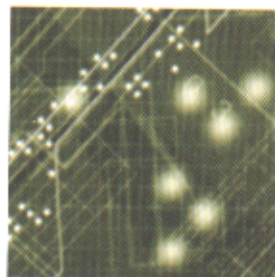


Amy Gahrn (2001), the editor of *Contentious*, a Web magazine for writers and editors who create content for online media, on one big difference between the way people read print and online documents:

Most Internet users are on information overload. Don't overwhelm your online audience. It's best to focus on providing small amounts of high-quality content. Don't pump out lots of lower-quality content—nobody's going to read it all, anyway. Reward your readers for every small investment of their precious attention.



The Web is a gigantic publishing medium, made up of millions of Web pages and sites. Nobody has precise figures about Web usage because it changes too quickly and because there is no Internet headquarters. According to the Computer Industry Almanac (2002), by the year 2005, more than a billion people will be using the Internet. Because the Web is such an important publishing medium for organizations, professionals should understand the basics of creating a Web site.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF CREATING WEB SITES

The process of building and maintaining a Web site is nonlinear. You will find yourself going forward, then doubling back and rewriting. In fact, a Web site is never finished, for you will add, delete, and revise information as long as the site exists.

The following sections discuss the process of creating Web sites.

Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose

Your first goal is to understand who will be viewing the site and why you are creating it. Who are your readers? Why would they visit the site? What kinds of information do they seek? How much do they already know about your subject? Are they looking mainly for links to other sites? Do they need to download information to their own computers? What are your specific goals in launching the site: to project a positive image for your organization? to publicize your products or services? to sell?

On TechComm Web

For additional samples, activities, and links related to this chapter, see bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm.

To create a Web site:

Analyze your audience and purpose.

Design the site and its pages.

Create and code the content.

Revise and test the site.

Launch the site.

Register the site with search engines.

Maintain the site.

In This Book

For more about audience and purpose, see Ch. 5.

You also need to think about four additional questions that can affect the design of your site:

- *What kind of equipment do your readers have?* If they have fast Internet connections, you can use more and bigger graphics without causing annoying delays as the information downloads. If they have slow connections, use only a few graphics and keep them small, and create a number of small pages rather than few large ones, because small pages load more quickly.
- *Do your readers want to print out the information on your site?* If so, create a version that prints as a single, unified document, not as a lot of small pages.
- *Do your readers have any disabilities?* If many of your readers are elderly, design the site to accommodate vision impairment and perhaps motion impairment. For more about designing sites for people with disabilities, see page 561.
- *Are your readers native speakers of English?* If not, consider creating the site in other languages. For more about designing sites for multicultural audiences, see page 562.

Depending on your answers to these questions, you may need to include extra time in your schedule and extra labor in your budget.

Designing the Site and Its Pages

Figure 21.1 shows the basic structure of a simple Web site. Almost all sites consist of a home page—the main page of the site—and other pages that are linked to it. A page refers to a file; the content for one file might fit on one screen, or you might have to scroll through several screens to see it all.

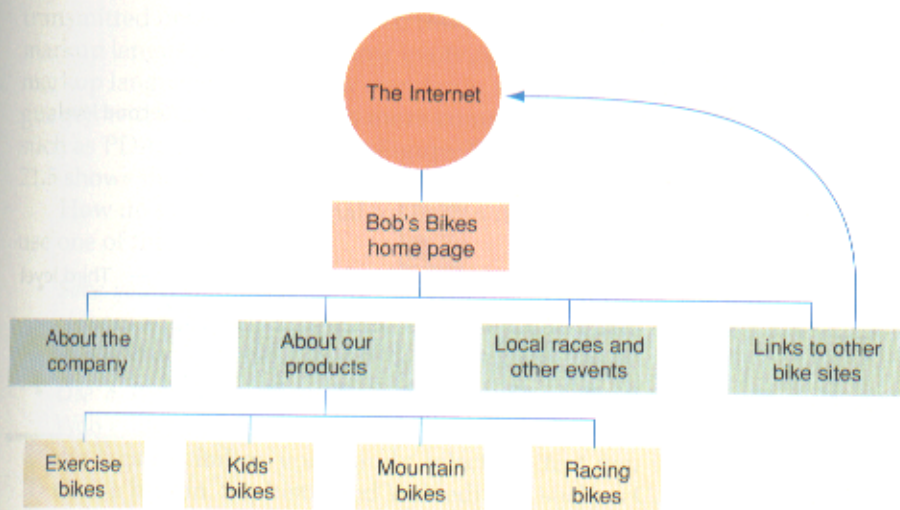
On a well-designed site, readers can easily find the information they need. Your job is to figure out the kinds of information they will need and how they will look for it. Consider your audience and purpose. For example, if you are creating a site for a small insurance agency, you might conclude that your readers will want to visit your site for five reasons:

- to understand the types of insurance offered
- to find out rates
- to follow links to other sources of information about insurance
- to e-mail questions
- to make appointments

Your site should be designed so that readers can figure out how to fulfill each of these purposes from the home page.

On TechComm Web

For more help with designing for the Web, click on Tutorials on <bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm>.



■ **Figure 21.1**
Structure of a Basic
Web Site

Each box in the diagram represents a page on the Web site for Bob's Bikes. The pages in the bottom row are linked only to the "About our products" page.

For simple sites such as this one, a shallow design, like the one shown in Figure 21.2, might work best. Larger sites often call for a deeper design, as shown in Figure 21.3.

In designing the site as a whole, try to give all pages a consistent appearance. Although the content and function of different pages might vary greatly, the typography, types of graphics, and colors should be consistent from page to page. The site's navigation elements should also appear in the same place on each page, creating a pattern that will help readers find the information they seek.



■ **Figure 21.2** A Shallow Site Design

If the home page clearly displays links to the second-level pages, a reader can easily navigate the site. Electronic phone books and bibliographies are often presented using a shallow design.



■ **Figure 21.3 A Deeper Site Design**

A deeper site lets you classify and subclassify information so that readers are not overwhelmed with links on a home page. Unfortunately, readers might overlook information on lower-level pages. Many site designers try to structure their sites so that a reader does not have to click more than twice to get from any one place on the site to any other.

On TechComm Web

For more links to online tutorials on making Web pages, click on Links Library for Ch. 21 on <bedfordmartins.com/techcomm>.

For more specific advice about designing the site and its pages, see page 548, or consult one of the many excellent online tutorials on designing Web sites. Four well-known ones are the following:

- *Getting Started with HTML*, by Dave Raggett
- *W3Schools.com*
- *Webmonkey*
- *Web Style Guide*

Creating and Coding the Content

Once you have created a design for your site, you need to create or gather your content—both text and graphics—and code it so that it can be published on the Web.

Gathering your content can be a bigger job than you think. If you simply code print documents and put them on the Web, your site will be ineffective. Readers on the Web tend to jump from place to place rather than read consecutively. To make paper documents effective on the Web, you need to revise or even rewrite them.

In addition, you need to collect or make the graphics for the site. A graphic the size of a standard sheet of paper would work poorly on a Web site, because readers with slower modems or phone lines would have to wait several minutes for it to download.

The next step is to code your information into a digital format that can be transmitted on the Web. For text, the current standard is HTML (hypertext markup language), which is now evolving into XHTML (extensible hypertext markup language). Other new standards, such as WML (wireless markup language), will make Web pages more compatible with evolving technologies, such as PDAs and cell phones. Figure 21.4 shows a simple Web page; Figure 21.5 shows the HTML code that produced it.

How do you code material for use on the Web? To add HTML tags to text, use one of three techniques:

- *Save your word-processed files as Web code.* Unfortunately, most word processors add erroneous code. If you use word-processed code, open the file in a text editor and remove the faulty code.
- *Use a Web-editor program.* Sometimes called a *Web-authoring program*, a Web editor automates most of the coding. For example, instead of typing the tags for italics, you simply select the text you want to italicize, then click a button. Sophisticated Web editors, such as GoLive[®] or FrontPage[®], contain numerous other features, including design templates, for creating complex sites and pages. Like word processors, however, Web editors often introduce unnecessary or erroneous code.
- *Enter the tags by hand in a text editor such as Notepad.* For simple sites, use the text editor that comes with your computer operating system. Creating the tags shown in Figure 21.5, for example, required only a few minutes in Notepad. Learning basic HTML tags will allow you to make changes to a file yourself.

Formatting graphics for use on the Web is a little trickier, because you sometimes have to open your graphics file in a graphics program, such as Photoshop[®], then save it in one of the correct formats. Currently, .jpeg and .gif are the two most common formats used on the Web. In addition, graphics often have to be sized and compressed to decrease the file size so they will download rapidly.

The online tutorials listed on page 550 provide instruction on coding information for the Web.

Revising and Testing the Site

Test the site as you would a print document to make sure it accomplishes your purposes. Can readers understand the main point? Can they understand how the pages of the site work together? Are the hyperlinks clear and informative?

In addition, determine whether the technical aspects of the site work correctly. For instance, does the home page load correctly when you enter the URL on your browser? Do all the links work? Does the e-mail form for contacting you work?

In This Book

For more about purpose, see
Ch. 5, p. 97.

On TechComm Web

To view XHTML versions of Figs. 21.4 and 21.5, click on Links Library for Ch. 21 on <bedfordstmarins.com/techcomm>.

Some Basic HTML Codes

HTML can be a complicated markup language, but most of the *tags* you will need for a simple page are easy to understand.

The default typeface on the Web is Times Roman. You can use tags to change the **color**, the **SIZE**, or the typeface. The title of this page is formatted as H1, the largest of six heading sizes.

You can use most of the *design* features that you use all the time on your word processor. For instance, you can easily make a bulleted list, called an *unordered list*:

- first bulleted item
- second bulleted item

Or a numbered list, called an *ordered list*:

1. first numbered item
2. second numbered item

You can insert a graphic:



You can add a hyperlink to another file, such as the Web site of this [textbook](#).

You can make a table:

<i>Column head</i>	<i>Column head</i>
data	data

Tables are useful in HTML because they let you create columns of text:

Here you place the text and graphics for the left-hand column of the screen. If you eliminate the grid lines, your reader sees only the text and graphics.

Here you place the text and graphics for the right-hand column of the screen.

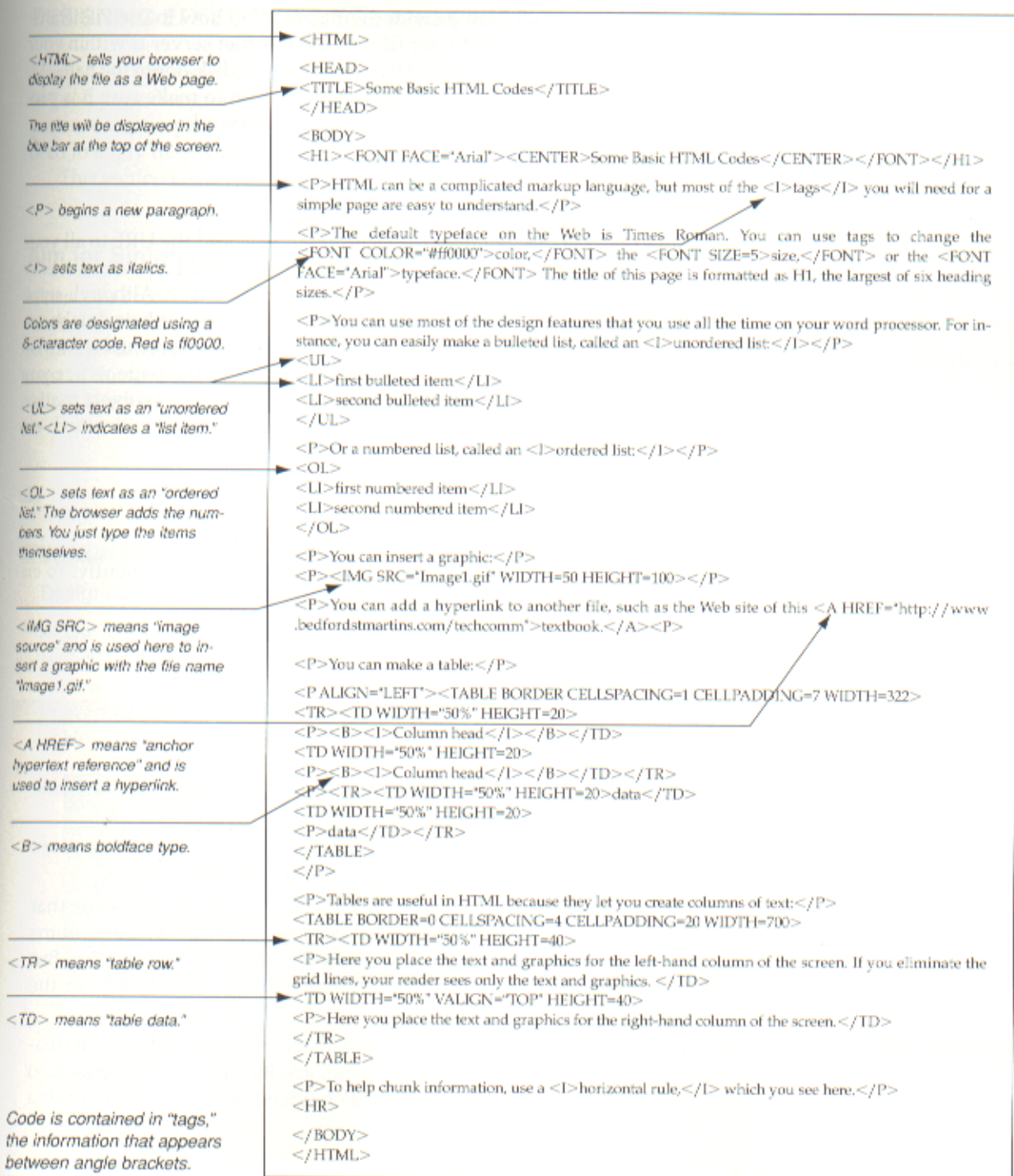
To help chunk information, use a *horizontal rule*, which you see here.

■ **Figure 21.4**
A Simple Web Page

Test the site with different kinds of computers, monitors, and browsers. If you find, for example, that one browser displays your tables as masses of meaningless, unformatted numbers, you will have to figure out a different way to display that information.

Launching the Site

Ordinarily, you create your Web site on your own computer. After you have tested it, you transfer the files to an Internet server, a computer that is connected to the Internet and has special software. If you are using an Internet



Code is contained in "tags," the information that appears between angle brackets. Note that most tags are used in pairs.

■ Figure 21.5 The HTML Code for the Page in Figure 21.4

service provider (an ISP), that provider will show you how to use File Transfer Protocol (FTP) to transport your files. If the Internet server is within your own organization, you might use FTP or even carry a disk down the hall.

Once you get the site up on the Web, test it again to make sure it is professional and attractive and that its technical features work.

Registering the Site with Search Engines

You should publicize your site in the traditional way: add the URL to all your product information and advertising. However, you should also make it easy for people to find the site through search engines on the Web. Although some search engines automatically add addresses of new sites to their databases, you should formally notify search engines that you have launched a site. Go to the most popular search engines and look for a link to a page where you can register your site by listing its keywords, describing its subject matter, and entering its URL. For sites that help you register your site with search engines, search for “site registration.”

Maintaining the Site

Your goal in creating a Web site is to have people visit it frequently. To encourage visits, you need to actively maintain the site.

GUIDELINES

Keeping Your Site Current

- ▶ *Add new information.* Many sites have a “what’s new” box on the home page that directs readers to new information.
- ▶ *Delete old information.* Few mistakes undercut your credibility more than a page describing an upcoming event from last year.
- ▶ *Test for link rot.* When you link to a site that no longer exists or that has moved to a new address, you have *link rot*. Web-editor programs and a number of sites on the Web help you test your links. But you can check yourself by visiting your own site and trying out the links.
- ▶ *Solicit comments from users.* Ask readers to e-mail you about any features that are not working and with suggestions for adding content to your site. When readers send you such e-mail, be sure to reply with a thank-you note.

On TechComm Web

Some sites register your site with many search engines at the same time. Click on Links Library for Ch. 21 on <bedfordstmarins.com/techcomm>.

In This Book

For more about designing documents, see Ch. 13.

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE SITES AND PAGES

Most of the principles of good Web page design are similar to the principles of good page design for printed documents. For instance, start with a page grid, use white space liberally, and use typography effectively. However, you need to apply these principles a little differently in designing your site.

This section covers seven design principles.

Aim for Simplicity

When you create a site, it doesn't cost anything to use all the colors in the rainbow, to add sound effects and animation, to make text blink on and off. Although these effects can sometimes help you communicate information, most of the time all they do is slow the download and annoy the reader. If a special effect serves no useful function, avoid it.

To design effective sites and pages:

Aim for simplicity.

Make the text easy to read and understand.

Create informative headers and footers.

Help readers navigate the site.

Create clear, informative links.

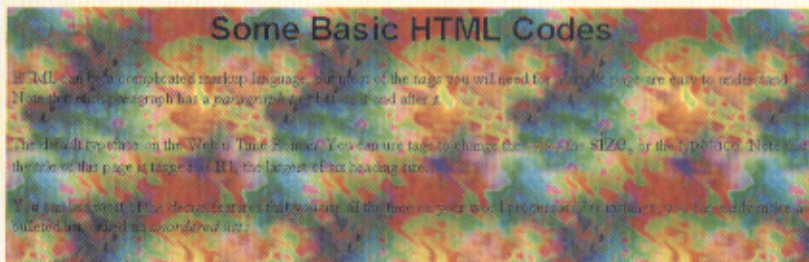
Avoid Web clichés.

Include extra features your readers might need.

GUIDELINES

Designing a Simple Site

- ▶ *Use simple backgrounds.* If you think a plain white background is ineffective, use a pale pastel or, at most, a muted background pattern. Avoid loud patterns that distract the reader from the words and graphics of the text. You don't want readers to "see" the background. Here is an example of what can go wrong:



- ▶ *Use conservative color combinations to increase text legibility.* The greater the contrast between the text color and the background color, the more legible the text. The most legible color combination is black text against a white background (see Figure 21.4). Bad idea: black on purple.

Some Basic HTML Codes

HTML can be a complicated markup language, but most of the tags you will need for a simple page are easy to understand. Note that each paragraph has a *paragraph tag* before it and after it.

The default typeface on the Web is Times Roman. You can use tags to change the *color*, the *size*, or the *typeface*. Note that the title of this page is tagged as H1, the largest of six heading sizes.

You can use most of the design features that you use all the time on your word processor. For instance, you can easily make a bulleted list, called an *unordered list*.

- ▶ *Avoid decorative graphics.* Don't waste space using graphics that convey no useful information. Hesitate before you use clip art.
- ▶ *Use thumbnail graphics.* Instead of a large graphic, which takes a long time to download, use a thumbnail so that readers can click on it to open a larger version of the image.

Make the Text Easy to Read and Understand

Web pages are harder to read than paper documents because screen resolution is much less sharp: usually, 72 dots per inch (dpi) versus 1200 dpi on a basic laser printer and 2400 dpi in some books.

GUIDELINES

Designing Easy-to-Read Text

- ▶ *Keep the text short.* Poor screen resolution makes reading long stretches of text difficult. In general, pages should contain no more than two or three screens of information.
- ▶ *Chunk information.* When you write for the screen, chunk information to make it easier to understand. Use frequent headings, brief paragraphs, and lists.
- ▶ *Make the text as simple as possible.* Use common words and short sentences to make the information as simple as the subject allows.

On TechComm Web

For more on writing for the Web, see John Morkes and Jakob Nielsen's "Concise, SCANNABLE, and Objective: How to Write for the Web." Click on Links Library for Ch. 21 on <bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm>.

Create Informative Headers and Footers

Headers and footers help readers understand and navigate your site, and they help establish your credibility. You want your readers know they are visiting the official site of your organization, and that it was created by professionals.

Figure 21.6 shows a typical Web site header. Figure 21.7 shows a typical Web site footer.



■ **Figure 21.6 Header**

This is the header on the Corel home page. Notice that the date is displayed, along with links to the major contents of the site. Notice, too, in the upper right corner, links to versions of the site for international visitors. Headers should always contain a link to the home page; on this page, the logo and the word Corel in the upper left link to the home page.

Source: Corel, 2002 <www3.corel.com/cgi-bin/gx.cgi/AppLogic+FTContentServer?pagename=Corel/Product/WordPerfect>.



■ **Figure 21.7 Footer**

A footer usually includes a copyright notice. This footer also includes links to legal information, accessibility information, the privacy policy, the Webmaster's e-mail, and several other areas of the site. Note that because the links in the footer are presented as text, they will be visible to visitors with handicaps and to those who have turned off the graphics.

Source: Corel, 2002 <www3.corel.com/cgi-bin/gx.cgi/AppLogic+FTContentServer?pagename=Corel/Product/WordPerfect>.

Help Readers Navigate the Site

Readers of a Web site cannot hold the Web page in their hands. All they can see is the page on the screen. Therefore, each page should help readers see where they are in the site and get where they want to go.

One important way to help readers navigate is to create and sustain a consistent visual design on every page. Make the header, footer, background color or pattern, typography (typeface, size, and color), and placement of the navigational links the same on every page.

GUIDELINES

Making Your Site Easy to Navigate

- ▶ *Include a site map or index.* A site map, which lists the pages on the site, can be a graphic or a textual list of the pages, classified according to logical categories. An index is an alphabetized list of the pages. Figure 21.8 is a section of the Google site map.

On TechComm Web

To view Figs. 21.6 and 21.7 in context on the Web, click on Links Library for Ch. 21 on <bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm>.

On TechComm Web

For advice on how to design an effective site map, see Jakob Nielsen's "Site Map Usability." Click on Links Library for Ch. 21 on <bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm>.

On TechComm Web

To view Fig. 21.8 in context on the Web, click on Links Library for Ch. 21 on <bedfordstmarlins.com/techcomm>.

Our Search	Our Company	More Google	For Site Owners
Search Tips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview • Basics of Search • Interpret Results • Refine Search • Customize Google • Special Features • FAQ Other Ways To Google <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview • Special Searches 	Press Center Press Kit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press Releases • In the News • Image Gallery • Reviewer's Guide • Google Zeitgeist Our Company <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comp. Overview • Fact Sheet • Management • Investor Info 	Picture Us <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside Google Logos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official Logos • Holiday Logos • Fan Logos • Permissions • Guidelines • Request Form • Brand Terms 	Advertise with Us Advertising Programs Premium Sponsorships Getting Started <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview • Take the tour • Benefits • Pricing tool • FAQ • Terms & conditions Account Resources

■ **Figure 21.8 Site Map**

Source: Google, 2002 <www.google.com/sitemap.html>.

- *Use a table of contents at the top of long pages. If your page extends over more than a couple of screens, include a table of contents—a set of links to the items on that page—so that your readers do not have to scroll down to find the topic they want. Tables of contents can link one page to information further down on the same page or on separate pages. Figure 21.9 shows a table of contents at the top of an FAQ page.*

On TechComm Web

To view Fig. 21.9 in context on the Web, click on Links Library for Ch. 21 on <bedfordstmarlins.com/techcomm>.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What is GovBenefits? ■ What benefits will GovBenefits screen for? ■ How much time will it take to answer all the questions? ■ What types of questions will GovBenefits ask? ■ Do I have to answer all the questions? ■ What if I am looking for a specific benefits program? ■ What if I am helping someone else? ■ What if I want to apply for a benefits program? ■ How often should I use GovBenefits? ■ How does the search work? ■ What Federal agencies are participating in GovBenefits?
What is GovBenefits? GovBenefits is a screening tool to help you find government benefits that you may be eligible to receive. GovBenefits does NOT offer application services for benefits and cannot guarantee eligibility for specific programs. In addition, GovBenefits is not designed to be a comprehensive listing of all assistance programs for which someone is eligible. Its purpose is to give you a list of benefits

■ **Figure 21.9 Table of Contents**

In this excerpt from an FAQ, the questions are presented as links in a table of contents at the top of the page.

Source: GovBenefits, 2002 <www.govbenefits.gov/GovBenefits/jsp/FAQ.jsp>.

- ▶ *Help readers get back to the top of long pages.* If a page is long enough to justify a table of contents, include a “Back to top” link (a textual link or a button or icon) before the start of each new chunk of information.
- ▶ *Include a link to the home page on every page.* This link can be a simple “Back to home page” textual link, a button, or an icon.
- ▶ *Include textual navigational links at the bottom of the page.* If you are using a button or an icon for navigational links on your pages, include textual versions of those links at the bottom of the page. Readers who have turned off the images to speed up the download won’t be able to understand the graphical link (unless you have added an alt tag—a tag that instructs the browser to display a word or phrase defining the graphic). In addition, readers with vision impairment might be using special software that reads the information on the screen. This software interprets text only, not graphics. Figure 21.7 on page 557 shows textual links in a footer.

Create Clear, Informative Links

Well-phrased links are easy to read and understand. By clearly telling the reader what kind of information the linked site provides, they help the reader decide whether to follow the link. The following guidelines are based on Sun Microsystems’ “Guide to Web Style” (Sun, 1999).

GUIDELINES

Writing Clear, Informative Links

- ▶ *Structure your sentences as if there were no links in your text.*

AWKWARD [Click here](#) to go to the Rehabilitation Center page, which includes numerous links to research centers across the nation.

SMOOTH The [Rehabilitation Center](#) page includes numerous links to research centers across the nation.

- ▶ *Indicate what information the linked page contains.* Readers get frustrated if they wait for a file to download and then discover that it doesn’t contain the information they expected.

UNINFORMATIVE See the [Rehabilitation Center](#).

INFORMATIVE See the [Rehabilitation Center](#) for hours of operation.

- ▶ *Don’t change the colors of the text links.* Readers are used to two common colors: blue for links that have not yet been clicked, and purple for links that have already been clicked.

Avoid Web Clichés

The Web has already developed its share of clichés. Tired, empty words or phrases can obscure the site's purpose and make readers suspect that they are wasting their time. The following Web clichés are particularly annoying because they insult visitors' intelligence by stating the obvious.

- *"Check out" your site.* If the information looks interesting and useful, they will.
- *"Under construction."* If the site is a mess, don't launch it. If you want to tell visitors that you update the contents periodically, state when the site was last revised.
- *"Cool."* Very uncool.
- *"Come back often."* If their visit was worth it, they will. If it wasn't, they won't.


Include Extra Features Your Readers Might Need

Because readers with a range of interests and needs will visit your site, consider adding several or all of the following five features:

- *An FAQ page.* A list of frequently asked questions helps new visitors by providing basic information, explaining how to use the site, and directing them to more-detailed discussions. Figure 21.10 is an excerpt from an FAQ page.
- *A search page or engine.* A search page or search engine lets readers enter a keyword or phrase and find all the pages on the site that contain it.

On TechComm Web

To view Fig. 21.10 in context on the Web, click on Links Library for Ch. 21 on <bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm>.

 **Registration Information**
Selective Service System

Registration Info

About the Agency

News & Public Affairs

Publications

History/Records

Frequently Asked Questions

[I registered already. How can I find out my Selective Service registration number?](#)

[I registered two months ago and still haven't gotten a registration acknowledgment card. I also received a letter from Selective Service reminding me to register. What should I do?](#)

■ Figure 21.10 Excerpt from an FAQ Page

Each question here links to a separate page containing the answer. On other sites, the questions and answers are presented on the same page.

Source: Selective Service System, 2002 <www.sss.gov/qa.htm>.

- *Resource links.* If the main purpose of your site is to educate readers, you should provide links to other sites.
- *A printable version of your site.* A Web site is designed for a screen, not a page. Consider making a printable version of your site, with black text on a white background, and all the text and graphics consolidated into one big file.
- *A text-only version of your site.* Many readers with slow Internet connections set their browsers to view text only. In addition, as is discussed more fully in the next section, many readers with impaired vision rely on text because their specialized software cannot interpret graphics. Therefore, consider creating a text-only version of your site and include a link to it on your home page.

DESIGNING SITES FOR READERS WITH DISABILITIES

The Internet has proved to be a terrific technology for people with disabilities because it brings a world of information to their desktops, allowing them to work from home and participate in virtual communities. However, as sites have become more sophisticated over the last few years, many people with disabilities have found the Internet harder to use. In 1996, a court ruled that the Americans with Disabilities Act covered commercial Web sites, which must now be accessible to people with disabilities. Over the next few years, more effort will go into making hardware and software to help people with disabilities use the Internet.

The following discussion highlights several ways to make your site easier to use for people with disabilities. Consider three main types of disabilities as you design your site:

- *Vision impairment.* People who cannot see, or cannot see well, rely on text-to-speech conversion programs. Provide either a text-only version of the site or textual equivalents of all your graphics. Use the alt (alternate) tag to create a textual label that pops up when the reader holds the mouse over the graphic.
Do not rely on color or graphics alone to communicate information. For example, if you use a red icon to signal a warning, also use the word *warning*. If you use tables to create columns on the screen, label each column clearly using a text label rather than just an image.
Use 12-point type or larger on your site, and provide audio feedback—for example, having a button beep when the reader presses it.
- *Hearing impairment.* If you use video, provide captions and, if the video includes sound, a volume control. Also use visual feedback techniques; for example, make a button flash when the reader presses it.

On TechComm Web

See the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, from the World Wide Web Consortium, for a detailed look at accessibility.

A site called Bobby will check your site, for free, to evaluate its adherence to accessibility options. Click on Links Library for Ch. 21 on <bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm>.

- *Mobility impairment.* Some people with mobility impairments find it easier to use the keyboard than a mouse. Therefore, build in keyboard shortcuts wherever possible. If readers have to click on an area of the screen using a pointing device, make the area large so that it is easy to see and click.

DESIGNING SITES FOR MULTICULTURAL AUDIENCES

More than 60 percent of the world's Web users are nonnative speakers of English (Global Reach, 2002). Therefore, it makes sense to plan your site as if many of your visitors will not be proficient in English.

On TechComm Web

See the World Wide Web Consortium's internationalization page for more about the challenges of creating markup languages that meet the needs of international users.

Also see "Guidelines for Accessible Web Sites: Technology & Users," by Michele Ward, Philip Rubens, and Sherry Southard. Click on Links Library for Ch. 21 on <bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm>.

On TechComm Web

See Stan Morris's essay, "The Importance of International Laws for Web Publishers." Click on Links Library for Ch. 21 on <bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm>.

In This Book

For more about copyright law, see Ch. 2, p. 18.

STRATEGIES FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Communicating Across Cultures Online

Planning for a multicultural Web site is similar to planning for a multicultural paper document.

- *Use short sentences and paragraphs, as well as common words.*
- *Avoid idioms, both verbal and visual, that might be confusing.* For instance, don't use sports metaphors, such as "full-court press," or a graphic of an American-style mailbox to suggest an e-mail link.
- *If a large percentage of your readers speak a language other than English, consider creating a version of your site in that language.* The expense can be considerable, but so can the benefits.

ETHICS, COPYRIGHT LAW, AND THE WEB

Information on the Internet is easy to steal. Users can download and manipulate digital versions of the text and graphics, or claim credit for materials that they did not create. These practices are unethical and illegal: digital material is covered by the same copyright laws that apply to printed material, regardless of whether they include a copyright symbol. Unless the copyright owner specifically says that you may use the material, you must receive written permission, just as you would for printed material.

Benedict O'Mahoney (2002) has written a thoughtful essay on some of the complicated issues involved in interpreting copyright law. Here are just three of the puzzles he addresses:

- *Is the design of a Web page protected by copyright law?* Some would say no, because what readers see is a function of their hardware and software,

and readers can customize the image. However, the design of a Web page is an original work and thus should be protected, regardless of how readers might change it after it is transmitted.

- *Are lists of links protected?* Is each link protected by copyright? No. Is the whole list of links protected? Probably, if the person showed some originality in creating the list. For example, a set of links to resources for agriculture students would be protected if the author did some original thinking in creating categories for the individual links.
- *May you link to anyone else's Web site? May anyone link to yours?* Although the Web was originally envisioned as an open environment, in which anyone can link to anyone else, a site owner might not want the extra traffic on its server or might not want to be associated with the linking site. Are you responsible for finding out who has linked to you, or should the linking site have to get permission to link to you?

As this discussion suggests, questions of digital ethics and legality are likely to remain unresolved for years. Over the next decade, the courts will be hearing many cases in which copyright law has to be reinterpreted in light of the unique technical, economic, and social implications of electronic media.

GUIDELINES

Creating an Ethical Site

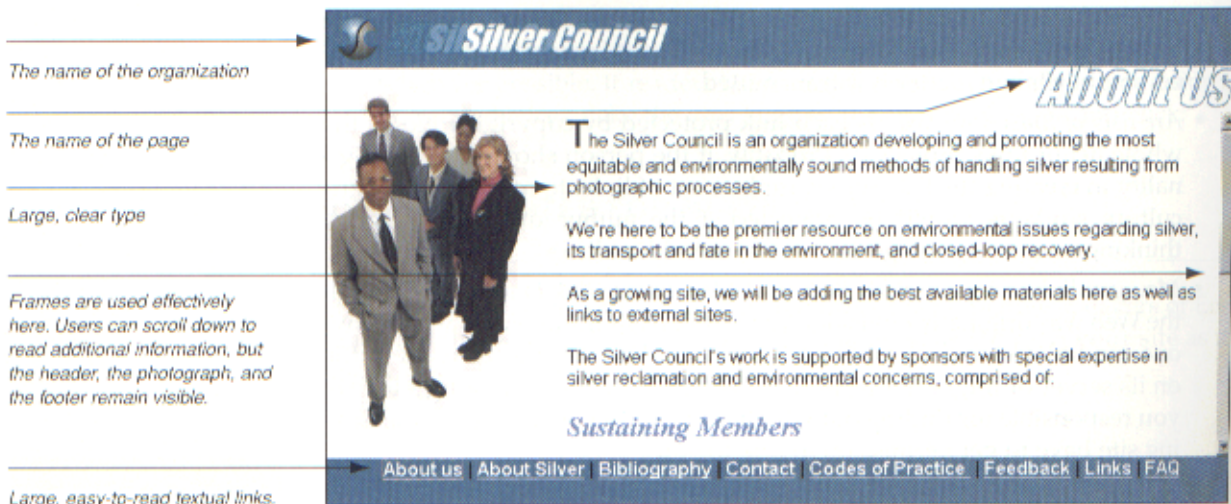
- ▶ *Don't plagiarize.* If you want to publish material you found on the Internet, secure written permission from the copyright owner.
- ▶ *Ask permission to link.* Notify an organization if you wish to link to its site, then abide by its wishes. And ask before *deep linking*—linking to a page other than the home page.
- ▶ *Don't misuse meta tags.* If you look at the source code of a typical Web page, you will see a meta tag near the top. This is the place where you put keywords that describe the contents of your site. If you are a Ford dealer, you list "Ford," "dealer," and the names of Ford models. It is unethical and, according to some intellectual-property attorneys, illegal to list "Chevrolet" to get potential Chevrolet customers to come to your site.

A LOOK AT SAMPLE WEB PAGES

The best way to learn about designing Web sites and their pages is to study them. Figures 21.11 and 21.12 offer examples of good Web page design.

On TechComm Web

To view Figs. 21.11 and 21.12 in context on the Web, click on Links Library for Ch. 21 on <bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm>.



■ **Figure 21.11** The Silver Council Home Page

This page is simple and attractive, with a clear purpose and effective organization.

Source: Silver Council, 2002 <www.silvercouncil.org/html/default.htm>.



■ **Figure 21.12** Palm's Knowledge Library Page

This is the Knowledge Library page, part of the Support section of the Palm Web site.

Source: Palm, Inc., 2002 <<http://205.141.210.149/SRWS/CGI-BIN/WEB CGI.EXE?>>.

Interactive Sample Document: Making an Impression

The following home page was created by Ari Feldman, a Web designer. The questions in the margin ask you to think about creating and designing effective sites and pages. The answers to these questions are available on TechComm Web.



Source: Feldman, 2002 <www.arifeldman.com/index.html>.

1. What is the audience for this site? Which elements of this page indicate its audience?
2. What is the purpose of this site? Which elements of this page indicate its purpose?
3. Evaluate the ease of navigation. How easy do you think it would be to find what you needed on this site?
4. Evaluate the integration of the links in the text window. How smoothly has the author integrated the links with the text?

On TechComm Web

To find the answers to these questions, click on Interactive Sample Documents for Ch. 21 on <bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm>.

Reviewing the Process

Analyze your audience and purpose.

Consider their equipment and their needs. Do they have disabilities? Do they speak English fluently? Determine your purpose: to inform or persuade, or both.

Design the site.

In light of the information you want to communicate and the needs of your readers, create a design that makes it easy for readers to find the information they need. Create a clear and consistent design for the pages.

Create and code the content.

Aim for simplicity. Make the text easy to read and understand. Create informative headers and footers to help readers know where they are. Help readers navigate the site. Create clear, informative links. Avoid Web clichés. Include extra features your readers might need. Be sure the information on your site adheres to copyright law.

Revise and test the site.

Test the site using different browsers and computer equipment. Revise the site to make it as effective as it can be. See the Revision Checklist that follows.

Launch the site.

Get the files to the server that will host your site.

Register the site with search engines.

Search for sites that automatically register your site with many search engines.

Maintain the site.

Keep the information up to date, add new information, test for link rot, and solicit comments from users.

Revision Checklist

- In designing the site, did you
- analyze your audience and purpose before planning your site? (p. 547)
 - revise and test the information? (p. 551)
 - get the files to an Internet server? (p. 552)
 - register the site with search engines? (p. 554)
 - use a plain, simple background? (p. 555)
 - allow for effective contrast between the background color and the text color? (p. 555)
 - avoid decorative graphics? (p. 556)
 - use thumbnail graphics rather than large ones? (p. 556)
 - make the text easy to read by using brief chunks of text? (p. 556)
 - use simple language and short sentences? (p. 556)
 - create informative headers and footers? (p. 556)
 - include a site map or index? (p. 557)
 - use a table of contents at the top of long pages? (p. 558)
 - link to the home page on every page? (p. 559)
 - include textual navigational links at the bottom of the page? (p. 559)
 - link to the top of long pages? (p. 559)
 - create clear and informative links? (p. 559)
 - avoid Web clichés? (p. 560)
 - include extra features your readers might need, such as an FAQ page, a list of links, a printable version of the site, and a text-only version of the site? (p. 560)
 - design the site so that it is easy for people with vision, hearing, and movement disabilities to use? (p. 561)
 - design the site to accommodate the needs of multicultural readers? (p. 562)
 - get permission to publish any information that you did not generate? (p. 562)
 - ask permission to link? (p. 563)
 - link to another site's home page rather than a secondary page? (p. 563)
 - avoid including misleading information in the meta tags? (p. 563)