

## Task 1: Website consideration

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### Introduction

The past few years have seen an exponential growth in the number of websites (Popsecu, 2013) and people accessing web-based information has reached over 2 billion people (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2013). Research has demonstrated that aesthetics plays an important role in shaping user responses to products and websites. User also draw on aesthetic factors to judge usability and credibility” (David & Glore, 2010, para.1). As part of the design process web designers should consider both aesthetic and functional elements if they wish to create an effective website.

This report begins with a discussion of key design and implementation issues identified for creating a website. It then describes the technology I selected to create my website and why I selected this specific technology. Finally, it summarises my research findings and concludes with some recommendations for other teachers who may be interested in creating their own educational website.

### Research results

Some of the key design and implementation issues that people should consider when creating a website are: accessibility, copyright, credibility, readability, layout, typography and website navigation.

#### Accessibility

“The web is fundamentally designed to work for all people, whatever their hardware, software, language, culture, location, or physical or mental ability. When the web meets this goal, it is accessible to people with a diverse range of hearing, movement, sight and cognitive ability” (W3C, 2013). Therefore, it is important to ensure that your website is accessible to all Internet users. W3C provides a handy checklist: [Easy checks – A first review of web accessibility](#) to help you assess specific aspects of a web page.

#### Copyright

Copyright laws apply to anything you find on the internet. The ease of use of the internet creates a copyright minefield as many users do not realise they need permission to use someone else’s material. However, there are a growing number of tools available to assist people to correctly use and acknowledge other people’s work. For example, Creative Commons is a non-profit organization that enables the sharing and use of creativity and knowledge through free legal tools. Creative Commons licenses are not an alternative to copyright. They work alongside copyright to enable you to modify your copyright terms to best suit your needs” (Creativecommons.org, 2013).

#### Credibility (Authority, Currency & reliability)

In theory, anyone can publish on the web. Therefore it is important to evaluate the credibility of information found on the Internet. Montecino (1998) suggests “like any other source, the authority of the author helps determine the value of the information” (para. 17) and provides the following guidelines to assist us to assess the reliability of Internet information.



- **Authority:** Is there evidence that the author has some authority in the field about which they are writing? What are the author's qualifications, credentials and connections to the subject? What organisation are they affiliated with?
- **Currency:** Is the information current? Many broken or out-of-date links may reflect on the credibility of the information.
- **Reliability:** Is the information backed up with reference credible, authoritative sources? On what kind of website does the information appear?

## Readability (Layout, Typography & Colour)

Readability relies on many factors including the layout, text font (typography) and colours.

**Layout:** Website layouts work best if they are simple and uncluttered. This makes it easy for the user to navigate and view as well as guide the users' eye to the appropriate information or links. The layout should not contain too many boxes of text or pictures and all pictures should directly relate to the content. Each webpage on the website should follow a similar layout and formatting style. This shows the user continuity within the website and makes the website look more professional and complete.

**Typography:** Many design sites recommend to only use three or less different fonts to increase readability, uniformity and simplicity. Other restrictions on fonts would be the type of font used for general text and paragraphs. This text should be a sans serif font or at least a proportional font so that it is easier to read and reduces eye fatigue. Lines of text should be approximately 12-15 words long and paragraphs should be kept short and succinct (Australian Flexible Learning Community. 2002). Italic fonts should never be used due to their difficulty in being read, and decorative fonts should be avoided for the same reason.

**Colour:** Colour plays a large role in the overall feeling that the user gets from your site. In general, a website should only contain two or three major colours in the scheme as this helps makes a site, and individual pages, seem more united and less cluttered (Australian Flexible Learning Community. 2002). Certain colours also give off certain feelings. Wright (2012) provides a useful guide that identifies the [positive and negative psychological affects of colours](#). As well as these colour considerations, you should also take into consideration which colours work together to create a nice aesthetic. The Tiger Color (2012) website provides good information about [Basic color schemes - Introduction to color theory](#) that can assist you to easily create a colour scheme that is aesthetically pleasing.

## Website Navigation

A website should be easy to navigate through and easy to get back to the home page. Navigation buttons should be situated at the top of each page (Australian Flexible Learning Community. 2002) and should be displayed the same on each page. As well as this, the title of the website should take you back to the homepage. Another navigation feature that can be useful is putting navigation buttons at the bottom of the page, however this is generally reserved for pages that are more than a few screens long.

## Discussion of research results

The technology I selected to create my website was Weebly. I began my research into web creation technologies using the Technology Toolbox for Educators wiki. This wiki includes a web creation page with lots of useful information for teachers wanting to create their own



websites or helping their students learn about website creation. It also contains reviews of a number of free web creation technologies. Using the overall ratings provided on the [WebsiteToolTester.com website comparison chart for 2013](#) I selected four technologies to investigate: Jimdo, Weebly, Webnode and Yola. Using the features included in the Free versions I created a comparison table of the features I thought were most relevant for my needs (see table below).

Features	Jimdo	Weebly	Yola	WebNode
Overall rating	5	5	4	4
Ease of use	5	5	4.5	4
Design templates	5	5	4	3.5
Advertisement free	Jimdo logo	Weebly logo	Yola logo	Webnode logo
Navigation	3	5	2	5
Widgets	5	5	4	4
Visitor statistics	5	5	4.5	5
Blog	4	4	4	2
Forums	No	Yes (Tal.ki)	Yes (Tal.ki)	No
Contact form	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Password protection	Yes	No	Yes	No
Add HTML code	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Storage space	500mb	10mb per file	1GB	100mb
Fun factor	5	5	4	4

I then created a test website using each of the technologies to explore which of the sites I thought was the most suitable for my website.

**Jimdo** - <http://jennip98.jimdo.com/>

Easy to use with a wide range of layouts. You simply click on an existing placeholder to edit or click the Plus icon to add a new element to the page. At first I couldn't figure out how to publish my website. A quick Google search gave me the answer. You don't need to click a publish button, Jimdo automatically publishes your site and you can toggle between View and Edit modes using a link at the bottom of each page. It was so simple I found it a bit daunting. The only thing I couldn't find out how to change was the background colour behind the page title. Next I investigated Weebly.

**Weebly** - <http://msparkerictwebsite.weebly.com>

I found Weebly also very easy to use. I could simply "drag and drop" different elements onto the page (E.G., text, images, videos etc.) and it provided a large range of free design templates. I could also add other people as editors to my website if desired. This would be a useful feature for a group web project. There is no password protection available for the free version but this is not an issue for my website because I need to make sure all my pages are available for my peers to review and there will be no confidential information on my website.

**Yola** - <http://jennip98.yolasite.com/>

Yola, like Weebly uses a simple "drag and drop" editor. It has a limited range of free templates and very flexible page layout features. The major drawback of Yola is that the free version only allows you to create 3 pages and this is not sufficient for this project.



**Webnode** – <http://itshistory.webnode.com>

Webnode has a very limited range of page layouts. For example I wanted to make the EDN205 page 2 columns the same width, like I did in my Jimdo and Weebly sites but the only 2 column layouts available had a wide left column with a narrow right column. And there was no column element to create my own custom layout.

All four technologies were easy to use. However, in the end I choose to use Weebly as it offered the greatest flexibility and range of features.

### **Key design and implementation of my website**

Once I had decided on my website technology I then checked my website against the design and implementation elements identified in my research. Following is a short explanation of how I have addressed each of the issues identified.

**Accessibility:** I have included captions on all images and the URL for each page displays the full name of the page.

**Copyright:** I have already added a few links and used one picture from another source, which is linked back to its original page. These links help the reader by giving them further information, but it is also important for copyright issues.

**Credibility:** My website includes an 'About Me' page that includes author information, contact details and links to my professional resume and research websites. I have also included the year the website was created/updated in the copyright notice at the bottom of each page. References have been cited on all pages where third party information, images and other media have been included and where possible hyperlinks to the original sources.

**Readability:** I have used a similar layout on each page so that the user is not confused. Each page contains a title that clearly identifies which page you are reading. Information is grouped under appropriate headings and white space used between paragraphs.

**Layout:** Weebly provides a broad choice of design templates to achieve a consistent layout and colour scheme throughout the website. I selected a design that fitted with the educational purpose of my website and have used a 2 column layout for most pages except the home page.

**Typography:** I have used only one font style (Verdana) with varying and consistent sizes for page headings (18px), paragraph headings (14px) and paragraph text (11px). The colour scheme has 3 main colours: Black, blue and red (excluding pictures).

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this report was to identify key design and implementation issues for creating a website and to explain how these issues were addressed in the creation of my website. Free web based technologies make it very easy to construct your own website as they literally walk you through it. Some of the key issues to consider when developing your own website are: accessibility, credibility, copyright, readability, and website navigation. There is a wide range of information and tools available to help you create an effective website.



## Recommendations

Following are a few recommendations for teachers who might want to create a website.

- The [Technology Toolbox for Educators](#) wiki provides a range of information and tools to help you get started creating your own website.
- Make sure you include author details, creation/update dates, and references to give your website credibility.
- Use an in-built template to ensure a consistent design and layout across your website. Check colours do not detract from readability.
- Use consistent heading styles across all pages. Make sure headings reflect the page name on your navigation menu so users can easily identify which page they are on.
- Use consistent heading styles and paragraph text across all pages to give your site a more professional polished look and feel.
- Use the W3C [Easy checks – A first review of web accessibility](#) checklist to help you assess accessibility aspects of your website.
- Make sure you have a [basic understanding copyright laws](#) before publishing on the web.
- Use [Creative Commons](#) or public domain licensed images to avoid copyright issues and make sure you acknowledge the original author and include a hyperlink back to the original source.

## References

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