Designing a Web site requires more than just typing some words and putting some pictures in place. You have to consider the computers your audience is using. You may have the latest and greatest computer available, but you are making something available to people all over the world. If you design your site to work well on your computer, you may be cutting out a huge segment of your audience. So let's take some things into consideration before we even get underway.

- *Visitors to your Web site.* You have no idea who they are. Although you might target your audience, many people will show interest in your site simply by accident. As they browse, they may run into your site and find something that attracts them. Consider modem speed as slow as 56 Kbps that some people still use.

- *Battle for the browser.* The primary Web browsers you will consider are Firefox, Opera, Chrome, Safari and Microsoft Internet Explorer. Some Web visitors use Lynx, although it is a text-only browser. This explains why some sites give the visitor a choice between text version and graphics version. In order to capture that part of your audience, you need to design for Lynx users. The other five are popular graphics browsers. However, just because your site works on one, doesn't mean it will work on the others. Of the five, Internet Explorer is the odd one because it is built on an architecture that is different from the other. It is a good idea to design for Firefox first, then tweak the code for Internet Explorer. You also need to be aware of Windows and Macintosh users. To help with this problem, use a validation service such as the one provided at by the World Wide Web Consortium at the following location:

  http://validator.w3.org/.

  You can validate by the Web location (URI), by file upload from your local computer, or by direct text input.

- *Monitors.* Screen resolutions vary upward from 640 pixels per inch. Monitors have various color display capabilities as well, from 256 to millions of colors. To capture a maximum audience, design for a screen resolution of 800 x 600 pixels. That's 800 pixels wide, 600 pixels high. Now you can guess how many colors to design for, and you will probably come close. Both PCs and Macs using eight-bit display video have 256 colors. So that is what you design for in order to reach the broadest audience. However, the two platforms share only 216 colors, so you need to use the Web palette.

- *Window size.* Most Web visitors don't like scrolling - especially horizontally. Therefore, you need to design for a window size of 800 x600. This will accommodate most users and few people will need to feel irritated with you.

- *Picture format.* Remember that pictures must load through a telephone line and a modem. To facilitate such transfers, you need to use a compressed image. The two image formats used on the Internet are JPG (JPEG for the Mac) and GIF. A good rule of thumb is if the image is a scanned photograph, JPG is a better format. Here are four ways of compression:

  Low — Smallest file; lowest resolution and lowest quality.
  Medium — Resolution is about the same as high resolution.
  High — Contains more information than medium, but the result is about the same.
  Maximum — Largest file; best quality.

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The lower the compression, the lower the picture information and the lower the quality. Each time the picture is saved, it loses information and quality. When preparing a picture, set the resolution at 72 pixels per inch and use the RGB color model.