Web Design, Usability, and Aesthetics 3

Omit needless words
“The art of not writing for the web.”

Notes from book
“Don’t Make Me Think: by Steve Krug

Krug’s third law

• Get rid of half the words on each page

• Then get rid of half of what’s left

Krug’s third law

• Omit needless words

• Vigorous writing is concise

✓ A sentence should contain no unnecessary words
✓ A paragraph no unnecessary sentences
✓ for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts

(Idea taken from E.B. White’s seventeenth rule in The Elements of Style)

Most words take up space.

• No one is going to actually read all of them

• Having them there may require them to be read in order to understand what’s going on

Getting rid of all those words has several beneficial effects:

1. It reduces the noise level of the page

2. It makes the useful content more prominent

3. It makes the pages shorter, allowing users to see more of each page at a glance without scrolling.

Happy talk must die

“…the introductory text that’s supposed to welcome us to the site…

…and tell us what we’re about to see in the section we’ve just entered…”
Happy talk must die

- Something is happy talk when it makes you think, “Blah, blah, blah, blah”
- Needless talk/words
- Like small talk-content free

Happy talk must die

- Conveys no useful information
- Focuses on saying how great we are
- As opposed to delineating what makes us great

Instructions must die too

- Instructions are another major source of needless words
- No one is going to read them unless absolutely necessary
- Make everything self-explanatory, or at least as close to it as possible
- If absolutely necessary, limit them to the bare minimum

How to create the proverbial “clear, simple, and consistent” navigation

Shopping in the mall at a store…
…….where is the item I want?

Navigation systems and organizing hierarchy

Website Hierarchy

Sections and sub-sections all with their corresponding links
Web navigation 101
Process when you enter a Web site
• You're usually trying to find something.
• You decide whether to ask first or browse first
• Asking on the web = searching or search box

Jakob Nielsen (usability expert)
✓ “Search-dominant” users
  (look for a search box as soon as they enter a site)
✓ “Link-dominant” users
  (browse first, searching only when they've run out of likely links or have become frustrated)
✓ For “everyone else” choice depends on our frame of mind

Oddities of Web space:
• No sense of scale
• No sense of direction
• No sense of location

Important Web facts:
• Bookmarks important mapping technique
• Back button accounts for 30-40% of clicks
• Having a Home page important
• Visited links should be a different color

Overlooked purposes of navigation
• Help us find whatever it is we're looking for
• Tell us where we are
• It gives us something to hold on to
• It tells us what's here
• It tells us how to use the site
• It gives us confidence in the people who built it

Web navigation conventions
• Specify the appearance and location of the navigational elements
• So we know what to look for and where to look when we need them
• Putting them in a standard place
Putting them in a standard place

- Putting them in a standard place lets us quickly locate them with a minimum of effort
- Standardizing their appearance makes it easy to distinguish them from everything else

Persistent or Global Navigation

Navigation elements that appear on every page of the site

Persistent/Global Navigation

Five elements you need to have at all times.
1. Site ID (Logo/Name) Upper left of pages
2. A way home (home page)
3. Search (for big sites)
4. Utilities (Help, how, FAQ's, site map, etc.)
5. Sections (Main sections of site, often the top 2 levels)

The (Main) Sections of navigation:

Top levels of a site’s hierarchy

(A secondary navigation may provide subsections)

Hard to find good examples of third level navigation

Lower-level navigation is not as well planned out as top-level

(lower level still as important)

Every page needs a name

- Name needs to be in the right place
- Name needs to be prominent
- Name needs to match what I clicked (as closely as possible)
**Breadcrumbs**

- Reminiscent of a trail of crumbs
- Early Yahoo example (*Home* > *Arts* > *Visual* > *Photography*)
- Using alone would not be a good navigation scheme
- Not a good replacement for showing at least the top two layers of the hierarchy
- Put them at top and use "->" (separators)
- *Considered a convention*