

Tips to Design a Website That Can Increase Engagement



TIP 1:

CHECK YOUR TEXT COLOR CONTRAST

Text color contrast refers to how well text stands out against a background. The WCAG 2.0 AA standards note that you must use a **contrast ratio of 4:5:1** except for large, incidental, or logotype text. A safe way to make sure you're meeting requirements is to use the free **WebAim Color Contrast Checker**. To use the tool, simply plug in the Hex codes for your background color and foreground (text) color and the checker will tell you if they are accessible. If you need to make adjustments to your colors but want to remain in the same color scheme, try using the slider tool on the site to add black and darken the color.



TIP 2:

CHOOSE FONTS AND SIZES THAT ARE READABLE

You put text on your website so people can read what you have to say. You want to make sure your fonts aren't too small or hard to read and you definitely want to avoid blinking and moving text. To keep your site clean and professional, choose two typefaces for your entire website. Use one for body text and one for headings. **Font Pair** is a great resource to help you choose complimentary fonts.



TIP 3:

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN USER INTERFACE AND USER EXPERIENCE

User experience is how your website makes someone feel. Think about who is using your site, how they are using your site, why they are using your site, and what information they want to see. Knowing your audience will help with placement and expectations of the visual elements of your website - or your user interface. User interface is how your website looks and includes navigation, buttons, images, colors, and content.

**TIP 4:****USE KEY WEBSITE ELEMENTS AND THEIR PLACEMENT**

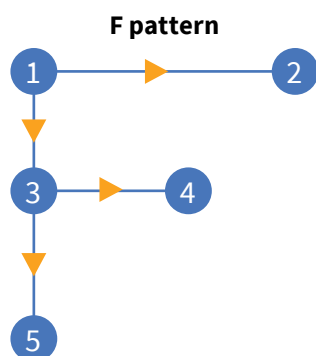
When you walk into a school you expect to see an office near the main entrance, classrooms down hallways, and a cafeteria or gym on site. Similar to those expectations, website visitors expect to see certain visual elements throughout your site. Keep these in mind when building your layout and content.

- **98%** of visitors expect a clickable logo in the top left
- **88%** of visitors expect main navigation horizontally across top
- **78%** of visitors expect a search bar on top right
- **72%** of visitors expect contact info in the footer

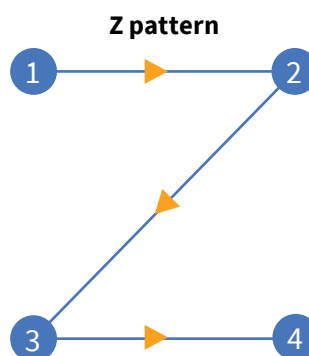
**TIP 5:****CREATE VISUAL HIERARCHIES**

Our brains are programmed to follow certain patterns and habits when consuming content. When reading a book, for example, our eyes automatically read from top to bottom, and left to right. The same thing happens with websites. Visitors typically scan a website instead of reading every word. To accommodate that flow, it's important to build a visual hierarchy.

The two most popular ways to create a hierarchy are the F pattern and the Z pattern.



The F pattern works best for information heavy websites. The design flows from left to right and top to bottom and is very conventional.



The Z pattern works best for websites that do not have a lot of information. It allows the reader to skim from your logo at the top left through your navigation then down to your first important piece of information and across the page.

When choosing your hierarchy and pattern, remember the main goal is to drive visitors to the important areas of your website. Use color, spacing, and sizing to help break up your information and highlight the areas of interest.

**TIP 6:****USE PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES**

If you need help creating an outstanding website for your school community there are plenty of professional resources at your fingertips. **Check out this free resource list** for help with accessibility, color, text, icons, and images.

These tips were originally presented by the Blackboard Creative Services Design Team during a webinar titled, “Why Design Matters: How a Well-Designed Website Can Increase Engagement.” To hear the full set of design tips, watch the video recording.

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