

Web Design: Introduction and Theory

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Let's begin with human history:

STORYTELLING

Imparting a thought, conveying information

What to leave in, what to leave out

Oral tradition

Early drawings

ARCHITECTURE

What is the desired effect... what does it have to do?

What is the limited resource? Materials? Time?

Granaries, forts

Winchester Mystery House

Feng shui

PRINT

Literacy

Gutenberg Bible and the press

Anatomy of a book

Tschichold and Modernist design

Magazine, Brodovich era

Restaurant menu

FILM, TELEVISION, VIDEO

Every second is a precursor to the next

In a sea of information, which portion are you watching?

Styled intro sequences... the user's manual to the movie

Saul Bass

Dexter

OBJECTS, PRODUCTS

Japanese kanban

Nintendo NES

GAMES

The learning curve

Pieces are just a conduit of the experience

Chinese checkers and chess

Pong

Grand Theft Auto and Half Life

A brief history of web design:

TECHNOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

Downloading speeds
Smaller screens

ARCHAIC INFRASTRUCTURES

Webrings
Geocities, Tripod, Angelfire, Xoom
Turnpikes, shrines, directories
Link free

Did design matter? Does it matter now?

In practice:

WOW, LOOK AT THE TIME

Time is the limited resource
Skip and scan
Sites don't come with instruction manuals

ANATOMY OF THE WEB

Pixels
Ratio of the screen, the size of the medium
"Above the fold" real estate
Left versus right
Header versus footer
Navigation
Call to action
Standard ad sizes

In practice: (continued)

WORKING PROCESS

Research; Architecture; Design; Development; Testing
Begin on paper; end on the screen

RESEARCH: WHAT QUESTIONS TO POSE?

What does my audience want to accomplish with this site?
What do I want to accomplish with this site?
What kind of content am I serving?
How often will I update?
Do I make big changes each time I update?
Who is my audience? Do they have handicaps?
Under what circumstance is someone reaching my site?
Where are they coming from?
What will my audience expect to see when they visit this site?

ARCHITECTURE: WHAT IS THE NARRATIVE?

Try to keep users on each page? Or move them around?
Where to move them to?
How to best help them get there? (Find what they're looking for?)
Make sure what absolutely needs to be seen, is seen first
Make sure nothing is hidden, or if it is, that it doesn't disappear
Interaction flow
Site map
Page schematic

DESIGN

Negative space is as powerful as positive space
Grids, layout, boxes
Hypertext and responsive behavior
Typography
Dimensionality

In practice: (continued)

DEVELOPMENT

HTML and CSS / Content and Presentation
Which CMS? EE, WORDPRESS, INDEXHIBIT, TUMBLR
Javascript
Flash
Want to use more fonts? SIFR, CUFON, FACELIFT, TYPEKIT

NARRATIVE

Remember storytelling
The less it does, the better it will do (usually)
Understand the existing logic, then articulate your own

Online resources (to use):

The Elements of Typographic Style Applied to the Web
[HTTP://WEBTYPOGRAPHY.NET](http://webtypography.net)

Browser-Safe fonts
[HTTP://AMPSOFT.NET/WEBDESIGN-L/WINDOWSMACFONTS.HTML](http://amsoft.net/webdesign-l/windowsmacfonts.html)

Typetester
[HTTP://TYPETESTER.ORG](http://typetester.org)

Gridmaker
[HTTP://GRAFIKK.CO.UK/GRIDMAKER](http://grafikk.co.uk/gridmaker)

Grids are Good, by Khoi Vinh and Mark Boulton
[HTTP://SUBTRACTION.COM/PICS/0703/GRIDS_ARE_GOOD.PDF](http://subtraction.com/pics/0703/grids_are_good.pdf)

Points to Pixels Conversion chart
[HTTP://REEDDESIGN.CO.UK/TEST/POINTS-PIXELS.HTML](http://reeddesign.co.uk/test/points-pixels.html)

Pattern Tap
[HTTP://PATTERNTAP.COM](http://patterntap.com)

Online resources (to read):

Use It (Jakob Nielsen)
[HTTP://USEIT.COM](http://useit.com)

A List Apart
[HTTP://ALISTAPART.COM](http://alistapart.com)

World Wide Web Consortium
[HTTP://W3.ORG](http://w3.org)

Peter Merholz
[HTTP://PETERME.COM](http://peterme.com)

Reading list:

Cascading Style Sheets: Separating Content from Presentation
Briggs, Champeon, Costello, Patterson

Don't Make Me Think
Steve Krug

Thinking with Type
Ellen Lupton

Grid Systems in Graphic Design
Josef Muller-Brockmann

The Elements of Typographic Style
Robert Bringhurst

Visual Explanations
The Visual Display of Quantitative Information
Envisioning Information
Edward Tufte

Understanding Comics
Scott McCloud

A few well-designed sites:

[HTTP://INTERACTIONDESIGN.SVA.EDU](http://interactiondesign.sva.edu)

[HTTP://AWORKINGLIBRARY.COM](http://aworkinglibrary.com)

[HTTP://QUESTIONABLECHARACTERS.COM](http://questionablecharacters.com)

[HTTP://NOTCOMING.COM](http://notcoming.com)

[HTTP://NICKASBURY.COM](http://nickasbury.com)

[HTTP://CONTRAST.IE](http://contrast.ie)

[HTTP://THEPRACTICESSESSIONS.ORG](http://thepacticesessions.org)

[HTTP://THINKINGFORALIVING.ORG](http://thinkingforaliving.org)

[HTTP://MTWTF.ORG](http://mtwtf.org)

[HTTP://GERDARNTZ.ORG](http://gerdarntz.org)

[HTTP://MONOCLE.COM](http://monocle.com)

[HTTP://SPACECOLLECTIVE.ORG](http://spacecollective.org)

[HTTP://THEVINYLFACTORY.COM](http://thevinylfactory.com)

... specifically art sites:

[HTTP://EXACTITUDES.COM](http://exactitudes.com)

[HTTP://SAMWINSTON.COM](http://samwinston.com)

[HTTP://RICHARDSARSON.COM](http://richardsarson.com)

[HTTP://DAVIDPEARSONDESIGN.COM](http://davidpearsondesign.com)

Cool bits:

Olia Lialina's Vernacular Web 2

[HTTP://CONTEMPORARY-HOME-COMPUTING.ORG/VERNACULAR-WEB-2](http://contemporary-home-computing.org/vernacular-web-2)

Do Not Use "Click Here"

[HTTP://WWW.WEBCENTRICDESIGN.CO.UK/BLOG/?P=17](http://www.webcentricdesign.co.uk/blog/?p=17)

A Page of Talmud

[HTTP://PEOPLE.UCALGARY.CA/~ELSEGAL/TALMUDPAGE.HTML](http://people.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/talmudpage.html)

Thank you!