



Running An Institutional Web Service: Exercises

1 Design Exercise

This exercise is intended for workshop participants who are particularly interested in web design issues. The exercise will form the basis of a discussion group on Design Issues.

In your web browser go to the resource <URL:<http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/docs/webawa.htm>> Go to the list of entries for the 1997 Information Dissemination awards.

Configure your browsers so that the display of images is switched off and, if possible, warnings are given when cookies are received or Java or ActiveX programs are downloaded.

Access the nominations using your normal web browser, initially with the display of images switched off. Then switch the display of images on and look at the resources again. If possible then use another widely used web browser (Netscape or Internet Explorer). Finally use less widely used browsers, such as NCSA Mosaic or lynx. If possible access the resource using a high spec (e.g. 256 colour, large screen) and low spec (16 colour, small screen) PC.

Go to the Bobbie service <URL:<http://www.cast.org/bobbie/>> or <URL:<http://hosted.ukoln.ac.uk/mirrored/web-authoring/bobby/>> and enter the URL of, in your opinion, a well-designed resource and a poorly-designed resource. Make a note of the responses from Bobbie.

Complete the following table based on your experiences.

If you are feeling brave, give a critical appraisal of your institution's corporate pages.

Make a note of any comments on this exercise or of any issues you may wish to raise in the discussion group.

Comments

Resource:

No	Task	Comments
1	How usable was the site without graphics?	
2	How usable was the site when using a 16 colour PC?	
3	What technologies did the resource use (apart from HTML and images)? For example did it use frames, Javascript, Java, ActiveX, plugins, cookies, etc?	
4	If the resource used new technologies, how usable was the site using browser which don't support such technologies (or when support for such technologies is disabled).	
5	Did the resource make appropriate use of new technologies	
6	Make a note of any inappropriate writing styles (e.g. "Click here" or "Return to University home page")	
7	How usable was the resource with a low spec system?	
8	How consistent were the navigational aides throughout the resource?	
9	Did the resource make use of any intrusive features (sound, scrolling text, animation, etc)?	
10	How accessible was the resource? For example, could the size of the text be increased for the visually impaired, or was the text displayed as a graphic? Could the resource be accessible to a speaking browser for the blind?	
11	What comments did the Bobbie service give regarding the accessibility of the resource?	
12	Could the resource be indexed?	
13	Did the resource make sensible use of backgrounds?	
14	Validate the resource using the HTML validation service at the URL http://www.hensa.ac.uk/html-val-svc/ Did the resource pass the validation tests? If so, which one? If not, were the errors significant? Make a note of the errors.	
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Add any extra questions related to web design to the bottom of the checklist.

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