

KISS - Keep It Simple Stupid

By Tom Falco © 2001

You know the saying: "Keep it Simple, Stupid!"

This should be your mantra when you are designing your website, especially your home page or gateway pages.

The longer it takes for these pages to open, the more people you will lose. There are far too many other sites on the internet like yours, or damn well close and most people will not wait for your splashy graphics or time consuming downloads.

People are coming to your site for information or with the intent on purchasing something and it is important to get them to stay. Even if it is just an information site that represents a company or service, it is important not to bore people with slow downloads.

If you need to have splash graphics and long lists or photos, please save them for another page and let the page that your visitors will enter through be easy to navigate and fast to download.

Many e-commerce sites have a logo and not much else on their first page and they just lead the visitors to an "eCatalog" or something similar, where the visitors can root around for what they would like to find after being introduced to your site the proper way.

How many times have you left a site while you waited and waited for the page to open? Don't let this happen to you.

Look at your site now. Look at every gateway page and of course, the homepage. Are they slow?

Keep in mind that many people don't have DSL or 56K modems. Just because you are up on the latest tech items and computer peripherals, don't take for granted that many people are using slow, older computers. Most organizations, schools, smaller offices and such are using older computers. This is a fact. Keep this in mind when designing your site.

If you run a commercial site, remember that people are visiting your site to purchase something, not to be dazzled with graphics and special effects. When a person wants to purchase a bouquet of flowers, they want to get on and get off in as short a time as possible. They don't want all that song and dance involved with java and other programs. Many commercial sites "remember" your name and credit card and past purchases in order to speed up your transaction. Why frustrate all this by confusing people with too much on one page?

If your site is an entertainment site, focus on what you are trying to portray. Is that flash screen entrance necessary? You may be losing many visitors just so you can show off your entrance screen. Save the flashy stuff for later. Let people get a feel for your site, let them see what you have to offer and let them feel around

and navigate until they are comfortable. Then you can bombard them with your graphics prowess.

It is a great thing to get lots of unique hits. But what good is it if people aren't sticking around? You need to keep your site sticky. Don't turn people away with long downloads and graphics.

KISS: Keep it simple stupid!