

# Choosing A Color Scheme

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Article: Choosing A Color Scheme (2001)

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## CHOOSING A COLOR SCHEME

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When you begin the design of your Web site, one of the first things you need to do is decide on a color scheme. Although choosing colors seems like a relatively easy proposition, it's not easy at all. In fact, it's hard.

One of the pluses we have as Web designers is that millions of colors are at our disposal. Unlike the print world, we do not have to pay for each color we use. If we want to use a specific hue of yellow, for example, all we need to know is the hexadecimal code for that particular color.

One of the pitfalls of having millions of colors to pick from is that some people go crazy and use every color imaginable on their Web site. This is a big no-no. Not only does it look unprofessional to use 20 different colors on your home page, but depending on the colors you choose, your page may not be readable.

It is extremely important to pick hues that complement each other. You will want to use a background color that contrasts well with the color of your text. People are used to reading black text on a white background. I keep this fact in mind when I design my clients' Web sites. Although I have never stuck with the black and white color scheme, I try to use a dark font on a light background. It makes for easier reading and a more pleasant experience for my visitors.

Color affects our emotions. For example, the color red makes us hungry. If you're on a diet, it

wouldn't be a good idea to set your table with a red tablecloth!

Colors like blue and green are cool. Have you noticed in the summertime how sitting in a blue room automatically makes you feel refreshed?

Yellow is a wonderful brightener. It is cheerful and warm--like the sun.

When using colors on your Web site, you need to consider the mood you want to create and the audience you are designing for.

If you are designing a Web site for children, red is an excellent color choice, because it attracts the eye and stimulates our metabolism. Red is cheerful and exuberant.

Blue is an excellent choice for a business site because it exudes professionalism, wealth and power.

If you are designing a Web site for a nature group, greens and browns are natural choices because they are colors that are commonly found in the outdoors.

Another important consideration when choosing color schemes is cultural differences. For example, black is the color most commonly associated with mourning in the United States, but in Japan, white symbolizes sorrow. In Malaysia, green is associated with disease, and red symbolizes anger in Indonesia. As you can see by just these three examples, color is interpreted quite differently depending on the country. You must be careful if you don't want to insult your visitors.

Choosing an appropriate color scheme for your Web site is extremely important. Your color scheme must be carefully considered because the wrong choices could adversely affect your visitor's experience at your Web site. You only have one chance to make a good impression. Don't blow it!

For more information about choosing color schemes, visit the following resources on the Web:

The Color Schemer

<http://www.godigitalstudios.com/www/color>

Clear Ink's Palette Man

<http://www.paletteman.com/>

Project Cool Developer Zone

<http://www.projectcool.com/developer/reference/color-chart.html>

VisiBone Web Design Color References

<http://www.visibone.com/color/>

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