

# What Makes a Great Web Site?

---

**Original content is the most important trait of a great Web site.**

---

## **Web sites should:**

Provide **credible, original content** in as many forms as possible.

Original content is the most important trait of a great Web site. Sites that provide only links to other sites are essentially meta-lists (although Yahoo seems to be doing well :), while sites that have some information that's useful to the user stand out and will be revisited.

Provide **valuable, timely information** to the user, not lots of data.

Web sites should be **updated regularly**. Stale Web sites say "been there, done that." For the information to be valuable it should be **well-edited**. For external links include only the best sites with concise descriptions. For internal content be like a magazine editor, don't rush to publish mediocre or incomplete articles. Typos are unacceptable.

**Share everything** you learn

Great Web sites share everything they learn and hear (that's relevant of course) with their users. Give behind the scenes accounts of your latest site features, go open source, start a newsletter, and you'll get more than you give.

---

**Customize and target your content/site to your users. Think "one-to-one" Web sites.**

---

**Custom-tailor** the information to user preferences.

One of the Web's strengths is the volume of information available. That is also one of its weaknesses. Make your site unique for your users.

**Be easy to read.**

Make your pages as easy to read as possible. Black text on a white background (as this page is set up) is the easiest to read. I've seen some nearly impossible to read pages that use backgrounds the same shade as the text (dark text on a dark background and vice versa). If you use a background, stick with the lighter shades and let the text stay black.

Be **responsive** on a 56 Kbps modem (the typical Web user).

Use **graphics sparingly** to convey information. Each graphic takes another trip to the server.

**Optimize graphic file size** for Web display (a maximum of 20 KB per graphic).

---

**The second most important trait a Web site should have is interactivity.**

---

Be **interactive**; good interactivity engages the user and makes your site memorable.

After original content, the second most important trait a Web site should have is interactivity. The Web is an interactive hypermedia communications medium that your Web site should reflect. Sites that involve the user and have a sense of fun or adventure will get more hits, and can charge more for ad space.

---

**Users equate poor organization with poor site design.**

---

Be **well-organized**

Balance the number of levels (the degree of hyperization) with page length to minimize scrolling and display time.

Part of having a well-organized site is providing multiple ways of easy navigation. Supply both text and graphics for buttons. Users feel more comfortable if you maintain a consistent look and feel throughout your site.

---

**Many sites on the Web are just lists that someone else has already done.**

---

**Dominate** a subject area; become *the* site for that subject.

Don't duplicate a list when you can point to it.  
Many sites on the Web are just lists that someone else has already done.