Website Design Phases

• Phase One: Site Design

• Phase Two: Page Design

Site Design: Steps to Take

• Gather and organize content into areas or sections or units
• Determine best names for sections
  • Know that sections become buttons
• Work out navigation between areas
  • Know that buttons can only go to one place
• Diagram results
  • Know that the completed site map also gives the page count
• Simplify, simplify, simplify!
1 Organize Content

- Either mentally or on paper, gather together all content you would like to make available for the new webpage.
- Include everything needed to make a complete statement of your content.
  - Important whether you are designing a fully online course or merely posting a few basic items on an adjunct site.
- Jot down the main points.
  - An outline works well or a concept map.

2 Name Sections

- Distinguish housekeeping info from substantive content, i.e., separate syllabus, schedule, announcements, contact, etc. from unit 1, unit 2, etc.
- Group the substantive content by the increment you use to deliver it, i.e., by the week, by the unit, by the chapter, etc.
Organize Buttons

- Section or unit headings can become the titles of navigation buttons
- Important Tips:
  - Consolidate concepts to achieve fewer buttons with shorter names
    - Best practice: 5 or 6 main buttons, others relegated to submenu
  - Balance need for usability with instructional functionality

Navigation

- Buttons are agents of navigation as well as labels that reveal organization
- Assume all main pages will need to be linked to each other, both forward and backward
  - Remember this has to be set up deliberately
- Determine whether a second tier of pages will be needed
  - Some sections, such as a weekly schedule, may contain navigation to deeper levels of the site
  - Remember: One button can jump to only one place
### Make Site Map

- Using whiteboard to make changes easy, map your site according to what you have developed so far
- Draw arrows to indicate navigation paths
- Count pages to see how big the site is going to be
- Modify as needed

---

#### Page Count:

7 upper level pages  
4 units x 5 pages ea. = 20  
2 course info pages  
29 pages = Total
Page Design: Steps to Take

- Three factors drive page design:
  - Usability (simplicity beats complication)
  - Reliability (trust beats surprise)
  - Repetition (anticipate user’s issues over time)
- Ultimate goal is to minimize anything that interferes with website “transparency”
  - the student’s whole attention should be on the content, not the site

Page Design Principles

- Adopt one or two page designs and stick with them throughout the site
- Seek balance between stable and changing elements
  - Always place buttons and other regular features in the same place on each page
  - Once they are placed, never move them
  - Leave plenty of room for changing features
# Page Design Principles

- **“Brand” all pages as part of balance**
  - Visually cue users by using a unique corner graphic for each section
  - Build user’s trust yet keep interest alive with predictable variety
- The eye can read an image much faster than type: instant “geo-location” saves time for you the developer as well as for the student user of the site

---

# Page Design Principles

- Place frequently used items near the top of the page
- Choose colors as you would for a room in a house
  - Subtle beats bright
  - Contrast beats saturated color
  - “Brand” areas with specific colors
- Keep text for print within the first 600 pixels from the left side of the screen
Current Standard Screen Size = 800 x 600

Reliable Printable Area = 600 pixels counted from left edge of screen

Some printers cut off right side

600 pixels

800 pixels

Simple Page Design

Sketchy ideas
1. **Page Title Area**
   - designates course name/number and website location

2. **4-8 Main Buttons**

3. **Logo or Graphic**
   - 200-280 pixels wide
   - 100 pixels high
   - links to Splash page

4. **Content Area**
   - from left, 0 – 600 pixels
   - Area left blank or good for a picture or not-for-print item

5. **Overall Page Width = 800 pixels**

---

1. **Page Title Area**
   - designates course name/number and website location

2. **4-8 Main Buttons**

3. **Logo or Graphic**
   - 200-280 pixels wide
   - 100 pixels high
   - links to Splash page

4. **Sub Buttons**
   - 200 pixels wide or less

5. **Content Area**
   - from left, 0 – 600 pixels

6. **Overall Page Width = 800 pixels**

---

**Ellie’s Bio 130 website**

**#1 Secondary Page Idea**
#2 Secondary Page Idea

Logo or Graphic
200-280 pixels wide
100 pixels high
links to Splash page

Page Title Area
designates course name/number and website location

4-8 Main Buttons

4-8 Sub Buttons

Content Area
from left, 0 – 600 pixels

Picture or Bulletin Board
or other area
200 pixels wide or less

Overall Page Width = 800 pixels

Keep header area narrow: Actual content should begin no lower than 150 pixels from top of webpage
Browser almost doubles content’s distance from screen top

• Make information easy to find
• Don’t allow site organization to draw attention away from the content
• Ultimate goal is to make the site relatively transparent to the user
• The site should become like a favorite book or place to sit: comfortable, easy to relax in, yet interesting enough to keep attention, a safe, yet fascinating place to make discoveries.