01. Web design principles

Principles

This section introduces the design principles applied on EU- and EC-branded websites. Respecting these principles helps ensure a coherent, user-centred online experience.

- **Users first**: Showing an understanding of user needs helps gain user approval. Make sure that all functionalities and interactions are simple and clear, so users can navigate easily and understand what to do to find what they came for.
- **Evidence over opinion**: Always start with research before initiating any design hypothesis. Investigate users' needs. Ensure design decisions are informed by analytics and user data. Confirm your design hypothesis with real-world user testing.
- **Prioritise task completion**: Make it easy for users to do what they came for. Ensure they can immediately view and use the content they've requested, free from distraction. Ensure they can complete their main task on the first attempt. Use progressive disclosure patterns to reveal content, presenting the minimum content required for the task at hand and only revealing more upon request or as a suggestion.
- **Be inclusive**: make digital content and interactions accessible to people with disabilities and welcoming to as many users as possible. Good design works for people of different backgrounds, skills, circumstances and subject knowledge. Make the design and content as simple as it can be, so it can be used by as many people as possible.
- **Design for multiculturalism:** Designing for a multicultural audience includes content and design considerations that go beyond language, such as colours, symbols and cultural values. Try to keep language as consistent and complete as possible. Minimise the disruption of switching language. Allow for different alphabets, the longer line lengths content in some languages creates and, where appropriate, right-to-left reading.
- **Design effectively**: Be respectful of a user's time. Design predictable, reusable solutions to solve similar problems. Streamline and optimise the experience. Anticipate needs to help people work better, smarter and faster. Standardised, reusable solutions also contribute to the cost-effectiveness of the European Commission's communication effort.
- **Provide no more than needed**: Focus on content that only the European Commission can provide. Reduce complexity by constraining choices. Remove 'noise' wherever possible: any redundant element – a link, a button, an image – can be a source of distraction.
- **Promote brand approach**: Design with a common design language that supports the corporate image of the European Union and/or the European Commission. Use the modular components from the Europa Component Library to create consistent, accessible and adaptive /responsive sites, tools and pages to enhance usability.

Contact and support

If you require further assistance, please contact:

Comm Europa Management

European Commission
DG Communication
Unit B.3
Europa Web Communication