

12 Deadly Website Design Mistakes

By John Simonson
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1. Website is All Flash or Graphics

Everyone wants their website to get easily found on the search engines when their targeted audience is searching for the type products and services. The search engine's spiders (for example: Google's Googlebot) crawl websites and use the text content to help determine what the website is all about. Unfortunately, a website that is all graphics or Flash has very little information to help the spiders determine the purpose of the website. A well designed website will balance text with graphics, Flash, videos, etc. to make each web page search engine optimized and still meaningful to the web visitors.

2. Page Title Tags & Meta Description Tags Poorly Written

When looking at websites across the Internet it is amazing to see how many sites have poorly written Title Tags and meta description tags missing and duplicated on every page. The Title Tag is used by the search engines and visitors as a short description of the web page. Poorly written Title Tags or Title Tags stuffed with too many keywords can spell instant death at achieving good marketing reach on the search engines' organic (free) listings.

3. Poor Navigation Design

An important factor in good web design is to make sure your targeted visitors can quickly find what they are looking for on your website and also meet your goals. A poorly designed navigation system will frustrate your visitors and surely send them off to your competitors. Navigation systems need to be easy to follow and have the correct wording so the visitors know what they will find if they click on a navigation link. This also holds true for the search engine spiders trying to crawl your website.

4. Too Much Industry Terminology

Often website developers leave the text content to the client and the client describes their products and services in common industry terminology. Unfortunately, many times the targeted audience doesn't think and talk that way. So your targeted audience searches with keyword phrases that are not found in your website. Thus, your website doesn't appear in the search engine listings when your potential audience is searching for your types goods and services. Know how your audience talks and mirror those words within the website.

5. Home Page Too Cluttered

Websites that try to cram too much on their home page make it difficult for the visitor to find what they are looking for and probably spell goodbye! Avoid overloading the page with flashing graphics and using too many different colors. Define the key elements that need to stand out, especially above the fold and then design accordingly. Ask some people to find things on your web site and see how easy or difficult it is to achieve the task.

6. Pages Never Updated

There is nothing worse than going to a web site and seeing the sale they have posted is from two years ago. Or, that the hours or location has changed but hasn't been updated. Keeping your web pages and content updated and fresh will help keep your audience engaged and can also improve your search engine page ranking.

7. Design & Colors Are Awful

First impressions do count on the web as well as in person. When we land on a website we have certain expectations and the first thing we do notice is the design and colors. Nothing is a bigger turn off then seeing a web page that looks awful. Spend the extra bucks to have it done right. The web can make you bigger than life if done correctly.



N1140 Lone Pine Road

Adell, WI. 53001

Tel: (920) 994-8835

E-mail: john@webstreamdynamics.com

URL: www.WebstreamDynamics.com

8. Forms Don't Work

There is nothing more frustrating to any of us than when we fill out a form (as example: contact us form) and have it not work and message is not sent. So you click back and try it again but it still doesn't work. The result... goodbye!

9. Duplicate Content

Today, many small businesses choose to save money and fall into the trap of going with a template website that already has content created for your website. Wow! Sounds great doesn't it? Wrong! Search engines will discover your content is the same as a whole bunch of other websites and will only list in the search results one site and discard all the others. Or, they may penalize your site for using the duplicated content.

10. Broken Links

One of the biggest ways to loose your audience is when they click on a link they see the dreaded "Page not Found" error. This holds true for internal page links as well as links to other web sites from within your web pages. Many small businesses will link to supplier's websites or supplier's product catalogs. Unfortunately, suppliers do change their web site pages and this can cause links to fail because the page URLs have changed.

11. Website Poorly Optimized

This is actually a combination of several of the above points. You are all excited about your newly created website. Now a few months go by and you realize you website is not generating any online leads. The site was designed without ever considering how you will get found online. With over 172 Million website today, every website needs to be optimized correctly from the start and updated regularly.

12. Failure to Analyze Website Traffic & Usage

Often times you may be told by your web developer that you are getting a lot of hits to your website. Although you are getting traffic you are not meeting your goals and the website is not generating any leads. Without site analytics you are shooting in the dark and have no way of determining what is wrong. Using a good analytics program, such as Google Analytics, will help you see where your visitors are coming from (*called referrers*), how well landing pages are performing and what pages they are exiting from. For example: your online yellow page rep tells you: "*We are sending you a lot of traffic.*" With a good site analytics program you can quickly tell if this is true or not and if it is generating any leads.