

What makes a good Web Site?

When looking a web site think about each of these points

1 Audience and Purpose

Who and what is the Web site for? Is the audience for the site clearly stated or obvious. If not, who is it appropriate for in your opinion?

2 Management

One of the major benefits of the Internet is that information can be updated immediately. People are very excited about creating a Web site – however, very few sites are well managed. The vast majority are updated on an ad hoc basis. This provides the visitor with no reason to return as the information is unlikely to change. One of the first things you should look for is to see when the site was last updated. Many of the best sites are updated on a daily (in some cases minute-by minute) basis.

3 Ease of Use

A good site should be easy to use. An index is helpful and makes navigation much easier. Check to see if the site has one.

4 Content

How useful is the content? Is it what you expected/wanted? Is it well written? How useful/interesting are the graphics (pictures and drawings)? And the other elements (sounds, video, etc)? How good is the information and who are the authors? The quality of information on the Internet is variable. A good site should include sources.

5 Links

Hotlinks to other pages and sites are important. How relevant are the hotlinks, and do they lead on to other useful information? Good sites will check that the hotlinks they recommend are up to date and avoid the dreaded message 'ERROR: Not found'.

6 Design

A well-designed site will make it obvious how you use it. You should understand the structure and where you are in the Web site. Simple design and layout is often the most effective. Over busy designs can make navigation difficult. The site should also be relatively quick to download. Large graphics, sound and video can take a long time to download and may also require 'plug-ins' to access them. (Plug-ins are small programs which act as extensions to your browser and allow you to play sound and video files).

7 Interactive features

One of the benefits of the Internet is that it can be interactive. What level of interactivity does the site allow?

low – browsing and reading

medium – with things to do but on the 'click-and-reveal' type

high – with things to do involving forms or multiple choice, for instance where you submit answers and correct answers are revealed; there is e-mail access to the author

very high – active participation and communication (e.g. of answers) are actively encouraged; Shockwave and Java applets are used to allow you to drag-and-drop change variables, including drawings

8 Advertising

Is the site full of 'in your face' advertising that has not relevance to you?

9 Unique to the web

Ask yourself 'Could I do this task or get this information from another resource more quickly or more effectively?' If the answer is 'Yes', use the alternative source.

10 Recommendation

The bottom line – would you personally feel confident about recommending the site to someone else?

Task

Select up to 10 Web Sites and assess them using the criteria supplied. You may want to start with some of the sites listed overleaf

Write Web Site address below	Audience	Management	Ease of Use	Content	Links	Design	Interactive Features	Advertising	Unique to the Web?	Recommend

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Assess these sites against your criteria for a good web site

NASA

www.nasa.gov

YouthNet

www.youthnet.org.uk

Parents Information Network

www.pin-parents.com

BBC Learning Station

WWW.bbc.co.uk/education/schools

Network Wales

www.network.wales.org.uk

Scottish Council for Educational Technology

www.scet.co.uk

University for Industry

www.ufi.org.uk

The Louvre

<http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/louvrea.htm>

The Science Museum

www.nmsi.ac.uk

Disney

www.disney.com

Virtual Library: Museums

www.museums.reading.ac.uk/vlmp/

Manchester United

www.sky.co.uk/manu