

In Defense of FLiP

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In a previous blog entry, I criticized the [Fusebox framework](#) for some of its slight imperfections. So this may seem like a slight reversal. I still maintain that while Fusebox is a great framework, it isn't the choice for me. [FLiP](#) (Fusebox Lifecycle Process - the methodology associated with Fusebox and Mach-ii), on the other hand, is another matter.

I generally follow FLiP to some degree (depending on the nature of the project). Although some steps haven't usually worked well for me (the wireframe actually, perhaps I am using it incorrectly though), the process overall has been of great use.

In further support of FLiP, I recently happened on to the [Usability.gov](#) site (by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). The site includes web site usability report. This report is available as a 128 page PDF of [guidelines](#) from usability studies. Each guideline is ranked (1-5) on both "Relative Importance" and "Strength of Evidence". Of the 189 guidelines, four rank as 5 (highest) for both "Relative Importance" and "Strength of Evidence".

- Use an Iterative Design Approach
- Provide Useful Content
- Use Black Text on Plain, High-Contrast Backgrounds
- Ensure Visual Consistency

Let's read what Usability.gov has to say under "Use an Iterative Design Approach":

Guideline: Develop and test prototypes through an iterative design approach to create the most useful and usable website.

Comments: Iterative design consists of creating paper and software prototypes, testing the prototypes, and then making changes based on the test results. The "test and make changes" process is repeated until the website meets performance benchmarks (usability goals). When these goals are met, the iterative process ends. Software tools are available to assist and facilitate the development of prototypes.

FLiP is (to some degree) an iterative approach. Certainly, FLiP isn't the only iterative design process available, but it is (in my humble opinion), a good one. That being said, I would love to hear about other design processes with which you have had success.

Note that "[Extreme Programming](#)" might also count as an iterative approach, but [Hal Helms notes that Extreme Programming is without a major success.](#)