UPDATE/DRAFT

Style Guide & Web Standards
for
Department of Energy Websites

For U.S. Department of Energy Public Websites

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Style Guide

The homepage of a website is the gateway to your organization's information. Therefore, it is designed to force flow to the items frequently requested and most important to your users. We will describe each major area in this section.

Area Definitions

Throughout the style guide, we will reference areas of the web pages. To ensure clarity and understanding, these items are defined and should be used and referenced for the remainder of this document.

For the reminder of this document, the above definitions be referenced as the following terms:

Top Global Navigation – "Top Navigation"
Global Search – "Search"
Global Header Graphic – "Header Graphic"
Global Topical Navigation – "Topical Navigation"

Section Header Graphic – "Section Headers"
Content Well – "Content Well"
Page Section Graphic Titles – "Page Section Titles"
Global Editable Footer – "Editable Footer"
Global Link Footer – "Link Footer"
Global Contact Footer – "Contact Footer"
Global Standard Utility Footer – "Utility Footer"

Top Navigation

The top navigation which displays the U.S. Department of Energy's general information is displayed by graphic buttons. Each button is white with black letters, and each button is a different width. However a consistent height should be maintained for this navigation.

These four buttons must be linked to the relevant sections on the Energy.gov web site.

Font Used: Eurostile
Font Height: 12px
Font Color: #000000
Graphic Slice
Height Used: 18px
Photoshop PSD: layeredMasterPSD.psd

Search

The search is a global navigation item and will remain in the top right corner of the site at all times, on all pages throughout Energy.gov and any future site development across other agency offices or programs.

The search is a graphic button with a HTML textbox prepared to be integrated with the Google tool. A form must be placed around the textbox area for proper submission. The "Go" is also a graphic button and should be used as an "onclick" Javascript function. Both buttons have a PSD file using a black background #000000.

Font Used: Eurostile
Font Height: 12px
Font Color: #FFFFFF
Graphic Slice
Height of Search Button: 11px
Height of Go Button: 11px

Header Graphic

The main top graphic of the global header is one graphic. The graphic sits under the main topical navigation. The width and height of this graphic must always remain the same and no additional photo, text or graphic should be placed in the design.

The U.S. Department of Energy seal must always remain in the header graphic. The seal is placed 20px from the left corner of the graphic edge and 25px from the top. The words U.S. Department of Energy are displayed 13px to the right of the seal. The word "Energy" must always be larger than "U.S. Department of" and must align clearly with the length of the word "Energy".

Font Used: (U.S. Department of) Verdana Bold Strong Alias
Font Size: 12px, 300 tracking
Font Used: (Energy) Arial Black Sharp-Alias
Font Size: 44px, 20 tracking
Font Color: #FFFFFF
Graphic Slice
Width Top Graphic: 778px
Height Top Graphic: 118px
Photoshop PSD: header.psd
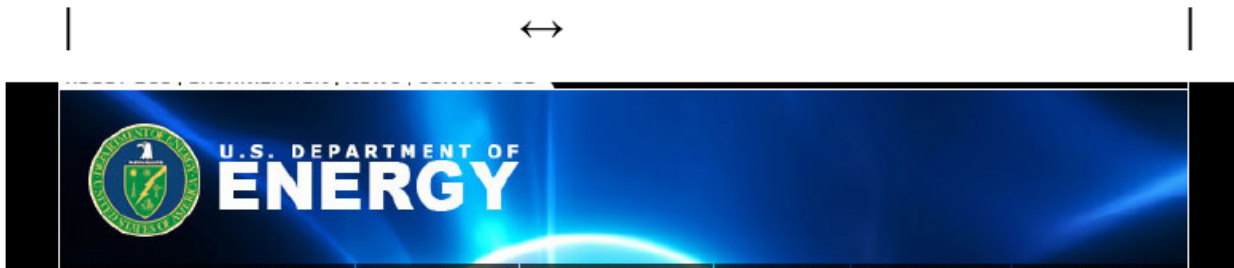
Topical Navigation

The top global navigation is broken out button by button. The global graphical header is layered under the main navigation.

The global navigation uses a black background with 43 percent opacity. White font is used on top of each button. The spacing for each button is 10 tracking.

Font Used: Eurostile
Font Size: 12px
Font Spacing: 10px tracking
Font Color: #FFFFFF
Graphic Slice
Width Navigation: Each button varies. Total buttons can not be longer than 778px.
Height Navigation Buttons: 28px
Photoshop PSD: header.psd

Office Headers

This graphic is for placement of the Office name. The width is 778 pixels and the height is 31 pixels. The Office name is right justified and uses the following font:

Font Used: Eurostile
Font Size: 20px
Font Color: #FFFFFF

Background color depends on whether the site is for a Program Office or a Staff Office. Use the appropriate color theme referenced in the *Backgrounds* section of this guide.
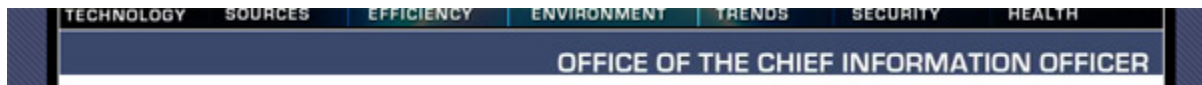
This banner should remain consistent throughout your site. It should not change with each program or sub-organization site. The main content area is where you would add a small graphic with the program/organization name.

Editable Footer

The editable footer is for the use of additional footer links. This area can be used for any text links, and will appear across all back pages. On program or office pages, this area is used to display information specific to that office.

Font Used: Verdana
Font Size: 11px
Font Color: #FFFFFF
Background Cell: #808080
Row Width: 778px
Height: NA

Link Footer

The link footer displays icons. These icons can not be changed or removed. Requests for additions to this footer should be forwarded to the DOE Webmaster and should include the proper graphic for consideration. The formatting for new icons requires all items to be no taller than 30px. The maximum width for new icons is 120px. The total length of the row should not exceed 405px.

Contact Information

The contact footer displays general contact information for the U.S. Department of Energy. This information is global and should never be removed/changed.

Utility Footer

The utility footer is the standard global navigation footer and will not change. This is why the gray global footer is offered for an alternate location for additional links and information. The bottom area is defined by graphics. The graphics are displayed on a black background using white font.

Web graphics for Energy Web Sites

PhotoShop PSD's, GIF and JPEG files are also provided to help speed your redesign project. Please contact the DOE Webmaster for additional information. As stated earlier in this document, graphics pertinent to the overall look and feel of energy.gov are NOT to be changed in any fashion for use on Program and Staff Office websites.

Backgrounds

Homepage: The website design is formatted for an 800x600 browser resolution. Therefore, background images have been designed to show up on each side of the main design for higher browser resolutions. This helps create a visual fullness to the site. The following area defines the backgrounds colors and images used.

As new pages are created and added to the Energy.gov website, a color theme must be defined and a background image must be selected. The taxonomy will help users define the proper placement of the file, hence the color and image for the page.

Color Themes & Background images

DOE Homepage: Each major area of the website is defined by a color selection. This can be defined by the top section header graphics in the pages. The DOE homepage color is gray blue.

Hexadecimal Color: #3A486B
Image: bg_stripes_liteblue.gif

Topical: The topical pages are linked to through the main global topical navigation carried throughout all DOE web pages. Each section is the same color theme. The color is goldenrod.

Hexadecimal Color: #3A486B
Image: bg_stripes_gold.gif

Program Office web sites should follow this color scheme throughout their respective sites as well.

Energy.gov Administration: The administration pages consist of general information that Energy.gov must display on their site due to policies, rules and employment. These areas are defined by the same gray blue that the homepage uses. Each section should follow the gray blue color theme. These areas can be linked from several footer navigations as well as areas such as Contact Us.

Hexadecimal Color: #FFA601
Image: bg_stripes_liteblue.gif

Staff Office web sites should follow this color scheme throughout their respective sites as well.

The following color schemes are specific to the main DOE web site:

About: The pages listed under "About DOE" will follow basic taxonomy guidelines. These areas are linked from the top sub navigation. The About areas will host the color green.

Hexadecimal Color: #006600
Image: bg_stripes_green.gif

Organization: The organization pages are linked from the top sub navigation throughout the site. This is a global element. All organization pages will host the color burgundy.

Hexadecimal Color: #750400
Image: bg_stripes_burgandy.gif

News: The news pages are linked from the top sub navigation throughout the site. This is a global element. All news pages will host the color dark blue or navy.

Hexadecimal Color: # 0E2289

Image: bg_stripes_dark_blue.gif

Audience: The organization pages are linked from the homepage and can be found throughout the site. All audience pages will host the color orange.

Hexadecimal Color: # E05603
Image: bg_stripes_orange.gif

Website Fonts

The website consists of a variety of fonts. These fonts range from the graphic fonts to the actual content, titles, sections and navigation. The fonts range in size, style, point size and color. In this section, we define the major areas and the CSS class associated if available. If a Photoshop master file exists for a text graphic, we explain these as well.

Top Navigation
    Color – White
    Background-color - #000000
    Font - Eurostile
    Font Size – 12 px
    Photoshop PSD – header.psd

Search
    Color – White
    Background-color - #000000
    Font - Eurostile
    Font Size – 12 px
    Photoshop PSD – header.psd

Graphical Header
    Color – White
    Font Used – (U.S. Department of) Verdana Bold Strong Alias
    Font Size – 12px, 300 tracking

    Font Used – (Energy) Arial Black Sharp-Alias
    Font Size – 44px, tracking
    Height – 47px
    Width – 211px
    Photoshop PSD – header.psd

Topical Navigation
    Color – White
    Background-color - #000000
    Font - Eurostile
    Font Size – 12px
    Effects – 10 px line spacing
    Height - 28
    Width – Varies for each navigation item
    Photoshop PSD – header.psd

Dropdown JavaScript
    Color - White
    Background-color - #000000
    Border-width - 1px
    Border-style - Solid
    Font-family - Verdana
    Font-size - 7pt
    Font-weight - bold

Height - 23px
Width - 170px

Section Headers
Color – White
Background-color – See backgrounds for section coloring
Font - Eurostile
Font Size – 20px
Height - 31px
Width – back pages 778px
Photoshop PSD – int_sechdr_.psd

Editable Footer Text
Background color - #808080
Font – Verdana
Font size - 10 pt.
Font Color: #FFFFFF
Row Width: 778 pixels

Link Footer
Graphics – height of items should be no more than 30 pixels
Background-color - #000000
Row Width: 405 pixels

Contact Information
Color – White
Background-color - #3A486B
Font - Verdana
Font Size – 11px

Utility Footer
Color – White
Background-color - #000000
Font – Verdana
Font Size – 11px

Program & Staff Office Templates

The Office web site pages are one, two, or three column special layout. The page contains the standard global header, global topical navigation and the section sub navigation.

Landing pages
There are two options for landing pages (index.htm) for Office websites. The doublewide page allows a banner to overlap two columns of the content well.
Elements that must be changed per template are:
Background
Section Header
Font Title Color

This page allows for a banner only in the middle column.
Elements that must be changed per template are:
Background
Section Header
Font Title Color

Generic 1
This template should be used for pages without specific navigation. The template should follow the proper color theme for the area.

The proper section header graphic should be placed in the page.

Elements that must be changed per template are:
Background
Section Header
Font Title Color

Generic 2
This template is designed to include sub navigation and one content well.

The proper section header graphic and color theme for the page needs applied.

Elements that must be changed per template are:
Background
Section Header
Font Title Color

Generic 3
This template is designed to include sub navigation and one content well.

The proper section header graphic and color theme for the page needs applied.

Elements that must be changed per template are:
Background
Section Header
Font Title Color

Sub navigation

The Energy.gov site offers several navigations in the global and footers. However, it is the left column sub navigation that allows users to define and quickly find information. In this section, we will describe the HTML for creating navigation items.

The HTML below creates one instance of a sub navigation item. This navigation is displayed on all pages across the Energy.gov website with the exception of generic1.htm template. This HTML is to be repeated for every instance of a second level navigation item.

As the HTML is repeated, the graphic effect to the user shows multiple levels of the sub navigation. The example below displays the table repeated five times for five navigation items.

First level navigation ←

The final result of the ←
Second level navigation
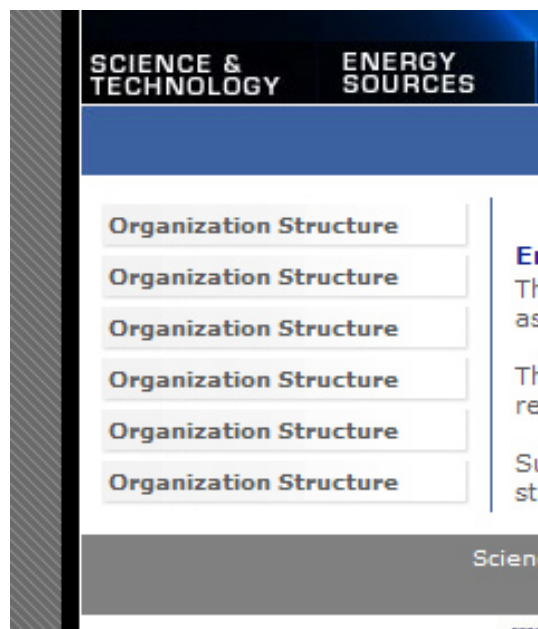
Left Sub navigation
Navigation Font - verdana10greyBold
Navigation Cell Background image - images/int_bgbutton_left.gif
Div & Table Align - Center
Image Bottom – int_padbtom_left.gif
Spacer Image – spacer.gif

Standard Text links

There are several ways to use text links within the DOE templates. Graphical representations of these links is acceptable. The important thing is to be consistent in whatever format you use. The following are a few examples of text links to use on DOE Web sites.

LEARN MORE
Find out what Federal regulations pertain to Cyber Security. Go>

PROTECTING YOUR COMPUTER
Helpful tips and other resources to protect your computer, whether home or at work. more>

VIRUS PROTECTION PROGRAM COST ANALYSIS
How much does a virus cost you? Is it worth it to invest in protection strategies? read more>

It's not necessary to spell out the full email address if you hyperlink the text that describes who the user will contact.

CERTIFICATE REQUESTS
Need a certificate for a server? Send your request to PKI Support.

Cascading Style Sheets - CSS

```css
body, td, tr {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 11px;
        color: #595959;

}

.verdana10grey {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 10px;
        color: #595959;
        text-decoration: none;

}

.verdana10white18line {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 10px;
        line-height: 18px;
        color: #FFFFFF;
        text-decoration: none;

}

a.verdana10white18line:hover {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 10px;
        line-height: 18px;
        color: #FFFFFF;
        text-decoration: underline;

}

.verdana11grey {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 11px;
        color: #595959;
        text-decoration: none;

}

.verdana11grey18line {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 11px;
        line-height: 18px;
        color: #595959;
        text-decoration: none;

}
```

```css
a {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 10px;
        color: #0E2289;
        text-decoration: none;

}

a:hover {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 10px;
        color: #0E2289;
        text-decoration: underline;
}

.verdana11bluebold18line {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 11px;
        font-weight: bold;
        line-height: 18px;
        color: #0E2289;

}

.verdana11blueboldcaps {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 11px;
        font-weight: bold;
        text-transform: uppercase;
        color: #0E2289;

}

.verdana10greyBold {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-weight: bold;
        text-decoration: none;
        font-size: 10px;
        color: #595959;

}

a.verdana10greyBold:hover {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-weight: bold;
        text-decoration: none;
        font-size: 10px;
        color: #333333;
        text-decoration: underline;

}
```

```css
.verdana11darkgrey {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 11px;
        line-height: 15px;
        color: #333333;
        font-weight: bold;

}

.verdana11greyboldcaps {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 11px;
        font-weight: bold;
        text-transform: uppercase;
        color: #595959;

}

.verdana11grey15line {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 11px;
        line-height: 15px;
        color: #595959;
        text-decoration: none;

}

.verdana11burgundybold18lineCopy {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 11px;
        font-weight: bold;
        line-height: 18px;
        color: #750400;

}

.verdana11greenbold18lineCopy {

        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 11px;
        font-weight: bold;
        line-height: 18px;
        color: #006600;

}

.verdana11purplebold18lineCopy {
        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
        font-size: 11px;
        font-weight: bold;
        line-height: 18px;
        color: #41015F;

}
```

.verdana11orangebold18line

```
{        font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
         font-size: 11px;
         font-weight: bold;
         line-height: 18px;
         color: #C14900;

}
```

.verdana11burgundybold {

```
         font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
         font-size: 11px;
         font-weight: bold;
         line-height: normal;
         color: #750400;

}
```

.verdana11bluebold {

```
         font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
         font-size: 11px;
         font-weight: bold;
         line-height: normal;
         color: #0E2289;

}
```

.verdana10bluebold {

```
         font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
         font-size: 10px;
         font-weight: bold;
         line-height: normal;
         color: #0E2289;

}
```

Web Standards

Requirements & Best Practices

The laws, regulations, policies, and other directives in this section apply only to public websites in the U.S. federal executive branch. They do not apply to intranets or websites of the judicial or legislative branches (except where specifically noted).   However, any website can benefit from the information in this section.

Before you consider whether or not to create a website for your organization, you need to be aware of many laws, regulations, and other policies that all Government, and in particular DOE, websites must follow.

Federal Laws & Regulations

The following is a list of current Federal laws and regulations, however, the technology changes very quickly. To verify whether this list is complete, and to find additional information, please visit http://www.webcontent.gov .

- Access for People with Disabilities (Section 508) - the Rehabilitation Act (amended 1998) requires Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. (additional guidance available at http://www.section508.gov)
- Digital Rights, Copyright, Trademark, and Patent Laws - Most content on federal public websites* is in the public domain and should not include copyright or other intellectual property notices. However, when an organization uses or duplicates information available from the private sector as part of an information resource, product or service, the organization must ensure that the property rights of the private sector source are adequately protected. These protections apply to any material posted to federal public websites, such as documents, graphics, or audio files. Organizations should also review content to determine if it is subject to international copyright laws. Organizations should review the relevant laws and regulations to ensure that their public websites meet the full range of requirements, (additional information available at http://www.copyright.gov/).
- E-Government Act of 2002 – the purpose of the Act, Title II - Federal Management and Promotion of Electronic Government Services, section 207 is to improve the methods Government information is organized, preserved, and made accessible to the public. (read the Act at http://www.archives.gov/about/laws/egov-act-section-207.html)
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) - All federal public websites must comply with existing laws and directives that relate to the Freedom of Information Act. The principal requirement is that websites must have a page that includes certain content as required by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This page should include information about how the public can request information under the Act. The graphic global footer on all DOE Headquarters websites provides a direct link to the DOE FOIA Web page.
- Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) - requires that, when practicable, federal organizations use electronic forms, electronic filing, and electronic signatures to conduct official business with the public, by 2003.
- Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) - requires organizations to make their annual performance plans readily available to the public.
- Information Quality - Public Law 106-554, "Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of Information Disseminated by Federal Organizations" requires federal organizations to issue guidelines for "ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information (including statistical information) disseminated by Federal organizations."
- Lobbying Restrictions - All federal public websites* must comply with existing laws that prohibit federal public websites from being used for direct or indirect lobbying.
- No Fear Act - that Federal agencies be accountable for violations of antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws; to require that each Federal agency post quarterly on its public

- Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) - compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35) ensures that information collected from the public minimizes burden and maximizes public utility. One of the principal requirements of the PRA is that organizations must have OMB approval before collecting information from the public (such as forms, general questionnaires, surveys, instructions, and other types of collections), and they must display the current OMB control number on the collection.
- Priorities and Schedules for Posting Content - Agencies must develop an inventory of information to be published on their websites, establish a schedule for publishing information, make those schedules available for public comment, and post the schedules and priorities on the website. Agencies should develop their website inventories based on the wants and needs of citizens as a whole and intended audiences. In establishing priorities, agencies should consider current and anticipated information needs, as well as historical, legacy materials.
- Privacy Requirements - All federal public websites must comply with existing laws and directives that address the need to protect the privacy of the American people when they interact with their government. Some of the key requirements for federal public websites include conducting privacy impact assessments; posting privacy policies on each website; posting a "Privacy Act Statement" that tells visitors the organization's legal authority for collecting personal data and how the data will be used; and translating privacy policies into a standardized machine-readable format.
- Security Protocols to Protect Information - All federal public websites must comply with Section 207(f)(1)(b)(iv) of the E-Gov Act of 2002, which requires organizations to have security protocols to protect information.
- Small Business Paperwork Relief Act - All federal public websites must comply with Small Business Paperwork Relief Act of 2002, which requires organizations to designate a single point of contact for small businesses, and to post the contact information on the organization's website.
- Web Records - All federal public websites must comply with existing laws and regulations related to the management of public web records. This includes the need for organizations to comply with new NARA guidance related to web records issued on December 17, 2005. (additional information available at http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/bulletins/2006/2006-02.html)

Office of Management & Budget (OMB) Policies

OMB issued Policies for Federal Public Websites on December 17, 2004 to fulfill the requirements of section 207(f) of the E-Government Act of 2002 (Pub. L. No. 107-347). Overall, the management of agencies' public websites should be in compliance with Federal information resource management law and policy. OMB went on to define Federal Public Websites as "…information resources funded in whole or in part by the Federal government and operated by an agency, contractor, or other organization on behalf of the agency. They present government information or provide services to the public or a specific non-Federal user group and support the proper performance of an agency function." The following are the specific policies issued by OMB:

1. Establish and Maintain Information Dissemination Product Inventories, Priorities, and Schedules
2. Ensure Information Quality
3. Establish and Enforce Agency-wide Linking Policies
4. Communicate with the Public, State, and Local Governments
5. Search Public Websites
6. Use Approved Domains
7. Implement Security Controls
8. Protect Privacy
9. Maintain Accessibility
10. Manage Records

Most of these are already required under OMB Circular A-130 (Management of Federal Information Resources) or other regulation. OMB defines "compliance" and provides additional explanation of expectations. A full copy of the memorandum and attachment are located http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/fy2005/m05-04.pdf.

Usability

Usability is a combination of factors that affect the user's experience with a website, including:

Ease of learning	How fast can a user who has never seen the site before learn the navigation structure sufficiently well to find the information they need?
Efficiency of use	Once an experienced user has learned to use the site, how fast can he or she find the information they need?
Memorability	If a user has used the site before, can he or she remember enough to use it effectively the next time or does the user have to start over again learning everything?
Error frequency and severity	How often do users make errors while using the system, how serious are these errors, and how do users recover from these errors?
Subjective satisfaction	How much does the user like using the system?

How does this relate to DOE websites? Consider the current situation at DOE: any Program office, Staff office or even Division can put up a website. Each site has a different architecture; each site has a different navigation structure; and, up until recently, each site could have a different look/feel. Each time a customer visits a different website at DOE, they have to learn a new navigation scheme. Studies show that visitors to websites who have a frustrating experience just don't come back again.

As a Federal agency, we have an additional burden of designing our websites for multiple audiences. According to regulations and OMB policy, our first and foremost customer is the general public – the taxpayer. Industry, professional stakeholders, and our peers take a back seat to the taxpayer. Providing a customer-centered organizational architecture is important, but it can be surprisingly difficult. Remember, customers don't care how DOE is organized; they just want to get to the information they want and they want to get there quickly.

Usability is NOT a luxury. Designing a site that keeps people coming back is essential to the Agencies' survival. Consistent design conventions help DOE become more recognizable to the public.

Use navigation elements consistently
Once users see a link, they expect when they see it again it will look the same, be in the same location, and function the same. If it has changed, users may be forced to relearn the button, which will delay their completion of tasks and reduce their satisfaction level.

When developing a website, each Office develops the navigation based on their lines of business, not from the overall DOE. When a user comes to www.energy.gov and then goes to one of the program websites, they have to learn another navigation scheme with each site. But they don't necessarily understand that each site is quasi independent. So all they know is that periodically we rearrange most everything on the page just to confuse them...

It would be pretty difficult to impose all the same specific terms to be used on each site (so that navigation is consistent throughout ALL DOE), but we can assist users by at least establishing a few standards:

1. Left navigation items should be listed alphabetically (for the most part).
2. Each major site should have a "Contact Us" button as the last item in the navigation list and this page should adhere to OMB & E-Gov requirements. (see also "Use Basic Common Content, Terminology, and Placement, Contact Information" at http://www.firstgov.gov/webcontent/managing_content/organizing/common_content/contact_us_p

[ages.shtml](). (A simple way to boost your site's credibility is by making your contact information clear: phone number, physical address, and email address.)

Research shows that sites win credibility points by being both easy to use and useful. Some site operators forget about users when they cater to their own organization's ego or try to show the dazzling things they can do with web technology.

The quality of a site's navigational system can directly impact perceptions of credibility. While the statement "the site is difficult to navigate" was reported to hurt credibility considerably, its polar opposite ("The site is arranged in a way that makes sense to you") was reported to be among the biggest contributors to credibility. The implication of these and other results is clear: Web sites need to be easy to use.