



3 Anti-Captivation Web Snags

The Errors That Cause Visitors to Leave Web Sites Before Exploring

Much about web site management involves decisions on tactical issues (fonts, colors, use of Flash, etc.). But audience captivation — attracting and holding interest — is a strategic element often overlooked amid the dozens of other decisions to be made during web site development. Bidlack believes there are three strategic snags to watch for when thinking about how to captivate the audience for your web site...

The Premise

The underlying premise of this strategy sheet is simple: You want visitors to your web site to find the information they need, but also to stay and linger, to discover new and interesting things. The longer a visitor sticks around to explore, the greater the chances become that the visitor will turn from a relative stranger, into a person with some degree of knowledge about your organization with the potential of becoming (to one degree or another) a pro tem emissary for your brand.

1 Captivation Error 1: Failure to Captivate Through Basic Explanation

Far too many web sites fail the early visitor test: Allowing the semi-disinterested visitor * to quickly understand what's going on. Without a quick, straightforward explanation about what your organization is all about, the web guest may quickly become an un-enthralled former prospect, ready to move on to the next (more interesting) web site.

Web masthead without a "What We Do" explanation



Web masthead with a "What We Do" explanation



Adding a brief line of explanation (the "candy bar descriptor") as part of your organization's brand helps strangers to quickly ascertain what it is you do, fights miscomprehension and, if the fit is right, captivates.

2 Captivation Error 2: Failure to Captivate Through User Discovery

Too often, when considering how information is going to be presented, the web site planner does not focus sufficiently on *discovery* as a way to entice, invite, and get the web visitor to stick around. Just as a visit to a great theme park fills the visitor with a scene of some new and cool item around the next corner, so too can a web site allow its visitor to become excited about another worthwhile and interesting item awaiting at the next click.

VISITING AN UN-CAPTIVATING WEB SITE



VISITING A CAPTIVATING WEB SITE



3 Captivation Error 3: Failure to Captivate Through Visual Excitement

The internet is a pixel-based canvas of opportunity, and web site planners must remember to present content and ideas as visual elements, not simply words. While it's true that not every section of a web site needs to be a master work of art, every element under consideration for inclusion should be judged for its ability to contribute *visually* to the tone and tenor of the site.

Which one attracts your attention?

Our Cool Web Site!



*A semi-disinterested visitor is, nonetheless, a person visiting your web site, and should be assisted by all means possible into becoming a truly interested visitor. Prior knowledge of your organization's purpose and function should not be a prerequisite for understanding what an organization is all about within a first glance at a web site. Getting the semi-disinterested visitor to quickly ascertain what it is that your organization does is crucial to getting the visitor to be interested and to care.