

SUBTLETIES ON THE WEB – Part 2

This month's article continues pointing out subtle changes found on many websites, changes that affect the way we use the internet.

6. Vector Art

Companies need to create a strong branding influence to be successful. Today, we are seeing more large "vector" art – those oversized mascots that leave us memorable images so we recall that brand; a major one is Mozilla and Firefox. These cartoon-like characters depict a more playful approach to the services or products a company offers...many more are on the way.

7. Ribbon & Banner Graphics

With the rapid advent of so much new technology, tutorials for just about everything are available. Such sites and blogs need attention-grabbing graphics. Web designers (aided by a touch of human psychology) are using more banners, bookmarks, page ribbons and other "eye popping" graphics to grab the user's attention. You often find banners wrapped around "FREE" downloads, articles, etc. with the intention that the visitor should visit often for new, additional free (or paid) information.

8. Infographics

The successful interactivity between the user and website are crucial to a site's popularity; the better the user's overall experience, the better for the site. Never before has more information been presented by so many entities in such a simple, easy-to-use, manner. Unlike "YouTube" video tutorials, infographics provide data, charts, images and text in a simple, cohesive way so even a 5-year old could follow easily, e.g. Instagram. The world wide web is simply a platform for expanding our knowledge through information gathering and sharing.

9. Design elements

Web designers are rampant, but many are not very creative as they tend to use pre-formatted templates. The end results are sites that look similar, have the same basic functions and just get the information across.....in a word, boring. However, some design elements found on newer sites evoke a different sensibility. Ex: rather than the same old fonts like "Times Roman" or "Arial," custom-made fonts are being employed. These can be unique to the site, designed as part of its total

image package, or a font that enables a site or blog to retain its uniqueness in a sea of similar sites. A singular identity is key in today's massive accessibility to so many sites.

Another aspect of a site is its links to other places, but too much of a good idea has become overused and confusing. Newer sites are now attempting to locate core links toward the upper part of the page so the user doesn't have to hunt everywhere and accidentally discover the link they needed to start with!

10. Simplicity

The ultimate goal of any site is to get the user from A to B to Z as quickly and painlessly as possible. Intuitive interactivity is here now and rapidly improving. The simpler, more refined, less distracting and confusing a site, the better the user focus. The "Less is More" design concept holds true even virtually. For the average web surfer, this sophistication in design is truly appreciated.