



## **Ten tips to make your professional web site design accessible to all users.**

1. A picture file is usually big in size. However pictures are important as they enhance the look of the page. But it is not a good idea to fill your web pages with loads of images. Till today many people across the world use dial-up connections. The average time taken for a page to download should not be more than 5-10 seconds. If it does take longer the surfer might go away to your competitor's site. To keep on your site all the images must download in the smallest amount of time. You must also remember to keep the aggregate page size less than 30k. Remember that each file on the page requires a separate HTTP request link to the server. So, even if you have a lot of small images on your professional web site design it will take a long time to download. Modern browsers offer users a choice to turn off images. This gives an idea of how troublesome those extra, unnecessary images could be.
2. Think twice before using images for navigation purposes. An average user will be comfortable with easy navigation. The users will not spend time to look at those fantastic & truly artistic navigation buttons that may take hours to design. They may just look at it for a moment, but will not give it any more importance. They will be looked at in the same way as a simple text navigation link. Even if you do include those fancy buttons, do provide an Alternate Text for each image that you use for navigation. ALT text can help such users immensely. Make your professional web site design page load faster by providing information to the browser regarding the height and width of the image. If you don't provide this, then the page will take longer to download because the browser will not know the dimensions of the image and therefore will not know how much space to leave for the images.
3. Don't let your aesthetic sense overtake your common sense. Please do not let your artistic excellence affect the navigability & functionality of your web site. An average user gives more importance to easy-to-understand navigation links than to a creative piece of art. It is of no use making your professional web site design artistic if users are having a tough time navigating around it. Such 'beautiful' sites do exist, where the users reach the main page but then have no clue where they want to go. It is also possible that unless you move the mouse over the picture, you have no idea where the link will take you. This will annoy the surfers because unless they move their mouse all over the site, they will not know which a link is and which is not. Avoid this and save your site from becoming wasted time and space.
4. If your web page is created within a table, then it will not show until the full table is downloaded. You might have experienced this, when for some time nothing is visible and then suddenly the entire page appears. This causes a delay to the user and he might get impatient and click away to another site. To avoid upsetting the user in this way, the table should be split up into two or more parts and put one below the other. Let the first table consist only of the page header and a few navigational links. As this will download quickly and first, it will attract the user's attention and keep him on the site, while he waits for the remainder of the page to load. This will stop him from leaving your site. This method helps especially if there is a slow Internet connection.
5. Avoid browser specific functions. If a certain feature is presented and supported by one browser then as a result of browser wars, may not be supported by another browser. If there is no way out and you have to use browser specific functions, be positive that it does not hinder the display of the page in another browser, one which does not



support such functionality. To put in simply, if the display of your professional web site design deteriorates, make sure it does so gradually and gracefully. Even then the web page should be viewable.

6. As much as you can, give the user the freedom to create a new browser window. Do not curb his freedom by adding too many pop-ups, as it will clutter the users screen. All links should open in the same window by default. However, a professional web site design page is an exception. In this case, it is convenient to open links in another window, so that the user can come back to the links page easily. It is advisable to give a prior notice to users when a link will open in another window.

7. Avoid fonts that are not so common with people. There are many fonts that are difficult to get and find. Using them may enhance your web page, but you still have to avoid them. You have to keep all your users happy. You may use a fancy font, which is not in the users' computer. The font may well appear as old Times New Roman or Arial on your user's machine. And you cannot do anything to rectify the situation at that point in time. For all you know they could be visiting your site from across the globe. To be on the safe side, you should always use common fonts like Times Roman, Arial and Courier etc.

8. You may want to use a functional navigational bar that guides you across all the ways within your professional web site design. The use of this bar is becoming increasingly popular. With this bar the users can visit just about any other page on your website, while keeping them aware for their location.

9. To ensure easy accessibility of your professional web site design page, avoid the use of too many 'plug-ins'. In recent times the 'revolutionary plug-in' has come up and a lot of web designers are spicing up their websites using them. But this plug-ins is not very well-liked among the Internet users and many don't even get them installed, even if they are available as free downloads. They would rather go to another website. The most popular sites like Google don't use plug-ins. However, if you must use them, then use commonly used plug-ins like Shockwave Flash plug-in, which has now made its way onto most computers today. Hence, you may use it to place some animation on your site.

10. The final frontier is Java. Java technology is one of the most misused technologies in web design. The real use of Java is as a programming language. However Java's adaptability makes many web designers to use it as a graphic front-end for images on the professional website. There are a variety of things you can do with Java as far as web design is concerned, but it is not sensible to do all of them. Java applets usually run slower, due to which users might experience slowness in performance, particularly when it comes to downloading. These applets have also been known to crash browsers. So, while using Java be careful and use it only where necessary.