# Practice Exercise

## Using the *Interface Design* Checklist Items to Evaluate an Existing Site

Use this Interface Design Checklist to evaluate a course of your choice.

**Tip**: You may want to use the site Search tool and enter a key word (for example, "hardware" Or "Tech Requirements" to more quickly locate information to answer a survey item.

Page and Site Design
Content Design
Navigation
Accessibility
Usability

### Page and Site Design

Check if Web pages look good in a variety of Web browsers and in text-based browsers, all recent versions of Internet Explorer and Netscape, and so on.

| Browser | Best Viewed By (Type versions) | Not Best Viewed By (Type versions) |
|---|---|---|
| Netscape | | |
| Explorer | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Check if the Web documents are available in any of the following formats? (check all that apply):
- ❑ PDF
- ❑ HTML
- ❑ XML
- ❑ Word processed
- ❑ Text file
- ❑ Not applicable
- ❑ Other (specify)

Does the course provide printable transcripts of any streaming audio and video used in the course?

❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable
❑ Other


Do the pages of the course use reasonable blank or white spaces (about 20%) to help readers' eyes move through the content more easily and comfortably? (Note: Insufficient white space can contribute to cluttered screens.)
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable


Throughout the course, are background colors of screens compatible with the foreground colors of the screens (so that they complement rather compete)?
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable


Does the course use a consistent font type across elements such as heading, body text, link, etc.?
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable


Does the choice of graphics enhance the learners understanding of the site's purpose?
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable

How fast do the pages on the course Website load? Or, do the screens load quickly? Or, must the learner wait for large amounts of graphics, video, audio, applets to load? (Note: Large images and multimedia files require a long time to download. However, loading speed may vary with users' Internet connection speeds. The course should be designed to use bandwidth efficiently in order to minimize learners' frustration. It is always a good idea to test pages at various Internet connection speeds)
❑ Fast
❑ Fairly fast
❑ Somewhat slow
❑ Very slow

Do the lessons, assignments and tests take a longer time to complete than the course allow? (Note: It should not be a surprise to anyone that learners from diverse geographical locations with varying Internet connections speed may take longer to complete learning activities on the Internet than the course designers estimated. To avoid learners' dissatisfaction, pilot test of course lessons and timed-quizzes or assignments should be tested at dial-up speeds with a representative population.)
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable

Downloading audio and video is often time-consuming. Does the course assign students pre-listening work or other instructional activities while the files are downloading?
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable

Does the Website provide links to any of the following Websites within the institution? Check all that apply:
❑ Institution's Website
❑ Admissions Office
❑ Financial Aid Office
❑ Academic Departments
❑ Accounting Department
❑ Registrar Office
❑ Student Services
❑ Student Organizations (Greek, Academic Clubs, etc.)
❑ Information Technology Services
❑ Professional Development
❑ Continuing Education
❑ Other (specify)

Does the course have a link to instructor's home page and curriculum vitae?
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable

Does each screen of the course print one printer page?
❑ Yes
❑ No

❑ Not applicable

## Content Design

Check if the course uses any of the following ways to gain learner attention?
(check all that apply):
❑ Novelty
❑ Animation
❑ Motion (e.g., animated GIFs)
❑ Captioned graphics
❑ Changes in brightness
❑ Contrast between object of interest and its surroundings.
❑ Colors, sounds, and symbols that focus on specific content
❑ Other (specify)

Check if the course uses any of the following ways to improve learner retention?
(check all that apply):
❑ Sequenced screens
❑ Meaningfully organized contents
❑ Overviews
❑ Consistent screen layout (consistent placement of title, graphic, textual
contents, etc)
❑ Chunked materials, presenting together when appropriate
❑ Introductions and summaries
❑ Other (specify)

Does the course follow "one idea per paragraph" rule?
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable

Is the text chunked and presented in a way that enables scanning and
comprehension? (Note: Throughout the course headings and sub-headings should
be parallel, short, logically connected so that readers can scan them.)
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable

Check if any of the following multimedia presentation components are used in the
course? (check all that apply):
❑ Text
❑ Graphics
❑ Animation
❑ Audio

❑ Video
❑ Other (specify)

If *yes*, does the mixture of multimedia components contribute to a rich learning environment?

  ❑ Yes
  ❑ No
  ❑ Not applicable

The course content is presented with appropriate and relevant (check all that apply):
❑ Text
❑ Graphics
❑ Animation
❑ Audio
❑ Video
❑ Other (specify below)

## Navigation

Does the course provide structural aids (i.e., unit, lesson, activities, etc.) to guide learner's navigation?
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable
❑ Other (specify)

Do pages of the course fit within any graphical browser window without any horizontal or sideway scrolling? (Note: Sideway scrolling can be awkward and annoying at times. It seems to happen when tables are given widths in pixels instead of percentages; a given browser can be too small for the pixels required to display a page, but percentage is defined as relative to browser width.)
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable

Are all links clearly labeled, and do they serve an easily identified purpose, so that learners have enough information to know whether they should click a link?
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable
❑ Other (specify)

Does the site use any icons that are difficult to remember? (Note: In using icons, we should ask "Is it clear what they represent? Does what they represent relate to what they do?")

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable
- ❑ Other (specify)

Does the course use consistent color for both unvisited and visited links? (Note: Standard link colors such as 'blue' for unvisited link and 'reddish or purple' for visited link can be used in every page of the course site.)
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable
- ❑ Other (specify)

Does the course indicate the size (e.g., 13k, 200k, etc.) of the multimedia files used?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable
- ❑ Other (specify)

Does the course offer suggested pathways for the user? (Note: Learners tend to follow links in the course. Therefore, hyperlinking in pages should be well-thought out as they suggest pathways for users.)
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable
- ❑ Other (specify)

How easy is it to navigate the course Website? (Can users move from page to page, and link to link with ease without getting lost or confused?)
- ❑ Very easy
- ❑ Fairly easy
- ❑ Somewhat difficult
- ❑ Very difficult

Are learners informed when they use outside links lead to different Websites (Note: In his Distance Educational journal article in 1997, Boshier suggested using signposts or some visual guidance to expedite their return. However, if we can open external sites in new browser windows, then do not need any signposts.)

❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable
❑ Other (specify)

When a course contains links to sites located in different countries with different cultures (where navigation or expression icons may differ from learners' native culture), are there any cues on how to adjust to unfamiliar navigation or a different instructional environment? (Boshier et al, 1997)
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable
❑ Other (specify)

Does the site include a search feature?
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable
❑ Other (specify)
If *yes*, check all that apply?
   ❑ Internal search feature within course Website
   ❑ External search feature


Check all options that apply about menus in the course:
❑ Menus are deep (i.e., more layers)
❑ Menus are shallow
❑ More choices should be available in menus
❑ Should limit the number of choices in menus
❑ Not applicable
❑ Other (specify)

Does every page of the course (where frames are not used) have links back to the site's main page?
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable
❑ Other (specify)


Do all the inside links in the course link to the correct locations?
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not applicable
❑ Other (specify)

Do all the outside links in the course link to the correct locations?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable
- ❑ Other (specify)

## *Accessibility*

Is the course Website designed to be accessible by a wider user population?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable
- ❑ Other (specify)

Are various accessibility barriers considered in the design of the course? (Note: Web pages can run through Bobby to test Web pages and help expose and repair barriers to accessibility and encourage compliance with existing accessibility guidelines, such as Section 508 and the W3C's WCAG. http://bobby.cast.org)

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable
- ❑ Other (specify)

Does the course use a text alternate to the images? (Note: The use of alternate text for all non-text elements can be read aloud by software for synthesizing speech, and therefore, essential for visually impaired learners.)

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable

Does the course provide captions for audio content? (Note: People who cannot hear can read the audio content from the captions.)

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable

Are all the colors used in various screens of the course clearly distinguishable by visually impaired?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable

## Usability Testing

Has there been a trial run beforehand with representative users?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable
- ❑ Other (specify)

Do users find answers to the most frequently asked questions on the course site within reasonable amount of time?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable

Can users easily know where they are and navigate the site without guessing?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable

Does the course Website load quickly?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable

Can learners easily take a look at or sample each bit of the course? (Boshier et al, 1997)
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable

Is the site designed so that learners can easily get to a specific piece of content (in no more than 3 clicks)?
- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable