

## netFRONT

Eight things you don't  
want on your Web site >**Executive Summary:**

Create an important favorable impression with a Web site that serves visitors well.

**By Janeson Keeley**

Many business owners equate getting more traffic to their Web sites with getting more business from them. This may not happen if your Web site creates an unfavorable impression of your business.

This checklist, with comments by Roanoke area Web professionals, will help you identify features that may be standing in the way of the professional image you want your Web site to project.

*Splash or "click to enter" home pages.* "The name of the game here is to keep your user's clicks to a minimum," recommends graphic designer Patrick Carrell. Replace the splash page with the main content page, and more people will see your Web site content.

*Automatically loading sound or music.* "Music that comes up when the site loads can be annoying when you're browsing the Web in a business environment," reports Carilion Web application developer Buffy Lyon. Be respectful of prospective clients who may be visiting your site from their cubicles at work, and put post links to videos or sound tracks so visitors can listen at their convenience.

*Too many special effects.* "There is nothing I hate worse than pages that are in constant motion while I'm trying to read," says Web site developer Chris Berry of Roanoke. One animation or rotating picture sequence may be an asset; more than that can be distracting.

*"Unique" navigation.* Menu bars on Web sites are traditionally located across the top or



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down the left side. While it may be tempting to do something "different," it's not a good idea. "Don't force your viewers to relearn the basic navigation layout," cautions Jackie Frackelton of Lab in Kilt Design.

*Purposeless content.* If your visitor can't tell within the first few seconds what your site is about, he isn't likely to try to figure it out. "If the site is trying to reach prospective clients or customers, it must give information they need ... in the first few paragraphs," recommends Christian Moody of Web Writers Inc.

*Outdated content.* Carrell suggests giving "your Web site a once over to make sure the content is still relevant." He notes that outdated content can make your site look "stagnant, or worse, abandoned."

*Errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation.* This should go without saying, but these types of errors are common. Have a professional copy writer proofread your site.

*Hidden or missing contact information.* Make sure that you contact information is complete and easy to locate. "If it is too hard to reach you, I can easily move to your competitors," warns social media consultant John Lusher.

Your Web site is a reflection of your business. By avoiding features and errors that make your Web site appear unprofessional, you can measurably improve the likelihood of doing business with your Web site visitors. Remember: your competitors are only a few clicks away. 