

DO!

Practices

- Think about the purpose of the web/page before you begin
- Describe your audience and what they want from your content
- Highlight most frequently used information on the home page
- Design for the content you have
- Sketch out several possible layouts for the content
- Create a diagram before designing a template
- Get feedback from other designers, users, and owner(s) of the system

Visual

- Keep the branding elements consistent throughout the site (logo, header)
- Use the font for logo (get high-resolution file from printer vs. low-resolution scanning)
- Keep navigation consistent throughout the site
- Use browser-safe, web-friendly colors
- Make sure all images are aligned with something – or purposefully unaligned
- Combine fonts from the same font families. Choosing a primary and secondary font is good practice.
- Use meaningful graphics. Any time you decide to put something anywhere, there should be a *reason*.
- Use the same style of imagery throughout the site
- Adjust kerning and leading on all embedded text

Usability

- Design each page to download in 18 seconds or less for a 28.8K connection
- Use thumbnails or a cropped image to reduce the size of your content graphics.
- Test your design for *compatibility* (browsers, browser versions, monitor settings, sensible user preferences)
- Test your design for *usability*

DON'T!

- Use frames on the Internet
- Use cliched images (globe, spider, web, etc.)
- Organize the content according to its printed form
- Animate, flash or scroll text (unless you have a reason to other than, it's "cool")
- Create or use patterned backgrounds (short, tiled, little, striped)
- Use reverse type (light type on dark background)
- Use light type on light background or dark type on dark background
- Use underlined or colored text for anything other than hyperlinks
- Use dividers
- Use free clip art or "borrow" images from other sites
- Use under construction signs
- Put the mission statement on the home page
- Use buttons unless there's a link attributed to it.
- Use gradients or glowing text.
- Use multiple light sources for drop-shadows.
- Preface your home page with a "splash" page.
- Use sound files unless prefaced by an option and warning.