In Chapter 5, you were introduced to the idea of message design, a concept that integrates the research in text design and screen design. Many of the Web design guidelines developed through the last half of the 90s were heavily grounded in research done in print design and reflect this work.

This research, combined with studies beginning in 1950 in media attributes, continues to evolve as delivery technologies improve. In the early days of the Web, text was the standard format—it was familiar, we knew how to design effective print resources and using text increased accessibility for most users who were restricted by bandwidth.

However, we now know that users have diverse needs and characteristics, text-only environments can constrain accessibility, and that text is not always the most effective medium for conveying information. With faster computers, increased bandwidth, and better tools, hypermedia environments promise to support more users, in more ways, with more choices than uniform format text resources.

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Key Ideas

As in Chapter 5, this chapter continues to expand the idea of accessibility and usability. You will continue to explore:

- Using different e-texts to carry the message
- How to incorporate media into your texts
- How to adapt existing electronic formats to e-Learning environments

Key Terms

This chapter introduces a number of terms and phrases that you may not be familiar with. These terms are listed in the Handbook (go to Key Terms in Chapter 6 of the Handbook). Check off the terms you know. Then, use this list to guide your reading of the chapter.

- Animation
- Sensory Modality
- Multi-channel
- Mental Model

Plan Your Progress

A concept guide for the ideas presented in this chapter is provided in the Handbook (go to Concept Guide in Chapter 6 of the Handbook). You can use this outline to help guide your exploration.

There is additional space for you to write the questions for which you need answers. Record your own information or learning needs in the Handbook (go to Questions and Goals in Chapter 6 of the Handbook).

At the end of the chapter, check your list of questions to determine whether you need additional information and use the chart to organize an action plan.

A “To do list” has also been provided for you in the Handbook for you to record what needs to be done, who needs to do the task, and when the task should be completed by (go to To Do List in Chapter 6 of the Handbook).
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