

Exhibit 11.2. A Checklist of Technical Dos and Don'ts for Web Learning Environments.

This checklist asks you to make sure that you *did* use some of the technical features of the Web to promote learning, and *did not* make any of the technical errors that are common to poorly designed Web sites.

DOs: My learning Web site

Does reflect an instructional design strategy. I created a "learning specification" (in addition to the technical specification), and I stuck to it. If the technology did not fit the learning specification, I changed to a different technology.

Does involve the learners right away, and give them a way to interact with and contribute their expertise to the learning environment by using the Web's collaborative tools.

Does show a map or other device so that the learner is never lost in Web space.

Does include an "escape hatch" (such as e-mail) to a real human being who can answer content questions and give guidance on technical problems.

Does allow printing, if the learner wants a hard copy.

Does contain links that work.

Does have flexibility for the future, so that the site is both easy to maintain and flexible enough to accept new instructional approaches and content, without suffering radical changes in look and feel.

DON'Ts: My learning Web site

Does not use unnecessary multimedia.

Does not use the Web as just a self-paced learning environment without tapping its capacity for enabling collaborative learning. (In fact, research from Carnegie-Mellon University makes a strong case for not using the Web as a self-paced learning environment because of the isolation and depression that can result from solitary Web use [Harmon, 1998]).

Does not use distracting elements such as blink tags, marquees, or rotating banners.

Does not leave the learner stuck on a page without an obvious way to get out or back to a familiar place.

Does not have links that go nowhere, or that return a "file not found" error message.

Does not make learners wait for long downloads (especially without a progress indicator).