

Goals, audience & content

Web Content Design
for Writers and Editors
Fall 2004



Introductions

- Who are you?
- What's your editing/writing background?
- What 2 things do you want to learn?
- What's your favorite website? Why?
- Optional—provide email address

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Class Overview

- Objectives—what you will and won't learn
- Textbook
- Project
- Class website – www.webcontentdesign.com

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Portfolio projects

Any **one** of the following:

- Prototypes** of home page and 2nd level page for real or fictional site
- Article** written for Web
- Existing article **revised/edited** for Web

For more info, see "Class projects" under "BCC class" on www.webcontentdesign.com

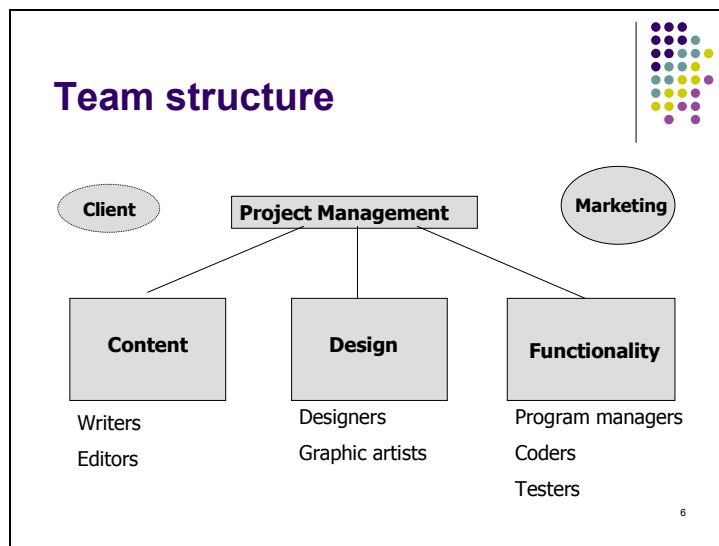
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Today's class

- Web team—roles, skills, job descriptions
- Steps in the design process
- Site goals and audience
- Web content

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Often, working with outside clients entails educating them about Web sites—purposes, process of creating/maintaining them, etc.




First step in creating a Web site—gathering a team

On small team, one person can take >1 role; depending on site size and purpose, can vary from 1-2 people to team of 40-50.

Writer/editor –content expert, not just wordsmith

During this class, you'll play these roles:

- ✓ Planning:
- ✓ Producer/managing editor
- ✓ Info architect
- ✓ Creating:
- ✓ Writer
- ✓ Editor



Web design process

Planning

- Define site: audience, goals, style, content


Design

- Organize information: create content categories, select page types, design navigation
- Define functionality and layout

Building

- Create content: research and write, create illustrations, make text web-ready, create style guide
- Publish and maintain content: (proof, archive)

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Website purposes

Promote and provide customer support	www.Microsoft.com
Sell products or services	www.Amazon.com
Provide news and information	www.Cnn.com
Direct you to other sites	www.Yahoo.com
Educate and entertain	www.zone.com
Provide free services	www.ofoto.com
Persuade	http://www.healthcareforalloregon.org/
Foster communities	http://groups.yahoo.com/
Express self, display art	http://www.menwholooklikekennyrogers.com/ , www.mycathatesyou.com

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Uses of the Web, per Farkas

Several of these can be combined in one site.



What are your goals for site?

- What do you want to accomplish via the Web?
- Be specific and measurable
- Site's business model – how to make money?
- May have different goals for each audience segment

Examples:


- "Attract potential investors; 50% of site visits should result in sales call"
- "Decrease costs by reducing support calls by 20%"
- "Increase donations by 30% in the first year"

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Rosenfield (p. 137) suggests starting with brainstorming about mission and vision, then end up with mission statement

All members of web team should be aware of site purpose, and ideally be involved in defining it.

To determine purpose: interview key decision-makers. Get buyoff on mission statement. Sometimes difficult when stakeholders don't all agree w/ each other, or you don't agree with them.



Who's the audience?

- Demographic info
 - Age
 - Education/reading level
 - Socioeconomic status
 - Gender
 - Language
- Knowledge & attitudes
 - What do they know about you?
 - How do they feel about you? What kind of relationship do they want?
 - Familiarity w/computers & Web
 - Concerns about Internet (privacy, security)

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Subject-specific (Farkas p. 29) – audience's background, beliefs, attitudes & preferences w/regard to subject matter. Example: secondmarriage.com

Attributes that can affect content

- ✓ Novice users might need site index, simpler home page, FAQ, glossary
- ✓ Experts might care more about good Search, detailed index
- ✓ International users: no jargon or idioms, use universal icons, provide transcripts for audio/video
- ✓ Condition of use: privacy, shared machine, touch-screen (museum)
- ✓ Disabled: site should work well with large fonts, graphics turned off
- ✓ Income: type of advertising

Audience can be described in PERSONAS, which are descriptions of fictional but representative members of each audience segment.

Audience characteristics (cont.)




- **Disabilities** “Accessibility”
 - Eyesight
 - Motor control
 - Hearing

www.aarp.com

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How will they use site?



- What kind of machine? Connection? Browser?
- Where will they access site from?
 - Private office
 - Shared cubicle
 - Shared machine in public space (library)
 - Wireless in public space (Starbuck's)
 - Home

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What does audience need?



What do they want to do or get from the site?
What top 4-5 things are they trying to accomplish?

- Find out when your store is open.
- Download a membership form.
- Compare different product versions.
- Get directions.
- Place an order.
- Decide how to vote regarding a candidate or issue.

www.alaskaair.com

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Audience needs (cont.)



- What obstacles will prevent them from accessing or using the site?
 - Slow Internet connection
 - Limited time
 - Distrust
 - No credit card
 - Don't know about site
- How do they currently interact with the company/organization? Are they willing to change?

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What's the site style?



2-3 adjectives that describe the look and feel of the site

- "hip, cutting edge"
- "straightforward, business-like"
- "warm, inviting"
- "retro, feminine"
- Colors, fonts, graphics, layout
- Needs to be consistent with other branding & marketing materials

www.fullbloomacupuncture.com

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Exercise: Identify website goals & audiences



What are the goals of the site owners? Who's the audience & what are their objectives? How do you know?

What adjectives would you use to describe the style?

- www.coolmath.com
- www.marthastewart.com
- <http://www.healthcareforalloregon.org/>

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Choosing content



Choose content based on:

- Audience needs
- Site goals
- Existing content
- Operational needs
- Competitor sites

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Different kinds of Web content



Text

Graphics (static & dynamic)

Audio

Video

Tools

Downloads (checklists, worksheets, templates)

User-supplied (chats, bulletin boards)

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Common text pages

About Us
<http://www.pixar.com/companyinfo/aboutus/index.html>


FAQ
<http://www.weedshare.com/web/faq.html>

Privacy policy
<http://www.weedshare.com/help/policies/privacy.html>

Top X Lists
<http://moneycentral.msn.com/articles/tax/prepare/1382.asp>

Related links
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/dnpalink.htm>

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Examples: multimedia content


Audio
http://www.naturewatch.ca/english/frogwatch/learn_frogs.asp?Province=bc

Video
<http://www.cooking.com/techniques/vidtech.asp?id=27>

Animation
http://www.frontiernet.net/~steve_glimpse/stringar.html

Static graphic
<http://www.solidwaste.org/combins.htm>

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Examples: other content

Downloads
<http://officeupdate.microsoft.com/templategallery/>

Applications
<http://wellstyled.com/tools/colorscheme2/index-en.html>

User-supplied
<http://blog.contentious.com/>

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Considerations

- Do you have content for all audience segments? For each goal?
- Where will you **get** content?
- How often do you need **new** content?
- Which content is most important?
- Don't forget "utility" content (contact us, about us, etc.)

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Frequency

How often to post new content?

How often do you want visitors to return?

How much content can you generate and publish?

How will users know about new content?

"Evergreen" or static content vs. dynamic content




Research

- Review existing data about customers or business
 - Membership info
 - Sales records
 - Marketing research
 - Customer service calls
- Gather new data
 - Customer interviews
 - Surveys
 - Focus groups
- Competitor sites
 - Content
 - Organization
 - Look & feel (“style”)

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Look for EVOLVING STANDARDS at similar sites



Class exercise

You work at a Web design company. The companies are competing to get the contract to build the website for a new health club.


Tonight, you'll interview the owner. Find out:

What does the owner want to accomplish with the site?
Who does she want to attract to the site? What will these visitors want?

As a team, start filling out these sections of content plan:

- Goal
- Audience
- Style
- Content


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Homework

- Review at least 2 other health club websites for ideas about goals, audience needs, style, content.
- Potential sites:
 - www.24hourfitness.com
 - www.goldsgym.com
 - <http://www.hampshirehills.com/>

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Reading

Review this week's lecture:

- "Purpose and audience" & "Site org" sections of class website (www.webcontentdesign.com)
- Chapters 2, 3, 4 & 7 of *Principles of Web Design*

Next week:

- Chapters 8 & 11 of *Principles*

Questions? Email me: cmazzba@comcast.net

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