



A paper for GCOM360 :: User Interface Design  
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## The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly in Web Design

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# GCOM 360

### Evaluating and Comparing Web Designs

*Web usability can take into consideration many elements of website design feature and function based upon each person's own criteria as to what he or she deems as usable or not usable in terms of individual user desire. In this paper I choose to focus on 4 elements which I deem important to my personal website user experience. I then look to see if each website reviewed can pass these criteria, which are:*

- **Purpose** - Does the website clearly say and show what it does as well as provide supporting images, captions and links to more information?
- **Content** - Is information clear, concise and informative?
- **Navigation** - Is the navigation menu uncomplicated and easy to use, and is there always clear navigation on every page I visit? Where there is many products, services or information topics is there a search bar?
- **Appearance** - Is the typeface easily readable? Are heading used? Is there imagery and is it relevant? Are soft animations used? Is there branding and a relevant, consistent color scheme? Is the website responsive?

#### The Good

**Mountain Rose Herbs.** **Purpose** is clearly stated on the home page as "PURVEYOR OF SUSTAINABLE ORGANIC INGREDIENTS" in bolded uppercase large and centered H1 text. A Sub-heading just below it supports the heading with "Shop our vast selection of high-quality herbs, spices, teas & DIY supplies." Just below this is a beautiful collage of colorful herbs and spices. **Content** is well organized as items for sale are alphabetized Clicking an item brings up excellent detail for each item including Latin name, common name, overview, parts used, preparation, historical use data and precautions. Site **Navigation** is exceptional in that each cascade of the sub menu also has an icon to visually show the user what can be expected at that menu location. Menu cascade is activated on hover, the main menu is accessible from every page and the search function works well to locate specific items. Search. Overall the **appearance** is excellent with use of clear and large typeface. Bold and clear headings appear on every page. Beautiful imagery used for every item for sale on every page. Soft animations are used in the small gallery on the home page. This is a very good and usable website in every respect

## The Bad

[William Tell Archery Supplies](#). While clear that the **purpose** of this merchant is online archery supply sales, the image animations on the landing page too much resemble a moving target on a shooting range with so much erratic movement that, like a hard to shoot moving target, it becomes hard to focus on the items on display and thus detracts from the purpose of display for sales. Usability says the target should be the audience, not the landing page. **Content** wise there are specifications of the crossbow items but the descriptions are short with not enough description and inconsistent as well. For example, one crossbow specifies performance in frames per second while another specifies performance as the draw weight of the device. It is hard to compare the performance of items where descriptions lack detail and specifications are incomplete. **Navigation** is not too bad but on the descriptions page the tag cloud does not have icons but **appear** as strange looking dots on the page. The typefaces used are small and without style. The galleries do not look pleasing to the eye being too small, poorly positioned with too much padding between images. The click actions of the JavaScript launchers for the galleries do not work at all and the clicked image will just display a loading icon but never pop up the image. The page margins are too narrow and the overall cheese ball functionality of the website gives the impression that the products sold are also cheese ball and chincy.

## The Ugly

[Elk Grove Taxidermy](#). Taxidermy is the stated business **purpose** but from the condition of this website one wonders if the business still really exists. We have a full page dedicated to items for sale but on that page it says "Sorry, nothing for sale at this time." There is very little **content** at all on the website, but then again, how many would need the services of a taxidermist in these days. The oversized **navigation** menu on the left margin is clear but there are only links on the gallery page which when clicked shows a gallery. There is no JavaScript code on this website and clicking on a gallery image opens it and replaces the web page in so doing, requiring a browser back button click to return to the website. On the "Links" page one goes to a website written in Chinese and the other a dead link. On the "Contact" page we see the contact information and a link: "click here for prices", which when clicked opens a PDF file of pricing but replaces the web page, requiring a browser back button click to get back to the website. The overall **appearance** is ugly with a black background in use with black space inside the narrow margins. The typeface on the front page runs into the image with no padding used looking crude. An inspection of the source code shows a hand coded HTML construction using the old doctype of XHTML 1.0 Transitional with embedded CSS code and deprecated HTML tags throughout.