Planning Website

CS 4640
Programming Languages
for Web Applications

[Steve Krug, "Don't make me think", Chapter 2]
[Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, "Prioritizing Web Usability," Chapter 2]
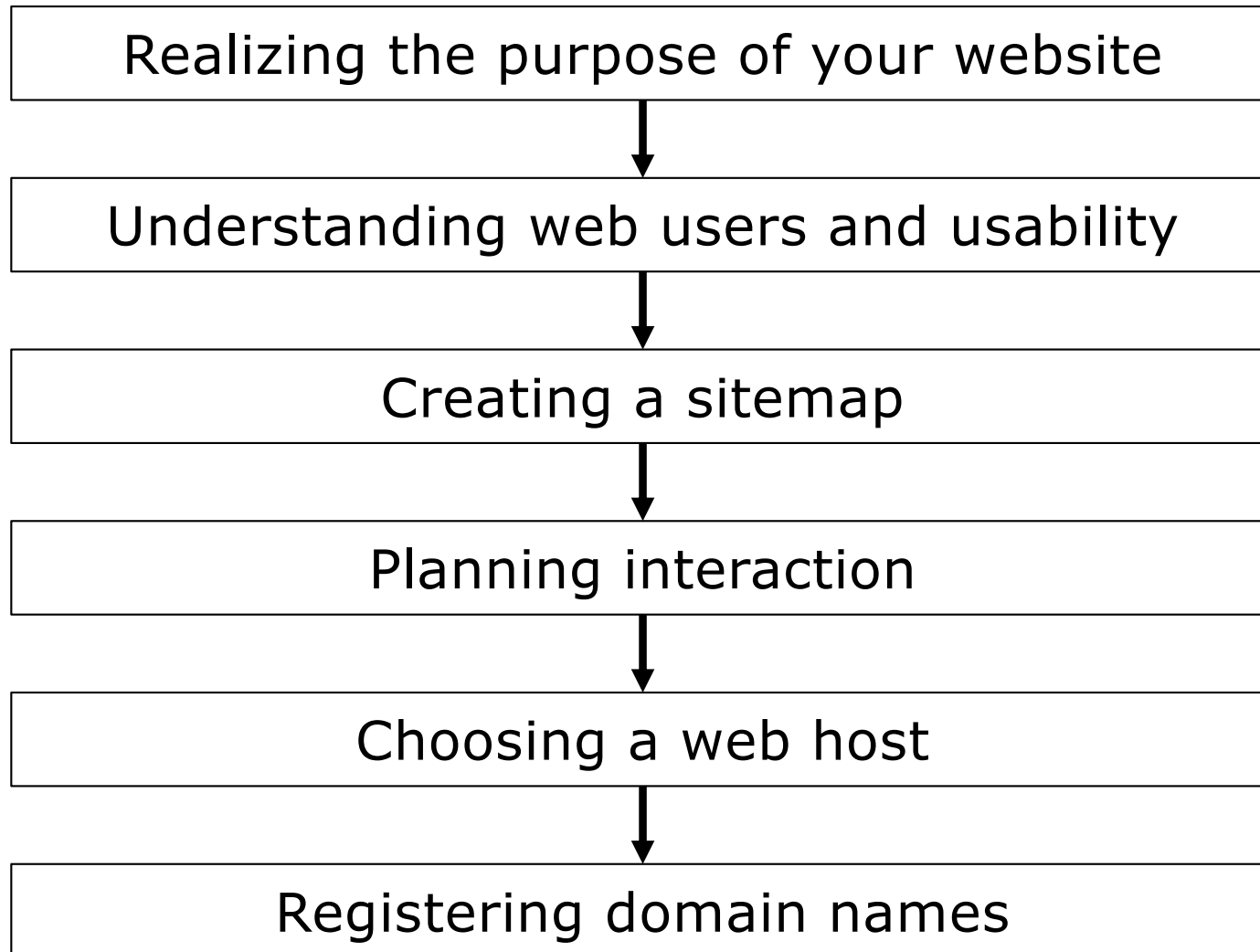[Sean McManus, "Web Design," Chapter 2]

Setting Up Your Website

- Planning

- Content creation

- Web design

- Web development

- Testing

- Launching the website

- Promoting the website

- Measuring how well the site is fulfilling its purpose

Planning Your Website

Realizing the purpose of your website

⬇

Understanding web users and usability

⬇

Creating a sitemap

⬇

Planning interaction

⬇

Choosing a web host

⬇

Registering domain names

Realizing the Purpose of Your Website

- Why are you building a website?

- What do you want it to achieve?

- What will you and your visitors benefit from the website?

- Examples:
  - Build new relationships
  - Enhance your reputation and profile
  - Sell
  - Improve customer service
  - Education
  - Entertain
  - Create a community
  - Make money -- https://www.google.com/adsense

Understanding Web Users and Usability

- With a website, the competition is only one click away
  - How does your website benefit the visitors?
  - What do you do better than other similar sites?

- Who are your potential visitors or target users?

- What stage of life are they at?

- How much disposable income could they spend with you? How sensitive are they to pricing?

- What are they interested in outside of your website?

- How experienced are they at using the Internet?

- Where do they use the Internet?

- How do they use the Internet?

- What kind of device will they use to view your site?

User Satisfaction With Website

- Users spend less than two minutes on a site before abandoning it

- Most sites are rarely revisited

- Most users visit deep links through search engines

- Three guidelines for supporting deep link users

  1. Internal pages must tell users where they are and where they can go

     - Name and logo on every page
     - Direct, one-click link to home page
     - Search facility in a common place (upper right corner)

  2. Encourage users to look elsewhere on the site

     - Breadcrumb trail

  3. Do not assume users took the standard route

How People Use Sites

A website is like a house with a thousand doors,
and visitors can enter anywhere

Home pages are like signs on the freeway,
With users zipping by at 70MPH

- The homepage
    - So much to say, so little time
    - Clarity is crucial
    - Users only read 20 to 30 words
    - Only 23% of users scrolled down the home page
    - Users are not reading – they are deciding where to go next

How People Use Sites (2)

Users are goal directed
Help them reach their goals

- Four goals for a home page

  1. Define the site (use your tagline)
  2. Articulate what benefits are offered
  3. Describe the company and its products
  4. Provide navigation to the rest of the site

- Interior page behavior

  - Users read more content on interior pages
  - Put important links in content area
  - Users spend 27 seconds looking at a page .. Do not make them think about the navigation

Search Dominance

- 88% of tasks started in a search engine

  - Search engines are replacing bookmarks

- 1994: Searches were used to find resources

- 2017: Searches are used to answer questions

- Four ways to grab value from search engine visitors

  - Offer flytrap content: clear answers to common problems

  - Embellish with useful "see also" links

  - Provide deep analysis and insights

  - Publish newsletters with additional tips and information

Users ignore your navigation, but may click your links

Search Dominance (2)

- Encourage, do not discourage, deep linking
  - Navigation is always a barrier, no matter how well designed

- Organic vs. sponsored links
  - Organic links are best matches for users' query
  - Sponsored links are ads

- Search Engine Results Page (SERP)
  - 93% of users visit first SERP only
  - Only 47% scroll the first SERP (4 or 5 results from Google)
  - 51% click on first site; only 16% click on second site

> **Try to be the first!**
> **If you are not in the top 5, you are invisible**

Scrolling

- Users do not scroll

  - They are lazy and ignorant
  - Or … maybe they are busy

- 23% of users scroll the home page on the first visit

- 52% scroll interior pages

- 47% scroll SERPs

- Users with more web experience scrolled more

> Don't make me think! [Steve Krug]
> Don't make me scroll!

Creating a Sitemap

- Organize the content into meaningful sections -- match users' mental model

- Consider how the sections are related to each other

- Use simple language to define each section, no jargon

- Sitemap helps people if they get lost or can't find something on your site

- Search engines can use it to discover all your site's content

- Sitemap provides an overview of the main paths users can take to get between the main content areas

Planning Interaction

- Every site allows people to navigate it using links, and most enable the use of contact forms and search boxes

- Some sites enable sophisticated interactions

- Don't overcomplicate your site

- Consider how you want users to interact with content
  - Hide and reveal parts of the page in response to user requests

- What kind of experience do you want users to have?

- The degree and type of interaction determines the complexity and cost

Choosing a Web Host

- When selecting a hosting company, the monthly costs will be tiered according to 2 parameters:

  - Storage space:
    - How much space all your site files occupy on disk
    - Do you allow users to contribute content?

  - Bandwidth:
    - How much data you can send over the Internet each month
    - How many visitors, how many pages they look at, how big the files are

- It can be hard to find a good hosting company online

  - Some companies are only reselling the hosting service .. They aren't hosting at all

  - Well established hosting companies include GoDaddy.com, 1and1.com, enom.com

Registering Domain Names

Domain names matter

- Each web page has a unique address

- Possible (but not recommend) to launch a website without having your own domain name

  - Imagine hosting your site as part of someone else or some company's website … what if their business was sold on or their site was shut down

- Owning your domain name gives you independence

- Domain names can be as cheap as $10 per year or as expensive as $16 million*

  - wow.solar -- registered in tens, sold in thousands

- Avoid ambiguous domain name

* https://startbloggingonline.com/how-much-is-a-domain-name/

Domain Name Buying Tips

1. Any reputable hosting company can tell you whether a domain is already registered

2. It is usually easier and cheaper to buy your domain name from your hosting company

   - Beware when buying from individuals or unfamiliar companies
   - Beware of companies claiming to provide appraisal services

3. Keep the domain name short

4. Make it memorable and avoid things that can't be spelled easily

   - Avoid 0 and o and O, 1 and l, _, special symbols or characters

Domain Name Buying Tips (2)

5. Domain extension can help you tell visitors the kind of site you have

   .co.uk for UK companies

   .ca for Canadian websites

   .mobi for mobile websites

   .com, .info, .net, .org can be used for anything

   Most US websites use .com

   You can invent creative domains using the extensions of foreign countries

   .tv (Tuvalu) or .me (Montenegro)

   Many new, rarely seen extensions are available

   .cool, .dating, .games, .fyi, .vip, .xyz

   .website, .ws (Western Somoa and short for website)

Domain Name Buying Tips (3)

6. Don't try to buy all the different variants of your domain name. They are way too many

    - It might be worth buying a couple of domains for key markets you want to work in (such as .com and .co.uk if you intend to create different websites for the US and UK)

7. Search engines will consider any keywords in your domain name to be important, but don't over do it

8. Don't register a domain name that include a word or phrase that somebody else has trademarked in your market sector.

    - This might lead to infringement and you might lose the domain name

Domain Name Pitfalls

- Domain names are valuable assets. It is like digital houses. It is important to look after yours.

- The renewal date of your domain name is a matter of public record.

- If you missed the renewal date, someone else might take it.

- Rival domain registration companies sometimes phone up or post letters that look like invoices and ask you to renew.

  - Many people are tricked into transferring management of their domain name to another company.

  - To protect yourself, know when your domains are due for renewal and beware of any communications that come too early or from unfamiliar organizations

  - If you get any paperwork you don't understand, ask your current hosting company to explain it

Domain Name Pitfalls (2)

- Some scams involve companies trying to sell you domain names you don't need

- Another scam involves companies trying to claim ownership of a similar domain name and threaten you to forfeit yours

Summary

- Always comply with conventions and standard design elements
  - Users know what features to expect
  - Users know how the features look
  - Users know where to find features
  - Users know how to operate features
  - Users do not ponder meaning of unknown design elements
  - Users do not miss important features
  - Users do not get surprised

Plan your website properly

- Current users "visit" not "browse"

- Experienced users spend less time on pages than inexperienced users

- Younger users spend less time than older users

- The concept of "site loyalty" does not exist