



University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow

Basic Usability for websites

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What will we cover

What I mean by usability in context of a University website

Look at a department site.

Page Design

Content Design

Site Design

Web analytics

Closing comments

What is usability ?

Ease of employing a tool (website) to achieve a particular goal.

What sort of goals do I mean?

Different users have different goals

Web visitors/user goals:

Internal- staff: admin (find contact number)

External- prospective: courses, research (apply)

These goals can be defined by user journeys

E.g. UG prospective student > course list> course page
> course details > apply

What about YOUR goals ? = business goals



User goals v Business goals

Business goals

what YOU are trying to do.

E.g. sell courses and gather personal information

User goals

what they are trying to do

. E.g. look at course information whilst protecting their personal information

Balance between the 2 sets of goals.

Why bother ?



Why bother with accessibility and usability?

Legal duty to be accessible.

Accessibility increases usability.

More people who can use the site Improves chances of an increase in “sales” /conversion rate.

So what does basic usability cover?

Basic site usability includes:

Consistent design: no need to re-learn designs

Inherent information organisation- site info organisation makes sense

Context in navigation: are you on page 1 of 5 or 5 of 5?

Efficient navigation: minimal clicks needed

Adequacy of feedback: form > thank you

Searchability: site content accessible via search results.

These are just a few.

Let us look at Dept homepage >

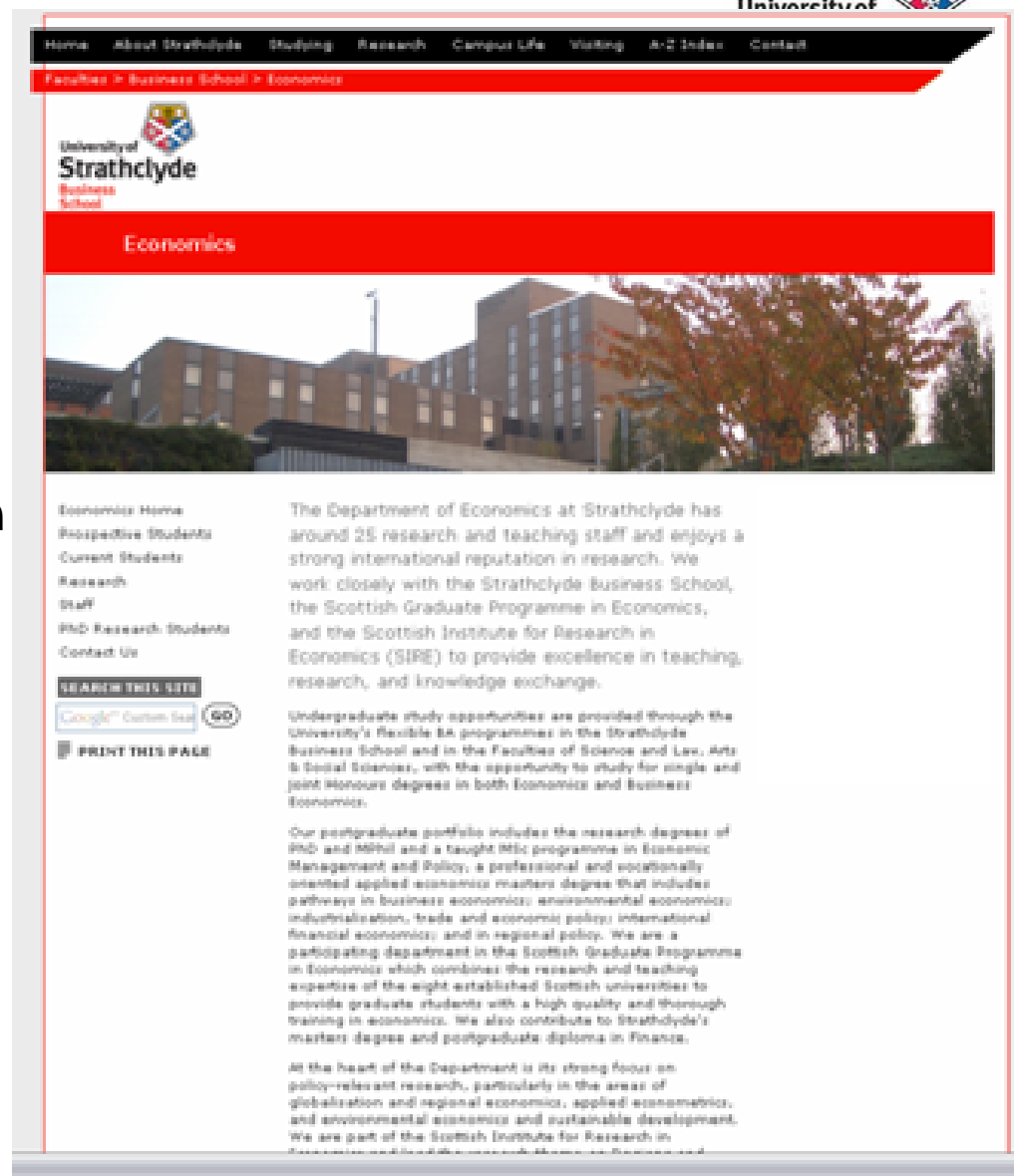


Dept page

Does this page have:

- A consistent design
- Inherent information organisation
- Context in navigation
- Efficient navigation
- Adequacy of feedback
- Searchability?

SO HOW DO WE IMPROVE THIS PAGE?



Web development before analytics>

Web development

Before using web analytics software

A bit of hit & miss, best practice and latest techniques.

After getting web analytics software

we need to know how the site is performing before we can suggest improvements and measure the effect afterwards.



Web analytics- understanding visitor behaviour

who they are?

where they are from?

what they look at?

how they navigate?

what they search for?

**Use this information to guide the development of the
site/page.**

Modify behaviour

Modify the site to modify visitor behaviour

Measure how it has affected their behaviour

Use this information to guide the next stage of development.

The point being that they get to the information
they want and what you want them to get.

What is the purpose of a Homepage?



What is the purpose of a Homepage?

To funnel visitors through to their preferred destinations:
UG/PG course lists, research, staff pages etc

Do this by providing effective access routes into these areas.

Homepage analytics should show majority of people landing on a homepage continuing through into the subsections of the website.

Lets look at the figures for the Dept page we just looked at>



Dept homepage Web analytics

Home.Faculties.Business_School.Economics

2,886

1.	→	Home.Faculties.Business_School.Economics	425	14.7%
2.	→	Home.Faculties.Business_School.Economics.Staff	370	12.8%
3.	→	[External]	513	17.8%
4.	→	Home.Faculties.Business_School.Economics.Prospective_Students	220	7.6%
5.	→	Home.About_Strathclyde.Departments	146	5.1%
6.	→	Home	145	5.0%
7.	→	Home.Faculties.Business_School	145	5.0%



What does this mean?

**14.7 % of people reload the homepage
(homepage link LHS)**

17.8% go to a page outwith the dept site

5.1 % go to Uni Dept list page

5% go to Uni Homepage

**I would argue that the site is not helping these people access the
information they need:**

ie. it is not as usable as it should be.

What can we do to make the HP more usable?

(1) Lose the copy on the homepage; no-one will read it!

Replace with some image cues to pull the eye to the navigation items.

Segment the homepage navigation into groups.

(2+ 3) Efficient navigation – perhaps use the right hand side to drive traffic into deeper areas e.g. Announcements?



From this

The screenshot shows the website for the University of Strathclyde's Economics department. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, About Strathclyde, Studying, Research, Campus Life, Writing, A-Z Index, and Contact. Below the menu is a red banner with the text "Faculties in Business School & Economics". The University of Strathclyde logo is displayed, followed by a red banner with the word "Economics". A large photograph of a modern university building is shown below. On the left side, there is a sidebar with a list of links: Economics Home, Prospective Students, Current Students, Research, Staff, PhD Research Students, and Contact Us. Below the links are search and print buttons: "SEARCH THIS SITE" with a search input field, "Google Custom Search" with the Google logo, and "PRINT THIS PAGE" with a printer icon. The main content area on the right contains the following text:

The Department of Economics at Strathclyde has around 25 research and teaching staff and enjoys a strong international reputation in research. We work closely with the Strathclyde Business School, the Scottish Graduate Programme in Economics, and the Scottish Institute for Research in Economics (SIRE) to provide excellence in teaching, research, and knowledge exchange.

Undergraduate study opportunities are provided through the University's flexible BA programmes in the Strathclyde Business School and in the Faculties of Science and Law, Arts & Social Sciences, with the opportunity to study for single and joint Honours degrees in both Economics and Business Economics.

Our postgraduate portfolio includes the research degrees of PhD and MPhil and a taught MSc programme in Economic Management and Policy, a professional and vocationally oriented applied economics masters degree that includes pathways in business economics; environmental economics; industrialization, trade and economic policy; international financial economics; and in regional policy. We are a participating department in the Scottish Graduate Programme in Economics which combines the research and teaching expertise of the eight established Scottish universities to provide graduate students with a high quality and thorough training in economics. We also contribute to Strathclyde's masters degree and postgraduate diploma in Finance.

At the heart of the Department is its strong focus on policy-relevant research, particularly in the areas of globalization and regional economics, applied econometrics, and environmental economics and sustainable development. We are part of the Scottish Institute for Research in Economics and Finance.

To ...

To This.

Economics



SEARCH THIS SITE

Google Custom Search

PRINT THIS PAGE

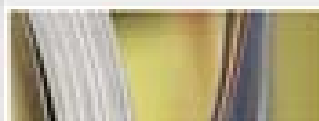
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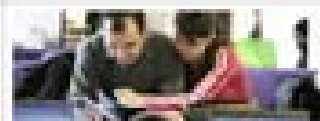
[What we're up to](#)



[Prospective Students](#)



[Research](#)



[Current Students](#)

Economics [Sir William Duncan](#) BUILDING
130 ROTTERLOW G4 0GE
t:0141 348 3840 f:0141 348 4445

Announcements

[Seminar Series 2007/2008](#)

[University Research Day](#)

[SES Newsletter](#)

Latest News

[Fully funded 1+3
ESRC/Scottish Government
Collaborative Studentships
available](#)

[The June 2008 Fraser
Economic Commentary, Vol 32
No 1, is now available](#)

[Interested in study an
MSc through Open Learning?](#)

[Spatial Economics and Trade
Conference](#)

What has been the effect? >



Dept homepage Web analytics

Home.Faculties.Business_School.Economics

2,134

1.	→	[External]	398	18.7%
2.	→	Home.Faculties.Business_School.Economics.Staff	203	9.5%
3.	→	Home.Faculties.Business_School.Economics.Prospective_Students	196	9.2%
4.	→	Home.Faculties.Business_School.Economics	191	9.0%
5.	→	Home.Faculties.Business_School.Economics.about_us	191	9.0%
6.	→	Home.Faculties.Business_School.Economics.Current_Students	149	7.0%
7.	→	Home.About_Strathclyde.Departments	125	5.9%
8.	→	Home	115	5.4%
9.	→	Home.Faculties.Business_School.Economics.Research	107	5.0%
10.	→	Home.Faculties.Business_School	106	5.0%



Used to be.

Home.Faculties.Business_School.Economics 2,886

1.	→	Home.Faculties.Business_School.Economics	425
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What does this mean?

More people are getting to content in the site.

Fewer people are reloading the page

Fewer people are going to pages outwith the department.

So doing these simple changes has a positive impact on helping people access the information.

ie. The page is a bit more useable and the information a bit more accessible.

Making a site more accessible:

Use analytics to record user behaviour

Modify the site to modify their behaviour

Use analytics to record user behaviour

etc

End.



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Thanks

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However this is just the homepage

What about the rest of the site?

Prospective students?

They want to look at courses.

Let's look at a course page.

Course page

Does this page have:

- A consistent design
- Inherent information organisation
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- Efficient navigation
- Adequacy of feedback
- Searchability?

The screenshot shows the University of Strathclyde website. At the top right is the university's logo and name. Below it is a navigation menu with links: Home, About Strathclyde, Studying, Research, Campus Life, Visiting, A-Z Index, and Contact. A red breadcrumb trail reads: > Prospective Students > Undergraduate Courses > Economics And Psychology Undergraduate. The main header features the University of Strathclyde Business School logo and a red banner with the text "Economics And Psychology Undergraduate". On the left is a sidebar menu with links: Economics Home, Prospective Students (with sub-links for Undergraduate Courses and Postgraduate Courses), Current Students, Research, Staff, PhD Research Students, Fraser of Allander Institute, and Contact Us. Below the menu is a search box with "SEARCH THIS SITE", a Google Custom Search input, and a "GO" button. A "PRINT THIS PAGE" button is also present. The main content area displays "Economics And Psychology 08/09 (BA Joint Hons) Full-time, Admission Code : N150" and states that entry requirements are published at the end of each course description in "our Prospectus". At the bottom, there is a footer with links for Staff, Alumni & Development, Business & Organizations, Press Centre, Vacancies, Freedom Of Information, Feedback, and a copyright notice for the University of Strathclyde.

SO HOW DO WE IMPROVE THIS PAGE?



None yet available

Data coming real soon !



Purpose of a course page?

Promoting teaching the courses.

Whats the one thing someone needs to do before they can get on a course?



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Apply

Course page

Does this page have:

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The screenshot shows the University of Strathclyde Business School website. At the top right is the University of Strathclyde logo. Below it is a navigation bar with links: Home, About Strathclyde, Studying, Research, Campus Life, Writing, A-Z Index, Contact. A red breadcrumb trail reads: Home > Economics > Prospective Students > Undergraduate Courses. The main header features the Business School logo and the title "Undergraduate Courses". The page is divided into three columns. The left column contains a "Prospective Students" menu with "Undergraduate Courses" selected, and links for "Current Students", "Research", "Staff", "PhD Research Students", "Fraser of Allander Institute", and "Contact Us". Below this is a search box with "SEARCH THIS SITE", a Google Custom Search logo, and a "GO" button, followed by a "PRINT THIS PAGE" button. The middle column is titled "ECONOMICS AT STRATHCLYDE" and contains a paragraph about the economy and a section titled "COURSE STRUCTURE" with sub-sections for "Year 1" and "Year 2". The right column has a red header "Undergraduate Economics" and three links: "Course Structure", "Teaching and Assessment", and "Careers Opportunities", with a note "Apply through UCAS".

SO HOW DO WE IMPROVE THIS PAGE?



None yet available

Data coming real soon !



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