

Chapter 1. Let's Get Started ... but How?

Planning to Stay on Schedule and Within Budget

Effective Pre-planning

Checklist 1.1

- Choose a focus, and keep it simple.
- Delegate decision-making tasks.
- Plan ahead.
- Allow plenty of time to plan and develop your new web site.

Doing your Homework and Making Educated Decisions

Checklist 1.2

- Learn about and understand the common types of web site features and content.
- Read case studies about how businesses that are different from, and similar to, your own have created their sites.
- Visit other web sites.
- Compile a list of competitors' web sites that you'll visit regularly.
- Research the kinds of skills that will be needed to develop your web site.
- Research potential web site costs.
- Seek advice from others who have experience with web projects.
- Learn about current best practices and standards.

Developing a Web Site Style Guide

Checklist 1.3

- Provide and promote consistency among all of the web site's elements and content.
- Include writing style guidelines and clear examples that show users how to maintain consistent written communications throughout the web site.
- Include instructions about content publication and permissions.

- Include specifications for the usage of graphics and multimedia.
- Include guidelines for, and examples of, the use of logos and other branding elements.
- Include instructions for meeting, and text that addresses, the company's legal policies.
- Provide templates for the site's key web pages, along with instructions for, and examples of, their usage.

Managing Like Magic: Effective Organization

Checklist 1.4

- Break down your web site project into its major phases.
- Within each major phase, create smaller, more manageable steps.
- Prepare and follow a task list based on the above task breakdowns.
- Create a realistic schedule.
- Plan to update web site content regularly to keep it fresh and current.
- Consider using helpful project management tools.

Working Together as a Team

Checklist 1.5

- Communicate clearly.
- Keep one master plan and one master schedule. Make sure these documents are always current, accurate, and accessible to all team members.
- Be supportive.
- Be positive and dependable.
- Be diplomatic and sensitive to others involved in the project.
- Stay flexible.

Chapter 2. What to Find Out: Initial Questions to Answer

Establishing your Target Audience

Who will Visit and Why?

Checklist 2.1

- Determine the types of external visitors who will visit your site.
- Determine the range of abilities and disabilities your visitors are likely to have.
- Determine the levels of Internet experience your visitors are likely to have.
- Determine the reasons why each different type of user will visit your site.

How will they Visit?

Checklist 2.2

- Identify the different browsers and alternative devices that visitors may use.
- Identify the different computer platforms that visitors may use.
- Determine the range of Internet connection speeds over which users will access your site.

Identifying your Initial Goals

Checklist 2.3

- Identify your site's primary goals and requirements.

Identifying your Budget

Domain Name Costs

Checklist 2.4

- Itemize and budget for all the domain names that will be registered each year.
- Consider the costs associated with purchasing more than one domain name.
- Don't infringe on trademarked names.

Web Hosting

Checklist 2.5

- Determine the bandwidth allowance you require.
- Determine how much disk space your site will require.
- Determine the quality of hosting service you'll receive.
- Determine the level of hosting support you'll need.
- Determine the training you'll need to support your web hosting arrangements.

Identify your Server Needs

Checklist 2.6

- Determine your needs for CGI use and access privileges.
- Determine your needs for server-side scripting technologies such as PHP, ASP.NET, and others.
- Determine your needs for server-side includes (SSI).
- Determine your needs for a secure server (one that uses SSL).
- Determine your email requirements.

Branding and Marketing

Checklist 2.7

- Consider using professional logo design services.
- Include costs for purchasing fonts, typography, and symbols, along with other branding-related expenses.
- Factor in the cost of paid search directory and search engine submissions.
- Budget for online marketing expenses.
- Budget for offline advertising and promotions.
- Include costs for training staff members in marketing, advertising, search engine strategies, and related branding and marketing tasks for your web site.

Bringing in the Experts

Checklist 2.8

- Include costs for a publicity agent or marketing specialist.
- Budget for the commissioning of content creators and editors.
- Include costs for an SEO (search engine optimization) copy expert.
- Include the costs of employing and training staff who are involved with the web site's ongoing maintenance.

How Much is a Picture Worth?

Checklist 2.9

- Budget to pay licensing fees for the online use of royalty-free stock images and image collections.
- Include the costs of hiring professional photographers.
- Include costs for the creation and/or use of illustrations and other custom imagery.
- Include in your budget the costs of purchasing or hiring the hardware and software necessary to take photos, and scan and prepare images.
- Ensure your budget includes the necessary training costs for the creation of photography and graphics, and the processing of images for your web site.

Ecommerce

Checklist 2.10

- Include merchant account and related fees, or the fees charged by merchant account alternatives.
- Factor in the cost of secure server (SSL) facilities.
- Budget to purchase and run a shopping cart program.
- Include custom programming costs.
- Budget for product shipping, fulfillment, and related expenses.
- Include the cost of training staff to manage all aspects of your site's ecommerce capabilities, as needed.

Computer Software and Hardware

Checklist 2.11

- Include the cost of purchasing hardware and software needed to write and edit content.
- Factor into your budget the costs of web design and programming software.
- Budget to purchase software with which to create and manipulate graphics and photos.
- Anticipate the costs of upgrading existing hardware and purchasing new hardware, such as high quality monitors, additional memory, and so on.
- If you don't already have one, budget to buy a digital camera (two megapixels or more), and purchase related training, software, and so on.
- If you don't already have one, include the cost of purchasing a scanner.
- Budget to buy a fax machine.
- Include the costs of hardware and software required to work with media such as audio and video.
- Include training costs in your budget as needed.

Chapter 3. Preparing Web Site Content

Gathering and Itemizing Content

Checklist 3.1

- Use physical file folders to organize print materials and notes.
- Save digital content to organized folders on your computer, or to a drive that's accessible to relevant project team members.
- Save electronic versions of existing web site content to organized folders.
- Itemize common page elements and detail their content.
- Itemize each web page and detail the content it requires.

Providing Accessible Content

Checklist 3.2

- Provide thorough, current information.
- Provide helpful links to other web sites and resources.
- Provide an accessible contact link.
- Provide helpful shopping information.
- Provide an informative privacy policy.
- Use plugins and alternative content formats judiciously.

Preparing Web Copy

Checklist 3.3

- Write concise sentences.
- Keep paragraphs short.
- Use subheadings to break up content.
- Use list formatting when possible.
- Provide a summary or overview of key points for longer articles before providing the details.
- Avoid using all capitals for titles.

- Provide clear, concise calls to action.
- Keep layout and formatting to a minimum.
- Avoid converting text content to HTML using word processing software.
- Minimize the use of alternative formats for text content.

Preparing Images

Checklist 3.4

- Select high quality images to support your site's credibility.
- Use photos that are in focus, are sharp, and exhibit good color contrast.
- Respect and obtain proper web-use licensing for the use of any images that you don't own.
- Select non-lossy formats for original images.
- Select illustrations, clipart, and other images that are sharp and have good color contrast.
- Crop images, if required, to target their most important aspects.
- Remove or diminish busy backgrounds, if required, to target the image's important aspects.
- Prepare thumbnail images for larger images.
- Use appropriate, widely supported image file formats.
- Resize images using a graphics program.
- If you have a large number of images, batch process consistent treatments to save time.

Chapter 4. Managing all the Content

Assessing your Web Site Content

Checklist 4.1

- Take a content inventory.
- Itemize your content.

Determining your Content Management Needs

Checklist 4.2

- Assess your needs for a content management system.
- Assess your needs for an ecommerce system.
- Assess your needs for HTML, XHTML, and/or CSS skills.
- Assess your needs for web authoring tools.
- Consider whether you need programming and database administration skills.
- Assess your needs for image editing tools.

Web Authoring Tool Features

Checklist 4.3

- The tool has a customizable, easy-to-use, user-friendly interface.
- The tool offers template support.
- The tool provides permission controls and the ability to lock templates.
- The tool offers snippet or clip support.

Content Management System Features

Features for you and your Staff

Checklist 4.4

- The tool has a customizable, easy-to-use, user-friendly interface.
- The tool offers form-based text editing.
- The tool supports WYSIWYG content editing.

- The tool functions on multiple browsers and platforms.
- The tool offers spellcheck functionality for content additions and editing.
- The tool offers staging server support.
- The tool provides for permission-based access.
- The tool supports automated version control and tracking.
- The tool allows for an unlimited number of content contributors.
- The tool permits annotations or comments for content review and changes.
- The tool provides email notifications of progress through steps in the workflow.
- The tool offers centralized content and document management features.
- The tool offers stability, reliability, and excellent performance overall.
- The tool is affordable.
- The tool offers excellent after-sales support.

Content Publication Features

Checklist 4.5

- The tool supports content lifecycle management.
- The CMS allows for the scheduling of publications.
- The tool dynamically or automatically generates indexes or lists.
- The tool automates the cross-referencing and interlinking of content and other data on the site.
- The tool offers customizable directory structures and directory names.
- The tool supports customizable filenames and the creation of search-engine friendly, human-friendly URLs.
- The tool has customizable categorization options.
- The tool has flexible, customizable archiving options.

- The tool allows for the easy management and use of images, multimedia, and other web site content formats.
- The tool facilitates the easy management of email subscriptions.
- The tool provides detailed activity logs and traffic reports.

Behind-the-Scenes Features

Checklist 4.6

- The CMS is flexible, scalable, and nonproprietary.
- The tool provides automated, scheduled backups.
- The tool offers support for multiple platforms.
- The CMS offers support for popular scripting packages.
- The tool provides custom template support and integration.
- The tool separates content from presentation.
- The tool produces standards-compliant XHTML, HTML, XML and CSS code.
- The tool provides support for W3C Web Accessibility Guidelines, and applicable government requirements.
- The tool validates internal and external hyperlinks.
- The CMS integrates with existing applications and processes.
- The tool generates dynamic pages.
- The tool generates static pages.
- The CMS lets you generate and manage metadata.

Chapter 5. Web Site Usability: Focusing on the User

Creating a User-friendly Index Page

Checklist 5.1

- Provide obvious identification for your web site.
- Provide an overview of what your web site has to offer.
- Provide fresh content.
- Provide shortcuts to your site's most frequently visited pages.
- Provide easy access to your site's login tools, and direct links to registration forms and account information.
- Prominently display the site's search box.
- Provide a direct link to your sitemap.

Ensuring your Web Site Focuses on Users

Checklist 5.2

- Give users the chance to provide themselves with self-service.
- Provide predictable and consistent global navigation.
- Display "You are Here"-type cues for users.
- Support multiple methods by which users can reach or find content.
- Provide easy access to help and contact information.
- Provide friendly, helpful information about potential errors.
- Ensure that your pages load quickly for all users.
- Accommodate a wide range of user abilities, disabilities, browsers, and alternative devices.
- Use color effectively.
- Provide scannable pages.

- Speak your visitors' language.
- Use instantly recognizable and relevant hyperlinks.
- Ensure that your pages are bookmark-friendly.
- Make sure your site's functionality and features behave predictably.
- User-test throughout the design and development processes.

Providing Fast-loading Web Pages

Checklist 5.3

- Accommodate a wide range of user connection speeds.
- Optimize your web page markup.
- Use minimal graphics per page, to save page load times and bandwidth.
- Optimize images and alternative file formats, including multimedia files.
- Promote "flow" by providing a fast response to user interactions, and minimizing distractions.
- Load useful content first.

Accommodating User Abilities, Disabilities, Browsers, and Alternative Devices

Checklist 5.4

- Provide a flexible web site design that works in a wide range of screen resolutions and window sizes, and with alternative devices.
- Use scalable font sizes.
- Avoid using frames if possible.
- Provide printable versions of your web site.

Ensuring Predictability

Checklist 5.5

- Provide clear, predictable, consistent web site and page architecture.
- Include important web site and page identifiers, navigation elements, and location cues on every page.

- Keep existing browser functionality enabled.

Using Conventional Practices

Checklist 5.6

- Underline hyperlink text, and display links in a different color from surrounding text.
- Avoid underlining text that is not a hyperlink.
- Differentiate between visited and unvisited hyperlinks.
- Apply easily recognized, commonly used labels.
- Place web objects where users expect to find them.
- Place your logo at the top-left of every web page, and link that logo to your homepage on every page except Home.
- Place a Home link near the top-left of each web page, or in your global navigation.
- For web sites that offer account management and/or shopping cart facilities, place View Cart and/or Manage Account functions near the top-right of each relevant page.
- Place a local web site search form at the top of each web page.

Providing User-friendly Corrections for User Errors

Checklist 5.7

- Provide obvious, clear error messages that explain how the user can resolve the error.
- Use consistent error message content, formats, and locations.
- Use color and text to highlight user errors and explain how to fix the problem.
- Eliminate the need for back-and-forth clicking.
- Don't make users have to retype correct information.
- Provide concise instructions.

Chapter 6. Color

Preparing a Color-friendly Work Environment

Checklist 6.1

- Position your monitors in areas with subdued light, out of strong or direct light.
- Use color-neutral, daylight-balanced lighting in your work area.
- Set your displays to 24-bit or 32-bit color (True Color).
- Set your display contrast to its maximum unless the image display is too bright or harsh on this setting.
- Calibrate your displays to the sRGB ICC profile.

Choosing a Color Scheme

Checklist 6.2

- Base your web site's color scheme on your branding and logo colors.
- Use a neutral, subtle color scheme for your web site to help direct the focus to your products or services.
- Use color to convey meaning.
- Consider the different meanings associated with colors in particular cultures.
- Use no more than six colors in your web site color scheme, if possible.
- Avoid placing blocks of saturated, complementary colors next to one another.
- Test for color differences, inconsistencies, and problems using a variety of displays, resolutions, and platforms.

Using Color to Enhance Functionality

Checklist 6.3

- Use color to direct user focus.
- Use colors consistently to avoid user confusion.
- Use color to distinguish hyperlinks from regular text.
- Avoid using purple to style unvisited hyperlinks.

- Avoid using blue to style visited hyperlinks.
- Where possible, use CSS, instead of graphics, to create web site colors.
- Perform a “wireframe” test to ensure that you’re catering for various user preferences and disabilities.
- Use color to emphasize the organization of information and provide visual cues.
- Don’t rely solely on color to communicate important visual cues.

Using Color to Enhance Readability

Checklist 6.4

- For best legibility, use colors that provide a strong contrast between the page background and the text.
- Use solid, light-colored backgrounds behind dark-colored text for page content areas.
- Avoid displaying patterns, textures, and colorful backgrounds behind text.

Chapter 7. Information Architecture

Laying the Foundations

Checklist 7.1

- Determine how users will interact with your web site.
- Document the steps involved for each user activity.
- Allow for a range of Internet experiences and a variety of skill levels among users.
- Allow for a variety of user abilities and disabilities.

Improving Findability

Checklist 7.2

- Organize content from visitors' perspectives.
- Visually group pieces of information into manageable units.
- Visually group similar kinds of information together.
- Visually separate different information.
- Create multiple ways to find information on your web site.
- Plan to monitor your site's search and activity logs.

Organizing for Success

Organization Schemes

Checklist 7.3

- Use an exact organization scheme for users who know what they want.
- Use an ambiguous organization scheme for users who may not know what they want.
- Use both schemes when possible.

Organizing Content Structure

Checklist 7.4

- Organize content into groups.
- Determine logical hierarchies.

- Identify related information.
- Use faceted classifications and hierarchies to help users view information in a variety of ways.
- Ensure that your web site's labeling system uses clear, short, consistent labels that your visitors will understand.
- Diagram your content's information architecture.

Preparing Web Page Information Architecture

Checklist 7.5

- Organize web page content logically, predictably, and consistently.
- Emphasize important content.
- Create mockups, such as sketches, wireframes, and paper prototypes to reflect each of your web page architecture needs.
- Group corporate information items together.
- If you place ads on your homepage, place them on the outer parts of the page, and make sure they're clearly differentiated from web site content.

Information Architecture for Ecommerce Pages

Checklist 7.6

- Make the shopping cart easy to find from anywhere on your web site.
- For each product on a web page, display a clear, at-a-glance view of the item's name, price, current availability, an item description, shipping options, and Add to Cart or Add to Wish List links.
- Clearly show ordering options, and link to details.
- Clearly show within the contextual navigation any related items that are available.
- Clearly display user's progress within the ordering process.
- Keep order forms simple.
- Emphasize to users that all transactions are secure.
- Clearly display special handling options for gift items.

- If your ecommerce store sells internationally, design menus and information accordingly.
- Clearly show options that allow customers to modify the quantity of each item being purchased.
- Provide clear links that allow users to return to the shopping process from their carts.

Organizing Directories

Checklist 7.7

- Base your user-friendly directory structure on your content's information architecture.
- Use conventional practice to create guessable, user-friendly, consistent directory names.
- Plan ahead for the growth of your directory structure.
- If you generate pages dynamically from a database, use server-side scripting to create easy-to-remember permanent URLs.
- Allow for secure areas in your directory structure.

Using Friendly URIs, URLs, and Filenames

Checklist 7.8

- Use human-readable, consistent filenames.
- Create human-friendly URLs, including database-generated URLs.
- Keep filenames and directory names as short as possible.
- Use lowercase letters and numbers as first choices for directory names and filenames.
- Avoid the use of mixed-case or all-capitals for filenames and directories.
- Limit the use of underscores, hyphens, and periods in filenames and directory names.
- Avoid using special characters in filenames or directory names.
- Avoid character spaces in filenames.
- Create filenames and locations with a view to permanence and the long term.
- Redirect the URLs of pages that have been moved or removed.

Hiding Filename Extensions as Much as Possible

Checklist 7.9

- Create your web site's file directory structure to use directory defaults for web page file-names.
- In your site's markup, hide filename extensions as much as possible.

Chapter 8. Navigation

Golden Rules for Effective Web Site Navigation

Checklist 8.1

- Create the navigation system with users in mind.
- Place the navigation system where users expect to find it.
- Ensure that the navigation system accommodates the various ways in which visitors want to access content and functionality on your site.
- Provide multiple ways for users to access information.
- Use the sitemap you created as you developed the site's information architecture to inform the development of your site's navigation.
- Ensure that your navigation system provides context and flexibility to reinforce your information architecture hierarchy.
- Create and implement a consistent navigation system throughout your web site.
- Use templates, server-side includes (SSI), or similar technologies to simplify the maintenance, and support the consistency, of your navigation system.
- Explain your navigation system in your web site style guide.
- Use navigation labels that are concise, conventional, and easily understood.
- If you use icons within your navigation, use them as enhancements, not as the only visual cues.
- If you use graphics in navigation areas, be sure to cater to visitors who use low-bandwidth connections and/or alternative devices.
- Avoid using Flash to create your web site's navigation.
- If you use JavaScript to create or enhance navigation elements, make sure your navigation works without it.
- Keep in mind the browser features that are used to access your web site.
- Don't disable browser navigation features.

Creating User-centered Global Navigation

Checklist 8.2

- Include a link to your homepage in your global navigation.
- Include links to all of your web site's top-level sections in your global navigation.
- Include links to your web site's help information in your global navigation.
- Provide contextual clues that identify the user's current location.
- Use minimal global navigation on form pages.

Creating Local or Section Navigation

Checklist 8.3

- Complement your web site's global navigation with local navigation.
- Use local and internal navigation to link to more detailed information.
- For web sites that have subsites, or sections with subcategories, consider including subcategory navigation within the global navigation.
- Use structural breadcrumb navigation to add context for users.
- Create local navigation systems for sections of your web site that contain more than a few pages.
- Create a user-friendly table of contents for each section of your web site.

Providing Internal Page Navigation

Checklist 8.4

- For longer pages, create a tables of contents whose items link to each heading or subheading on the page.
- If content is broken across several pages, include links to all those pages from each page of content.
- If content is broken across several pages, give users the option to view it all on one page.
- Provide Top of Page links for pages that span more than two screens.
- For longer pages, include Top of Page links at regular intervals.

Adding Supplemental Navigation

Creating Sitemaps

Checklist 8.5

- Create a sitemap for sites of more than fifteen pages.
- Create a text-based sitemap rather than a graphical sitemap.
- Make sure your sitemap reinforces your site's information hierarchy.
- Make sure your sitemap provides easy, quick, direct access to your web site content.
- Make sure your sitemap supplements existing navigation, rather than being a last resort for users, or an excuse for poor global navigation.

Creating Site Indexes

Checklist 8.6

- Create your site index based on the terms that users actually look for.
- For each term in your index, provide a listing of the documents indexed with that term.
- Remember to update your site index regularly to keep it current and accurate.

Creating Search

Determine Whether or not you Need a Search Feature

Checklist 8.7

- Include a search feature if your web site has too much information to browse easily, or if users expect it.
- Include a search feature if you have highly dynamic content.

Developing a Search Feature

Checklist 8.8

- Include a search box within the global or local navigation on every page of your site.
- For search options with restricted scope, clearly state the scope of the search in both the search box and the results pages.
- Ensure that search results are sorted to present the best matches first.
- Organize search results in groups according to the web site structure.

- Keep page abstracts short on search results pages.
- For advanced search, provide brief, helpful instructions.
- Allow users to search within their current results to help narrow their search.
- Provide helpful options when a search yields no results.
- Make sure your search results program eliminates duplications within the search results list.
- Enhance search destination pages, for instance, by highlighting the user's search terms.

Chapter 9. Best Coding Practice: W3C Standards and Recommendations

Magic Markup

Checklist 9.1

- Use consistent markup.
- Use the correct **DOCTYPE**.
- Validate your code.
- Include the correct character encoding with the **Content-Type** `<meta>` tag on every web page.
- Encode reserved HTML characters as HTML character entities.
- Include the **title** element on each page.
- Include **meta** elements to aid your web site's search engine rankings.
- Avoid using proprietary markup or scripts.
- Avoid using deprecated markup.
- Mark up text using an HTML editor or W3C-compliant CMS.
- Optimize the markup generated by graphics programs.

Separating Content from Presentation

Checklist 9.2

- Use external CSS.
- Use absolute links, rather than relative links, with externally linked files
- Avoid the use of embedded scripts and embedded or inline CSS.
- Use CSS to control web page presentation and element styling.
- Use the **table** element to display tabular data only.

Ensuring the Integrity of your Markup

Checklist 9.3

- Use proper heading elements.
- Use **u1**, **o1**, and **li** elements to mark up lists.
- Use definition list elements—**d1**, **dt**, and **dd**—for lists of definitions.
- Use the **br** element for line breaks only.
- Avoid using the **pre** element for general formatting.
- Use the **span** element sparingly.

Excellent XHTML

Checklist 9.4

- Nest all elements properly.
- Use lowercase letters for all element and attribute names.
- Close all elements.
- Include a value for minimized attributes such as **selected** or **checked**.
- Use the **id** and **name** attributes for fragment identifiers.
- Use the **alt** attribute with images.
- Use **&** to express the ampersand (&).
`http://mybyz.com/cgi-bin/myscript.pl?class=john&doe=member`
- Avoid including line breaks and multiple white space characters within attribute values.
- Format comments correctly.
- Ensure that embedded CSS and scripts are uncommented.

Spectacular CSS

Checklist 9.5

- Use CSS for decorative images.
- Use CSS to designate borders and whitespace, and achieve the visual alignment of images.

- Designate the anchor pseudo-class rules in order: **link**, **visited**, **focus**, **hover**, **active**.
- Minimize the use of CSS hacks and workarounds, and ensure that those you *do* use, validate.

Using Appropriate CSS Naming Conventions

Checklist 9.6

- Use the **id** attribute for core structural components.
- Assign helpful, descriptive names to describe the function or purpose of each CSS **class** and **id**.
- Begin **id** attribute names with a letter, not a number.
- Avoid using underscores in CSS **class** and **id** attributes.
- Avoid names that describe location, such as “left” or “right.”

Beware of Browser Bugs and Problems

Checklist 9.7

- Avoid using **a:active** to alleviate problems with Internet Explorer.
- For Netscape 4, specify bold text for the heading (**h1**, **h2**, **h3**, **h4**, **h5**, **h6**) and **strong** elements.
- Use the **@import** rule with a separate external style sheet to hide CSS rules that Netscape 4 bungles.
- Test continually as you develop your pages and your CSS.

Using CSS for Print

Checklist 9.8

- Use a separate external style sheet to specify print rules.
- Specify print-only images, such as your logo, that have been optimized for print use.
- Prevent web site navigation from appearing when the page is printed.
- Avoid forcing page margins and padding.
- Avoid forcing font sizing for text content.
- If possible, make URLs for hyperlinks appear in printed versions of the page.

Chapter 10. Creating Accessible Web Sites

The Bare Bones of Creating an Accessible Web Site

Checklist 10.1

- Ensure that your web site conforms to W3C WCAG 1.0 Priority 1 or better.
- Ensure that your web site conforms to your local laws, government guidelines, or company guidelines for accessibility.
- Use valid, structured, semantic markup.
- Separate content from presentation.
- Provide accessible navigation.
- Provide users the ability to adjust text size via the browser or a style switcher.
- Use clear, simple language that's appropriate for your web site's content.
- Conduct tests to ensure that your web site makes sense without CSS.
- Avoid the use of frames.
- Avoid causing the screen to flicker.

Creating Valid, Structured, Semantic Markup

Checklist 10.2

- Use the correct **DOCTYPE** for every web page.
- Specify a character encoding for every web page.
- Use the **lang** attribute to identify the primary language for each web page and to highlight a language change within a page.
- Use heading elements (**h1**, **h2**, **h3**, **h4**, **h5**, **h6**) sequentially, beginning with **h1**.
- Use correct markup for lists and list items.
- Use ordered lists to help provide context for non-visual users when appropriate.

Using Recommended Markup in Content

Checklist 10.3

- Use **blockquote** to mark up quotations.

- Use **em** instead of **i** for emphasis.
- Use **strong** instead of **b** for stronger emphasis.
- Use **cite** to mark up the citations of names, such as the titles of books, movies, plays, and television shows.
- Use **dfn** to mark up definitions.
- Use **code** to denote program code.
- Use **var** to mark up variables within code.
- Use **kbd** to represent text typed at a computer keyboard.
- Use **samp** to mark up samples of computer program output.
- Use **acronym** and **abbr** (though these are not yet supported by Explorer) to mark up acronyms and abbreviations.
- Use **address** to mark up contact information about the author.

Providing Accessible Navigation

Checklist 10.4

- Ensure that all parts of your navigation system are accessible without a mouse.
- Avoid making Flash or other plugins necessary for the use of navigation systems unless you provide accessible alternatives.
- Consider specifying link focus with the CSS **focus** pseudo-class to provide helpful visual cues, especially for the mobility-impaired.
- Provide several ways for users to navigate through your web site.
- Use “skip” links when necessary, for example, before each navigation area (global, local/section, and internal) or block.
- Avoid skipping past web site functions, such as search boxes and login forms.
- Avoid skipping past navigational links such as **Next**, **Back**, or **Top of page** buttons or links.
- Avoid hiding skip links.

Color for the Masses

Checklist 10.5

- Ensure that your web site makes sense in black and white.
- Specify colors for the browser to use as defaults for body text, page backgrounds, links, and so on.
- Avoid using black text on red backgrounds or red text on black backgrounds.
- Avoid using green text on red backgrounds or red text on green backgrounds.
- Avoid mixing beige, yellow, or orange with red and green.

A Thousand Words to Each Picture

Checklist 10.6

- Provide a text equivalent for each image by specifying the **alt** attribute.
- Ensure that the **alt** attribute text makes sense out of context.
- Avoid animations, including blinking or scrolling text.

Accessible Image Maps

Checklist 10.7

- Use the **alt** and **title** attributes for all the graphical areas of your image map.
- Reproduce graphical text in the appropriate **alt** or **title** attributes.
- If providing You are Here cues, include the You are Here information within the **alt** or **title** attributes.
- Use the **nohref** attribute within the **area** element to make sure the current location cannot be selected from the You are Here cues.

Multi-purpose Multimedia

Checklist 10.8

- Implement the built-in accessibility features for all plugins and alternative content formats.
- Provide accessible alternatives if your content is not compatible with your users' accessibility requirements.
- Provide text information for non-text content that conveys information, such as instructional animations or videos.

- Provide accurate text transcripts for audio and video files, including conversation and relevant sound elements.

In Good Form

Checklist 10.9

- Place prompts above, or to the left, of text fields and combo boxes on forms.
- Place prompts to the right of checkboxes and radio buttons on forms.
- Wrap the `label` element around its related `input` element whenever possible.
- Use the `for` attribute with the `label` element to associate prompts with their respective controls when necessary, for instance, when they're in separate table cells.
- Group related form fields using `fieldset`.
- Use the `legend` element to assign a caption to each `fieldset` group.
- Use the `title` attribute to provide advisory information.
- When using an `img` within a `button` element to produce a graphical button, use the `alt`, `value`, and `title` attributes to provide a text alternative.
- Avoid using a `reset` button to prevent its accidental use.

Sturdy Tables

Checklist 10.10

- Reserve the `table` element for displaying tabular data.
- Make sure the content included in tables makes sense when linearized.
- Avoid using nested tables.
- Use proportional sizing for table and cell dimensions.
- Use the `caption` element to provide table names or titles.
- Use the `summary` attribute within the `table` element to provide brief summaries of complex data.
- Use the `th` element to mark up table headers within rows.
- Use the `td` element to mark up data columns within rows.

- Use the **scope** attribute within the **th** or **td** element to associate headers with table cells.
- Specify the **tbody** element if you use the **thead** element.

Chapter 11. Web Site Optimization

Creating Clean, Lean Markup

Checklist 11.1

- Use external CSS rather than inline or embedded CSS.
- Use external JavaScript.
- For every web page, specify a **DOCTYPE** and create well-formed markup.
- Minimize HTTP requests by using CSS instead of images, and consolidating external CSS and JavaScript files whenever possible.
- Use structural markup and avoid presentational elements.
- Avoid using tables for layout purposes.
- Remove excess whitespace and carriage returns from your HTML markup.
- Minimize or delete HTML comments.
- Avoid using redundant elements and attributes.
- Ensure that all `img` element `alt` attribute text is short and concise (but not at the expense of meaning).
- Include the `img` element `height` and `width` attributes.

Minimizing URLs

Checklist 11.2

- Use root relative paths for internal link markup whenever possible.
- Eliminate the directory default filename in links, where possible.
- Remove “www” from links whenever possible.

Optimizing CSS

Checklist 11.3

- Minimize CSS comments.
- Remove excess whitespace and carriage returns from your CSS.

- Group selectors that share the same declaration whenever possible.
- Use CSS shorthand properties whenever possible for **font**, **background**, **margin**, **border**, **padding**, and **list**.
- Use short **class** and **id** values.
- Use the highest-level parent possible for your CSS declarations.
- Use separate external CSS files for each media type you need.
- Use shorthand hexadecimal color values, RGB color values, or color names—whichever is shortest—where possible.
- Assign multiple CSS classes to a single element where appropriate.

Optimizing JavaScript

Checklist 11.4

- Use JavaScript to enhance, rather than create, the user experience.
- Use external JavaScript when possible.
- Use the **defer** attribute to defer or delay loading your JavaScript files if possible.
- Design or modify your JavaScript to encapsulate code into functions that execute at page load.
- Load external JavaScript conditionally whenever appropriate.
- Abbreviate and map your JavaScript.
- Rework your code to make it simpler and more efficient.
- Tune your expressions for speed.

Supporting Speedy Server Responses

Checklist 11.5

- Include trailing slashes on the URLs of directories.
- Ensure that your server resolves your domain name without the “www”.
- Use HTML compression when possible.

Optimizing Images, Multimedia, and Alternative Formats

Checklist 11.6

- Always reduce image dimensions with a graphics program, not via HTML.
- Crop each image to the smallest acceptable size, retaining only its most important areas.
- Use the highest possible image compression without degrading image quality.
- In JPEG format files that have a prominent foreground and a less-important background, blur the background.
- For larger images, create thumbnail versions for display on web pages.
- Use HTML text captions whenever possible.
- Optimize alternative format files, including multimedia files.

Chapter 12. Search Engine Optimization

Successful SEO in a Nutshell

Checklist 12.1

- Plan your web site's SEO before you create the site.
- Ensure that every page includes text, links and popularity components that will help boost your search engine rankings.
- Employ other means to market your web site.

Working with Keywords and Keyphrases

Checklist 12.2

- Research keywords and keyphrases (multi-word phrases) before you create your web site.
- Target keyphrases rather than single keywords.
- Use longer words and plurals.
- Focus on a few specific keyphrases for each web page.
- Create keyphrase-rich text content, especially for your homepage.
- Include keyword and keyphrase research in your ongoing web site SEO maintenance plan.

Using Keywords and Keyphrases in your Markup

Checklist 12.3

- Include keywords and keyphrases in your site's information architecture.
- Use focused keyphrases within each web page's **title** element.
- Use your keyphrases within each web page's **description meta** element.
- Use your focused keyphrases within the page's heading elements, beginning with the **h1** element.
- Use your focused keyphrases within link URLs and corresponding **title** attributes.
- Use relevant keyphrases within your **img** elements' **alt** attributes.

Being Search Engine-Friendly

Checklist 12.4

- Avoid the use of splash pages.
- Balance HTML text and graphics.
- Create search-engine friendly HTML text navigation and cross-links.
- If any of your web pages' URLs change, use server-side redirects to send search bots using the old link to the new URL.
- Use external CSS and JavaScript whenever possible, to maximize relevance.
- Use structural markup, and separate content from presentation as much as possible.
- Provide a web site sitemap, and link to it from your homepage as well as all your other web pages.
- If you use JavaScript links, include fallback `href` attribute links within the `<a>` tags.
- Avoid dynamic URLs that contain `?`, `&`, `$`, `=`, `+`, and `%` characters, `cgi-bin`, session IDs, or cookies.
- Use text alternatives to Flash content.
- Provide metadata and text alternatives for audio and other rich media files.

Avoiding Being Banned by Search Engines

Checklist 12.5

- Use genuine SEO methods.
- Avoid cloaking.
- Avoid using doorway pages or domain names used for doorways.
- Avoid stuffing keywords into comments or `title` or `alt` attributes.
- Avoid using JavaScript or `meta refresh` redirects to try to trick search engines.

Getting Listed

Checklist 12.6

- Submit your web site to search directories only after initial SEO is complete and content has been finalized.

- Submit your web site to search directories only after your web site is live and has been tested for broken links.
- Research each directory or search engine and its categories individually, read each directory or engine's FAQ, and follow instructions precisely before submitting your web site.
- Research the best description to use for each search directory before you submit.
- Ensure your unique selling description is also included in your directory description.
- Write several descriptions of varying lengths to copy/paste into submission forms.
- Ensure your most important keywords are in every description, but avoid keyword stuffing.
- Consider paid or expedited submissions as a way to have your web site listed more quickly.
- Submit your homepage to search directories before submitting other web pages.
- Submit other pages, particularly those on specialized topics, once your homepage is listed.
- Submit your web site manually to search directories, rather than using automated submission software.
- Submit your web site to search directories such as Yahoo!, DMOZ, JoeAnt, and Gimpsy.
- Avoid over-submitting.
- Use a `robots.txt` file and `meta robots` tags to denote content that you don't want indexed.

Creating an Ongoing Links Campaign

Checklist 12.7

- Provide ongoing, link-worthy content.
- Provide plenty of outbound links to web sites that you recommend.
- Ask other web site owners to consider linking to your web site or exchanging links.
- If any URLs change at your web site, be sure to inform those who link to it.

Planning for Ongoing Maintenance

Checklist 12.8

- Follow-up every four to five weeks with search engines and directories to ensure that your web site is listed.

- Contact a directory representative if you don't find your web site listed at a directory after three submissions.
- Check your server logs regularly to see how visitors find your web site and adjust your web site accordingly.
- Add announcements about, and links to, new content from your homepage, to help web site visitors and search crawlers find it.
- Add new keywords and keyphrases to your SEO strategies when you add new content or make other changes to your site.
- Consider using analytics software to review keyphrases, search engine rankings, and listings status.
- Use the results of keyphrase analysis to add to your web site content that visitors seek.
- Avoid making changes to your site's SEO tactics for at least three months after you optimize the site and submit it to search directories.
- Avoid constantly tweaking your web site in an attempt to improve your search engine rankings.
- Check your link popularity at search engines regularly.
- Depending on the industry, consider creating a calendar of keywords and keyphrases for future reference.

Chapter 13. Design

Basic Design Principles

Checklist 13.1

- Ensure contrasts are obvious in type, color, shape, whitespace, and lines.
- Use strong contrast to attract reader attention.
- Balance page weight using contrast.
- Create a strong, unifying visual identity using repetition.
- Use repetition consistently throughout your web site.
- Create a clean, professional look by providing visual connections between elements.
- Use alignment consistently.
- Avoid using justified text.
- Group related items together.
- Visually separate unrelated items.
- Draw attention with isolated objects.

Effective Typography

Checklist 13.2

- Apply the fonts you've used in your logo to other design elements.
- Use highly stylized novelty fonts sparingly, if at all.
- Use fonts consistently throughout your site.
- Avoid using more than two font families on a page.
- Use contrasting typefaces when using two or more fonts.
- Capitalize only the first word and any proper nouns in headings and titles.
- Use boldface type only for strong emphasis.

- Avoid using huge type.

Brainstorming

Checklist 13.3

- Develop paper prototypes.
- Base the look and feel of your web site on your logo design and company colors.
- Base design concepts on your web site's purpose, requirements, and visitor needs.
- Design for content.
- Provide a flexible design.
- Keep it simple.

Finalizing the Design

Checklist 13.4

- Develop and refine paper prototypes into digital graphic prototypes.
- Create an interactive prototype.
- Test the basic functionality of your interactive prototype.

Chapter 14. Testing

Getting Started

Checklist 14.1

- Document your baseline web site testing requirements.
- Source and install all necessary tools.
- Provide acceptable testing protocols.
- Set up a staging server.

Good Testing Practice

Checklist 14.2

- Systematically test individual pages.
- Track bugs and confirm fixes.
- Regression test, especially when fixing bugs.
- Validate the markup for each individual web page.
- Validate all CSS.
- Conduct load testing to stress-test programming technologies and server hardware capacities.

General Testing

Checklist 14.3

- Test your web site on multiple browsers and platforms.
- Test page optimization with every update.
- View pages on a variety of displays.
- View pages on different screen resolutions and with various color settings.
- Check for adequate color contrast.
- Test the functionality of external and embedded scripts and functions.
- Test all links, including navigation.

- Check error pages.
- Test all downloads.
- Test the search feature.

Solid Security

Checklist 14.4

- Check that digital certificates and SSL URLs work correctly.
- Check that all pages requiring SSL access are accessible only via SSL.
- Test the security of restricted areas.
- Test forms and form controls.
- Test online shopping facilities.

Accessibility Testing

Conducting a Preliminary Review

Checklist 14.5

- Select a random sampling of pages to test.
- Use a graphical browser to test sample pages.
- Use a voice *or* text-only browser to test sample pages.
- Use two evaluation tools.
- Manually examine representative pages using the checkpoints from WCAG 1.0, your government accessibility guidelines, or other requirements.
- Summarize the results.

Conducting a Comprehensive Review

Checklist 14.6

- Identify, determine, and document site-wide conformance requirements and levels.
- Test the site's accessibility conformance.
- Use *at least* two different accessibility evaluation tools.

- Manually examine representative pages using the checkpoints from WCAG 1.0, your government accessibility guidelines, or other recommendations.
- Use a graphical browser to test sample pages.
- Use a text-only browser and a voice browser to test pages.
- Ensure that interface elements are operable with multiple input devices.
- Proofread all content.
- Conduct usability testing with a diversity of participants.

Testing with a Graphical Browser

Checklist 14.7

- View pages without images.
- View pages without style sheets.
- Check that your pages allow users to vary the font sizes displayed.
- View tabular data with tables disabled or in a browser that doesn't offer table support.
- View the web site with new technologies turned off.

Testing with a Voice or Text-only Browser

Checklist 14.8

- Check that web site navigation is available and works properly.
- Check all hyperlinks.
- Check that decorative images don't appear in text-only browsers and aren't read by voice browsers.
- Check that the information is presented in a way that's comprehensible when read serially.
- Test form controls.

Usability Testing

Checklist 14.9

- List test objectives and concerns.

- Choose test approaches.
- Recruit users for testing based on your target market.
- Prepare an NDA (non-disclosure agreement) ready for users to sign prior to starting your tests.
- Determine testing location(s).
- Create a relaxed atmosphere for testers.
- Establish realistic tasks for users to perform and identify what, specifically, you will measure.
- Provide simple, clear instructions only.
- Allow users to perform their own tasks in addition to your pre-defined tasks.
- Create a post-test questionnaire.
- Analyze test results.

Chapter 15. Preparing for Launch

Conducting Final Checks

Checking Templates and Markup

Checklist 15.1

- Ensure that your web page templates adhere to your web site style guide.
- Provide clear instructions for the template's use and implementation.
- Ensure template markup is semantic, structural, and valid.
- Ensure that all style sheets are validated.
- Conduct a final web site optimization check.
- Conduct a final web site search engine optimization check.

Checking Layouts

Checklist 15.2

- Check overall page layouts and formatting for consistency.
- Check that your page layouts are based on the appropriate final version of your HTML/XHTML template.
- Check that images are formatted and optimized correctly.
- Check that lists and tables are formatted correctly.

Finalizing Content

Checklist 15.3

- Ensure that all content templates are complete, and provide detailed operational instructions.
- Nominate outsiders to review on-site content.
- Check the accuracy of your web page titles.
- Proofread content for correct spelling and grammar.
- Ensure that written text adheres to your web site style guide.
- Ensure that required legal information is included and accurate.

Checking Functionality

Checklist 15.4

- Check all internal and external links.
- Check the functionality of all forms and form elements.
- Test all scripting functions.
- Check the accessibility of plug-in content using the specified plug-ins.

Checking Server-side Requirements

Checklist 15.5

- Ensure that domain names point to the correct server.
- Ensure that web site statistics logging software is working properly.
- Ensure that periodic back-ups are set up and running properly.

Conducting a Soft Launch

Checklist 15.6

- Freeze web site production and modifications.
- Allow one to four weeks for the soft launch testing phase.
- Move all necessary directories, files and databases from the development server to the live server.
- Verify functionality after the migration is complete.
- Ensure visual display elements remain intact after migration.
- Invite a selected group of users to trial the web site privately and provide feedback.
- Fix bugs and resolve issues that require immediate attention.
- Ensure a solid plan is in place to rectify unresolved bugs and issues, and make post-launch web site fixes and immediate content updates.
- Provide web site maintenance training.

Launching the Web Site

Checklist 15.7

- Coordinate the web site launch with related events.
- Launch during off-peak hours.
- For larger web sites, plan to launch sections in phases, and launch the homepage last.

Completing your Web Site Handover

Checking and Finalizing Project Documentation

Checklist 15.8

- Finalize your site administration information, such as server login information and hosting control panel login details.
- Finalize your web site style guide.
- Finalize your web site maintenance document.
- Finalize your web site testing plan and Quality Assurance document.
- Finalize all other related documents and instructions.
- Ensure that the CD containing the handover package works.

Creating a Handover Package

Checklist 15.9

- Include copies of all original graphics program files, including custom preset files, Photoshop actions, and other automation tools.
- Include copies of all photos and illustrations, and their related copyright and usage rights information.
- Include copies of all fonts and their related usage permissions or licensing information (or purchase information, if needed).
- Include copies of all HTML templates, pages, and corresponding style sheets.
- Include a detailed administrative sitemap that encompasses all of the site's pages, images, and related documents.
- Include copies of all database files.

- Include instructions, licensing, and tools (or purchasing information, if needed) for content management systems, editing tools, and other software.
- Include administrative login information.
- Include server login and authorization information.
- Include a copy of the web site's root directory and all related files.
- Include the web site maintenance document.
- Include your web site testing and Quality Assurance document.
- Include the final web site style guide.
- Include electronic versions of print materials.
- Include a table of contents.
- Include a list of the names, contact information, and responsibilities of those involved in the web site's production.
- Include a list of the names, contact information, and responsibilities of those who will be involved in the web site's maintenance.

Archiving Project Documentation and Files

Checklist 15.10

- Archive a copy of the web site project proposal.
- Archive a copy of the web site project plan or creative brief, as applicable.
- Archive competitive analysis reports, if conducted.
- Archive the signed web site project contract.
- Archive budget approvals, if separate from a signed web site project contract.
- Archive copies of additional charges, invoices, and payments received.
- Archive copies of all emails related to this project, especially those that document change requests and approved changes.
- Archive usability testing reports and all related documentation and notes.

- Archive notes, sketches, and files regarding information architecture and visual design.
- Archive any other notes or helpful information related to the project.
- Archive contact information for all those involved in the project, including vendors who provided photos, software, hardware, and other supplies for the project.
- Archive a copy of the handover package.

Chapter 16. Post-launch Follow-up

Conducting a Post-launch Review

Checklist 16.1

- Refine and instigate the levels of support and training that will be provided, and their timeframes.
- Determine who will be responsible for updating the site's content.
- Determine who will be responsible for fixing web site bugs.
- Determine who will respond to web site-related email.
- Determine how frequently web site-related email and queries will be answered.
- Review and implement plans to deal with potential problems.
- Review and instigate methods to deal with post-launch usability issues.
- Organize your resources and ensure that they are sufficient to cover your web site maintenance schedule.
- Determine who is responsible for monitoring the performance of the web site and resolving server issues.

Completing Initial Post-launch Tasks

Checklist 16.2

- Implement the initial scheduled updates, and plan for upcoming updates.
- Schedule and instigate unresolved post-launch fixes.
- Obtain user feedback and usability test results.
- Implement plans to integrate quality assurance (QA) procedures with maintenance and updates.
- Confirm periodic, offsite backups of your entire web site.
- Implement your web site marketing and promotion campaigns.
- Ensure that appropriate resources are available for web site maintenance.

Orientating New Staff

Checklist 16.3

- Provide a copy of the web site style guide for review.
- Provide the handover package for detailed review.
- Ensure that all web site files and documents, including HTML templates, HTML pages, and administrative sitemaps, have been reviewed.
- Provide required login information and instructions for areas that require authorization.
- Ensure staff members are familiar with directory structures and directory and file naming conventions.
- Ensure that they're familiar with web site testing and QA requirements and procedures.
- Ensure that sufficient training has been provided for tools used to maintain the web site.
- Ensure that sufficient training has been provided to handle ecommerce requests.

Getting Attention

Checklist 16.4

- Update existing print materials to include your web site information.
- Create new print materials that include your web site information.
- Consider and implement other advertising and marketing options.
- Include your web site URL(s) in an email signature at the bottom of every email you send.
- Use search engines and directories to bring in traffic.
- Launch and maintain a reciprocal links campaign to help with online networking and boost search engine rankings.

Managing Maintenance

Checklist 16.5

- Ensure that staff involved with web site maintenance possess adequate skills.
- Ensure that all maintenance staff members have a copy of the handover package and web site style guide.
- Ensure that procedures for version control, backups, and site rollback are operational.

- Implement a method to update outdated content.
- Check each content addition or change for correct spelling, grammar, consistency of terms, and other content requirements specified in your web site style guide.
- Ensure that new pages are created with the correct web page templates, as specified in the web site style guide.
- Validate the markup for new or changed pages,
- Ensure that new pages are linked from the appropriate navigational sections and pages.
- Update your administrative sitemap to include new web pages.
- Ensure that new images are optimized and adhere to the web site style guide.
- Inspect the licensing agreements and copyright terms of images obtained from third parties.
- Review, validate and approve all site updates and changes before they're published to the Web.
- Review server logs regularly to catch and resolve errors and other issues.
- Review bug tracking reports regularly to catch and fix bugs.
- Run periodic web site accessibility tests to ensure that your web site remains accessible and continues to adhere to accessibility requirements and guidelines.
- Run periodic web site QA tests to maintain the site's quality and functionality.

Undertaking Daily Duties

Checklist 16.6

- Check and respond to web site-related email promptly.
- Check and review web site feedback forms, and follow up as needed.
- Ensure that your web site is online, fully functional and secure.
- Check the fulfillment of ecommerce orders.
- Check for and correct any broken internal and external hyperlinks.
- Review your server logs.

Conducting Monthly Minding

Checklist 16.7

- Compare your goals for the site with its current status to evaluate whether or not you're on track.
- Look for overall trends in your server logs.
- Check your site's status with search engines and directories.
- Review your marketing and advertising campaigns and web site metrics to evaluate their successes, problems, and status.
- Plan the next iteration of your web site.

Performing Periodic Processes

Checklist 16.8

- Check for and correct any broken internal and external hyperlinks.
- Run site-wide validation tests.
- Run site-wide accessibility tests for sites that, by law, must adhere to accessibility guidelines.
- Check that directory structures, directory names, and filenames continue to adhere to your web site style guide.
- Test your web site's local search function to make sure search results continue to be current and accurate.
- Check that your shipping policies, options, and prices are still current and accurate.
- Check on software updates, licensing, and registrations.
- Check and test that all forms and error messages function properly.
- Perform content audits.

Conducting Annual Activities

Checklist 16.9

- Renew your domain name registrations.
- Ensure that copyright date information is updated on January 1 every year.
- Ensure that your legal documentation, including your privacy policy, web site terms of use, and copyright terms, is current.

- Review web site hosting prices and features to ensure that you're still getting the best value for money.

Collecting Data

Collecting and Using Quantitative Data

Checklist 16.10

- Collect data about user demographics and the reasons users visit your web site.
- Collect data about the sources of your web site traffic.
- Collect data about which search engines and directories provide the most traffic to your site.
- Collect data about which keywords and keyphrases generate the most search engine referrals, and which aren't working well.
- Collect data about PPC (pay-per-click) results to help refine and improve your PPC campaign.
- Collect data about your web site's traffic, including the most popular and least popular web pages.
- For ecommerce sites, collect data on shopping cart abandonment and the reasons for it.
- For ecommerce sites, collect data on order sizes to see if an upsell or cross-sell marketing strategy is working.
- Collect data about your web site's local search to learn more about what users are seeking and to assess potential navigation problems.
- Collect data from bug reports and server logs to learn about and fix web site problems.
- Collect data about problems found on the web site, and apply appropriate fixes.

Collecting and Using Qualitative Data

Checklist 16.11

- Collect information about your brand, such as brand recognition, perception, and relationship information.
- Collect user feedback via email, questionnaires, focus groups, and reviews and ratings of your web site to help improve your web site.
- Collect data for use with customer relations management (CRM) processes and tools.

- Collect information about your web site's competitive advantage.
- Collect data about which web site features your visitors like most and least, and why.

Appendix A: Ecommerce Checklists

Assessing Ecommerce Content Usage and Management Needs

Checklist A.1

- Accept and manage online payments.
- Accept and manage online credit card payments in real time.
- Automate order processing.
- Calculate and manage sales tax.
- Calculate and manage shipping costs, including international calculations.
- Manage order processing, shipping, or both.
- Send order confirmations or other related correspondence.
- Manage order tracking.
- Process and manage returns.
- Integrate ecommerce finances with existing book-keeping systems.
- Manage photos for each product or service.
- Manage data for products or services in a database.
- Manage customer information or related ecommerce information in a database.
- Manage and administer downloadable products that may be accessed only after purchase.

Features to Seek in a Shopping Cart Program

Checklist A.2

- Automated, customizable sales tax calculation facilities.
- Automated, customizable shipping cost calculation facilities.
- Automated, customizable choice of payment methods, and the acceptance of online payments.

- Integration with online credit card payments, including real-time credit card payment verification.
- Integration with your existing book-keeping systems.
- Seamless PayPal integration.
- Automated, personalized email order confirmations, shipping status and confirmations, and other automated order-related correspondence.
- Automated production of personalized, printable receipts.
- Automated customer follow-up and tracking.
- Display of a shopping cart order confirmation page prior to purchase finalization.
- "Remove" feature for customers to remove one, several, or all items from the shopping cart.
- Shopping cart summary to show products in customer's cart as the customer continues to shop.
- Option to change the quantities of each product ordered on the confirmation page, and recalculate costs accordingly.
- Option to show prices with and without local taxes.
- Customizable product search.
- Flexibility to use the software with your existing products database.
- Standards-based integration and customization to blend with your web site design.
- Customizable product display in your online store.
- Customizable directory names.
- Customizable, search engine-friendly, human-friendly filenames and URLs.
- Ease in adding or changing product attributes, including pricing, photos, descriptions, and other details.
- Ability to remove products from the store temporarily.
- Customizable pricing.

- Customizable minimum and maximum quantities or units, and the ability to hide this feature if it's not applicable.
- Automated product inventory tracking.
- Ability to import and export all data and reports.
- Limitless number of items or products.
- Manual order processing.
- Customizable product download details.