

THE MISTAKES OF THE WEB PRESENTATIONS

Galovič Marian *, Kremeňová Iveta¹, Fabuš Juraj²

* The University of Zilina, Slovakia
Marian.Galovic@fpedas.utc.sk

¹ The University of Zilina, Slovakia
Iveta.Kremenova@fpedas.utc.sk

² The University of Zilina, Slovakia
Juraj.Fabus@fpedas.utc.sk

Abstract

This article describes the most often mistakes of web presentation, that you can encounter on the internet. From the graphic design, through the informational content, till the code validity and adjustment for various search engines. It tries to validate everything from the page visitor's point of view, i.e. from the customer's or potential customer's point of view.

Keywords: web sites, portal, web presentation

1 Introduction

The web page is mainly a sort of advertising tool that has to fulfill its target. If it is about profit, it has to bring profit. If it is about presentation, it has to present. If it is about fun, it has to make fun! But its main task is to find people that it will serve for.

The quality and efficiency of a web site is not in the quantity of animations or its size. Internet web sites which nobody can find will hardly serve their objectives. The customer looks for information that you are providing. He will not find you but the competition.

The web site can offer an amount of eye-comforting components and effective enchains, but it can not help to find its visitors and potential future customers or partners for you.

This article describes the shortcomings of the web sites and portals that can be found most often. The visitor often does not see these shortcomings as mistakes. If he can not find what he is looking for, he simply leaves and looks for it at the websites of the competitors.

In the beginning we outlined starting points, that we will describe more detailed later on. Starting points or a few words about what a proper web should consist of.

- it is necessary to find out, who the web is intended for,
- graphical appearance of the web, because this is the first thing that addresses the customer,
- looking at the web page, the customer has to get a clear answer on the questions: where is he? who is the page intended for? what can he find here?

- the orientation on the page must be clear, understandable and logic,
- the loading of the page must be sufficiently fast
- regular updating
- the result must be of a sufficient quality, regardless the used hardware or browser and
- other.

2 Internet users

Web is a relatively young form of presentation. Many people today still don't have a computer or even an internet connection. Already from this first condition we can see, what a filter the internet gives us. We have to realize, that someone who is about to connect to the internet has to have at least basic computer usage skills. That means that not everyone gets to the internet. The result is that on the internet can connect:

- people who have a PC at work,
- more solvent people, that have a PC with an internet connection at home,
- internet bar visitors (random connections),
- students,
- and another. [5]

another It is therefore clear, that the people who would connect to the internet will have an average or a higher income in contrary to unemployed people or people with a lower income. Because a web presentation is an advertisement tool, we must realize that we can't take these visitors, potential customers easy and we must forego the mistakes to which it often comes while creating the web.

3 Update requirements

Prior to the development of the web page or web presentation its update requirements must be defined. There is a difference between pages with the need of everyday updating or updating even a few times a day and the pages with information with a not changing content. Of course, by pages with often updates it is usefull to design the web page using databases. The information is stored in databases, whose content can be changed very fast and effective. It is obvious that using only HTML is not the optimal solution, because we

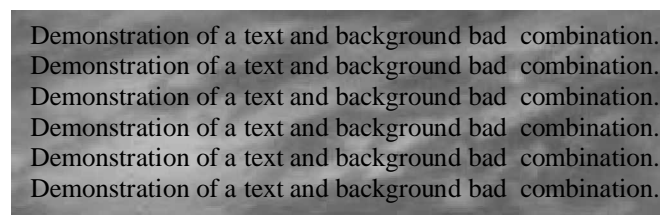
would have to perform the data change in the very source code, what is not practical and long. In the practical life it happens that although the creator created a nice and big web page, he did not consider the update requirements. The result is usually that the page is being updated only in a short period after its launch. The problems with updating of such a page are considerable, its updating is being gradually forgotten especially because of time and financial reasons. A page with old not up to date information soon ceases to be interesting for its visitors.

4 Graphic design

Graphics, the colour harmonisation and the final display in the browser are things, that address us even before we start to work with the page.

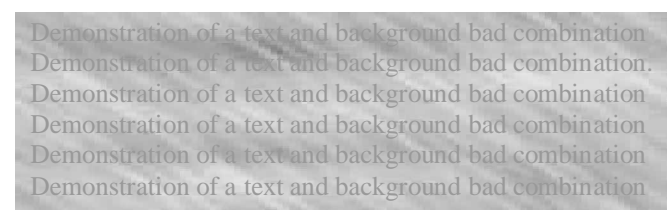
When we start searching for information on the chosen page, we start to encounter the following shortcomings.

By surfing the internet everyone of us certainly found a web, that's graphics was excellently managed. Right after the loading of the initial page, we are literally hit by the perfect graphics and a lot of animations. After the initial euphoria vanishes we find out that we don't even know what area the web represents, who it belongs to and who it is intended for. The opposite can be, that a decently designed web is corrupted by too aggressive advertisement in the form of an advertisement banner, many times taking a large part of the screen. In the case of web or portal specialised for presentation of a big amount of information, for example information portals, the colour harmonisation of the background and the characters is very important. This sometimes is not kept. As the result of the inappropriate combination of the character and background colours or the used character style and size the text is not well legible. On the following pictures you can see an inappropriate combination of the background and the characters. [5]



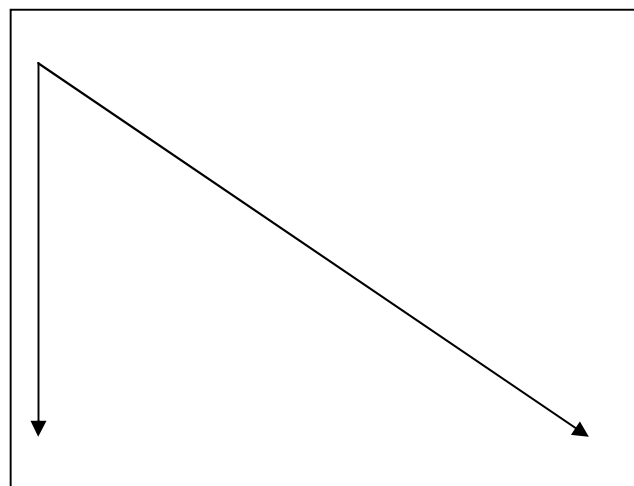
Picture 1: Demonstration of a text and background bad combination 1.

or



Picture 2: Demonstration of a text and background bad combination 2.

Subconscious perception of the direction priority by used ways of web navigation. It is obvious, that this perception comes from orientation in printing materials. On the picture we can see in what way a person is orienting itself in a document. Because the perception is strongest on the drawn arrows, it is clear that it is important to locate to these areas the most important information or the very navigation of the page.



Picture 3: Priorities direction perception [2]

5 Navigation

Sometimes we encounter web pages, where the navigation is designed very bad or badly situated or it is even missing. The simplest solution is to use text navigation. The main advantage is the possibility to simply change the name of the navigation, adding of effects and not unessential is also the loading speed of the page. Text navigation is mostly used by information portals, where the emphasis is laid on providing information. Using the picture navigation it is different.

The using of picture navigation is recommended by graphically rich pages. The main advantage of picture navigation is that it can be created by random style or way, when it comes only to the skill of the web designer. Such a navigation should of course be composed appropriately into the general design of the page.

The main disadvantage is the waiting time until the navigation elements are loaded. For users with a high speed internet connection this may sound not relevant, but for those ones with a common analogue access it can be a difficult obstacle. The other disadvantage is that in case of need of the change of one of the navigation elements, the change of all used navigation elements of the page or the change of the whole graphics must be performed. New problem comes by users with turned off graphics or users with a text browser. These users will see only empty blocks, where the navigation elements – pictures – are missing. The only solution in such cases is to use by pictures the ALT attribute, which displays the description of the element after moving the mouse cursor over the place for the picture. This way we can solve the orientation of the user on the page at least partially.

The information is sometimes divided into a huge amount of sections or a lot of information with no relation is placed in one section. The author wants to present a big amount of information immediately on the introduction site. Sometimes we meet with cases when in the introduction site he presents the firm logo, addresses, contacts, animations, maps – where you can find the company, information about the webmaster and in extreme cases photos, which are not related with the presented company at all though. Much of the information is not necessary or wrongly sorted. Too much of information causes a difficult orientation and a considerable opacity of the web sites.

6 Layout

The layout of the page components can be performed in more ways – using tables, frames or cascade styles (CSS).

Although in a minor number but still, we encounter pages with layout using frames. The work with the frames is simple and fast, but there is a couple of problems connected to their use that a lot of web creators forget about. First of them is the fact, that in every particular frame one whole page has to be loaded. That means that if our page is divided into 3 frames then 3 or 4 pages have to be loaded at the same time. 3 in the particular frames and the fourth page defines the frameset. For a user with an analogue access or an older PC this results in long loading time. Some browsers don't even support a correct display of this kind of pages. In these cases the user closes the page before it even gets loaded. As you can see in the picture the horizontal scrolling of the page looks not very nice or practical. On the page shown at this picture 4 the user has to scroll the page horizontally and also vertically in all of the 3 windows.



Picture 4: Layout via Frames

Contrary to the frames the layout using tables has a couple of advantages. Among the most basic ones is the simplicity and compatibility. It needs a little bit of imagination about how the elements shall be located, utilize the table in a suitable way, turn off the display of margins and background (thanks to which the table will be unrecognizable) and a good result comes to light. Tables come from the time when CSS or even the frames did not exist. As a consequence a correctly

designed and created table should be correctly displayed even on very old computers. [1]

The main disadvantage of using tables is their slowness. The reason is that the browser displays the table only after it loads the whole table. The next disadvantage is the dependence of the page appearance on the code. Today's time requires the separation of the code connected to the very content from the code relating to the visual display in the browser. A disadvantage of the table layout is also a big number of not very clear and obvious code. Using CSS a saving of 30-50 % can be achieved.

To the main advantages of using CSS while formatting a document belongs a clearer, briefer and more obvious code. The result is also that the pages are loaded faster. The page created in this way is being displayed gradually in relation to its being loaded. Thanks to this the user can see the reaction on the screen almost immediately after clicking the mouse. CSS is a very strong tool with which help we can achieve an interesting layout. By separating the content from the appearance we can create more layouts for one particular page just by changing one css file.

Surely, like the other methods CSS has also a couple of disadvantages. The main disadvantage today is the incomplete support of CSS by browsers. Different browsers support different CSS features in different ways. There is no browser that would support CSS exactly according to the W3C norms.

Another disadvantage is that the very CSS code is not very clear or understandable. While two divided in tables are relatively easily readable and understandable, by looking at CSS definitions it takes relatively long until we realize how the page actually works. We can solve it by dividing the code into more files. Except of that CSS does not have a couple of features and in this respect it lags behind the tables.

A big mistake is the using of the pictures with full sizes. For example the definition of the size of a table cell where the picture is meant to be located but using the full size of the source picture is a mistake that slows down the loading of the page. Miniatures should be used - after clicking them the picture in its full size will be displayed.

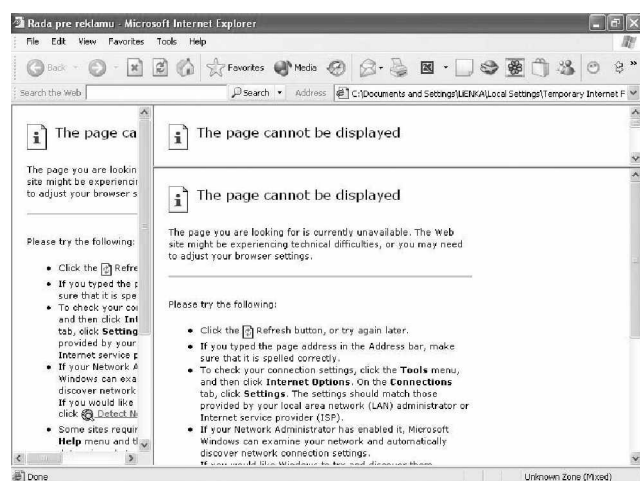
7 Displaying in browsers

One of the problems by web pages can be the fact that in different internet browsers they might be displayed differently. By the creation of the web page the developers can't be sure about what browser the users will use, they can only guess that. This fact is often underrated or it is entirely forgotten. Many web developers subconsciously suppose, that every user uses the same browser that the developer also prefers or that everyone has the newest version of that particular browser installed. If the newest HTML and CSS features are used on the pages, these features can negatively influence the result in older browsers. [1]

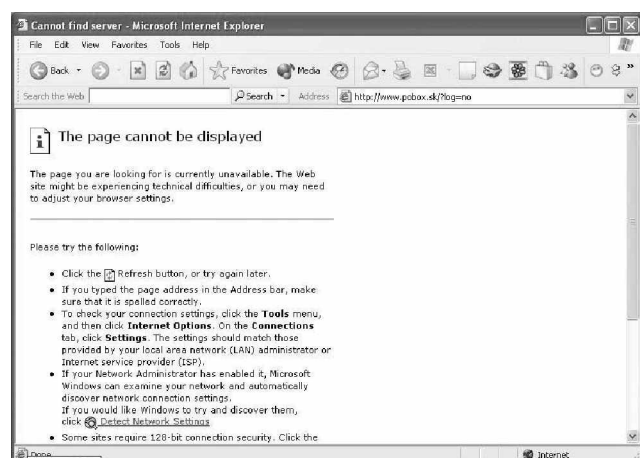
8 The functionality of the page

It is not recommended to create pages without any navigation. We often encounter something similar when the creator wants to put our attention to a big document or picture. The result can be that on the open page there is the information we were searching for, it is without any back navigation though. In such a case the user is often not able to orient himself on the page. The consequence is that he will not find the other useful information situated on the page and he does not necessary know to which section or theme the information belongs. In worst case the visitor leaves the page being disappointed and searches for the information rather in other sources.

Very important is also the functionality of the links. The user is not very willing to “jump” more times over windows with an error message. Everyone of us has surely encountered similar pages like those on the following pictures. The pictures 5 and 6 show an incorrect display of the pages in the browser.



Picture 5: Incorrect displaying in browser 1



Picture 6: Incorrect displaying in browser 2

A big mistake is being made by the changing of the page address. If someone decides to change the accustomed page

address on the internet, it is necessary to provide the rerouting to a new page also in case of typing the old address into the internet browser. It is not enough to change the address only on the propagation material. It must be realized, that many visitors come to the page via links in other web pages or have the contact information from other sources. If the rerouting to the new page is not ensured, the users will again get the error message as shown on the pictures 5 and 6.

9 Code validity

An inseparable part of the web site and portal creation is the preserving of the code validity. Many of the sites are not valid, it means that they are not in accordance with the W3C standards. We could simply describe the code-validity as the grammatical rightness of the source code logging. Some of the browsers count with the mistakes and they can cope with some of them. If the potential customer uses a browser that is not tolerant to code shortcomings, the presented site has bad luck.

Everything written earlier is inessential, if we can't find the web site at all. Because of this problem the search engine optimization (SOE) is very important. It is necessary to think about the visitors, who don't enter our web sites through the direct typing of the internet address into the browser, but through catalogue detection or full-text key-word detection.

Many web-site owners think that their sites are optimized for the search engines. A simple test of that can be the typing of key-words for the area into the search engine. Is your address present among the first sites of the found addresses? If not, then the site is not well search engine optimized.

The worst is that we know that what we are looking for is somewhere there, but we are not able to find it.

Conclusions

In present time many web-site owners belong to the group who keep the site only because of it is modern. Only a few of them can calculate or only estimate what the benefit of the web presentation is.

In this paper we have tried to show the failures that are most appeared by the internet presentations creation. It needs to be spoken about them and try to avoid them simultaneously.

References

- [1] M.Galovič. „Návrh internetového informačného portálu Katedry spojov“ Diploma work, KS 2004
- [2] R. Mindžák. „Dokonalý WebDesign“, Computers Press, 2003
- [3] www.jaknaweb.com
- [4] www.park.cz
- [5] www.tvorba-webu.sk
- [6] www.webaudit.cz