

Tips for effective website layout and design

Graphics

- **Think small** - around 10-12KB per image. Slow pages are really frustrating and huge images are a primary cause of slow pages.
- Always **use graphics that fit the content**. The main exception I would make to this is for "design" images. These are photos or graphics that help make up the design of the page, and are not intended to illustrate the content.
- **Do not use images that blink** or move or change or rotate or flash. There have been many studies that show that flashing graphics are distracting and annoying to people.

Layout

- **Stick with standard layouts**. Some pages use 6 or 8 frames on one page. Some sites use a layout where you had to scroll to the right to read everything on the page. The reason that the 3-column layout is so popular on Web sites and newspapers is because it works, you'll keep more readers if you stick with something simple that they can understand.
- Whitespace is more than the CSS property, it is a function of your layout. You should be aware of the whitespace on your pages and how it affects how the content is viewed. **Whitespace is just as important in a Web layout as it is in a paper layout**.
- **Use your graphics as elements in your layouts**. Graphics can be more than just graphics when you use them as actual elements in your layouts.

Fonts

- **Serif for headlines and Sans-Serif for text**. Sans-serif fonts are much easier to read on computer monitors. If you use serif fonts for normal text, the serifs can blur together on the screen making them hard to read. Your printer friendly page should use the opposite fonts (serif for headlines and sans-serif for text).
- **Limit the number of different fonts**. Limiting your page and site to 2 or possibly 3 standard font families is easier to read and looks more professional.
- **Use standard font families**. Stick with fonts like Verdana, Geneva, Arial, and Helvetica & your pages will look better and the designs look correct on more browsers.

Advertising

- **Don't be greedy**. If you have any control over the number of ads on your site, be aware that your readers are not coming to read the ads, they are coming for the content. If the ads overwhelm the page content, many readers won't stick around long enough to read your information.
- **Treat ads as you would any other image**. Keep them small, avoid blinking/flashing, and keep them relevant.

Remember Your Readers

- **Test your pages** in multiple browsers & operating systems