

UX

USER EXPERIENCE



Time for a Redesign?

If you have a website online, when was the last time you updated the design? Does it reflect who your business is today? Does it compliment your other marketing materials?

There are several reasons to redesign your website, the most common being simply because your design is out of date and needs updated. So when do you know when it's time for **your** website to be updated?

If it's been more than a year since your website was designed you should take another look at it and see if it accurately

represents you, your company, your services and products.

Once you've determined that your site is due for a redesign browse online at competitor sites, and pretty much every other site you come across, print out or take a screen capture (PrtScn button on keyboard then CTRL-V into Word) of sites that have aspects you like, get your copy together, then call your design and development firm and book a meeting to get started!

Redesign with OpenUX before September 1 and receive 10% off the final cost of your project.

10 reasons to redesign:

Logo or marketing materials have changed.

New audience.

Design is outdated – doesn't reflect company well anymore.

Site not search engine friendly.

New products or services.

Company branches into different areas.

Adding e-commerce or other major features.

Site is not easily navigated.

Your site loads slowly or is done in 1990s Flash.

Your website doesn't get results.

2. Layout

What should the floor plan of your site be for optimal user experience?

3. Colors

How much to do colors really matter and which ones are best?

4. Content

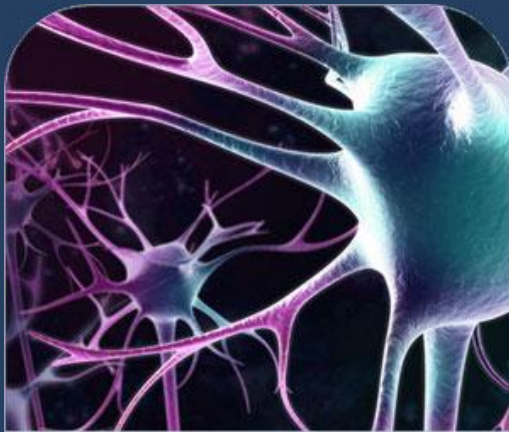
Again with the content! What and how much should you say?

Redesign Mistakes People Make:

Adding a ton of new content. If your site doesn't need new content don't add it just to fill space.

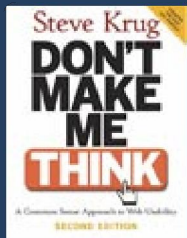
Mimicking your competitor's site. If your site looks like your competitor's how are people going to tell you apart? If there are features you like from their site incorporate them but don't copy.

Removing content. If pages aren't being accessed and aren't really useful, by all means delete them. But know that search engines will still have those pages catalogued!



RECOMMENDED BOOK!

Don't Make Me Think!
Steve Krug



All of the tips, techniques, and examples presented revolve around users being able to surf merrily through a well-designed site with minimal cognitive strain.

Readers will quickly come to agree with many of the book's assumptions, such as "We don't read pages--we scan them" and "We don't figure out how things work--we muddle through."

Coming to grips with such hard facts sets the stage for Web design that then produces topnotch sites.

At Amazon.com from \$19.00



Layout:

How should your site design be laid out?

You wouldn't build a house without a blueprint, so why would you build your website without first figuring out how everything will fit together?

It's pretty basic really, figure out what you want to show on the page, then put the pieces together in the way that makes the most sense for the viewer.

It's like creating a floor plan. Certain things go in certain places but you have quite a bit of leniency about where everything else goes and how it is styled.

Here are some standards: if you have a search function put it in the upper right. Keep your navigation on the left or across the top. Your logo should be top and center or upper

left. Your body should be somewhere in the middle of the page and should be the largest section. Text navigation should be at the bottom of each page so people can get anywhere from

Viewers prefer to use websites that they already know how to navigate. Unique layouts can make you lose visitors!

any page at the site.

As you can see there are a few rules that should be followed, but a great designer will be able to work

with your ideal design while still conforming to these web standards.

It all comes down to is comfort, if a visitor to your site can immediately tell where everything is because they are already familiar with the location of certain items from other sites – they will find your site easier to use, which means they'll choose your site over someone else in the same field who has a fancy, non-user-friendly layout and design.



5 COLOR TIPS

1 Make your links change color when someone has visited them. It helps people retrace their steps.

2 Print your website on a black and white printer and make sure everything blends nicely.

3 White text on a dark background onscreen is very hard to read, try to avoid it for large paragraphs.

4 Don't depend on colored text to differentiate links or special words from the rest of your page.

5 When in doubt stick to 3 or fewer colors. The more colors you have the busier your site looks.

Colors:

Do the colors you use at your site really matter?

Sure, we all have our favorite colors and we naturally associate certain colors with certain things (blue for professionalism, purple for royalty, red and yellow for McDonalds®) but when it comes to your website, how much do the colors you choose really matter? Quite a bit actually. And unfortunately it is very easy to create an unappealing combination.

Certain colors look great together, others ... not so great. But it's a personal preference thing you say? Not really, our eyes are naturally trained to recognize pleasant combinations. Usually those found in nature are pleasant to the eye (look at the daisy to the top left) but add a human hand and you end up with some strange combinations.

How do you know what colors to use at your website? Look at your logo, your marketing materials, and

the image you want to portray and make sure that is reflected in the layout and colors at your site.

If you run a children's site you want bright fun colors. If you're a business site you should stick with a relatively monochromatic site or at least one with similar color values to enforce stability.

Color says a lot about how you are perceived be sure to leave visitors with the right impression.

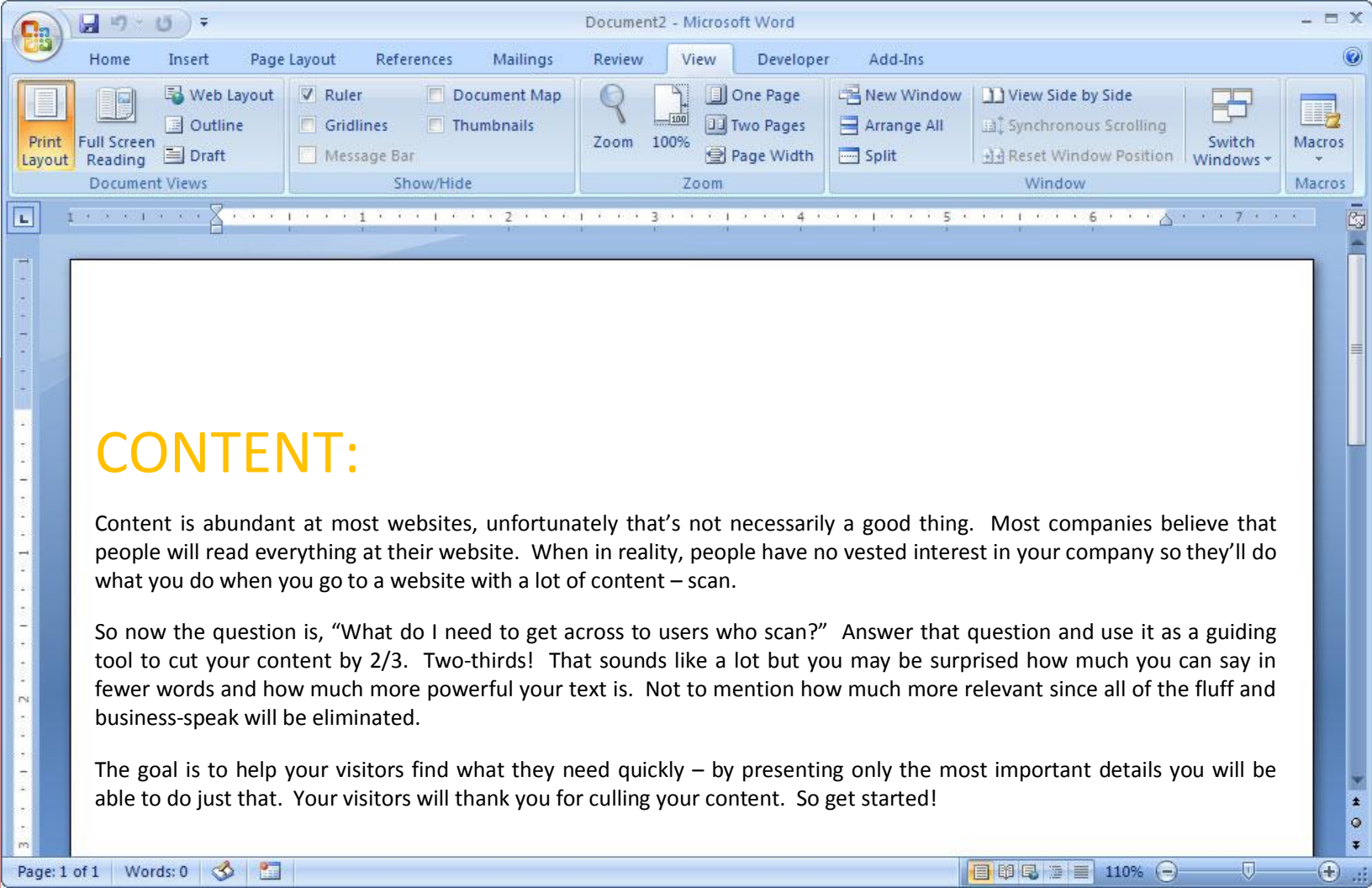
COLOR RESOURCES: HOW WE CREATE COLOR COMBINATIONS

It's not easy to create color schemes that work well together and that compliment your corporate logo or marketing material theme. But there are a few great tools available to make this process easier.

VISIBONE is one of the most extensive color resources and they specialize in colorblindness and appropriate web palettes. They also have a great color chooser available.

COLOR SCHEMER ONLINE is a fantastic color chooser. You choose your primary color and it presents you with 15 complimentary and contrasting options and the ability to lighten or darken the color scheme with the click of a button.

HOME DEPOT is great for paint chips. Yes, those books with the little colored rectangles. Those books have a lot of wonderful color palettes pre designed. If it works in your home it is likely it will work just as well online.



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