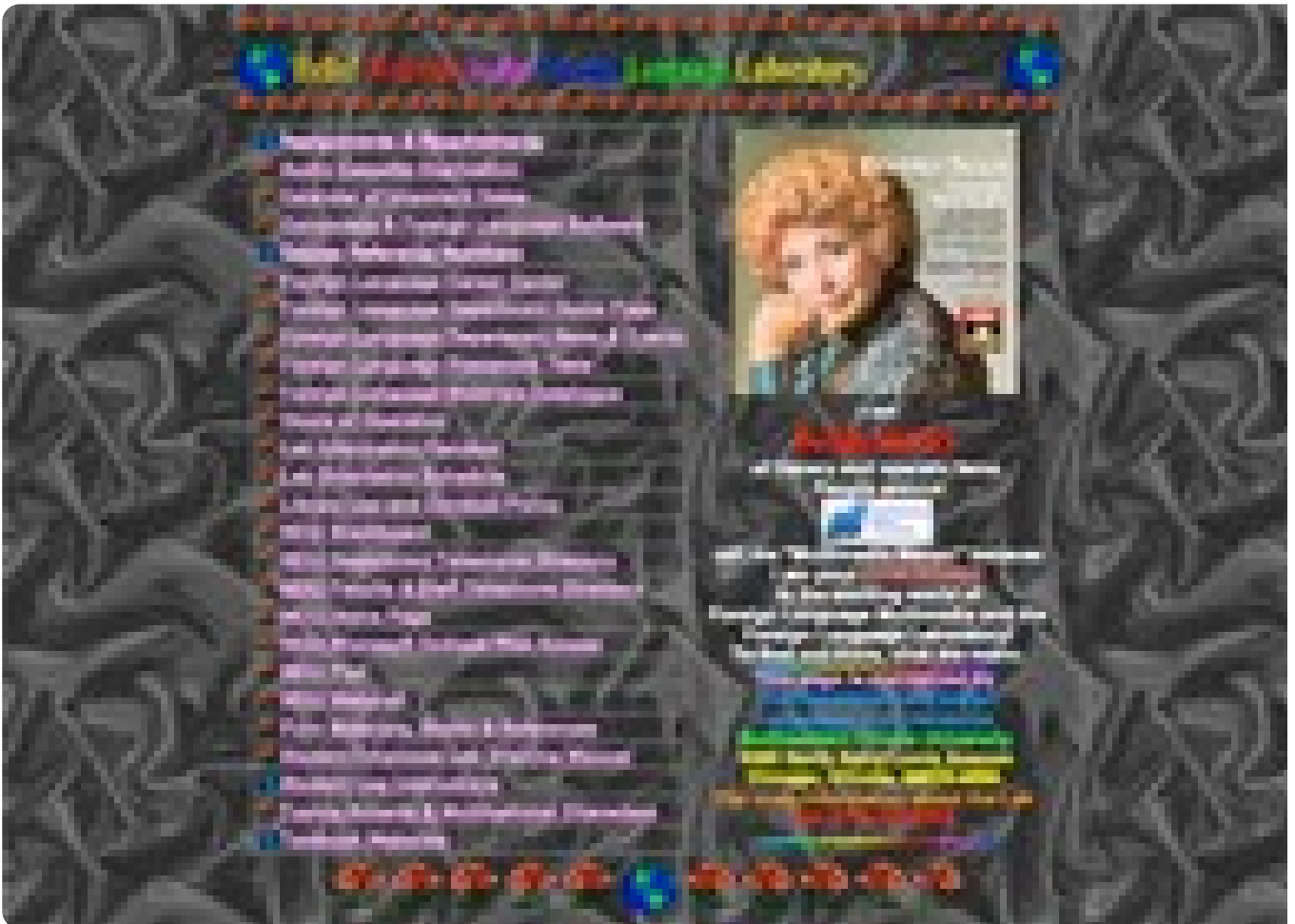


## Designing with usability in mind

 By Georgia Christian 4 Jun 2012

Web development and design have come a long way since the early days of hideous, blinding pages, (such as these below), that confronted us when we navigated through websites in the hope of a: finding the information we want, and b: seeing awesome designs and functionality in place.



[click to enlarge](#)



[click to enlarge](#)

Thankfully, times have changed. Of course, there are still sites that use Flash but hey, Rome wasn't built in a day, right? For now, what's important is that developers and designers are putting a lot more emphasis on user experience (UX), ensuring that visitors have a positive and seamless website interaction and overall experience.

## A design philosophy

Broken down, UX is a design philosophy. At its core, it's a process in which the needs, wants and limitations of the end users of a product are given priority attention at each stage of the design process. This incorporates:

- Usability
- Design
- Accessibility
- Marketing
- System Performance
- Ergonomics
- Human-Computer-Interaction (HCI)
- Utility
- Human 'factors'

## The importance of UX

So why has flawless UX become more and more prevalent in web design? Quite simply, there are more users and more complex systems being used. In addition, users now have multiple ways in which to access the web (smart phones, tablets, laptops and other mobile devices). What this means is that more than ever developers and designers have to stay at the top of their game and constantly be on the lookout for new trends.

When it comes to UX, here are the main points that they need to consider for each new project or rebuild:

- What is the purpose of the website and how will this be achieved?
- What action do you want visitors to perform? Do you want them to make contact, buy online, view the gallery, browse a portfolio, see what services are offered, or download documents? Ultimately, what people are looking for, how they find it, and their subsequent conversion might be the most important aspects of UX.
- Is the site easy to navigate?
- Are there strong and non-conflicting "calls to action"?
- Is the design simple and easy on the eye?
- Is the most important information easy to find? How many clicks does it take for a visitor to reach the page or information they're looking for?
- How long does it take for pages to download?
- How does the website render on the major web browsers?
- Is there any content on the main pages that doesn't need to be there? It's a better idea to put non-vital information on secondary pages and make sure the content throughout the site is consistent, concise and search engine optimised.

The beauty of UX is that it takes something highly technical and combines it with a human appeal that aims to target a visitor's specific website and content requirements. So really, everyone wins. It's an exciting side of the development and design process and there's no doubt that we'll be seeing more innovative use of it in the near future.

## ABOUT GEORGIA CHRISTIAN

Georgia Christian is a copywriter and e-marketing specialist for Lima Bean ([www.limabean.co.za](http://www.limabean.co.za); @limabeansa), a web development, design and online marketing company in Woodstock, Cape Town. She is also editor of email marketing service Mail Blaze ([www.mailblaze.co.za](http://www.mailblaze.co.za); @mailblaze), responsible for communicating its five-plus years of industry experience and accumulated knowledge to the market. Contact Georgia on tel +27 (0) 21 486 1860, email [georgia@mailblaze.co.za](mailto:georgia@mailblaze.co.za) and follow @GeorgiChristian on Twitter. [View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>