

# DESIGNING THAT FABULOUS WEBSITE

## INTRODUCTION

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This is the second of two articles on planning your website. The focus here is on general content and layout considerations. (The first article, "Preparing For That Amazing Website", provides an overview of what should be considered when planning a website.)

## CONTENT

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### TEXT

When preparing text for your website, bear in mind the following guidelines. If followed they will make it easier for:

1. Viewers tend to scan the pages to see if what they are looking for is contained within the site.
2. Customers (clients) to find your website when utilising search engines and directories.

#### Guidelines

- **Title.** Give each page a title of 60 characters or less.
- **Keywords.** Brainstorm a list of keywords, or better still keyword phrases, that describe the site to the target audience. (Use words they would utilise when scanning a particular page or when using a search engine to find a suitable website.) Then make use of them in the title, the description and on each page where relevant. Use a minimum of 2 but no more than 4 per page. (We can assist you determine suitable keyword phrases as part of our search engine optimisation service.)
- **Description.** Develop a summary description of the website for use on the Home page (as the first paragraph). Utilise keyword phrases in the sentences. Keep the description "snappy" - around 80 words will be fine.
- **Main text.** Make sure that keyword phrases are used in the text. (Most viewers initially scan a web page to see if what they want is there.) Make use of white spaces. Avoid large amounts of text. Break the text up into logical blocks, making use of headings, lists, and images. Avoid large columns of text as it makes for difficult reading on screen.

### GRAPHICS

Graphics enhance the visual impact of a web page. Graphics are commonly used to provide an overall "look" for a website, in association with text, and for links to other pages and sites. Sometimes graphics are used in the background. Common examples of graphics use are logos and menus (not recommended).

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## PHOTOGRAPHS

Pages can and have been written about the use of photographs on websites. As a general rule of thumb, use them sparingly for the more pictures on a page the longer it takes for that page to appear on screen. And viewers tend to be impatient. Pictures can be used as links to other pages and sites.

## LAYOUT

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### LOGO

Decide where the logo is to be located. Most sites have it at the top. The left-hand side of the screen is popular. Another common position is at the top, middle of the screen.

### NAVIGATION BAR

The navigation bar (menu) contains the links to other pages in your website. The two most common types of menus are the vertical menu and the horizontal menu. The vertical menu is usually located on the left-hand side of the screen. Whereas the horizontal menu location frequently varies from left aligned to centre to right aligned. In both cases, the menu is usually found at or near the top of the screen.

### CONTENT

Determine the relative location of text, graphics and pictures. Place the main text above, below, or alongside an image (a graphic or a picture). Locate the image's title above or below the image. Locate headings to the left or the middle of the page (be consistent across pages). Decide if the text (or image) is to appear to the left, centre, or right hand side of the page. Consider the use of columns.

P.S. Make sure you own everything on the website or have permission to use it.

## QUESTIONS

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If you have any questions about designing a website (or any other aspect of a website), please contact the author. Telephone 64 4 383 8086 or 027 460 3902 and ask for Pierre Woolridge. Alternatively, he can be e-mailed at [enquiries@optimumwebsites.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@optimumwebsites.co.nz)