

Web Site Design - Navigation Tips

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Sample of Content:

You may think it's easy to add navigation to a site but I'm sure there's something here you haven't thought of.

Content:

This is a simple area but so many people get it so wrong. The purpose is to get the user from A to B as quickly and easily as possible. Make the structure as obvious as possible.

Think about where users are going to want to go next and offer a direct link. Minimise the user's mouse movement. If the first link they click is one third of the way down the screen on the left then put the next links they are likely to click in the same area. If they have to move to another menu running along the top of the screen, down the right, along

the bottom, etc. it is all extra work for the user, albeit subconscious.

Make your links obvious. The user should know what is a link and what isn't without having to hover over it. Often links are grouped together under a category heading and the user is unsure whether or not the heading is a link. The best sites use the default blue underlined text with purple text for visited links. This isn't suitable for all sites but if Google, Yahoo! and MSN all use it it's not without good reason.

Don't be afraid to repeat links in a page, most commonly at the foot of the page. This saves the user having to scroll back up to see the navigation options.

Dynamic rollover menus are best avoided. Though they are very efficient in terms of space saving they can be very frustrating to use. For those users with a less steady hand or a misbehaving mouse it can take them several attempts to hover over the right link. If using a system like this it pays to repeat the links in simple text format elsewhere on the page. This will also help search engine spiders to navigate from what might otherwise be a dead end.

Be careful with non HTML documents. Don't link to a PDF file without making it clear in your text that this is where the link goes. In some browsers or with some software PDFs either don't display in the browser or take forever to appear. It's much better to give the user the option to download by right clicking and saving.

Chris Smith works full time as a freelance web designer, developer and internet marketing consultant. Please visit his sites: [Cheap Web Page Design](#), [Cheap Web Traffic](#), and [Search Engine Optimisation](#)

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