Is Your Website Clouding Your Message?

Check your website to be sure you're not making it hard for visitors to hear what you want to say.

By Max T. Russell

The problem with do-it-yourself websites is that, too often, they don't solve basic problems of communication. The issue is composition. No matter how many fancy options are available for website development, you'll muddy your message if you shortcut the principles of composition. Follow these pointers to assure that you're getting your message across.

Don't clutter your site with images. Thanks to faster internet, newer website packages provide capacity to add all kinds of photos, movies, and charts to your site. These can slow your website down. They may be functional on your own server, but somebody else's system may serve up those images v-e-r-y slowly. And a few seconds can break the visitor's confidence that what you have is worth waiting for.

Be cautious about using revolving photos on the front page. You probably assume the visitor is interested in all these photos and in your pace of showing them. Those are risky assumptions. It's better to provide a hard-hitting, brief video that sticks to your main idea and engages the visitor at a pace *you* control.

But video isn't imperative. You can deliver images as still shots. It's hard to beat relevant photos that have great narration or powerful captions.

Just be sure to give your visitors a clear path that motivates them to click through to where you want them to spend their

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time. When they're looking for specific information, they don't need you to impress them with a pretty collection of your own images.

Think simplicity. To keep people on the right path, you must keep things simple. It's so easy to plaster your website with everything under the sun that might dazzle the visitor. Resist the urge – especially if the website package you bought gives you a long list of dazzling options. Draw a line through them and shoot for simple, simple, simple.

Muster your self-control and pick one big idea for your front page. Stick to that one big idea. That way you can keep your visitors on the path to what you need them to see and do.

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Marketing Your Message Online

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