

Briefing Document: How to find ideas for design

The design of your multimedia product will include colour, text style and font, use of images and graphics. From your research into the websites that are already out there, and from your audience research, you will have collected data that shows what web designers are already using and what appeals to different groups of users. You might already have ideas about what colours you would like to use, and what your page layout might look like.

However, because the way your product looks and feels has a big impact on the people who use it, it's really important at this stage to get the design right. Using the wrong colours, or including text that is too small, or which isn't easy to read, could discourage visitors from fully exploring your site.

Here are some hints for getting the design right.

Hints for finding design ideas

- The best place to look for design ideas is on the Internet. Look again at **How to search on the Internet** to remind you of the most efficient way to find things. Use key words such as 'web design ideas' to see what hits you get on your search engine.
- You have already carried out some research on the published websites that are similar to the product you are working on. Go back to this research and remind yourself of some of the design information you collected. Colours and layouts were part of the research – this can be the start of your design decision process.
- When you search for design ideas you might get some sites coming up that have 'best of' lists – these are independent sites which bring together examples of what they consider 'best' design ideas. However, design is very subjective – that is, not everyone will agree on what is the best design. So it is better to compare these sites rather than just accepting one as examples of the 'best'.
- Some design sites will be listed under 'graphic design'. Use the key words graphic design to expand your search of the Internet.

- Take a look at website designers' websites. They often have examples of their designs for clients to look at. See what sort of design they use for different types of sites. Compare the designs they use for business sites with those that are used on more fun sites. Think about the purpose of your site – who are you trying to attract and what messages are you trying to convey?
- You will be building your website in an existing software package. It might be worth looking at the designs and templates that are already available in the package you are using. Some of the better programs have lots of designs already available for use. This would make your task much easier. However, you have to be sure that the design or template you choose really does fit with your client's requirements.
- Don't be afraid to use your own design ideas in your website. All web design programs allow different backgrounds, variations on banners and layout, and even different navigation and hyperlink buttons can be used. If you have a great idea for design, go with it. If you're not sure whether your design idea is working, ask some of your friends and teachers to take a look and comment.
- Text colour and background colour (underneath the text) is really important. Look at examples of websites and see what colour combinations work the best. Some people can't read text in websites because they suffer from a form of colour blindness. When you are making text decisions, carry out some informal user testing – just ask friends to look at your ideas and make sure they can all read it.
- Keep your design consistent. Once you've decided on the design it should remain the same for all the web pages you create. So the banners will be the same, the navigation buttons and the background. The best websites have the same design features throughout, although page layouts might change.