

Josh Johnson

Project 1 Site Audit

Interface Design

[Usmicrolab.com](http://Usmicrolab.com) is a company specializing in the manufacturing and distribution of Hard drive components and PCI cards. The site contains product descriptions, images, upcoming releases, contact and support for their products.

All the site tried to accomplish is to list their current products and give company information, contact page as well as support for their products. Product descriptions are very abundant throughout the site.

The site has a nice navigation bar design. It does stand out to the visitors. One you first see the site, the top navigation bar really stands out you get the company name, its description and a listing of what they are in the business of manufacturing. The site also has great images of every side of their products and great descriptions.



The problems of the site is the color, black is really not the best background color for a web site. The logo of the company does not stand out at all, it is really small, it is a big part of the site and should be much bigger. The big bubble at the top is really in the way, it should not be there, its content could be better as text within the site. The universe image is nice but does not belong there by itself, maybe as part of the top navigation bar. The site seems to have alignment issues. The navigation icons are misaligned, the images do not line up with other images and its content. The home page should not be so long, it will take a long time to load making many prospective clients leave the site.

The site has many great features, but those small problems prevent the site from really doing its job well.

The business sector of usmicrolab has come a long way. When computer just started, users could only use these massively expensive floppy disks that could barely hold anything. Today for next to nothing a user could get a hard drive that could hold a billion floppies. Everyone from large companies to individual home users will need a hard drive. While not all will need an extremely large hard drive, they need them to be relatively inexpensive. Usmicrolab does not manufacture the hard drive itself, however they manufacture very

crucial parts that provide different uses for the hard drive. A major development for this business sector is the development of Firewire and USB 2.0. They both allow a massive transfer rate of data to and from computers. Making Usmicrolab products very important to many businesses and consumers. In general, computer components are very important, everyday thousands of computer are being manufactured requiring products that the business sector manufactures.

In this part of my evaluation paper, I will discuss three other sites of the competitors. Good design is when something looks pleasing to the eye, works well with everything, and at the same time informing. A site can have this unique design, but if it does not mix well with the content, then it is nothing. In other words, design is everything.

Interactivity is also key for a website. Interactivity is how the user gets to interact with the content of the Website. You don't necessarily have to have a ton of interactivity for a site to be good. You just need it to be easily accessible to everyone and work.

Content can make or break a site, it can be everything. On a Website, content can be the images, video, and music. Content is what people read on a web site, a book, an ad. It is one of the biggest

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parts of the design for anything. Content and the overall design have to be in harmony together in order for it to work. It must have a layout that works, it needs to have a great font choice, size and color which goes along nicely with the rest of the design. If it is a site that is meant for the elderly, you don't want a tiny font size. Incorporating all of that into the content can be challenging. Designing content for a web site or an add both have their own unique challenges.

## Site # 1 – [Lacie.com](http://Lacie.com)

The first competitors' site is [lacie.com](http://lacie.com), It is not only about the company itself, but an online catalog as well. So it has double the content of all three sites.

### Design

The home page is nicely organized, it fits on to the screen, removing the need for anyone to scroll. It provides links to each major section of the website, both in graphic form and text form as well. The main focus of the home page is that big image that takes up most of the page. The image incorporates all of the companies products into a professional feeling setting.

### Content

A search option is also available. The site has a ton of content for all of their products as well as news. Content is given through images of the products and includes descriptions and specs.

### Interactivity

The site has common interactivity, link to each major section of the site. There are no rollovers or large amounts of eyecandy.

### Strength

The page fits on to the screen without any need of scrolling. All of the important information is on the first page, so the prospective customers will be able to easily learn what the company is about instantly.

### Weakness

The color scheme between the buttons and the backgrounds goes against each other. They are all different shades of silver and when the same shades meet it becomes difficult to see the titles of the links.



The second competitor site, [Highpoint-tech.com](http://Highpoint-tech.com). They mainly deal with the manufacturing of computer cards that handle massive storage devices. They do not sell through their site, just like Usmicrolab. Only provide product information and support.

### Design

The design of the site is similar to Lacie. It fits on to the screen without the need for scrolling. It just has a different color scheme that almost goes along well with there logo. The logo doesn't really blend in with the overall design of the site. It's a red square surrounded by a completely different color. The links are also drop down menus, providing easy and direct access to the sub-links.

### Interactivity

Links to the products, company info are clearly provided and in textural links as well. The graphical links at the top are also drop down menus, allowing visitors to be able to go into the site more quickly and easier.

### Content

They have latest news about the company and latest products created by them. Specs are also provided for their latest product.

### Strength

It is not as graphically intensive as Lacie, making it easily viewable to everyone. Even a visitor who is on dial-up, will be able to quickly view the website. Each section is color coded making it easy to separate all of the content.

### Weakness

There are too many different colors, there does not seem to be a real color scheme involved in the site.



The last competitor site is an online ecommerce Website [cooldrives.com](http://cooldrives.com). Cooldrives sell external enclosures and computer cards just like Usmicrolab, but they do not manufacture them. Multiple company products are sold on this Website.

### Design

The design is not the best in the world, it is a really basic design. Seems to come from a template. Links to each product genre are provided in text and graphical links. On the left and right of the page, the popular products have images and direct links.

### Interactivity

There are a lot of buttons and links on this site, maybe too many. There are many ways of accessing all the products.

### Content

Content is everywhere on this site, all information about the products and themselves are massively detailed. The images of the products are huge, you are not left without knowing the specs of each product.

### Strength

Content is massive, and they do a pretty good job of organizing it on the inside of their site.

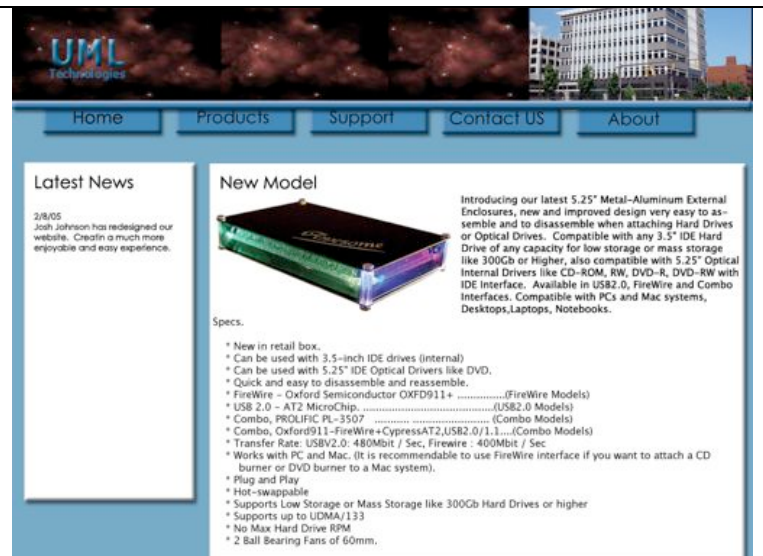
### Weakness

Too many links, they have three different ways of getting to the same stuff. The homepage is flooded with an unnecessary large amount of images, making it difficult for a visitor on a slow connection to be able to quickly view the Website



For all of the designs, the color blue was used as the most dominate color. The reason for blue is because of the color of the logo. The site is about UML and should try to reflect that. There was no background color chosen to make the site easier to read. The incorporation of the company logo and building in both designs was extremely important. The links also had to stand out so the visitor can easily navigate.

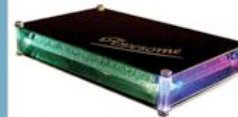
In Re-Design #1, The choice to use common tabs, nothing to fancy was so no visitor had to figure out a brand new way of navigating the Website. The visitors have seen tabs before and know what they do, so there will be no confusion at all. The news is separated from the main content. Visitors will notice a big distinction between them allowing them to choose where to go next, without having to search endlessly. As for the main content itself, the type face was intentionally left as a normal font. Nothing fancy, just the size and color of some text was modified from the original content



#### Latest News

2/8/05  
Josh Johnson has redesigned our website. Creatin a much more enjoyable and easy experience.

#### New Model



Specs.

- \* New in retail box.
- \* Can be used with 3.5-inch IDE drives (Internal)
- \* Can be used with 5.25" IDE Optical Drives like DVD.
- \* Quick and easy to disassemble and reassemble.
- \* FireWire - Oxford Semiconductor OXF911+ .....(FireWire Models)
- \* USB 2.0 - AT2 MicroChip. ....(USB2.0 Models)
- \* Combo, PROLIFIC PL-3507 .....(Combo Models)
- \* Combo, Oxford911-FireWire+CypressAT2,USB2.0/1.1.....(Combo Models)
- \* Transfer Rate: USBV2.0: 480Mbit / Sec, Firewire : 400Mbit / Sec
- \* Works with PC and Mac. (It is recommendable to use FireWire interface if you want to attach a CD burner or DVD burner to a Mac system).
- \* Plug and Play
- \* Hot-swappable
- \* Supports Low Storage or Mass Storage like 300Gb Hard Drives or higher
- \* Supports up to UDMA/133
- \* No Max Hard Drive RPM
- \* 2 Ball Bearing Fans of 60mm.

In Re-Design #2, The design was taken a little step further. The logo and image of the UML company building were left in the same spot. The navigation was all chained together in the nice little quarter circle around the logo of UML. Again the type is not fancy, just simple. The news and content is separated a little differently, Instead of the beveled edges a line similar to the one used for the navigation is wrapped around them, creating a visual path of where to follow.

The screenshot shows the UML Technologies website. At the top left is the UML Technologies logo. To its right is a navigation menu with links: Home, Products, Support, About US, and Contact, arranged in a quarter-circle path. A quote from a customer is displayed: "Our customers will always stay on the top of the competitive edge because of our services. Our ultimate goal is set for our customers' total satisfaction because our customers' success is our success." Below the navigation is a "Latest News" section with a date "2/3/04" and a brief announcement. The main content area features a "New Model" section with an image of a 5.25-inch Metal-Aluminum External Enclosure. To the right of the image is an introductory paragraph. Below the image is a "Specs." section with a list of features and technical details.

**UML Technologies**

Home  
Products  
Support  
About US  
Contact

"Our customers will always stay on the top of the competitive edge because of our services. Our ultimate goal is set for our customers' total satisfaction because our customers' success is our success."

**Latest News**  
2/3/04 - new site  
Josh Johnson has  
designed us a great new  
site. One that will make  
your experience with us  
much more enjoyable

**New Model**

Introducing our latest 5.25" Metal-Aluminum External Enclosures, new and improved design very easy to assemble and to disassemble when attaching Hard Drives or Optical Drives. Compatible with any 3.5" IDE Hard Drive of any capacity for low storage or mass storage like 300Gb or Higher, also compatible with 5.25" Optical Internal Drivers like CD-ROM, RW, DVD-R, DVD-RW with IDE interface. Available in USB2.0, FireWire and Combo Interfaces. Compatible with PCs and Mac systems, Desktops, Laptops, Notebooks.

**Specs.**

- \* New in retail box.
- \* Can be used with 3.5-inch IDE drives (internal)
- \* Can be used with 5.25" IDE Optical Drivers like DVD.
- \* Quick and easy to disassemble and reassemble.
- \* FireWire - Oxford Semiconductor OXF911+
- \* USB 2.0 - AT2 MicroChip
- \* Combo, PROLIFIC PL-3507
- \* Combo, Oxford911-FireWire+ CypressAT2,USB2.0/1.1

Transfer Rate: USB2.0: 480Mbit / Sec, FireWire : 400Mbit / Sec

- \* Works with PC and Mac.
- \* Plug and Play
- \* Hot-swappable
- \* Supports Low Storage or Mass Storage like 300Gb Hard Drives or higher
- \* Supports up to UDMA/133
- \* No Max Hard Drive RPM
- \* 2 Ball Bearing Fans of 60mm.

After close examining of Usmicrolab's on-line presence and competitors' sites. I have come to the conclusion that the current site should be changed. The content is great, the site has more than enough content. The major issues are that, each page should be scaled down, not the content, but the way the content is placed on to one page. Each product should have its own page. Visitors do not want to scroll up and down the page to find what they are looking for.