The five elements of websites

- Content
- Design
- Usability
- Interactivity
- Technology

The five elements - content

- The web is at heart a communications medium
- Comms objectives
- Content is **what** we communicate, usually we'll be talking about text
  - Not restricted to text:
    - Forms
    - Pictures
    - Database entries
    - Polls
    - Other media

The five elements - content

- Text is the main concern
  - Is it written & formatted for the web?
  - Is it credible?

- Text is also critical for search engines

The five elements - design

- Aesthetically pleasing?
  - there is a difference between bad design and ugly
  - is it right for the audience?

- Consistency in themes, metaphors?
  - same basic look on each page?
  - elements: logos, wordmarks, photos

The five elements - design

- Colour -scheme, good contrasts
- Typography -- text, fonts, typfaces
- Tastes of the audience taken into consideration?
- Does the design get in the way or help?
- Good design improves communication.
- Sometimes content and design are called "context" together

The five elements - usability

- site organization or architecture
  - is the information presented in a coherent and easy-to-follow manner – does it make you think?
  - does the site identify itself, and what you can do there?
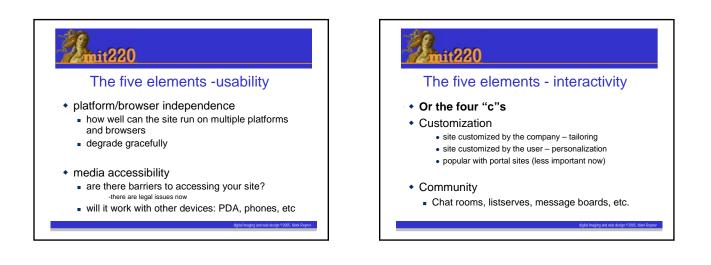
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The five elements - usability

- navigation
  - is there more than one way to find your way around the site; does it help you form a "mental map"
  - what happens when your users try to access info in a non-linear way?
  - Navigation can be innovative and still work, but generally, we want to use <u>conventions</u>

The five elements - usability

- speed
  - time required to display a page on the user's screen
  - dependant on: bandwidth, computer, connection, what is on the page
  - the more stuff you have on the page, the longer it takes

- reliability
  - does the site have any downtime?
  - does it download correctly?

The five elements -usability

- platform/browser independence
  - how well can the site run on multiple platforms and browsers
  - degrade gracefully

- media accessibility
  - are there barriers to accessing your site?
    - -there are legal issues now
  - will it work with other devices: PDA, phones, etc

The five elements - interactivity

- **Or the four "c"s**
- Customization
  - site customized by the company – tailoring
  - site customized by the user – personalization
  - popular with portal sites (less important now)

- Community
  - Chat rooms, listserves, message boards, etc.

The five elements - interactivity

- Communications
  - site-to-user (email)
  - user-to-site (direct requests, forms, etc)
  - server-to-user (see community)
- Commerce
  - are there opportunities for the sale of goods, products or services

The five elements - technology

- is an appropriate level of technology used for the site's purpose?
  - I was torn where to link this, under technology or usability
  - Flash, Shockwave, Java, Visual Basic, CGI Scripts, etc.
  - Database or content management system?