

# Basic Design Concepts

Most websites contain the following basic design elements;

## Heading:

The heading is usually the same or similar on every page. This identifies your site to the user no matter which page they're on.

## Navigation Bar:

This is where you put links to the other areas of the site. This is typically either across the top (underneath the Heading) or down the left-hand side of the page. Occasionally it can be found down the right-hand side – and it is rarely ever placed across the bottom of the page.

## Main Area:

This is where you put the content of each page.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the website <http://www.wealdenskillscentre.co.uk/cafe.html>. The page layout is divided into three main sections:

- Heading:** Located at the top right, it features the logo "WealdenSkillsCentre.co.uk" and the tagline "Vocational training for all the community" next to a gear icon.
- Navigation Bar:** Located on the left side, it contains a vertical list of links: Home, Service for Businesses, Apprenticeships, Full Time Courses, Adult Courses, 14-16 Programme, Progression to Employment, Adult & Child Holiday Courses, Skills Cafe (highlighted), About Us, and Contact Us.
- Main Area:** The central content area, titled "Skills Café", contains promotional text, a photo of staff, and a menu. The text includes: "Do you want to take a break from work without walking into town?", "Not enough time to travel far for lunch?", "Do you have an early start and wish there was time to make breakfast?", "Do you need something 'on the go'?", "Come and relax in style at the Skills Café. Enjoy the comfort and professional, friendly service.", "Open weekdays 7.30 am to 1.30 pm, the café offers both sit-down and take-away services. Skills Café serves a wide range of pastries, sandwiches, baguettes, snacks and healthy options! You don't have to be on a course to enjoy comfort and a professional service in our latest development at the Centre. Everyone is welcome!", "All Day Full English Breakfast with tea or coffee for just £3.00!", "Home Made Soup with a bread roll - only £1.80", "Selection of Sandwiches, Baguettes & Paninis from £1.20 - £2.20", "Jacket Potato - £1.00 - £2.00", "Ploughman's - £3.00", "Variety of Salads - £2.00 - £3.50", "Main Meal of the Day - £3.00", "Assorted Pastries and Snacks available.", and "This is only a sneak preview of what we have on offer so come along and see what else we can do for you."

These layouts can be achieved with Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), using a table, or with frames.

**Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)** is the method of choice for most professionals now due to its great flexibility and ability to impose a single style across all pages of a website, reducing the overall amount of code which needs to be written. It is also easily translated by screen-readers (text to speech tools for blind people), however it is very different to HTML and requires a lot more planning before use.

**Tables** are quite flexible, however do not allow for overlapping items or such easy uniformity. Although some screen-reading software still has issues with this method, most of them can now deal with it reasonably well. It is the easiest acceptable method of laying out a website, and you can put tables within tables to help you to refine your layout further.

**Frames** can be quite useful, as you can use independent pages for the header and navigation bars – meaning that you only need to update the navigation list in that single file when you want to add or remove pages from your website. However, this mode is difficult for screen-readers to deal with, and is now mostly considered to be obsolete.

## Page Size

Over 95% of internet users are using screen resolutions of 1024 pixels wide at the moment. Less than 1% overall are using anything less than that, and the remainder are using around 1280 pixels or more. As such, you should design your website to be 1000 pixels wide, which allows room for the scroll bar (if it is needed) and will look good for the vast majority of your users.

## Colours

It is important to choose your colour-scheme before you start, and to write down which colours you intend to use for each type of content. For example:

<i>Basic text:</i>	<i>#000000</i>	<i>Black</i>
<i>Links:</i>	<i>#990000</i>	<i>Dark Red</i>
<i>Heading text:</i>	<i>#FF0000</i>	<i>Bright Red</i>
<i>Highlights:</i>	<i>#0000CC</i>	<i>Mid Blue</i>

This will help you to keep track of what you're using where, and maintain a uniform and professional image throughout your website.

## Content

List out which pages you need and an idea of what is going on to them – then map out your site as a diagram. This will help you to keep a sense of perspective and to remain organised. It is often easiest to do this initially with a pen and paper! If you need to present proposal documents to a potential customer, you might then wish to create a copy in Word or Publisher later on.