

## Web Standards - Bad Web Design Checklist

Watch out for the following items --**each one is a sign of an amateur designer**. Each item can be easily corrected to make the page look so much more professional.

Keep in mind that the point of eliminating bad features is not just to make the page prettier, but also to communicate more effectively.

### Not-so-good Checklist ☹

#### Backgrounds

- Color combinations of text and background that make the text hard to read
- Busy, distracting backgrounds that make the text hard to read

#### Text

- Text crowding against the left edge (use a nested table or cell padding)
- Text that stretches all the way across the page (use columns like a newspaper does – never let text expand over 600 pixels, preferably less)
- Centered type - except for poems and drop quotes
- Paragraphs of type in all caps
- Paragraphs of type in bold
- Paragraphs of text in italic
- Paragraphs of type in all caps, bold, and italic all at once
- Serif fonts like Times New Roman at 8pt's or 11px's - in italics.

#### Links

- Default blue links (our style sheets will automatically fix this for you)
- Blue link borders around graphics (right click on graphic >picture properties > border=0 )
- Links that are not clear about where they will take you
- Links in body copy that distract readers and lead them off to remote, useless pages
- Dead links (links that don't work anymore)
- Linking the whole sentence rather than the catch phrase

#### Graphics

- Large graphic files that take forever to download
- Meaningless or useless graphic files
- Thumbnail images that are nearly as large as the full-sized images they link to
- Graphics with "halos" of icky stuff (called anti-aliasing "artifacts") around the edges
- Graphics with no alt labels (right click on graphic >picture properties >alt=add your text description here)
- Missing graphics, especially missing graphics with no alt labels (the big red X)
- Graphics that don't fit on the screen (Horizontal scroll at 800x600 is a no no)

#### Tables

- Borders turned on in tables (unless you are creating a calendar or data table)
- Tables used as design elements, especially with extra large (dorky) borders
- Anything that blinks, especially text
- Multiple things that blink
- Rainbow rules
- Rainbow rules that blink or animate
- "Under construction" signs, especially of little men working
- Animated "under construction" signs
- Animated pictures for email
- Animations that never stop
- Multiple animations that never stop

#### Junk

- Counters on pages -- who cares

- Junky advertising (no advertising on City's web site)
- Having to scroll sideways
- Too many little pictures of awards that don't mean anything to the user

### Navigation

- Unclear navigation; overly complex navigation
- Complicated frames, too many frames, unnecessary scroll bars in frames (no frames)
- Orphan pages (no links back to where they came from, no identification)
- Useless page titles that don't explain what the page is about (seen on the browser bar)

### General Design

- Entry page or home page that does not fit within standard browser window (800 X 600 pixels)
- No focal point on the page
- Navigation buttons as the only visual interest, especially when they are large and dorky
- Cluttered, not enough alignment
- Lack of contrast (in color, text, to create hierarchy of info, etc.)
- Pages that look okay in one browser but not in another

### So-much-better checklist 😊

One of the elements of good web design is a lack of the elements that make bad web design. If you stay away from everything on the not-so-good checklist, you've probably got a pretty nice web site. In addition, keep these concepts in mind:

#### Text

- Background does not interrupt the text
- Text is big enough to read, but not too big (body text 10pt or 12 pt)
- The hierarchy of information is perfectly clear
- Columns of text are narrower than in a book to make reading easier on the screen (no larger than 600 pixels wide, preferably less)

#### Navigation

- Navigation buttons and bars are easy to understand and use
- Navigation is repeated on every page in the same place (links never disappear for the page you are on)
- A large site has an index or site map

#### Links

- Link colors coordinate with page colors
- Links are instantly clear to the visitor
- The links give the visitor a clue as to where they are, what page they are currently on

#### Graphics

- Buttons are not big and dorky
- Every graphic has an alt label
- Every graphic link has a matching text link (covered by your text only page)
- Backgrounds use browser - safe colors unless you don't mind dithering colors
- Animated graphics turn off by themselves (if they were necessary)

#### General Design

- Pages download quickly
- Compliment the college navigation with your design
- SPELL CHECK!
- Good use of graphic elements (photos, subheads, pull quotes) to break up large areas of text
- Every web page in the site looks like it belongs to the same site; there are repetitive elements that carry throughout the pages (Important!!!)