

UNIT I

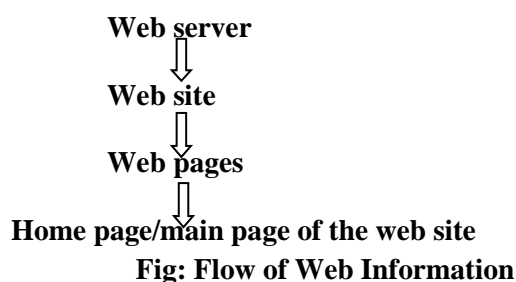
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Designing your web site

THE WEB FLOW

Following figure will give you a very clear picture of how information will flow from your web site to the web. This term will also be very useful to you, as we will be referring to them throughout the development process on the web.

A **web server** is a computer on the internet that contains one or more web sites. each web sites on the internet is stored on a web server computer. after you have learned how to develop a web site you will learn how to publish your web sites on a web server. Now, what does a web server contain. it contains-web sites.



A **Web site** is a collection of web pages that are linked with each other to form one single body of information. A web site can offer information about the object that it aims to describe using text, graphics, audio or video

A **Web page** is a single file of a web site. It is referred to by the web server by its filename and displayed to the user by a web browser. A webpage can be of any length and can contain text, graphics, audio or video etc.

A **Home page** is a Key web page or the Main page of the web site. It is the entry point of the web site. Using this page the user get access to the web site. It is a first web page that the people will see when they try to access a site.

OBJECTIVE OF THE WEB SITE

The term objective means the main rule or the reason behind the existence of a web site. Let us try to find answers for the three question listed below:

- Why do you or your company need a web site?
- Who is your target audience?
- Hoe best can you get their attention and how can a web site improve your business or meet the other goals of your organization?

Web sites are designed keeping in mind a particular set of audience or clients. but with the incredible reach of this medium it has become necessary to keep in mind to global audience. The chance of sits being

visited by not just its target audience in increasing by the day. A website reflects the image of the person, the company or the product.

It is not necessary that your site must reflect what or your company does, you could have totally different web site layout. It all depends on what you want to do with your site. The bottom line is how do you get attention of a web surfer. There are some surfers how are regular user and are very comfortable with the web ,on the other hand some surfers are not regular they are not so comfortable navigating the web and are steel discovering the web. Considering this we have to use a very good layout and graphics. You how to make a web site that not only gets a visitor to the site but also satisfies their need.

Basically you have to decide on your primary web audience and then depending on that create your site. if you just want to put your personal information or hobby page on the web, then you can develop a site that shows just that personal information page containing your hobbies, your picture and everything else that you will be primary addressing the market audience.

In you are making a web page for a company then, you will be primarily addressing the market audience. In such case your website will be containing company profile, job openings, product information and other such feature another similar example is of the online shopping store on the web. if you intend creating and online store for selling books then the book reader become you main audience.

Whether your target audience is a student, a teacher, an artist or a business man, yours site is still open to world at large. At no point of time is it restricted to any one type of audience. Once your web site is on the internet it can be viewed by anyone in world. Keeping this in mind you have to develop an design your web site.

Don't worry once you get in to active designed an deployment of a web site, you will find it very challenging and interesting. And remember it is not a one –time job, web site need continuous updating an maintenances in order to be meaningful.

BASIC INTERFACE DESIGN

The users of the internet prefer to view sites that are not only reach in contains but have an equally interactive visual interface and design. To create a site which has these features is not too difficult. Web page are different from printed documents for books since they are based on hyper –text links. Therefore web pages need to have intuitive design.

You can use graphic icon as navigation and interaction aids to make the web site attractive. Since, the internet faces the constraint of bandwidth ;the graphics used have to be not only attractive but also small in their file size .

Bandwidth is the rate at which data travels across the network. It is measured in kilobytes per second (kbps),

All web pages must have a clear and precise page title, which helps the user in locating information these titles are the first things that appear on the users browser, giving some idea as to the page content. The other advantage of a page title is that if the user bookmarks the page then it goes on to become his bookmark title as well. A bookmark is a feature that is present in nearly all the browsers. It is used to mark a document or specific place in a document so that the user can retrieve it later. It saves the address or the link to a web page or to a web site so that you can easily access the page at a later time.

The other important feature while making the page is incorporating the last updated date for a particular page. This tells the user how current or updated is the information. Web pages that deal with product information , corporate information, personnel manuals or other technology-intensive pages should always have this feature incorporated in their design.

DEVELOPING A STORYBOARD FOR THE WEB SITE

A storyboard helps you to plan your web site and decide what goes where before you actually start constructing. In this way, you end up creating an outline of the web site much before you actually star developing.

This storyboard should contain all the information of the site , which include the function of the site , its target audience, the graphical layout and design navigation within the site and the overall functionality of the site. If the site small and simple , then you may find this not so essential. But where the web site is complex and involves more than two or three people, there you should definitely consider using story board. In large web site development storyboard not only saves time but also avoids a lot of unnecessary confusion and mistakes.

Storyboarding can be done on sheets of paper or by using special software packages. The best software utilities for doing this are those that also help in web site management. These packages give you a graphical view of the entire web site with hyperlinks and also that provision for modifying. A popular software for web site planning and development is Microsoft's front page explorer, which shows you the complete site design one single page with all links and option displayed. Change in one link automatically gets reflected in other relevant pages. SiteMan, is another software, very user-friendly and allows the user to check the site offline and has the provision of making site-wide changes. Then there is NetObjects fusion also used for site administration and management purposes.

NAVIGATION AND LINKS WITHIN THE SITE

It is always helpful if you decide your site into sections and then list down the board goals for each section. Something like the following objective or goal list made for the company JM software. Since it is an organization dealing with software development and marketing so the sections broadly could be something like:

For example, consider the case of JM software, an organization dealing with software development and marketing. It my list its objectives under various areas as:

JM software web site objectives

Software development

- Company Information
- The platform of the software development
- Hardware specification
- Customized development
- Clint List

Marketing

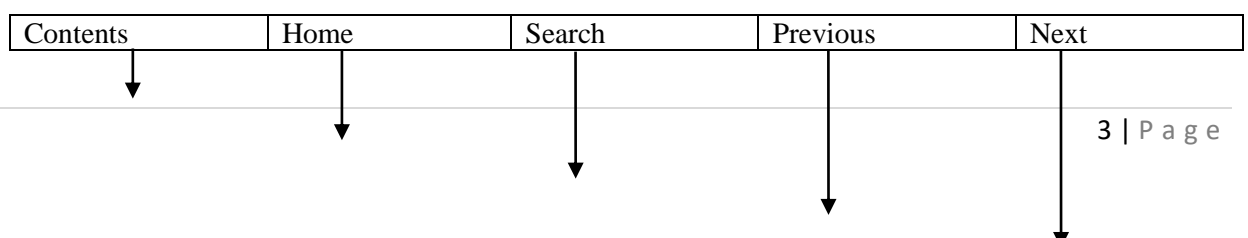
- Complete information of the products
- Online sale of products
- Product update

Feedback or customer support

- Encourage customers to give meaningful feedback
- Customer support
- FAQ (Frequently asked questions)
- Search engine for the site to help in locating information
- Contact address and company address

Once you have made the broad categories you need to work towards site navigation and organization. As you know that most of the user interaction with web pages on a site is done sing navigation hypertext links. The most common interface problem arises when the user gets lost in the site. This problem can be solved if proper and clear graphics, icon or text based navigation help is included in the web page.

Providing navigation bar gives your site a concrete design. While creating the graphic do keep in mind that the navigation bar doesn't take up too much place on the screen as then you may loose space from page content. It is safe to use the terms **previous** and **next** as the navigation terms.



Link to site contents

Link to Home Page

Link to Search Page

Link to Previous Page

Link to Next Page

Fig: A Sample Navigation bar with minimum options for the web page

CHECKLIST FOR DESIGNING

User friendly interface

While designing the site you should try to minimize the information in direct link and not have too many nested links. The term nested here means link within another link. your site design should have a very efficient and appealing interface. The term efficient in this context relates to small graphics that do not take too long to download the interface could have main section presented as main menu and they in turn contain links to sub menus. try to keep all the main options on one single page, preferably on one single menu bar.

BANDWIDTH

The pages should be so designed that the user does not have to wait for a long time .it is a well known fact that most users get impatient if the page takes too long to come on the screen and so they move on to some other site . web user have different types of internet connection and machines configurations so the site has to be such that it is efficient on all type of user machines .for instance, if the user connecting through a 28.8kvs dial-up phone line connection it will not be a very good idea incorporate huge graphics into the web page . the choice is entirely yours depending on your audience priority and designed issue .

SIMPLE AND CONSISTENT DESIGN

Web page should be designed with a consistency and the site layout should be simple and yet interesting .you must not forget that most of the users come looking for specific information the language the graphic and the overall site design should be very logical and meaningful to the user .it should essentially be very comfortable in its appeal. To achieve maximum site functionality your site design should be consistent in layout in all sections within the site .all the web pages within the web site should ideally share more or less almost the same page layout , graphic styles ,and linking and navigation pattern the user once into the site should be able to get control of navigating and exploring the site .using a particular graphic depiction style you can convey to him continuity of a particular theme .

SEARCH AND FEEDBACK SERVICE

Your web site can be very useful if you include search facility and feedback facility within the site . this specially helps those users who come to your site looking for some specific information .the user can use the feedback option to make inquiries or just give a feedback on the site or the product . the feedback should be a link to the 'webmaster' or 'webmistress' of the site .they are the persons who are responsible for the site and its contents. These features also help to get you closer to user all over the world and they are especially very helpful to business oriented web sites.

DESIGNING FOR NON GRAPHIC VISITORS

It is important to keep in mind that there are many users who use the UNIX shell account for browsing on the internet. So, it is important for you to keep this factor in mind while designing your site .one key advantages of web pages is that in the same documents you can incorporate capabilities that will allow a shell account user to go through your site as effectively as for a graphic capable connection . you will learn about this feature in detail when we begin to learn to create web pages.