

TJHS Computer Magnet

Design Checklist

From: "The Non-Designers Web Book" by Robin Williams and John Tollett; pg. 154

Good Design Checklist:

One of the elements of good web design is a lack of the elements that make bad web design. If you stay away from the "Not so good design checklist", you've probably got a pretty nice web site. In addition, keep these concepts in mind:

Text

- Background does not interrupt the text
- Text is big enough to read, but not too big
- The hierarchy of information is perfectly clear
- Columns of text are narrower than in a book to make reading easier on the screen

Navigation

- Navigation buttons and bars are easy to understand and use
- Frames, if used, are not obtrusive
- A large site has an index or site map

Links

- Link colors coordinate with page colors
- Links are underlined so they are instantly clear to the visitor
- The links give the visitor a clue as to where they are, what page they are currently on

Graphics

- Buttons are not big and dorky
- Every graphic has an alt label
- Every graphic link has a matching text link
- Graphics and backgrounds use browser-safe colors
- Animated graphics turn off by themselves

General Design

- Pages download quickly
- First page and home page fit into 640 by 460 space
- All other pages have the important stuff in 640 by 460
- Good use of graphic elements (photos, subheads, pull quotes) to break up large areas of text
- Every web page in the site looks like it belongs to the same site; there are repetitive elements that carry throughout the pages

Not-so-good Design Checklist:

Watch out for the following items – each one is a sign of an amateur designer. Each item can be easily corrected to make the page look so much more professional. Keep in mind that the point of eliminating bad features is not just to make the page prettier, but to communicate more effectively.

Backgrounds

- Gray default background color
- Color combinations of text and background that make the text hard to read

- Busy, distracting backgrounds that make the text hard to read

Text

- Text crowding against the left edge
- Text that stretches all the way across the page
- Centered type over flush left body copy
- Paragraphs of type in all caps
- Paragraphs of type in bold
- Paragraphs of type in italic
- Paragraphs of type in all caps, bold, and italic all at once

Links

- Default blue links
- Blue link borders around graphics
- Links that are not clear about where they will take you to
- Links in body copy that distract readers and lead them off to remote, useless pages
- Text links that are not underlined so you don't know it's a link
- Dead links (links that don't work anymore)

Graphics

- Large graphic files that take forever to download
- Meaningless or useless graphic files
- Thumbnail images that are nearly as large as the full-sized images they link to
- Graphics with "halos" of icky stuff (called anti-aliasing "artifacts") around the edges
- Graphics with no alt labels
- Missing graphics, especially missing graphics with no alt labels
- Graphics that don't fit on the screen

Tables

- Borders turned on in tables
- Tables used as design elements, especially with extra large (dorky) borders

Blinking and animations

- Anything that blinks, especially text
- Multiple things that blink
- Rainbow rules
- Rainbow rules that blink or animate
- "Under construction" signs, especially of little men working
- Animated "under construction" signs
- Animated pictures for e-mail
- Animations that never stop
- Multiple animations that never stop

Junk

- Counters on pages – who cares
- Junk advertising
- Having to scroll sideways
- Too many little pictures of the first page of awards that don't mean anything

Navigation

- Unclear navigation; overly complex navigation
- Complicate frames, too many frames, unnecessary scroll bars in frames
- Orphan pages (no links back to where they came from, no identification)
- Useless page titles that don't explain what the page is about

General Design

- Entry page or home page that does not fit within standard browser window (640 by 460 pixels)
- No focal point on the page
- Too many focal points on a page
- Navigation buttons as the only visual interest, especially when they're large (and dorky)
- Cluttered, not enough alignment
- Lack of contrast (in color, text, to create hierarchy of info, etc.)
- Pages that look okay in one browser but not in another