

The Non-Designer's Essential Glossary of Web Design Terms

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If you have no idea what the difference is between HTML and CSS, JPEGs and PNGs, or fonts and typefaces. Then this compiled glossary is for you. It was created to bring business owners into the mix. Speaking with an in-house designer or an outside contractor, can make you feel a little silly with all the terminology and verbiage. Here are the tools to empower yourself with the terminology so your next web project will hit the mark.

A well-designed website is a two-way street and when both parties are working together and speaking the same language your project has the greatest chance of achieving its main purpose. By no means is this the be-all-end-all of web design terminology but it is a solid foundation to build upon. Here's what I have, organized alphabetically.

A

Alignment

The positioning of the elements in your design (e.g. text, images, etc.). These elements can be aligned to both the page and to each other.

Analogous Colors

On the color wheel, analogous colors are those that lie on either side of any given color.

Anchor Text

An anchor is another word for internal link or bookmark on a web page. An anchor is a link that links within the same page of the document.



B

Backlink

A backlink is a link coming from another website to your own. The number and quality of backlinks that your site has can affect your search engine optimization efforts, as some search engines provide significant weight to the backlinks of a site.

Bounce Rate

The bounce rate is the percentage of visits that come to the site and only view one page. This is a good metric to have as you can then determine how popular your site is as well as how effective (or not effective) your navigation is.

C

Call to Action

A button, arrow or other graphic element, which entices a user to perform a particular action.

CMYK Color Model

Stands for cyan, magenta, yellow, and black. This set of colors is used in print design because of the way paper absorbs light.

Color Wheel

A circle of colors that shows relationships between primary, secondary, and tertiary colors.

Color Schemes

Also known as color harmonies, color schemes are the combination of two or more colors from the color wheel.

Complementary Colors

Colors that are directly opposite of each other on the color wheel.



Content Marketing

Content marketing is the marketing and business process for creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience - with the objective of driving profitable customer action.

Contrast

The accentuation of differences between colors, shapes, spacing, or any other design element.

Crop

When you remove the outer-parts of an image to reframe the subject matter or resize the image's aspect ratio.

CMS

Stands for: Content Management System

A CMS allows it's users to edit, delete and manage the content of a website from a visual interface. A successful CMS requires no knowledge of programming languages, CSS or HTML to easily update a website. A CMS can be open source or built from scratch depending on the budget of your web project and the needs of your organization.

Open Source Examples: Expression Engine, WordPress, Magento, Drupal, Contao.

Here at WebProfessionals.us
we use **WordPress**

CSS

A piece of code that is used to designate the look and feel of a website, separate from the actual content of the web page.

D

Descender

An extender on a letter, appearing below the baseline.



Dots per Inch (DPI)

Similar to the pixel for the web, dots are the smallest unit of measurement when printing digital images. DPIs refer to the resolution of a printed digital object.

Drop Shadow



A visual effect that displays a graphic as if it has a shadow behind it.

E

EPS

A file format used for vector images that contain both text and graphics.

F

Feathering

A design technique used to smooth out edges of a feature.

Font

A typeface in one specific style and size. An example would include Times New Roman Semi Bold in size 14.

Flat Design

Flat Design: This is a design philosophy that promotes simplicity and functionality. Quite literally, flat means design that has no dimensional depth. Instead of designing elements that look like you can reach out and grab them, flat design goes back to the basics of graphics - bright colors, primitive shapes, icons, etc.

G



GIF

Pronounced jif (like the peanut butter), this image file format is best used for small image files with few colors and designs. Bonus: you can make GIFs animated!

Grid

A purely hypothetical map of vertical and horizontal lines that helps align images and text within a document.

H

Hero

A common term used to refer to the main image on a homepage or landing page

HEX Code

A code used in HTML and CSS to designate a specific color, usually appearing after the pound sign (#).

HTML

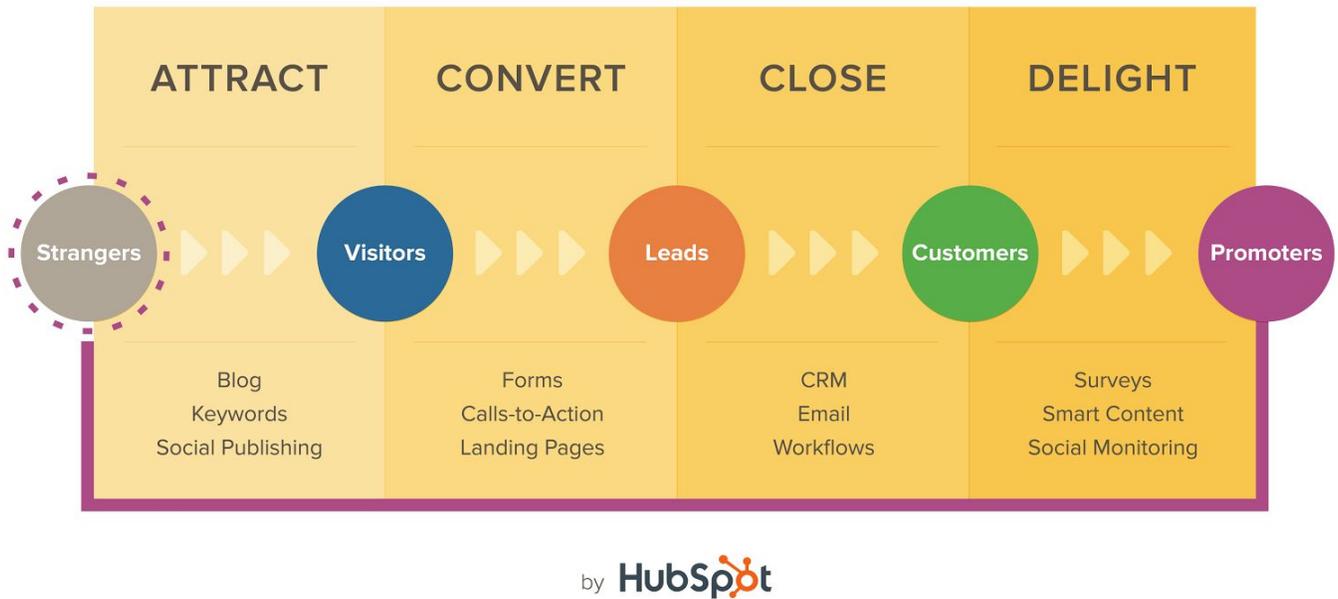
The computer language used to display content like text, images, and links on the web.

Hue

What most people think of as "color" -- red, orange, yellow, etc.

I

Inbound Marketing



Sharing is caring and inbound is about creating and sharing content with the world. By creating content specifically designed to appeal to your dream customers, inbound attracts qualified prospects to your business and keeps them coming back for more.

Inbound marketing refers to marketing activities that bring visitors in, rather than marketers having to go out to get prospects' attention. Inbound marketing earns the attention of customers, makes the company easy to be found, and draws customers to the website by producing interesting content.

Impression

An impression is an advertising term referring to each time an advertisement is loaded on the screen. Whenever a customer loads an advertisement, that is an impression.

J

JPEG

An image file type that uses lossy ([see below](#)) compression, with little perception in a loss of quality. This type of file is best used for photographs and realistic paintings where there are smooth transitions between colors.

K

Kerning

The space between individual letters.

L

Leading

The space between lines of type.

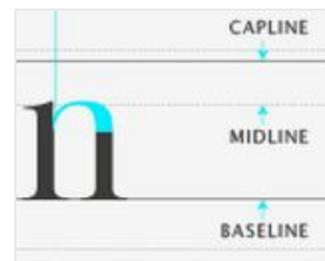
Lossy

A form of data compression where detail is deleted as the file size is decreased. A usual lossy compression method is JPEG.

M

Midline

The distance from the baseline to the top of most lowercase letters, including “e,” “g,” and the curve of “h.”



Mockup

Mockup: Mockups are basically real size models of how your design is planned to look. For web designers, a mockup will be nearly identical to the actual website, only without the functionalities. Using Wix spares you the necessity of preparing a mockup before you start with creating your website, but you can still prepare one if you want by using a draft website in your account. Once you're happy with the result, you can duplicate the draft site and add all the functionalities.

O

Open Type Fonts

The current standard in font formats. It contains both the screen and printer versions in a single file, and is compatible for both Windows and Mac. The file extension is .otf.

Organic Search

Most search engines offer two types of search results to their customers: paid results (typically at the top or on the side) and organic or natural results. While paid results can get your Web site to rank higher for a specific keyword phrase (because you've paid to be high in the results), most customers consider these results to be little better than advertising, and will often skip over them in favor of the natural or organic search results.

An organic search is a search that generates results that were not paid advertisements. Many customers feel that these results are a more accurate reflection of what they might want when searching for a specific phrase, because they are generated by popularity and common usage.

When you do SEO or search engine optimization you are attempting to adjust the content of your Web pages to rank well in the organic search results.

Orphan

A opening line in a paragraph that appears alone at the bottom of a page, or a word or very short line that appears by itself at the end of a paragraph.

P

Pageviews

A pageview is a request for an item called a page in Web analytics. A page is loosely defined as all the requests required to build one Web page. A pageview can include many hits, as the page is built with CSS, scripts, and images.

Pageviews are a good unit of measure in Web analytics. The number of pageviews a website gets is a measure of how popular it is and how attractive it will be to advertisers.

Most Web analytics tools will show you pageviews.

PDF

A file format best used to represent documents and presentations.

Pixel

The smallest element of an image on a computer.

PNG

An image file format that's best used when you have large areas of uniform color or images with transparent backgrounds (unlike JPEG).

R

Rectangular (or Tetradic) Colors

Four colors that are two pairs of complementary colors.



Responsive

What can web design respond to, you ask? To the type of device that it's viewed with, of course. With the rise of mobile and tablet web usage, responsive design - web design that makes sure your site looks great on all devices - is a key condition when designing a website.

Resolution

Resolution is sometimes identified by the width and height of the **image** as well as the total number of pixels in the **image**. For example, an **image** that is 2048 pixels wide and 1536 pixels high (2048 X 1536) contains (multiply) 3,145,728 pixels (or 3.1 Megapixels). You could call it a 2048 X 1536 or a 3.1 Megapixel **image**.

RGB Color Model

Standing for the colors red, green, and blue, the RGB color model is used for web design because monitors transmit light in those colors.

Robot Text

The robots.txt file is a file in the root directory of a web site that controls spider access to the site. It can allow or disallow specific spiders access to specific pages on the site. Spiders can ignore the robots.txt file, but the reputable ones check it first and index only the pages that the robots.txt file allows them to. Notably, all of the major search engines and the Wayback Machine honor the robots.txt file.

S

Saturation

How bright or intense a color is.

Schema Markup

Schema markup is code (semantic vocabulary) that you put on your website to help the search engines return more informative results for users. If you've ever used rich snippets, you'll understand exactly what schema markup is all about.

Serif

A small line attached to the end of a stroke in some fonts.

Shade

How much black is mixed in with the hue.

Single Page Design

Single-Page Sites: Most internet users are familiar with websites that are divided into several pages and that use a navigation menu to move from one page to another. A single-page website literally has only one page. There are many reasons a website owner would prefer to have a single-page rather than a multi-page website. For the design process, the single-page layout requires planning and thought to achieve effective content hierarchy. Fortunately, Wix has many [single-page templates](#) that are already set up for that purpose.



Split-Complementary Colors

Similar to complementary colors, split-complementary colors involves the base color plus the two colors that lie next to its complementary color.

Square Colors

On the color wheel, four colors are spaced evenly from each other.



T

Triadic Colors

Color scheme where three colors located at 120 degrees from each other are combined. Often considered the best color scheme.

Typeface

A design collection of characters, including letters, numbers, and punctuations. Examples include Times New Roman, Helvetica, and Arial.



U

UI

Stands for: User Interface. A UI designer focuses on the usability between a website and its users. They make sure the targeted user can use the website with ease by designing elements to make their experience easy.

Example: The UI of the website allowed the user to easily find the product they were searching for and make a purchase.

UX

Stands for: User Experience. This term encompasses UI. It includes all of the emotions, feelings, moods etc. associated with the use of a website's UI.

Example: While using WebProfessionals.us's UI to find work samples, the user experienced happiness, a sense of clarity and no feelings of frustration while completing the task. The UX of user "A" was relatively good. If they felt confused, frustrated and lost, their user experience would be poor.

V

Vector Image

Instead of using pixels to represent images, vectors use lines and shapes. Because they do not rely on pixels, enlarged vector images still maintain image clarity and quality.

Visual Hierarchy

A design principle that visually emphasizes certain parts of your content's message by using colors, sizes, and layouts.

W

Watermark

An easy-to-see marker placed over the top of photos on the web and in print. It is used to identify the owner of an image and prevent visual content theft.

Weight

In typefaces, the thickness of the stroke's width. Some examples include demibold, light, and bold.

White Space

The blank space surrounding an object in design. Also called negative space.

Widow

When the end of the paragraph spills over into the following column or page, the section of text that spills over is called a widow.

Wireframe

Very crude and simplistic drawings and/or layouts of a webpage, which typically have no design applied. Wireframes are used in the preliminary stages of a website design. They allow for designers to focus on the UI and the layout of content first before applying any design. This is a critical step in any mid to large size website that has a lot of different elements and/or content.

The design of a website can often distract from its true purpose of displaying information and content effectively. Many designers do this step first to avoid missing any crucial elements or information. Wireframing can save time in development by allowing for items to be missed in the planning or design phase rather than in the final stages. It typically costs more to rework an already designed and developed web page than to catch a mistake in the planning stages.

X

X-height

In a letter, the distance between midline and the baseline.



Z

ZIP file

A file format that compresses many other files and combines them into a single folder. Compressed files do not lose any data to become smaller and are easily restored by unzipping the ZIP file.

Image credits: [KISSmetrics](#) (Analogous, Complementary, Rectangular, Split-Complementary, Square, and Triadic Colors), [Playtype](#) (Ascender, Cap Height, Descender, Midline, Stem), [A Digital Dreamer](#) (X-Height), [Hubspot](#)

<http://webprofessionals.us>

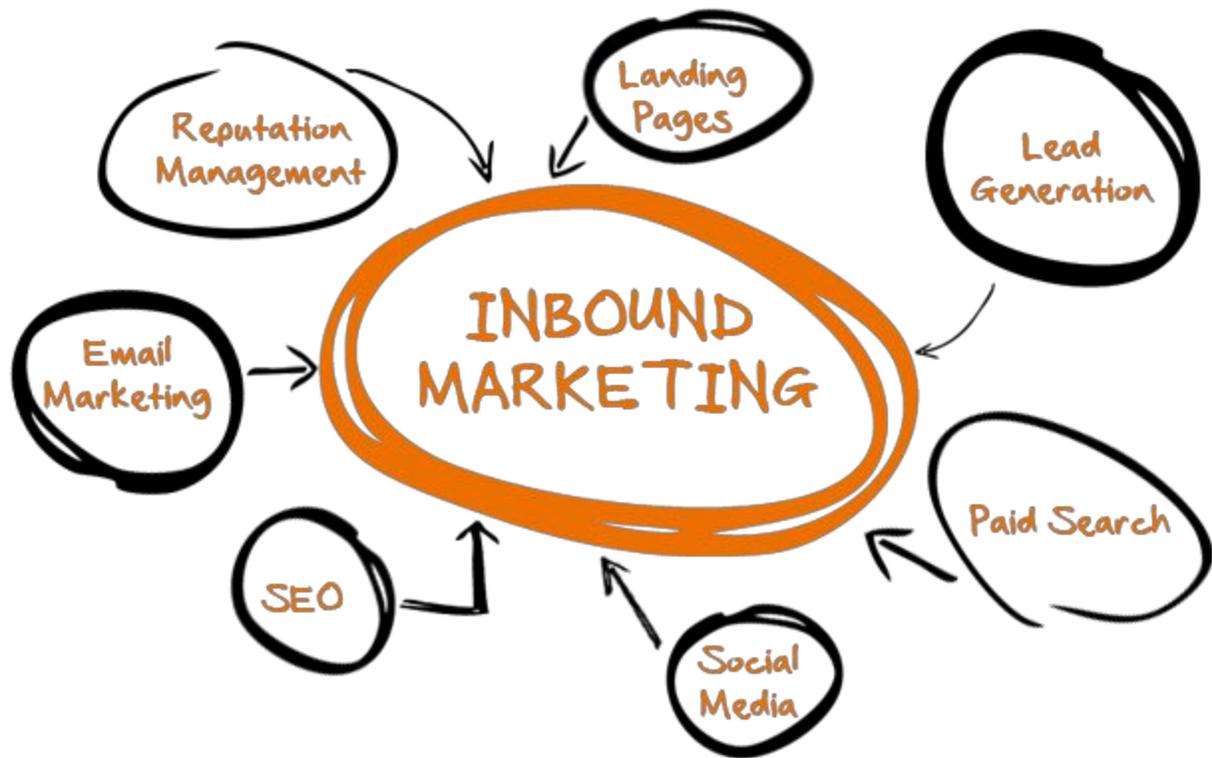
An advertisement on a dark grey background. On the left is a screenshot of a social media dashboard with a heart icon and the text 'Social Media Marketing People Love'. On the right, the text reads 'How to Optimize Your Social Media Marketing Strategy' in large white font, followed by 'We'll evaluate your current strategy & offer tips to get the most out of your social media marketing efforts.' in a smaller white font. At the bottom right is a blue button with the text 'Get a Free Assessment' and a white play button icon.

Topics: [Design](#) [Content Marketing](#)

Bonus

PROGRESSIVE ENHANCEMENT [LINK](#)

Progressive enhancement is a strategy for web design that uses web technologies in a layered fashion that allows everyone to access the basic content and functionality of a web page, using any browser or Internet connection, while also providing those with better bandwidth or more advanced browser software an enhanced version of the page.



For more details on web design & mobile development and Inbound Marketing or to work with the Web Professionals at ArtHaven International contact us via email or from our websites.

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