Once upon a time, the Web carried only text with minimal formatting. It was based upon the needs of military reports and college thesis papers. Obviously, the web has developed a long way from there to meet new needs. As designers, our job is not always to design content. Content are things like the actual text in a page, or the specific images used. Our job is to make the content look good. Beyond that we need to have an understanding of what makes a site look good and work well.

1) Clear and meaningful Content: A website should have a clear and meaningful message to your viewers. It must capture the essence of the company the page represents. This is sometimes referred to as “Corporate Image.” A site selling muscle car parts should look substantially different to a Lawyers’ site, or a site selling flowers

2) Well-organized and Easy to Read: Your website should have a clear and easy to follow structure and navigation. Viewers equate "poor organization" with "poor design." It should have a strong ‘banner’ at the top of the page. The site should be easy to read whether on the screen or printed. Viewers should easily find their way around your site, and locate important information quickly.

3) Navigation and page length: Viewers love to Click! Hate to Scroll! A site that has many short pages, thoughtfully linked, will draw them through your website. This is probably the most powerful, but often overlooked, advantage of using websites to present information.

4) Knowledge sharing: Every business has knowledge that their viewers might find useful. The company may needs to have a quick way to answer common questions. FAQs pages, "how to" and "helpful hints" all make good content, if they are organized and edited properly.

5) Links to External Sites: While you may be concerned that this will take viewers away from your site, keep in mind that they will leave anyway if they don't find what they're looking for! If you provide a list of useful links, people will return to your site for reference and may get your site listed higher in directories such as Yahoo!

6) Use of Graphics: A picture may say a thousand words, but if it takes too long to load, they will move on? Even so, nobody wants to look at a site that is all text! Balance the graphic elements with the text so the viewer's interest is kept alive, and your message gets across.

7) Allow for feedback: Encourages viewer participation. Whether this is as simple as filling out a "Contact Us" form, or a more complex database driven application, interactivity is one of the elements we strive to provide in your website.
Assignment: WEB PAGE ASSESSMENT

For this assignment, you will look at three different websites on the internet (not your own). You will assess them in terms of the seven design factors listed above. Use sites on similar subjects (such as book vendors or music stores). Look at the websites of different sizes of companies if you can.

For each website write a review looking at:

1) Clear and meaningful Content
2) Well-organized and Easy to Read
3) Navigation and page length
4) Knowledge Sharing
5) Links to External Sites
6) Use of Graphics
7) Feedback

Turn in to me reviews of three different sites. This will be due at the beginning of the next class.

Assignment: EGO SITE

After this we will begin to design our first site and our first pages. Our first design assignment will be our “Ego site.” It will be an all about “Me” site designed by you about you. Don’t worry – there are no points off for lying about yourself on your own site. You will want to use the same list of seven points when designing your site as when you reviewed the other sites. Remember what you saw on the other sites. Use what you liked, and avoid what you didn’t.

You will want to procure a picture of yourself for this page. If you do not have a picture, I will take a picture of you in class and make it available to you – but don’t expect it to be pretty.

You will be designing primarily on paper at first. You may also use MS Word to help you visualize what you want if you are comfortable working that way. NEVER use MS Word to publish a website or webpage. It seldom comes out the way you expect, and the code it produces is ugly and often hard to edit.

As the next week or so progresses, we will learn to set up our site, and format our pages. By the end of the semester, you may have a completely different way of working than we will begin with – but we are starting simply. Have fun!