In *Web Site Design Principles*, author Joel Sklar tells web designers to "focus on both the user's needs and the requirements of the content you want to deliver, while planning a site that is easy to navigate and quick to download."[1] When creating a website, Sklar notes, designers should have four overriding goals that include: 1) to design for the computer medium; 2) to create a unified site design; 3) to design for the user; and 4) to design for the screen.

Design for the computer medium

Designing for the computer means taking into account design portability, bandwidth, access, and presentation when making design decisions. Different users will use different computer platforms, browsers, and operating systems. Users also access website information on a variety of devices such as desktops, tablets, and smartphones. We must consider not only how our design choices look across these platforms and devices but the responsiveness of our website across these platforms.

Not every user has top speed Internet access. Website creators should consider designing for a lower bandwidth. If users arrive on a site and page elements such as graphics or animations are slow to download, users will become quickly become frustrated and leave.

Website content should be accessible; that is, organized in a meaningful way. Navigation should be obvious and users should be presented with logical navigation choices that don't detract from their purpose for visiting the website.

A website should be designed so that information is easy to read. Typefaces should be used that are more suitable for reading on a computer screen, such as a sans serif font. Font color is also important and a color should be selected that contrasts with a page's background in such a way that it promotes both readability and legibility. In the article, *8 Guidelines for Exceptional Web Design, Usability, and User Experience*, author Erik Devaney recommends "a maximum of three different typefaces in a maximum of three different sizes."[2] Finally, text should not be presented in large chunks; instead, text should be broken up into smaller paragraphs for ease of reading.

Create a unified site design

A unified website will have a theme appropriate to the site's content and audience and deliberately leave its audience with an intended impression. It's layout should orient users to the site's content: This is achieved structurally, and through thoughtful selection of color, fonts, and graphics. Major subject headings should be meaningful and use a consistent typeface and color throughout the site. Main navigation elements should be placed in a prominent location

and in the same position on each website page. Transitions from page to page should be smooth.

Design for the user

Sklar notes, "[k]nowing your audience answers almost all design questions."[3] In Smashing Magazine article, *The Future Of Mobile Web Design: Video Game Design And Storytelling*, author Suzanne Scacca reminds developers that "attention spans" have shortened and visitors "just want to get to the good stuff on a website."[4] We need to determine audience characteristics by asking questions about our users such as, what does my user want from my website; will my user want to search for information; is my user here to learn something; how does my user want to interact with my website; and is my user more likely to read deeply or scan for information?

Answering questions about you audience will inform how you design your website; for example, if users expect to be able to search your site, then you must include a search element.

Design for the screen

We do not read computer, mobile, or tablet screen text in the same way we read print text. And even the way we read print text depends on the context. Now, more than ever, we skim. In *9 Ways To Instantly Make Your Website More User-Friendly*, author Jansen Manfredini explains how audiences are more likely to understand our website content if it's "clear and concise;" consequently, we need to make our content "easy to skim."[5] One way to achieve this is by making use of bulleted or numbered lists. Another way is by using active whitespace throughout a page.

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[1] Joel Sklar, "Web Site Design Principles," in *Principles of Web Design*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Thompson Course Technology, 2006), 29.

[2] Erik Devaney, *8 Guidelines for Exceptional Web Desgin, Usability, and User Experience*, Hubspot.com, https://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/30557/6-guidelines-for-exceptional-website-design-and-usability.aspx

[3] Joel Sklar, "Design For The User," in *Principles of Web Design*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Thompson Course Technology, 2006), 41.

[4] Suzanne Scacca, The Future Of Mobile Web Design: Video Game Design And Storytelling, https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2018/03/future-mobile-web-design-video-game-design-storytelling/

[5] Jansen Manfredini, 9 Ways To Instantly Make Your Website More User-Friendly, Sage: Sage Blog, https://www.sageworld.com/blog/index.php/2015/07/02/9-ways-to-instantly-make-your-website-more-user-friendly/