HOW TO DESIGN EFFECTIVE WEBSITES FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Think of designing for age as you would any other form of persona targeting. You want to know:

- Their goals in visiting your site.
- Their familiarity with websites, in general.
- Any accessibility issues that may commonly spring up with those users.
- The average emotional response to certain triggers.

DESIGNING SITES FOR CHILDREN

- Motor skills might not be quite as refined in younger children, so interactive elements should be large enough where even the sloppiest of gestures or clicks still gives kids the payoff they expect.
- Keep the interface clean and simple enough to navigate around.
- Establish consistent relationships within the design. That way, kids can make proper associations between the design and corresponding actions that result from their engagement with it.
- Stay away from distractions like popups, links that take them away from the website, etc. Keep the experience right on that page.

DESIGNING SITES FOR TEENS

- It's safe to say that distractions can be problematic for teenagers, so it's best to keep your site's interface as clean and simple as possible.
- While the use of text won't be an issue in terms of your audience being able to read, it's more an issue of whether they'll want to read. It might be safer to rely on imagery and other directional cues to get them to the intended goal.
- Use bright colors to demonstrate where the most important parts of your website are.
- Use micro interactions throughout the site to keep them engaged.

DESIGNING SITES FOR MILLENNIALS

- Get creative with layouts and testing out new design trends. They'll appreciate your ingenuity.
- Millennials tend to prefer non-verbal forms of communication, so your site should have more than enough contact methods for them to choose from.
- Millennials want to feel like they're connecting with someone and not something, so try to be as genuine in your design as you can.
- Make your scannable content with headers, shorter paragraphs, and plentiful white space.

DESIGNING SITES FOR GENERATION X

- While most Gen Xers are familiar with the web, it's not always safe to assume they're fluent in using it. This means that simpler is better, though you don't need to go so far as to spell everything out. Just give them options that increase the convenience factor, like a search bar or blog filters.
- Generation X tends to be comprised of more goal-oriented individuals who want a clear pathway to their intended goal. So, don't bother with distractions like popups, ads, sidebars, or anything else that might impede getting to that goal.
- They don't mind doing research and taking their time to look through worthwhile content. Just remember that it needs to be relevant, insightful, and helpful.
- Of all the age groups we're looking at today, these guys are probably the most receptive to longer pages of text. A few visuals here and there won't hurt, but they need to serve an actual purpose in the experience.
- Social media probably won't be as big a deal to Gen Xers, but you can still include links to your social media profiles just in case.

DESIGNING SITES FOR BABY BOOMERS AND RETIREES

- Focus on creating a very easy-to-follow interface, one in which there is no question as to where your visitors need to go next.
- Navigation also needs to be simple and ever-present. In case anyone should get confused about where they are, keep the navigation menu at the top of the site along with a search bar. You may even want to include an actual tab for "Home" in case they don't know that the logo takes them back there.
- Larger fonts are probably a good idea, but you don't want to overdo it to the point where it compromises your design. Instead, use a tool that will enable users to increase font size on their own.
- While strong visual elements (like large call-to-action buttons) are good for directing Baby Boomers to next steps, don't go crazy with colors. Keep fonts black against a clean white background and rely on an attractive, but muted color palette for everything else.
- There's no need to try to impress Baby Boomers with super modern design trends like parallax scrolling, popups, or animation. Keep it simple and don't overwhelm.