

Fast Web Design Essentials Guide

1. **Fast Loading web site designs** - This is the number 1 tip that every web designer should follow. You might design a web site that looks fantastic but few people are going to see it if it takes a long time to load. Your designs should be optimized for the web and should not take more than 15 seconds to load. Remember, you might have a great design but very few people are going to see it if it takes a long time to load.
2. **Clear Navigation** - Once a visitor has come to your site you need to make them go through your site. To do this you need to have clear navigation. Make sure all your important links are at prominent places. Preferably right on top - that's usually where a visitor first looks. Make use of menus on the right and the left. Try to link to as many pages of your site. Let your information be accessible from all parts of the site. You never know what a visitor may be interested in. Try to also use the footer for your important links.
3. **All Resolutions** - Today, there are computers with all kinds of resolution. They range from 640 x 480 to 1024 x 768 and go even higher. Your job is to design your site for all these resolutions. The best way to do this is to design your site in terms of percentage and not pixels.
4. **Browser Compatibility** - Make sure your site is browser compatible. Your web site should look good in Netscape as well as in Internet Explorer. Don't stop designing your site as soon as you find that it looks great on IE. Usually Netscape gives some problems, especially when you try doing complicated HTML designs. But don't give up too soon, usually with patience these problems can be easily fixed.
5. **Readable and professional looking fonts** - Don't ask me how many times I've clicked out of a site just because the font is in Comic Sans and the colour is a bright pink or green. Just by looking at the font you feel that the site is not a professional site. Don't use Comic Sans and other fancy fonts that may not be available on most computers. If the font you use is not available in a visitors computer the web site will use the default font of your computer which is much worse. So try to keep to common and professional web fonts. The fonts that I always stick to are Arial and Verdana.
6. **Minimize the use of images** - I believe that sometimes simple designs are the most effective for the web. Keep your site simple but neat. Don't clutter your page with big, bulky images that take ages to load. Instead use tables creatively and design eye - catching icons that will draw a visitor's attention to a particular section of your site. Tip - Visitors are usually more interested in content than in design.
7. **Use of white space** - Try not to clutter up your page with too many images, backgrounds and colourful fonts. Again use the Keep It Simple principle by minimizing the use of graphics and using a lot of white space. White space gives a sense of spaciousness and overall neatness to a site. Notice the white space in our site.
8. **Check for broken links** - Always check for broken links within a site before uploading it to your web server. In Dream Weaver you can check for broken links by right clicking on any file in the Site Files Window and then clicking on Check links - Entire Site. If you don't have this facility you need to upload your site and then check it using online tools like Net Mechanic.