

Disastrous web design mistakes

The main aim of your website is to encourage your visitors to come back again. You won't manage this unless your site is perfect, so we're going to look at some of the most common web design problems people run into.

1. Color choice – Keep your website simple. Sometimes less is more. Don't use more than three colors on your site, and make sure you use colors that are easy to read. Remember the main aim of your site is to be read, not to look great.
2. Navigation – Your website is not a maze designed to trap people inside you want your visitors to be able to find their way around easily. Some websites need you to click ten times before you can get to where you want to go!
3. Font – Make sure every page uses the same font, everyone likes continuity. Stick to commonly used internet fonts, like Arial. Don't use fancy fonts, and certainly don't use comic sans ms! If you use strange fonts people probably won't have them on their computers, and even if they do your text will be difficult to read. Also, make sure you don't use a font that's too small.
4. Huge paragraphs – People switch off when they see a block of text, don't do it!
5. No contact information – People like to know who they are dealing with, start including this information and make it easy to find!
6. Page load speeds – Everyone is in a rush, your website must load within 10 seconds otherwise people will get the information elsewhere.
7. Meta tags – you must use Meta tags, although your visitors won't see these, search engines will.
8. Frames – For some reason frames were popular some time ago, however many search engines are not capable of listing sites that use frames, and so they have been dropped.
9. Scrolling text – cool things aren't always good on websites

10. Wrong resolution – most people use their computers at an 800x600dpi resolution. Bear this in mind when designing your site.
11. Plug-ins – Media plug-ins are all well and good, but make sure you limit yourself to one per page. If you’re using Flash then don’t use a music player, and never use Java and Flash at the same time. This will make the pages load much slower. However it’s not actually as bad to use the same plug-in two times if you want.
12. Confusing links– Make the links obvious, don’t hide them. People want to be able to see them so that they can click on them.
13. Advertisements – yes everyone knows that you want to make money from your site, but don’t rub their noses in it. If you put too many adverts on your website it will just annoy people. Whenever you’re adding new adverts ask yourself if you think it goes. Don’t compromise your design and layout just for an advert.
14. Obscure email links – make sure that any email links use the word email. If a person clicks someone’s name hoping to learn more about them they will be very disappointed when an email window loads.
15. Broken links – Make sure all of your links work on a regular basis, links can become broken especially if you are linking to external links.
16. External links the same – make it obvious that the links are external if they are. Try coloring them in a different color, or use some sort of symbol.
17. Content – the content on websites should be easy to read and scan. Websites should be conversational and friendly. Don’t fill your websites with confusing jargon.