Site Diagram or flow chart is to help organize the site structure



Interface – Site Structure

- Structure of a site can be deep or wide.
 - *Wide* has many categories and subcategories – all info within 3 clicks (only a few levels & best for small sites)
 - *Deep* has few main categories & subcategories – takes many clicks



Interface- Structure

- List the elements and links for each page of the diagram
 - include text, images, video, and audio clips
 - include image maps, GIFs, applets, downloadable items, and all links
 - organize your list into categories that distinguish those items appearing on every page with those only on certain groups
- Doing this before site work assures you leave room in your layout for everything you need.

Interface – Style Guide

- Style guide identifies the parameters of how the materials need to appear
 - typefaces, colors, logos & other design elements
- Ensures consistency
- Always keep the character & essence of a brand in foremost of your design

Interface Elements

- Standard interface elements are common to most sites & include
 - Navigation – how the user finds information through the use of buttons & links
 - Section Headers – indicate the topic of the page
 - Text Content – also known as copy
 - Graphical content – images/support graphics that illustrate and enhance the content of background
 - Layout System – a system or grid that organizes elements of a page into sections
 - Multi-media/Interactive content – customized features that might include animation, audio, video to involve users in useful interaction with the site
 - Color Palette – defines the general color scheme of a site
 - Style Sheet – standardizes font styles, typefaces, & sizes for text & graphics

Interface – Color Scheme

- Color can have a profound impact on how the user views a website.
 - reflect clients identity
 - enhance the message
- Rule of Thumb- choose a set of colors that make a family set (if using pastels don't use a bright saturated color OR grays then stick to gray)
- Associate a section of a website with a color can help users determine where they are
 - Pages with subcategories should remain in the same color scheme as the main page in that category (p 237)

Interface- Typeface

- Using HTML to determine text types is only allows for limited control because of fonts installed on each users system
 - Set font as needed & hope they show up
 - Create text as an image file
- Suggestions
 - User largest typeface that words 10-12 pixel
 - User a typeface whose lowercase letters have large height
 - allow as much white space between lines
 - Limit word breaks
 - Prevent widows
 - Keep # of typefaces to two or three maximum

Metaphors & Themes

- Metaphor is a symbol of an idea
 - work best when they are familiar symbols like a trash can/shopping cart
- Websites that use metaphors are more interesting than those that only use text links
- THEME- can be a visual or conceptual representation of a time, place, artistic style, medium etc.
 - Like a chocolate site having candy buttons or kid site having kids images for links & theme

Navigation & Usability

Chapter 6 continued...

Navigational Schemes

- How easy or hard "getting around" is will determine the stickiness of your site (how well you keep the visitor!)
 - User needs to build a mental map on their first visit to your site
 - How they do this is based on the information architecture of the site
 - Consistency is important
 - CONSISTENT placement of graphics or text links from PG-2-PG makes navigation easier to locate and employ!
 - CONSISTENT action is also key to navigational function

Navigation- Conventions

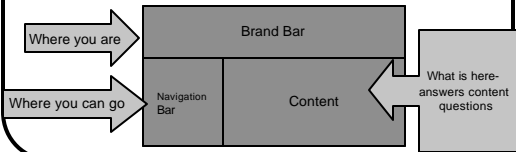
- Conventions- widely used and accepted device or technique
- Navigational conventions are important to maintain
 - underlined hyperlinks
 - link to the home page on EVERY page
 - search features
- Users don't come to your site to LEARN new navigational techniques

Navigation- Page Layouts & Storyboards

- Important interface feature is PAGE LAYOUT
 - Physical organization of information on the interface.
- Be organized about your layout
 - should indicate where a user is and where they can go

Navigation- Page Layouts & Storyboards

- Popular page layout places links in a column along the left side
- Site identity on the top
- body copy fills the remainder of the page

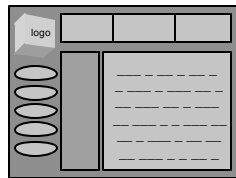


Navigation- Page Layouts & Storyboards

- Layout grid helps preserve a consistent look and feel from page to page
 - Ensures your elements are aligned
 - Behaves as a skeleton for all the objects & elements intended for your pages
 - Created using FRAMES or TABLES
- Story Boards – are sketches of each page in the site.
 - contain page title
 - overview of where each element goes in layout (both links & graphics)
 - list of resources

Prototype Creation

- After the general page layout is determined & the style guide is set up
 - site mock up or *PROTOTYPE* is made to show client
- simplified version of website
- Allows changes before full site development
- focus on the intention & needs of client in a unique way!
- Typically three versions are created for client choice



Home Page

- Organizes and presents the contents
- Directs & guides the visitor
 - well designed & reflects the personality of clients product or service
- **USERS** first impression of client!!
 - Like cover of book or magazine!

Homepage Guidelines

- Proportion – images and text are in proportion to the rest of the page
- Fluidity – user's eyes move from one element to another with fluid ease
- Direction – eye moves in a determined direction and isn't forced to wander aimlessly looking for a place to rest
- Structure – elements are structured in a visual hierarchy which emphasizes them in the order of their importance
- Mood – color scheme, type, & image determined by message of page

Interface - Usability

- High usability means that a system is easy to learn & use.
 - user-friendly
 - strives to create a good relationship with audience
 - attractive & functional

Usability – File Size

- File size matters to the user
- Regardless of the broadband capabilities – anything higher than 65KB will be SLOW to download!!
- Users are more satisfied with a page that
 - responds to user-initiated action in less than 1 second
 - loads enough of the page to allow the user to work in less than 8.5 seconds
 - offers text links before graphics
 - lets the user know in advance if the download may be slow

●