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Insight: Design Guidelines

The Insight system is one of the most powerful content management and community development platforms available. With power comes complexity (unlike what most software companies tell us!) There are certain issues which third-party designers need to be aware of when creating designs for the system, as well as the process which includes a validation of the supplied design to ensure they are usable.

Standard Elements

See the following very simple example: <http://samplech.churchinsight.com>

- Design should include a **Status bar**, top level **Menu bar** and **Footer bar**.
 - The **Status bar** features elements such as a personalised welcome, Login & Register links (where the latter is appropriate), and a Search box.
NB The design doesn't *have* to include a status bar – this could be handled via a custom a login component. This could be dispensed with entirely if the clients you wasn't going to utilise login elements – very rare as this is a key feature.
 - The **Footer bar** includes the system credit link as well as a link to an accessible text-only version of the site. (NB the latter is created automatically, templates are not required). The credit reads 'an Insight site' for commercial, school and other charity websites.
 - The **Home** menu item on the **Menu bar** can only include automatically-inserted system items, such as Forums and Calendar, plus Address Book and Chat, where appropriate.
- These three items should normally be horizontal.
 - The order in which they appear is not important.
 - Some flexibility is possible with the Status bar elements.
 - A non-horizontal, Flash-based top level menu can be created using the XML feed of the site structure from the system.
- Sub navigation on lower level pages is always displayed vertically.
See: <http://samplech.churchinsight.com/Group/Group.aspx?id=66310>

Content Elements

You also have a number of content components available to you – see the *Insight - Graphic Design* document for sites using these:

- **Welcome Article** – a default Home page content area.
- **Featured Articles List** – a summary of articles from the site which have been promoted to the Home page or just a list of the latest articles posted on the site.
 - This is made up of Thumbnail images + Article Summary and integral links to the full article.
 - Thumbnails for the above are always a maximum of 100px in any dimension, i.e. they could be 100 x 80px.
- **Events feed** – latest events from the Calendar. The system can control the number of future events to display.
- **Latest Forum(s) posts**, if these are being used. The system can control the number of future events to display and with a variety of formats and fields.
- An **RSS feed** of any XML feed from the site or another site.
- **Rota reminder** – where Rotas are being used for volunteers, the system can feature the site members next Rota duty.
- **Images & Flash** – both can be featured at all levels of the system.

- **Flash Slideshows:** User-updateable Flash slideshows can be created – this where we create a movie , but the site owner simply uploads still images of a certain size to a pre-determined folder and the Flash slideshow movie updates on the fly. NB there is a cost implication for this depending on the complexity of the proposed solution. See: Simple example: www.newfoundationsuk.com
Examples with more complex styling:
<http://www.woodsidechurch.com>
<http://winfam.churchinsight.com> (temp address)
- **Other Elements:** Polls, Google Map, Media list, Breadcrumbs.

Templates

Most of the simple examples shown above are from a 3 column design, but the system can support any number of columns and templates.

The site can be a 3 column layout on the Home page and top level category/group home pages, but then 2 column in the main content/articles template.

- **1) Home Page:** <http://samplech.churchinsight.com>

NB It's also possible to create *dual* home pages on the same URL – one with layout and focussed content for new visitors, the other with layout and more detailed content for logged-in site members/supporters. Talk to us if you would like to use this feature as there are some cost & technical implications.

See <http://www.citychurchcambridge.org.uk> for a visitor home page example.

- **2) Top Level Category/Group Home Page:**
<http://samplech.churchinsight.com/Group/Group.aspx?id=66315>
<http://samplech.churchinsight.com/Group/Group.aspx?id=66325>

Note that Content components are reusable at any level

<http://samplech.churchinsight.com/Group/Group.aspx?id=66325>

NB Different images can be featured as headers or in the main body area each Top Level Category/Group Home Page template, but this can add to the cost of integration.

- **3) Article page:** <http://samplech.churchinsight.com/Publisher/Article.aspx?id=99784>
(although this layout needs more air on that right hand edge)

Normally, a designer would supply at least a Home page design and then some indication of the template structure for the Top Level Category/Group Home Page and Article pages.

Process inc. design validation

Please supply:

- Layered Photoshop psd or Fireworks png files.
(NB Our design and integration team are Mac based)
- Please flatten any items with Font elements to ensure consistent display.
- A jpg or gif of each layout design so we can match as closely as possible to a controlled design.
- Notes on the CSS settings used for content elements where this is important.

Please don't supply HTML – the designs have to be taken apart and re-built in the Insight platform's template system to allow simple addition of content elements in the future and maintain flexibility.

Design validation

Once designs are supplied, they will initially be submitted to a design and layout validation process to ensure that required elements can be reproduced in the system. Any technical issues or cost implications will then be flagged up for particularly complex requirements.

If you want to run initial layouts past us early in the design and layout process, we'd be happy to help – catching issues earlier on is usually less painful than later!

Inspiration

See <http://www.endisplanet.com/designservices> for more examples of what's possible with the Insight system.