

Examining private and professional websites regarding technique and usability

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With the growing popularity of the internet, more and more people feel it necessary to publish their own homepage on the World Wide Web. The companies also recognized the importance of their online presence, but they can not always find the best form of their online appearance, so their websites can be criticized in many aspects. One of the reasons can be that there is no general recipe for creating a good website, as these homepages have to suit many – often contradictory – expectations.

In our article we examine homepages of amateur and expert website designers. Andor Abonyi-Tóth examines the self-made homepages of future informatics teachers and programmer-mathematician students at ELTE. In each semester nearly 300 students attend his (distant learning) courses, and create their first own websites. He is compiling a comprehensive listing of typical mistakes and errors on these pages, also indicating the possible solutions for them. (<http://www.html-kezdoknek.ini.hu>)

Dénes Eglesz – editor of online gaming magazine PC Dome (<http://www.pcdome.hu>) – has actively participated in the design and development of several highly visited professional websites. Based on his experience and on other well respected sources, we gathered a list of aspects that will be the reference for examining the amateur and professional websites. This listing will not only be used for this examination, but it will also be made available for the students learning the basics of HTML.

Orhidea Edith Kiss takes part in teaching software ergonomics at her department (Izsó, L., Hercegfői, K.: Website usability. Supplementary resource, BME DEP, 2002). Together with the students she is examining usability issues of navigational solutions and tools offered by different websites.

Based on the sources above, we have created a list of aspects for our examination. Main aspects of usability:

- download speed
- ease of overview
- navigational solutions
- content
- design
- spelling
- regular updates

Besides it we are also examining the sites regarding technical solutions:

- clearness of the HTML code, missing or unnecessary elements
- structure of the page
- usage of tables
- usage, optimization of images and animations, different image types
- support for different browsers
- topological examination, error messages

In our article we will be pointing out the good and bad solutions through concrete examples.

For helping the students examine their work themselves, we are also presenting some free- and shareware programs and online services that can be used for such purposes.