

## Technical English, Lecture 8: Web pages

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### Focus on your goals

When composing a set of pages, think about

- the purpose,
- the audience,
- the work of the “competition”,
- the content and the means to provide it,
- the look and feeling you want to give for your pages,
- the timeline (when are the pages required and how often should they be updated), and
- those who will test the pages.

## What goes on the web?

As time passes, people provide more of the following materials on the web,

**in universities :**

- research publications,
- class materials,
- schedules,
- announcements, . . .

**in companies :**

- product manuals,
- white papers,
- marketing and sales materials,
- announcements, . . .

You might want to design and publish some pages regarding your work either to the whole world or internally within your organization.

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### Questions

- What is the first thing that appears in a page?
- What do you do if the page does not satisfy your request?
- What is the speed of the connection that you often use?
- Where you ever “lost” on the web?
- Do you turn off the download of images sometimes?
- How often did you get “404 Not Found” ?

### Within the page :

- use descriptive titles,
- put the important material first,
- limit the content on the page,
- limit the size (in bytes) of the page to speed the download,
- consider the balance of “white” and “gray” ,
- use the graphics coherently, and
- avoid generic information.

### Between pages :

- avoid “dead-ends” ,
- ensure that all the links are working,
- do not use *click here*.

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## Through the big maze

The organization of the site is important.

- Users think differently and might want to reach the information in different ways. Does your site provide that?
- Is there a way to search within the site?
- Will I be able to know my position in your site map easily?
- How many links does a reader use to reach the required information?
- How wide and how deep is the site tree?

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We want to provide a focused message.

- Non-textual materials (graphics, audio, video, ...) are good aids to the text in technical documents. Consider the information they provide when deciding their position and size.
- A paragraph must provide some information. It should not be just a list of links. A reader is easily distracted.
- The whole site should have a similar design to give a feeling of continuity.

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## Standards and extensions

The World Wide Web Consortium (<http://www.w3.org/>) specifies the different web standards.

- What are the languages of the web?
- What are cascaded style sheets?
- What other languages may be used to provide dynamic content?

W3C provides some tutorials and helping tools.

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- Do not link to “under construction” pages!
- Do not use unrelated images or interfering backgrounds.
- Do not steal.
- Provide “ALT” tags.
- Provide the information of the webmaster.
- Think about the disabled.

If you do not already have a personal webpage then start one at a free hosting service provider. For example

1. <http://www.freehostia.com/>,
2. <http://www.awardspace.com/>, and
3. <http://www.freewebs.com/>.

In that page, describe your research interests using the lists that you created last week.