

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?



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 conventions



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?