

Web site planning: metaphor

1. What is a metaphor?

In a communications project, a metaphor can be thought of as associations, emotional reaction, experience, relationship with your audience.

To illustrate this point, consider Apple's Think Different campaign.

2. Examples

Foreign Languages & Literature.

Sloan School

Ocean Engineering

MIT Libraries

Fixed size(absolute) table format: Graduate Student Office top page

Flexible table format: Graduate Student Office sub pages

Bates College

MIT Home page variations gallery and the publishing plan.

Campus Dining

3. How do you develop a metaphor?

Ask these questions:

What business is the client REALLY in? (Detroit example.)

What makes this business/department/etc. different from others on in the world?

What abstract idea characterizes your site? What is the personality of the site? What should its personality be? What associations does it bring up? Similar terms in the industry: identity, brand.

If you replace the "name" of the site, would it still work for someone else/another company? If so, you still haven't found the unique design for the site.

4. **Discussion pages**

Name the unstated. What is it like? What associations does it bring up?

Steinway Pianos

New York Times

CMS

Campus Committee on Race Relations

Electric Postcards

Division of Comparative Medicine

Alumni Network Services
