

# What We Keep in Mind When Developing Your Web Site

by Ché Borden, Media Eye Studios

Your website's design plays a major role in the user's decision to either stick around or continue surfing elsewhere. Graphics, layout, load time, fonts and ease of navigation can all influence the user. To develop a site that retains visitors, make it fast, clean, pleasing to the eye and easy to use is our focus.

Aside from attracting and retaining visitors, your website's design is critical for search engine positioning. Directories, such as Yahoo!, will review your site before accepting it. Directory editors look for sites with good design and add them to their database. If your site is clean, easy to navigate, fast and enjoyable, visitors will stay longer and your site will score higher.

## 1. Navigation

People who visit your site are probably looking for a specific product or piece of information. Studies show the average web surfer has a short attention span; after three or four pages, your visitor will probably move on to another site. By making it easier for visitors to find information you increase the amount of time they will spend on your website. If you have an online store or online reservations, you are also increasing the probability that users will buy your products.

## 2. Clean Design

Clean pages are uncluttered and have a focus, something that draws the eye. They are easy to find information. Some sites are so cluttered with links, too much information, pictures or animated graphics; they are almost impossible to navigate. Not only do visitors dislike these websites, directories such as Yahoo! and Looksmart may reject them.

## 3. Make It Look Good

It is important that your website look pleasing to visitors. If your website looks bad, many potentially loyal users will not go past your home page. Get together with your web designer to determine the best layout, colors, fonts and graphics for your website.

## 4. Load Time

If your visitors have to wait over 10 seconds for your site to load, you can be sure you are losing half your

audience. These days there are plenty of sites that load far more quickly, and users naturally prefer those. Reducing the amount of time it takes for your site's front page to display completely can help you hang onto users.

## 5. Search Engine Friendly

We always add ALT tags to your images to make sure search engines recognize all the content on your website. We add effective meta tags for the search engines to properly index your pages. We also ensure that all other aspects to your website do not conflict with search engine criteria and will be as search engine friendly as possible. *We do not promote spamming search engines -- we do not use hidden text, doorway pages or any other tricks.*