

Web Site Usability Checklist

Content

What you communicate on the site should match defined or assumed audience and purpose requirements. Key usability benchmarks that ensure success include:

- ✓ Entry to the site (the home page) easily identifies what the visitor can expect to learn or do on the site.
- ✓ The site breaks up information into multiple pages/topics where less important info appears on secondary pages.
- ✓ Each page focuses on a single topic.
- ✓ Information presented is free of inaccuracies/contradictions and is not out of date.
- ✓ There is a site map that is well organized and clearly indicates pages already visited.

Context

Navigation and links follow a logical progression and are interrelated to support content. Make it easy for users to:

- ✓ Navigate between main and secondary windows
- ✓ Move between sections (same level)
- ✓ Recognize relevant links and those they've already visited
- ✓ Access information on terminology
- ✓ Locate index or "site map"
- ✓ Determine information credibility and timeliness
- ✓ Locate background or related info
- ✓ Find information again
- ✓ Exit the site (without exiting the browser)

Design

Design supports users' attention spans and principles of readability. Ensure that:

- ✓ Pages load quickly.
- ✓ The site is appealing to visit.
- ✓ The color scheme facilitates readability.
- ✓ Graphics carry tag lines to facilitate decision making prior to complete loading.
- ✓ The reader can discern where to begin and end on a page.
- ✓ The user will not hit frustrating "dead ends."
- ✓ Graphics enhance the user's ability to do or know what the designer intended.
- ✓ Pages are not cluttered, confusing, or distracting.
- ✓ No one would be embarrassed to have others see these pages (e.g., teachers, parents, and supervisors).

Writing Style

Develop text that is structured, "scannable," and concise. Be sure to:

- ✓ Write objectively; use external links for credibility.
- ✓ Use simple, informal language.
- ✓ Incorporate "telegraphic" headings and previews.
- ✓ Rely on the inverted pyramid approach to writing (main idea up front).
- ✓ Ensure that hypertext is well linked.
- ✓ Use highlighted key words, lists, and meaningful subheadings.