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## what is it about this site?

Learn about the criteria do define the quality of a site

***“Five basic usability attributes: be easy to learn, efficient to use, easy to be remembered, contain few errors, and be subjectively pleasant”***

***Felipe Memoria***

This has certainly happened to you. When reading a book or magazine with references to award-winning sites in the area, or when accessing a web design community, you try to understand the reason for so many compliments for that certain work.

Out of curiosity, you immediately open your browser, type in “www dot xyz dot com” and bingo! Your experience is immediately taken with chin-dropping fascination. And the first question that comes to mind is: “but what is it about this site?”

Moments later, after recovering and stopping to think, the answer appears through several claims: it could be the chromatic combination, the not very usual typography, the uncommon shapes, an original idea, swift and simple navigation, good convergence between audio, video and text, as well as great harmony and balance between the interface elements.

In this issue, we talked with some of the professionals who took part in the judging panels for the main awards for the web in Brazil. The contents of this chat should be very useful by revealing what are the assessment criteria used to define the quality of a site.

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### **Working on the visual identity of the site.**

Thus, in the process of constructing the personality of a site, the application of the fundamental concepts of design is essential to ensure the success of your design. “In general, the visual identity quality is the combination of characteristics such as harmony of colors, concern with the page gestalt, typography work thought out to work on the internet, well worked pictures, and a structure and technology that allows for a good combination of those elements” Globo.com designer and panel member for the Selo Peixe Grande Felipe Memoria states.

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Also remembering that all that process must be consistent with the positioning desired for the site. “Bottom line, it is a product with some final objective: convey a message, sell an image, sell a product, make contents available, serve as an application, and so on. The identity must be pleasant and be thought out for the public it is aimed at. Depending on the traits of that public, it can be more or less elegant, more or less retailing, more or

less minimalist. What actually defines the visual identity is how much those lines are well thought out and produced within the site strategy to reach the target public” Memoria explains.

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### **Easy to use: ladies and gentleman, usability and information architecture!**

We understand the importance of care regarding management of contents to be transmitted on a site, as well as the development of a visual identity to build a unique personality for the design. Thus, in order that this is all assimilated by the user, working on usability concepts is fundamental to assure a comprehensive period of experience within an environment. However, the doubt that remains is: how to define a site's usability level?

“I usually say that those characteristics are the ones that meet the basic principles included in the definition I like most of the term by Jakob Nielsen in 1993. According to our controversial ‘guru’, usability is not a singular, one-dimensional property of an interface with users. Usability has several components and is traditionally associated with five attributes: be easy to learn, efficient to use, easy to be remembered, contain few errors, and be subjectively pleasant. The concern with those issues defines, even if superficially, the first level of usability in a site. For the level to be really measured, usability testing is required”, Felipe Memoria instructs.

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As a practical example, Memoria analyzes the case of a user having difficulty to find a sought after product in an e-commerce site. “What we most likely have here is a potential architecture problem. If the user finds the contents in a certain page incomplete and lacking pertinent and necessary information, another architecture problem can be identified. A well designed architecture features well thought out content classification and organization, takes into consideration the logic of organizing pertinent and related contents, It should consider the mental model of the target public for those design decisions to be made. The main navigation direction for soccer lovers is their teams of the heart. What about Formula-1 lovers? What do they look for? Brazilian pilots, pilots in general, racing tracks or teams? A good information architecture must reflect those issues”, he claims.

### **Web 2.0 and the challenges of interactivity**

The concepts of the Web2.0 movement seem to have made a definite mark on the two-sided way users will be interacting in digital environments. With that in mind, what tools must be used to attain interactivity within a site?

“Basically, tools that allow for communication between people, that give users a say. The main point is having the publication of contents by ‘amateurs’ be instantaneous and easy for anyone. This means people who do not know what HTML and FTP are must be able to publish contents: give their opinion, write articles, share pictures, audio, video, whatever. Being that easy, my brother, who is not a photographer, shares his pictures with other people because he is able to publish them in 30 seconds without needing help from me. My mother, who is an architect and not a journalist, publishes countless texts on art and fashion without ever having heard about tags”, Felipe Memoria analyzes.