

Web Design in the 21st Century

News

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Twenty years ago, if you told someone that in the not too distant future they would be able to do their weekly shop, chat to friends, bid on auctions and send virtual post from their desk or home, they would collapse in a fit of laughter! Yet today these very things are everyday life for the majority of people. As the internet changed, so did the options available to web designers. The mass uptake of the broadband internet connection was a major milestone for modern web design – the speeds available for the downloading of content was such as to allow the streaming of video, audio and other multimedia. Web pages no longer were required to consist of plain text and basic formatting – web layouts could be forged completely from images and could contain animation and audio. Websites started appearing that had no discernible design or purpose – they were created and there just because they could be! Random animations were strewn haphazardly across the page and an annoying audio track looped on entry with no option to stop. We may be painting a portrait of a cliché of a bad website, but such novelties as animation and sound really turned many designers to the dark side! Thankfully, most good website design businesses were not 'wowed' sufficiently by the array of new techniques available to abandon good taste, and instead of pasting them in a montage of annoyance, used them to create rich user interfaces like nothing ever before experienced. Today designers have the tools available to achieve everything that was ever possible in print and more, on screen. With applets like Adobe/Macromedia Flash and Java and programming languages like PHP, ASP and CGI, interactivity like never thought possible is accessible to the average consumer. Nowadays, designs need to cater for an immense range of potential content – from plain text and images, maps and message boards to browser based massively multiplayer online games and interactive tours. It is generally no longer acceptable to have a page of information presented in default formatting - and call it a website. Instead of plain, boring statistics and data displayed in type, websites can today visually represent this data in graphs and charts. Users can toggle how that data is displayed, adding another level of interactivity and therefore involving the user even more with the content. Comments and suggestions for the site owners can be left, visitors can upload pictures...share them, rate them, even sell them. Message boards, chat rooms, games, libraries, shops and vast online worlds to explore. It's all possible, and the marvellous thing about it is that it can all be disabled with a flick of a switch if the user is on hardware or software which doesn't support it. With the release of a couple of brand new web technologies for the programming of websites, designers today are able to invent designs which harmoniously blend graphic beauty, accessibility, aesthetics and accessibility. If web standards - and designers respect for them - continue to grow as rapidly as they have in the past five years, one day every website will be accessible universally. This is because every web designer will create their sites in the strictest and latest standards compliant code. But until that time arrives, Integrous already does and will complete the job for you! Website Design Services

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