

Don't Make Me Think! A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability

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a summary by Professor Joan Inderhees, Spring 2009

As far as humanly possible, when I look at a web page it should be:

Self-evident

Obvious

Self-explanatory

How do we really use the web?

- o Scanning—hopping around to find only what we're looking for
- o Sacrificing—we choose the first reasonable option
- o Muddling through—few people read directions. We plod along because we use an old method that still works (no matter how weird), and we don't care, really.

Design pages for scanning, not reading.

- o Clear visual hierarchy
- o Use existing style and layout conventions to our advantage
- o Break up pages into clearly defined areas
- o Make it obvious what's clickable
- o Keep the 'noise' down to a dull roar

Omit needless words.

No 'happy talk' or instructions

The home page and navigation

People won't use your site if they can't find their way around it.

Compare your site to walking into a mall to buy a specific item ASAP.

Keep wording absolutely consistent from page to page

Place navigation and logos at the top or on the left

Navigation bars

Give us a constant element —persistent navigation

Tell us what's there (how big the store is)

Tells us how to use the site

Helps us trust the site owner and their designer

Search boxes are very useful on large sites

Designing the home page

Convey the 'big picture' clearly

'Where do I start?' answered clearly

Usability testing

Don't skip this or shortchange it. Review results promptly before you forget.