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