When you complete this chapter, you will be able to:

- Design for the computer medium
- Create a unified site design
- Design for the user
- Design for the screen

This chapter covers the basic design principles that you will apply to your Web page designs as you work through this book. By examining a variety of Web sites, you will learn to focus on both the user’s needs and the requirements of the content you want to deliver, while planning a site that is easy to navigate and quick to download.

The sample Web pages in this chapter come from a wide range of sites. The Web is so far-reaching in content and design that no collection of pages represents what is typical. Most of the samples illustrate good design principles, although some contain design defects as well. In truth, almost every site has one flaw or another, whether it is confusing accessibility, overambitious design, or poor download time. Judge the samples with a critical eye. Look for elements of design that you can transfer to your own work. As you progress through the book, you will practice and apply these principles to your own Web design efforts.
DESIGN FOR THE COMPUTER MEDIUM

When designing a Web site, remember the destination is a computer monitor, not the printed page. As a Web page designer, you must create Web pages specifically for the computer screen. You must consider how the layout, fonts, and colors will appear on the screen. As an HTML author, you must consider the nonlinear nature of hypertext, weaving the appropriate links and associations into the information. Give users the options to follow the information path they desire by providing appropriate links to related topics. Make them feel comfortable at your site by letting them know where they are and where they can go.

Craft the Look and Feel

The interface that the user must navigate is often called the look and feel of a Web site. Users look and feel when they explore the information design of your site. They read text, make associations with links, view graphics, and, depending on the freedom of your design, create their own path through your information. The look and feel is both the way your Web site works and the personality it conveys to the user. Not only should you plan for a deliberate look and feel, but as mentioned in Chapter 1, you must test your design against the variable nature of the Web. You want to ensure that the greatest number of users can navigate your site reliably.

Make Your Design Portable

To be successful, your Web site design must be portable and accessible by users who have different browsers, operating systems, and computer platforms. Many designers make the mistake of testing in only one environment, assuming that their pages look the same to all of their users. No matter how much Web design experience you gain, always remember to test in different environments even when you feel confident of your results. For example, Figures 2-1 and 2-2 show the same page displayed in Netscape Navigator 7.1 and Netscape Navigator 4.75. The page is created with Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) code, which the older version of Netscape cannot interpret. Notice that the page contains a link informing users that they must use an updated browser to view the site. As you can see by comparing the two figures, Netscape 4.75 has significant problems with CSS that render the page unreadable.

You can avoid problems such as these by testing for compatibility. Viewing your pages in the browsers your users are likely to have, testing on the popular operating systems, and checking the site on more than one computer platform ensures that your site is accessible to the greatest number of users. Consider analyzing your audience and building a profile of your average user. Perhaps many of them have moved up to a newer browser, allowing you to build pages that can take advantage of newer technologies such as the CSS example shown here. You will read more about analyzing your audience in Chapter 3.
Design for the Computer Medium

Plan your pages so that they are accessible at a variety of connection speeds. If your pages download slowly because they contain large, detailed graphics or complicated animations, your users will leave before they ever see your content. The average user clicks away from a site if the page does not download quickly. As you learned in Chapter 1, it will be a few more years before the majority of your users have a consistent, high-speed connection to the Web. Until that time, consider users with a lower bandwidth when you design the look and feel of your site.

The Petco Web site (www.petco.com) main page, illustrated in Figure 2-3, contains 71 separate images totaling 84 KB in file size. Although most of these images average only 1 or 2 KB each, the sheer number of images that must be sent to the user’s computer means a lengthy download time, especially for first-time visitors.

Figure 2-1  Netscape 7.1 correctly displays the CSS styles

Design for Low Bandwidth

Plan your pages so that they are accessible at a variety of connection speeds. If your pages download slowly because they contain large, detailed graphics or complicated animations, your users will leave before they ever see your content. The average user clicks away from a site if the page does not download quickly. As you learned in Chapter 1, it will be a few more years before the majority of your users have a consistent, high-speed connection to the Web. Until that time, consider users with a lower bandwidth when you design the look and feel of your site.

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Plan for Easy Access to Your Information

Your information design is the single most important factor in determining the success of your site. It determines how easily users can access your Web content. The goal is to organize your content and present it as a meaningful, navigable set of information. Your navigation options should present a variety of choices to the user without detracting from their quest for information.

A visitor to your site may choose to browse randomly or look for specific information. Often users arrive at a page looking for data low in the hierarchy of information. Sometimes users arrive at your site seeking a specific piece of information, such as a telephone number or order form. Anticipate and plan for the actions and paths that users are likely to choose when they traverse your site. Provide direct links to the areas of your site that you feel are most in demand.
Plan for Clear Presentation of Your Information

The screen’s low resolution makes the computer monitor a poor reading medium. The light source coming from behind the text tires the user’s eye. Environmental factors such as glare or physical distance from the screen affect the user as well. To counter this, design your information so it is easy to read. Many Web sites fail this criterion by using too many fonts, colors, and lengthy passages of text. Break text into reasonable segments that make for easier on-screen reading. Think about providing contrasting colors that are easy to read and easy on the eye, such as dark colors against a light or white background.

Keep in mind that readers have different habits when reading online. Compared to how they read printed text, they scan more and read less online, skimming long pages quickly as they scroll through the text. Include plenty of headings so users can find content quickly. Control the width of your text to provide complete, easy-to-read columns. Keep the “seven (plus or minus two)” rule of information design in mind; that is, users cannot comprehend more than seven (plus or minus two) steps or segments of information at one time. For example, a well-written procedure would contain no more than nine steps.
Rather than presenting long scrolling pages, break information into smaller chunks and link them with hypertext.

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden Web site (www.bbg.org) offers both clear presentation and easy access to information, as shown in Figure 2-4. The navigation links on the left side of the page are logically organized and offer clear descriptions of their destinations. A group of the most popular destination links appears in the page header and is repeated on every page. The text is legible and easy to read online. Groups of featured content links on the right side of the page have meaningful headings. Plenty of active white space between the page elements adds to the readability of the page. (You’ll learn more about white space later in this chapter.)

![Figure 2-4](BrooklynBotanicGardenWebSite.png)

**Figure 2-4** Clear presentation and easy access

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**CREATE A UNIFIED SITE DESIGN**

When designing your site, plan the unifying themes and structure that will hold the pages together. Your choices of colors, fonts, graphics, and page layout should communicate a visual theme to users that orients them to your site’s content. The theme should reflect the impression that you or your organization wants to convey.
For example, Figure 2-5 shows the Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) Web site main page. This mainly text-filled page has a restrained, informational feel. The content is primarily news and information links that are clearly presented. Navigation choices are abundant and separated by meaningful headings. The use of subdued colors, familiar, business-oriented fonts, and structured, linear columns emphasize the news and informational theme.

The CDC also maintains a Web site for children (www.bam.gov), as illustrated in Figure 2-6.

While the site for adults communicates a serious impression, the site for children combines bright colors, an open, friendly font, a dynamic structure, and eye-catching graphics to present a livelier, more playful theme. The children’s page also uses good design features such as abundant navigation choices, meaningful links, and clear presentation.

When you design a site, you must consider more than each individual page. For a well-integrated site, create smooth transitions, use a grid to provide visual structure, use active white space, and practice consistent placement of page elements. Each technique is explained in the following sections.
Plan Smooth Transitions

Plan to create a unified look among the sections and pages of your site. Reinforce the identifying elements of the site and create smooth transitions from one page to another by repeating colors and fonts and by using a page layout that allows different hierarchical levels. Avoid random, jarring changes in your format, unless this is the effect you want to achieve. Consistency creates smooth transitions from one page to the next, reassures viewers that they are traveling within the boundaries of your site, and helps them find information.

Provide grounding for the user by placing navigation elements in the same position on each page. Users orient themselves quickly to your navigation structure. Use the same navigation graphics throughout the site to provide consistency and avoid the need to download a wide variety of graphics.
Think of users turning the pages of a periodical when they browse from Web page to Web page. Although each page should be a complete entity, it also is a part of the whole site. The overall design of a page at any information level should reflect the identity of the site. For example, Figures 2-7 and 2-8 show the main page and a secondary-level page from the American Zoo Association Web site (www.aza.org).

Because these pages share the same color scheme, navigation icons, and identifying graphics, the Web site offers a smooth transition from the main page to the secondary pages and a unified look and feel.

![American Zoo and Aquarium Association - Microsoft Internet Explorer](image)

**Figure 2-7** AZA Web site main page
Use a Grid to Provide Visual Structure

The structure of a Web page is imposed by the grid or page template you choose for your page design. The grid is a conceptual layout device that organizes the page into columns and rows. You can impose a grid to provide visual consistency throughout your site. You can use the grid to enforce structure, but you also can break out of the grid to provide variety and highlight important information.

Web pages that respect the grid and consistently align different elements have a more polished look than pages that have scattered alignments. The World Health Organization Web site main page (www.who.int) in Figure 2-9 has a strong four-column grid. All of the text and graphic elements on the page align within the grid to create an orderly layout.

Most current Web sites use tables in one form or another to give their pages structure and consistency. With table borders turned off, the user cannot tell the layout is held together by a table; they see a coherent, well-structured page. The reliance on tables as a design tool will eventually wane as more users adopt newer browsers that support CSS, which allows columnar positioning without tables.
Create a Unified Site Design 39

Use Active White Space

White spaces are the blank areas of a page, regardless of the color you choose to give them. Use white space deliberately in your design, rather than as an afterthought. Good use of white space guides the reader and defines the areas of your page. White space that is used deliberately is called active white space and is an integral part of your design that structures and separates content. Sometimes the strongest part of a design is the active white space. Passive white space includes the blank areas that border the screen or are the result of mismatched shapes. Figure 2-10 illustrates active versus passive white space.
Content presentation can become confused when designers do not use enough active white space to separate and define content. A lack of active white space creates the impression that a page contains too much information and that it will be difficult to find the piece of information you want. The Christian Science Monitor Web site page (www.csmonitor.com) in Figure 2-11 shows good use of active white space, making it very easy to read. Plenty of active white space reduces clutter and clarifies the organization of your ideas.
DESIGN FOR THE USER

Keep your design efforts centered solely on your user. Knowing your audience answers almost all design questions—if it serves the audience, keep it; if it is potentially distracting or annoying, eliminate it. Find out what users expect from your site. If you can, survey them with an online form. Create a profile of your average user by compiling responses to basic questions. What do users want when they get to your site? Are they trying to find customer support and troubleshooting help, or do they want to buy something? Do they want to read articles or search for information? Once you know what your users want from your site, you can evaluate how the design reflects the audience profile and needs.

Consider the main page for Google (www.google.com), currently the Web’s most popular search engine. The site’s main page, shown in Figure 2-12, has no ads, very few links, and is designed for only one purpose—letting users quickly enter a search term.

**Figure 2-11** Active white space enhances legibility
Compare the main pages from the following sites and consider their target audiences. The E! online Web site (www.eonline.com), shown in Figure 2-13, is an entertainment news site. The main page contains competing content that draws the user’s eye, such as animations, a Java text scroll, bright colors, and familiar shapes. The overall effect is decidedly similar to television—familiar territory for E! online’s audience.

In contrast, the Web site for the Atlantic Monthly (www.theatlantic.com) in Figure 2-14 projects a strong periodical-like image. The main page components are textual. Even though the page has a lot of content, it is all well organized with clear headings and readable text in well-defined columns. The design uses just enough active white space to clearly separate each element on the page. The overall effect evokes the printed page while using the color, linking, and design flexibility that the Web offers.
These two examples demonstrate how the design suits the audience’s visual expectations—the look of the site. However, you also should consider the ways users interact with the content—the feel of the site.

**Design for Interaction**

Think about how the user wants to interact with the information on your Web page. Design for your content type, and decide whether the user is likely to read or scan your pages.

For example, suppose your page is a collection of links, such as a main page or section page. Users want to interact with these types of pages by scanning the content, scrolling if necessary, pointing to graphics to see if they are hyperlinked, and clicking linked text. Design for this type of user interaction by using meaningful column headings, linked text, and short descriptions. Organize links into related topic groups and separate groupings with white space, graphics, or background color.

Figure 2-13  A hectic design for E! online’s audience
Figure 2-14  A paper-based design for the Atlantic’s audience

Suppose the page is an article that contains large blocks of text. Your user is accustomed to interacting with pages of text by scrolling and possibly clicking hyperlinked words of interest. The links may be in the body of the article or contained in a sidebar. Design your pages for this type of content by keeping paragraphs short for online consumption. Make reading easier by using a text column that is narrower than the width of the screen. Keep your text legible by providing enough contrast between foreground and background colors. Provide links that allow the user to jump quickly to related content.
Two screens from the National Center for Research Resources Web site (www.ncrr.nih.gov) illustrate the difference between designing for reading and for scanning. Figure 2-15 shows a page designed for scanning. There are four columns of content, presenting a variety of information. Users can look through a variety of links to find a topic of interest, read article abstracts, or choose one of the featured main sections.

![Page designed for scanning](image-url)
Once users choose a link, they jump to a page designed for reading, as illustrated in Figure 2-16, which shows a page from the National Center for Research Resources Web site (www.ncrr.nih.gov). This page has a two-column layout that allows a more generous column for the main article text. Navigation links along the left side provide related information. Site navigation is provided in the banner at the top of the page.

![Figure 2-16](image)

**Figure 2-16** Page designed for reading
Design for Location

It is difficult to predict the user’s exact viewing path. There is, however, general agreement on the relative areas of screen importance. Figure 2-17 depicts the sections of screen “real estate” ranked in order of importance.

Figure 2-17  Relative areas of screen importance
During page design, rank the information you want to display, then position the most important in the middle of the window, the next most important across the top, and so on, with the least important or static information in the left margin. For example, Figure 2-18 shows the Cabela’s outdoor gear (www.cabelas.com) main page with the areas of importance overlaying the content.

Guide the User’s Eye

The user can traverse a page in a variety of ways. Human engineering studies show a wide range of results when tracking a user’s eye movements. As you plan your design to guide the user’s eye, consider the following two examples of online reading habits.

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*Figure 2-18* Areas of screen importance applied to the Cabela’s Web site
As a function of normal reading habits, the user’s eye may move from left to right and back again, as in Figure 2-19.

Figure 2-19  Paper-based reading pattern
Figure 2-20 shows this viewing pattern applied to the *Atlantic Monthly* Web site. This page’s columnar design encourages a paper-based reading pattern, enforcing the appropriate periodical feel for the content.

![Paper-based reading pattern applied to theatlantic.com Web page](image)

*Figure 2-20  Paper-based reading pattern applied to theatlantic.com Web page*
In contrast, when viewing landscape-based displays, such as televisions, the user may scan information following a clockwise pattern, as shown in Figure 2-21.
Figure 2-22 shows this viewing style overlaying the United Nations Web site (www.un.org). As the user’s eyes sweep over the page, he or she can take in most of the main content areas. This page encourages a screen-based reading pattern.

Knowing these common user habits can help you decide where to focus the user’s attention by object placement, text weight, and color use. Think about your grid structure and how you want to break out of it to attract attention. Use text weight and size to communicate relative importance of information. Break sections up with rules or active white space. Use shapes and color to reinforce location or topic. Get to know your users, and consider the two sample viewing methods described earlier as you experiment with content placement based on the way these users view the page.

**Figure 2-22** Screen-based reading pattern for the UN Web site

**Keep a Flat Hierarchy**

Do not make users navigate through too many layers of your Web site to find the information they want. Structuring your Web site to include section- or topic-level navigation pages allows users to find their path quickly. Try to follow the “three clicks rule”; that is, don’t make your users click more than three times to get to the content they
design. Provide prominent navigation cues that enable quick access. For example, a standard navigation bar consistently placed on every page reassures users that they will not get lost and lets them move through the site with flexibility.

Consider providing a site map that graphically displays the organization of your Web site. Figure 2-23 shows a site map from CNET.com (www.cnet.com). This graphical view of the Web site shows all the individual pages and the section in which they reside. Clear headings organize the content. Users can click to go directly to a page or orient themselves to the site’s structure.

![Figure 2-23 CNET’s site map](image)

**Use the Power of Hypertext Linking**

Unlike paper-based authors, as a hypertext author you have the luxury of adding clickable text and images where necessary to guide users through your information. This powerful ability comes with a measure of responsibility. You make the decisions that determine how users move through your site and process information. Readers browsing through magazines can flip to any page in any order they desire. You can replicate this nonlinear reading method...
on your Web site with links that let users move from page to page or section to section. With thoughtful hypertext writing, you can engage readers in a whole new way.

Many sites have separate columns of links and topics, but not enough provide links within the text. This is a powerful hypertext feature that is not used often enough. Weave your links into your prose to offer a variety of paths. Avoid using the meaningless phrase “Click Here” as the hypertext link. Instead provide a helpful textual clue to the destination of the link.

Figure 2-24 shows a page from the Pro Football Hall of Fame Web site (www.profootballhof.com) Note how the hypertext links are worked directly into the text. When users click a link, they move to another page of information; from that page they can either go back or move to another page of information, and so on. The abundant hypertext links allow users to create a view of the site’s information that is uniquely their own.

![Figure 2-24 Good use of textual links](image)

Links in context let users get additional information.
Provide plenty of links to let the user get around quickly. Use links to let the user return to the navigation section of your page, to a site map, or to the main page. Do not make the user scroll through lengthy columns. Provide links that let users jump down the page, jump back to the top of the page, or that show a clear way back to higher levels of your content.

Provide a hypertext table of contents, as in Figure 2–25, that lets the users pick the exact topic they want to view.

![Table of Contents](image)

**Figure 2-25**  Hypertext table of contents tracks the user’s viewed pages

The benefit of a hypertext table of contents is the color-coding that shows the users which pages they have visited. By default, links are blue when new; they change to purple after they have been visited. A hypertext table of contents instantly shows the users where they have been and where they have yet to go.
Glossaries and other densely packed documents become much easier to navigate with the addition of hypertext. Figure 2-26 shows a hypertext glossary that provides plenty of navigation choices for the user.

![Hypertext glossary](image)

**Figure 2-26** Hypertext glossary with plenty of navigation choices
How Much Content Is Enough?

You can crowd only so much information onto any one Web page. Be conscious of the cognitive load of the user, who often thinks that Web pages hold too much information. Yahoo!'s Web site (www.yahoo.com) in Figure 2-27 offers a dizzying array of Web resources.

Resist the temptation to overload users with too much information. Provide enough navigation clues to let them find the content they want. Separate content into smaller portions and use hypertext linking to divide content between pages.

Design for Accessibility

Any large audience for a Web site includes users who want to access your content despite certain physical challenges. Designing for accessibility means developing Web pages that remain accessible despite any physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities, work constraints,
or technological barriers on the part of the user. Most mainstream Web sites are so heavily image- and media-intensive that they are not suitable for adaptive devices such as screen readers, voice browsers, and Braille translators. Many of the guidelines necessary for developing accessible content naturally lend themselves to creating good design.

The W3C supports a comprehensive accessibility initiative, available at www.w3.org/WAI/. Here you find a large variety of guidelines and standards to build more accessible Web content. You can learn more about the adaptive devices for accessible browsing at www.w3.org/WAI/References/Browsing.

Building more accessible content does not mean that you have to forgo more challenging Web designs. Often the best way to provide a more accessible site is by building alternatives to the traditional navigation choices or by offering a text-based version of your content. When designing for accessibility, consider these tips from the W3C (also found at www.w3.org/WAI/References/QuickTips/).

- **Images and animations**—Use the alt attribute to describe the function of each visual.
- **Multimedia**—Provide captioning and transcripts of audio and descriptions of video.
- **Hypertext links**—Use text that makes sense when read out of context. For example, avoid “Click here.”
- **Page organization**—Use headings, lists, and consistent structure. Use CSS for layout and style where possible.
- **Scripts, applets, and plug-ins**—Provide alternative content in case active features are inaccessible or unsupported.
- **Frames**—Use the noframes element and meaningful titles.
- **Tables**—Make line-by-line reading sensible. Summarize.
- **Validity**—Check your work and validate your code using validators from the W3C.

Consider providing alternate methods of content presentation to accommodate a variety of users. For users with assistance devices such as screen readers, a text-only alternate is desirable. For example, the British National Maritime Museum Web site (www.nmm.ac.uk) offers a text-only alternative to its standard graphics-based Web site as shown in Figures 2-28 and 2-29.
You can verify that physically challenged people can access your Web pages easily by using Bobby, a Web-based tool developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) (available at www.cast.org/bobby). Bobby checks your pages by applying the W3C’s Web contents accessibility guidelines to your code and recording the number and type of incompatibility problems it finds. Bobby looks for elements such as consistent use of alt attributes, appropriate color usage, compatibility with screen readers, and ease of navigation. You can use Bobby online if your pages are live, or you can download Bobby to test your work on your own machine. Unfortunately, many mainstream Web sites fail Bobby’s requirements for accessibility because they use tables as a page layout device and lack support for CSS.
The computer monitor, the destination for your Web pages, is very different from print-based media. You must take the following differences into account when planning your Web site:

- **Consider the shape of a computer screen.** Although most paper-based media are portrait oriented, the computer screen is landscape oriented—that is, wider than it is tall. Your page design must reflect the space where it is displayed and read.

- **Although a piece of paper reflects light,** a computer screen has light passing through it from behind. This affects your choices of colors and contrasts. Design pages that provide enough contrast for the user to read, but not so much that the colors distract from the content. Avoid light text on a light background and dark text on a dark background.
Computer screens use a much lower resolution than the printed page. Graphics and text that look fine on a laser printer at 600 dots per inch (dpi) are coarse and grainy at 72 dpi, the typical resolution for a computer monitor. Because of the screen graininess, italic text is especially hard to read in paragraph format, so restrict its use for special emphasis, as shown in Figure 2-30, which shows a page from The Ohio Historical Society (www.ohiohistory.org).

Reformat Content for Online Presentation

Although tempting, it often is a poor choice to take documents that are formatted for print and post them online without considering the destination medium. In most cases, a document that is perfectly legible on paper is hard to negotiate online. The text length, font, and content length do not transfer successfully to the computer screen. Figures 2-31 and 2-32 show the same section of text from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. Figure 2-31 is formatted as if it were a page from a book. The text is dense and fills the screen in large blocks, obscuring the browser window. The Times Roman font, designed for print, is hard to read online.

![Figure 2-30 Italic text is hard to read online](image-url)
In contrast, Figure 2-32 (from the Online Literature Library, www.literature.org) shows text that has been designed for online display. The text width is short and easy to read without horizontal scrolling. The font is designed for online reading. The white space on both sides creates a text column that enforces the vertical flow of the page. The illustrations break up the text and relieve the user’s eyes. The differences between these two pages show that text must be prepared thoughtfully for online display.

Figure 2-31  Content formatted for paper
Web sites have a wide variety of looks. It is easy to see why so many Web designers get caught up in the medium and forget their message. The lure of technology makes it easy to overlook that you are still trying to communicate with words and pictures, just as humans have for centuries. Adapting those elements to online display for effective communication is the challenge.

Plan a site that stands out and delivers its message. If you stick with the principles you learned in this chapter, you can present information that is both accessible and engaging.

- Design specifically for the computer medium, considering how the page layout, fonts, and colors you use appear on the screen.
- Craft an appropriate look and feel and stick with it throughout your site. Test and revise your interface by paying close attention to the demands of online display.

Figure 2-32  Content formatted for the Web
Make your design portable by testing it in a variety of browsers, operating systems, and computing platforms, and use as low a bandwidth as possible.

Plan for easy access to your information. Provide logical navigation tools and do not make users click through more than two or three pages before they get what they want.

Design a unified look for your site. Strive for smooth transitions from one page to the next. Create templates for your grid structure and apply them consistently.

Use active white space as an integral part of your design. Use text, color, and object placement to guide the user’s eye.

Know your audience and design pages that suit their needs, interests, and viewing preferences.

Leverage the power of hypertext linking. Provide enough links for the users to create their own path through your information.

Design your text for online display, considering the differences between the screen and the page.

**REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is another name for the interface the user must navigate in a Web site?
2. What is a common mistake Web designers make when testing their sites?
3. What is a prime reason users may leave a Web site?
4. What is the single most important factor in determining the success of a Web site?
5. What important factor degrades the legibility of your information?
6. Name three ways to create a unified look for your site.
7. How does a grid layout enhance Web design?
8. Which HTML elements can you use to create a visual grid?
9. Explain active versus passive white space.
10. List three ways to create a smooth transition between pages of a Web site.
11. List two benefits of consistently placing navigation tools.
12. Describe the difference between reading and scanning a page.
13. Name three ways to focus a user’s attention.
14. Describe why using “Click here” as link text is ineffective.
15. Describe the benefits of textual linking.
16. Describe the benefits of a hypertext table of contents.
17. Why is the alt attribute so important to navigation?
18. Name three differences between paper-based and screen-based design.
19. Describe a good strategy to format text for online display.
1. Browse the Web for examples of good Web design.
   a. Using a screen capture program, capture Web pages that show two levels of
      information from the Web site. For example, capture the main page of a Web
      site and a secondary page.
   b. Indicate with screen callouts the unifying characteristics of the pages, such as
      shared colors, fonts, graphics, and page layout. (A callout is an arrow or line
      that connects to explanatory text. Many figures in this book have callouts,
      including Figure 2-1.)
   c. Indicate the areas of active white space and passive white space.
   d. Describe whether the design of the site is appropriate for the content.

2. Browse the Web for examples of poor Web design.
   a. Using a screen capture program, capture Web pages that show two levels of
      information from the Web site. For example, capture the main page of a Web
      site and a secondary page.
   b. Indicate with screen callouts the jarring or distracting inconsistencies of the site,
      such as abrupt changes in any design elements, including theme and layout.
   c. List detailed recommendations for improving the site design.

3. Write a short essay critiquing a Web site’s design. Describe the structural layout of
   the site and determine whether information is presented clearly and is easily
   accessible.

4. Browse the Web for sites that use unique navigation methods. Write a short essay
   describing why the method is or is not successful.

5. Find a Web site that you think needs improvements in its design.
   a. Print two pages from the site.
   b. Make copies of the originals and set them aside.
   c. Using scissors, cut out the main elements of each page. Rearrange the elements
      and paste them in a design you feel improves the site.
   d. Compare and contrast the original with your improved design.
CASE PROJECT

Visualize the page design for your site by sketching a number of page layouts for different information levels of the site. For example, sketch the main page, a secondary page, and a content page. You do not have to be concerned with the exact look of the elements, but be prepared to indicate the main components of the pages, such as headings, navigation cues, link sets, text areas, and so on.

Start to organize your site. Create a visual diagram that indicates the main page, section pages, content pages, and so on. Indicate the links between the pages. Indicate whether you will provide alternate navigation choices such as a table of contents or site map.