

425 DESIGN BASELINE

BASIC VISUAL DESIGN ELEMENTS:

CRAP, color, continuity, imagery, white space, balance, branding, font size & style.

BASIC QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Focal point: Where is the eye drawn when the page opens (and what do users immediately understand)—and what design elements induce that focus?
2. User options: What kinds of users are being served, and what are they encouraged to do (esp users new to this topic or site)—and what elements induce that activity?
3. What makes the site navigation easy for anyone to use?
4. How is information hierarchy established?
5. What brands the site, and/or lends credibility, and/or makes it sticky or appealing—and what is the overall tone?
6. Overall layout: how are balance achieved and clutter avoided?
7. What is the lasting impression—what 1 or 2 things will people definitely remember after leaving and what's the site's unique niche or user-benefit?

CHECKLIST:

- Main content fits 800x600.
- Navigation contrasts with other content and establishes a consistent, site-wide pattern.
- Graphics and backgrounds always augment (rather than distract from) main content.
- Page colors (preferably limited to no more than 4) cohere with each other & with links & text.
- Text is easily legible, buffered from edges, in narrow columns, & contrasts with bgs & headlines.
- No incorrect language; or broken links; or shoddy graphics, borders, frames, etc.
- Page(s) load easily and look relatively the same in major browsers.
- Separate pages are united by a consistent theme, and so are all elements within each page.