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# Web Development & Design Prospectus

Our principles and philosophies



# Design Principles

## **Usability**

This is one area we stress more than any other – a website must be functional in design. Too often, web developers confuse *bling* with *good design*; the two aren't the same. You've seen it before: flash presentations that prevent you from getting to the content and appear every time you come back. Menu bars that take forever to load. Animations that make you wait. Spinning images. Sparkling backgrounds. Sites that seem to take eons to load. Efforts made by the designer, in short, which may have looked really cool the first time but got old quickly.

We believe a website serves a purpose. And we believe the design and implementation of the site needs to further that purpose, not hinder it in the name of cool. Layouts need to be clean. Information needs to be easy to find. Navigation should be easy. Presentation is paramount.

## **Aesthetics**

Arranging all the information so that it's easy to find isn't enough, though. It needs to be easy on the eye, too. Most of the time, these two goals go hand-in-hand. Sites that have a good color scheme, clean and crisp layout, and easy to identify stylistic elements are also, generally, those that are easiest to use.

Even more, sites that look good attract visitors and keep them longer. People aren't attracted to ugly – they're attracted to beautiful. Aesthetics also play a part in branding and marketing: a site that represents you or your company had better do a good job of it.

## **Accessibility**

You've seen it before: "this site optimized for 800 x 600 resolution in Microsoft Internet Explorer." If a site has a chosen resolution and browser, it's a failure. The fact is, relatively few people use 800 x 600 and Internet Explorer, or any other such combination. Unfortunately, many designers create sites for themselves; that is, an Internet Explorer designer's site will work best in Internet Explorer, while a Firefox designer's site does the same in Firefox. But the web is made up of users with loads of different operating systems, web browsers, and configurations. Sites must work with all of them to be truly functional.

Which is why we design our sites to the highest accessibility standards. The World Wide Web Consortium, or W3C, creates the guidelines for HTML, XHTML, and CSS – the programming languages of the web. We make sure all our sites pass W3C validation tests, and all are tested in the leading web browsers, Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, and Opera. It's good to make sure half your visitors aren't turned away from the beginning because of the 'wrong' configuration.

# How We Work

Interested in considering our services? You might want to know the steps we generally follow, and how that will relate to you. Of course, all our services are tailor-made for each client, and our process is just as flexible.

- ① First, you contact us and tell us what services you're interested in. Basically, this means telling us who you are and what you want: a mid-sized company looking to overhaul its web presence? A recent startup wanting a site to attract new customers? A hobbyist looking for an easy to maintain side project? We'll sit down with you, asking and answering questions, figuring out just what you need, and sketching out an idea for your eventual site.
- ② Then, if you like our ideas, we'll make a design for you – generally, an image showing what the site can look like. You can make comments and, of course, tell us to change things – even ask for a completely different design. We'll send you another version with these updates, until you're happy with the way it looks.
- ③ We then discuss in depth the services you'll require – the scope and size of the site, the programming and designing needed to achieve your vision. Based on the size of the project, we negotiate a price for the work and a time frame for completion.
- ④ Over the next few weeks, we make the site for you, asking questions when we're unsure of what you want, suggesting new and different features you could use. By the end of this time, you should have a fully functional website that we design, develop, and implement for you. Not just a bunch of coded files – a working site on a server, ready to be used. One last time, you can have us change some details until the site's exactly to your specifications. Then, it's all yours.