Guidelines for improving:
1. Testing
2. Content
3. Forms
4. Design

Review website design patterns

Useful Usability Findings
Overview
Testing
Framing questions, formats for response
Any testing is better than none

The biggest gains are achieved when going from zero test users to one

- Just five users reveal about 85% of all problems with your website
- Responses given after only 5 seconds are the same as those after 10 minutes
- Survey respondents prefer the left-side of the rating scale
- Suggest scenarios rather than direct tasks
Content

Scrolling, scanning, photo choice
Plan for text scanning

Users often read Web pages in an F-shaped pattern: two horizontal stripes followed by a vertical stripe

- The first two paragraphs must state the most important information
- Start subheads, paragraphs, and bullet points with information-carrying words
- Smaller type encourages focused viewing behavior... larger type promotes scanning
Focus above the fold

77% of visitors won’t scroll; they’ll just view the content above the fold

- Users have a limited attention span
- The most important information should be above the fold
- Scrolling beats paging
Encourage visitors to scroll

Sometimes users do read down an entire page

People will scroll down a page if

- the layout encourages scanning

and

- the information visible at the top makes them believe that it will be worth their time to scroll
Use photos with purpose

Users pay close attention to photos and other images that contain relevant information but ignore fluffy pictures used to "jazz up" Web pages.

- Avoid using photos as pure filler
- Users spend 10% more time viewing portrait photos than reading biographies
- Use photography of "real" people over stock photos when possible
Forms
Labels, search fields
Put form labels above fields

Users scan downward when filling out a form, not right to left
Use the ideal search box width

The average search box is 18-characters wide. Data shows that 27% of queries are too long to fit into it

- 27 characters accommodates 90% of queries
- In general, search boxes are better too wide than too short
- Padding in the input field can also improve user experience
Design
Layout, link color, buttons, banners
Use faces to direct attention

**Stuck on the face**

**Following the gaze**
Choose your link color wisely

Consider the following:

- Level of contrast with the background color
- Level of contrast with the rest of the text
- The browser’s default link color is blue, so it is familiar to most users
Value your white space

- White space between paragraphs and in the left and right margins increases comprehension by almost 20%
- Layout on a web page may not measurably influence performance, but it does influence satisfaction
Build usable navigation

Menu-driven interfaces are perceived as easier to use. Icon-based interfaces are perceived as more useful.

- First time users prefer text links over icons
- On sites with clear labels and prominent navigation options, users tend to browse rather than search
Be cautious of banner blindness

Users don’t fixate on design elements that resemble ads, even if they aren’t an ad

- Most users are blind to ad banners
- Be careful with heavily styled navigation items that may look like banners
- The more an image looks like a native site component, the more users will look at it
Website patterns

Typography, layout, forms
All measurements are in pixels.

- Line height ÷ body copy font size = 1.48
- Line length ÷ line height = 27.8
- Space between paragraphs ÷ line height = 0.754
- Optimal number of characters per line is 55 to 75, but between 75 and 85 characters per line is more popular in practice
92% of layouts have a fixed width (pixel-based)
94% of layouts are centered
The width of fixed layouts varies between 950 and 1000 pixels
58% of a website’s overall layout is used to display the main content
Most layouts have a large horizontal navigation menu
Contact pages contain driving directions, phone number, email address, postal address, vCard and online form
The registration link is titled “sign up” (40%) and is placed in the upper-right corner.

Sign-up forms have simple layouts, to avoid distracting users (61%).

Titles of input fields are bolded (62%), and fields are vertically arranged more than they are horizontally arranged (86%).

Designers tend to include few mandatory fields and few optional fields.

Email confirmation is not given (82%), but password confirmation is (72%).

The “Submit” button is either left-aligned (56%) or centered (26%).
References

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