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Web Site Development:
Basic Web Design

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Design Methodology

- Establish a purpose
- Set goals, objectives & specific outcomes
- Identify the target audience
- Design “look & feel” of the site
- Create templates for site construction

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Design Methodology

- Design structure of the site
- Create/import general content
- Develop feedback mechanisms
- Schedule content updates and changes

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Four Basic Design Concepts

- Alignment
- Proximity
- Repetition
- Contrast

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Alignment

- Three basic alignments: flush left, center & flush right
- Simple rule:
 - Choose one alignment and stick with it!
 - Mixed alignments = “Clown’s pants”
- Avoid edge to edge text
 - That’s why printed pages have margins!
- Centering? Maybe not...

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Proximity

- When items are separated it is difficult to identify relationships
 - HTML tends to produce undesirable separations
 - Headings should be close to the text they are associated with
 - Captions for pictures should be immediately adjacent to the picture

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Repetition

- Elements constantly and consistently repeated give pages visual unity
 - Elements of visual unity include
 - Colors
 - Text styles
 - Typography
 - Illustrations
 - Format
 - Layout
 - Navigation controls

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Contrast

- Contrast on your page serves two purposes:
 - Creates a visual hierarchy of information
 - Creates a focal point for the page
- Combination of hierarchy of information and focal point will draw users' eyes to desired locations

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Content

- What goes on your Web pages?
 - Driven by:
 - Customer/client expectations and needs
 - Marketing
 - Sales
 - Public Relations
 - Should be an across-the-board component of planning in all areas it touches

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Content Driven by Purpose

- **Informational (brochureware)**
 - Molding opinion perhaps?
- **Catalog**
 - Let folks know what you've got in as much detail as they care dig into
- **Online transaction (E-Commerce)**
 - Sell your product or service directly online

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Informational Site

- **Who we are**
- **What we do**
- **Where we are**
- **How to contact us**
 - Company contact information
 - Please include address and phone number!

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Catalog Site

- **Company information (as on info site)**
- **Complete product list with images and detailed information**
 - Can contain FAR more depth and breadth of information than found in printed catalog
 - If properly designed will dovetail with any future e-commerce efforts

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E-Commerce Site Content

- Company information
- Interactive catalog
 - Link directly (!) to inventory
- Automated shipping and tracking
- System to collect and verify credit card orders
- Customer personalization

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What Makes a Site Amateur?

- Busy backgrounds
- Busy graphics
- Crummy looking navigation bars
- Awkward frames
- The linear look
- Hit counters
- “Under Construction” signs
- Browser endorsements
- Free ads, buttons and clutter
- Getting ripped off for changes/updates

From “Amateur Web Sites - the Top Ten Signs” by Charlie Morris

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Focus, organization, & spelling

- Web pages tend to grow out of control
 - Each page should address ONE topic
- Decide what you to accomplish with your site
 - **Maintain that focus**

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Focus, organization, & spelling(!)

- **Organize your site**
 - Each page in your site should make sense to someone who has never been there before
 - Pages should flow in a logical sequence
 - Storyboard or flow diagram your site to ensure you have considered flow and logic
- **Write clearly and concisely**
- **SPELL EVERYTHING RIGHT!**

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More Design Thoughts

- **Focus attention on immediately viewable portion of your page**
 - 595 by 292 pixels on a 15" monitor set to 640 by 480 resolution
 - All critical information in this "browser critical" area
 - Default point size for most browsers is 12 points
 - Most folks never change it
 - Don't plan on everyone having 600X800 monitors! (pages may not *print!*)

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Even More Design Thoughts

- **Avoid clutter; eliminate extraneous graphics and text**
- **Maintain unity of design**
 - Stick to a style
 - Don't mix and match graphics and colors
 - Just because browsers support 216 colors doesn't mean you have to use them all on one page

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Importance of Navigational Aids

- Web sites become very complex very rapidly
 - Critical to give your viewers an anchor
 - Use menus, menu bars, buttons, etc.
 - Topics must be clear; navigation should always include text
 - Buttons with no text lose folks *fast*
- Goal: make important points on your site always available

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Designing to a specific browser

- Risky!
 - You never know which browser will be in use
 - Fact: you *will* lose viewers who cannot properly see features of your pages!
 - Don't do it!
- Validate your HTML
 - <http://validator.w3.org/>

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Don't Distract Your User

- Avoid graphical distractions
 - Very large text (<H1> tags)
 - Animated .gifs
 - Horizontal rules with little eyes peeking over them
 - Any or all of these may serve to distract your viewer from the content of the page

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Other Considerations

- Be consistent
- Be aware of audience expectations
 - Who is your audience?
 - What access speed will they be viewing your pages at?
 - Critical to number and size of graphics on page

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Questions?

- **Questions?**

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More Information

<http://itwebmaster.iit.edu/seminar/designing.html>

- ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY Internet Technology/Webmaster Program
 - <http://itwebmaster.iit.edu/>**;
 - see especially the Resources section at **<http://itwebmaster.iit.edu/resources/>**
 - Contact Ray: trygstad@iit.edu or trygstad@raytrygstad.com

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