Website design & development | Foundation

charity wise

Web design best practice checklist



Guide

Introduction

A well-designed website requires consideration of various design principles that collectively enhance the user experience.

This checklist will give you some of the key principles that are essential for creating an engaging, user-friendly website.

Prioritising simple navigation



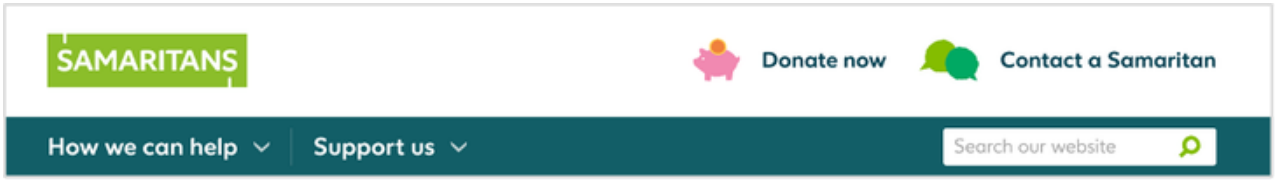
Navigation can be one of the most important elements of your website. If users can't easily navigate your website, they won't stay or return. A simple, clean design is essential for helping users access the content they want.

Some things to think about:

- Keeping the menu bar simple with few options
- Avoiding too many dropdowns
- Clearly labelling each menu option
- Limiting the number of clicks needed to find information

By focusing on these elements, you can create a user-friendly experience that encourages visitors to explore your content.

A great of example of simple navigation is the samaritans.org



Ensuring website responsiveness



Your site should respond to any device, regardless of screen size. With **7.2 billion** smart phone users worldwide, the likelihood of your site being accessed on a mobile device is very high.

Adopt a mobile-first approach to ensure that all elements are visible and clickable on smaller screens. Prioritise important content and ensure appropriate text size to enhance engagement and interactivity. This approach will help you create a responsive and user-friendly website.



Understanding the role of colour

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Consistent use of colour is essential to establishing a great brand experience for users on your website.

Thoughtful use of colour can significantly improve your site's usability, guiding users through journeys, enhancing content comprehension, and maintaining engagement. For example, consistently using distinct button colours for primary, secondary, and tertiary actions across your site helps users easily recognise and interact with key elements

Although it might not seem significant, colours play a crucial role in how people perceive your charity. The right palette can help you stand out, evoke specific feelings, and even influence someone's mood. The graphic below illustrates the emotions commonly associated with different colours.

Colour psychology

Blue

Peace/ Calm
Trust
Confidence
Loyalty

Green

Health
Tranquility
Growth
Generosity

Purple

Luxury
Power
Ambition
Creativity

Red

Passion
Excitement
Energy
Confidence

Pink

Love
Kindness
Innocence
Femininity

Orange

Success
Enthusiasm
Warmth
Determination

Yellow

Hope
Optimism
Positivity
Joy

Grey

Elegance
Authority
Knowledge
Dignity

Brown

Nature
Security
Strength
Dependability

Black

Power
Formality
Rebellion
Mystery

White

Purity
Safety
Knowledge
Goodness

The Importance of good web typography



Good typography plays a crucial role in web design. Typography is a fundamental aspect of user experience (UX) and user interface (UI) design. Good web typography enhances readability, ensures accessibility, and strengthens brand identity.

Enhancing readability

One of the main goals of good typography is to make the text readable and legible. Good typography ensures that the content is easy to read, which is essential for retaining visitors on a website. Factors such as font size, line spacing, and line length significantly affect readability.

Ensuring accessibility

Accessibility is a critical aspect of web design, and typography plays a key role in making websites usable for all, including those with visual impairments. Good practices, such as maintaining sufficient colour contrast between text and background, ensure readability for users with low vision. Additionally, using scalable fonts that adapt to various screen sizes is essential for accessibility.

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) offer recommendations to enhance web content accessibility, including specific criteria for text, like a minimum contrast ratio and the ability to resize text without losing content or functionality. Adhering to these guidelines helps ensure your website is accessible to a broader audience, enhancing the user experience for everyone.

Strengthening brand identity

Typography is a powerful tool for reinforcing brand identity. Consistent use of typography across all web pages creates a cohesive brand experience, building trust and recognition among users. Different fonts can evoke distinct emotions and perceptions, influencing how users view your charity.

Incorporating brand-specific typography into your web design can also set your charity apart from competitors. Maintaining consistency across all touchpoints, from the website to social media, strengthens your brand's presence and makes it more memorable to your audience.

Improving user engagement

Engaging users is a primary goal of web design, and typography plays a crucial role in achieving this. Well-designed typography guides users through content, highlights key information, and creates a clear hierarchy that makes text easy to scan. Distinguishing between headings, subheadings, and body text helps users quickly find the information they need. Additionally, interactive elements like clickable text links benefit from thoughtful typography, enhancing usability and engagement.

Examples of good web fonts

Arial

Aa Aa

Source Sans

Aa Aa

Open Sans

Aa Aa

Roboto

Aa Aa

Verdana

Aa Aa

Poppins

Aa Aa

Montserrat

Aa Aa

Raleway

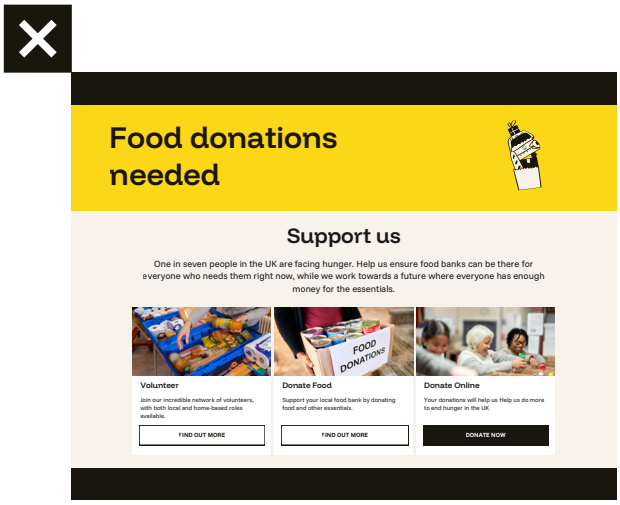
Aa Aa

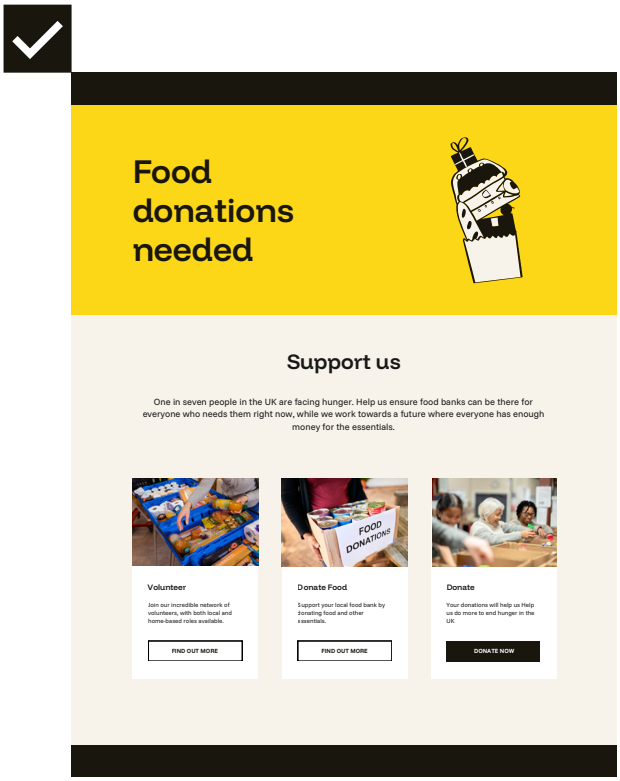
Utilise the power of space



Good spacing is crucial for effective website design. Being confident with spacing ensures that your text is readable, your content is well-organised, and your users can easily focus on the key elements of your page.

White space, or negative space, is the area between the elements on your page. Effectively using white space makes your website content more digestible, improving readability and focus. This is particularly beneficial for visitors with visual impairments, as it helps reduce visual clutter and enhances the overall user experience.





Use widely accepted design patterns



When people visit your website, they have expectations about how different elements should work. While you want your website to be unique, you should always keep widely accepted website design patterns and approaches in mind.

A few examples of these would include:

- Your header logo should take people to your home page
- Underlined or highlighted body text should signify links to other pages
- Use the hamburger button to let people expand a menu on mobile devices
- Using directional arrow icons to show if something will expand or move
- Give users feedback on their actions e.g. "Thank you, we have received your message someone will be in touch…" or "There has been an error please try again"
- Ensure form errors are clearly explained to users by placing error messages directly below the corresponding form element, not at the top or bottom of the page. Using both text and colour to indicate errors helps users quickly identify and correct issues, improving the overall form usability

By implementing these best practices, you ensure that when visitors land on your website, they will immediately understand how to navigate and use it effectively.

Utilise the power of visual hierarchy

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Visual hierarchy is an important principle in web design that involves arranging and prioritising content to guide users through a webpage seamlessly.

By strategic placement of different elements, you can ensure that users notice the most important information first and understand the structure of the content.

Key elements of visual hierarchy:

- **Size and scale:** Larger elements naturally draw more attention. Headings, featured images, and primary calls-to-action (CTAs) are often made larger to stand out. Smaller text and elements are perceived as less important, guiding users to read them after the primary content.

- **Colour and contrast:** Using contrasting colours helps highlight important information. Bright or bold colours can draw the eye to calls-to-action (CTAs) or critical information, while muted or darker colours recede into the background, helping users focus on the highlighted areas.

- **Typography:** Different font sizes, weights, and styles can create a hierarchy within the text. For example, a bold, large headline captures attention first, followed by subheadings, and finally, the body text. This textual structure helps users scan and understand the content more efficiently.

- **Alignment and Proximity:** Grouping related items together and aligning them properly helps users understand the relationships between different pieces of content. Consistent alignment and proximity create an intuitive flow that guides users through the information logically.

While there are many more concepts, principles, and approaches to consider in designing a best-in-class digital experience, this checklist provides a solid foundation for creating a website that meets user expectations, engages visitors, and supports your charity's digital goals.

Remember, the web evolves rapidly, so ongoing iteration and optimisation are crucial to staying relevant to your audience and addressing their future needs.

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