
SETTING UP THE SITE

Communicate With Your Clients

The first, and most important step in any design project is effectively determining what the client wants. Many web designers have suffered untold hours of design toil, only to be told by the client, "Well, that's not really the style I was looking for".

There are some important steps and questions you should follow to make sure that you start your work off on the right foot.

Ask the Client About What They Want

It is important to ask. Many new web designers assume that they know best. That may be true, but if the client doesn't like what you've done, they won't pay.

A downloadable "Client Qualification Questionnaire" can be found here in MS word format:

http://www.awdsf.com/downloads/Client_Qualification_Questionnaire.doc

The questionnaire covers all of the basic questions (and some of the not so basic ones) that you should ask your client.

Tell Your Clients About What You Want

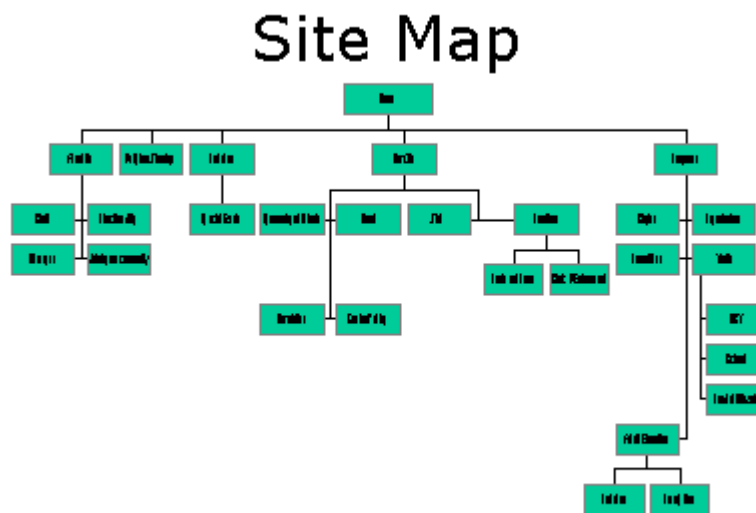
If you have a certain style that you're not willing to compromise, let the client know right up front. Remember, your first couple of jobs are going to be heavily used to get your next couple of jobs. If the client wants you to do something that you don't think is a good idea, tell them, and tell them why. Be patient and teach them a little about web design. No one else will. If they are insistent and you don't want to compromise, refer them to another web designer. Web designers often get referrals from other web designers. It's a good idea to build up working relationships with people who have a different style than you do.

Defining Goals (clients vs. users)

You must be very careful to define your goals when setting up a site. What does your client want out of the site? More importantly, what do users want out of the site? Often, designers get so wrapped up in giving the client what he wants, that they forget to make the site user friendly and useful. Sometimes the client's ideas are not the best. Patiently explain your ideas and remind the client that the happier their users are the more successful the site will be.

Build a Site Map

It is very important to lay out the entire structure of the site before you begin work. Your site must be very easy to navigate and important pages can not be buried too deeply. You can build a site map with software such as Inspiration, by Inspiration Software, or you can simply draw it by hand. The site map below was created in Microsoft PowerPoint:



Easy Design—Ask for Artwork

Sometimes much of your design work is already done for you. Ask the clients if there is printed material that they'd like you to work from. I've often found that clients want a "Design Copy" of their brochure. Most of your time will be spent designing the

look and feel of the site, not actually building it. If a client already has the “look and feel” ready for you, you’re very happy indeed! Ask your clients for *any* printed material they have, including brochures, letterhead, and that sort of thing.

One useful technique is to ask the client for a number of sites that represent the “feel” that they want their site to have. You’ll be able to glean a good understanding of what your client likes and dislikes from these sites.

Site Comps

You should provide your client with a number of different visual ideas for their site. The comps should represent color and layout ideas, but do not need to have all text placed or the buttons labels. *By all means, do not work up a totally working model for your site comps.* Present clients with a static image created in a program like PhotoShop, Illustrator, or Fireworks. You can even present hand drawings as comps if you are a talented artist.

Building a Storyboard for Your Site

Before Hollywood actually starts filming a picture, the whole narrative is laid out in a series of drawings called a storyboard. A storyboard illustrates key moments in the film and helps to give film makers a good sense of their story flow.

It is becoming common for Web Designers to storyboard their site. The sketches include placement of text and graphics. The pages are then usually laid out in the same manner as the site map.

Use Templates

A thirty-page site does not usually have thirty unique pages. Such a site would consist of a unique homepage and a couple of other generic pages that are to be used as templates. These template pages are pre-built by the web designer with navigation bars and basic layout already set. The content area is left blank and is filled in when needed. The template pages can be re-used again and again. Building

sites with templates is not cheating. Templates provide for site continuity and upgradability.

Site File Structure

You'll remember that your entire website will be kept in one folder on your hard drive, called the "root folder". What other folders are needed inside the root folder? You can actually organize your pages however you want, but convention dictates a few common folders. You should always keep these folders in your site, as it is important to be seen as professional.

Folders Your Site Should Have:

1. images - You don't want a bunch of messy images floating around in your root folder. You should always have at least one folder designated for images. In larger sites there can be thousands of images. The pages may be worked on by a number of different designers. To make things easier, usually each page in a larger site will have it's own image folder.
2. cgi-bin – If you are going to be using CGI's on your site, you *must* have a cgi-bin. You should, of course, store all of your CGI programs here. It is important that you call the cgi-bin "cgi-bin", as some servers run custom security programs that only allow users to access CGI's in an appropriately labeled folder.
3. original_artwork – You should always store your original artwork on the server for future modifications and as a back-up. Clients will expect you to hand over your original artwork.

DESIGN TIPS

Even if you are already a talented artist, the web will present you with some unique challenges. How many links should be on a page? What fonts are most easily readable? We will face these question and others in... design tips!

New to Design?

Buy this book: [The Non-Designer's Design Book](#), by Robin Williams. It rocks. In a simple and straight forward way, this inexpensive book engrains beginners with four basic design principles, which are:

Proximity: Objects that have a relationship should be spatially grouped together. Objects that are not part of the same intellectual group (idea) should be separated with space.

Alignment: Every design element should have a strong linear alignment with other design elements. Basically, you'll want to line things up on each other. Beginners often make the mistake of centering everything they deem important.

Repetition: If you use a design element once, use it again on other like objects. This is especially important in web design as you must make the site feel like a "whole".

Contrast: Things that are different stand out and bring interest to your piece. A good rule to follow with contrast is that if you're going to make something different, make it *really* different. For example, if you're going to increase font size to make a word stand out, make the font really big! Don't be wimpy.

Again, I can't emphasize how much [The Non-Designer's Design Book](#) can help beginners design nice looking pages. The book is a quick, easy read, and only costs about \$12.00. Buy it.

Page Size

According to the Association of Internet Research, 80% of people *never scroll down* when first viewing a website. Users are searching for answers and don't have time to scroll through your big ol' page.

What does this tell us? Keep your pertinent information "above the fold". The standard browser window is 760 pixels wide, by 420 tall. Make sure that the important parts of your site are above the 420 pixel line.

If you positively must place more information on the screen than can be displayed at one time, make it very obvious. I don't know how many websites I've seen that have "hidden" information below the bottom of the screen. The easiest way to make your pages obvious is by making sure that a graphic is cut in half at the bottom of the page.

If 80% of people never scroll down, how many people do you think scroll to the side? The easiest way to appear un-professional is to build a website that requires side scrolling at 800x600. Remember, that images do not resize even when placed in a percentage-based table. If you have an image that is too large it will push the screen out.

Checking Your Site on Different Screen Resolutions

You should check your pages these different screen resolutions to see how it looks:

640x480

800x600

1024x768

You may have to re-open your browser after adjusting the screen resolution to allow the page to resize correctly.

On the PC you can change your screen resolution by:

1. Click START
2. Go to SETTINGS
3. Click CONTROL PANEL

4. Click DISPLAY
5. Click SETTINGS
6. Adjust the Desktop Area

Using Color In Your Website

If your colors don't look good, your website won't look good. Web designers need to think about the psychological impact of colors and their readability. Although, I've covered the important basic points below, color theory is a vast subject and would require a separate book. For an excellent, easy to read book on color theory, try:

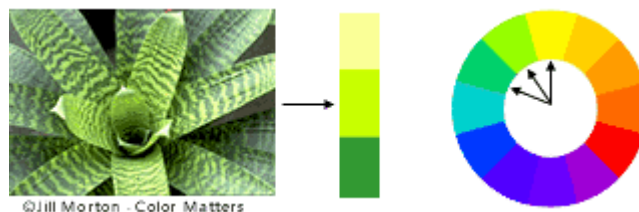
[Color Theory \(Watson-Guption Artist's Library\)](#) by Jose Maria Parramon

Color Harmony

If your pages have "color Harmony" it means that your colors "match" and are pleasing to the eye.

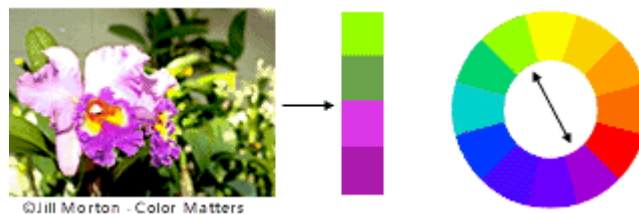
There are some basic ideas that are easy to learn about color harmony.

A color scheme based on analogous colors



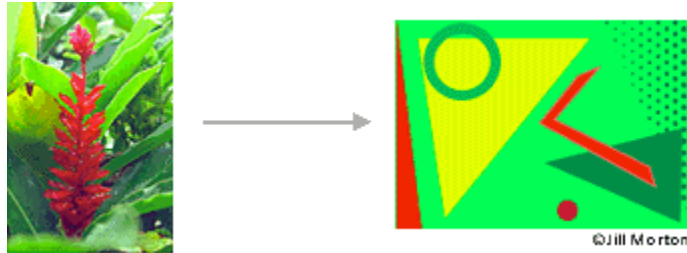
Analogous colors are any three colors, which are side-by-side on a 12-part color wheel, such as yellow-green, yellow, and yellow-orange. Usually one of the three colors predominates.

A color scheme based on complementary colors



Complementary colors are any two colors, which are directly opposite each other, such as red and green and red-purple and yellow-green. In the illustration above, there are several variations of yellow-green in the leaves and several variations of red-purple in the orchid. These opposing colors create maximum contrast and maximum stability.

A color scheme based on nature

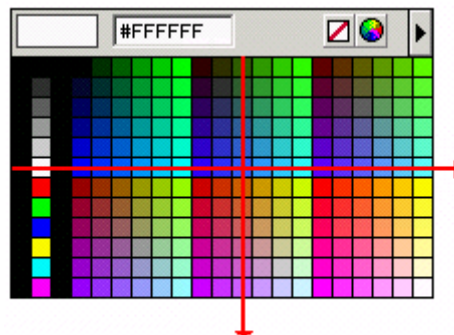


Nature provides a perfect departure point for color harmony. In the illustration above, red yellow and green create a harmonious design, regardless of whether this combination fits into a technical formula for color harmony. Go outside for a while!

Matching Color by Color Value

Often, the colors the chosen don't matter as much as their brightness, or "color value". Two colors next to each other will most often look good if they are approximately the same brightness level. You can use software like Adobe PhotoShop or Macromedia Fireworks to adjust the brightness of color before you use it.

Here's a nice tip: In most design software, when you're presented with colors to choose from, the colors in the same row have the same color value, and therefore match.



Easy matching colors in Fireworks

If you have trouble picking out colors to use, there are books that list matching colors and show them in patterns next to each other. I highly recommend this wonderful series of books:

[Designers Guide to Color](#)

by Jeanne Allen, Ikuyoshi Haishoku Jiten Shibukawa

Color and Readability

Okay, lets get this out of the way:

Very bright background colors are hard to read over. They hurt people's eyes and no one likes them.

The easiest color combination on the eyes is black over muted yellow.

The second easiest color combination is black over white.

White text on black looks cool, but is hard to read.

That said, use whatever colors you want. You will have to make your own decisions about page and text color. There are no hard and fast rules. Just make sure that your pages look good, and that text is easy to read so no one gets a headache.

Fonts

Your choice of fonts can say a lot about you. You can appear modern or old fashioned. You can excite users or re-assure them. When designing with HTML your font choices are rather limited.

Serif Fonts

A serif font has fancy squiggings and overhangs. Serif fonts were invented for the Guttenberg Press to drive your eye to the next letter.

Sans-Serif

"Sans" means "not". Sans-serif fonts do not have little squiggings.

Psychological studies have waffled back and forth on the readability of serif and sans-serif fonts. After much debate, most experts agree that font sets like "Arial" that incorporate both serif and san-serif letters read the fastest and have the highest level of comprehension.

Fonts Created For On-Screen Display

Most font sets were originally created for high-resolution printing. The intricate squiggles and smooth curves can create readability problems when viewed on a computer screen. To deal with this problem, special fonts were created, specifically made for viewing on a computer.

Verdana is a san-serif font, designed to mimic Arial. Arial has been shown to be the fastest reading and most understood font.

Georgia is a serif font, designed to mimic Times New Roman, the time worn standard typeset.

Designing Well Thought-Out Links

Links get your users from page to page. If your links are badly set up your site will be hard to use. Conversely, if your site is easily navigatable users will return again and again

Chunking Information

Psychological studies have shown that people absorb information in "chunks". At any one given time, most people can think about keep five to seven things in mind at one time. What this means to you is that, if you can, you should shoot for a maximum of five to seven main links on your homepage. Those links can have sub-categorical links as long as they're well organized. Have you ever tried to read Yahoo's Home page? 'Nuff said.

Label Your Links

Buttons and links *must* be obviously labeled and easy to understand. Cutesy names are usually a big no-no, as they will confuse many users. You don't want people to

have to think about what a button means, they should know just by looking at the button. If your website has non-standard features, you will have to enlist your client for help with naming buttons. Don't feel weird about this. You're only supposed to build a website. Your client should be able to describe their own services in a word or two.

Hidden links are cool if they're just for fun, but don't expect people to roll over your buttons to find out what they're for. Most people aren't as into the web as you are.

Drop Down Menus Vs. Lists

Studies have shown that people prefer well-organized lists to drop down menus, but that they find information more easily with well-organized drop-down menus. Guess it's up to you.

Nav-Bar Placement

Our visual cortex is designed to scan along the horizon, and therefore most people find horizontal design more pleasing than vertical. Many sites take advantage of this by using a horizontal nav-bar at the top of the screen. Studies have shown, though, that people register individual links better if the links are listed on top of each other in a vertical fashion.

You'll also want to make sure that if your page is long you place a nav-bar at the bottom of the page as well as the top. People don't want to have to scroll up when they're finished reading.

Creating "Whole" Pages

Beginners often create page elements, and then just stuck them in the page, without any real plan for the look of the page. A good page will stand by itself as a work of art, regardless of it's content. The page should be pleasing to the eye and should flow nicely.

Learning From Others (super important point)

You do not have to be an artist to be a web designer. You do have to have style, and you do have to be able to recognize when things look good. Before embarking on any project, you should spend *hours* on the web looking at other sites that project the same feeling that you want for your site. What did other designers do to successfully bring about the impact you wish to convey? Take notes and bookmark pages you like. You can borrow ideas from other designers to make sure your pages look good. This is not stealing. When Spielberg came out of film school he didn't just come up with his own brand new ideas about what film should be. He built on previous masters. You should do this too. You can borrow layout, color schemes, font and spacing ideas, and site structure. Don't just make a carbon copy of the other site, though. You might get in trouble.

There is no reason that your first site shouldn't be great, as long as you're not too proud to learn from others. Feel free to interject your own ideas and philosophy. When you're ready, go crazy on your own.

Beginning web designers rarely spend enough time researching design. Search for sites that give the same feeling that you're trying to create. For example, if you're building a site for a security company, you might want to check out other sites that want to appear solid and trustworthy, like financial institutions and insurance agencies.

Things to Avoid

There are a couple of mistakes that crop up over and over with beginners, so let's cover them now.

Gratuitous Frames

Don't use frames as a design element. Frames should be used only if it is really helpful to keep certain information in front of your reader at all times. Frames take longer to download, are more complicated, are harder for a reader to bookmark, and have search engine drawbacks.

Huge Headers

Many beginner websites go crazy with the header size. It ends up taking up the whole screen. As a rule, it's a good idea to only use about 25% of your viewable screen size on a page header, including and top nav-bar buttons.



Annoying Music

Not everybody loves techno as much as you do. Music can quickly turn off many users. If music is appropriate, like Italian music for an Italian restaurant site, make it subtle and quiet. You'll learn how to stream music and control the volume in later sections.

Splash Pages

People want to use your site. Now. Why make users "Click here to enter site."?

I hate that.

If your page can't stand on its own, make it more exciting. Don't subject people to longer load times and frustration. Nobody cares about your logo that much anyway.

If you need to check for a plug-in, there are plenty of free java scripts to do that for you (discussed later). Chances are your user doesn't even know what he or she has.

Long Flash Intro Movies

Designers love long Flash intro movies. Users just want to use the site. A short intro can effectively pull a user into the site, but a long one is most often more annoying than anything else. My rule of thumb is that if you need a "Skip Intro" button, the intro is too long.

Check <http://www.awdsf.com> for an example of a short compelling intro.

LISTING YOUR PAGES WITH SEARCH ENGINES

One of the single most important things you can do is learn how to do is effectively submit your sites to search engines. Submitting your site to search engines is easy. Almost every search engine has a “submit your site” link. While submitting the site is quite easy, knowing how to design your site so that it can easily be found is incredibly important. You can build a beautiful site, easy to navigate and incredibly useful, but if no one can ever find it, your efforts go to waste. How sad.

We are going to learn how to correctly configure your pages and what strategies you should employ when listing them with directories and search engines.

SEARCH ENGINES VS. DIRECTORIES

It is important to understand the difference between search engines and directories.

Search engines create their listings automatically with the help of computer programs. They can scour the web quickly and can often help users obtain “hard to find” information. Some popular search engines are: [Lycos](#), [Alta Vista](#), [Google](#), and [Infoseek](#).

Directories depend on people for their listings. You submit your site to them and a reviewer will eventually decide if it qualifies to be listed in the directory. Directory users enjoy the “humanness” of a directory and often find them much easier to use than a search engine. Sadly, the web grows much faster than directories can catalogue websites. Directories often fit a site into one category, and therefore often miss information stored deep in a website. Popular directories include [Yahoo](#), [NBCi](#), [About](#), and [AskJeeves](#)

We are going to learn how to correctly configure your pages and what strategies you should employ when listing with both directories and search engines.

HOW SEARCH ENGINES WORK:

Spiders

Search Engines employ programs called spiders, also called crawlers, which scour the web looking for files. The spider visits a web page, reads it, and then sends the gathered information back to the search engine's main database. When the spider is finished cataloguing it follows any links it finds on the page and starts the whole process over again.

After a while the spider will return to a catalogued site to look for changes. Generally, if the spider finds changes it records them and schedules a future stop back. Every time the spider finds changes it spends less time away from the site, until it's examining your site for changes every day. If the spider doesn't find any changes, it will schedule a stop back in the far future. If the spider doesn't find any changes after three or four stops, it won't ever come back unless instructed by you to do so. It's a good idea not to list your site with search tools until it's completely ready.

Most Spiders catalogue every word on the home page. On the deeper pages spiders usually only record meta tags, the title, and first paragraph. Deep crawl engines, like Alta Vista, catalogue every single word on every single page.

Spiders and Your Jump Page

If your page uses a "jump-page" like a plug-in detector, you will need to include a HREF link pointing to your homepage on the jump page if you want spiders to follow to your main site.

Index

Everything the spider finds goes into the search engine's main database, the index. The index, sometimes called the catalog, is like a giant book containing a copy of every web page that the spider finds. The web page is further broken down into sub categories. For example, sites that repeatedly use the word "dog" get filed under "pet sites", or specifically, dog sites.

Search Engine Software

Search engine software, often simply called the engine, is the third major part of any search engine. The engine is the program that sifts through millions of pages recorded in the index to find search matches. Using clever tricks, the engine also helps rank returns in order of what it believes to be most relevant.

How a Directory Works

A directory such as Yahoo depends on people for their listings. You submit your site to them and a reviewer eventually decides if it qualifies to be listed in the directory, where it will be listed, and what description should show when listed in a search return. Directories can be harder to get into, but they enjoy much more traffic than normal search engines, so it is very important that you list with them.

I want to become an expert on how each search engine works. Where should I look?

One of the best sites dedicated to workings of search engines is:

www.searchenginewatch.com

Meta Tags

In the Meta Tag section, we learned the necessary composition of keyword and description Meta tags. Now we are all set to learn what strategies we should employ when writing Meta tags. Meta tags can be placed on any page, but some search tools like Yahoo only care about the home page.

Keywords

```
<META NAME="KEYWORDS" CONTENT="Search term, some other search term, something someone would look for">
```

Keywords are used to help search engines match specific user searches with your page. Basically, you should try to think of anything that someone who might benefit from your site would search for, and list it in your key words. When listing the content of your keywords tag, you should be thinking in terms of key phrases, not

individual words. Someone searching for pet supplies is more likely to look for “dog chow” than “dog” or “chow”.

Example:

```
<META NAME="KEYWORDS" CONTENT="Dog chow, on-line pet supplies, pet store">
```

How many key words and phrases can I have?

Resist the temptation to list the dictionary in your keyword tag. Search engines know this trick and will probably disqualify you from their listings. You should keep your keywords between 200 and 500 characters long. Having more than 500 characters will convince some search engines that you are trying to pull a fast one. Having less than 200 characters will convince others that your site is not very worthy of listing.

Handy tip: Microsoft word will count characters for you. Simply cut and paste your keywords Meta tag into Word and click: File-> Properties.

Search engines will also disqualify you if you repeat key phrases or if you use the same individual keyword too many times (five times is safe). You can use different keywords on different pages, though.

Is it legal for me to use trademarked words in my Meta tags?

Nope. Court cases have decided that if you don't really have a good reason to list a product or company (other than to drive traffic to your site), you can't use their trademarked items in your Meta tags. For a great article on this topic, check out:

<http://www.searchenginewatch.com/resources/metasuits.html>

Deciding On Which Key Words to Use

You should make a list of all keywords/phrases that you think would be a good match for your site. Ask your friends what they would search for. Ask everyone you know. You'd be surprised what some people would look for. After you have your list, use the wonderful tools available at:

http://inventory.goto.com/inventory/Search_Suggestion.jhtml

Go2.com allows you to search through their database that catalogues how many times a specific search term was used in the last month. Keep in mind that the most often searched for terms are not always the best. A very specific term like "San Francisco web design school" may only have received ten searches, but those searches are much more likely to turn into sales if you own the Academy of Web Design, SF.

<http://www.wordtracker.com>

Word tracker is a paid service, but is well worth it. After you decide what words describe your site, word tracker searches the web and analyzes your projected search returns based on your keywords, the number of searches run on that keyword, and the amount of competition also using those keywords. Word tracker will even suggest keywords for you based on your business type.

Keyword Density

If an engine finds a search term in the Meta keywords, the title tag, and the first paragraph of your site, it assumes that the page is *really* about that term, and ranks it high. It is very important to chase keyword density, as it is the major deciding factor in where your page ranks on a search engine.

The Meta Description tag

```
<meta name="description" content="Positively the best school for web design! The finest teachers, economical prices, and a schedule that lets you keep your current job while you learn!">
```

Most search engines don't care about your Meta Description tag, but you should! The description will entice users to click, or it will turn them away. A description should be under 150 characters, including spaces.

Your Title Tag

Many people use keywords Meta tags, and leave it at that. Big mistake. Search engines count other factors when ranking your pages. The <TITLE> tag plays an important part in determining whether your site is listed on the first or fiftieth page

of a search return. Basically, your title tag should contain all of the important key words in your Meta Keywords.

Example:

```
<META NAME="KEYWORDS" CONTENT="Dog chow, on-line pet supplies, pet store">
```

```
<TITLE> On-Line Pet Supplies, your virtual pet store! Dog chow, cat food, pet stuff </TITLE>
```

Your site users will only see the first couple of words in your title, so make it human friendly in the beginning. Some search engines get upset if your title tag is too long. It's best not to exceed twenty words.

The First Paragraph in Your Page

The first paragraph may be the trickiest part of search engine page design. You need to craft an engaging opening paragraph, readable by humans, that also contains all of your key phrases. The closer to the top of the page your paragraph is, the better. For the above pet store, the opening paragraph might read:

```
<P> Welcome to Doggie Dancer, your virtual pet store, and home of On-Line Pet Supplies. We have all sorts of pet stuff, from dog chow and cat food, to hamster cages! </P>
```

Tricking a search engine

Some people suggest trying to trick a search engine by using text in the same color as the background, putting meta terms in comment tags, or trying to put a lot of small text at the bottom of pages. While some of these tricks do work, the major search engines are developing tools to combat them. You may get your site banned from a search engine if they determine that you're trying to be sneaky.

Setting up Flash and Frame Based Pages

Pages created in a frameset and pages built with Macromedia's Flash don't have body text, but can still accept Meta tags in the head and a well-crafted title. Some

search engines recognize frames and full Flash pages, and so some experts suggest writing an opening paragraph in comment tags.

Learn From the Best

Get on the Internet and pretend that you're "Joe User". Search for a site like yours. Examine the top ranking pages for <Title>, keywords, and first paragraphs. I'm not telling you to copy their keywords, or anything like that...

LISTING YOUR PAGE WITH SEARCH TOOLS

You do not have to wait forever for a spider to happen upon your page. Every search engine has a link that you can use to submit to their service. There are also tools available on the Internet that will submit your site to many sites, often for free. It is important to note that you will probably be hand submitting to the major directories like Yahoo, though.

There is a wonderful tool to be used at:

www.selfpromotion.com

Self Promotion will *correctly* submit your site to the major search engines and directories for free. Also available is a bunch of other cool programs to help you figure out and test your keywords.

Resubmitting your Page

You should re-submit your page to the major search engines every month or so. You should NOT re-submit your site to Yahoo in this manner. You'll only make them mad.

Submitting Your Pages to Yahoo

Yahoo is by far the most important place to submit your site. Yahoo gets more traffic than any other site on the Internet.

Yahoo is incredibly picky about your submission. If you do anything wrong, they will reject your submission. Usually it will take them 6-8 weeks before they can review

your site. Be patient. Don't bombard them with e-mails or they'll get mad. If you are not listed with-in two months, send them a gentle e-mail. If time is of the essence, you can pay Yahoo to look at your site more quickly.

Some things your site must have before submitting to Yahoo:

1. A complete site. Don't give them an "under construction" page or a half finished page with links that don't work.
2. Commercial sites must list the street address and contact information for the business somewhere on the site. If your address is hard to find on the site, you can direct the Yahoo people to it when they give you the chance to send comments with your submission.

Yahoo Categories

To submit your site to Yahoo, you must first find the category your site belongs in. This is very important. If you submit to an incorrect category, you'll get nowhere. Dig all the way down. Yahoo likes you to get specific. After you find your category, you'll click on the "Suggest a Site" link at the bottom of the page.

To find your category, try to search for a related site and see what category they're in.

Commercial sites

IMPORTANT: Yahoo always distinguishes between commercial and non-commercial sites. If you're suggesting a site that is in any way commercial--it sells something, promotes goods and services, or promotes a company that sells goods and services--then the site belongs somewhere in the Business and Economy section of Yahoo. If you fall into this category start by clicking on the "Business and Economy" link.

Regional Sites

ALSO IMPORTANT: If you are a local based site, that is, your site offers goods and services on a regional basis only, you should submit to the appropriate regional section of yahoo. Start by typing in your city or region, and follow the links from there.

Heed This Warning

OKAY, REALLY SUPER IMPORTANT: Always follow Yahoo's directions to the letter. If they tell you not to do something, *don't do it!* They'll toss your application faster than you can think "Dang, it's been six months. Why isn't my site on Yahoo?"

Ranking High on Yahoo

1. When a user searches, Yahoo gives returns in *alphabetical order*. "Academy of Web Design SF", wasn't chosen entirely by accident, you know. If you can, you're best off with a site that starts with the letter "A" or a number. This works well for the phone book, too.
2. While going through the site submission process, you will come to a "Site Information" page, which will ask you for a page title, URL, and a short description. It is best to work as many key words into the title and description as possible. Yahoo returns search results based on keyword density between your keywords and *what you type in these submission boxes*. Yahoo doesn't care too much about your first paragraph, or your Title tag. It's what you type while filling out the yahoo form that matters.
Some web designers print out the Yahoo submission form and fill it out by hand before submitting on the web. It's easier to take your time without a "submit" button glaring up at you.

The Open Directory Project

The Open Directory Project is an indexed database that allows itself to be searched by other search engines. It is gaining extensive use and widespread recognition. The Open Directory Project is staffed by volunteers and is currently the number-two queried search tool. The Open Directory Project is gaining on Yahoo, and therefore a must for submission. Submit at:

<http://www.dmoz.org>

Other Important Directories to Submit to by Hand

www.About.com

www.AskJeeves.com

www.Go.com

www.Looksmart.com

<http://search.msn.com/>

www.NBCi.com

Your Search Engine Skills Will Get you More Clients

I have found that it is important to teach your potential clients a little bit about successful submission. You should make sure they know that successfully listing with search engines is a special skill that you possess. Believe it or not, I've found that most web designers know very little about how to submit to a search engine.