

Does your website pass the 25-point test?

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Your customers are impatient. They have a lot on their minds, and a lot on their plates.

When they go online (and they do that a lot) they get even more impatient. They want your site to have what they're looking for, make it easy for them to find it, and tell them how quickly they can get their hands on it. And they want it NOW.

To find out whether or not you're going to have happy website customers, take this easy 25-point quiz. If you have to put a checkmark in any of these boxes, hand this list to your web designer when you're finished, and say, "Fix it."

"Fix My Site" Checklist

- The background drowns out your text.
- Graphics and backgrounds use the right colors. Not colors that make your eyes burn.
- Text is too small to read, or so big it looks cheesy, and it's in the wrong font (the right one is Arial or Verdana for text. You can use Times New Roman for headlines).
- You have large amounts of text in ALL CAPS, **all bold**, or *all italic*.
- Wide columns of text that make it easy to lose your place when reading.
- You don't use graphic elements (photos, subheads, pull quotes) well. Huge chunks of unbroken text are unattractive, uninteresting, and scary.
- Navigation is unclear or overly complex.
- Your navigation buttons and/or page titles don't tell visitors what page they're on.
- Your logo isn't at the top of every page, and clicking on it doesn't take a visitor back to your homepage.
- Your link colors clash with the page colors.
- In-text links aren't underlined.
- You have underlined text that isn't a link. (**Bold** works best for emphasis.)
- Your home page isn't "above the fold." (The entire page isn't visible on the first screen, without having to scroll down.)
- Your pages don't all look like they belong to the same site.
- Your text crowds the left edge. A little "breathing room" is important.
- You have links in your body copy that distract visitors or lead them off to useless pages (or, heaven forbid, someone else's site that doesn't open in a new window).
- You have dead links.
- You open with a splash page or film, or have huge graphic files that take forever to load.
- Your graphics are meaningless or useless (a.k.a. clipart)
- You have things that blink, especially text. Your site plays music.
- You have "Under construction" signs, especially the cutesy ones with stickmen.
- Your visitor has to scroll sideways.
- You have frame scroll bars in the middle of a page.
- You have orphan pages (no links back to where they came from, or they take you too far back; no identification--logo, etc.)
- Your pages look okay in one browser but not in another.