



158 Taylor Ave.
Beaver, PA 15009-2820
724-775-6159

office@towerwebdesign.com

<http://www.towerwebdesign.com>

What makes a good website?

The first thing visitors should see is an inviting home page. That initial window must give the visitor a reason to stay and read more. Your home page is your business's front door. It should say "come in and stay, look around, I offer something that you want!"

An inviting page includes:

- an attractive header and a well-crafted tagline that quickly identify the business or organization and its purpose
- a carefully chosen color scheme
- navigation (the menu) that clearly helps the visitor find what he or she is seeking
- a visually balanced page and an effective presentation of information

What makes a site user-friendly?

- logical site organization
- a navigation system (menu) that is immediately understandable
- inner pages are found easily with a minimum of clicks
- links, and where they lead, are identified clearly by color and wording
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Websites should be designed for their audience. Think about who is going to be using your site, and what they will need to see in order to want your service or product.

What about readability?

Most people read about 25% slower from the screen than from print. Perhaps one fifth actually read word by word; the rest scan web pages quickly. Content on website pages should have:

- high contrast between text color and background
- short paragraphs
- pages not longer than 2-3 screenfuls
- line lengths - about 12-15 words, or 65-70 characters
- headings and other cues that lead the viewer's eyes through the text

Colors of text and background should have high contrast for the greatest readability. Patterned backgrounds can make reading on-screen more difficult.

The content should be well written and concise. Writing on-line has different impact than writing on hard copy.

Quantity is not better; the average person reading on a monitor screen will remember only 15% of what they see, compared to 60% from a printed page. Make every word count. Avoid long pages of paragraph after paragraph. Use bulleted lists to highlight key information. Well-chosen graphics and photos add interest. Meaningful headings and sub-headings identify sections and help the reader's eye move down the "page."

How many graphics should be used?

That depends: photos and clip art should be chosen because they enhance the content, not simply for their own effect. Again, quantity does not guarantee a positive result. Graphics should be optimized so that file size of each page + images is not too big. Image-rich pages lead to longer download times.