### Web Design, Usability, and Aesthetics

**Billboard Design 101**

"Designing pages for scanning not reading"

**Notes from book**

"Don’t Make Me Think: by Steve Krug"

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**Don’t Make Me Think**

- Purpose is to give insight into web usability (common sense design).

**Usability**

- Making sure that something works well and is easy enough to use to the average or below average user.

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- There is no one "right or perfect" way to design Web sites.
- Best techniques always changing and improving.
- Hard to predict the Web’s future, since it is constantly changing, …needs determine its evolution.
- Usability does matter- less frustration and more satisfaction by your users and viewers, …instrumental to your success as a designer!

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**Minimum of 7 Deadly Sins of (web) design**

1. Navigation not intuitive (confusing and frustrating to user).
2. Too many colors (4-5 colors max! black, white, gray, color, and a shade of this color).
3. Too much text. (viewers don’t read text, they scan)
4. Page resolution and background not optimized for viewers (design for 800x600 and use a white background until you are an expert in graphic design).

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5. Fonts and font sizes inconsistent.
6. Loading takes too long, pictures not optimized (avoid Flash only and broadband only sites).
7. Site not designed with the user and usability in mind. (Optimize for the intended audience. Decomplicate your site, simplify for your user/viewer)

(Remember that these are not the only sins there are many, many more.)

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**Krug’s first law of usability:**

"Don’t make me think!" (when deciding whether a web design works) … should be self-evident, obvious, self explanatory
• Links/ naming should be obvious
• Navigation should be universal and interpretable by the viewer
• Remember viewers scan pages they don’t read

Cognitive overload will frustrate viewers
• Too much decision making will lose visitors
• Each page should be self-evident or at least self-explanatory (should take little thought to “get it”)

Why is it important for the visitor not to have to think?
-Because they are not willing to spend very much time viewing and your pages purpose has to be quickly obvious.

How we really use the Web
-Viewers glance and then click on the first link they think is what they want.

We tend to focus on words or phrases that seem to match...
(a) The task at hand
   OR
(b) Our current or ongoing personal interests
   AND
(c) The trigger words (our own name, catch words like free or sale, buzz or trendy words etc)

Viewers will choose the first reasonable option, a strategy known as “satisficing.” (satisfying and sufficing)
**Rational decision making:**
- Faced with a problem, a person gathers information, identifies the possible solutions, and chooses the best one

**Web users don’t like to think:**
- They are in a hurry (to find what they want)
- No penalty for guessing
- Weighing options not necessarily better
- Guessing is faster, the “click” mentality

**We use things all the time without understanding how they work …**
and
…we may have the wrong understanding about how they work
(it’s just not important to us)

**Search engine example, using a web site differently than the designer intended**
- Search engine should be easy to find, and usually located on the main page
- Search options should be explained if not typical or obvious
- Is a Site Map page the logical location for the search engine?

**Most of us have learned (to navigate) the web by experience and we do what we do because it has worked for us in the past**

Designers need to create obvious and yet standardized navigation

**If users can “get it”**
- Better chance they will find what they need
- Good for both them and the designer
- Your site will be better understood
- More likely to get them to navigate to where you want
- They’ll feel smarter and more in control (highly desirable)
What about the college site?
http://www.csn.edu

What about the CG site?
http://sites.csn.edu/cg

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