

Six Cent Press - Usability Recommendations

Overview

This report has identified several key areas of the six cent press website (www.sixcentpress.jp) which can be improved upon to both increase sales, and make using the site more enjoyable.

Each issue has a list of recommendations which should be followed to improve that area. Where specific design solutions have been offered it is recommended that implementation match these as closely as possible. However, in cases where no such solution exists, recommendations should still be followed, but discretion can be used during implementation.

An Appendix is also included which offers content suggestions for the proposed site architecture.

Findings and Recommendations

Information Architecture

Issues

The navigational structure of the sixcentpress website is not optimized for tasks of high importance to the business and it's clients. The following tasks have been identified as most important:

- Discover information about products and services
- Place an order
- Ask a question

The current architecture is confusing and hides information from the user. For example, the order form is located under 'Contact', whilst design services are hidden at the bottom of a very long 'About' page. Overall, related information is spread out across seemingly unrelated pages.

Recommendations

- Change the architecture of the site to the following (in order):
 - Home
 - Products
 - Buttons
 - Packaging
 - Gasha-machine
 - Design Services
 - Order
 - Gallery
 - Contact
 - About Us
 - Help

- Current Navigation design can adequately handle this change, however please see the below issue, *Navigation Design*, for suggestions on how to improve this area.
- For a detailed description of the recommended contents of each section, see *Appendix A: Content Recommendations*.

Navigation Design

Issues

The general navigation design (i.e. Global navigation up top, local links to the left) is good and clear. However, to draw the user *into* the site, a more prominent navigation is needed. Also, the site should cater for those who have images disabled.

Recommendations

- Top Navigation buttons should be made 50% larger.
- “Utility Links” should be placed above the main navigation.
- A text link footer should be added to the bottom of every page.



Figure 1: *Suggested Navigation Layout*

Amount of Text

Issues

First time visitors to a website tend to scan a web-page for information. Instead of reading everything and then making a decision, they will click the first thing that looks good. Therefore, the most important text should be displayed first, and should be short enough to scan.

Currently, various pages of the website have far too much text (e.g. 'About' has 6 full screens of text). Reading such pages comes across as a daunting task - it is likely that most users simply wouldn't bother. As a result, important information (such as design prices) won't be seen.

Recommendations

- Aim to half the amount of text on every page.
- On pages where a lot of text is necessary, break the text into bite-sized subsections with clear headings, and include an index of these headings at the top of the page (i.e. Like an FAQ).
- Where section headings exist, aim to make them more meaningful. Omit unnecessary words and avoid 'marketing hype'.
- Beneath every section, include a “Back to Top” link.

Help

Issues

Currently, there is no obvious method of help on the website.

Recommendations

- Create a Help Page with several sub-sections:
 - How to Order
This should explain, in steps, what is needed to carry out an order.
 - Payment Information
Details about the various methods of payment.
 - FAQ
A list of all other frequently asked questions.
- Provide a support email in the footer of each page
- Where required, a "(What's this?)" link can be used next to certain lines of text or links which will trigger a pop-up window. Here, concepts can be further explained, and more detail can be given.
- On certain pages, relevant questions from the Help/FAQ can be displayed beneath the left navigation, similar to how downloadable files should be displayed. This will provide fast and easy access to solutions.
- Beneath every FAQ answer, a question can be posed: "Did this answer your question?". Yes and No links can then be supplied, which will submit this information to management. This will assist in continuously refining the help section.

Homepage Design

Issues

The homepage creates the first impression of a company for most users, and so it needs to do a number of things. For commerce related sites, it should develop a sense of trust, give a preview of what products exist, and also convince potential customers that *this* is the place they should be, not a competitor's site. Also, it needs to offer a clear place to start.

The six cent press homepage is generally very good. It looks attractive and clearly indicates what the point is ("Your source for pin back buttons"). However, there is room for improvement in other areas.

Recommendations

- Separate the main content of the homepage into two columns:
 - The first column should take up 60% of the available space, and give a clear guide on the products and services offered by the company. The welcome blurb should be placed at the top of this section, and made to have more emphasis (keep it short). This section should also contain contextual links to relevant sections of the site.

- The second column should contain a summary of news and latest offers. Each item should be clickable, and be taken to another page which goes into further detail.
- The large special offer button should be clickable, and should take the user to a separate page explaining the offer.
- The above issues will also have a positive effect on the homepage and it's effectiveness.

Other Recommendations

- Downloadable files (e.g. Templates) should be given more emphasis. A list of downloadable files should be shown beneath the left navigation on all relevant pages, including the help page.
- Basic contact details, such as email and phone numbers should be displayed in the footer of each page. This will help develop trust between users and the company behind the website.
- The contact form should only contain 3 fields: Name, Email and Message. No other information is needed for this page. If deemed necessary, a drop-down can be included which indicates the nature of the inquiry (quote, general question, etc). However, this should only be included if it increases the speed at which the user can get a helpful answer (i.e. assists management).
- After completing an action of any type, users should be presented with a confirmation screen. This eliminates doubt about whether an action was successful, and can provide an opportunity to describe what, if anything, went wrong. Similarly, email confirmations should be sent on all inquiries to assure the user that their attempt has been received.
- On the order page, a minimalistic design should be used. Once a user has entered this section, the aim is to minimize distractions and get the order completed as quickly as possible. Only the main navigation should be displayed, along with direct links to relevant sections of the help page.

Appendix A – Content Suggestions

The report below details suggested content for the proposed site hierarchy of the sixcentpress.jp website (see Page 1 – *Information Architecture*). Content is taken from what already exists on the website, however in places additional content is suggested. New content is marked with a red star (★). Please refer to the *Findings & Recommendations* above for layout suggestions.

Home

- ★ 1. A concise breakdown of the steps involved in placing an order.
- 2. Latest News and special offers
- 3. Contact information

Products

- ★ 1. Clear, graphical representations of the various products listed in this section. Each different product type should have minimal text, and a link that says “Click for more information” (or something similar). Possibly, the product types could be presented in a 2 x 2 grid, with each section having a clear heading.

Products > Buttons

- 1. Clear, graphical representation of the various sized buttons. This should include links the further information about each button (see point 4 below).
- 2. All relevant pricing.
- ★ 3. prominent “Order Now” link.
- 4. Details of product make-up (as seen on the current About page).
- 5. Button template information.

Products > Packaging

- 1. Clear presentation of all available packaging options. Should include graphical examples where possible.
- 2. All relevant prices and options.

Products > Gasha-machine

- 1. Basic information on the Gasha-machine.
- 2. Pricing.
- ★ 3. Possible integration of information from the Gasha-combo page.

Products > Design Services

- 1. Clear concise information stating that design services are available. Possibly provide examples.
- 2. Provide pricing details, but make it clear that this is just a guide.
- ★ 3. Provide a contact form for direct enquiries on this page.

Order

To come in future documentation.

Gallery

As it is. Consider breaking into smaller pages.

Contact

1. Comprehensive list of contact details, including address, email, phone & fax.
 2. Contact form.
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About Us

This section should be used to give a corporate history, and other information which is not relevant to the rest of the website.

Help

See *Help* (page 3).