Suggested WSB Web Site Best Practices

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House Information Resources
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Suggested WSB Web Site Best Practices

(Each of these suggestions was originally raised at a CAO-Web Solutions Branch (WSB) Peer Review, WSB Skills Seminar, or another WSB-wide forum; and appeared to represent a consensus of those in attendance. Material in footnotes may not have been raised at those forums.)[1]

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 indicates sections that primarily deal with text content.
 indicates sections that primarily give warnings about text.

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[1] Dr. Ben Shneiderman, writing in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines*, 2nd edition, pages iv to v, observes:

> the greatest benefits from [web design] . . . guidelines will accrue to those who create effective processes for their implementation. My advice is to recognize the Guidelines as a 'living document' and then apply the four Es: education, enforcement, exemption, and enhancement.
>
>   **Education:** Delivering a document is only the first stage in making an organization's guidelines process effective. Recipients will have to be motivated to read it, think about it, discuss it, and even complain about it. Often a live presentation followed by a discussion can be effective in motivating use of guidelines.
>
>   **Enforcement:** While many designers may be willing to consider and apply the guidelines, they will be more diligent if there is a clear process of interface review that verifies that the guidelines have been applied. This has to be done by a knowledgeable person and time has to be built into the schedule to handle deviations or questions.
>
>   **Exemption:** Creative designers may produce innovative compelling Web page designs that were not anticipated by the Guidelines writers. To support creative work, managers should balance the enforcement process with an exemption process that is simple and rapid.
>
>   **Enhancement:** No document is perfect or complete, especially a guidelines document in a fast changing field like information technology. This principle has two implications. First, it means that [the] . . . organization should produce an annual revision that improves the Guidelines and extends them to cover novel topics. Second, it means that adopting organizations should consider adding local guidelines keyed to the needs of their community. This typically includes guidelines for how the organization logo, colors, titles, employee names, contact information, etc. are presented. Other common additions are style guides for terminology, templates for information, universal usability requirements, privacy policies, and legal guidance.

Abbreviations and Acronyms *see also Forms #(15); and Roman Numerals*
> **(1)** Abbreviations should be coded with <abbr> tags (each having a "title" attribute identifying what the abbreviation means).[2]
> **(2)** Acronyms[3] should be coded with <acronym> tags (with "title" attributes).[4]

📖 **"About" page (or section)** *see also Biographies #(3)*

Each committee, leadership, caucus, or support office website should have an "about" page[5] that describes the purpose and function of the office[6] (and perhaps the philosophy

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[2] Checkpoint 4.2 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites need to "[s]pecify the expansion of each abbreviation or acronym in a document where it first occurs."

For more information on the <abbr> tag, see "Accessible Web Pages: Abbreviations and Acronyms," *e-CyberCongress Connection*, summer 2005. A more rigorous approach is set out in Colin Lieberman's "The Accessibility Hat Trick: Getting Abbreviations Right," A List Apart (January 16, 2006).

[3] Acronyms are words formed from the initial letter(s) of the phrase they originally represented – for instance NASA (**N**ational **A**eronautics and **S**pace **A**dministration), COPPA (**C**hildren's **O**nline **P**rivacy **P**rotection **A**ct), and radar (**ra**dio **d**etecting **a**nd **r**anging). Acronyms are normally pronounced as they are spelled, while abbreviations normally are pronounced as the word that they are abbreviating (e.g., "Dr." is normally pronounced "Doctor" (or "Drive", depending on the context) and not "dir").

[4] Checkpoint 4.2 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites need to "[s]pecify the expansion of each abbreviation or acronym in a document where it first occurs."

For more information on the <acronym> tag, see "Accessible Web Pages: Abbreviations and Acronyms," *e-CyberCongress Connection*, summer 2005.

[5] See, for instance, the "About" page of the House Science and Technology Committee (formerly the Democratic Office of the Science Committee). The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (p. 45) praises the website for
> showcasing information in a way that improves the users' sense of the depth and breadth of the committee's duties. Users can browse easily through the detailed description of the committee's jurisdiction . . .

The report (page 47) also praises the website of the House Majority Leader (which was then the website of the House Democratic Whip) for their inclusion of information on the role of the office.

[6] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (p. 44) praises the 109th Congress website of the House Budget Committee (now the

of the office), the history of the office, and who is in charge of the office. The "about"
page should also provide information on how to contact the office.[7]

Academy Nominations *see Service Academy Nominations*

📖 Accessibility Policy

Each website should include a page indicating what accessibility standard(s) the site
attempts to comply with and a way that persons with disabilities can contact the office if
they have problems accessing the site.[8]

Accesskey attribute

(1) Use caution when assigning values to the "accesskey" attribute. (Some House
websites use the accesskey="x" attribute in the <a href> skip-navigation tag; and
the accesskey="h" attribute in the <a href> tag for the "home" navigation button).
The "accesskey" attribute allows the user to activate a command by pressing the

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Republican Office of the Budget Committee) for providing "a general introduction for newcomers" while
being primarily "geared toward an audience of experts familiar wit the budget process."
   The report (page 45) also praises the website of the 109th Congress website of the House Science
Committee Democratic Office (now the website of the Science and Technology Committee)

[7] Jakob Nielsen, in "*About Us* Information on Websites" (September 29, 2008), notes:

> Representing a[n] . . . organization on the Internet is one of a website's most important jobs.
> Effectively explaining the . . . [organization's] purpose and what it stands for provides essential
> support for any of the other website goals.
>
> Unfortunately, while most websites offer an *AboutUs* section, they often do a poor job
> communicating the crucial information it should contain. . . .
>
> To direct users to your *About Us* section, I recommend offering a **homepage link** labeled either
> *About <name-of-company>* or *About Us*. This link need not be the most prominent on the
> homepage, but it should be present and easily visible. In our studies [of websites of government
> agencies, non-profits, and various size for-profits,] users had trouble locating . . . [organization]
> information when the link had a nonstandard name, like *Info Center*, or when it was placed near
> graphical elements that looked like advertisements and was thus ignored.
>
> We recommend providing *About Us* information at **4 levels of detail:**
> 1. **Tagline** on the homepage: A few words or a brief sentence summarizing what the
>   organization does.
> 2. **Summary:** 1-2 paragraphs at the top of the main *About Us* page that offer a bit more
>   detail about the organization's goal and main accomplishments.
> 3. **Fact sheet:** A section following the summary that elaborates on its key points and other
>   essential facts about the organization.
> 4. **Detailed information:** Subsidiary pages with more depth for people who want to learn
>   more about the organization.

Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, in *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (p. 115) recommend that the *About*
information also include:
- The organization's top executive or official
- Correct contact information
- The organization's philosophy
- Historical timeline and milestones

[8] See, e.g., Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.'s accessibility policy.

ALT key with another key; for instance, if the <a href> tag in the "home" navigation button has an accesskey="h" attribute, then when a user presses the ALT key and the "H" key, the browser will go to the site's homepage. **Note**, however, that there is substantial disagreement among accessibility standards experts over whether the use of "accesskey" attributes is a good practice or a bad practice because of conflicts with ALT key combinations defined by Web browsers and screen readers.[9]

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[9] Checkpoint 9.5 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible web sites should:

> Provide keyboard shortcuts to important links (including those in *client-side image maps*), form controls, and groups of form controls. . . .
>
> For example, in HTML, specify shortcuts via the "accesskey" attribute.

To implement the W3C standard, the Government of the United Kingdom has adopted the following standards for accesskey attributes (*Illustrated Handbook for Web Management Teams, § 2.4.4*):

> S – Skip navigation
> 1 – Home page
> 2 – What's new
> 3 – Site map
> 4 – Search
> 5 – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
> 6 – Help
> 7 – Complaints procedure
> 8 – Terms and conditions
> 9 – Feedback form
> 0 – Access key details

The Canadian Government's *Common Look and Feel* standards best practices – which largely follows the W3C standard – on the other hand, provides that:

> Following the identification of a conflict between the Access keys previously recommended on the CLF [(Common Look and Feel)] Web site for site navigation on GoC [(Government of Canada)] Web sites, and the proprietary assignment of access keys being used in commercially available software, e.g. speech enabled Web browsers, the CLF Access Working Group has made the following recommendations for amendment to the CLF best practices:
>
> 1. The use of Access Keys M, 1 and 2 be eliminated, and the use of any other access keys is discouraged because there is no way of knowing which access keys conflict with any assistive technology or other applications installed and running on users' desktops.

An extensive review of ALT-character combinations that are already defined for various browsers and screen readers is set out at John Foliot's "Using Accesskeys – Is it worth it?" WATS.ca, October 2006. Virtually no characters appear to be unclaimed.

The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 38% of screen reader users always or often use access keys whenever they are available. The report noted that:

> Responses to this question varied greatly with no real consensus on use. Beginner screen reader users were much more likely to use access keys than expert screen reader users.

Additional material on use of the "accesskey" attribute can be found at:
- "Accesskey standards," by Richard Rutter
- "Accesskeys and Reserved Keystroke Combinations"
- "Using accesskey Attribute in HTML Forms and Links" by Jukka Korpela.

(2) The name for the "accesskey" attribute must be in lower case ("<accesskey>" not
"<acccessKey>" or "<accesskey>").[10]

📖 Accomplishments

Highlight the office's accomplishments – particularly recent accomplishments.[11]
Consider having a page of the website devoted to accomplishments[12] and perhaps even
making "accomplishments" a major navigation button (e.g., "My Priorities/07 Recap" on
Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's website).[13]

ActiveX controls *see <object> tags*

Acronyms *see Abbreviations and Acronyms*

<address> tags *see Contact Information and Techniques #(13)(o)*

Addresses (Postal) *see Contact Information and Techniques #(6) and #(13)*

Afrikaans language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and
Linking #(14)*

Albanian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and
Linking #(14)*

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[10] Section 4.2 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "XHTML documents must
use lower case for all HTML element and attribute names." Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web
Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when
they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[11] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web
Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 43, 46, 47, and 94) identifies including up-to-date information about the
office's legislative and other accomplishments (particularly from the current Congress) as an element of a
successful Congressional website. The report (pages 62, 67, 71, 74, and 75) particularly praises then-Rep.
Tom Allen's website for "an interactive map shows the Congressman's activities and accomplishments by
county"; Rep. J. Randy Forbes's website for its "issues section [which] describes the Congressman's most
recent actions and accomplishments on each of his priority issues"; Rep. Patrick Murphy's "local issues"
page which highlights the congressman's accomplishments on local issues; Rep. Cliff Stearns's Web site
for providing information on his accomplishments; and Sen. John Cornyn's website for "a list of
accomplishments and an updated description of his work on each issue in the current Congress."

[12] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the
Information Age* (page 23) praises Rep. Chaka Fattah's website "section called '*How Government Works*'
that explores the impact of the federal government in his district, explains how citizens' tax dollars are
spent, and answers general questions about Congress". Also, see Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.'s
"Accomplishments" page.

[13] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites
on Capitol Hill* (page 37) praises Rep. Carolyn Maloney's site for providing information on her
accomplishments (her website has "My Work in Congress" as a major navigation button. That section
includes a "Legislative Accomplishments" page).

Alignment *see also Centering*

Style sheets, not the "align" attribute, should be used to set alignments.[14] Which style sheet property is appropriate to use for alignment depends on what is being aligned:

- Alignment of text should be done with the style sheets "text-align" property.
- Alignment of <hr>, <iframe>, <img>, <input>, <object> and similar tags should be done with the style sheets "margin" property.[15]
- Alignment of table captions (i.e., the <caption> tag) should ideally be done with the style sheets "caption-side" property. Internet Explorer 6, however, does not support the "caption-side" property.[16] It is, nonetheless, recommended that the "caption-side" style sheets property be used (instead of the "align" attribute of the <caption> tag), with the understanding that the feature will not work until browsers become more standards compliant.
- Alignment of <legend> content with respect to the <fieldset> tag does not appear to be supported by style sheets. Until the <legend> tag will accept style sheet "align" properties, it is reasonable to continue using the "align" attribute (note, however, that the only valid values for the "align" attribute of the <legend> tag are "left", "right", "top", and "bottom" – "center" is not a valid value for the "align" attribute of the <legend> tag).[17]

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[14] Sections 11.2.1, 11.2.2, 13.7.4, 15.1.2, 15.3, and 17.10 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designate the "align" attribute of the following tags as deprecated (i.e., outdated) attributes: <caption>, <div>, <h1> to < h6>, <hr>, <iframe>, <img>, <legend>, <object>, <p>, and <table>.

  Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML.".

[15] To align left, use: margin: 0 auto 0 0

  To align right, use: margin: 0 0 0 auto

  Note: In Internet Explorer 6 and 7, the "auto" value of the "margin" property is only supported when the browser is in Standards Mode (Internet Explorer's Standards Mode is the equivalent of Mozilla's Almost Standards Mode).   To ensure that IE7 is in Standards Mode, use one of the XHTML 1.0 <!DOCTYPE> declarations from the W3C *Recommended List of DTDs*. To ensure that IE6 is in Standards Mode, use one of the XHTML 1.0 <!DOCTYPE> declarations from the W3C *Recommended List of DTDs* and make sure that the <!DOCTYPE> declaration is the first thing in the file. For additional <!DOCTYPE> declarations that are compatible with Internet Explorer being in Standards Mode, see Henri Sivonen's *Activating the Right Layout Mode Using the Doctype Declaration*.

[16] A CAO-WSB analysis of www.house.gov usage for July 9 to 15, 2008, indicates that the following browsers each accounted for at least 0.1% of the identifiable, non-robot access to the site:

1.	Internet Explorer 7.x	46.32%
2.	Internet Explorer 6.x	30.30%
3.	Firefox 2.x	13.15%
4.	Firefox 3.x	5.01%
5.	Internet Explorer 5.x	1.39%
6.	Firefox 1.x	0.45%
7.	Safari	0.35%
8.	Opera	0.21%
9.	Netscape 7.x	0.11%

The analysis also indicated that 0.10% of the usage was from mobile device browsers (primarily from Blackberry devices).

[17] See § 17.10 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification*.

Amharic language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Ampersands

Ampersands (&) should only be used as part of character entities (e.g., " or).[18] To represent an ampersand in text (or as part of a URL), use:

&

<applet> tags

The <object> tag, not the <applet> tag, should be used to insert programs into HTML pages. The <applet> tag should not be used for any purpose.[19]

"Approved by" Icons *see Compliance Icons*

Apostrophes and Quotation Marks *see also Quotations*

Open and close, single and double quotation marks (and apostrophes) generated by Microsoft products, often generate proprietary coding that is not compliant with the Unicode standard.

(1) When it is desired – in the content of a website – to use the curved open and close single and double quotation marks (or a curved apostrophe), use the decimal representations:[20]

'	open single quote	‘
'	close single quote (or apostrophe)	’
"	open double quote	“
"	close double quote	”

(2) When using a single or double quotation mark in the coding of a website (e.g., in <a href="index.shtml">), use neutral (i.e., uncurved) single or double quotation marks:

' single quote

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[18] Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

Section C.12 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that:

In both SGML and XML, the ampersand character ("&") declares the beginning of an entity reference (e.g., ® for the registered trademark symbol "®"). Unfortunately, many HTML user agents have silently ignored incorrect usage of the ampersand character in HTML documents - treating ampersands that do not look like entity references as literal ampersands. XML-based user agents will not tolerate this incorrect usage, and any document that uses an ampersand incorrectly will not be "valid", and consequently will not conform to this specification. In order to ensure that documents are compatible with historical HTML user agents and XML-based user agents, ampersands used in a document that are to be treated as literal characters must be expressed themselves as an entity reference (e.g. "&"). For example, when the href attribute of the a element refers to a CGI script that takes parameters, it must be expressed as http://my.site.dom/cgi-bin/myscript.pl?class=guest&name=user rather than as http://my.site.dom/cgi-bin/myscript.pl?class=guest&name=user.

[19] Section 13.4 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the <applet> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) element.

[20] For additional information, see David Wheeler's "Curling Quotes in HTML, SGML, and XML."

"   double quote

Arabic language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Archived House Websites
   The National Archives and Records Administration's official copy of the House and Senate websites of the 109th Congress is available at http://webharvest.gov/collections/. Additional copies of former House office Web pages are available (going back to 1996) through the Internet Archive at http://www.archive.org/index.php. Copies of websites of former Members of the House that were recognized by the Congressional Management Foundation with their 2006 Gold, Silver or Bronze Mouse Awards, are available at http://www.connectingtocongress.org/.

<area> tags *see Image Maps #(3)*

Armed Forces *see District Information #(5); Military (Active Duty, reserves, and National Guard); Service Academy Nominations; and Veterans*

Armenian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

📖 **Articles and Op-Eds**
   (1) Offices should be encouraged to have available on their website the articles, op-eds, and similar material issued by the Member[21] and to make them available in chronological order and in subject order.[22]
   (2) Offices should be encouraged to use WIDA for putting articles, op-eds, and similar material on their site.

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[21] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 46 and 95) identifies having an archive of the Member's "columns or op-ed pieces" as an element of a successful Congressional website. The report (pages 73 and 75) praises the website of Sen. Chris Dodd for cross referencing to his op-eds throughout the site.
    See also Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.'s website, which has articles available by issue or in chronological order.
[22] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 46) observes that:
       The most important thing to consider is presenting the wealth of information the office produces in the most usable way possible. Virtually all offices already allow the press access to the most recent information by providing press releases arranged by date. But many users are interested in specific topics or issues. It is much more likely that they want to know the latest news or action on their topic of interest—say, the environment or the war in Iraq—than they want to see the last three press releases or floor speeches the Member has released. Organize all of the press resources by topic and type. Users are more likely to read articles and watch or listen to video or audio if they don't have to wade through an endless chronological list of unidentifiable files. While this meets the needs of the press, keep in mind that other key audiences, like lobbyists, academics, and interested constituents will also be served by this information.

📖 **Artistic Discovery Contest** *see also Forms*

(1) Member offices should be encouraged to provide information about how to apply to compete in their competition in the Artistic Discover Contest. Offices may also want to include information about previous winners of the contest from their district.[23]

(2) The Artistic Discovery Contest section of a Member's website should include a form for submitting an entry into the competition.[24] If the Member requires that the submitter sign the application, it is suggested that the form be HTML-based (instead of PDF), were the applicant would fill out the HTML-based application, press the "Generate Application" button, and the filled out application would be in a printable form without any navigation or anything else extraneous.[25]

(3) The Artistic Discovery page should be linked to from both the Constituent Services page and from the Kid's page.

Attributes *see also Accesskey attribute; Apostrophes and Quotation Marks #(2); Centering; Contact Information and Techniques #(13); Event Handlers #(1); Favicons #(1); Forms; HTML #(3); Image Maps #(2); Language of Text; Margins and Padding #(2); <object> tags #(3); Privacy Policy and Cookies #(4); Roman Numerals #(1); RSS #(4); Scripts #(2); Tables; and WIDA #(4)*

(1) The value of each attribute should be in quotation marks or apostrophes (e.g., use colspan="2" or colspan='2', not colspan=2).[26]

(2) The name of each attribute should be in lower case (e.g., use "href", not "HREF").[27]

(3) Every attribute must have a value (e.g., use checked="checked", not just: checked).[28]

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[23] Examples of websites that include material on the Artistic Discovery Contest include Rep. Neil Abercrombie, Rep. Robert Aderholt, Rep. Tom Cole, Rep. Jim Cooper, Rep. Bill Delahunt, Rep. Mike Honda, Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr., Rep. Rick Larsen, Rep. Dennis Moore, and Rep. Devin Nunes.

[24] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 57) notes that:

> Many offices use their Web sites to direct constituents to contact them offline for the information and services they are seeking. Yet, people who choose the Web as their method of contacting a congressional office are doing so precisely because they prefer to have their needs met online. Respond to their needs accordingly, and you will find you have more satisfied "customers," at less effort and expense to the office than you ever thought possible.

[25] See, e.g., the Congressional Art Competition forms of Rep. John Adler, Rep. Steve Austria, Rep. John Boccieri Rep. Joseph Cao Rep. Bill Cassidy Rep. Jason Chaffetz   Rep. Mike Coffman

[26] Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Use W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

Section 4.4 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition)* provides that "[a]ll attribute values must be quoted, even those which appear to be numeric."

[27] Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Use W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

Section 4.2 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition)* provides that "XHTML documents must use lower case for all HTML element and attribute names."

[28] Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Use W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

(4) Line breaks[29] and multiple blanks should not be used in the value of an attribute.[30]

(5) Attribute values are case-sensitive and should normally be in lower case.[31]

Audio files *see Multimedia files and Audio files*

Aural Style Sheets

If using aural style sheets,[32] keep in mind that Jaws[33] (starting with version 8) uses screen style sheets – not aural style sheets – to determine the text to be presented.

Babel Fish *see also Language of Text; Linking #(14); and Privacy Policy and Cookies*

Offices desiring to include the Alta Vista's free Babel Fish language translation function on the office's website should be cautioned that:

- Babel Fish generates third party cookies on the PCs of people who use their service. Use of cookies on Congressional websites has generated bad publicity in the past.[34] If an office does decide to use Babel Fish, the office should be strongly encouraged to (a) provide notice on their Privacy Policy page that use of this feature may generate third-party cookies on their PC; and (b) include (in the office's Privacy Policy) a link to Alta Vista's Privacy Policy (with an appropriate exit message)[35].

Section 4.5 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition)* provides that "Attribute-value pairs must be written in full. Attribute names such as `compact` and `checked` cannot occur in elements without their value being specified."

[29] Line breaks in the "title" attributes of `<link rel="alternate" type="application/rss+xml">` tags display as empty boxes (□) in 🔊 dropdown menu in Internet Explorer 7.

[30] Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Use W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

Section C.5 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition)* recommends "Avoid line breaks and multiple white space characters within attribute values. These are handled inconsistently by user agents."

[31] Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Use W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

Section 4.11 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition)* provides that "HTML 4 and XHTML both have some attributes that have pre-defined and limited sets of values (e.g. the `type` attribute of the `input` element). In SGML and XML, these are called *enumerated attributes*. Under HTML 4, the interpretation of these values was *case-insensitive*, so a value of `TEXT` was equivalent to a value of `text`. Under XML, the interpretation of these values is *case-sensitive*, and in XHTML 1 all of these values are defined in lower-case."

[32] Aural Style Sheets should be used with caution. Section A.1 of the W3C *Cascading Style Sheets Level 2 Revision 1 (CSS 2.1) Specification* provides that aural style sheets are deprecated (i.e., outdated).

[33] The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 74% of screen reader users use Jaws.

[34] See, e.g., "Dozens of U.S. Senators are Quietly Tracking Visits to their Web Sites even Though they have Publicly Pledged Not to Do So" by Declan McCullagh and Anne Broache, CNET News.com, January 6, 2006.

[35] The *Committees' Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, General, § 5), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

- The Babel Fish software imports a JavaScript on the office's website and jumps the user to a non-House of Representatives website (http://babelfish.altavista.com/) without informing the user that they are leaving the House website and that neither the office nor the House is responsible for the content of that site. This would appear to violate the provision in the *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, § 5) that states that "HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives website. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links." (Similar language is contained in the *Committees' Congressional Handbook*.)[36]
- Babel Fish may not accurately translate some of the nuances of a website's text. As the sponsor's of Babel Fish point out, "Expect Babel Fish to allow you to grasp the general intent of the original, not to produce a polished translation."[37]

Backgrounds *see also Centering; and Navigation #(1)*
  (1) Background colors should be designated with style sheets (using the "background" property).[38] The "bgcolor" attribute should not be used for this purpose.[39]
  (2) Background images should be designated with style sheets,[40] not with the "background" attribute.[41]

> HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → HTML → Exit Message to External Web Sites.

[36] The *Committees' Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, General, § 5), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

> HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives, prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither the committee nor the House is responsible for the content of linked sites. Committees maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

[37] See http://www.altavista.com/help/babelfish/babel_help.

[38] Use the "background" property, rather than the "background-color" property.
  Section 9.1 of the W3C *CSS Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that "If specifying a foreground color, always specify a background color as well (and vice versa)."

[39] Section 15.1.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "bgcolor" attribute as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[40] Use the "background" style sheets property, rather than the "background-image" property..

[41] Section 7.5.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "background" attribute as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

(3) Different browsers have different default background colors. Background colors, therefore, should be specified by style sheet, rather than relying on browser defaults.

(4) The contrast between any text and its background should at least meet the minimum level set out in a respected accessibility standard, e.g., Guideline 1.4.6 of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0.[42] Text and background contrast should be tested using a tool such as Colour Contrast Analyser.[43] To maximize accessibility, the contrast between any text and its background should have a luminosity ratio of at least 7:1 (with and without allowing for colorblindness).

(5) Rather than using the "background-color", "background-image", "background-repeat", "background-attachment", or "background-position" style sheet properties, use the "background" property – and specify those elements in that order (i.e., color, image, repeat, attachment, and then position).

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[42] Guideline 1.4.6 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 provides that in a accessible website:

> The visual presentation of text and images of text has a contrast ratio of at least 7:1, except for the following: . . .
>
> - **Large Print:** Large-scale text and images of large-scale text have a contrast ratio of at least 5:1;
> - **Incidental:** Text or images of text that are part of an inactive user interface component, that are pure decoration, that are incidental text in an image, or that are not visible to anyone, have no minimum contrast requirement.
> - **Logotypes:** Text that is part of a logo or brand name has no minimum contrast requirement.

Guideline 1.4.3 (level AA) has the same standard as Guideline 1.4.6, except Guideline 1.4.3 Only calls for a base contrast ratio of 4.5:1 and a large print contrast ratio of 3:1.

[43] Contrast Analyser 2.0 is available at http://www.paciellogroup.com/resources/contrast-analyser.html.

(6) Every background graphic that is not purely decorative needs to include a "title" attribute (or its equivalent)[44] in the HTML tag that invoked the graphic. The "title" attribute (or its equivalent) should convey the information that the graphic provides.

  (a) If the graphic includes text, the "title" attribute (or its equivalent) should include that text.

  (b) Phrases such as "photo of" or "link to" should not be used as part of a "title" attribute (or its equivalent).[45]

  (c) Abbreviations should not be used in a "title" attribute.

  (d) File names should not be used as the value of an "title" attribute.[46]

Bahasa language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Banners *see also Committee Websites #(2); Navigation #(2); Printing; and Searching*
  (1) Avoid unnecessary blank space under the banner.
  (2) Each page should have a banner with the name of the office.[47] The banner of a Member's website should also include the Member's state and district.

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[44] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(a)) provide that "A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content)."

  Guideline 1.1.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> All non-text content that is presented to the user has a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose, except for the situations listed below. (Level A)
>
> . . .
>
> - **Sensory:** If non-text content is primarily intended to create a specific sensory experience, then text alternatives at least provide descriptive identification of the non-text content.
>
> . . .
>
> - **Decoration, Formatting, Invisible:** If non-text content is pure decoration, is used only for visual formatting, or is not presented to users, then it is implemented in a way that it can be ignored by assistive technology.

  Section C9 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends using style sheets to display purely decorative images. It notes, however, that "This technique is not appropriate for any image that conveys information or provides functionality, or for any image primarily intended to create a specific sensory experience." Where the image is being used to create a "specific sensory experience," § G100 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends just using a well-accepted name of the image (e.g., "Mona Lisa, by Leonardo da Vinci").

[45] Roger Hudson's "Text Alternatives for Images" (September 2003) recommends that Web designers **"**Avoid unnecessary terms. Don't use words like 'link' or 'click here' for images that are links. Screen readers will indicate if something is a link or not."

[46] Roger Hudson's "Text Alternatives for Images" (September 2003) recommends that Web designers not **"**use the image file name as the alt. Alternative text like "02_cc_68.gif", or even "building.jpg" are neither descriptive nor helpful."

[47] *Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 27) recommends that the name (or logo) of the office sponsoring a website appear in the upper left corner of each Web page. The recommendation is designed to accommodate users who initially arrive at an interior page of a website (e.g., through a search engine). The recommendation notes:

> Don't assume that users have followed a drill-down path to arrive at the current page. They may have taken a different path than what you intended and not have seen information that was contained on higher-level pages.

(3) On Member websites, having multiple pictures of different aspects of the district in the banner helps convey the diversity of the district and shows that the Member takes pride in all of it. To expand the ability to cover a wide number of images, consider having a slide show[48] in the banner (see e.g., Rep. Dan Lungren's website).[49] **Note:** When a script, applet, object, or similar technique is used to generate such a slide show, the coding needs to be done in such a way that browsers that do not support the technique (or have been set by the user not to support the technique) will display either (a) links to the images from the slide show, or (b) a composite of the images from the slide show, or (c) one image from the slide show.[50]

(4) When a Member website's banner includes scenes or symbols related to the Member's district and/or state, as well as scenes or symbols related to Congress or the Federal Government, consider placing the district/state material closer to the Member's picture than the Federal material. See, e.g., the banner on Rep. Abercrombie's site.[51] Additionally (particularly when the banner graphics are coded as a background image), consider putting the symbols relating to Congress or the Federal Government on the right side so that on small resolution displays they will be eliminated rather than the symbols relating to the Member's district.

(5) The height of the banner should be as small as possible, while still conveying the information desired by the office.[52]

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[48] As with any moving image on a website, the regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(j)) provide that accessible Web pages "shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz." Checkpoint 7.1 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should:

> *Until user agents* allow users to control flickering, avoid causing the screen to flicker. . . .
>> **Note.** People with photosensitive epilepsy can have seizures triggered by flickering or flashing in the 4 to 59 flashes per second (Hertz) range with a peak sensitivity at 20 flashes per second as well as quick changes from dark to light (like strobe lights).

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 40) also notes that:

> While moving text and animations may look flashy, they can impair the readability of the information, distract the user, and reduce the usefulness of the site.

[49] Notes on how to implement this feature using iframes can be found in the "IFRAME fading photo's" section of the WSB Blog.

[50] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(*l*)) provide that

> When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.

Similarly, Checkpoint 6.3 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should:

> Ensure that pages are usable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or not supported. If this is not possible, provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page.

[51] See also, the banner for Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama.

[52] See, e.g., http://www1.house.gov:801/oh14_latourette/.

The Congressional Management Foundation's 1999 report *Building Web Sites Constituents Will Use* (page 17) notes that:

> It's extremely important that you identify every page of your site as yours. However, using a banner that takes up 1/3 or more of the screen serves no purpose and makes it difficult and frustrating from users to read the information there're after because they have to keep scrolling past the irrelevant banner in order to get it.

(6) When practical, graphics used in the banner should be implemented as background images. Deployment of images as background images (rather than using <img> tags) promotes scalability of web pages.[53]

- **Note**, however, that many browsers have the default set to not display backgrounds in printing. To make sure that a banner will display when the page is printed, consider the following technique:

  (a) Have separate style sheets for screen display and printing.

  (b) In the HTML coding, in addition to providing a banner as a background image, also have a banner called by an <img> tag with a unique "id" attribute.

  (c) In the screen display style sheet, assign that <img> tag's "id" attribute value a property of "display:none;".

  (d) In the print style sheet, assign that <img> tag's "id" attribute value a property of "display:block;" (or "display:inline;").[54]

- **Additionally,** see the section, above, on **Backgrounds**.

(7) On Member websites, consider including a map of the Member's state with the location of the Member's congressional district highlighted.

(8) Do not use "banner" as the name of a directory, as some anti-intrusion software (e.g., Symantec's Norton Internet Security) may interpret this as the content of a banner advertisement and block it.[55]

<base> tags

(1) Each file should contain no more than one <base> tag. The <base> tag should be between the <head> tag and the </head> tag. A <base> tag should not be used between the <body> and </body> tags.[56]

(2) Each <base> tag should end with "/>".[57]

The Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 54) report goes on to say:

> . . . using a banner or graphics that take up most of the screen serves no purpose. It also makes it difficult and frustrating for users to read the information they're after because they have to keep scrolling to get the information they are seeking. At least two thirds of every page on your site should contain useful information.

[53] An alternative technology that can be used, if appropriate, is Scalable Vector Graphics. For information on SVG, see the W3C website at http://www.w3.org/Graphics/SVG/.

[54] To deal with users whose browsers are not supporting style sheets, Ross Howard's "High-Resolution Image Printing," A List Apart (September 5, 2005), suggests using the "height" and "width" attributes of the <img> tag at "1". In the print style sheet, he suggests using the desired values for the "height" and "width" properties associated with the <img> banner to override the "height" and "width" attributes.

[55] Consider using "masthead" as an alternative to "banner".

[56] Section 12.4 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "When present, the BASE element must appear in the HEAD section of an HTML document, before any element that refers to an external source. The path information specified by the BASE element only affects URIs in the document where the element appears."

Notwithstanding the W3C specification, some versions of Internet Explorer (prior to version 7.0) supported multiple <base> tags between the <body> and </body> tags. This support stopped with IE 7.0.

[57] Section 4.6 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2ⁿᵈ edition) Specification* provides that "Empty elements must either have an end tag or the start tag must end with />. For instance, <br/> or <hr></hr>."

Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites

<basefont> tags *see Fonts #(3)*

Bengali language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

📖 **Biographies** *see also Committee Assignments and Caucus memberships; Legislative Material; Navigation #(5); and Word Choice*
  (1) Each Member website should have a biography of the Member.[58]
  (2) When a Member's biography mentions an issue (or an accomplishment of the Member), it is recommended that the mention be hypertext linked to the place in the website that sets out the Member's position or accomplishments on the issue.[59] Likewise, if the Member's biography mentions a committee, caucus, or other organization that the Member has an affiliation with, it is suggested that the mention be hypertext linked to that organization's website; and if the biography mentions an event (e.g., receipt of an award) where there is a relevant press release on the Member's website, it is suggested that the mention be hypertext linked to the press release.[60]
  (3) Rather than having "Biography" (or "My Background") as a major navigation heading, consider making the Member's biography part of a section titled "About [Member's name]".[61] This facilitates including additional material about the Member, e.g.,
   • the Member's committee assignments and caucus memberships,
   • a description of a typical day (or week) of the Member[62], and

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[58] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 46) identifies providing an official biography as an element of a successful Congressional website.

[59] The Congressional Management Foundation's January 2002 report *Congress Online: Assessing and Improving Capitol Hill Web Sites* (p. 16), recommends that "Every congressional Web site should include a biography and photo of the Member or Chairman as background information. Promotional materials are also appropriate in the Member information section of a congressional Web site, because it is what visitors are looking for when they click to it. Audiences are seeking to learn about the Member's priorities, interests, accomplishments, experience, and expertise."

[60] Rep. Rush Holt's biography, for example, mentions that he was awarded a patent for a solar energy device – and links to the text of the patent at the U.S. Patent and trademark Office's website.

[61] See, for instance, the "About the Leader" navigation and page on the website of the House Majority Leader. The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 47) praises that site (which was then the website of the House Democratic Whip) for including information on the role of the office.

[62] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 48) recommends that Congressional websites include information on what a "Member, Chair, or Leader does on a given day." The October 10, 2006 issue of the Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online* newsletter praises Rep. José Serrano's "The Job of a Congressman" and Rep. Adam Smith's "A Day in the Life." The CMF's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (p. 30) praises Rep. Brian Baird's website for having "A Day on Capitol Hill" slideshow; praises (page 35) Rep. John Larson's website for linking to the Indiana University Center on Congress's "Members of Congress and What They Do" page. The CMF's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 42) identifies providing information

should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

- the Member's upcoming schedule.[63, 64] (Consider laying this information out calendar-style – see, e.g., the calendar of the Committee on Natural Resources (Republican Office).)
- the Member's official photo.
- having an expanded version of the biography as well as the "standard" version (see, e.g., Rep. Trent Franks' website).

(4) Offices should be encouraged to write their Member's Web biography so that:

- It is clearly up-to-date (e.g., it includes information from the current year)[65]
- It tells what the Member is doing now
- It tells the Member's priorities and interests
- It tells the Member's accomplishments
- It tells about the Member's expertise and experience.[66]

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on "what a Member does" as an element of a successful Congressional website; praises (page 67) the "A Day in the Life of Congressman Randy Forbes" audio column on the website of Rep. J. Randy Forbes; and notes (page 21) that only 6% of House websites include information about what a Member does. Other examples of similar material include Rep. Bud Cramer's former "A Typical Week" and former-Rep. Lee Hamilton's "The Job of a Congressman".

[63] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 60 and 67) notes that

> Congressional Web sites can demonstrate accountability by providing voting records, rationales for key votes, and schedules – and they can do so without overburdening their staffs. Your constituents are not interested in knowing about every meeting that takes place or every vote taken. Stick to the most relevant and current information: meetings with constituents, public Member appearances in the district or state, committee hearings, the House and Senate floor schedule.
>
> Most citizens do not understand, or are not familiar with, the intricacies of the congressional schedule. In our research with constituents, they assumed that their elected officials were golfing or on vacation when Congress is in recess. While there isn't much legislative activity to report during recesses, you can correct this misperception by posting a schedule of town hall meetings, reorganizing your home page content, or providing a preview of what the Member, committee, Leader, or Congress will be doing after the break. Every August we see scores of congressional Web sites that haven't been updated since mid-July. Don't let yours be one of them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 23) also praises the website for Rep. Earl Blumenauer for including the Congressman's weekly schedule.

[64] Rep. Cynthia McKinney's website used WIDA to provide her schedule.

[65] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 13) notes that:

> The Internet is a fast-paced medium, and users expect up-to-date information. No matter how well designed a site is or how much content it has, it's not going to be useful for visitors if the most current information they can find is six months, or even a year old..

[66] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (p. 58) notes that:

> While it shouldn't be the primary focus of the site, every congressional website should include a section that contains information about the Member's (or Leader's or committee's) priorities, interests, accomplishments, experience, and expertise.

The report (on page 32) praises the biography section of Rep. Marion Berry's website for highlighting the Congressman's issues and accomplishments; praises (on page 40) the biography on Rep. Charlie Norwood's website for clearly detailing his accomplishments and priorities; and praises (on page 69) the biography section of Rep. John Mica's website for highlighting the Congressman's accomplishments and areas of interest.

(See, e.g., the Rep. Frank Pallone's "About Me" page.)

Blinklist *see Social Bookmarking*

<blockquote> tags *see Quotations*

Blogmarks *see Social Bookmarking*

Blogs *see also Twitter*

(1) Offices interested in having blogs on their website[67] should be encouraged to use the House Web Log Utility.[68] Offices using the House Web Log Utility include Rep. Dan Burton, the Republican Policy Committee, and the Republican Study Committee.

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[67] The Congressional Management Foundation, in its *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 83) identifies having a blog as one of the elements of a well formed Congressional website. Before deciding whether to have a blog, however, the CMF report (page 71) recommends that offices consider the following:

> **Can we dedicate the resources that would be necessary to launch—and sustain—a blog?** The most precious resource in most congressional offices is time–especially the Member's time. A blog requires constant attention and staff resources–in most cases taking the staffer away from other projects or duties. To be a truly effective blogger requires a time commitment to regularly–even daily–update and post new content to the blog. It will also take staff time to read through and publish reader comments and to respond when necessary. Be sure you are ready to make the commitment; too many Members have launched blogs that fall by the wayside because of insufficient resources.
>
> **Are we willing to allow constituents and other members of the public to post comments to the blog?** A vast majority of the mainstream blogs allow the moderator or other user to start a "thread" to which viewers can comment. Will the office allow comments–the good and the bad, the complimentary and the not so complimentary? Good management policies will need to put in place and enforced by the Member's staff to make sure the medium is not abused or too one-sided.
>
> **Does the Member have something to say that isn't being said somewhere else?** While blogs are becoming more and more prevalent every day, not every Member should have a blog. People read blogs because they provide information that they do not get from traditional media sources. If the Member is worried about alienating people and not willing to speak "off script," the blog is probably not a good idea. Blogs are expected to provide unfiltered and informal communication and personal perspective. In a world of scripted speeches and carefully thought-out talking points, this is a valid concern for Members and staff. Also, it is critical that a blog be more than a different way to list press releases, otherwise blog enthusiasts–your intended audience–will be the first to notice and the last to return.
>
> **If we aren't ready for our own blog, what about guest blogging, or special event blogging?** Many Members have been successful players in the world of blogs by chiming in, or guest blogging, on other mainstream blogs. Another alternative is for the Member to publish a blog or trip diary during a significant event, like a CODEL to Iraq, that chronicles the Member's impressions of what they encounter. These blogs are a good way for Members to enter into the blogosphere without overwhelming staff and running out of interesting and relevant things to say.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 21) indicates that 10% of House Member websites had blogs by mid-2007.

[68] The availability of the House Web Log Utility was announced on December 11, 2006, through a Dear Colleague letter from the Chairman of the House Administration Committee.
    For more information on the House Web Log Utility, see HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → Tools → Blog.

(2) When using the House Web Log Utility, set the "Data Server" value to "www.house.gov", not just to "www".

<body> tags *see Margins and Padding #(2)*

Bolding
   (1) Where bolding would be appropriate on a visual display, use <strong> tags, not <b> tags.[69]
   (2) Other than in headings, bolding should normally be limited to a few words – entire sentences or paragraphs should normally not be bolded.[70] Bolding a few words per paragraph is a useful technique to give the reader a feel for the contents, particularly in documents with substantial amounts of text and few headings[71] (though use of properly coded headings is preferred).[72]

Bosnian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

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[69] Guideline 1.3.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Information, structure, and relationships conveyed through presentation can be programmatically determined or are available in text. (Level A)".
   Section H49 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends using <strong> tags instead of <b> tags, noting that:
> Using semantic markup to mark emphasized or special text also provides structure to the document. User agents can then make the structure perceivable to the user, for example using a different visual presentation for different types of structures or by using a different voice or pitch in an auditory presentation.

   Perhaps the one legitimate exception to this standard (and even then, one to be used with care) is when you are reproducing text that originally existed as non-World Wide Web printed text. As Paul Ford notes in "Processing Processing" (September 2, 2003) (cited in Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006], p. 175):
> When I'm publishing content from 1901 and it's in italics, it's in *italics,* not emphasized. Typography has a semantics that is subtle, changing, and deeply informed by history.

[70] Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, in *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (p. 275) note that:
> Highlighting carefully chosen keywords can attract readers' attention to specific areas of the page. Using design treatments such as boldface or colored text adds emphasis and draws the eye to important elements . . . . Highlighting entire sentences or long phrases slows readers down, so single out just those words and phrases that communicate key points. Emphasizing too many items with color highlight or bold test causes diminishing returns; nothing stands out; and the page just looks busy.

[71] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 38) praises Rep. Jeff Miller's website for putting "important information in bold."

[72] Guideline 2.4.10 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Section headings are used to organize the content. (Level AAA)".
   Section G141 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends "Organizing a page using headings" and notes that:
> In HTML, this would be done using the HTML heading elements (h1, h2, h3, h4, h5, and h6). These allow user agents to automatically identify section headings. . . . To facilitate navigation and understanding of overall document structure, authors should use headings that are properly nested (e.g., h1 followed by h2, h2 followed by h2 or h3, h3 followed by h3 or h4, etc.).

   In the Jaws screen reader, Insert+F6 generates a list of headers. The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 74% of screen reader users use Jaws.

**
 tags**

   (1) The "clear" property in style sheets should be used instead of the "clear" attribute of the <br> tag.[73]

   (2) Each <br> tag should end with "/>".[74]

📖 **Browsealoud**

  Offices should consider including a Browsealoud link on each page. Browsealoud is a screen reader designed particularly for people with English literacy problems and/or learning disabilities such as dyslexia. The Browsealoud link should point to a page on the office's website that has the content of the House "About The Browsealoud Plug-In" page (http://www.house.gov/house/browsealoud.shtml).[75]

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[73] Section 15.1.3 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "clear" attribute of the <br> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[74] Section 4.6 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "Empty elements must either have an end tag or the start tag must end with `/>`. For instance, `<br/>` or `<hr></hr>`."

   Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[75] Websites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server (and do not use a virtual URL) are encouraged to use the server-side include:

       `<!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/browsealoud_content.html" -->`

  All other sites can use code along the lines of:

       `<iframe src="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/browsealoud_content.html"`
       `scrolling="auto" style="width:35em;height:32em;" frameborder="0" title="About the`
       `Browsealoud plug-in"><ul><li><a`
       `href="http://www.house.gov/house/browsealoud.shtml">About The Browsealoud Plug-`
       `In</a></li></ul></iframe>`

  Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the House's "About The Browsealoud Plug-In" page. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's website. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* which provides that an accessible website should "Use navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

   Section 4 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further provides that:

       A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.

       Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:

          1.   navigation bars
          2.   the primary content of a page

         . . .

       A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

Possible graphic links to Browsealoud include:

(1) [76]

(2) [77]

(3) [78]

Browser compatibility

(1) Designing websites to only run well in one type of browser is contrary to industry best practices and will generally produce websites that are not accessible to people with disabilities.[79] Sites should be checked[80] against a range of browsers

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The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

> **Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. **Sen. John Cornyn**'s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[76] http://www.house.gov/images/browsaloud.gif

[77] http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/audio1.gif

[78] http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/logo_browsealoud.gif

[79] For additional material on this subject, see the letter from the World Wide Web Consortium to the U.S. Copyright Office concerning "37 CFR Part 202 [Docket No. RM 2005-9]," (August 22, 2005).

Jeffrey Zeldman, in the second edition [2006] of *Designing With Web Standards* (pp. 33 & 37), notes that:

> In a misguided effort to reduce expenses, an increasing number of sites are designed to work only in Internet Explorer, and sometimes only on the Windows platform, thus locking out 15-25% of their potential visitors and customers. . . .
>
>   I won't pretend to understand the business model of a company that would say no to up to a quarter of its potential customers. And the sheer number of customers lost by this myopic approach should boggle the mind of any rational business owner or noncorporate agency with a mandate to serve the public.
>
>   Say you don't mind losing up to 25% of the people who choose to visit your site. The "IE-only" approach still makes no sense because there's no guarantee that IE (or even desktop browsers as a category) will continue to dominate web space. For one thing, as I write these words, Firefox continues to take market share away from IE. For another, more people are getting their internet fix via mobile devices, In the U.S., desktop browsing still far outweighs mobile use; in Japan the reverse is true. While the numbers are continually changing, the trend favors mobile (www.gotomobile.com). As ubiquitous computing gains acceptance and creates new markets, the notion of designing to the quirks of *any* individual desktop browser seems more and more 20th century and less and less intelligent.

Zeldman also notes in "99% of Websites Are Obsolete" (September 4, 2002):

> Some years [ago] . . ., Netscape's Navigator browser enjoyed a market share greater than Microsoft's Internet Explorer does today. At the time, conventional wisdom held that Netscape's was the only browser that mattered, and developers coded accordingly. Untold millions of dollars later, the market changed. Netscape-only sites were dumped in the landfill beside the Information Superhighway.

and versions of browsers. To help identify which browsers should be tested against House websites, CAO-WSB conducted an analysis of www.house.gov usage for July 9 to 15, 2008, and found that the following browsers each accounted for at least 0.1% of the identifiable, non-robot access to the site:[81]

1. Internet Explorer 7.x   46.32%
2. Internet Explorer 6.x   30.30%
3. Firefox 2.x   13.15%
4. Firefox 3.x   5.01%
5. Internet Explorer 5.x   1.39%[82]
6. Firefox 1.x   0.45%
7. Safari   0.35%
8. Opera   0.21%
9. Netscape 7.x   0.11%

The analysis also indicated that 0.10% of the usage was from mobile device browsers (primarily from Blackberry devices).

(2) Browser compatibility does not require that a website look absolutely identical from one browser to another. Instead, it expects merely that a site will be at least presentable (and have at least equivalent functionality) from one browser to the next.

Bulgarian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Burmese language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

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[80] Appendix A (items 4 to 7) of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* recommends that websites be validated as accessible by use of various tools, including:
    4. Use a text-only browser or emulator.
    5. Use multiple graphic browsers, with:
        o sounds and graphics loaded,
        o graphics not loaded,
        o sounds not loaded,
        o no mouse,
        o frames, scripts, style sheets, and applets not loaded
    6. Use several browsers, old and new.
    7. Use a self-voicing browser, a screen reader, magnification software, a small display, etc.
[81] Zytrax' "Browser ID (User-Agent) Strings" is a useful tool for identifying the browser types associated with specific Web server log entries.
[82] Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger in their *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 94) look at the question of where the cutoff should be in testing browser compatibility:

    Is it worth testing your Web site . . . in order to cater to . . . two percent of the market . . .? We would probably . . . say "yes," at least for bigger Web sites for which a two percent increase in business is worth more than a few tests and easy fixes. Smaller sites, on the other hand, might decide that the . . . return is insufficient to bother testing on [small-share browsers]. . . . As always, with a limited budget, you must choose your battles.

For a different approach to identifying browsers that should be tested against, see "Graded Browser Support" by Nate Koechley.

📖 **Business Assistance**

Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with people seeking business opportunities with the Federal government)[83] should be encouraged to include in their website:

(1) The CRS-maintained "Business Opportunities with the Federal Government" material.[84,85]

(2) Information for small businesses (see, e.g., Rep. Trent Franks' "Small Business Assistance" page).[86]

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[83] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (p. 46) notes that "Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans' Affairs* Web site provides information on veterans' benefits for its key audience."

[84] For instructions for how to include the CRS-maintained "Business Opportunities with the Federal Government" material on a House website, see:

> http://housenet.house.gov/portal/server.pt?open=18&objID=600&parentname=CommunityPage&
> parentid=20&mode=2&in_hi_userid=2&cached=true

[85] Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the generic "Doing Business with the Federal Government" page. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's website. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* which provides that an accessible website should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

Section 4 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further provides that:

> A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.
> Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:
>   1.   navigation bars
>   2.   the primary content of a page
>   . . .
> A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

> **Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. **Sen. John Cornyn**'s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[86] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 39) notes that "One of the keys to a successful Web site is building it around

(3) Information on programs that are specific to the Member's state or district, e.g., material available through:

        (a) Small Business Administration; and

        (b) Internal Revenue Service.

Cambodian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Campaign material *see Election Campaign Material*

Cantonese language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Capital letters

Use of all capital letters in text or in a heading is the equivalent of shouting and should generally be avoided.[87]

Capitol tours *see Visiting Washington*

CAPTCHA[88]

When trying to prevent software from spamming forms, do not rely solely on displaying an image with distorted text and then asking the user to rekey the text. Such an approach is inaccessible by many persons with vision disabilities.[89] One alternative to CAPTCHA is to use a logic test where the user is asked a simple mathematical (or other question).[90] So as to not make a form inaccessible to persons with cognitive disabilities, try to keep logic puzzle questions to a second or third grade level.

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specifically targeted audiences" and praises the "For > Small Business" page on Rep. Dennis Moore's website. The report (page 34) also praises the small business section of the website of Rep. Mike Honda and the "Doing Business in Vermont" page of the website of Sen. Patrick Leahy.

[87] The November 12, 1997 minutes of the W3C's XML Working Group, for instance, notes that "Defining all keywords as uppercase would have the advantage of providing a very simple rule. For some W[orking] G[roup] members, the primary (and successful) objection to this approach was the familiar one that all-uppercase is unappealing and resembles shouting."

    Jakob Nielsen in "Right-Justified Navigation Menus Impede Scannability" (April 28, 2008) also notes that using all caps "reduces legibility by about 10%. When you **mix cases**, the ascenders and decenders produce varied letterforms, while all caps produce boxy shapes. Users recognize words faster when you preserve traditional word shapes."

[88] "CAPTCHA" is the acronym for "Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart".

[89] Section 1 of the W3C's WAI Protocols and Formats Working Group note *Inaccessibility of CAPTCHA: Alternatives to Visual Turing Tests on the Web*, November 23, 2005, notes that:

      This type of visual and textual verification comes at a huge price to users who are blind, visually impaired or dyslexic. Naturally, this image has no text equivalent accompanying it, as that would make it a giveaway to computerized systems. In many cases, these systems make it impossible for users with certain disabilities to create accounts, write comments, or make purchases on these sites, that is, CAPTCHAs fail to properly recognize users with disabilities as human.

[90] Section 3 of the W3C's WAI Protocols and Formats Working Group note *Inaccessibility of CAPTCHA: Alternatives to Visual Turing Tests on the Web*, November 23, 2005, offers several additional alternatives.

<caption> tags *see Alignment*

Casework *see also Contact Information and Techniques #(14); Constituent Services; and Forms #(1)*

Avoid using the term "casework" – it is jargon and may confuse or alienate constituents. Consider, instead using something along the lines of "How I Can Help You with Government Agencies".[91]

Caucuses *see "About" page; Committee Assignments and Caucus memberships; and Contact Information and Techniques #(13)*

Census data *see District Information #(4)*

Centering

Style sheets, not <center> tags (or align="center" attributes), should be used to achieve centering.[92] Which style sheet property is appropriate to use for centering depends on what is being centered,

- centered text should use the style sheets property "text-align:center"
- background images being centered should use the style sheets property "background"[93]
- all other items being centered (e.g., the <hr>, <iframe>, <img>, <input>, and <object> tags) should use "margin: 0 auto;"[94]

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[91] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 45) notes that

> "Casework" is Hill jargon. Constituents will better understand what the office can do if the Web site employs phrases such as "Help with a problem you are having with a Federal Agency," "What this office can do for you," or "Assistance with a government problem," rather than using the term "casework." Sometimes constituents may not even be aware that congressional offices can help them. Describing what an office can and cannot do to help constituents is as important as explaining how to initiate that assistance.

Section 5.1(4) of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* recommends "Avoid slang, jargon, and specialized meanings of familiar words, unless defined within your document" to implement WCAG 1.0 checkpoint 14.1 [priority 1], that accessible websites should "[u]se the clearest and simplest language appropriate for a site's content."

[92] Section 15.1.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the <center> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) element. Sections 11.2.1, 11.2.2, 13.7.4, 15.1.2, 15.3, and 17.10 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designate the "align" attribute of the following tags as deprecated attributes: <caption>, <div>, <h1> to < h6>, <hr>, <iframe>, <img>, <legend>, <object>, <p>, and <table>).

Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[93] Use the "background" property, rather than the "background-position" property.

[94] In Internet Explorer 6 and 7, the "auto" value of the "margin" property is only supported when the browser is in Standards Mode (Internet Explorer's Standards Mode is the equivalent of Mozilla's Almost Standards Mode).   To ensure that IE7 is in Standards Mode, use one of the XHTML 1.0 <!DOCTYPE> declarations from the W3C *Recommended List of DTDs*. To ensure that IE6 is in Standards Mode, use one of the XHTML 1.0 <!DOCTYPE> declarations from the W3C *Recommended List of DTDs* and make sure that the <!DOCTYPE> declaration is the first thing in the file. For additional <!DOCTYPE> declarations that are compatible with Internet Explorer being in Standards Mode, see Henri Sivonen's *Activating the Right Layout Mode Using the Doctype Declaration*.

Certification Icons *see Compliance Icons*

Chamorro language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Character Entities *see also Ampersands; Navigation #(6); Quotations #(1); Roman Numerals #(3); U.S. Code #***Error! Reference source not found.**

    When referencing a character entity by its hexadecimal value, the letters should be lower case. E.g., to represent ☎ using its hex value, use "☎", not "☎".

Charts and Graphs

    All charts and graphs should have a link to a table that contains the same data as the chart or graph.[95] Such tables should conform to the standards for accessible tables.

Children *see Missing and Exploited Children*

Chinese language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Chuukese language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Classes *see Style Sheets #(5)*

<col> tags *see Tables*

Colors *see also Backgrounds; and Tools for Validating Web Sites #(4)*
    (1) When color is used to supply information (e.g., listing in red the school districts where most of the enrolled students receive subsidized meals), the information also needs to be made available to people who are color blind and to people who are using monochrome monitors – in order to comply with § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.[96]

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[95] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(a)) provide that "A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content)."

    Guideline 1.1.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

        All non-text content that is presented to the user has a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose, ... (Level A)

    Section G73 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that when using a link to get to the explanatory material (in this case the table with the data what was in the chart or graph), the link should immediately follow the chart or graph.

[96] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(c)) provide that "Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup." Likewise, Guideline 1.4.1 (level A) of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Color is not used as the only visual means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element."

(2) It is not necessary to just use "browser safe" colors.[97]

(3) Text colors should be designated with style sheets (using the "color" property). The "text" attribute should not be used for this purpose.[98]

(4) When specifying the hexadecimal value of a color that can be represented as either a three-digit representation or a six-digit representation, use the three-digit representation (e.g., instead of "#336699", use "#369").

Comments *see also Style Sheets #(8)*

Comments should be preceded with a less-than-sign, an exclamation mark, two dashes, and a space (<!--). At the end of each comment should be a space, two dashes and a greater-than-sign (-->). In between those two delimiters, do not use two or more consecutive dashes. Some browsers have problems with comments that do not conform to this standard, e.g., Firefox will display improperly coded comments as if they were intended to be page text.[99]

☠ **Commercial references** *see also District Information #(2)*

Other than possibly in comments in the source code, House websites should not contain any reference to the commercial firm or developer who designed, coded, or maintains the website.[100]

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[97] Lynda Weinman in *The Browser-Safe Web Palette*, acknowledges that "A lot of people credit me with the browser-safe palette, but it's a misplaced honor (if you can call it that!). I do have the distinction of being the first author to identify and publish the colors - but I can't take credit for creating them. . . . Though this might seem blasphemous to older readers of my books, or loyal website visitors, I believe it's safe to design without the palette. I believe this because so few computer users view the web in 256 colors anymore."

[98] Section 7.5.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "text" attribute as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[99] Section 3.2.4 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that:

> HTML comments have the following syntax:
>
> <!-- this is a comment -->
> <!-- and so is this one,
>   which occupies more than one line -->
>
> White space is not permitted between the markup declaration open delimiter("<!") and the comment open delimiter ("--"), but is permitted between the comment close delimiter ("--") and the markup declaration close delimiter (">"). A common error is to include a string of hyphens ("---") within a comment. Authors should avoid putting two or more adjacent hyphens inside comments.

Guideline 4.1.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website,

> In content implemented using markup languages, elements have complete start and end tags, elements are nested according to their specifications, elements do not contain duplicate attributes, and any IDs are unique, except where the specifications allow these features. (Level A)
>
> *Note:* Start and end tags that are missing a critical character in their formation, such as a closing angle bracket or a mismatched attribute value quotation mark are not complete.

[100] The *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, Content, § 5), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

> The content of a Member's Web site: . . .

The suggested format for placing the information in comments is:

<!-- Web designer: *Jane Smith* (*House Information Resources*); site published: *February 30, 2008* -->

where *Jane Smith* should be replaced with the name of the designer(s) of the website; *House Information Resources* should be replaced with the name designer's company; and *February 30, 2008* with the date that the website (rather than the individual page) was published.

 📖 **Committee assignments and Caucus memberships**
   Member offices should be encouraged to
- list the committees, subcommittees, and caucuses[101] that the Member serves on;
- provide links to those committees, subcommittees[102] and caucuses; [103] and
- explain the purpose of each committee, subcommittee, and caucus.[104]

 📖 **Committee Websites** *see also "About" page; Contact Information and Techniques #(13); and Legislative Material #(1)*
  (1) Committee websites should include:
- transcripts of hearings held by the committee[105]

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    5. May not include any advertisement for any private individual, firm, or corporation, or imply in any manner that the government endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service.
An identical requirement is contained in the *Committee's Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, Content, § e).

[101] Rep. Earl Blumenauer has a Caucuses page that links off the Issues section of his website. Rep. Blumenauer's Caucuses page lists all of the caucuses that he serves on. For the three caucuses that he is particularly involved with there are links to individual pages on his website that describe of the purpose and accomplishments of that caucus.
   The Congressional Caucuses page of Rep. Illeana Ros-Lehtinen, provides a description of the purpose of each of the caucuses she co-chairs.
   A reasonably comprehensive list of caucus websites is set out in Appendix 3: *Caucus Web Sites* of this document.

[102] Most subcommittees have at least one Web page within their full committee's website.

[103] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age,* (p. 46) praises Rep. Mike Honda's website for indicating the Congressman's committee assignments. Rep. Honda has links to the committees and subcommittees that he serves on (indicating which subcommittee he serves as ranking member) and also links to the caucuses that he chairs.

[104] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 35) praises Rep. John Larson's "Committees and Caucuses" page because it "lists the committees on which he serves and explains the nature of their work" and praises the late Rep. Charlie Norwood's "Committee Assignments" page because it "does not simply list the committees on which he serves, but also explains which issues are under their jurisdiction."
   See also Rep. Ron Klein's "Committee Information" page.

[105] Published Congressional committee hearing transcripts (and other materials) are available through the U.S Government Printing Office's GPO Access at http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html. Because there is often a substantial delay between when a hearing is held and when the transcripts are published by the Government Printing Office, some committees also include the prepared statements that witnesses submit to the committee prior to the hearing. (see, e.g., the House Agriculture Committee's hearings page which has both the prepared statements and the GPO printed transcripts).

- full text of reports issued by the committee[106]
- full text of the committee's rules[107]

(2) On pages devoted to individual subcommittees, consider using a banner that is similar to the full committee's banner but uses graphics that relate to the subcommittee's mission.[108]

(3) The website for a minority office of a committee should indicate the distinctive philosophy and/or message of the office (rather than of the full committee).[109]

Communication *see Contact Information and Techniques*

📖 **Compliance Icons**

Sites that comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* should consider displaying an appropriate icon from http://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG2-Conformance.html.[110] For instance:

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 44 to 46) praises the House Budget Committee, Science Committee (Democratic Office), and Ways and Means Committee for including on their websites the transcripts of the hearings held by the committee. The report (on page 68) notes that only 28% of congressional committee websites included hearing transcripts.

[106] Instructions for using Thomas to link to all of the reports issued by a committee are set out at http://www.congress.gov/help/THOMAS_links/comm.html#commcommittee.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 46 and 49) praises the Ways and Means Committee and the Judiciary Committee for including the full text of their committee reports on their sites.

[107] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 49) praises the House Judiciary Committee for including the full text of its rules on its site.

[108] See, e.g., the individual subcommittee pages on the website of the Natural Resources Committee (Republican Office).

[109] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (pages 35) notes that "The goal of most minority offices is to use the Web to 'get their message out' to the public, press, and other congressional staff." It goes on to praise the minority website of the Government Reform Committee for including:

- Information on their "*special investigations*" that showcase their efforts to have their voice heard on the diverse issues that fall within their jurisdiction;
- *Interactive calculators*, designed to differentiate between the majority and the minority party's plans for Social Security and Prescription Drugs, make the site more interesting to visitors; and
- An Enron "   line" allows citizens to submit information online and feel that they can contribute to the work of the minority office.

The report (page 42) also praises the Energy and Commerce Committee (Democratic Office) for providing "statements, dissenting views, correspondence, and other information in a detailed and non-confrontational manner."

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 79) praises Republican Office of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works for having "content [that] is also fully integrated and cross-referenced throughout the site. For instance, the issues section contains a brief statement by the Ranking Member, related press releases and speeches, as well as related facts of the day and blog posts."

[110] Icons to indicate compliance with other standards can be found at

- other W3C standards - http://www.w3.org/QA/Tools/Icons
- Dublin Core metadata standard - http://dublincore.org/about/

Conformance Icons *see Compliance Icons*

Congratulations *see Greetings*

Congressional Art Competition *see Artistic Discovery Competition*

Congressional Citations *see Greetings*

Congressional Commendations *see Greetings*

Congressional Page Program *see Page Program*

Congressional Record *see Floor Statements*

Congressional Research Service products *see Business Assistance; Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance; Issues and Voting Information #(3); Legislative Material #(1); and Student Financial Aid*

📖 **Constituent Recognitions**
   Consider having a page devoted to recognizing constituents (as part of the site's photo album and as a link from the site's congressional district section).[111]

📖 **Constituent Services** *see Artistic Discovery Contest; Business Assistance; Consumer Protection Information; Disaster Preparedness Information; District Information #(3); Flags; FirstGov; Government Resources; Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance; Graphics #(15); Greetings; Identity Theft Information;*

- W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (and/or Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) as validated by HiSoft's "Cynthia Says" accessibility tester - http://www.cynthiasays.com/org/cynthiatested.htm
- ICRA implementation of the W3C PICS standard - http://www.icra.org/_en/buttons/
- SafeSurf implementation of the W3C PICS standard - http://www.safesurf.com/safewave.htm
- Microformat Standards (including hCard) - http://microformats.org/wiki/buttons
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

Examples of compliance icons can be found on the websites of Rep. Frank Lucas (508 Bobby Approved), Rep. Buck McKeon (Bobby Approved), Rep. Jim Saxton (W3C XHTML 1.0 checked), and the LGBT Equality Caucus (W3C WCAG version 1.0, level AA).

[111] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (pages 21 and 25) praises the "Highlighting Delawareans" page on Senator Tom Carper's website for "posting constituent photo galleries and congratulating constituents on their accomplishments"; and the website of Representative Richard Pombo for having "An extensive gallery of constituent photos". See also the "Photo Album" on Rep. Marsha Blackburn's website.
   The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 83) identifies including "photos of constituents on the home page" as an element of a well-formed Congressional website.

*Internships; Missing and Exploited Children; Navigation #(5); Page Program;
Service Academy Nominations; Student Financial Aid; Unclaimed Property;
Veterans; and Visiting Washington*

(1) Where possible, include step-by-step instructions for what a constituent needs to do (and provide) to get assistance.[112]

(2) Avoid using the term "constituent services" – it is jargon and may confuse or alienate constituents. Consider, instead using something along the lines of "How Can I Help You".[113]

(3) Consider including a form[114] to allow constituents to request assistance.[115]

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[112] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 83) identifies having an "Answers FAQ regarding constituent casework" and providing "guidance on how constituents can initiate casework" as two elements of well-designed Congressional websites. The report (pages 30 to 38) praises Rep. Brian Baird's website for having "an informative FAQ section, which contains casework questions, [and] an example of an actual case"; Rep. John Linder's website for providing a "casework section takes his constituents step-by-step through the process of determining eligibility and opening up a case"; and Rep. Xavier Becerra's website for providing

> [a] constituent services section [that] guides users through every step in the casework process. The site allows users determine whether the office can help, takes them through FAQs that give them the tools to resolve an issue on their own, and gives clear guidance on what information the office needs in order to open a case.

The report also notes that "Congressman [Mike] Honda's casework section accommodates those who may be unaccustomed to governmental operations"; praises the website of Rep. John Larson for having a "casework assistance [section] that is geared toward informing uninitiated users."; praises the constituent services section of Rep. Marion Berry's website for providing "both FAQs for selected agencies and the steps necessary to initiate an agency inquiry"; praises Rep. Jeff Miller's website for providing "easily accessible" constituent FAQs; and (page 50) praises the "[i]nteractive casework section" of Rep. Brian Higgins' website.

  The Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age*, (p. 57) praises Rep. Steve Rothman's website for providing a "step-by-step casework guide. . . to help citizens who need assistance from federal agencies."

   Rep. Jim Moran's "Casework" page also provides step-by-step directions for getting help with Federal agency problems – including a FAQ.

[113] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 61) notes that "Congressional jargon and the legislative process can be difficult for most people off the Hill to understand. Focus on making the information on your site understandable, rather than impressive and official-sounding."

   Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. uses "How I Can Help You". Rep. Ben Chandler uses "How Can We Help You?". Rep. Spencer Bachus uses "Helping You". Rep. Frank Pallone uses "How Can I Help". Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite uses "How Can Ginny Help You?" Rep. Dennis Moore uses "Assistance".

[114] Instructions for using CAO-Web Solutions Branch's form_proc software to do this are available on HouseNet at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → HTML → FormProc.

   Form_proc is the software suggested in Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age*, (p. 57): "House offices can also simplify their e-mail management by utilizing the customized Web-based forms available from House Information Resources (i.e. for tour requests, scheduling requests, casework, feedback, etc.)."

[115] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 11) notes that:

(4) Consider including a Privacy Act release form.[116] Because an actual signature is needed on the forms, consider using a form along the lines of Rep. Neil Abercrombie's Constituent Consent and Information Form, which uses an HTML form to capture the information and then generates a filled out form to be signed and mailed to the office.[117]

(5) Consider including information about services regardless of whether they are provided by Federal, state, or local agencies.[118] Constituents often do not care which layer of government fixes their problem, as long as the problem gets fixed. Where a service is completely outside the ability (or jurisdiction) of the office, indicate that and – if at all possible – offer to help the constituent get in touch with the right office (for an example of this approach, see the "Local Help" section of Rep. Congressman David Wu's "Constituent Services" page).

(6) Consider organizing the Constituent Services portion of the website by function, rather than by agency name.[119] Constituents may not know the function of an individual government agency or may be confused as to which government agency is the one that can sole their problem.

(7) Where the website deals with both services and issues that are related to each other (e.g., a page on veterans' benefits and a page on legislation dealing with veterans), make sure each one has a link to the other.[120]

Citizens typically access congressional Web sites for a specific reason. Seeking assistance from the Senator or Representative is one of them. When they access a Web site they are seeking information online, not offline. It is essential that congressional offices provide information and guidance about constituent services online, rather than requiring citizens to contact the office by phone to get answers to even basic constituent service questions.

 The report (page 39) goes on to recommend that "a site should provide easy and quick access to contact information including each office's telephone number, address, as well as a link to an e-mail contact form on every page. This is a standard for Web sites in Congress and the Internet at large, so it is more likely that users will expect the information on every page".

[116] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 83) identifies including "a casework privacy release form" as an element in a well constructed Congressional website. Nonetheless, the report (page 4) indicates that "30.9% of all Member websites do not have a self-service privacy release form available for constituents."

[117] See also the "Federal Agencies—Getting Help" pages on the websites of Rep. John Adler, Rep. Steve Austria, Rep. John Boccieri Rep. Joseph Cao Rep. Bill Cassidy Rep. Jason Chaffetz   Rep. Mike Coffman

[118] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 68) praises Rep. Mike Honda's website for including "Extensive links and clear information about federal agencies, state and local government, and community service providers is offered for problems that fall outside the office's jurisdiction."

[119] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 61) notes that "Congressional jargon and the legislative process can be difficult for most people off the Hill to understand. Focus on making the information on your site understandable, rather than impressive and official-sounding."

[120] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) notes that:

When users are interested in a topic, they want everything related to it, without having to start a new search in every section of the site. Even simply linking to related sections of your Web site and cross-referencing your content can go a long way toward making your site usable.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 50) further notes that "Putting time and effort into one feature or element of the website and then posting it only in one place increases the likelihood it gets overlooked."

📖 **Consumer Protection Information** *see also Identity Theft Information*

    (1) Member offices (and offices that have consumers as a constituency) should consider including consumer protection information on their website. See, e.g., the "Consumer Protection" pages of <u>Rep. John Adler</u>, <u>Rep. John Boccieri</u>, or <u>Rep. Bobby Bright</u>,[121] which feature Federal Trade Commission information on:

- Business Opportunities
- Chilren's Online Privacy Protection
- Computers nad Technology
- Credit and Insurance
- Credit and Loans
- Cross-Border Fraud
- "Do Not Call" Registry
- Funerals
- Gas Saving Tips
- Health Cures
- Home Energy Savings
- Information Security
- Investments
- Mail Fraud
- Native Art from Alaska
- Office Supply Scams
- Shopping Online
- Spam
- Weight Loss Scams

    (2) When linking to consumer protection Web pages from the Federal Trade Commission, consider using the icons available at <u>http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer/partners_buttons.shtm</u>.

📖 **Contact Information and Techniques** *see also Blogs; Listserv; Maps and Directions #(1); Navigation #(5); and Privacy Policy #(1)*

    (1) Consider including, in the "Contact Me" page, a method to allow constituents to communicate electronically with the office[122] (preferably through a form[123] on

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[121] The Federal Trade Commission's September 2007 *For the Consumer: Congressional Outreach Projects Using FTC Resources*, sites as examples the consumer protection pages of the following Congressional offices: <u>Rep. Neil Abercrombie</u>, <u>Rep. Judy Biggert</u>, <u>Rep. William Lacy Clay</u>, <u>Rep. John Dingell</u>, <u>Sen. Byron Dorgan</u>, <u>Rep. Phil English</u>, <u>Rep. J. Randy Forbes</u>, <u>Rep. Gene Green</u>, <u>Rep. Mary Bono</u> Mack, <u>Rep. Henry Waxman</u>, <u>Sen. Barbara Boxer</u>, <u>Sen. Jon Kyl</u>, <u>Sen. James Inhofe</u>, and <u>Sen. Blanche Lincoln</u>.

    The May 2006 edition of the FTC's report also mentions the consumer protection pages on the websites of <u>Rep. Spencer Bachus</u>, <u>Rep. Bob Goodlatte</u>, <u>Rep. Sue Kelly</u>, and <u>Rep. Dennis Moore</u>.

[122] The Congressional Management Foundation's *<u>2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill</u>* <u>(page 57)</u> notes that:

> Many offices use their Web sites to direct constituents to contact them offline for the information and services they are seeking. Yet, people who choose the Web as their method of contacting a congressional office are doing so precisely because they prefer to have their needs met online.

the "Contact Me" page)[124]. When using a form – and not a public e-mail address – consider including an explanation as to why a public e-mail address is not being provided.[125]

(2) Consider including, in the "Contact Me" page, an electronic newsletter[126] subscription sign-up opportunity (via Listserv).

Respond to their needs accordingly, and you will find you have more satisfied "customers," at less effort and expense to the office than you ever thought possible.

When the Foundation's 2003 report was compiled (*Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age*, (p. 47)), 97% of House Member, committee, and leadership websites provided this capability.

[123] Instructions for using CAO-Web Solutions Branch's form_proc software to do this are available on HouseNet at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → HTML → FormProc.

Form_proc is the software suggested in Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age*, (p. 57): "House offices can also simplify their e-mail management by utilizing the customized Web-based forms available from House Information Resources (i.e. for tour requests, scheduling requests, casework, feedback, etc.)."

[124] Using a form on the Member's site is preferable to just linking to the House Write Your Representative page, because keeping within the Member's site retains the consistent look and feel. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* which provides that an accessible website should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

Section 4 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further provides that:

A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.

Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:

1. navigation bars
2. the primary content of a page
. . .

A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site: Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. **Sen. John Cornyn**'s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[125] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 66) praises the explanation provided on Rep. John Larson's website.

(3) Consider including a staff directory.[127]

(4) Consider including a form to allow constituents to schedule a meeting with the Member (see e.g., Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr.'s "Contact Me to Schedule an Appointment" page and Rep. Trent Franks' "Appointment Scheduling Request" page).[128]

(5) Consider including a form to allow constituents to invite the Member to attend an event.[129]

(6) Consider including the regular office hours along with the addresses (and phone numbers) of Washington and district offices.[130]

(7) For the Washington and district offices, indicate special services that each office offers so that a constituent will know which office to contact (e.g., if one of the district offices is particularly equipped to provide services to speakers of a particular foreign language or if the Washington office normally takes care of veterans' benefits problems, indicate that).[131]

(8) Offices are urged to include a fax number on their website.[132]

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[126] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age*, (p. 31) praises Sen. Mary Landrieu's website for offering on-line subscriptions to several different newsletters.

[127] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 86) praises the website of Rep. Ed Perlmutter for having a "'Staff Biographies' section [that] provides constituents with a look at who works for the Congressman, as well as background information about them," The report (pages 64 and 74) also praises the "Contact: Staff Directory" page of Rep. Dan Burton and the "Staff List" page of Rep. Cliff Stearns. The report (page 21) additionally indicates that 25% of House Member, committee, and leadership office websites provide this type of information.

  The "Staff Policy" page of Rep. Chip Pickering's website includes the title of each staffer and a link to a list of issues – indicating which staffer is responsible for which issue area. The "Current Staff" page of Rep. Robert Andres' website includes the title of each staffer, a description of the areas that each staffer is responsible for, and which office each staffer is in.

[128] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 45) identifies providing guidance on scheduling a meeting as an element of a successful Congressional website.   The report (pages 65 to 74) praises the sites of Reps. Christopher Carney, Brad Ellsworth, Mark Ferguson, and Mike Thompson for providing either a form for requesting a meeting with the Congressman or providing instructions as to how to request such a meeting.

[129] See e.g., Rep. Devin Nunes's "Invitation Requests" page, Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.'s "Contact Me to Schedule a Speaking Engagement" page, and Rep. John Tierney's "Request to Speak" page.

[130] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 66) recommends that:

> Every congressional Web site should prominently display basic contact information, including telephone and fax numbers, the office's physical addresses, office hours, and their e-mail address or a link to their contact form. The emerging standard is to have this information on the bottom of every Web page. The more detailed and helpful the contact information, the better. Surprisingly, only 5.0% of Senate Member sites and 11.4% of House Member sites list their office hours.

Jakob Nielsen, in "About Us Information on Websites," (September 29, 2008) notes that "some sites seem to deliberately hide address listings and phone numbers. Doing so will backfire, though, because users view such sites as having very low credibility."

[131] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 49) praises the "Rhode Island Office" and "D.C. Office" sections of Rep. Jim Langevin's website. The two sections separate out information relevant to the Washington office from information relevant to the district office.

[132] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 66) recommends that:

(9) Consider including information as to how soon a constituent can expect to get a response and how they will be contacted.[133]

(10) Offices should be encouraged **not** to include an "e-mail this page to a friend" capability on their website because of the security problems that such a feature may create.[134]

(11) Some Member websites us a two-step contact form that has the user submit address information that the system uses to determine that the user lives in the Member's district before providing the user with the opportunity to submit a message to the Member.[135] Offices using this approach should be encouraged to indicate why the address information is being requested.

(12) Where the primary contact page includes various methods of contacting the office, and the electronic form is just linked to the page, put that link at the top of the page.[136]

(13) Contact information from an office should be coded in conformance with the hCard Microformat Standard,[137] specifically:

> Every congressional Web site should prominently display basic contact information, including telephone and fax numbers, the office's physical addresses, office hours, and their e-mail address or a link to their contact form. The emerging standard is to have this information on the bottom of every Web page. The more detailed and helpful the contact information, the better.

[133] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 50) recommends that Congressional websites "**Post clear e-mail and correspondence policies.** Clear policies regarding email correspondence reassure citizens that the office will process their communications efficiently. *Sen. Jeff Bingaman's (D-NM) e-mail policy* tells constituents how their correspondence is handled internally within the office and sets expectations for when they can expect a response from the Senator."

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 66) similarly recommends that Congressional websites "**Post clear e-mail and correspondence policies** . . . *Sen. Jeff Bingaman*'s site goes the extra mile, with a contact section that offers four different ways of contacting him: e-mail, postal mail, phone, or walk-in. His site also indicates which method is most effective for each type of request."

[134] Items 20 and 22 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Checklist* (HISPUB 007.1.56, August 2008) provide that:

> 20. All web forms must be protected against multiple submissions. Multiple submissions of web forms can often create denial of service conditions on the web server and affect servers in the enterprise.
> 22. Web forms to email a link to a friend need to be secured so that they can't be used to relay or spoof email.

Note, that prior to the issuance of the HISPUB, the Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 39) praised Rep. Dennis Moore's website for including an "'inform a friend' feature [that] allows users to share the site with others via e-mail"

[135] A technique for district address validation, using HIR form_proc, is set out at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → HTML → FormProc..

[136] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 57) notes that:

> people who choose the Web as their method of contacting a congressional office are doing so precisely because they prefer to have their needs met online. Respond to their needs accordingly, and you will find you have more satisfied "customers," at less effort and expense to the office than you ever thought possible.

[137] The hCard Microformat Standard is set out at http://microformats.org/wiki/hcard. Also included are links to authoring tools and applications that make use of hCard formatted data. For additional geographic applications, see also http://microformats.org/wiki/adr#Implementations.

(a) **street numbers** and **street names** should be enclosed by a tag with a class="street-address" attribute, e.g.,

    `<span class="street-address">101 First Street</span>`

(b) **post office box numbers, room numbers, suite numbers, building names,** etc., should be enclosed by a tag with a class="extended-address" attribute, e.g.,

    `<span class="extended-address">2401 Rayburn House Office Building</span>`

(c) the names of **cities, towns,** etc. should be enclosed by a tag with a class="locality" attribute, e.g.,

    `<span class="locality">Springfield</span>`

(d) the names of **states** should be enclosed by a tag with a class="region" attribute, e.g.,

    `<abbr class="region" title="Maryland">MD</abbr>`

        or

    `<span class="region">Virginia</span>`

(e) **zip codes** should be enclosed by a tag with a class="postal-code" attribute, e.g.,

    `<span class="postal-code">20515</span>`

        or

    `<span class="postal-code">20515-6165</span>`

(f) the **street-address, extended-address, locality, region, and postal-code classes** should all be within a wrapper with a class="adr" attribute, e.g.,

    `<span class="adr">`
      `<span class="street-address">101 First Street</span>`
      `<span class="locality">Springfield</span>,`
      `<abbr class="region" title="Maryland">MD</abbr>`
      `<span class="postal-code">20515-6165</span>`
    `</span>`

(g) **telephone numbers** should be enclosed by a tag with a class="tel" attribute, e.g.,

    `<span class="tel">(202) 226-2140</span>`

(h) **fax numbers** should be coded with class="tel", class="type", and class="value" as follows:

    `<span class="tel"><span class="type">Fax</span>: <span class="value">(202) 226-1872</span></span>`

(i) **e-mail addresses** (including links to e-mail addresses) should be enclosed by a tag with a class="email" attribute, e.g.,

    `<a href="mailto:WebAssistance@mail.house.gov" class="email">WebAssistance@mail.house.gov</a>`

(j) **URLs** (including links to URLs) should be enclosed by a tag with a class="url" attribute, e.g.,

    `<a href="http://www.house.gov" class="url">House of Representatives</a>`

The hCard Microformat Standard is based on RFC 2426 (the vCard MIME Directory Profile) and is consistent with the W3C (X)HTML specification.

(k) with **Member offices**,

    i. the **title** of the Member (i.e., Representative, Congressman, Congresswoman, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner) should be enclosed by a tag with a class="honorific-prefix" attribute;

    ii. the **first name** of the Member should be enclosed by a tag with a class="given-name" attribute;

    iii. the **middle name** (or middle initial) – if any – of the Member should be enclosed by a tag with a class="additional-name" attribute;

    iv. the **last name** of the Member should be enclosed by a tag with a class="family-name" attribute;

    v. any **attribute that normally follows a Member's last name** (e.g., "Jr." or "III") should be enclosed by a tag with a class="honorific-suffix" attribute;

    vi. **all of the elements relating to a Member's name** should all be within a wrapper with a class="fn" attribute, e.g.,

```
<span class="fn">
   <span class="honorific-prefix">Representative</span>
   <span class="given-name">John</span>
   <span class="additional-name">J.</span>
   <span class="family-name">Jones</span>,
   <abbr class="honorific-suffix" title="Junior">Jr.</abbr>
</span>
```

(l) with **Committee, Caucus, Leadership, Officer, and support office** websites, the name of the office should be enclosed by a tag with a class="fn org" attribute, e.g.,

```
<span class="fn org">Committee on House Administration</span>
```

(m) where the contact information does not have the specific name of the office, add that information (with, as appropriate, either class="fn" or class="fn org") and use the style sheet "display:none; visibility:hidden;" property[138] so that it will not display on the Web page, but will be picked up by applications making use of hCard data.

(n) all of the contact information (full name, address, phone numbers, URL, and e-mail address) should be within a wrapper with a class="vcard" attribute, e.g.,

```
<span class="vcard">
   <span class="fn org">Committee on Rules</span>
   <span class="adr">
      <span class="extended-address">H-312 The Capitol</span>
      <span class="locality">Washington</span>,
```

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[138] Use of the "visibility:hidden;" style sheets property is to deal with an apparent bug in Window-Eyes, which causes Window-Eyes to read text styled "display:none;background:url", unless it is also styled "visibility:hidden".

  For more information, see Gez Lemon's "Screen Readers and display:none," Juicy Studios (October 12, 2007). The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 23% of screen reader users use Window-Eyes.

```
            <abbr class="region" title="District of Columbia">DC</abbr>
            <span class="postal-code">20515</span>
        </span>
    </span>
```

(o) Where the contact information is the contact information for most of the material on the current page, use the <address> tag[139] as the tag to carry the class="vcard" attribute, e.g.,

```
        <address class="vcard">
            <span class="fn org">Committee on Rules</span>
            <span class="adr">
                <span class="extended-address">H-312 The Capitol</span>
                <span class="locality">Washington</span>,
                <abbr class="region" title="District of Columbia">DC</abbr>
                <span class="postal-code">20515</span>
            </span>
        </address>
```

(14) When practical, include the office's phone number and address on each page.[140]

(15) The main content of the contact page should have a link to the site's constituent services and/or casework pages.[141]

(16) Consider providing tips on how to communicate effectively with the office.[142]

Contrast *see Backgrounds #(4); and Tools for Validating Web Sites #(5)*

Cookies *see Privacy Policy and Cookies*

COPPA *see Kids' pages; and Privacy Policy and Cookies*

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[139] Section 7.5.6 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "The ADDRESS element may be used by authors to supply contact information for a document or a major part of a document such as a form."
   Section 1.1.2 of the W3C *HTML Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* suggests using the <address> element to satisfy checkpoint 13.2 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0*, which provides that an accessible website should "Provide metadata to add semantic information to pages and sites."

[140] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 39) recommends that "a site should provide easy and quick access to contact information including each office's telephone number, address, as well as a link to an e-mail contact form on every page."

[141] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 49) praises Rep. Jim Langevin's "Rhode Island Office" page, which includes a "How to Get Help from Our Office" link.

[142] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 56) praises Rep. Earl Blumenauer's "Effective Advocacy" page for advising "citizens about how to communicate effectively with Congress, by telling them what to ask, who to ask, how to ask, and how to follow-up." See also, the "Help Filing a Case with My Office" portion of Rep. Marion Berry's "Help With a Federal Agency" page.
   The October 10, 2006, issue of the Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online* Newsletter praises Rep. Lincoln Davis' "Communicate Effectively" page.
   See also, footnote 112.

☠ Copyrighted material

(1) Copyrighted material[143] should be used only with the written permission of the copyright owner.

(2) When using copyrighted material on a Web page that is also using Dublin Core meta tags, the "content" attribute of the <meta name="DC.rights" /> tag should indicate the name of the copyright owner and what part of the page is copyrighted material.

(3) Copyrighted material should not be photo-edited (or otherwise altered) unless the copyright owner has given written permission for the alteration (permission to use copyrighted material does not imply permission to alter the material).

(4) Where material used on a website contains a copyright notice (e.g., "©," "copyright," or "copr.;" with the name of the copyright owner and the year of original publication), the copyright notice should not be removed from copyrighted material without specific written permission of the copyright owner.

(5) Material prepared by (or for) a House office is not copyrightable and should not have a copyright notice.[144]

(6) Material copied from any website – other than a Federal government website – should be presumed to be copyrighted. Material from state and local government websites; commercial websites; newspaper, television, or radio websites; educational websites; and non-profit websites should all be presumed to be copyrighted.

Corners *see Layout #(5)*

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[143] Title 17, § 102(a) of the U.S. Code provides that copyrightable material includes (but is not limited to) the following categories:

    (1) literary works;
    (2) musical works, including any accompanying words;
    (3) dramatic works, including any accompanying music;
    (4) pantomimes and choreographic works;
    (5) pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works;
    (6) motion pictures and other audiovisual works;
    (7) sound recordings; and
    (8) architectural works.

[144] Title 17, § 105 of the U.S. Code provides that:

> Copyright protection under this title is not available for any work of the United States Government, but the United States Government is not precluded from receiving and holding copyrights transferred to it by assignment, bequest, or otherwise.

House Report 94-1476, pages 58 to 59, (the House Judiciary Committee report for the legislation that enacted title 17) goes on to note that:

> The general prohibition against copyright in section 105 applies to "any work of the United States Government," which is defined in section 101 as "a work prepared by an officer or employee of the United States Government as part of that person's official duties." Under this definition a Government official or employee would not be prevented from securing copyright in a work written at that person's own volition and outside his or her duties, even though the subject matter involves the Government work or professional field of the official or employee. Although the wording of the definition of "work of the United States Government" differs somewhat from that of the definition of "work made for hire," the concepts are intended to be construed in the same way. . . . [I]t can be assumed that, where a Government agency commissions a work for its own use merely as an alternative to having one of its own employees prepare the work, the right to secure a private copyright would be withheld.

Courts *see Government Resources #(1)*

Croatian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Czech language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Danish language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

☠ **Dates, Time, and Timeliness** *see also Forms #(11)*
  (1) If you dynamically generate the current date or time, use a server-side include, rather than grabbing the information from the user's PC.[145]
  (2) When referring to congresses (e.g., the 109th Congress), also provide the years. Do not assume that people off of Capitol Hill know what a particular congress is.[146]
  (3) Information on the website should be kept up to date.[147] The information should also convey the idea that it is current (see, e.g., Rep. Frank Palone's "About Me" page, that starts off with "On January 4, Frank Pallone, Jr. was officially sworn in for his tenth full term").
  (4) When possible, avoid using numeric notation for dates (e.g., 5/10/07), especially where the potential audience includes an appreciable number of people who use a language other than American English as their primary language. The United

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[145] Sample code for doing this can be found at the Indiana University Webmaster's Server-Side Includes Tutorial.

[146] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 61) notes that "Congressional jargon and the legislative process can be difficult for most people off the Hill to understand. Focus on making the information on your site understandable, rather than impressive and official-sounding."

[147] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 11) notes that:

> The Internet is a fast-paced medium, and users expect up-to-date information. No matter how well-designed a site is or how extensive its content, it's not going to be useful for visitors if the most current information they can find is a year old.

The January 30, 2006 edition of the Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online* newsletter further notes:

- **Outdated links.** A lot of House sites have outdated or incorrect links. The most frustrating ones were those linking to bills, sponsorships, and co-sponsorships from the 108th Congress (and, occasionally, earlier Congresses); dead links to the Clerk's Web site; THOMAS search engines that search the wrong Congress; and those linking to INS (it changed to USCIS in 2003!). Web sites continually change, so it's important to periodically review any link that goes off your site, especially at the beginning of each Congress so you don't have visitors looking at old information.
- **Outdated content.** We also saw an overwhelming amount of outdated content on Member Web sites, such as issue information referring to bills from previous Congresses as though they were current legislation. This is troublesome because few constituents will know that it's the 109th Congress (not the 108th, 107th, or 106th) or bother to search THOMAS to double-check. Instead, they will take the information on their Representative's Web site at face value and trust it. Congress is confusing enough to most people without outdated Member sites making it worse!

States, Canada, and a few former U.S. territories appear to be the only countries using month-day-year, as opposed to day-month-year or year-month-day.[148]

Delicious *see Social Bookmarking*

Demographics *see District Information #(4)*

📖 Digital Television Information

Member offices should consider including information on their websites concerning the upcoming conversion to digital television. Information on the transition is available at https://www.dtv2009.gov/, however offices should be encouraged to provide some information on their own website information on the transition before linking the user to the dtv2009 website.[149]

<dir> tags *see Lists #(6)*

📖 Disaster Preparation Information

Member offices should consider including information on their websites concerning disaster preparation information. Rep. Mary Bono's website, for instance, provides earthquake preparation information.[150]

📖 District Information *see also Banner #(7); Constituent Recognitions; Maps and Directions; Navigation #(5); and Government Resources #(1)*

(1) Member offices should be urged to include on their website material on the history of their congressional district. See, e.g., Rep. Diana DeGette's district history page, which lists all of the Members of the House who have represented the district since 1861, when Colorado became a territory; Rep. Ray LaHood's "Abraham Lincoln's Legacy" page that links the current 18th District of Illinois with the district represented by Abraham Lincoln when he was a member of the

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[148] In *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 152), Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger recommend that:
> Whenever you show dates on a Web site, remember to use the international date format, spelling out the name of the month instead of representing it by a number. Different countries have different conventions for writing dates by numerals. In France, for example, 5/4 would be April 5, not May 4.

[149] See, e.g., Rep. Anna Eshoo's "Digital Television (DTV) Transition FAQ" page and the "Ready for Digital Television (DTV)?" page on the website of Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama.

Concerning providing at least a brief explanation before providing a link, the Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill (page 34)* praises the federal government links on Rep. Mike Honda's website because Rep. Honda's site "complements them with brief descriptions of the general areas those agencies cover."

[150] The October 10, 2006, issue of the Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online Newsletter* praises Rep. Mary Bono's website for including information on earthquake preparedness information on earthquake preparedness.

Rep. Dan Boren's website includes information on ice storm preparedness. Rep. Gus Bilirakis' website includes information on hurricane preparedness. Rep. Bennie Thompson's website provides extensive information on local weather safety. Rep. Roy Blunt provides disaster and emergency phone numbers.

USA.gov (formerly FirstGov) has a wealth of information on disaster preparedness and current disasters at http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/PublicSafety/Disasters.shtml (in English) and at http://www.usa.gov/gobiernousa/Temas/Desastres.shtml (in Spanish) – organized by subject.

House of Representatives (1847-1849); and Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's "Interesting First District Facts" page which provides information on noteworthy events from the 1800s to the present that occurred in what is now the 1st District.[151]

(2) Many Members of Congress view it as one of their responsibilities to serve as the goodwill ambassador for their district. As such, they may want to feature (and link to) attractions and industries in their district. The *Members' Congressional Handbook (Web Sites, Content § 5)* and the *Committees' Congressional Handbook (Web Site Regulations, Content § e),* however, prohibit House Member and House committee websites from including "any advertisement for any private individual, firm, or corporation, or imply in any manner that the government endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service." Two practices have been developed by House offices that wish to provide links to external Web pages that provide information on attractions and industries in their district, while staying within the House rules:

    (a) Listing **all** of the companies in a Member's district that are within a specific segment of the economy (e.g., all professional sports teams in the district, or all the wine vineyards in a district) and linking to informational pages – not pages primarily containing solicitations for money, volunteerism, or other things of value[152]; [153] and

    (b) Including a statement on the Web page with the links, that these links are not intended to be an endorsement.[154]

(3) Where there are offices of Federal agencies in (or near) the district, Member offices should be encouraged to include information about the offices (or at least links to their websites).[155] Consider placing these references in the District

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[151] For techniques on how to compile a history of a congressional district, see *Congressional Districts: How to Compile Histories of Their Composition and Representation*, Congressional Research Service report 97-1052 GOV (December 9, 1997).

[152] The March 25, 2003 Dear Colleague from the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Administration Committee, concerning "Supporting Our Troops Web Sites," provides that:

> In publishing web site links consistent with House rules, official sites should direct constituents to informational materials, and not locations containing only solicitations. By doing so, Members can avoid engaging in solicitations which is prohibited under House rules, including solicitations for money, volunteerism, or other things of value.

[153] Use of this strategy is consistent with verbal guidance provided by the staff of the House Franking Commission at their January 7, 2008, briefing on franking reform to the House System Administrators Association.

[154] The "Wine Links" page of the Congressional Wine Caucus states (in red text) that

> **Please note that the links on the following pages will take you outside of The Congressional Wine Caucus' official website. The Congressional Wine Caucus does not control the content of these websites, nor do these links constitute an endorsement by the Congressional Wine Caucus. They are presented here for informational purposes only.**

Then-Rep. Christopher Shays' "Resources" page provided that:

> *These links are being provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by Congressman Christopher Shays of any of the products, services or opinions of the corporation or organization or individual. Congressman Christopher Shays bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality or content of the external site or for that of subsequent links. Contact the external site for answers to questions regarding its content.*

[155] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 24) notes that "Too many congressional Web sites are generic — they fail to reflect

Information section of the website and in the Constituent Services section of the website and in the Federal Government section of the website.[156, 157]

(4) Member offices should be encouraged to include Census Bureau data about their district.[158]

(5) On Member websites, consider providing links to the websites of military units stationed in (or near) the district; and military units associated with the district. See, e.g., Rep. Rush Holt's "Guard and Reserves" page.

(6) Member offices should consider providing information about the counties, towns, and other localities within their district.[159] Rather than just linking to the websites of a county, town, or other locality within a district, it is preferable to link to pages on the Member's website that provide information about the locality and include on that page a link to the locality's website.[160]

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the personality of the Member and the distinctiveness of the district or state." The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill (page 95)* identifies having "information about local or district resources" as an element of a well-formed Congressional website.

[156] Sources for this information include:

- Bureau of Land Management - http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en.html
- Department of Housing and Urban Development: http://www.hud.gov/localoffices.cfm
- Department of Veterans Affairs: http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: http://www.eeoc.gov/offices.html
- Federal Bureau of Investigation: http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm
- Internal Revenue Service: http://www.irs.gov/localcontacts/index.html
- Minority Business Development Agency: http://www.mbda.gov/?section_id=1&parent_bucket_id=151&content_id=2264
- National Archives and Records Administration: http://www.archives.gov/locations/states.html
- National Forest Service - http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/map/finder.shtml
- Small Business Administration: http://www.sba.gov/localresources/index.html
- Social Security Administration: http://www.ssa.gov/regions/
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: https://egov.uscis.gov/crisgwi/go?action=offices
- U.S. Geological Survey – Water Resources Offices: http://www.usgs.gov/contact_us/
- U.S. Park Service: http://www.nps.gov/findapark/#

[157] The references can either be on a separate page linked from the Constituent services, District, and Federal Government pages of the site, or they can be in a server-side include that is picked up by a page in each of those sections.

[158] Web pages devoted to individual congressional districts can be found at the Census Bureau's Fast Facts for Congress site at http://fastfacts.census.gov/home/cws/main.html.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill (p. 83)* identifies providing "District/state demographic statistics" as an element of a well-formed Congressional website.

[159] The *Congressional Directory* includes a list of the counties (or similar units) in each congressional district, as well as incorporated municipalities in each district.

Some state government web sites (e.g., Maryland and Mississippi) contain lists of the counties of the state (and their municipalities), with links to the official web sites for each of those units of government.

[160] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill (page 30)* praises Rep. Brian Baird's website for having "specific content for each county in his district, discussing local issues and problems and how he is addressing them."

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill (page 62)* praises then-Rep. Tom Allen's website for "an interactive map shows the Congressman's activities and accomplishments by county."

(7) Member offices should consider including information for people who are moving (or contemplating moving) to the Member's district. Such information would include topics such as how to register cars (and other vehicles), how to get utilities activated, and how to register children for school.[161]

<!DOCTYPE> declarations

(1) Each file should have a <!DOCTYPE> declaration. Unless there is an important reason to do otherwise, the <!DOCTYPE> declaration on each file should be[162]:
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">
If that <!DOCTYPE> is not used, then it is recommended that a <!DOCTYPE> from the W3C *Recommended List of DTDs* be used. (Note that the <!DOCTYPE> declaration **is** case sensitive.)

(2) There should only be one <!DOCTYPE> declaration in a file and it should precede everything in the file.[163]

See also., Rep. Dan Boren's "Second Congressional District of Oklahoma" page, Rep. Bud Cramer's former "5th District of Alabama" page, Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's "Nebraska's First Congressional District" page, Rep. Adam Schiff's "California's 20th Congressional District" page, and Rep. Benny Thompson's "Mississippi's 2nd District" page.

[161] See, e.g., Mike Rogers of Alabama's "Moving In?" page.

[162] Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

XHTML 1.0 is the successor to HTML 4.01. Section 3.1.1(4) of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that:

There must be a DOCTYPE declaration in the document prior to the root element [i.e., prior to the <html> tag]. The public identifier included in the DOCTYPE declaration must reference one of the three DTDs found in DTDs using the respective Formal Public Identifier. The system identifier may be changed to reflect local system conventions.

<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-strict.dtd">

<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">

<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Frameset//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-frameset.dtd">

[163] Section 3.1.1 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 Specification* (2nd edition) provides that:

An XML declaration [e.g., <?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>,] is not required in all XML documents; however XHTML document authors are strongly encouraged to use XML declarations in all their documents. Such a declaration is required when the character encoding of the document is other than the default UTF-8 or UTF-16 and no encoding was determined by a higher-level protocol.

Section C.1 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification*, however cautions that:

some user agents [e.g., Internet Explorer 6] interpret the XML declaration to mean that the document is unrecognized XML rather than HTML, and therefore may not render the document as expected. For compatibility with these types of legacy browsers, you may want to avoid using processing instructions and XML declarations. Remember, however, that when the XML declaration is not included in a document, the document can only use the default character encodings UTF-8 or UTF-16.

An XML declaration, therefore, should not be used on House Web pages as long as Internet Explorer 6 holds a significant market-share of browsers accessing those sites. Preceding the <!DOCTYPE>

Download time *see also Graphics #(1) and (5)*

Offices should be encouraged to have each Web page take no more than 15 seconds to download on a 56.6kb connection.[164]

Dutch (Flemish) language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

📖 Earmarks

(1) Member offices should include on their websites the following information about each of their earmarks:

- The proposed recipient, and address of the recipient
- The amount of the request
- An explanation of the request, including purpose, and why it is a valuable use of taxpayer funds.[165]

(2) Member offices should be encouraged to provide an explanation of what an earmark is.[166] Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's "First District Earmarks" page, for

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declaration with an <?xml> declaration (or anything else – even a blank line) in Internet Explorer 6 or Opera 7 results in those browsers going into quirks mode, even when there is a valid <!DOCTYPE> declaration. A WSB analysis of www.house.gov usage for July 9 to 15, 2008, indicates that Internet Explorer 6 accounted for 30.30% of the identifiable, non-robot access to the site (Opera usage added another 0.21% for a total of almost 31% of www.house.gov visitors).

[164] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 55) recommends that:

> Your site should load in 15 seconds or less using a standard Internet connection. Bear in mind that, despite the growing availability of broadband connections, the majority of wired households in America still use a 56kbps or slower modem to connect to the Internet.

J.D. Power and Associates reported on September 20, 2006, that 44% of residential ISP customers subscribe to a dial-up service.

[165] The February 17, 2009 Dear Colleague from the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, concerning "FY 2010 Appropriations Requests," provides that:

> To offer more opportunity for public scrutiny of Member requests, Members must post information on the requests they have submitted to the Appropriations Committee on their official House website at the time the request is made. The Appropriations Committee will consider funding only those requests that have been so posted. The website must contain the following information for each request submitted in FY 2010:
> - The proposed recipient, and address of the recipient,
> - The amount of the request,
> - An explanation of the request, including purpose, and why it is a valuable use of taxpayer funds.

[166] Section 5.1(4) of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* recommends "Avoid slang, jargon, and specialized meanings of familiar words, unless defined within your document" to implement WCAG 1.0 checkpoint 14.1 [priority 1], that accessible websites should "[u]se the clearest and simplest language appropriate for a site's content."

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 61) notes that "Congressional jargon and the legislative process can be difficult for most people off the Hill to understand. Focus on making the information on your site understandable, rather than impressive and official-sounding." The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 42) also notes that "Constituents are not typically familiar with Hill jargon, so make sure that acronyms and terms like 'motion to recommit' and 'roll call votes' are explained as well."

instance, starts with an explanation of what earmarks are and the criteria he uses before seeking an earmark; and then lists the earmarks that he has succeeded in getting and provides a description of each. See also, Rep. Kevin Brady's "Taxpayers: Your Have the Right to Know My Earmark Requests" page and Rep. Ellen Tauscher's "Earmarks" page.[167]

Earthquake Preparation Information *see Disaster Preparation Information*

Election Campaign material *see also Political Language*
   (1) Material originally developed for (or originally paid for by) an election campaign should not be used on House websites.[168]
   (2) House websites should not contain election campaign information or links to election campaign sites.[169]

Elements *see Tags (general rules)*

Ellipsis *see Quotations*

E-mail addresses *see Contact Information and Techniques #(13)*

E-mail a friend
   Offices should avoid having "e-mail this page to a friend" features on their websites, because of their potential for creating security vulnerabilities.[170]

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[167] The Sunlight Foundation's 2007 Congressional Web Site Investigation Project indicated that (as of March 26, 2007) 6 House Member websites were providing earmark information on their websites:
- Rep. Tammy Baldwin
- Rep. Kevin Brady
- Rep. Jim Cooper
- Rep. John Culberson
- Rep. Darrell Issa
- Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.

See also Rep. Dan Boren's "Congressional earmarks for Oklahoma's Second Congressional District" page.
[168] The *House Ethics Manual* (2008 ed., pp. 177-178), issued by the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, provides that Congressional office websites are not to be paid for with campaign funds. Offices with questions about the extent of that prohibition should be urged to contact the Committee for either informal advice or for a formal written opinion.
[169] The *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, Content, §§ 1-2), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

   The content of a Member's Web site:
   1. May not include personal, political, or campaign information.
   2. May not be directly linked or refer to Web sites created or operated by a campaign or any campaign related entity including political parties and campaign committees.

The *Committee's Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, Content, §§ a-b). issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

   The content of a committee Web site may not:
   a. Include personal, political, or campaign information.
   b. Be directly linked or refer to Web sites created or operated by campaign or any campaign related entity, including political parties and campaign committees.

<embed> tags

    When possible,[171] the <object> tag, not the <embed> tag, should be used to insert programs into HTML pages. The <embed> tag is not compliant with the W3C XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) standard.[172]

Employment Opportunities *see Job Opportunities*

E-Newsletters *see Listserv and E-Newsletters*

Estonian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Event Handlers

(1) When used within an HTML tag, event handlers are syntactically equivalent to attributes. Event handler names should therefore be in all lower case when used inside a tag (though the value of the event handler may include any character).[173] For instance, use

but not

(2) An "onclick" event handler does not need to have a redundant "onkeypress" event handler.[174]

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[170] Item 22 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Checklist*, HISPUB 007.1.56, August 2008, provides that "Web forms to email a link to a friend need to be secured so that they can't be used to relay or spoof email."

    Note, that prior to the issuance of the HISPUB, the Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 39) praised Rep. Dennis Moore's website for including an "'inform a friend' feature [that] allows users to share the site with others via e-mail"

[171] Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006]), p.153, notes that support for the <object> tag "has long been known not to work reliably in Internet Explorer."

[172] Use of proprietary tags that are not W3C XHTML compliant also makes a Web page non-compliant with Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* which provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

    For an attempt at using the <object> tag so that works well across browsers, see Elizabeth Castro's "Bye Bye Embed, " A List Apart (July 11, 2006).

[173] Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Use W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

    Section 4.2 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "XHTML documents must use lower case for all HTML element and attribute names. This difference is necessary because XML is case-sensitive e.g. and <LI> are different tags."

[174] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(*l*)) provide that "When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology." Checkpoint 6.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should, "[f]or scripts and applets, ensure that event handlers are input device-independent." Checkpoint 9.3 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further

(3) Rather than using the "onmouseout" event handler to convey information (or to provide functionality),[175] either:

> **(a)** include an "onblur" event handler with the same value as the "onmouseout" event handler;
>
> **(b)** replace the "onmouseout" event handler with an "onblur" event handler with the same value;[176] or
>
> **(c)** replace the "onmouseout" event handler with a different technique that provides the same functionality.[177]

(4) Rather than using the "onmouseover" event handler to convey information (or to provide functionality) replace the onmouseover with the a:hover property of style sheets,[178] if possible. If it is not possible to replace onmouseover with a:hover then,[179] either:

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provides that an accessible website should, "[f]or scripts, specify logical event handlers rather than device-dependent event handlers."

Section 12.4 of the W3C *HTML Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that if an "onclick" event handler must be used, that there also be a redundant "onkeypress" event handler should also be used in the same element (i.e., in the same tag). Section 2(SCR20) of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0*, however, takes the position that "Although click is in principle a mouse event handler, most HTML user agents process this event when the control is activated, regardless of whether it was activated with the mouse or the keyboard. In practice, therefore, it is not necessary to duplicate this event." Additionally, *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* also notes problems with the implementation of onkeypress (see also Jared Smith's "Onclick and Onkeypress," WebAim (November 6, 2003) and Maurice Fanechi (et al's) "The Trouble with Onclick," Accessify Forum (October 12, 2004)).

[175] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(*l*)) provide that "When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology."

Checkpoint 6.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should, "[f]or scripts and applets, ensure that event handlers are input device-independent."

[176] Section 12.4 of the W3C *HTML Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that:

> Some event handlers, when invoked, produce purely decorative effects such as highlighting an image or changing the color of an element's text. Other event handlers produce much more substantial effects, such as carrying out a calculation, providing important information to the user, or submitting a form. For event handlers that do more than just change the presentation of an element, content developers should do the following:
>
> 1. Use application-level event triggers rather than user interaction-level triggers. In HTML 4.01, application-level event attributes are "onfocus", "onblur" (the opposite of "onfocus"), and "onselect". Note that these attributes are designed to be device-independent, but are implemented as keyboard specific events in current browsers.

[177] The U.S. Access Board's *Guide to the Section 508 Standards for Electronic and Information Technology (§ 1194.22(l))* recommends that "onmouseout" be used sparingly and that "onblur" be avoided.

[178] Support of the style sheets a:hover property in some browsers requires that the browser be functioning in Standards Mode. To maximize the likelihood that a browser is functioning in Standards Mode, use one of the XHTML 1.0 <!DOCTYPE> declarations from the W3C *Recommended List of DTDs*. To ensure that Internet Explorer 6 (Windows) and Opera 7 are functioning in Standards Mode, also make sure that the <!DOCTYPE> declaration is the first thing in the file. For information, see Peter-Paul Koch's *Quirks mode and strict mode* and Henri Sivonen's *Activating the Right Layout Mode Using the Doctype Declaration*.

[179] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(*l*)) provide that "When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology."

> **(a)** include an "onfocus" event handler with the same value as the "onmouseover" event handler;
> **(b)** replace the "onmouseover" event handler with an "onfocus" event handler with the same value;[180] or
> **(c)** replace the "onmouseover" event handler with a different technique that provides the same functionality.[181]

Events Schedule *see Schedule of Member*

Facebook *see Social Bookmarking*

Farsi language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Favicons
(1) Each Web page should specify its favicon[182] with a <link rel="SHORTCUT ICON" /> tag, where the "href" attribute specifies the URL of the image to be used as the favicon,[183] e.g.:
   <link rel="SHORTCUT ICON" href="http://altmire.house.gov/favicon.ico" />
(2) Favicon file names must end with a .ico extension.[184]

Checkpoint 6.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should, "[f]or scripts and applets, ensure that event handlers are input device-independent."

[180] Section 12.4 of the W3C *HTML Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that: Some event handlers, when invoked, produce purely decorative effects such as highlighting an image or changing the color of an element's text. Other event handlers produce much more substantial effects, such as carrying out a calculation, providing important information to the user, or submitting a form. For event handlers that do more than just change the presentation of an element, content developers should do the following:
> 1. Use application-level event triggers rather than user interaction-level triggers. In HTML 4.01, application-level event attributes are "onfocus", "onblur" (the opposite of "onfocus"), and "onselect". Note that these attributes are designed to be device-independent, but are implemented as keyboard specific events in current browsers.

[181] The U.S. Access Board's *Guide to the Section 508 Standards for Electronic and Information Technology* (§ 1194.22(*l*)) recommends that "onmouseover" be used only if the information it provides is duplicated by some other method and recommends that "onfocus" be avoided.

[182] The favicon is the image that will appear on some Web browsers in the URL status box (next to the URL) and in some browsers with the favorites (or bookmark) list, next to the name of each saved Web file link. Failure to designate a favicon may result in an undesirable default being displayed, e.g.:

[183] The URL for the default House favicon (the Great Seal of the United States) is:
                       http://www.house.gov/favicon.ico
Other favicons being used by House offices include:
- Rep. John Boozman – state outline and symbol
- Rep. Donna Edwards – state flag
- Rep. Mary Bono Mack – leaf
- Rep. Laura Richardson – state abbreviation and district number

[184] Traditionally, favicons are named "favicon.ico" and are located in the root directory. This is not a requirement, however, as long as the favicon has a .ico extension and each page of the website has a <link rel="SHORTCUT ICON" /> tag with an "href" attribute".

(3) The "Favicon from Pics" tool at http://www.chami.com/html-kit/services/favicon/ can convert gif, jpg, png, and bmp files into ico format. Adobe GoLive, Adobe Illustrator, and CorelDraw also are able to generate ico files.

Fax Numbers *see Contact Information and Techniques #(8) and #(13)*

☠ **Federal Bureau of Investigation tours**
   The FBI's "FBI Tours" web page indicates that "The FBI Tour is presently closed. No date has been set for its reopening."

Federal Government *see Government Resources*

Feedlinks *see Social Bookmarking*

<fieldset> tags *see Alignment; and Forms #(23)*

File Names and Extensions *see also Banners #(8); Favicons #(2); and Log files*
   (1) When redesigning a website, whenever possible reuse the file names of the old site in the new site, so that pre-existing bookmarks and links from other sites will continue to work. If it is not possible to reuse the previous file names, then use redirects to take users who attempt to access the old pages and move them to the corresponding new page (not just to your new homepage).[185]
   (2) Whenever possible, ".shtml" (rather than ".htm" or ".html") should be used as the extension for HTML pages. (Use of the ".shtml" extension facilitates the use of server-side includes.)
   (3) When creating a new file (or subdirectory), choose a meaningful name for the file (or subdirectory).
   (4) If a name consists of several words, separate each one by a dash, e.g., **use** "best-practices", **not** "bestPractices" or "best_practices" or "best practices".[186]
   (5) Avoid starting a file name with the third level domain name of the site (e.g., "jones" in "jones.house.gov"). Using the domain name as the beginning of a file name may result in being redirected to the homepage of that Member, e.g., http://jones.house.gov/jones.css may resolve as http://jones.house.gov/.

Finnish language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

📖 **FirstGov**
   FirstGov.gov (the U.S. Government information portal maintained by the U.S. General Services Administration) was renamed USA.gov, effective January 18, 2007.

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[185] Jakob Nielsen's *Designing Web Usability*, 2000 (page 249), recommends:
   make sure all URLs live forever and continue to point to relevant pages. Do not move pages around; instead keep them at the same URL. It is very annoying for authors of other sites when their links either stop working or turn into pointers to something different because the original pages has been moved and replaced with something new.

[186] For more information as to the impact of file (and subdirectory) names on search engine ranking, see "Filename with Underscore or Dash" Moveable Type Weblog (March 20, 2005).

House websites should, therefore, not contain references to FirstGov.gov, except in a historical context. Additionally, House offices should link[187] to pages on www.USA.gov, rather than to www.FirstGov.gov.

📖 **Flags** *see also Forms*
   (1) Member offices should be encouraged to include information on how to order U.S. flags flown over the Capitol Building.[188]
   (2) Member offices should be encouraged to use the E-Flag Calculator as part of their Web pages for ordering U.S. flags flown over the Capitol building. The E-Flag Calculator will calculate the cost of a flag request (including postage) and produce an invoice that the constituent can mail to your office with their check. Additionally, the cost of the flags are automatically updated by the House Office Supply Service and postage rates are automatically updated by the U.S. Postal Service.
   (3) Consider including a link (from the flag order page) to a page with instructions for the proper care of a flag. See, e.g., Rep. Steven LaTourette's "Care and Presentation of the Flag" page.
   (4) For links to the flag page (and for the heading of the flag page), rather than using a variation on "Order a Flag", consider using something along the lines of "Fly a Flag over the Capitol Building"[189] or "Have a Flag flown over the Capitol".

📖 **Floor Statements** *see also WIDA*
   Member offices should be encouraged to include Floor statements made by the Member.[190] The official text of all House Floor statements is available in the

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[187] The *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, § 5), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

> HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

An almost identical regulation appears in the *Committees' Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, General, § 5). Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → HTML → Exit Message to External Web Sites.

[188] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 46) recommends that "[v]isitors to Member sites should also be able to initiate basic service requests – for flags, tours, photos, and documents, for example . . . "
   The CMF report (page 57) goes on to note that:

> Many offices use their Web sites to direct constituents to contact them offline for the information and services they are seeking. Yet, people who choose the Web as their method of contacting a congressional office are doing so precisely because they prefer to have their needs met online. Respond to their needs accordingly, and you will find you have more satisfied "customers," at less effort and expense to the office than you ever thought possible.

[189] Rep. Jane Harman's "Services" page uses "Fly a Flag over the Capitol".

[190] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 43) indicates that providing Floor statements or speeches is one of the elements of a successful congressional website. At the time the report was compiled, 69% of all House Member, committee, and leadership websites included this information (page 21).

Congressional Record – which is available on the Internet (through Thomas).[191] Alternatively, offices may provide their own transcripts (see, e.g., Rep. Jason Altmire's website). It is recommended that floor statements be presented both in chronological order and in subject order.[192]

Fonts *see also Bolding; Italics; and Roman Numerals #(2)*
   (1) Style sheets, not <font> tags, should be used to set font colors, type faces, and type size.[193]
   (2) Font sizes (for material that will be displayed on a screen)[194] should be specified in ems or percentages, not in points, picas, centimeters, inches, or pixels.[195]
   (3) Style sheets associated with the <body> tag should be used to set the document-wide default values for text size, color, and typeface.[196] The <basefont> tag should not be used for this or any other purpose.[197]
   (4) When specifying a serif font for screen display, consider specifying Georgia, rather than Times New Roman. When specifying a sans-serif font for screen display, consider specifying Verdana, rather than Arial. Georgia and Verdana were designed for screen display, whereas Times New Roman and Arial were designed for printing.[198]

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[191] Instructions for linking to specific documents in the Congressional Record are available at http://www.congress.gov/help/THOMAS_links/cr.html.

[192] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 46) observes that:

> The most important thing to consider is presenting the wealth of information the office produces in the most usable way possible. Virtually all offices already allow the press access to the most recent information by providing press releases arranged by date. But many users are interested in specific topics or issues. It is much more likely that they want to know the latest news or action on their topic of interest—say, the environment or the war in Iraq—than they want to see the last three press releases or floor speeches the Member has released. Organize all of the press resources by topic and type. Users are more likely to read articles and watch or listen to video or audio if they don't have to wade through an endless chronological list of unidentifiable files. While this meets the needs of the press, keep in mind that other key audiences, like lobbyists, academics, and interested constituents will also be served by this information.

[193] Section 15.2.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the <font> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) element. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[194] In particular, this best practice is not intended to apply to style sheets where the value of the "media" property is "print". Use of points, picas, centimeters, or inches in that type of style sheet is appropriate.

[195] Guideline 1.4.4 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> Except for captions and images of text, text can be resized without assistive technology up to 200 percent without loss of content or functionality. (Level AA)

The W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0*, in §§ C12, C13, and C14, respectively, recommends setting font size by use of percentages; by using named font sizes (e.g., as the "font-size: larger" property in CSS)or by using ems as the font size unit.

[196] These may be set by the font-size, color, and font-family properties of style sheets.

[197] Section 15.2.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the <basefont> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) element. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[198] For information on the history of the Georgia and Verdana type faces, see Daniel Will-Harris' *Georgia & Verdana Typefaces designed for the screen (finally)*.

(5) When specifying a font family, use a series of fonts[199] with a generic font as the last in the series.[200]

(6) Consider adding an on-page feature to allow font size to be increased, e.g., the feature on the house.gov homepage.[201]

Foreign Languages *see Babel Fish; and Language of Text*

Forms *see also Alignment; CAPTCHA; Centering; Contact Information and Techniques #(1); Flags #(2); Graphics #(3); Social Security numbers; and Visiting Washington #(1)*

(1) All forms (other than those that appear on every – or nearly every – page of a website) should be coded as secure forms.[202] Secure forms should particularly be used for casework forms, tour request forms, and general purpose contact forms.

(2) When designing a form, assume that most of the instructions will neither be read nor remembered. Ideally, forms should be so self-explanatory that instructions are not needed.[203]

(3) A form should have an internally consistent look and feel. Where a site has more than one form for a similar purpose (e.g., sites that have specialized contact forms – one of casework, one for tours, one for inviting the Member to speak, etc.), they should all have a consistent look and feel.[204]

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[199] For a list of the names of equivalent fonts, see the comp.fonts FAQ, part 5, subject 1.32, at http://www.faqs.org/faqs/fonts-faq/part5/.

[200] Section 15.3 of the W3C *Cascading Style Sheets 2.1 Specification* provides that "Style sheet designers are encouraged to offer a generic font family as a last alternative." CSS 2.1 supports the following generic font families: serif, sans-serif, cursive, fantasy, and monospace.

[201] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) identifies providing "the ability to change text size" as an element of a successful Congressional website.   The report (pages 67 and 76) singles out those features on the websites of Rep. J. Randy Forbes and Sen. Orin Hatch.

[202] Instructions for setting up secure forms are set out at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → Features and Scripts → Online Forms – Secure Forms.

[203] Luke Wroblewski, in *Web Form Design*, 2008, page 19 recommends that "Since the point of just about every form is to get it filled in, make it abundantly clear how people can accomplish that goal."
Steve Krug, in *Don't Make Me Think* (2nd ed., 2006), page 47 recommends that:
> Your objective should always be to eliminate instructions entirely by making everything self-explanatory, or as close to it as possible. When instructions are absolutely necessary, cut them back to the bare minimum.

[204] *Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines*, 2nd edition, page 9 (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), notes that:
> Users . . . benefit from task sequences that are consistent with how they typically do their work, that do not require them to remember information for more than a few seconds, that have terminology that is readily understandable, and that do not overload them with information.
The *Guidelines* (page 123) recommends that a well-designed site should:
> Ensure that data entry labels are worded consistently, so that the same data item is given the same label if it appears on different pages. . . . If possible, employ consistent labeling conventions. For example, do not use single words or phrases for some labels and short sentences for others, or use verbs for some and nouns for others.
The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:
> **Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. ***Sen. John Cornyn***'s Web site is a model of clearly and

(4) When most of the fields in a form are **not** required fields, then the fields that are required should indicate that they are required.[205] Where most (or all) of the fields in a form are required, do not mark each field as required.[206]

(5) When marking fields as being required, consider the following techniques:

  (a) Use an asterisk to identify required fields. When using this technique, include a title="required field" attribute in a tag pair surrounding the asterisk (e.g., *).[207]

  (b) Highlight in yellow[208] those cells that correspond to required fields.[209] Highlighting those cells, however, should not be the only method used to indicate that the field is a required field.[210]

  (c) Underlining should not be used to indicate that a field is a required field.[211]

  (d) Any instructions indicating how to identify required fields should precede the form.[212]

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consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[205] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(n)) provide that "When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues."

[206] Luke Wroblewski in *Web Form Design* (2008), p. 78 — commenting on indicating that a field is required or that a field is optional — notes that "Neither indicator is particularly useful when the input fields are either all required or optional fields adds unnecessary information to the form that people then have to pause and consider."

[207] This technique should be used with caution when flaging optional fields in forms that primarily contain required fields. As Caroline Jarrett, co-author of *Forms that Work* (2008), suggests in http://www.formsthatwork.com/questionsanswers/asterisk.asp that marking optional fields with an asterisk in those circumstances "makes sense but it is also a bad idea", noting that:

> The problem is that most users spend most of their time on web sites other than yours, and on forms other than yours. Their experience on other web sites habituates them to the idea that an asterisk means a field is required.

[208] Consider #FFFFCC.

[209] This technique should only be used with caution to flag optional fields in forms that primarily contain required fields. See, generally, the comments by *Forms that Work* co-author Caroline Jarrett at http://www.formsthatwork.com/questionsanswers/asterisk.asp.

[210] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(c)) provide that "Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup." Likewise, Guideline 1.4.1 (level A) of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Color is not used as the only visual means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element."

[211] Jakob Nielsen, in "Guidelines for Visualizing Links" (May 10, 2004) recommends:

> Don't underline any text that's not a link, even if your links aren't underlined. **Reserve underlining for links**. Because underlines provide a strong perceived affordance of clickability, users will be confused and disappointed if underlined text doesn't have an actual affordance to match this perception.

[212] The National Information Library Service of Australia's "Accessible Forms & Tables" provides that accessible forms should:

(6) When asking for data that is familiar to the person filling out the form (e.g., name and address information), put the label above the input box.[213]

(7) Every form should either have a "submit" button (or its equivalent) or clear instructions as to how to activate the form.[214]

(8) When deciding on the text of a form button, be unambiguous and use the fewest words necessary to convey your meaning. For instance, use
- "Search" to submit a search request
- "Generate Application" to submit an instruction to produce an application based on the information contained in a form (**do not** use "Generate Application" if the data in the form is being automatically transmitted to the office by e-mail or web service).[215]

(9) Do not include a "Reset" button on a form, unless there is a substantial need to have it.[216]

Provide explanatory information *before* it is used:
"♦ indicates required fields".

[213] Luke Wroblewski, in "Web Application Form Design" (January 22, 2005) recommends:

When the time to complete a form needs to be minimized and the data being collected is mostly familiar to users (for instance, entering a name, address, and payment information in a check-out flow), a vertical alignment of labels and input fields is likely to work best. Each label and input field is grouped by vertical proximity and the consistent alignment of both input fields and labels reduces eye movement and processing time. Users only need to move in one direction: down.

[214] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(n)) provide that "When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues."

[215] See, e.g., the U.S. Service Academy Nomination forms of Rep. John Adler, Rep. Steve Austria, Rep. John Boccieri Rep. Joseph Cao Rep. Bill Cassidy Rep. Jason Chaffetz

[216] Jakob Nielsen's "*Reset* and *Cancel* Buttons" (April 16, 2000) notes that:

The Web would be a happier place if virtually all *Reset* buttons were removed. This button almost never helps users, but often hurts them.

Reset clears away the user's input on a Web form, but why would people want to do that? The Web is characterized by frequent movement between pages and users rarely encounter the same form twice. Thus, a Web form is almost always cleared when the user sees it. Even when a user revisits a form in a single session, it is usually faster to edit the old data than to erase it and start over.

The *Reset* button **hurts users** in three ways:
- The worst problem about *Reset* is that users **click the button by mistake** when they wanted to click *Submit*. Bang - all your work is gone!
- Having two buttons at the bottom of a form clutters up the interface and makes it harder for users to clearly see their next step. Some small amount of wasted time is spent scanning the useless button and deciding which of the two buttons is the correct one.
- Even when users do want to eliminate some of the data they have entered into a form, it may slow them down to have a dedicated button for doing so, since the extra button means that users have a choice:
    o edit the erroneous fields and replace the old text with the new text
    o click *Reset* and type the new text into nice clean fields

The **extra choice requires extra thinking**, and the time saved by using an optimal interaction technique is often smaller than the time wasted on having to think instead of just moving ahead with a single interaction technique that is always used. It takes at least one second and often two seconds to decide between two possible interaction techniques which is why it is usually better not to offer users a choice. (A second may not seem like much, but it translates into about $100 million in lost productivity per year world-wide.)

(10) Forms should not ask for more information than the office needs.[217, 218]

(11) Forms should not force the user to provide information in a particular format, unless there is a substantial need. For instance, unless there is a substantial need, do not require the user to enter dates in mm/dd/yyyy format – mm/dd/yyyy format may be machine-friendly, but it is not people-friendly.

(12) If submitting a form generates a follow-up page that requires the person who filled out the form to confirm the information before the content of the form is actually transmitted to the office, the confirmation button should be prominent and "above the fold" (i.e., it should be on the portion of the screen that a user sees without having to use a scroll bar). **Do not assume** that the user will have read either the instructions on the original form or instructions on the confirmation page.[219]

(13) Normally, each input field (whether created by an <input>, <select>, or <textarea> tag) has text associated with it that explains what information should be put into the field (e.g., "First Name", "Street Address", or "City").

    (a) If that explanatory text is present, it should be preceded by a <label> tag and followed by a </label> tag. The <label> tag should have a "for" attribute with a value equal to the value of the "id" attribute of the <input>, <select>, or <textarea> tag.[220] For example:

```
<label for="querytext">Search for: </label>
<input type="text" name="QueryText" name="querytext" id="querytext" size="10" value="" />
```

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[217] The standard set out in § 1303(b)(1)(C) of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA) prohibits conditioning participation in an activity though a website on "disclosing more personal information than is reasonably necessary to participate in such activity".

   Just as in the case of § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, Congressional offices are not statutorily required to abide by the requirements of COPPA. Just as with § 508, however, Congressional offices that do not abide by COPPA's standards risk being embarrassed if their non-compliance is publicized.

[218] Luke Wroblewski, in *Web Form Design*, 2008, page 22 notes that:

    People need to parse every question you ask them, formulate their response to that question, and then enter their response into the space you have provided. The best way to speed up that process is not to ask the question at all. That means if you want to be vigilant about optimizing your forms, put every question you are asking people to the test. Do you really need to ask this question?

[219] Steve Krug's *Don't Make Me Think* (2nd ed., 2006), p. 21 notes that:

    When we're creating sites, we act as though people are going to pore over each page, reading our finely crafted text, figuring out how we've organized things, and weighing their options before deciding which link to lick.

    What they actually do most of the time (if we're lucky) is *glance* at each new page, scan *some* of the text, and click on the first link that catches their interest or vaguely resembles the thing they're looking for. There are usually large parts of the page they don't even look at.

Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger in their *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 35) further note that users of a website spend an average of 27 seconds on each interior page that they view and less than half of that time is used to read the main content area.

[220] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(n)) provide that "When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues."

   Guideline 3.3.2 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Labels or instructions are provided when content requires user input. (Level A)". Section H44 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends using <label> tags.

(i) If the explanatory text surrounds the <input>, <select>, or <textarea> tags, e.g.

User name: [   ] (E-mail address: xxx@xxx.xxx)

surround the entire string in the <label> tags. For instance,[221]
```
<label for="user2">User name:
<input type="text" name="user2" id="user2" />
(E-mail address: xxx@xxx.xxx)</label>
```

(ii) When the input is through radio buttons or checkboxes, the explanatory information should follow (not proceed) the <input> tag.[222]

(b) If there is no explanatory text that can be associated with an <input>, <select>, or <textarea> element (e.g., were the label asks for a telephone number, but there are three <input> tags, one for the area code, one for the telephone exchange, and one for the remaining four digits), then either:

1. use a "title" attribute in the tag to indicate what information is to go into the field; or
2. add the information and put it between a <label> tag (with an appropriate "for" attribute) and a </label> tag; and give the <label> tag a class (e.g. class="hidden"), where the class places the text off screen and minimizes the size (e.g., position:absolute;left:-999em; font-size:1%);[223] or
3. add the information and put it between a <label> tag (with an appropriate "for" attribute) and a </label> tag; and use the technique suggested in "Labels.js: A Re-introduction to DHTML" (December 23, 2001).

(14) If a <select> tag has a substantial number of <option> tags associated with it, the <option> tags should be grouped together with <optgroup> tags. See, for example, the "What is the general topic of your message?" pull-down on Rep. Dan Boren's "Contact Dan Online Form" page.[224]

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[221] In "Wrapping Form Labels," the Web Accessibility Center of Ohio State University suggests this technique in order to optimize accessibility by Jaws users. Note that even in this case the <label> tag contains a "for" attribute. Section H44 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that the <label> tag always have a "for" attribute because some assistive technologies do not function well without it.

[222] Section H44 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* (for implementing WCAG 2.0 Guideline 3.3.2 (Level A)) specifies that:
> the label is positioned after input elements of type="checkbox" and type="radio"

[223] For a further discussion of these (and other) techniques, see Gez Lemon's "Invisible Form Prompts," Juicy Studio, September 18, 2004.

[224] Checkpoint 12.3 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should:
> Divide large blocks of information into more manageable groups where natural and appropriate. [Priority 2]
> For example, in HTML, use OPTGROUP to group OPTION elements inside a SELECT . . .

The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(n)) provide that "When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive

(15) Where a form has a pull-down menu of postal abbreviations, each <option> tag should have a "title" attribute that specifies the name of the state. See, e.g., the "Contact Me About Constitutional Amendments" page on Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.'s website.[225] **Note**, however, that from a usability and accessibility point of view, it is preferable to provide an <input type="text"> field where the visitor can type in the 2-character postal abbreviation, rather than puling the information from a <select>/<option> pull-down.[226]

- If the form is only meant to be filled out be visitors from the Member's state, it is preferable to hard-code the state value and use an <input type="hidden"> tag to pass the postal abbreviation to the appropriate software.
- If the form is expected to usually be filled out by visitors from the Member's state (but where it could be filled out by visitors from elsewhere), pre-populate the field with the state using the "value" attribute in the <input type="text"> tag.[227]

(16) JavaScripts, VBScripts, and other scripts should not be used as the exclusive way to submit forms.[228]

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technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues."

[225] Checkpoint 4.2 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites need to "[s]pecify the expansion of each abbreviation or acronym in a document where it first occurs."

[226] Jakob Nielsen's "Does User Annoyance Matter?" (March 26, 2007) notes that:

> Making users suffer a drop-down menu to enter state abbreviations is one of many small annoyances that add up to a less efficient, less pleasant user experience. It's worth fixing as many of these usability irritants as you can. . . . .
>
>   Sites offer drop-downs for state abbreviations under the theory that doing so prevents input errors. But that's not true: menus are more error prone than typing because the **mouse scroll wheel** often makes users inadvertently change the state field's content after they've moved their gaze elsewhere on the screen. In contrast, everybody knows how to type their own state's two letters, and it's always faster to enter this information through the keyboard than the mouse.

Luke Wroblewski, in *Web Form Design*, 2008, page 69, recommends that:

> it's generally a good idea to avoid really long lists in drop-down menus, especially when people are likely to be familiar with the options (like selecting the state they live in).

Caroline Jarrett and Gerry Gaffney, in *Forms that Work: Designing Web Forms for Usability*, 2009, page 90, likewise note that:

> We often hear of a particular annoyance in the United States, being forced to select your two-letter state abbreviation from a 50-state drop-down. And yet, most people who live in the United States find it perfectly natural to type this (and are unlikely to make a mistake when doing so).

[227] Luke Wroblewski, in *Web Form Design*, 2008, page 159 recommends that:

> if you know someone is accessing your form from the United States, you might consider defaulting the "Country" input field to "United States." If you know that 90 percent of your customers live in the U.S., you might do the same.

[228] Checkpoint 6.3 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should:

> Ensure that pages are usable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or not supported. If this is not possible, provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page. . . .
>
>   For example, ensure that links that trigger scripts work when scripts are turned off or not supported (e.g., do not use "javascript:" as the link target). If it is not possible to make the page usable without scripts, provide a text equivalent with the NOSCRIPT element, or use a server-

(17) Rather than using JavaScript or VBScript to determine whether required fields are present in a form (or to verify that e-mail addresses are in the correct format), websites hosted on the HIR Web servers should use the "required-[field]", "valid-email", or "required-valid-email" options in form_proc.[229, 230]

(18) Any <input> tag with a type="text" attribute should not have a "value" attribute.[231]

(19) If a <form> tag has a "name" attribute, it should also have an "id" attribute with the same value [232] When assigning the value of an "id" (or "name") attribute use the purpose of the data that the attribute's tag relates to, not how the data is to be portrayed – the "name" value should indicate function, not form. (For instance, "hotTopics" would be an appropriate value for an "id" or "name" attribute, but "whiteOnRed" would not be an appropriate value.)[233]

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side script instead of a client-side script, or provide an alternative accessible page as per checkpoint 11.4. Refer also to guideline 1.

[229] Instructions for using form-proc are set out at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → Features and Scripts → Online Forms – Basic Instructions.

[230] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(n)) provide that "When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues."

Checkpoint 6.3 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should:

Ensure that pages are usable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or not supported. If this is not possible, provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page. . . .

For example, ensure that links that trigger scripts work when scripts are turned off or not supported (e.g., do not use "javascript:" as the link target). If it is not possible to make the page usable without scripts, provide a text equivalent with the NOSCRIPT element, or use a server-side script instead of a client-side script, or provide an alternative accessible page as per checkpoint 11.4. Refer also to guideline 1.

[231] Checkpoint 10.4 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should, "*[u]ntil user agents* handle empty controls correctly, include default, place-holding characters in edit boxes and text areas." Donna Smillie (Web Accessibility Consultant for the Royal National Institute for the Blind (UK)), however, indicates that she is "Not aware of any user agents currently in use which have difficulty in handling empty form controls correctly. If anything, problems now tend to be presented for some users when default values are provided in edit boxes and text areas" (November 29, 2003). Jim Hatcher, in *Constructing Accessible Web Sites* (2002, p. 141) also notes that:

It used to be, when screen readers literally "read the screen", that they had difficulty detecting an input field that was blank. Now that screen readers use **Microsoft Active Accessibility (MSAA)** or the **Document Object Model (DOM)** of the browser, they do not have that problem anymore. The usefulness of Checkpoint 10.4 has passed.

For a contrasting opinion of whether Checkpoint 10.4 is no longer applicable, see "Place Holding Text in Form Inputs" Spider Trax, July 20, 2005.

[232] Section 4.10 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* designates the "name" attribute of the <form> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute and also provides that "XHTML 1.0 documents MUST use the id attribute when defining fragment identifiers" within <form> tags.

[233] Section 1 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that:

When designing a document or series of documents, content developers should strive first to identify the desired structure for their documents before thinking about how the documents will be presented to the user. Distinguishing the structure of a document from how the content is presented offers a number of advantages, including improved accessibility, manageability, and portability.

(20) Within every group of radio buttons, the <input> tag for one of the buttons should have a checked="checked" attribute.[234]

(21) Within every <select> tag, one of the <option> tags should have a selected="selected" attribute.[235]

(22) Each <input> and <option> tag should end with "/>".[236]

(23) Whenever there are major categories within a form (e.g., in a congressional congratulations form where there is a section for information about the person who is making the nomination and a section for information about the person who is being proposed to be honored),[237] use the <fieldset> and <legend> tags.[238]

(24) Consider including a forms library (see, e.g., the websites of Rep. Trent Frank and Rep. Jeff Fortenberry).[239]

(25) On each page that consists primarily of a form, the <meta name="DC.type"> tag should have a "content" attribute with the value "InteractiveResource", and the

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Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006]), p.180, recommends that

Semantic or meta-structural names (names that explain the function performed by elements contained within) are best. You would feel pretty silly having labeled a part of your site "orangebox" when the client decides to go with blue. You would feel sillier still revising your style sheets under a deadline six months from now and trying desperately to remember whether "Gladys" was a navigational area, a sidebar, a search form, or what.

[234] Section 17.2.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that for every group of radio buttons, there should be at least one <input type="radio"> tag with a "checked" attribute. Section 4.5 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that all attributes must be given values (e.g., checked="checked" not just: checked). Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[235] Section 17.6.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that for every <select> tag, there should be at least one <option> tag with a "selected" attribute. Section 4.5 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that all attributes must be given values (e.g., selected="selected" not just: selected). Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[236] Section 4.6 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "Empty elements must either have an end tag or the start tag must end with />. For instance, <br/> or <hr></hr>." Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[237] See, e.g., the Congressional Commendation forms of Rep. John Adler, Rep. Steve Austria, Rep. John Boccieri Rep. Joseph Cao Rep. Bill Cassidy Rep. Jason Chaffetz   Rep. Mike Coffman

[238] Section 17.10 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides

The FIELDSET element allows authors to group thematically related controls and labels. Grouping controls makes it easier for users to understand their purpose while simultaneously facilitating tabbing navigation for visual user agents and speech navigation for speech-oriented user agents. The proper use of this element makes documents more accessible.

    The LEGEND element allows authors to assign a caption to a FIELDSET.

[239] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 65) praises the forms library on Rep. Christopher Carney's website, which "allows users to quickly identify and easily fill out the relevant forms."

See also the "Forms Library" of Rep. Jim Moran.

<meta name="robots"> tag should have a "content" attribute with a value of "INDEX,NOFOLLOW". For example:

    <meta name="DC.type" scheme="DCTERMS.DCMIType"
    content="***InteractiveResource***" />
    <meta name="robots" content="***INDEX,NOFOLLOW***" />

The <meta> tags should be within <head> and </head> tags.

Frames and Iframes[240] *see also Alignment; Browsealoud; Banners #(3); Centering; House Operating Status; Kids Pages #(2); Legislative Material #(1) and (2); RSS(2); Veterans #(1); and Visiting Washington #(2)*

(1) When a frame (or iframe) calls in a page from outside the HOUSE.GOV domain, there needs to be a prominent message indicating that the material is not from the House of Representatives and that neither the office nor the House are responsible for the content.[241]

(2) If a <frame> tag or a <iframe> tag has a "name" attribute, it should also have an "id" attribute with the same value [242] When assigning the value of an "id" (or "name") attribute use the purpose of the data that the attribute's tag relates to, not how the data is to be portrayed – the "name" value should indicate function, not form. (For instance, "hotTopics" would be an appropriate value for an "id" or "name" attribute, but "whiteOnRed" would not be an appropriate value.)[243]

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[240] For further material on use of iframes, see the <u>WSB Iframes Blog</u>.

[241] The <u>*Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites</u>, § 5), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

> HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

An almost identical regulation appears in the <u>*Committees' Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, General</u>, § 5). Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at HouseNet → Technology → <u>Web Solutions</u> → HTML → Exit Message to External Web Sites.

   On <u>October 2, 2008, Rep. Robert Brady, Chairman of the House Administration Committee, issued a statement</u> that "the Committee has approved revisions to rules governing the use of web video on Member websites." The rule adopted by the Committee provides that:

> In addition to their official (house.gov) Web site, a Member may maintain another Web site(s), channel(s) or otherwise post material on third-party Web sites.
> The official content of any material posted by the Member on any Web site must be in compliance with Federal law and House Rules and Regulations applicable to official communications and germane to the conduct of the Member's official and representational duties.
> When a link to a Web site outside the Member's official cite is imbedded on the Member's official site, the Member's site must include an exit notice advising the visitor when they are leaving the House. This exit notice must also include a disclaimer that neither the Member nor the House is responsible for the content of the linked site(s).
> Chairman is authorized to make technical and conforming changes to facilitate inclusion into the Committees and Member handbooks.

[242] <u>Section 4.10 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification*</u> designates the "name" attribute of the <frame> and <iframe> tags as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute and also provides that "XHTML 1.0 documents MUST use the id attribute when defining fragment identifiers" within <frame> and <iframe> tags.

[243] Section 1 of the W3C <u>*Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0*</u> provides that:

(3) Frames may be used, as long as the <frame> or <iframe> tag has a "title" attribute that describes the specific function of that frame.[244] Where the <frame> or <iframe> is used to call up an image that is not able to have an "alt" attribute (or its equivalent), then use the "title" attribute of the <frame> (or <iframe>) tag to describe the image, the same way that the "alt" attribute would normally be used to describe an image.[245]

(4) Each <frame> tag should end with "/>"[246]

When designing a document or series of documents, content developers should strive first to identify the desired structure for their documents before thinking about how the documents will be presented to the user. Distinguishing the structure of a document from how the content is presented offers a number of advantages, including improved accessibility, manageability, and portability.

Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006]), p.180, recommends that Semantic or meta-structural names (names that explain the function performed by elements contained within) are best. You would feel pretty silly having labeled a part of your site "orangebox" when the client decides to go with blue. You would feel sillier still revising your style sheets under a deadline six months from now and trying desperately to remember whether "Gladys" was a navigational area, a sidebar, a search form, or what.

[244] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(i)) provide that "Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation."
    Checkpoint 12.1 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "[t]itle each frame to facilitate frame identification and navigation." Section 10 of the W3C *HTML Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that <frame>, <frameset>, and <iframe> tags are all implementations of frames.

[245] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(a)) provide that "A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content)."
    Guideline 1.1.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> All non-text content that is presented to the user has a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose, except for the situations listed below. (Level A)
>
> . . .
>
> - **Sensory:** If non-text content is primarily intended to create a specific sensory experience, then text alternatives at least provide descriptive identification of the non-text content.
>
> . . .
>
> - **Decoration, Formatting, Invisible:** If non-text content is pure decoration, is used only for visual formatting, or is not presented to users, then it is implemented in a way that it can be ignored by assistive technology.

    Section C9 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends using style sheets to display purely decorative images. It notes, however, that "This technique is not appropriate for any image that conveys information or provides functionality, or for any image primarily intended to create a specific sensory experience." Where the image is being used to create a "specific sensory experience," § G100 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends just using a well-accepted name of the image (e.g., "Mona Lisa, by Leonardo da Vinci")..
    Section 13.8 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that <img> tags and <area> tags must have "alt" attributes.

[246] Section 4.6 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "Empty elements must either have an end tag or the start tag must end with />. For instance, <br/> or <hr></hr>." Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

French language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

📖 Frequently Asked Questions

Offices should be encouraged to have FAQs in their website.[247] The website of the late Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald, for instance, had FAQs as a primary navigation item.[248] See also, Rep. Trent Frank's "Frequently Asked Questions – FAQ's" page and Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's constituent services FAQ.[249]

FTP software *see WS_FTP software*

Furl *see Social Bookmarking*

Georgian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

German language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Google *see Maps and Directions; and Social Bookmarking*

📖 Government Resources *see also Constituent Services; District Information #(3); FirstGov; and Linking #(4)*

  (1) Member offices should be encouraged to include material about (or at least links to) the Federal courts that have jurisdiction within the Member's congressional district.[250] See Appendix 2: *Federal Judicial Branch* of this document for information on Federal Judicial websites.

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[247] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 83) recommends that Congressional websites include FAQs about Congress and FAQs regarding constituent casework. The report (pages 30 to 38, 56 and 59) praises the casework FAQs of Reps. Brian Baird, Xavier Becerra, Marion Berry, John Larson, John Linder, and Ed Royce; the Congressional FAQ of Rep. Mike Honda; the FAQ on Internet Myths on Rep. John Larson's website; and the FAQ section of Sen. Patty Murray's website. The report (page 60) also praises the Budget Committee (Democratic Office) budget FAQ.

    The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 50) suggests that "Past letters written to constituents explaining the Member's stance and actions on an issue can populate the issues page and inform an FAQ."

    Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines, 2nd edition, page 10, (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), identifies providing "a useful set of frequently asked questions (FAQ) and answers" as one of the elements that project credibility in a website.

[248] See also, the websites of Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney, Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama, and Rep. Chris Van Hollen.

[249] See also, the frequently asked questions portion of Rep. John Linder's "Academy Nominations" page.

[250] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 24) notes that "Too many congressional Web sites are generic — they fail to reflect the personality of the Member and the distinctiveness of the district or state." The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*

(2) On websites that have non-English pages, consider also providing links to government information pages that are linked from the Federal Citizen Information Center's Multilanguage Gateway.[251]

(3) Consider including a link to USA.gov (formerly FirstGov).[252] See, e.g., Rep. David Wu's "Constituent Services" page.

(4) Consider including a link to the homepage of the U.S. House of Representatives homepage on each page.[253]

Grammar *see Word Choice*

📖 Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance

Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with grant applicants)[254], that are hosted on an HIR Web server should be encouraged to include the CRS-maintained "Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance" page in their website. Offices not hosted on an HIR Web server should be encouraged to iframe the page.[255]

(page 95) identifies having "information about local or district resources as an element of a well-formed Congressional website."

[251] http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm.

[252] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 95) identifies having a link to FirstGov (now USA.gov) as an element of a well-formed Congressional website.

[253] See, e.g., the websites of Rep. John Adler, Rep. Bill Cassidy, Rep. Jason Chaffetz, Rep. Mike Coffman, Rep. Kathy Dahlkemper, Rep. Bill Fleming, Rep. Marcia Fudge, Rep. Alan Grayson, Rep. Brett Guthrie, and Rep. Debbie Halvorson.

[254] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (p. 46) notes that "Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans' Affairs* website provides information on veterans' benefits for its key audience."

[255] Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the generic Federal Grants page. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's website. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* which provides that an accessible website should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

Section 4 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further provides that:

> A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.
>
> Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:
>   1. navigation bars
>   2. the primary content of a page
>   . . .
>
> A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

Graphics *see also Alignment; Backgrounds; Banners; Centering; Colors; Favicons; Layout #(5); Lists #(1); Multimedia files and Audio files; Navigation #(6); Photo Albums; and Tools for Validating Web Sites #(4)*

(1) Optimize graphics to cut download time. GIFBot is an easy to use graphics optimizer from NetMechanic that works with JPGs as well as GIFs.

(2) Where a small graphic will communicate as well as a large graphic, use the smaller graphic. Also consider using thumbnails that link large versions of the image.

(3) Every graphic needs to include an "alt" attribute (or its equivalent).[256] The "alt" attribute (or its equivalent) should convey the information that the graphic provides.

    (a) If the graphic includes text, the "alt" attribute (or its equivalent) should include that text (though, any abbreviations should be spelled out).[257]

    (b) If the graphic conveys no information (e.g., it is purely decorative), then set the value of the "alt" attribute either to null ("") or to a single blank (" ").[258]

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

> **Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn*'s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[256] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(a)) provide that "A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content)."

Guideline 1.1.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> All <u>non-text content</u> that is presented to the user has a <u>text alternative</u> that serves the equivalent purpose, except for the situations listed below. (Level A)
>
> . . .
>
> • **Sensory:** If non-text content is primarily intended to create a <u>specific sensory experience</u>, then text alternatives at least provide descriptive identification of the non-text content.
>
> . . .
>
> • **Decoration, Formatting, Invisible:** If non-text content is <u>pure decoration</u>, is used only for visual formatting, or is not presented to users, then it is implemented in a way that it can be ignored by <u>assistive technology</u>.

Section 13.8 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that <img> tags and <area> tags must have "alt" attributes.

With applets, § H35 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends placing the descitptive text between the <applet> tag and the </applet> tag. With objects, § H53 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends placing the descitptive text between the <object> tag and the </object> tag.

[257] Section H37 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that "If the image contains words that are important to understanding the content, [make sure] the words are included in the text alternative."

[258] Section H67 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* notes that

> Although alt=" " is also valid, alt="" is recommended.

(c) When using an "alt" attribute with a value that exceeds 100 to 125 characters, also use a "longdesc" attribute.[259]

(d) Phrases such as "photo of" or "link to" should not be used as part of an "alt" attribute (or its equivalent).[260] Likewise, the "alt" attribute (or its equivalent) should normally not state that it is being displayed because scripting, style sheets, or similar technologies are not being used.[261]

(e) Abbreviations should not be used in an "alt" attribute.

(f) File names should not be used as the value of an "alt" attribute.[262]

(4) Where a graphic consists principally of text, use actual text rather than an <img> graphic. Use style sheets to control size, color, background, positioning, etc. This approach maximizes accessibility, scalability, and download speed.[263]

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[259] Various standards have been suggested for how long an "alt" attribute should be before a "longdesc" attribute should also be used. The 100 to 125 character standard was recommended by Jon Brundage of TecAccess.

  Joe Clark's *Building Accessible Websites* (2003), page 68, suggests using the "longdesc" attribute when the value of the "alt" attribute exceeds 1,024 characters.

  Standard 1.8 of the New York State Government's Mandatory Technology Standard S04-001 ("Accessibility of State Agency Web-based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications," October 25, 2006) provides that the "longdesc" attribute should be used when the value of the "alt" attribute exceeds 150 characters.

  Statewide Policy P130 Rev. 1.0 (Attachment A) from the Arizona Information Technology Agency (September 15, 2006) suggests using the "longdesc" attribute when the value of the "alt" attribute exceeds 12 words.

  The default on HiSoft's Cynthia Says accessibility validating software to recommend use of the "longdesc" attribute is when the value of the "alt" attribute exceeds 81 characters.

  Section H45 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that (to comply with Web Content Accessibility Guideline 1.1.1 [level A], "the longdesc attribute [should be used] when a short text alternative does not adequately convey the function or information provided in the image."

[260] Roger Hudson's "Text Alternatives for Images" (September 2003) recommends that Web designers "Avoid unnecessary terms. Don't use words like 'link' or 'click here' for images that are links. Screen readers will indicate if something is a link or not." Jakob Nielsen and Marie Tahir, in *Homepage Usability: 50 Websites Deconstructed* (2002), page 18, recommend:

  Don't use generic instructions, such as "Click Here" as a link name. Instead, use meaningful text in the link names to tell users what they'll get when they click. This helps users to quickly differentiate between links when they are scanning through them. For example, instead of saying "Click Here for Layette Items" just say "Layette Items."

[261] Section G94 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that (to comply with Web Content Accessibility Guideline 1.1.1 [level A]):

  The text alternative should be able to substitute for the non-text content. If the non-text content were removed from the page and substituted with the text, the page would still provide the same function and information.

[262] Section F30 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* identifies using a file name as an "alt" value as a failure to comply with Web Content Accessibility Guideline 1.1.1 [level A].

  Roger Hudson's "Text Alternatives for Images" (September 2003) recommends that Web designers not "use the image file name as the alt. Alternative text like "02_cc_68.gif", or even "building.jpg" are neither descriptive nor helpful."

[263] Section 7 of the W3C *CSS Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that:

(5) It is recommended that headings (particularly on text-heavy pages that deal with multiple topics) be supplemented with relevant icons.[264]

(6) Every <img> tag should either have a "width" attribute and a "height" attribute[265] or should have the height and width set through style sheets.

(7) The width of borders around graphics should be set by style sheets,[266] not by the "border" attribute of the <img> tag.[267]

(8) When setting a buffer between a graphic and surrounding text, do not use the hspace or vspace attributes of the <img> tag – instead use style-sheets.[268]

(9) If an <img> tag has a "name" attribute, it should also have an "id" attribute with the same value.[269] When assigning the value of an "id" (or "name") attribute use the purpose of the data that the attribute's tag relates to, not how the data is to be portrayed – the "name" value should indicate function, not form. (For instance, "hotTopics" would be an appropriate value for an "id" or "name" attribute, but "whiteOnRed" would not be an appropriate value.)[270]

Content developers should use style sheets to style text rather than representing text in images. Using text instead of images means that the information will be available to a greater number of users (with speech synthesizers, braille displays, graphical displays, etc.). Using style sheets will also allow users to override author styles and change colors or fonts sizes more easily.

   If it is necessary to use a bitmap [e.g., a .gif file] to create a text effect (special font, transformation, shadows, etc.) the bitmap must be accessible (see the sections on text equivalents and alternative pages).

[264] Checkpoint 14.2 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "[s]upplement text with graphic or auditory presentations where they will facilitate comprehension of the page."

[265] Section 13.7.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that:
   The height and width attributes give user agents an idea of the size of an image or object so that they may reserve space for it and continue rendering the document while waiting for the image data.

[266] Use the "border-width" style sheets property together with the "border-style" property.

[267] Section 13.7.3 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "border" attribute of the <img> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[268] The "padding-left," "padding-right," "padding-bottom," and "padding-top" style sheets properties provide the functionality previously provided by the "hspace" and "vspace" attributes. Section 13.7.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "hspace" and "vspace" attributes as deprecated (i.e., outdated) attributes. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[269] Section 4.10 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* designates the "name" attribute of the <img> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute and also provides that "XHTML 1.0 documents MUST use the id attribute when defining fragment identifiers" within <img> tags.

[270] Section 1 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that:
   When designing a document or series of documents, content developers should strive first to identify the desired structure for their documents before thinking about how the documents will be presented to the user. Distinguishing the structure of a document from how the content is presented offers a number of advantages, including improved accessibility, manageability, and portability.

Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006]), p.180, recommends that
   Semantic or meta-structural names (names that explain the function performed by elements contained within) are best. You would feel pretty silly having labeled a part of your site "orangebox" when the client decides to go with blue. You would feel sillier still revising your style sheets under a deadline six months from now and trying desperately to remember whether "Gladys" was a navigational area, a sidebar, a search form, or what.

(10) Graphics originally developed for (or originally paid for by) an election campaign should not be used on House websites.[271]

(11) When modifying a graphic, it is normally best to conduct modifications in the following order:

- **(a)** red-eye correcting
- **(b)** blemishes and dark or shiny spots
- **(c)** color levels
- **(d)** color balance
- **(e)** brightness and contrast
- **(f)** shadows and highlighting
- **(g)** resizing
- **(h)** cropping
- **(i)** sharpening
- **(j)** saving

(12) When using Photoshop:

- **Red Eye:** avoid using the Red Eye tool (Shift-J) because it tends to be too extreme (turning dark gray whenever it finds any red). Instead, zoom in (Control-+) on the problem area. Use the Marquee select (Shift-M) or the Lasso select (Shift-L) to capture each eye (Shift-mousedrag to add to a selection, Alt-mousedrag to subtract from a selection). Use Hue/Saturation (Control-U) and attenuate the middle Saturation slider. Try darkening a little so you do not end up with gray eyes. Zoom to 100% (double click the zoom tool) to see what it looks like within the entire image.

- **Blemishes, Dark Spots, and Shiny Spots:** use the spot healing brush (Shift-J). This works best on blemishes that are surrounded by the correct tonal value. Make your brush width 1½ to 2 times the width of the blemish and click once over the blemish (the blemish should disappear). For areas with the correct tonal value only on one side of the blemish, use the healing brush. Alt-Select an area of the image that has the tonal value you want and then drag your mouse on the blemish. If the result is too harsh, then Edit-Fade immediately after to attenuate the effect. Alternatively, step backward and choose a different Mode, e.g., Screen, Lighten, or Darken. Another approach is to try Smear (Shift-R) to smooth out the result.

- **Levels:** use the Control-L function. The ideal curve for levels is a double bell curve tailing off at the edges of the window with the left tail at black; the right tail at white; and the center at gray. If there are peaks at the edges, there is too much contrast. If the curve does not reach the edges, then the contrast is too low.

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[271] The July 26, 2006 Advisory Memorandum of the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (Use of Campaign Funds and Campaign-Founded Resources for Official House Purposes) provides that Congressional office websites are not to be paid for with campaign funds. Offices with questions about the extent of that prohibition should be urged to contact the Committee for either informal advice or for a formal written opinion.

- **Color Balance:** use Control-B. This is especially useful if the image is scanned or the flash was incorrectly set. Color balance is usually used to reduce the red in the midtones or highlights of an image or, conversely, to correct for overly sallow skin tone.
- **Brightness and Contrast:** use Image: Adjustments: Brightness/ Contrast. Avoid setting the brightness and contrast control above 20 or below -20.
- **Shadows and Highlights:** use Image: Adjustments: Shadow/ Highlight. Once adjusting the shadows or highlights, it is usually necessary to readjust the color balance and or the brightness and contrast.
- **Resizing:** use "Bicubic" as the "Resample Image" value.
- **Text:** make sure that "Anti-Alias" is not set to "None".[272]

(13) Except when absolutely necessary, spacer images should not be used for layout. Style sheets should be used to control layout.[273]

(14) Each <img> tag should end with "/>".[274]

(15) When choosing graphics, make sure the image is appropriate for the text it is being associated with. For instance, on a page devoted to providing assistance to constituents, avoid using stern pictures of the Member.

Graphs *see Charts and Graphs*

Greek language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Greetings *see also Forms*

(1) Member offices should consider having information on their website as to how a constituent can receive greetings (or a Congressional Citation) from the Member to commemorate events of "public distinction" (e.g., graduation form high school or college; becoming an Eagle Scout; receiving U.S. citizenship; or election or appointment to public office).[275] Consider including an HTML form[276] to allow constituents to make the request electronically.[277]

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[272] Anti-aliasing can be set using either (1) the ^{a}a pull-down or (2) Layer > Type. **Note:** Photoshop 7.0 recommends that for the resolutions normally used in Web graphics, the Fractional Width option in the Character palette menu should be deselected.

[273] Section C18 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that style sheets (rather than spacer images) should be used to control layout.

[274] Section 4.6 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "Empty elements must either have an end tag or the start tag must end with />. For instance, <br/> or <hr></hr>." Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[275] Members including such a service on their website include Rep. Howard Berman and Rep. John Tierney.

The House Ethics Committee's *House Ethics Manual* (2008 edition, pages 160-161) provides that:

Letters, Mailings and Other Communications that Are Not Frankable in Content. At times Members wish to send letters or mailings, or make other communications, that are not frankable in content under the House Franking Regulations, and hence may not be created or sent using official

House resources. Examples of such communications include messages to constituents that are not official in nature, such as birthday greetings, holiday greetings, and letters of condolence. In addition, while letters of congratulations for a public distinction are frankable, other letters of congratulation, such as for years of service at a business, or retirement, are not. Under House Rules, a Member **may** use campaign funds and resources to create and send cards, letters and certificates of these types to constituents.

However, such materials may **not** be produced in or sent from any House office, and may **not** be produced or sent using any other House resource, including the office equipment or staff while on official time.

> ***Example 14.*** Congressman A wishes to create a "Congressman A Award of Merit" certificate that he will present to constituents who perform meritorious acts or services. The certificates may be printed with campaign funds, but their content must comply with the same restrictions that apply to campaign letterhead (*see* discussion below on "Laws and Rules on Campaign Letterhead"). In addition, official House resources may not be used to promote the certificates, or in connection with their presentation.

The House Franking Commission's *Franking Manual*, (pp. 12-13), further defines an event of "public distinction":

8. Congratulations

Section 3210(a)(3)(f) [of title 39 of the U.S. Code] authorizes the franking of "mail matter expressing congratulations to a person who has achieved some public distinction."

The Commission emphasizes that these messages of congratulations are limited to matters of public distinction as opposed to matters of personal achievement. The following examples are illustrative, and not all-inclusive:

*Examples of public
 distinction:*

Election or appointment to public office	Publicly notable awards and honors
	Eagle Scout/Gold Star
U.S. Citizenship	Heroism
High School Graduation	Appointment to a U.S. military academy

In the above examples, there is a public purpose to be served in establishing communication with newly elected or appointed public officials on a Federal, state or local level; with new citizens and graduates; and with honorees for outstanding public service to promote the public good.

Letters consisting solely of birthday, wedding, anniversary, retirement or condolence messages are not frankable.

However, legislative correspondence, which otherwise is frankable, may contain an incidental statement of condolence or of congratulations for personal achievement. For example, a response to a constituent's request for assistance in obtaining survivor annuity benefits may contain an incidental statement of condolence. Similarly, a letter enclosing Federal publications may contain a brief congratulatory message for personal achievement, provided the substance of the letter focuses on the content of the publication or other officially related subject matter rather than on the congratulatory remark.

Note that neither *Campaign Activity* nor the *Franking Manual* specifically address whether House websites can invite constituents to request Member recognitions of birthdays, anniversaries, etc. What the *Campaign Booklet* and the *Franking Manual* do is prohibit (or at least restrict) the use of official funds, staff time, or other House resources to prepare and mail such recognitions.

[276] Instructions for using CAO-Web Solutions Branch's form_proc software to do this are available on HouseNet at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → HTML → FormProc.

Form_proc is the software suggested in Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age*, (p. 57): "House offices can also simplify their e-mail management by utilizing the customized Web-based forms available from House Information Resources (i.e. for tour requests, scheduling requests, casework, feedback, etc.)."

[277] See, e.g., the "Congressional Commendation" pages of Rep. John Adler, Rep. Steve Austria, Rep. John Boccieri Rep. Joseph Cao Rep. Bill Cassidy Rep. Jason Chaffetz   Rep. Mike Coffman

(2) Member offices should consider having information on their website as to how a constituent can receive greetings from the President for important birthdays, anniversaries, and similar occasions.[278]

Gujarati language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Haitian-Creole language material [279] *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Hawaiian language material [280] *see Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

hCard *see Contact Information and Techniques #(13)*

Headings *see also Alignment; Capital letters; Graphics #(5); Tables #(1); and Titles*
(1) Headings within a page should be coded with h tags (highest level being <h1>, second highest level <h2>, etc.).[281] Use style sheets to set the typeface,

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The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 57) notes that:

> Many offices use their Web sites to direct constituents to contact them offline for the information and services they are seeking. Yet, people who choose the Web as their method of contacting a congressional office are doing so precisely because they prefer to have their needs met online. Respond to their needs accordingly, and you will find you have more satisfied "customers," at less effort and expense to the office than you ever thought possible.

[278] The Congressional Management Foundation's January 2002 report *Congress Online: Assessing and Improving Capitol Hill Web Sites* (p. 36) praises Rep. Mike Pence's website for including information on Presidential greetings. See also, "Presidential Greetings" pages of Rep. Steve Chabot, Rep. John Linder, Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald, Rep. Dave Obey, and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

The Greeting Request Guidelines issued by the White House provide that Presidential Greetings can be issued for:

- Birth of a baby (should be requested within one year of birth)
- Birthdays of individuals 80 years-old or older (should be requested at least 6 weeks before the birthday)
- Weddings (should be be requested after the wedding, but no later than one year after the wedding)
- Wedding Anniversaries for couples celebrating their 50th (or greater) anniversary (should be requested at least 6 weeks before the anniversary)

[279] Part of Rep. Kendrick Meek's website is in Haitian Creole; see http://kendrickmeek.house.gov/index-creole.shtml.

[280] Rep. Neil Abercrombie's website includes a Hawaiian version of the Congressman's welcome message; see http://www.house.gov/abercrombie/welcomeletter_hawaiian.shtml.

[281] Guideline 1.3.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Information, structure, and relationships conveyed through presentation can be programmatically determined or are available in text. (Level A)".

Section H42 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends "Using h1-h6 to identify headings" and notes that:

> Using headings merely to change the appearance of text does not convey the organization of the content, and may confuse users who use headings to perceive structure or rely on them for navigation. Conversely, while applying bold format, or even "class=heading", can result in the visual display of a heading, assistive technologies will not recognize such text as headings.

bolding, font-size, alignment, etc. so that the result is both esthetically pleasing and consistent throughout the site.[282]

(2) The words that convey the most information should be at the beginning of each heading – preferably in the first two words.[283]

(3) Headings should generally not exceed 60 characters.[284]

(4) An "id" attribute should be associated with each heading so that links can go directly to that spot.

Hebrew language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Hiligaynon language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Hindi language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Hmong language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 76% of screen reader users always or often navigate by headings whenever they are available.

[282] Guideline 2.4.10 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Section headings are used to organize the content. (Level AAA)".

   Section G141 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends "Organizing a page using headings" and notes that:

> In HTML, this would be done using the HTML heading elements (h1, h2, h3, h4, h5, and h6). These allow user agents to automatically identify section headings. . . . To facilitate navigation and understanding of overall document structure, authors should use headings that are properly nested (e.g., h1 followed by h2, h2 followed by h2 or h3, h3 followed by h3 or h4, etc.).

   In the Jaws screen reader, Insert+F6 generates a list of headers. The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 74% of screen reader users use Jaws.

[283] The W3C *How to Meet WCAG 2.0* suggests "Starting section headings with unique information."

   Jakob Nielsen's article "F-Shaped Pattern For Reading Web Content" (April 17, 2006), based on a study of the eye movements of 232 website users, recommends that Web designers:

> **Start subheads, paragraphs, and bullet points with information-carrying words** that users will notice when scanning down the left side of your content . . . . They'll read the third word on a line much less often than the first two words.

   Though Nielsen's study was based on sighted users, the technique he suggests is useful not only for sighted individuals, but also for blind individuals – since an often-used technique in Jaws and Window-Eyes is to have the browser skip from heading to heading or from list to list. The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 74% of screen reader users use Jaws; and 23% use Window-Eyes.

[284] Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger in their *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 277) recommend that headings "be short (60 characters maximum) and meaningful."

Homeland Security threat index *see also House Operating Status*

    Offices with websites that display the Department of Homeland Security's threat advisory icon should be encouraged to make use of the icon that the automatically changes as the Department's threat index changes. Instructions for using the icon on a website can be found at:

    http://listserv.gsa.gov/cgi-bin/wa.exe?A2=ind0303&L=EXPRESS-L&P=R2602&I=-3 .

📖 **Homepage** *see also Navigation #(1) and (9); and Privacy Policy #(2)*

(1) One of the primary goals of a Congressional website is to get constituents to return in the future. The first thing that most constituents will see, when they go to the office's site is the part of the homepage that will fit in a screen without scrolling down.[285] It is strongly recommended that as much of that the initial screen be composed of fresh, frequently updated information as possible.[286]

(2) Offices should be encouraged to either **(A)** not place the text of a welcome message on the homepage or **(B)** make the welcome message on the homepage very short (perhaps one or two sentences, with a link to a longer welcome message).[287]

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[285] Usability testing conducted by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger and reported in their *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 32), indicates that only 23% of first-time visitors of homepages bother to scroll down. Second-time (and subsequent) visitors only scroll down 16% to 14% of the time.

[286] The October 10, 2006, issue of the Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online Newsletter* suggests that homepages:

- **Promote a Constituent Service.** The best real estate on **Sen. Jeff Bingaman's (D-NM)** home page is devoted to the constituent services provided by the office, such as casework and help for small businesses. You could also rotate the various services to coincide with important dates (flags for Veterans Day, student loan assistance before colleges and universities begin a new year) or focus on one specific area, like **Rep. Mike Capuano (D-MA)** is with his immigration casework. Though not "traditional" constituent services, **Rep. Mary Bono (R-CA)** has information on earthquake preparedness and links to pandemic flu resources on her home page, while **Rep. Jim Moran (D-VA)** links to CRS reports on hot topics, all of which are of interest to constituents.
- **Highlight a Legislative Priority.** One of **Rep. John Peterson's (R-PA)** top priorities in Congress is revitalizing rural communities, such as those in his district, through economic development and job creation. This topic is front and center on his home page, giving constituents faster access (one less click) to his ideas for strengthening their communities and links to several dozen resources on the topic. On the other side of the Hill, **Sen. Tom Harkin's (D-IA)** home page is currently highlighting his efforts to improve the mental health and wellbeing of veterans.
- **Focus on a Local Issue or Current Event.** October may be slow for legislative work, but there are always current events and local activities of interest to your constituents. In his special features section on his home page, **Rep. Richard Baker (R-LA)** spotlights Louisiana's 529 College Savings Program and LSU's ROTC program. He also highlights the CBS Early Show's stop in Baton Rouge as well as ongoing Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts. **Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)** and **Sen. John Ensign (R-NV)** also showcase local issues on their home pages.

[287] The Congressional Management Foundation's 1999 report *Building Web Sites Constituents Will Use* (page 16) recommends against welcome messages or cover pages. The CMF report notes that:

    Both of these practices are frustrating because they prevent visitors from getting to useful information as quickly as possible. They require visitors to click or scroll in order to access the information they came to get, and neither of them serves much purpose except to take up valuable

(3) Try to keep the homepage short.[288]

Honorifics *see Contact Information and Techniques #(13)*

HOUSE.GOV Domain *see also Linking #(1)*
   Every Member's website and every committee's website must be in the HOUSE.GOV domain.[289]

<hr> tags *see also Alignment; and Centering*
   (1) Instead of using the "noshade" attribute or the "size" attribute in <hr> tags, use style sheets.[290]

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space. "Welcome to my Web site. I hope you find what you are looking for," is a waste of visitors' time.
   Rep. Mike Honda has addressed this issue by not including his welcome message on his homepage, but instead providing a link to the message – which is available in text (in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese) and in video (at three different resolutions). Rep. Steve Cohen also provides a welcome message on its own page.
   Based on extensive usability testing, Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, in *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (p. 30) recommend that homepage welcome messages not exceed 10 to 20 words.
[288] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 64) recommends that when designing a homepage, "Don't overwhelm users by posting everything on the home page. Provide the most important and most requested information first."
   Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines, 2nd edition, page 41, (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), notes that:

   Any element on the homepage that must immediately attract the attention of users should be placed "above the fold." Information that cannot be seen in the first screenful may be missed altogether—this can negatively impact the effectiveness of the Web site. If users conclude that what they see on the visible portion of the page is not of interest, they may not bother scrolling to see the rest of the page.

[289] The *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, § 2), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

   Member's Web sites must be located in the HOUSE.GOV host-domain and may be maintained by either House Information Resources (HIR), the Member's congressional office, or a private vendor.

The *Committees' Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, General, § 3), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

   Web sites must be located in the HOUSE.GOV host-domain and may be maintained either by House Information Resources (HIR), the committee office, or a private vendor.

   On October 2, 2008, Rep. Robert Brady, Chairman of the House Administration Committee, issued a statement that "the Committee has approved revisions to rules governing the use of web video on Member websites." The rule adopted by the Committee provides that:

   In addition to their official (house.gov) Web site, a Member may maintain another Web site(s), channel(s) or otherwise post material on third-party Web sites.
      The official content of any material posted by the Member on any Web site must be in compliance with Federal law and House Rules and Regulations applicable to official communications and germane to the conduct of the Member's official and representational duties.
      When a link to a Web site outside the Member's official cite is imbedded on the Member's official site, the Member's site must include an exit notice advising the visitor when they are leaving the House. This exit notice must also include a disclaimer that neither the Member nor the House is responsible for the content of the linked site(s).
      Chairman is authorized to make technical and conforming changes to facilitate inclusion into the Committees and Member handbooks.

(2) Instead of using the "size" attribute in <hr> tags, use the "height" property in style sheets.[291]

(3) Each <hr> tag should end with "/>".[292]

HTML *see also Attributes; and <!DOCTYPE> declarations*

(1) Use either the <code> tag[293] or the <pre> tag to display HTML code on a Web page. The <listing>, <plaintext>, and <xpm> tags should not be used for this or any other purpose.[294]

(2) Rather than using the "version" attribute of the <html> tag, place a <!DOCTYPE> declaration at the beginning of each page.[295]

(3) There should be an <html> tag between the <!DOCTYPE> declaration and the <head> tag on each Web page. The <html> tag should include an xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" attribute, a "lang" attribute (indicating the primary language used on the Web page), and an "xml:lang" attribute (also indicating the primary language used on the Web page).[296] For example, a Web page that is written primarily in American English should use: <html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" lang="en-US" xml:lang="en-US">

(4) Before publishing a new or revised website, at least some pages on the site should be validated through the W3C Markup Validation Service

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[290] Section 15.3 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "noshade" attribute of the <hr> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

   Using the "border:0" style sheet property along with the "background" style sheets property (to set the color) provides the same result in Internet Explorer 6.0, Netscape 7.1, and Firefox 1.0.7 as using the "noshade" attribute.

[291] Section 15.3 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "size" attribute of the <hr> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[292] Section 4.6 of the W3C *XHTML (2nd edition) 1.0 Specification* provides that "Empty elements must either have an end tag or the start tag must end with />. For instance, <br/> or <hr></hr>."
Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[293] Section 9.2.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification*, provides that the <code> tag "Designates a fragment of computer code."

[294] The W3C *HTML 3.2 Specification* designates the <listing>, <plaintext>, and <xmp> tags as deprecated (i.e., outdated) elements.

   Unlike the <listing>, <plaintext>, and <xmp> tags, the <code> tag and the <pre> tag will not display paired angle brackets (i.e., "<" and ">") in their raw state. To display either of those characters within a <pre> requires that they first be translated into their entity representations (e.g., < or >).

   The default versions of the <code> and <pre> tags differ in most browser implementations in that <code> automatically word wraps, while <pre> does not.

[295] Section 7.3 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "version" attribute of the <html> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute).

[296] Section 3.1.1(3) of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition)* provides that:
   The root element of the document must contain an xmlns declaration for the XHTML namespace [XMLNS]. The namespace for XHTML is defined to be http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml. An example root element might look like:
      <html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" xml:lang="en" lang="en">

(http://validator.w3.org/).[297]   The service is free and will verify that all of the HTML coding is grammatically correct.

Hungarian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Hurricane Preparation Information *see Disaster Preparation Information*

Hyphenation *see Word Choice*

Ice Storm Preparation Information *see Disaster Preparation Information*

Icelandic language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Icons *see Favicons; and Graphics*

Id attribute *see also Forms #(8) and (19); Frames and Iframes #(2); Graphics #(9); Headings #(4); Image Maps #(1); Linking #(12); Name attribute; and Tables #(2)*
- **(1)** When assigning a value of an "id" attribute, use the purpose of the data that the attribute's tag relates to, not how the data is to be portrayed – the "id" value should indicate function, not form. For instance, "hotTopics" would be an appropriate value for an "id" attribute, but "whiteOnRed" would not be an appropriate value.[298]
- **(2)** No two tags on the same page may have the same "id" attribute.[299]
- **(3)** The value of each "id" attribute should start with a letter.[300]

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[297] Section G134 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that web pages be validated.

[298] Section 1 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that:
> When designing a document or series of documents, content developers should strive first to identify the desired structure for their documents before thinking about how the documents will be presented to the user. Distinguishing the structure of a document from how the content is presented offers a number of advantages, including improved accessibility, manageability, and portability.

Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006]), p.180, recommends that
> Semantic or meta-structural names (names that explain the function performed by elements contained within) are best. You would feel pretty silly having labeled a part of your site "orangebox" when the client decides to go with blue. You would feel sillier still revising your style sheets under a deadline six months from now and trying desperately to remember whether "Gladys" was a navigational area, a sidebar, a search form, or what.

[299] Section 7.5.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* requires that the value of each "id" attribute "must be unique in a document."

Guideline 4.1.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website,
> In content implemented using markup languages, elements have complete start and end tags, elements are nested according to their specifications, elements do not contain duplicate attributes, and any IDs are unique, except where the specifications allow these features. (Level A)

[300] Section 6.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that:
> **ID** and **NAME** tokens must begin with a letter ([A-Za-z]) and may be followed by any number of letters, digits ([0-9]), hyphens ("-"), underscores ("_"), colons (":"), and periods (".").

📖 **Identity Theft Information** *see also Consumer Protection Information*

    (1) Member offices (and offices that deal with identity theft issues) should consider including identity information on their website. The Federal Trade Commission's September 2007 *For the Consumer: Congressional Outreach Projects Using FTC Resources*, sites as examples the identity theft pages of the following Congressional offices: Rep. Neil Abercrombie, Rep. Melissa Bean, Rep. Mike Honda, Rep. Darlene Hooley, Rep. Todd Platts, Sen. Herb Kohl, and Sen. Joe Lieberman.

    (2) When linking to identity theft Web pages from the Federal Trade Commission, consider using one of the icons available at http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer/partners_buttons.shtm.

Iframes *see Frames and Iframes*

Igbo language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Ilocano language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Image Maps *see also Maps and Directions #(2)*

    (1) If a <map> tag has a "name" attribute, it should also have an "id" attribute with the same value [301] When assigning the value of an "id" (or "name") attribute use the purpose of the data that the attribute's tag relates to, not how the data is to be portrayed – the "name" value should indicate function, not form. (For instance, "hotTopics" would be an appropriate value for an "id" or "name" attribute, but "whiteOnRed" would not be an appropriate value.)[302]

Section 4.1.3 of the W3C *Cascading Style Sheets Level 2 Revision 1 (CSS 2.1) Specification* provides that:
    In CSS, *identifiers* (including element names, classes, and IDs in selectors) can contain only the characters [a-z0-9] and ISO 10646 characters U+00A1 and higher, plus the hyphen (-) and the underscore (_); they cannot start with a digit, or a hyphen followed by a digit. Identifiers can also contain escaped characters and any ISO 10646 character as a numeric code (see next item). For instance, the identifier "B&W?" may be written as "B\&W\?" or "B\26 W\3F".

[301] Section 4.10 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* designates the "name" attribute of the <map> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute and also provides that "XHTML 1.0 documents MUST use the id attribute when defining fragment identifiers" within a <map> tag).

[302] Section 1 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that:
    When designing a document or series of documents, content developers should strive first to identify the desired structure for their documents before thinking about how the documents will be presented to the user. Distinguishing the structure of a document from how the content is presented offers a number of advantages, including improved accessibility, manageability, and portability.

Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006]), p.180, recommends that
    Semantic or meta-structural names (names that explain the function performed by elements contained within) are best. You would feel pretty silly having labeled a part of your site "orangebox" when the client decides to go with blue. You would feel sillier still revising your style sheets under a deadline six months from now and trying desperately to remember whether "Gladys" was a navigational area, a sidebar, a search form, or what.

(2) Do not use server-side image maps if the same functionality can be provided using client-side image maps.[303] (Client-side image maps have a "usemap" attribute in the <img> tag. Server-side image maps have an ismap="ismap" attribute[304] in the <img> tag.) If the same functionality cannot be provided using client-side image maps, provide an equivalent text link for each active region in the server-side image map.[305]

(3) Every <area> tag should have an "alt" attribute.[306]

(4) Each <area> tag should end with "/>".[307]

Images *see Favicons; Graphics; and Photo Albums*

📖 **Immigration**

(1) Member offices should consider having a page devoted to services for immigrants.[308]

(2) The Immigration and Naturalization Service was abolished March 2003 and its service and benefits functions were transferred to the newly created U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The law enforcement functions on the INS were moved to the newly created U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Both USCIS and ICE are agencies within the Department of Homeland

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[303] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(f)) provide that "Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape." Likewise, Checkpoint 9.1 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Provide client-side image maps instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape."

   Jim Thatcher in *Web Accessibility: Web Standards and Regulatory Compliance* (2006, pp. 204 to 205) indicates that there are no longer any geometric shapes can be defined in a server-side image map that cannot also be defined in a client-side image map and therefore "there is no case where a server-side map is permitted under the Section 508 provision §1194.22(f) or WCAG Checkpoint 9.1."

[304] Section 4.5 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that all attributes must be given values (e.g., ismap="ismap" not just: ismap). Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[305] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(e)) provide that "Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map."

[306] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(a)) provide that "A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content)."

   Guideline 1.1.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

   All non-text content that is presented to the user has a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose, ... (Level A)

   Section 13.8 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that <img> tags and <area> tags must have "alt" attributes.

[307] Section 4.6 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "Empty elements must either have an end tag or the start tag must end with />. For instance, <br/> or <hr></hr>."

Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[308] See, e.g., the "Immigration" pages of Rep. Mike Honda and Rep. John Adler.

Security.[309] House websites should, therefore, not contain references to INS, except in a historical context.[310]

(3) U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services reorganized its website on November 1, 2006. USCIS non-homepage links added to House websites before November 1, 2006, should be checked to make sure they are still valid links. A list of frequently accessed pages is available at:

http://www.uscis.gov/files/pressrelease/WebFactSheet_110106.pdf

<input> tags *see Forms*

📖 **Internships**

(1) Each office that sponsors internships should be encouraged to include information (on their website) as to how to apply, as well as a description of the duties and responsibilities (see, e.g., the website of the late Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald).[311]

(2) The Internships page should be linked to from both the Constituent Services page and from the Kid's page.

📖 **Issues and Voting Information** *see also Dates, Time, and Timeliness #(2); Legislative Material; Navigation #(5); and WIDA #(3)*

(1) Offices should be encouraged to have a section of their website devoted to the Member's stands on issues.[312, 313]

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[309] For the disposition of other functions formerly performed by INS, see http://149.101.23.2/graphics/othergov/roadmap.htm.

[310] The January 30, 2006 edition of the Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online* newsletter notes that "A lot of House sites have outdated or incorrect links. The most frustrating ones [included] . . . those linking to INS (it changed to USCIS in 2003!). Web sites continually change, so it's important to periodically review any link that goes off your site, especially at the beginning of each Congress so you don't have visitors looking at old information."

   A May 10 to June 9, 2006 review of House websites by the Web Systems Branch of House Information Resources (now CAO-Web Solutions Branch) indicated that 21% of House Member websites contained at least one reference to the INS as if the agency was still operational.

[311] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 45 and 95) identifies "internship and Service Academy Nomination applications and instructions" as elements of a well-formed Congressional website. The report (page 68 and 70).praises the websites of Rep. Virginia Foxx for providing "substantive information on how to apply for internships"; and Rep. Kevin McCarthy for providing "guidance on internship opportunities".

[312] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 11, 41, and 50) takes the position that:

> All sites, regardless of their audiences, need to have information about legislative activities and the work of the office. This should include information about legislative issues of national, state, or local interest. . . .
>
>   Typically, congressional sites have an "Issues" section which contains most of that content. It can include national issues (e.g. health care, war in Iraq), local issues (e.g. how the clean-up of a local river or the state economy is affected by federal legislation), and issues of particular importance to the Member (e.g. women's rights, fiscal discipline). Each issue usually has its own page with a description of the issue and the Member's position and the most recent action to take place on the issue, as well as the resources the office can provide related to the issue—from sponsored legislation to CRS reports. . . .

(2) Member offices are encouraged to have a portion of their website devoted to the Member's voting record.[314]

 To implement this recommendation, Member offices are urged **not** to simply link to the "Legislation & Votes" page[315] on the website of the Clerk of the House. The Clerk's Legislation & Votes page includes much more information than just roll call votes and does not include an explanation of how to understand the roll call vote information.

 As an alternative to simply linking to the Clerk's "Legislation & Votes" page, it is recommended that Member office websites have a page (or at least part of a page) devoted to roll call votes and that that page include at a minimum links that go directly to the roll call vote information of each of the sessions of the current

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 Past letters written to constituents explaining the Member's stance and actions on an issue can populate the issues page . . . .
The report (pages 80, 82, and 84) praises
- Rep. Eliot Engel's "'A-Z Issues in Brief' [which] offers an exhaustive list of issues and a brief statement of the Congressman's stance on each."
- Sen. Ben Nelson's "issues section [which] clearly emphasizes his priorities and explains them to his constituents"
- Rep. Bob Inglis's "Issues" section for being "extensive and informative"

 The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 45) also notes that, "Most citizens think of legislation in terms of broad issues, rather than specific bills. They especially want to understand the issues in Congress that affect them directly."

[313] Some offices have indicated a reluctance to provide detailed information on their Member's positions out of concern that this will help opposition research. The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 43) responds with:

 Don't worry about opposition research; the Member's record is readily available in any number of places online. If constituents can't find a Member's stance or record on their official site, they will find it elsewhere. This not only makes it look like the Member has something to hide, it also allows someone other than the Member to frame and explain the Member's views.

[314] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 4) notes that, "A recurring theme of our focus groups can be summed up in one word: accountability. Participants stated that Member Web sites that conveyed a sense of accountability and transparency deserved greater trust than those who seemed to be 'hiding something.' Features that were deemed to inspire trust included: voting records, voting rationales, schedules, and unbiased issue information."

 The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 60) notes that:

 Congressional Web sites can demonstrate accountability by providing voting records, rationales for key votes, and schedules – and they can do so without overburdening their staffs. Constituents are probably not interested in knowing about every meeting that takes place or every vote taken. Stick to the most relevant and current information: meetings with constituents, public Member appearances in the district or state, committee hearings, the House and Senate floor schedule.

 The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 94) identifies providing "the Member's voting record" as an element of a successful Congressional website. The report (page 21) indicates that 47% of House websites have this information and praises (page 76) the website of Sen. John Thune for having the "Senator's voting record . . . on the site in an easily readable format".

[315] http://clerk.house.gov/legislative/legvotes.html. Similar data is also available at GovTrack.US (http://www.govtrack.us/congress/findyourreps.xpd), C-Span (http://www3.capwiz.com/c-span/votesearch.tt), and *The Washington Post* (http://projects.washingtonpost.com/congress/).

Congress and Session[316], as well as a link to the roll call vote information for any relevant previous Congresses and Sessions. For example,

- roll call votes of the 110th Congress, 1st session - http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2007/index.asp
- roll call votes of the 109th Congress, 2nd session - http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2006/index.asp

Beyond these links, consider also[317] providing an explanation of how to read the roll call vote information.[318] Rep. Steve Israel's web site[319] contains an explanation of the Clerk's layout that other offices may want to adopt (a similar explanation is also available on the Library of Congress' Thomas web site).

Rep. Maurice Hinchey includes links to the appropriate pages of the Clerk's and Library of Congress' web sites, but also uses WIDAinc to provide material on roll call votes of particular interest.[320] If setting out information on roll call votes of particular interest, consider organizing them in issue order, rather than just in bill number order.[321]

(3) Where there are issues (or legislation) that the Member is particularly invested in, the office should be urged to make part of the website into a substantial source of information on the issues (or legislation).[322]

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[316] The January 30, 2006 edition of the Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online* newsletter cautions that "Web sites continually change, so it's important to periodically review any link that goes off your site, especially at the beginning of each Congress so you don't have visitors looking at old information."

[317] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 50) observes that "links to other Web pages or resources that contain specific and up-to-date information ([e.g.,], the Clerk's roll call votes page . . .) can offer additional timely information without any additional office resources."

[318] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 94) identifies explaining "how to read and use roll call votes" as an element of a successful Congressional website. The report (page 73) praises Rep. Adam Schiff's "Voting Record" page – noting that "The link to roll call votes is preceded with a step by step guide to deciphering the Clerk's roll call page, as well as answers to frequently asked questions."

[319] See also, Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama's "Voting Record" page.

[320] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 43 and 94) identifies providing "rationales for votes" (particularly recent votes from the current Congress) as an element of a successful Congressional website. The report notes that:

> Citizens are always going to be interested in the Member's . . . key votes. Don't worry about opposition research; the Member's record is readily available in any number of places online. If constituents can't find a Member's . . . record on their official site, they will find it elsewhere. This not only makes it look like the Member has something to hide, it also allows someone other than the Member to frame and explain the Member's views.

The report (pages 74 and 84) also praises Rep. Cliff Stearns' "Vites" page for including "A listing of recent votes, including a description of the bill, the Congressman's stance, and the final result, allow users to see what is happening in Congress."; and Rep. John Culberson's "'This Week's Votes,' which is updated weekly and offers users a look at key votes and how the Congressman voted."

[321] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 30) praises Sen. Dianne Feinstein's website for organizing her voting record information by issue.

[322] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 62, 63, 79, and 80) praises the websites of:

(4) Where the Member has made floor statements (or issued press releases) on an issue that is included in the issues section of their website, include a link to the text of each relevant statement (and press release).[323]

(5) Where the website deals with both issues and services that are related to each other (e.g., a page on legislation dealing with veterans and a page on veterans' benefits), make sure each one has a link to the other.[324]

- Rep. Tammy Baldwin, noting that "Descriptions of the issues are combined with links to further information in the form of related press releases, legislation, and links to relevant outside agencies and information."
- Rep. John Boozman for including "an exhaustive list of issues with links to related CRS reports, press releases, video, and other relevant documents."
- Republican Office of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works for having "content [that] is also fully integrated and cross-referenced throughout the site. For instance, the issues section contains a brief statement by the Ranking Member, related press releases and speeches, as well as related facts of the day and blog posts."
- Rep. Earl Blumenauer, noting that "For each issue in the issues section, a few brief paragraphs provide the latest information and a link to more information about the issue, along with clear, embedded links to related information which makes it very easy for visitors to find what they are looking for."

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 59 to 60) recommends that Congressional websites:

- **Include information on a variety of issues:** Constituents have a wide range of interests and priorities. Citizens' concerns about issues important to them should be addressed on Congressional Web sites. The best sites provide information on district or state issues, national issues, issues on which the Member is active, and some even include current "hot topic" issues that appear in the headlines at a given time.
- **Provide access to neutral sources of information:** You increase the value of your site and improve your credibility if you provide access to resources that will help visitors find answers to questions that your site does not address. Supporting information allows visitors to explore issues in greater depth, which will make them more likely to view you positively, even if they do not share your opinions and conclusions.

[323] See, e.g., the "Holt on the Issues" section of Rep. Rush Holt's website.
   For offices that use WIDA, use WIDA's "issue" feature and WIDAinc to automatically place links to the relevant press releases on the appropriate issue page.
   The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites

> **Organize by issue type in addition to content type:** *Rep. Jim Langevin*'s Web site allows users seeking information about an issue to view press releases, speeches, and CRS reports on the subject. When users are interested in a topic, they want everything related to it, without having to start a new search in every section of the site. Even simply linking to related sections of your Web site and cross-referencing your content can go a long way toward making your site usable.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 46) provides that

> While they might not peruse the press release section, incorporating press information into other sections of the site, such as the issues section, can enhance the timeliness and value of the entire site.

The report (pages 70 and 76) praises the "Issues" sections of the websites of Rep. Kevin McCarthy for including "the latest press releases relating to each issue, which allows users to find the most recent information quickly and easily"; and Sen. Orin Hatch for including "relevant press releases . . . [that] users can access them by topic."

[324] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) notes that:

Italian language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Italics
   (1) Where italics would be appropriate on a visual display, use <em> tags, not <i> tags. [325]
   (2) When using the name of a publication that would normally be italicized, consider using <cite> tags.

Japanese language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

☠ **Jargon**
   Avoid using jargon, as it may confuse or alienate constituents. [326]

When users are interested in a topic, they want everything related to it, without having to start a new search in every section of the site. Even simply linking to related sections of your Web site and cross-referencing your content can go a long way toward making your site usable.

   The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 58) quotes Rob Pierson, President of the House Systems Administrators Association and Webmaster of Rep. Mike Honda's four-time Mouse Award winning website, that

The constituent is not going to want to go to the video section and look through the whole list of videos to see everything about healthcare, and then go to the photos page to get all the photos about healthcare," said Pierson. "What we're looking for is to create issue-centered pages where you go to the healthcare page and it shows you the Congressman's perspective on healthcare, it shows all of the recent photos that he's posted that have been tagged with a 'healthcare' tag, all of the videos of him speaking on the floor of the House of Representatives about healthcare issues, or blog posts that relate to healthcare, and have that all in one central place. It's that kind of organization that makes it easy for the constituent to find exactly what they need without having to search through the whole site.

   The 2007 report (page 42) also advises:

Don't bury the information . . . When in doubt, put it in multiple places (or in one place and link to it elsewhere). For example, place links to educational information about Congress both in a general section about Congress and in an "Issues" section.

[325] Guideline 1.3.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Information, structure, and relationships conveyed through presentation can be programmatically determined or are available in text. (Level A)".

   Section H49 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends using <em> tags instead of <i> tags, noting that:

Using semantic markup to mark emphasized or special text also provides structure to the document. User agents can then make the structure perceivable to the user, for example using a different visual presentation for different types of structures or by using a different voice or pitch in an auditory presentation.

   Perhaps the one legitimate exception to this standard (and even then, one to be used with care) is when you are reproducing text that originally existed as non-World Wide Web printed text. As Paul Ford notes in "Processing Processing" (September 2, 2003) (cited in Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006], p. 175):

When I'm publishing content from 1901 and it's in italics, it's in *italics,* not emphasized.
Typography has a semantics that is subtle, changing, and deeply informed by history.

[326] Section 5.1(4) of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* recommends "Avoid slang, jargon, and specialized meanings of familiar words, unless defined within your document" to

JavaScript *see Forms #(16) and (17); Navigation #(12); and Scripts*

📖 Job Opportunities

Consider providing information on job opportunities (see, e.g., Rep. Doolittle's former "Federal Job Postings" page).[327] Possible information sources include:

    (1) USAjobs – the official site for posting Federal Executive Branch job announcements. (In particular, consider linking to a URL within USAjobs that brings up the announcements for Federal jobs within the Member's state.)[328]

    (2) U.S. House of Representatives' employment opportunities page.

Judicial Branch *see Government Resources #(1)*

Kannada language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Khmer language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

📖 Kids' pages

    (1) COPPA (the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998)[329] provides extensive requirements for websites (or Web pages) aimed at pre-teenage children that request personal information[330]. The requirements include getting parental

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implement WCAG 1.0 checkpoint 14.1 [priority 1], that accessible websites should "[u]se the clearest and simplest language appropriate for a site's content."

    The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 61) notes that "Congressional jargon and the legislative process can be difficult for most people off the Hill to understand. Focus on making the information on your site understandable, rather than impressive and official-sounding." The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 42) also notes that "Constituents are not typically familiar with Hill jargon, so make sure that acronyms and terms like 'motion to recommit' and 'roll call votes' are explained as well."

[327] See also, Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite's "Federal Job Postings" page.

[328] For instance,

      http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/jobsearch.asp?re=9&vw=b&pg=1&lid=602&paygrademin=1&paygrademax=15&FedEmp=N&sort=rv&brd=3876&ss=0&FedPub=Y

will retrieve the Federal job announcements for Tennessee.

    House Member websites linking to the USAjobs page for their state include Alabama (Rep. Bobby Bright), California (Rep. Tom McClintock), Colorado (Rep. Mike Coffman), Connecticut (Rep. Jim Himes), and New Jersey (Rep. John Adler).

[329] The full text of the Act can be found at title 15, chapter 91 of the U.S. Code. The full text of the regulations issued by authority of the Act can be found at title 16, part 312 of the Code of Federal Regulations. While the Act does not, on its own terms, apply to Congressional websites, House offices should be encouraged to comply to avoid being put in the position of someone pointing to the site and asking why is a Congressional website not complying with the minimum standards that Congress has mandated for commercial websites.

[330] "Personal information" is defined in § 312.2 of the COPPA regulations as:

    individually identifiable information about an individual collected online, including:

      (a) A first and last name;

      (b) A home or other physical address including street name and name of a city or town;

consent before collecting, using, or disclosing personal information from children.[331] The easiest way to comply with the Act is to not ask for personal information (including first or last names, postal addresses, e-mail addresses, or telephone numbers) on Web pages aimed at children.[332]

(2) The primary audience of a kids' page is different than the primary audience of most other pages on a House website. Kids pages should be kid friendly (see, e.g., Rep. Henry Hyde's kid's zone[333] – the basic content for this page is now available as a server-side include on the HIR Unix Web server that the CAO-Web Solutions Branch is now maintaining[334]).[335]

(c) An e-mail address or other online contact information, including but not limited to an instant messaging user identifier, or a screen name that reveals an individual's e-mail address;

(d) A telephone number;

(e) A Social Security number;

(f) A persistent identifier, such as a customer number held in a cookie or a processor serial number, where such identifier is associated with individually identifiable information; or a combination of a last name or photograph of the individual with other information such that the combination permits physical or online contacting; or

(g) Information concerning the child or parents of that child that the operator collects online from the child and combines with an identifier described in this definition.

[331] The narrow exceptions to the parental consent requirement, are set out in § 312.5(c) of the COPPA regulations.

[332] If an office insists on asking for personal information from children, the office should be referred to the parental consent requirements set out in § 312.5 of the COPPA regulations.

[333] Similar layouts are used on the websites of Rep. Dan Boren, Rep. Phil English, Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, Rep. Gwen Moore, and Rep. Randy Neugebauer.

[334] Websites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server (and do not use a virtual URL) should consider putting the contents of the House Kids page on their site by using the server-side include:

```
<!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Kids_content.htm" -->
```

All other sites can use code along the lines of:

```
<iframe src="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Kids_content.htm"
scrolling="auto" style="width:35em;height:100em;" frameborder="0" title="Kids'
page"><ul><li><a
href="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Kids_content.htm">Kid's
page</a></li></ul></iframe>
```

Additional links can be added to the set maintained by HIR. For instance, a link could be added to the bottom of the HIR-maintained links with the following coding:

```
<!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Kids_content.htm" -->
<div id="kids">
  <div id="kidsrow" >
    <div id="kidspic"><a target="_blank"
href="http://www.house.gov/htbin/leave_site?ln_url=http://www.mywonderfulworld.org&amp;ln
_desc=National+Geographic+Education+Foundation">
  <img id="imgkids" src="images/my-wonderful-world-2.gif" alt="My Wonderful World"
border="0" /></a><br /><a target="_blank"
href="http://www.house.gov/htbin/leave_site?ln_url=http://www.mywonderfulworld.org&amp;ln
_desc=National+Geographic+Education+Foundation">My Wonderful World</a>
    </div>
   </div>
  </div>
```

Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the House's generic Kids' page. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's website. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content*

(3) When practical, organize kid resources by grade level. See, e.g., the "Kids" page of Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama.[336]

Kirundi language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Korean language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Kurdish language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Kyrgyz language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 which provides that an accessible website should "Use navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

Section 4 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further provides that:

> A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.
> Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:
> 1. navigation bars
> 2. the primary content of a page
>   . . .
> A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

> **Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. ***Sen. John Cornyn***'s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[335] *Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. xxiii), notes, however, that "our usability studies with teenage users show that teens don't want business sites or government sites that are made to look as if they were created by teenagers when they were not."

[336] Similar material can be found at Rep. Vic Synder's "Kids" page and Rep. Jim Moran's "Kid's Page". See also, Rep. Bud Cramer's former "Kid's Zone".

<label> tags *see Forms*

Language of Text *see also Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Linking #(14); and Word Choice*

(1) The language codes used in HTML tags should conform to the RFC 4646 standard. Instructions for using the standard are set out in Appendix 5: *Language Identification Codes* of this document.

(2) The primary language of each page should be identified[337] with the appropriate attributes of the <html>, <meta name="DC.language">, **and** <meta http-equiv="Content-Language"> tags:

    (a) In the <html> tag, use the "lang" attribute and the "xml:lang" attribute to identify the primary language of the page. For instance, on a page where English (as used in the United States) is the primary language, the <html> tag should be:

        <html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" xml:lang="en-US" lang="en-US">

    (b) In both the <meta name="DC.language"> tag and the <meta http-equiv="Content-Language"> tag, use the "content" attribute to identify the primary language of the page. For instance, on a page where English (as used in the United States) is the primary language, the tags should be:

        <meta name="DC.language" scheme="DCTERMS.RFC4646" content="en-US" />
        <meta http-equiv="Content-Language" content="en-US" />

(3) When the language on a page changes, the change should be identified[338] by using the "lang" attribute and "xml:lang" attribute[339] in the HTML tags surrounding the text. For instance, on a page that is primarily in English, but includes in Spanish (as used in Puerto Rico) the phrase

    Subcomité Congresional Aprueba Proyecto de Ley de Fortuño

the phrase could be coded as

    Subcomit&#233; Congresional Aprueba Proyecto de Ley de Fortu&#241;o

Lao language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Latvian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Law references *see U.S. Code*

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[337] Checkpoint 4.3 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Identify the primary natural language of a document."

[338] Checkpoint 4.1 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Clearly identify changes in the natural language of a document's text and any text equivalents (e.g., captions)."

[339] Section C.7 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition)* provides "Use both the lang and xml:lang attributes when specifying the language of an element. The value of the xml:lang attribute takes precedence."

Layout *see also Margins and Padding; Style Sheets; and Tables #(3)*
    (1) Where practical, font sizes, margins, widths, heights, and other similar measure values (for material that will be displayed on a screen)[340] should be specified in ems or percentages, not in points, picas, centimeters, inches, or pixels.[341]
    (2) Web pages should be sufficiently scalable that a horizontal scroll bar should not be necessary at 800 x 600 screen resolution.[342] Completely liquid layout that is scalable to all screen resolutions is highly desirable.

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[340] This best practice is not intended to apply to style sheets where the value of the "media" property is "print". Use of points, picas, centimeters, or inches in that type of style sheet is appropriate.

[341] Checkpoint 3.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se relative rather than absolute units in markup language attribute values and style sheet property values. [Priority 2]

> For example, in CSS, use 'em' or percentage lengths rather than 'pt' or 'cm', which are absolute units. If absolute units are used, validate that the rendered content is usable (refer to the section on validation)."

Section 3 of the W3C *CSS Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0*, recommends these techniques:

- Use the "em" unit to set font sizes.
- Use relative length units and percentages. CSS allows you to use relative units even in absolute positioning. Thus, you may position an image to be offset by "3em" from the top of its containing element. This is a fixed distance, but is relative to the current font size, so it scales nicely.
- Only use absolute length units when the physical characteristics of the output medium are known, such as bitmap images.

[342] Jakob Nielsen's "Screen Resolution and Page Layout" (July 31, 2006) recommends that Web designers: Optimize Web pages for 1024x768, but use a liquid layout that stretches well for any resolution, from 800x600 to 1280x1024.

  . . .

- **Optimize for 1024x768**, which is currently the most widely used screen size. Of course, the general guideline is to optimize for your target audience's most common resolution, so the size will change in the future. It might even be a different size now, if, say, you're designing an intranet for a company that gives all employees big monitors.
- **Do** *not* **design solely for a specific monitor size** because screen sizes vary among users. Window size variability is even greater, since users don't always maximize their browsers (especially if they have large screens).
- **Use a liquid layout** that stretches to the current user's window size (that is, avoid frozen layouts that are always the same size).

Currently, about **60%** of all monitors are set at **1024x768** pixels. . . . In comparison, only about **17%** use **800x600** so it's obviously less important to aim at perfection for these small-display users. What's equally obvious, however, is that you can't simply ignore 17% of your customer segment by providing a frozen layout that requires more screen space than they have available.

When I say "optimize" I mean that your page should **look and work the** *best* **at the most common size**. It should still look *good* and work *well* at other sizes, which is why I recommend a liquid layout. But it should be its best at 1024x768.

The three main criteria in optimizing a page layout for a certain screen size are:

- **Initial visibility**: Is all key information visible above the fold so users can see it without scrolling? This is a tradeoff between how many items are shown vs. how much detail is displayed for each item.

(3) Offices should be encouraged to fill at least two-thirds of each Web page with substantive material.[343]

(4) When developing a website (or page) where final content is not yet available, it is sometimes useful to use dummy content to be able to make an informed judgment as to how the site will look.[344] When using dummy text during development, however, it is important to make sure that it is all removed before the site is published. Failure to remove dummy text may result in the office being embarrassed if the press is the first to discover the error.[345] Before publishing a website, it is good practice to search the text of the site for such words as "dummy", "test", and "ipsum".[346]

(5) Rather than using 90° angles exclusively, consider also using rounded corners. Sample coding for this, using style sheets, is set out in Trenton Moss's "CSS and Round Corners: Build Boxes with Curves" Sitepoint, March 18, 2005.

(6) Material that is particularly time-sensitive should be "above the fold" (i.e., it should be on the portion of the screen that a user sees without having to use a scroll bar).

(7) To maximize flexibility, it is recommended that the main content on each Web page should be preceded by "<!--~!CMB-->" and the end of the main content on each page should be followed with "<!--~!CME-->".[347] The <!--~!CMB--> and <!--~!CME--> tags should **not** be part of server-side includes (or their equivalents).

Legal citations *see U.S. Code*

- **Readability**: How easy is it to read the text in various columns, given their allocated width?
- **Aesthetics**: How good does your page look when the elements are at the proper size and location for this screen size? Do all the elements line up correctly -- that is, are captions immediately next to the photos, etc.?

[343] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 64) recommends that "At least two-thirds of every page on your site should contain useful information.".

[344] It is a long-standing tradition in the printing industry to use as dummy text a classical Latin excerpt from Cicero's *The Extremes of Good and Evil*, written in 45 B.C.E. The first two words of the passage are "Lorem Ipsum", which is now often used as the name for the text. For more, information on Lorem Ipsum, including a Lorem Ipsum generator to produce dummy text, see http://www.lipsum.com/.

    Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, in *Prioritizing Web Usability*, by, 2006 (p. 214), however, take a somewhat different approach. They note that:
> It often makes sense for designers to use place-holder text while they work on visuals before the content is finalized. However, legibility problems can easily be underestimated when all you see is "lorem ipsum." When reviewing screens with nonsense text, you simply think to yourself, text goes here. If you are not trying to read it, you won't notice if it's unintelligible.
>   Our guideline: If you don't have the final content available while designing a Web site, at least insert representative text from the current site instead of nonsense text.

[345] See, for instance, "Congressional Websites: The Bright, Bland, and Bizarre," *The Hill*, June 20, 2007.

[346] This approach is consistent with Item 6 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Checklist* (HISPUB 007.1.56, August 2008) which provides that "All test, dev, backup, and unnecessary files should be removed from the site."

[347] The <!--~!CMB--> and <!--~!CME--> tags allow pages to be maintained through the HIR UNIX Content Manager. The tags are treated as comments by other content managers and by Web browsers.

<legend> tags *see Alignment; and Forms #(23)*

  📖 **Legislative Material** *see also Committee assignments and Caucus memberships;*
Dates, Time, and Timeliness #(2); Issues and Voting Information; Jargon; and U.S. Code
   (1) Offices should be encouraged to include links to:
- Legislation sponsored (or co-sponsored) by the Member[348, 349] (in the case of committee websites, link to legislation referred to the committee)[350]
- Current House Floor Proceedings[351, 352]
- Weekly House Program[353, 354]
- Annual House calendar (available as a server-side include or as an iframe)[355]

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[348] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 94 and 21) identifies providing information on legislation sponsored and co-sponsored by the Member as one of the elements of a well-formed House Member's website.   At the time the report was compiled, 74% of House websites contained sponsorship and co-sponsorship information.
[349] For instructions as to how to link
- to legislation sponsored by a Member, see http://www.congress.gov/help/THOMAS_links/bss.html#bssmember.
- to legislation co-sponsored by a Member, see http://www.congress.gov/help/THOMAS_links/bss.html#bsscosp
- to legislation sponsored or co-sponsored by a Member, see http://www.congress.gov/help/THOMAS_links/bss.html#bssspco

[350] For instructions as to how to link to legislation referred to a committee, see http://www.congress.gov/help/THOMAS_links/bss.html#bsscommittee.
[351] http://clerk.house.gov/floorsummary/floor.html
[352] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 42 and 95) indicates that providing the current Floor proceedings is an element of a successful congressional website. At the time the report was compiled, 54% of all House Member, committee, and leadership websites included this information (page 21).

   Since the Current House Floor Proceedings website is maintained by the Clerk of the House, be mindful of the January 30, 2006 edition of the Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online* newsletter which notes that "A lot of House sites have outdated or incorrect links. The most frustrating ones [include] . . . dead links to the Clerk's Web site. . . . Web sites continually change, so it's important to periodically review any link that goes off your site, especially at the beginning of each Congress so you don't have visitors looking at old information."
[353] http://www.house.gov/house/floor/thisweek.htm
[354] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 17) indicates that providing the chamber schedule is one of the elements of a well-formed congressional website. At the time the report was compiled, 42.7% of all House Member, committee, and leadership websites included this information.
[355] websites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server (and do not use a virtual URL) are encouraged put the annual House calendar on their site by using the server-side include:
       <!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Calendar_content.htm"-->
  All other sites can use code along the lines of:
       <iframe src="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Calendar_content.htm"
       scrolling="auto" style="width:100%; height:40em;" frameborder="0" title="Annual House
       Calendar">
<a
       href="http://www.house.gov/house/House_Calendar.shtml">Annual House
       calendar
</iframe>
  Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the House's annual calendar page (http://www.house.gov/house/House_Calendar.shtml). Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's website. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with

- Majority and/or Minority Whip materials: [356]
  - Majority Leader's Daily Leader report[357]
  - Majority Leader's Weekly Leader report [358]
  - Majority Whip's daily WhipLine[359]
  - Majority Whip's House calendar[360]
  - Republican Whip's daily Whipping Post[361]
  - Republican Whip's weekly Whip Notice[362]
  - Republican Whip's calendar[363]
- Legislation: bills and resolutions[364, 365]

Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* which provides that an accessible website should "Use navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

Section 4 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further provides that:

> A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.
> Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:
> 1. navigation bars
> 2. the primary content of a page
>   . . .
> A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

> **Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. ***Sen. John Cornyn's*** Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[356] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (pages 45 to 46) praises Rep. Mike Honda's website for having links to legislative schedules. Rep. Honda's "Legislation: On the Issues" page links to the Majority Whip's calendar, the current House floor proceedings, and the Democratic Whip's daily notice.

[357] http://www.majorityleader.gov/links_and_resources/whip_resources/daily.cfm

[358] http://www.majorityleader.gov/links_and_resources/whip_resources/weekly.cfm

[359] http://majoritywhip.house.gov/daily_whipline.html

[360] http://majoritywhip.house.gov/house_calendar.html

[361] http://republicanwhip.house.gov/home.aspx#whip-notice

[362] http://republicanwhip.house.gov/home.aspx#tabbertab

[363] http://republicanwhip.house.gov/Calendar/

[364] http://thomas.loc.gov/home/bills_res.html

- Congressional Record[366, 367]
  - About the Congressional Record[368] (prepared by the Library of Congress)[369]
- Committee reports[370]
- Committee hearings[371, 372]
- *How Our Laws Are Made*[373, 374, 375]
- House Rules and Precedents[376, 377]

(2) Offices should be encouraged to have a description of how legislation becomes law.[378] If the office does not have its own text for this, they should be encouraged to use the text from the House's "Legislative Process" page.[379]

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[365] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 94) identifies including "a THOMAS search box or link" as an element of a successful Congressional website.

   Referring to "Legislation: bills and resolutions" instead of just referring to "Thomas" is consistent with the recommendation of the Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 61) which notes that "Congressional jargon and the legislative process can be difficult for most people off the Hill to understand. Focus on making the information on your site understandable, rather than impressive and official-sounding."

   The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 42) also notes that:

> The most important consideration in creating legislative content, of course, is ensuring that all users will understand it, regardless of how frequently they visit the site. For example, instead of a link that just says "THOMAS," there should be something briefly explaining what THOMAS is, such as "search for legislation."

[366] http://thomas.loc.gov/home/r110query.html

[367] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 83) identifies having "[l]inks directly to the *Congressional Record*" as one of the elements in a well-formed congressional website.

[368] http://thomas.loc.gov/home/cr_help.htm

[369] Consider also providing a link to the House Rules Committee's "Using the Congressional Record" (http://www.rules.house.gov/archives/pop022299_ho3.htm).

[370] http://thomas.loc.gov/cp110/cp110query.html

[371] Published Congressional committee hearing transcripts (and other materials) are available through the U.S Government Printing Office's GPO Access at http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html.

[372] Consider also including the list of today's hearings compiled by the House Radio-Television Correspondents' Gallery (http://radiotv.house.gov/hearings.shtml).

[373] http://thomas.loc.gov/home/lawsmade.toc.html

[374] Consider also including the kids' version of "How Our Laws Are Made" (compiled by the Clerk of the House).

[375] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 42 and 95) identifies providing information about how a bill becomes a law as an element of a successful Congressional website. The report (page 21) also notes that only 35% of House websites provide that information. The report (page 72) praises the website of Rep. Paul Ryan for providing this information.

[376] http://www.rules.house.gov/house_rules_precedents.htm

[377] Additional links related to the Rules and Precedents of the House that you might want to consider including are:

- General Parliamentary Procedure (compiled by the House Rules Committee),
- House Committee Procedures (compiled by the House Rules Committee),
- House Floor Procedures (compiled by the House Rules Committee),
- House and Senate parliamentary procedure (prepared by the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress),

[378] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 58) notes that:

> Most citizens outside the Beltway have forgotten their high school civics classes. Offices can do constituents a great service by finding ways of making educational information easily accessible throughout the site so visitors can refer to it whenever they have questions.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 48) further notes that:

> Some offices provide educational information on their kids' or students' pages, but kids are not the only ones who need it. *Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-PA)* has a prominent section on his home page that explains how government works. His site includes an actual case study of how his "GEAR UP" initiative became public law. Your site should also include information about how the committee process works; explanations of legislative and congressional terms; and general descriptions of what a Member, Chair, or Leader does on a given day.

An example can also be found on Rep. Bud Cramer's former "How a Bill Becomes Law" page..

[379] Websites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server (and do not use a virtual URL) are encouraged to use the server-side include:

> <!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Tying_it_all_content.htm" -->

All other sites can use code along the lines of:

> <iframe src="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Tying_it_all_content.htm" scrolling="auto" style="width:35em; height:120em;" frameborder="0">
Tying it all Together
</iframe>

Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the House's "Legislative Process page". Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's website. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* which provides that an accessible website should "Use navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

Section 4 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further provides that:

> A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.
> Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:
>   1. navigation bars
>   2. the primary content of a page
>   . . .
> A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

> **Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. **Sen. John Cornyn**'s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an

(3) Links to legislation, legislation sponsored by the Member, the Congressional Record, committee reports, and the annual House schedule, should include links from the current year.[380]

(4) References to specific bills (either by name or by number) should be linked either to information on the website explaining the bill or to the appropriate page in the Library of Congress Thomas System.[381, 382] Links **should not** be to Web pages in the Library of Congress' Legislative Information System (LIS)[383] because it is only accessible to congressional offices.

Library of Congress products *see Congressional Research Service products; Legislative material #(4); and Veterans #(2)*

Linking *see also Biographies #(1); Business Assistance; Committee Assignments and Caucus memberships; Contact Information and Techniques #(13); District Information #(2); Forms #(5)(c); Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance; Graphics #(2); Issues and Voting Information #0; Legislative Material; Lists #(3); Maps and Directions #(2); <meta> tags and <link> tags; Multimedia files and Audio files; Navigation; PDF files; Privacy Policy; Student Financial Aid; Underlining #(2); U.S. Code; Visiting Washington; and WIDA*

(1) Any hypertext link to a Web page that is not part of either HOUSE.GOV or LOC.GOV needs to have an exit message indicating that you are leaving the House of Representatives and that neither the office nor the House is responsible for the content of the site being linked to.[384] Instructions for adding such a

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important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[380] The January 30, 2006 edition of the Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online* newsletter notes that "A lot of House sites have outdated or incorrect links. The most frustrating ones were those linking [during the 109th Congress] to bills, sponsorships, and co-sponsorships from the 108th Congress (and, occasionally, earlier Congresses); dead links to the Clerk's Web site; THOMAS search engines that search the wrong Congress; and those linking to INS (it changed to USCIS in 2003!). Web sites continually change, so it's important to periodically review any link that goes off your site, especially at the beginning of each Congress so you don't have visitors looking at old information."

[381] Instructions for linking to specific legislation within Thomas can be found at http://www.congress.gov/help/handles.html .

[382] *Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines*, 2nd edition, page 10, (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), identifies providing "citations and references" as one of the elements that project credibility in a website.

[383] Domain CONGRESS.GOV.

[384] The *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, § 5), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

> HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

An almost identical regulation appears in the *Committees' Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, General, § 5).

   On October 2, 2008, Rep. Robert Brady, Chairman of the House Administration Committee, issued a statement that "the Committee has approved revisions to rules governing the use of web video on Member websites." The rule adopted by the Committee provides that:

message are available at HouseNet → Technology → [Web Solutions]( ) → HTML Scripts & Products → Exit Message to External Web Sites. Offices using the HIR-supplied exit should be encouraged to establish an @leave_site file to retain their site's look and feel when generating the exit message.[385]

(2) Rather than linking to other sites, offices should be encouraged to provide material within their own website.[386]

In addition to their official (house.gov) Web site, a Member may maintain another Web site(s), channel(s) or otherwise post material on third-party Web sites.

The official content of any material posted by the Member on any Web site must be in compliance with Federal law and House Rules and Regulations applicable to official communications and germane to the conduct of the Member's official and representational duties.

When a link to a Web site outside the Member's official cite is imbedded on the Member's official site, the Member's site must include an exit notice advising the visitor when they are leaving the House. This exit notice must also include a disclaimer that neither the Member nor the House is responsible for the content of the linked site(s).

Chairman is authorized to make technical and conforming changes to facilitate inclusion into the Committees and Member handbooks.

[385] [Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0*]( ) which provides that an accessible website should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

[Section 4 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0*]( ) further provides that:

A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.

Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:

1. navigation bars
2. the primary content of a page
   . . .

A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [*2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63)]( ) recommends that Congressional websites should:

Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site. Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. If you have a blue navigation toolbar on the left side of one page, there should be a blue navigation toolbar on the left side of every page. If you have links imbedded in text in one issue section, you should do the same thing in every issue section. *Rep. Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD)* uses the same horizontal and vertical navigation throughout his site. The only thing that changes on his pages is the content.

The Congressional Management Foundation's [*2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40)]( ) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[386] The Congressional Management Foundation's [*Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 24)]( ) praises the website of Rep. Kay Granger because of the site's "efforts to address

(3) Except where they point to an <iframe>, "target" attributes should not be used in <a> tags unless there is a substantial reason to have them.[387, 388] (One of the relatively rare instances when there is a substantial reason to use a "target" attribute is the link to an outside page that provides information that will be used to fill out a form – for example, a link to the U.S. Postal Service's Zip Code Lookup page when it is used to find a nine-digit zip code for a form that needs zip+4.)

(4) Avoid having pages that are primarily just lists of links. Also, avoid making pages that have "links" as part of the name of the page. Rather than "links", make the emphasis "information" or "resources" or a similar description. Where possible, include a sentence or short paragraph explaining each link (or each group of links).[389]

(5) Do not use "link to," "click here," or similar phrases in the text of links.[390]

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constituent concerns and problems online rather than pushing them off to another website or directing them off line."

[387] Checkpoint 10.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that "*[u]ntil user agents* allow users to turn off spawned windows, do not cause pop-ups or other windows to appear and do not change the current window without informing the user."

> *Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (pp. 69 & 74) notes that:
> > New browser windows, . . . [cause] problems for users who don't understand the concept of multiple windows. When possible, keep your Web site in the same browser window and ensure that the Back button works. Launching new windows on top of the parent window can stop many users from interacting with your site. For example, we've seen people accidentally click outside the parent browser window and bury the new window underneath it, then try to reopen the new window from the parent window and nothing appears to happen. They can't find their way back to the new window and conclude that the site is broken. . . .
> > Users with many different types of disabilities have particular problems managing extra windows. People with motor skills impairments certainly don't relish having to struggle to click unwanted Close boxes. And low-vision users may not even know that a pop-up has appeared if they have zoomed in their screen magnifier to inspect a different part of the screen. Finally, blind users are severely impacted by the additional cognitive load of having to cope with multiple windows and remember what information was read aloud from which pop-up.

Nielsen and Loranger, however, do recommend an exception for PDFs and similar types of documents (pp. 70-71).

[388] The homepage of the Immigration Reform Caucus is an example of proper use of the "target" attribute to control the contents of an <iframe>.

[389] The Congressional Management Foundation's 1999 report *Building Web Sites Constituents Will Use* (page 9) recommends that Congressional websites "**Place external and internal links throughout your site, rather than on a single "Links" page.** This ensures that visitors can instantly access the information they want, rather than searching for it among a long list of links."

> The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 34) praises the website of Rep. Mike Honda because it "links to federal government Web sites and complements them with brief descriptions of the general areas those agencies cover."

[390] Guideline 9 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides accessible websites should:
> Design for device-independence.
> **Use features that enable activation of page elements via a variety of input devices.**
> Device-independent access means that the user may interact with the user agent or document with a preferred input (or output) device -- mouse, keyboard, voice, head wand, or other. If, for example, a form control can only be activated with a mouse or other pointing device, someone who is using the page without sight, with voice input, or with a keyboard or who is using some other non-pointing input device will not be able to use the form.

(6) The text of each link should provide enough information that a person who has only the text of the link can have a good idea what information the link will link to. If it is not practical to provide that information in the link, then the information should be contained in a "title" attribute of the link's <a href> tag.[391]

(7) When linking to the next file in a series of files designed to be viewed in a particular order (e.g., in a photo gallery slide show), use "rel" and "rev" attributes in the <a href> tag.[392] The "rel" attribute specifies the relationship between the current page and the page (or internal anchor) being linked to. The values most frequently used[393] with the <a href> tag, are "next" and "prev" – next is used with a link to the next document in the series, and "prev" is used to link to the previous document in the series.[394] A special case is the first document in a series: this gets the value "start".[395, 396] The "rev" attribute functions the same way as the

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Roger Hudson's "Text Alternatives for Images" (September 2003) recommends that Web designers, **"**Avoid unnecessary terms. Don't use words like 'link' or 'click here' for images that are links. Screen readers will indicate if something is a link or not."

[391] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) recommends that "Links should be descriptive and clear enough that the user can tell where it leads."

   Checkpoint 13.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should:

> Clearly identify the target of each link. [Priority 2]
> *Link text* should be meaningful enough to make sense when read out of context -- either on its own or as part of a sequence of links. Link text should also be terse.
> For example, in HTML, write "Information about version 4.3" instead of "click here". In addition to clear link text, content developers may further clarify the target of a link with an informative link title (e.g., in HTML, the "title" attribute).

Note that the Jaws screen reader can be configured so that it will read which ever is larger – the text of the link or the value of the "title" attribute. The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 74% of screen reader users use Jaws, and that 71.4% of screen reader users with blindness customize their screen reader.

   An alternative technique to using the "title" attribute, that has been suggested is to put the additional information within <span> tags and give the tag a class (e.g. class="hidden"), where the class places the text off screen and minimizes the size (e.g., position:absolute;left:-999em; font-size:1%).

   A technique to avoid at the current time is adding the additional text to the link in a <span> with a class value that has a media="screen" style sheet with a display:none property and a media="aural" (or a media="speech") style sheet without the display:none property. The Jaws screen reader uses the screen style sheet (and not the aural (or speech) style sheet) to build its audio output. (See also, Gez Lemon's "Screen Readers and display:none," Juicy Studio (October 12, 2007), for an apparent bug in how Jaws and Window-Eyes processes the "display:none" property.)

[392] Checkpoint 13.2 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should:

> Provide metadata to add semantic information to pages and sites. . . .
> > **Note.** Some HTML *user agents* can build navigation tools from document relations described by the HTML LINK element and "rel" or "rev" attributes (e.g., rel="next", rel="previous", rel="index", etc.).

[393] For a complete list of the standard values for the "rel" and "rev" attributes, see § 6.12 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification*.

[394] For example:

> Next ¦
> Previous

[395] For instance

"rel" attribute, except it specifies the relationship from the file being linked to the file being linked from (rather than the other way around).[397]

(8) The color of links should be set by style sheets[398] and not by the "alink," "link," or "vlink" attributes of the <body> tag.[399]

(9) The colors used for hypertext links should be consistent throughout the site.[400]

(10) The color of each link should make it clear as to whether the visitor has visited the link yet or not – therefore visited links should be a different color that links that have not yet been visited, and the colors should be sufficiently different that they can be easily told from one another.[401]

Previous

[396] Even though § 6.12 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* includes a "start" value, it does not include an "end" value. An early draft document within W3C's Internet Engineering Task Force recommended that "end" (or "last") be valid values for "rel" and "rev". That proposal, however, was not adopted. (For the complete text of the proposal, including other suggested values for "rel" and "rev," see http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/draft-ietf-html-relrev-00.txt.)

[397] Examples:

Linking from the first document in the series:
    Next
Linking from the second document in the series:
    Previous ¦
    Next
Linking from any other document in the series:
    Previous ¦
    Next

[398] Use the "a:active {color: _____}" style sheets property.

[399] Section 7.5.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "alink," "link," and "vlink" attributes of the <body> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

To set the color of an active link, use the "a:active {color:}" style sheet property. To set the color of unvisited links, use the "a:link {color:}" style sheet property. To set the color of visited links, use the "a:visited {color:}" style sheet property. There are important usability issues that come into play when setting the colors of links – see e.g., Jakob Nielsen's "Guidelines for Visualizing Links" (May 10, 2004) for recommendations on specifying colors for visited and unvisited links. Also consider checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0*, which provides that accessible websites should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

[400] Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 61) recommends that Congressional websites should:

Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site: Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. **Sen. John Cornyn**'s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[401] Jakob Nielsen's "Change the Color of Visited Links" (May 3, 2004) notes that:

Generally, Web browsers are severely deficient in supporting user navigation. However, they do provide one feature that helps users orient themselves: browsers let designers display links in different colors, depending on whether the links lead to new pages or pages that users have seen

(11) Links should look like links.[402] Where text is used as a link, it should be underscored – whether the link has been visited or not (it is not necessary to keep the underscore on a link that is currently being hovered over).

(12) The larger the link area, the easier it is to use.[403]

(13) If an <a> tag has a "name" attribute, it should also have an "id" attribute with the same value.[404] When assigning the value of an "id" or "name" attribute use the purpose of the data that the attribute's tag relates to, not how the data is to be portrayed – the "name" value should indicate function, not form. (For instance, "hotTopics" would be an appropriate value for an "id" or "name" attribute, but "whiteOnRed" would not be an appropriate value.)[405]

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before. Changing the color of visited links has been part of Web browsing since Mosaic arrived in 1993, so it's completely standard; almost all users understand it.

Currently, **74% of websites** use different colors for visited and unvisited links, making this design approach a strong convention that people have come to expect.

Hypertext **theory**, the Web's **history**, and current design **conventions** all indicate the need to change the color of visited links. Further, **empirical observations** from user testing have identified several severe usability problems on sites that violate this convention. When sites use the same color for visited and unvisited links, users:

- unintentionally revisit the same pages repeatedly;
- get lost more easily because their understanding of each link's meaning is reduced;
- often misinterpret or overlook the difference between two similar links if they're unsure about which one they've already visited; and
- give up faster because they have a reduced sense of mastery when the site fails to reflect their actions and thus help them navigate.

[402] In *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 97 Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger note that "Whenever you find yourself having to give instructions for where users can click, you know you have a usability problem."

[403] *Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 65) notes that "the bigger something is, the less time it takes to click on it. This is because users won't need to point as precisely, which takes more time."

[404] Section 12.2.3 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that (with respect to <a> tags) "The id and name attributes share the same name space. . . . When both attributes are used on a single element, their values must be identical."

   Further, § 4.10 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* designates the "name" attribute of the <a> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute.

[405] Section 1 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that:
   When designing a document or series of documents, content developers should strive first to identify the desired structure for their documents before thinking about how the documents will be presented to the user. Distinguishing the structure of a document from how the content is presented offers a number of advantages, including improved accessibility, manageability, and portability.

Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006]), p.180, recommends that
   Semantic or meta-structural names (names that explain the function performed by elements contained within) are best. You would feel pretty silly having labeled a part of your site "orangebox" when the client decides to go with blue. You would feel sillier still revising your style sheets under a deadline six months from now and trying desperately to remember whether "Gladys" was a navigational area, a sidebar, a search form, or what.

(14) When linking to a Web page that has a primary language[406] that is different from the primary language of the current page, include an "hreflang" attribute[407] in the <a href> tag that created the link.[408]

(15) An <a> tag should not be nested within another <a> tag.[409]

<listing> tags *see HTML*

Lists

(1) In unordered lists:

(a) Consider using a graphic or a typographic symbol other than the default (see, e.g., Rep. Trent Frank's "Awards" page).[410]

(b) When using graphics as bullets, use <ul> and <li> tags with the Cascading Style Sheets "list-style-image" property.[411]

(c) When specifying a typographic symbol to be used as a bullet (e.g., circle (○) or square (▪)), use the style sheets "list-style-type" property; and do not use the "type" attribute of the <li> or <ul> tags. Likewise, when specifying the style of the numbering in an ordered list (e.g., Arabic numerals, Roman numerals, lower case letters, or upper case letters), use the style sheets "list-style-type" property; and do not use the "type" attribute of the <li> or <ol> tags.[412]

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[406] The primary language of a page is the language specified by the "lang" and "xml:lang" attributes of the <html> tag.

[407] The value of the "hreflang" attribute should conform to the RFC 4646 standard. Instructions for using that standard are set out in Appendix 5: *Language Identification Codes* of this document.

[408] Checkpoint 4.1 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Clearly identify changes in the natural language of a document's text and any text equivalents (e.g., captions)."

[409] Appendix B of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "a must not contain other a elements".

[410] Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006]), p.232, notes when the style sheets list-style property is used to designate a substitute for the default bullet in an unordered list and both the list-style-type and the list-style-image values are provided in the list-style property:

> IE/Windows and Opera/Windows users get an extra (unintended) treat. The site displays the [list-style-type designated characters] . . . first and then fills in the . . . images. The effect looks like Flash or JavaScript animation, but is purely accidental and a result of the order in which IE and Opera for Windows load and display web page components. In other browsers, users simply see the . . . [graphic].

[411] Guideline 1.3.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Information, structure, and relationships conveyed through presentation can be programmatically determined or are available in text. (Level A)".

> Section H48 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends using <ul> and <li> tags instead of coding that gives a similar look (e.g., using asterisks and <br> tags), noting that

> When markup is used that visually formats items as a list but does not indicate the list relationship, users [of assistive technologies] may have difficulty in navigating the information.

[412] Section 10.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "type" attribute of the <li>, <ol>, and <ul> tags as deprecated (i.e., outdated) attributes. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

(2) The words that convey the most information should be at the beginning of each item in a list – preferably in the first two words.[413]

(3) Lists should be in alphabetical order, unless there is a reason to organize them in a different manner.[414]

(4) Avoid starting two items (within a list) with the same first word. Starting two items in a list with the same word makes it substantially more difficult for users to visiually scan the list.[415]

(5) Lists of links can be boring and convey the (potentially false) impression that your website is not rich in content. Instead of presenting lists of links, consider inserting a sentence (or short paragraph) with each that explains what it is about.[416]

(6) The <ul> tag should be used instead of the <dir> tag or the <menu> tag.[417]

(7) The "compact" attribute of the <li>, <ol>, and <ul> tags should not be used.[418]

(8) Ideally, the "counter-reset" property of style sheets should be used (rather than the "start" attribute of the <ol> tag or the "value" attribute of the <li> tag) to change the numbering in an ordered list.[419] Note, however, Internet Explorer 6.0 does not support the "counter-reset" property.[420]

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[413] Jakob Nielsen's article "F-Shaped Pattern For Reading Web Content" (April 17, 2006), based on a study of the eye movements of 232 website users, recommends that Web designers

> **Start subheads, paragraphs, and bullet points with information-carrying words** that users will notice when scanning down the left side of your content . . . . They'll read the third word on a line much less often than the first two words.

Though Nielsen's study was based on sighted users, the technique he suggests is useful not only for sighted individuals, but also for blind individuals – since an often-used technique in Jaws and Window-Eyes is to have the browser skip from heading to heading or from list to list. (The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 74% of screen reader users use Jaws; and 23% use Window-Eyes.)

[414] *Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines*, 2nd edition, page 10 (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), identifies arranging a website "in a logical way" as one of the elements that project credibility in a website.

[415] Jakob Nielsen in "Right-Justified Navigation Menus Impede Scannability" (April 28, 2008), recommends "**Avoid using the same few words to start list items**, because doing so makes them harder to scan."

[416] The Congressional Management Foundation's 1999 report *Building Web Sites Constituents Will Use* (page 9) recommends that Congressional websites "**Place external and internal links throughout your site, rather than on a single "Links" page.** This ensures that visitors can instantly access the information they want, rather than searching for it among a long list of links."

[417] Section 10.4 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the <dir> tag and the <menu> tag as deprecated (i.e., outdated) elements.

[418] Section 10.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "compact" attribute as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute.

The W3C *CSS 2 Specification*, § 9.2.3, provided a style sheet display:compact element. The *CSS 2.1 Specification*, § C.2.5, however, notes that display:compact has been dropped from the CSS specification.

[419] Section 10.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "start" and "value" attributes as deprecated (i.e., outdated) attributes. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[420] A WSB analysis of www.house.gov usage for July 9 to 15, 2008, indicates that Internet Explorer 6 accounted for 30.30% of the identifiable, non-robot access to the site.

📖 **Listserv and E-Newsletters** *see also Contact Information and Techniques #(2)*
- **(1)** Offices with electronic newsletters should be encouraged to use the HIR Listserv service to maintain their subscriber lists.[421]
- **(2)** Forms to subscribe to an e-newsletter should ask for either (1) just the subscriber's e-mail address; or (2) just the name and e-mail address of the subscriber.[422]
- **(3)** Forms to subscribe to an e-newsletter should indicate (or link to a page that indicates) what potential subscribers can expect to get if they subscribe (e.g., expected frequency, size, and subjects).[423]
- **(4)** Where a form uses a checkbox or radio button to subscribe to an e-newsletter, the box (or radio) button **is not** to be pre-set to "subscribe".[424]

Lithauanian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Live *see Social Bookmarking*

Load time *see Download Time*

☠ **Log files**
Files with ".log" extensions (e.g., ws_ftp.log) should not be contained in any directory within a House website – even if there are no links to it.

Lorem Ipsum *see Layout #(4)*

Macedonian language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

<map> tags *see Image Maps*

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[421] For more information on the HIR Listserv service, see HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → Tools → Listserv.

[422] The standard set out in § 1303(b)(1)(C) of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA) prohibits conditioning participation in an activity though a website on "disclosing more personal information than is reasonably necessary to participate in such activity".

Just as in the case of § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, Congressional offices are not statutorily required to abide by the requirements of COPPA. Just as with § 508, however, Congressional offices that do not abide by COPPA's standards risk being embarrassed if their non-compliance is publicized.

[423] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 67) recommends that Congressional offices

> Establish a policy concerning your e-mail updates *before* visitors sign-up, and stick to it. Create clear expectations regarding what information citizens will receive and when they will receive it. A weekly legislative update or a monthly e-mail update on health care should be exactly that. An agreed-upon policy will also establish clear guidelines for office staff responsible for the newsletter's content and distribution.

[424] This is based on August 2007 verbal guidance from the staff of the House Franking Commission. (Identical guidance was presented by House Franking Commission staff at their January 7, 2008, briefing on franking reform to the House System Administrators Association.)

📖 **Maps and Directions** *see also Image Maps; Navigation #(8)*
   (1) Consider including maps and directions to the office's district and Washington offices.[425]
   (2) Include in each Member site, a map of the Member's district.[426] Where the map shows towns, counties, and other sites, it is recommended that the references to those localities on the district map be made into links[427] to either those localities' websites[428] or (preferably) into links to pages on the Member's website that provide information about the locality and include a link to the locality's website.[429]

Margins and Padding *see also Alignments; Centering; and Layout*
   (1) With all block elements (<div>, <p>, etc.) consider specifying the style sheet "margin" and "padding" properties, since different browsers provide different default values for these two properties.

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[425] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 62) praises then-Rep. Tom Allen's website for providing "driving directions and links to maps of the offices in the district and in Washington."
   Yahoo, MapQuest, Rand McNally, and Google provide the ability to automatically generate such a set of directions from any user-specified address in the United States.

[426] Congressional district maps are available from the U.S. Geological Survey at http://www.nationalatlas.gov/printable/congress.html#list. Congressional district maps are also available from the U.S. Bureau of the Census at http://www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/cd109/cd109_individualMaps.htm..

[427] Client-side image maps should be used for this function where possible, instead of server-side image maps. (The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(f)) provide that "Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape." Likewise, Checkpoint 9.1 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Provide client-side image maps instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.")
   Just as with external links created by <a href> tags, external links created by using image maps require exit messages to be in compliance with the *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, § 5), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

> HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

An almost identical regulation appears in the *Committees' Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, General, § 5). Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → HTML → Exit Message to External Web Sites.

[428] See, e.g., Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.'s district page.

[429] See, e.g., Rep. Dan Boren's "Second Congressional District of Oklahoma" page, Rep. Bud Cramer's former "5th District of Alabama" page, Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's "Nebraska's First Congressional District" page, and Rep. Adam Schiff's "California's 20th Congressional District" page. See also Rep. Pete Hoekstra's "Interactive Map" page.
   The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 21) praises Sen. Tom Carper's website for having a "map of Delaware [that] breaks down *local news* and *resources by county*, which gives constituents easy access to information relevant to where they live". Sen. Harry Reid's homepage has a map that links to the Senator's accomplishments, broken down by county.

(2) To eliminate any default margins that a browser may place around the edges of a Web page, rather than using

    <body leftmargin="0" marginwidth="0" topmargin="0" marginheight="0">

use the following style sheet properties with the <body> tag:

    margin:0;
    padding:0;

The "marginwidth" and "marginheight" attributes are proprietary attributes for Netscape. The "leftmargin" and "topmargin" attributes are proprietary attributes for Internet Explorer. None of those four attributes are compliant with the W3C XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) standard.[430] The style sheet "margin:0; padding:0;" properties, on the other hand, are W3C CSS and XHTML compliant.

(3) Rather than using the "margin-top", "margin-right", "margin-bottom", or "margin-left" style sheet properties, use the "margin" property.[431]

(4) Rather than using the "padding-top", "padding -right", "padding -bottom", or "padding -left" style sheet properties, use the "padding" property.[432]

Mastheads *see Banners*

Malay language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

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[430] Use of proprietary attributes that are not W3C XHTML compliant also makes a Web page non-compliant with Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* which provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[431] Section 8.3 of the W3C *Cascading Style Sheets Level 2 Revision 1 (CSS 2.1) Specification* provides that:
The 'margin' property is a shorthand property for setting 'margin-top', 'margin-right', 'margin-bottom', and 'margin-left' at the same place in the style sheet.

If there is only one value, it applies to all sides. If there are two values, the top and bottom margins are set to the first value and the right and left margins are set to the second. If there are three values, the top is set to the first value, the left and right are set to the second, and the bottom is set to the third. If there are four values, they apply to the top, right, bottom, and left, respectively.

[432] Section 8.4 of the W3C *Cascading Style Sheets Level 2 Revision 1 (CSS 2.1) Specification* provides that:
The 'padding' property is a shorthand property for setting 'padding-top', 'padding-right', 'padding-bottom', and 'padding-left' at the same place in the style sheet.

If there is only one value, it applies to all sides. If there are two values, the top and bottom paddings are set to the first value and the right and left paddings are set to the second. If there are three values, the top is set to the first value, the left and right are set to the second, and the bottom is set to the third. If there are four values, they apply to the top, right, bottom, and left, respectively.

Malayalam language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Marshallese language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Meeting with Member *see Contact Information and Techniques #(4)*

<menu> tags *see Lists #(6)*

<meta> tags and <link> tags *see also Tag Clouds #(3)*
> **(1)** To the extent practical, each page of a House website should include the meta data tags set out in Appendix 4: *<meta> and Related Tags* of this document.[433]
> **(2)** Each <link> and <meta> tag should end with "/>".[434]

 Military (Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guard) *see District Information #(5); Service Academy Nominations; and Veterans*

Member offices (and other House offices that have constituencies in the armed services)[435] should be encouraged to include a page(s) on their website devoted to military benefits. See, e.g., the "Active Duty, Reserves, National Guard" page of Rep. Thelma Drake's website[436] and Rep. Rush Holt's "Guard and Reserves" page.

Microformats *see Contact Information and Techniques #(13)*

 Missing and Exploited Children

Member offices should consider including a link to their state's page from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.[437]

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[433] Checkpoint 13.2 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should "Provide metadata to add semantic information to pages and sites."

[434] Section 4.6 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "Empty elements must either have an end tag or the start tag must end with `/>`. For instance, `<br/>` or `<hr></hr>`." Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[435] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (p. 46) notes that "Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans' Affairs* website provides information on veterans' benefits for its key audience."

[436] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 56) praises the website of Rep. Thelma Drake for focusing on the needs of those in military service.

[437] Use the link
> <a
> href="http://www.house.gov/htbin/leave_site?ln_url="http://www.missingkids.com/precreate/**SS**.html"&ln_desc=National+Center+for+Missing+and+Exploited+Children">

Replace "**SS**" with the capitalized 2-character postal abbreviation for the state.

Mongolian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

MP3 files *see Multimedia files and Audio files*

📖 **Multimedia files and Audio files** *see also Banners #(3); Graphics; and <object> tag #(3)*

(1) In Member websites, consider including multimedia files of the Member's floor speeches.[438]

(2) Links to audio files and multimedia files, when practical, should indicate the size of the files and their playing time.

(3) Any page that links to a multimedia file (or an audio file) should include access to software that allows the file to be accessed.[439] One technique for doing this is to include a link on each page to a "tool box" page on the site that contains links to the software.[440] Multimedia players are available at:

- Quick Time = http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/win.html
- Real Player = http://www.real.com/
- VLC Media Player = http://www.videolan.org/vlc/
- Windows Media Player = http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/Browse.aspx?displaylang=en&categoryid=4

Note that if any of the links to the software point to a non-House of Representatives website, an appropriate exit message needs to be given.[441]

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[438] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 17) indicates that providing video clips is one of the elements of a well-formed congressional website. At the time the report was compiled, only 35.6% of all House Member, committee, and leadership websites included this material.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age*, (page 32) praises Rep. Mike Pence for giving "short daily speeches on the House floor, which his office then provides on his Web site using low-cost, low-tech equipment. These regular audio and video updates show his constituents how hard he works on a daily basis."

[439] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(m)) provide that "When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with § 1194.21(a) through (*l*)."

[440] Examples can be found on the Chief Administrative Officer's "Site Tools and Downloads" page, Rep. John Salazar's audio clips page, and Rep. Heather Wilson's toolbox page. Each of the pages on the 109th Congress Speaker's website (except the homepage) have (on the left side) a toolbox image and "Important tools to visit this site" linked to a page with links to plug-ins.

[441] The *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, § 5), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

> HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

An almost identical regulation appears in the *Committees' Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, General, § 5). Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → HTML → Exit Message to External Web Sites.

(4) Web video files, for House Member sites, may be maintained on web servers outside the HOUSE.GOV domain, provided that any link from the Member's HOUSE.GOV site that goes to a non-HOUSE.GOV site must include an appropriate exit message.[442]

(5) Files that include audio need to provide access to a written transcript.[443]

(6) Whenever possible, multimedia files that include audio should have closed captioning that coordinates a transcript of the words with the action. Where closed captioning is not available, the transcript needs to use some other technique to coordinate the words with the action in order to comply with § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.[444]

(7) To provide accessibility to persons who have both visual and hearing disabilities, transcripts (accessible, for instance, through a refreshable Braille display) should be audio described, i.e., they should include a description of any actions depicted in the visuals.[445]

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[442] On October 2, 2008, Rep. Robert Brady, Chairman of the House Administration Committee, issued a statement that "the Committee has approved revisions to rules governing the use of web video on Member websites." The rule adopted by the Committee provides that:

> In addition to their official (house.gov) Web site, a Member may maintain another Web site(s), channel(s) or otherwise post material on third-party Web sites.
>
> The official content of any material posted by the Member on any Web site must be in compliance with Federal law and House Rules and Regulations applicable to official communications and germane to the conduct of the Member's official and representational duties.
>
> When a link to a Web site outside the Member's official cite is imbedded on the Member's official site, the Member's site must include an exit notice advising the visitor when they are leaving the House. This exit notice must also include a disclaimer that neither the Member nor the House is responsible for the content of the linked site(s).
>
> Chairman is authorized to make technical and conforming changes to facilitate inclusion into the Committees and Member handbooks.

[443] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(a)) provide that "A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content)."

Guideline 1.2.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in a level A accessible website with pre-recorded audio:

> An alternative for time-based media is provided that presents equivalent information for prerecorded audio-only content.

[444] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(b)) provide that "Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation."

Guidelines 1,2,2 and 1.2.4 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provide that in accessible website:

> **1.2.2 Captions (Prerecorded):** Captions are provided for all prerecorded audio content in synchronized media, except when the media is a media alternative for text and is clearly labeled as such. (Level A) . . .
>
> **1.2.4 Captions (Live):** Captions are provided for all live audio content in synchronized media. (Level AA)

[445] Guidelines 1,2,3 and 1.2.5 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provide that in accessible website:

> **1.2.3 Audio Description or Media Alternative (Prerecorded):** An alternative for time-based media or audio description of the prerecorded video content is provided for synchronized media, except when the media is a media alternative for text and is clearly labeled as such. (Level A) . . .
>
> **1.2.5 Audio Description (Prerecorded):** Audio description is provided for all prerecorded video content in synchronized media. (Level AA)

(8) When embedding a multimedia file that calls up a viewer (e.g., Windows Media Viewer for .wmv files), include instructions as to how to activate and control the viewer.[446]

(9) Avoid using auto-loading multimedia files where the user does not have advance notice that the file will load.[447]

(10) Rather than using an <a href> tag to link directly to a .wmv (or similar) file directly (and thereby spawning a new window for the multimedia plug in),[448] use an <iframe> (or similar technique) to have the viewer play on the current page. For examples, see the homepages of Rep. Ron Klein and the Immigration Reform Caucus.

Name attribute

(1) With <a>, <form>, <frame>, <iframe>, <img>, or <map> tags, an "id" attribute should normally be used instead of a "name" attribute.[449] If it is necessary to use a "name" attribute with these tags, then the tag should also have an "id" attribute with the same value.[450]

(2) If it is necessary to use a "name" attribute, when assigning the value of the "name" attribute use the purpose of the data that the attribute's tag relates to, not how the data is to be portrayed – the "name" value should indicate function, not form. For instance, "hotTopics" would be an appropriate value for a "name" attribute, but "whiteOnRed" would not be an appropriate value.[451]

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[446] The late Rep. Charlie Norwood's website included the following instructions:
> Pressing the "PLAY" button or clicking on the image above will start the video. After the video has started you may start, stop, or pause the video at any time.

[447] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (p. 64) counsels: "Stay away from auto-loading audio or video content—like a welcome video—on your home page."

[448] Checkpoint 10.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that "*[u]ntil user agents* allow users to turn off spawned windows, do not cause pop-ups or other windows to appear and do not change the current window without informing the user."

[449] Section 4.10 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* designates the "name" attribute of the <a>, <applet>, <form>, <frame>, <iframe>, <img>, and <map> tags as deprecated (i.e., outdated) attributes.

[450] Section 4.10 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "HTML 4 defined the name attribute for the elements a, applet, form, frame, iframe, img, and map. HTML 4 also introduced the id attribute. Both of these attributes are designed to be used as fragment identifiers. . . . XHTML 1.0 documents MUST use the id attribute when defining fragment identifiers on the elements listed above.
     Section 12.2.3 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that (with <a> tags) the "id and name attributes share the same name space. . . . When both attributes are used on a single element, their values must be identical."

[451] Section 1 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that:
> When designing a document or series of documents, content developers should strive first to identify the desired structure for their documents before thinking about how the documents will be presented to the user. Distinguishing the structure of a document from how the content is presented offers a number of advantages, including improved accessibility, manageability, and portability.

Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006]), p.180, recommends that
> Semantic or meta-structural names (names that explain the function performed by elements contained within) are best. You would feel pretty silly having labeled a part of your site "orangebox" when the client decides to go with blue. You would feel sillier still revising your

(3) The value of each "name" attribute should start with a letter.[452]

National Guard *see Military (Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guard)*

Navajo language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

📖 **Navigation** *see also Accesskey attribute; Biographies #(3);Flags #(4); Linking; Printing; Privacy Policy #(2); and RSS*
    (1) When designing the main navigation, consider including navigation that targets audiences of particular interest to the office. See, e.g., the "Looking for Help?" section of the right-side navigation on Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama's website,[453] which targets military personnel, immigrants, seniors, small businesses, students, and veterans.[454]
    (2) The top banner should be a link to the homepage.[455] The alternative of using the top banner as a skip-navigation link means that either

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style sheets under a deadline six months from now and trying desperately to remember whether "Gladys" was a navigational area, a sidebar, a search form, or what.

[452] Section 6.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that:

ID and **NAME** tokens must begin with a letter ([A-Za-z]) and may be followed by any number of letters, digits ([0-9]), hyphens ("-"), underscores ("_"), colons (":"), and periods (".").

Section 4.1.3 of the W3C *Cascading Style Sheets Level 2 Revision 1 (CSS 2.1) Specification* provides that:

In CSS, *identifiers* (including element names, classes, and IDs in selectors) can contain only the characters [a-z0-9] and ISO 10646 characters U+00A1 and higher, plus the hyphen (-) and the underscore (_); they cannot start with a digit, or a hyphen followed by a digit. Identifiers can also contain escaped characters and any ISO 10646 character as a numeric code (see next item). For instance, the identifier "B&W?" may be written as "B\&W\?" or "B\26 W\3F".

[453] See also, the website of Rep. Vic Snyder.

[454] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 54) notes that:

The fundamental rule for the success of any communications effort, including an effective Web site, is to know your audience. Therefore, audience is the first building block. If you know and clearly define your audience, it will be much easier to select the content, the format, and the kinds of interactive and innovative features to provide for your users. Every building block that follows will be shaped by the users of your site.

The report (on pages 54 to 55) identifies two overarching audiences – newcomers and experts and then suggests the following as typical audiences:

- **Member offices:** constituents; reporters; activists; students and educators; and lobbyists.
- **Committee offices:** congressional staff; majority/minority staff; activists; lobbyists; and other professionals.
- **Leadership offices:** general public; reporters; party supporters on and off the Hill; congressional staff; and lobbyists and advocates.

The report (on page 56) also praises Rep. Thelma Drake's site for focusing on the needs of those in military service.

[455] Steve Krug, in *Don't Make Me Think* (2nd ed., 2006), page 66, notes that:

There's an emerging convention that the Site ID [– the site owner's branding in the site banner–] doubles as a button that can take you to the site's Home page. It's a useful idea that every site should implement, but a surprising number of users still aren't aware of it.

Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines, 2nd *edition, page* 35, (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), notes that:

- the "alt" attribute of the image does not contain the text in the image (e.g., "Congressman Jones, representing the 39th district of Delaware"); or
- the "alt" attribute gives no indication where the link goes to.

While it is possible that the "title" attribute in the <a href> tag could be used to indicate where the link is going, having conflicting "title" and "alt" attributes may be more complicated than assistive technology browsers can meaningfully process.

    Note: where background graphics constitute part of the banner, they should be part of the link to the home page.

(3) There needs to be a mechanism to allow users of assistive technologies to skip past the navigation links.[456] One approach to this is placing a clear gif (with an "alt" attribute of "skip to main content"[457]) before the first navigation button and making the image a hypertext link to the first piece of text after the navigation links.[458]

(4) At the bottom of the main content, consider having a link that goes back to the top of the main content.[459]

(5) Labels on navigation links should be personal/friendly, e.g.,

- "Where I Stand" (rather than "Issues")[460]
- "How I Voted"
- "How Can I Help You" (rather than "Constituent Services" or "Casework")[461]

Many sites place the organization's logo on the top of every page and link it to the homepage. While many users expect that a logo will be clickable, many other users will not realize that it is a link to the homepage. Therefore, include a link labeled 'Home' near the top of the page to help those users.

[456] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(*o*)) provide that for a website to be accessible, "[a] method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links." Checkpoint 13.6 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* similarly provides that accessible websites need to "[g]roup related links, identify the group (for user agents), and, *until user agents* do so, provide a way to bypass the group."

    The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 38% of screen reader users always or often use "skip to content" links whenever they are available.

[457] The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that – among screen reader users who had a preference between "skip to content," "skip to main navigation," and "skip navigation" as the text for such a link – 50% preferred "skip to main content," 39% preferred "skip to conent," and only 11% preferred "skip navigation".

[458] For alternative approaches, see:

- "'Skip Navigation' Links," WebAIM, Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University
- "Skip Navigation Links," by Jim Thacher

[459] For an example, see the website of the Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine.

[460] Another alternative is "My Work in Congress" – see Rep. Frank Pallone's website.

[461] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 45) notes that "'Casework' is Hill jargon. Constituents will better understand what the office can do if the Web site employs phrases such as 'Help with a problem you are having with a Federal Agency,' 'What this office can do for you,' or 'Assistance with a government problem,' rather than using the term 'casework.'"

- "My Background" (rather than "Biography")
- "Contact Me" (rather than "Contact" or "Send an electronic message")
- "Our District" or "My District" (rather than "The Second District")

(6) Where practical, supplement navigation buttons (or links) with relevant icons.[462] See, e.g., the website of Rep. Jim Jordan.

(7) In addition to having navigation buttons across the top or down the side, each page should have a text-only version across the bottom of the page.[463, 464]

(8) Each web site should include a site map.[465]

Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. uses "How I Can Help You". Rep. Ben Chadler uses "How Can We Help You?" and "Assistance with Federal Agencies". Rep. Spencer Bachus uses "Helping You" and "Help with Federal Agencies". Rep. Frank Pallone uses "How Can I Help".

[462] Checkpoint 14.2 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "[s]upplement text with graphic or auditory presentations where they will facilitate comprehension of the page."

[463] Checkpoint 10.5 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that "[u]ntil user agents (including assistive technologies) render adjacent links distinctly, include non-link, printable characters (surrounded by spaces) between adjacent links." A vertical broken pipe ("¦" - ¦) is often used as a divider between such links.

[464] It is especially important that this suggestion be implemented on any page (including splash pages) where the only navigational links are through <input> tags or by use of scripts. Having all navigation links only through <input> tags or through scripts can create problems for users of assistive technologies and for search engine indexing spiders.

[465] Checkpoint 13.3 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should "[p]rovide information about the general layout of a site (e.g., a site map or table of contents)."

The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 18% of screen reader users always or often use a site map when it is available.

Jakob Nielsen, in "Site Map Usability" (August 12, 2008), reviewing two studies done by his firm on site maps, notes that (in the general Internet community) use of site maps from 2001 to 2008 fell from 27% to 7%. He goes on, however, to note that:

> Seven years ago, **48%** of the 50 websites we surveyed had site maps. Today, **71%** of the 150 websites we surveyed had site maps and **59%** of the 56 intranets analyzed in our report on Intranet Information Architecture had site maps. Also, most site maps have become somewhat more usable during the time between our two research rounds.
>
> Despite the prevalence of good site maps these days, users don't use them very much. So why bother making a site map for your website? Because it can help users understand your site and what it offers.
>
> I still **recommend site maps** because they're the only feature that gives users a true overview of everything on a site. One could argue that a site's navigation serves the same purpose. For example, some navigation offers drop-down menus that let users see the options available in each site section. But even with these menus, users can see only one section of content at a time.
>
> A site map lets users see all available content areas on one page, and gives them instant access to those site pages. Site maps can also help users find information on a cluttered site, providing a clean, simple view of the user interface and the available content. Site maps are not a cure-all, however. No site map can fix problems inherent in a site's structure, such as poor navigational organization, poorly named sections, or poorly coordinated subsites.
>
> If site maps required a major investment to design, they wouldn't offer sufficient R[eturn] O[n] I[nvestment] to be worth doing. But because all of our guidelines call for site map simplicity, making a good one doesn't require a lot of work, and it will help some of your users. More importantly, it will **help users at a critical time**: When they are lost and might abandon your site if they don't get that last piece of assistance to find their way around.
>
> Site maps are a **secondary navigation feature** — . . .

(9) Consider making the first primary navigation button a link to the site's homepage[466]. The remaining navigation should be in alphabetical order, unless there is a reason not to do so.

(10) When the main content of a page is divided into multiple sections, consider having a jump menu near the top of the page and links to go back to the jump menu at the end of each section.

(11) The formatting of navigation links should be consistent throughout the site.[467]

(12) JavaScripts, VBScripts, and other scripts should not be used as the exclusive way to navigate to the pages on the website.[468] In addition to accessibility

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- They **don't hurt** people who don't use them.
- They do **help** a few people.
- They incur very **little cost**.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 40 and 95) identifies providing a site map as an element of a successful Congressional website. The report (pages 64 to 79) singles out the site maps on the websites of Reps. Patrick Murphy, Adam Schiff, Hilda Solis, the Science and Technology Committee, the House Republican Conference, and Sen. John Cornyn.

Kim Siever's "Spruced-Up Site Maps", A List Apart (March 30, 2005) suggests a non-boring layout for site maps.

[466] *Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 27) recommends that each page on a website include a "[d]irect, one-click link to the homepage". *Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines, 2nd edition, page* 35, (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), recommends that web pages "include a link labeled 'Home' near the top of the page".

[467] Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

> **Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site.** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn*'s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40), in its discussion of what are the elements of a successful Congressional website also notes that:

> Consistency and clarity are key; they are the most important contributions to an easily navigable site. Many users come into the site in ways other than through the homepage, so consistent tools will also broaden those users' experience and show them what else your site has to offer.

The report also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities". The report (pages 62 to 78) praises the consistent navigation on the websites of then-Rep. Tom Allen, and Reps. Brad Ellsworth, Patrick Murphy, Adam Schiff, and Hilda Solis, and the House Ways and Means Committee.

[468] Checkpoint 6.3 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should:

> Ensure that pages are usable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or not supported. If this is not possible, provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page. . . .

> > For example, ensure that links that trigger scripts work when scripts are turned off or not supported (e.g., do not use "javascript:" as the link target). If it is not possible to make the page usable without scripts, provide a text equivalent with the NOSCRIPT element, or use a server-side script instead of a client-side script, or provide an alternative accessible page as per checkpoint 11.4. Refer also to guideline 1.

problems that this causes, many indexing spiders (including the indexing spider used by the House search engine) are not able to follow scripted links.

(13) Where a portion of a website is made up of several pages (or subportions, e.g., the "Issues" portion of a website which might consist of an introductory page and then separate pages for each issue), consider providing links to each of the subportions from each of the subportions.[469]

(14) The navigation of a site should be designed with the goal that every page in the site is accessible from every other page in the site with no more than three clicks.[470]

(15) Avoid using drop-down navigation that is activated (and only stays activated) on a mouse over (or hover) – that type of navigation is difficult to use by people with motor and/or vision disabilities.   Instead of using drop-down navigation that disappears when the cursor is moved, either (1) require a mouse click (or equivalent) to open or close the menu, or (2) replace the drop down with a link to a separate page that explains the options formerly contained in the drop-down.[471]

(16) If the navigation is arranged vertically, the labels should be left-justified. Left-justified information is much easier to scan than right-justified information.[472]

(17) Where a web site has a section that is composed of multiple pages, each page within a particular section should have a visible link to every other page within that section.[473]

Nepali language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

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[469] See, e.g., the "Hot Issues" portion of Rep. Joe Baca's website.

   Prioritizing Web Usability, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 27) recommends including "links to . . . resources that are directly relevant to the current location, but don't flood the user with links to all site areas or to unrelated pages."

[470] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 53) recommends that Congressional websites should:

   Follow the "three click rule." To the degree possible, the information architecture of your site should allow visitors to get from any one page on your site to any other page in three clicks. This is especially important for frequently accessed sections and information, and less important for supporting information and document archives.

[471] *Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 202) notes that:

   Vertical dropdown menus have become a widely used navigational tool, mainly because they save space on screens with limited real estate. Over the years, users have learned to adopt to them. While dropdown menus have their advantages, they can also be problematic, especially if they are long. The longer the menu list, the more difficult it is to control. The further users must travel down the list, . . . [the] more likely they are to lose their place.

   It's often better to present long lists of standard hypertext format, where there's more room for descriptions that help people differentiate between the choices.

[472] For more information on this technique, see Jakob Nielsen's "Right-Justified Navigation Menus Impede Scannability" (April 28, 2008).

[473] See, e.g., the "Services" portion of the websites of Rep. John Adler, Rep. Bill Cassidy, Rep. Jason Chaffetz, Rep. Mike Coffman, Rep. Kathy Dahlkemper, Rep. Bill Fleming, Rep. Marcia Fudge, Rep. Alan Grayson, Rep. Brett Guthrie, and Rep. Debbie Halvorson.

Netscape *see Browser Compatibility #(1); <hr> tags #(1); Margins and Padding #(2); Social Bookmarking; and Tables #(3)*

Netvouz *see Social Bookmarking*

Newsletters *see Listserv and E-Newsletters*

Newsvine *see Social Bookmarking*

Northern Sotho language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Norwegian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Numbers *see Roman Numerals*

<object> tag[474] *see also Alignment; <applet> tags; Banners #(3); Centering; <embed> tags; and <param> tags*
  (1) The width of borders around objects should be set by style sheets,[475] not by the "border" attribute of the <object> tag.[476]
  (2) When setting a buffer between an object and surrounding text, do not use the hspace or vspace attributes of the <object> tag – instead use style-sheets.[477]
  (3) When using an <object> tag to display a multimedia file, include a "type" attribute, e.g., type="video/x-ms-wmv" for .wmv files.[478]

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[474] For an attempt at using the <object> tag so that works well across browsers, see Elizabeth Castro's "Bye Bye Embed, " A List Apart (July 11, 2006).

[475] Use the "border-width" style sheets property.

[476] Section 13.7.3 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "border" attribute of the <object> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[477] The "padding-left," "padding-right," "padding-bottom," and "padding-top" style sheets properties provide the functionality previously provided by the "hspace" and "vspace" attributes. Section 13.7.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "hspace" and "vspace" attributes as deprecated (i.e., outdated) attributes. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[478] Other "type" attribute values for the <object> tag include:

Office Hours *see Contact Information and Techniques #(3)*

onBlur *see Event Handlers*

onClick *see Event Handlers*

onFocus *see Event Handlers*

onKeyPress *see Event Handlers*

onMouseOut *see Event Handlers*

onMouseOver *see Event Handlers*

Op-eds *see Articles and Op-eds*

<optgroup> tags *see Forms*

Padding *see Margins and Padding*

📖 **Page Program**
  (1) Member offices should be encouraged to provide information about how to apply
        to become a Congressional Page.[479] Offices may want to include a link to the
        Page Program website maintained by the Clerk of the House,[480] or incorporate
        text from the site into their own site.

Extension	"type" attribute value
.asf	video/x-ms-asf
.asx	video/x-ms-asf
.nsc	video/x-ms-asf
.spl	application/futuresplash
.swf	application/x-shockwave-flash
.wax	audio/x-ms-wax
.wm	video/x-ms-wm
.wma	audio/x-ms-wma
.wmd	application/x-ms-wmd
.wmx	video/x-ms-wmx
.wmz	application/x-mx-wmz
.wvx	video/x-ms-wvx

[479] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 68) praises the website of Rep. Virginia Foxx for providing "substantive information on how to apply for . . . the congressional page program"
    Other examples of Congressional sites with information on the Page Program include the websites of Rep. Jason Altmire, Rep. Peter DeFazio, Rep. Mark Foley, Rep. Mark Green, Rep. Jeb Hensarling, Rep. Mike Honda, Rep. John Linder, Rep. Frank LoBiondo, Rep. John Peterson, Rep. Tom Petri, Rep. Ted Poe, Rep. Bill Shuster, Rep. Michael Turner, and Rep. Diane Watson.
[480] http://pageprogram.house.gov/

(2) The Page Program page should be linked to from both the Constituent Services page and from the Kid's page.

<param> tags

Each <param> tag should end with "/>".[481]

📖 Parents

Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with parents)[482] should be encouraged to include a page(s) on their website devoted to information for parents. See, e.g., the "Parents and Teachers" section of Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama's "Kids" page. Note that this page may be similar to the site's student information page – but with the information in an order oriented toward the needs of parents.[483]

PDF Files

(1) Links to PDF files, when practical, should indicate the size of the files.

(2) Any page that links to a PDF file should include a link to software that allows the file to be displayed.[484] Note that if the link to the software points to a non-House of Representatives website, an appropriate exit message needs to be given.[485]

(3) All input fields (including radio buttons and checkboxes) on a PDF should have a tooltip[486] explanation of what information should be provided in the field.[487]

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[481] Section 4.6 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "Empty elements must either have an end tag or the start tag must end with `/>`. For instance, `<br/>` or `<hr></hr>`." Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[482] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (p. 46) notes that "Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans' Affairs* website provides information on veterans' benefits for its key audience."

[483] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 39) notes that "One of the keys to a successful Web site is building it around specifically targeted audiences" and praises the "For > Parents" page on Rep. Dennis Moore's website.

[484] For instance, http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html.
   The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(m)) provide that "When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with § 1194.21(a) through (*l*)."

[485] The *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, § 5), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

> HIR will display an exit notice stating that users are leaving the House of Representatives prior to linking to a non-House of Representatives Web site. The exit notice will include a disclaimer that neither Members nor the House are responsible for the content of linked sites. Member offices maintaining their sites on the Public web server are required to incorporate the exit notice into their external links.

An almost identical regulation appears in the *Committees' Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, General, § 5). Instructions for implementing the exit message can be found at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → HTML → Exit Message to External Web Sites.

[486] Tooltips for input fields in a PDF perform the same function for PDF files as "title" attributes in <input>, <select>, or <textarea> tags perform in HTML files. (Note: PDF does not have an equivalent to the HTML <label> tag.)

(4) Each PDF file should include sufficient identifying material in its text so that it is clear to a viewer who arrived at the document through a search engine, what the document is.[488]

Phone Numbers *see Contact Information and Techniques #(6)*

📖 **Photo Album** *see also Linking #(7)*
   (1) When setting up the layout for a photo album (or photo gallery) consider making it interactive, e.g., these models:
   - [Ath Slide JavaScripted Photo Gallery](#)[489, 490]
   - [Simple Slide Show Photo Gallery](#)
   - [Hoverbox Photo Gallery](#)
   - [Joshua Ink CSS Style Photo Gallery](#)
   - [Leftish Photo Gallery](#)
   - [Toppish Photo Gallery](#)
   - [Lightbox2](#) (see, e.g., [Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee's photo gallery](#) — be sure to make the instructions keyboard oriented (using arrow keys), rather than mouse oriented[491])

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[487] [Checkpoint 12.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0*](#) provides that accessible websites should "[a]ssociate labels explicitly with their controls."

   The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([36 C.F.R. § 1194.22](#)(n)) provide that "When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues."

   The Social Security Administration's *Guide to Accessible PDF Documents and Forms* (April 2006), page 36, recommends that the tooltips for input fields on PDFs:
   - Include only enough information in the tooltip for users to know what input is expected and how to complete the field correctly,
   - Indicate form inputs which are required.
   - Indicate if special keystrokes are required to perform a function.
   - . . . should not state the input type or state [e.g., that this is a checkbox]; this information is passed programmatically to assistive technology.

[488] *Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 36), notes that:
   When we let users loose to go anywhere they wanted on the Web [to find the answers to research questions], they went to a search engine 88 percent of the time. Only in 12 percent of cases did they go straight to a Web site that they hoped would help them with their problem.

[489] As written, the [Ath Slide JavaScripted Photo Gallery](#) does not work when scripting is turned off – which is not compliant with regulation [36 C.F.R. § 1194.22](#)(*l*) of § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology."), To make the coding compliant, add (after the </script> tag): a <noscript> tag, followed by an ordered (or unordered) list of the links and captions of the photos, followed by a </noscript> tag. For an example, see Rep. Bill Delahunt's "[Art Discovery Contest](#)" page.

[490] The [Ath Slide JavaScripted Photo Gallery](#) allows HTML coding to be included in the photograph captions. If using this feature, only use single quotation marks to include attribute values – do not use double quotation marks. If you want to use quotation marks in the text of the caption, use the entity name, decimal representation, or hexadecimal representation instead of the actual character (e.g., use “ for an open double quotation mark, or ” for a double close quotation mark).

[491] [Checkpoint 9.5 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0*](#) provides that accessible web sites should:

- • [SmoothGallery](#)
(2) Consider dividing a Member's photo album into sections (including one devoted to recognizing constituents[492]). See, for instance, Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's photo album which is divided into "[Working for Nebraska](#)", "[Nebraska Breakfast Gallery](#)", and "[Nebraska Visitors](#)".

Picas *see Fonts #(2); and Layout*

PICS (Platform for Internet Content Selection) *see <meta> tags and <link> tags*

Pixels *see Fonts #(2); and Layout*

<plaintext> tags *see HTML*

Points *see Fonts #(2); and Layout*

Polish language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Political Language *see also Election Campaign material*
     The *[Committee's Congressional Handbook](#)* [(Web Site Regulations, Content](#), § 1*)*, issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that "The content of a Member's website: 1. May not include personal, political, or campaign information."[493] Some offices have adopted the policy of not using words such as "elected" on their website.

📖 **Polls and Surveys**
     (1) Offices should consider including polls or surveys on their website[494]

          Provide keyboard shortcuts to important links (including those in *[client-side image maps](#)*), form
          controls, and groups of form controls.
[492] The Congressional Management Foundation's *[Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age](#)* [(pages 21 and 25)](#) praises the "Highlighting Delawareans" page on Senator Tom Carper's website for "posting constituent photo galleries and congratulating constituents on their accomplishments"; and the website of Representative Richard Pombo for having "An extensive gallery of constituent photos". See also the ["Photo Album" on Rep. Marsha Blackburn's website](#).
     The Congressional Management Foundation's *[2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill](#)* [(page 83)](#) identifies including "photos of constituents on the home page" as an element of a well-formed Congressional website.
[493] The *[Committee's Congressional Handbook](#)* [(Web Site Regulations, Content](#), § a). issued by the House Administration Committee, provides an identical restriction on House committee websites.
[494] Instructions for developing polls and surveys (using HIR form_proc) are available at
http://onlinecao/webassistance/html/ht_survey.htm.
     The Congressional Management Foundation's *[2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill](#)* [(page 67)](#) recommends that Congressional websites:
          Let constituents' voices be heard through online surveys and polls: Online surveys and polls
          offer quick and easy ways for constituents to register their opinions. Constituents not only feel
          engaged by the Member's office, but the inclusion of survey questions can cut down on the
          amount of mail an office receives because constituents understand that their views have been
          registered. Of course, the more timely the survey questions, the more effective the tool.

(2) When using the "real time results" in a form_proc-based survey, the survey pages (including the view results page) should reside in the HIR Unix Web server.

(3) Surveys should indicate when they started and when the most recent response was received. (See, e.g., the "See vote results" link on the website of <u>Rep. David Wu</u>.)

(4) Offices should consider displaying the results of their surveys in graphic form (see, e.g., <u>Rep. David Wu</u>'s "Vote Results" page).

Pop-up Windows

Pop-up windows should not be used, unless there is a substantial reason to have them.[495] (One of the relatively rare instances when there is a substantial reason to use a pop-up window is with a link to an outside page that provides information that will be used to fill out a form – for example, a link to the U.S. Postal Service's <u>Zip Code Lookup page</u> when it is used to find a nine-digit zip code for a form that needs zip+4.)

Portuguese language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Postal Abbreviations *see Abbreviations and Acronyms; and Forms #(15)*

Postal Addresses *see Contact Information and Techniques #(6) and #(13)*

<pre> tags

Instead of using the "width" attribute in <pre> tags, use the style sheets "width" property (with the value set in ems).[496]

The report (<u>pages 32 to 40</u>) specifically praises the websites of <u>Rep. Marion Berry</u>, <u>Rep. John Linder</u>, <u>Rep. Jeff Miller</u>, and <u>Rep. Charlie Norwood</u> for their use of polls and surveys.

[495] <u>Checkpoint 10.1 [priority 2] of the W3C</u> *<u>Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0</u>* provides that "*<u>[u]ntil user agents</u>* allow users to turn off spawned windows, do not cause pop-ups or other windows to appear and do not change the current window without informing the user."

Prioritizing Web Usability, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (pp. 69 & 74) notes that:

> New browser windows, . . . [cause] problems for users who don't understand the concept of multiple windows. When possible, keep your Web site in the same browser window and ensure that the Back button works. Launching new windows on top of the parent window can stop many users from interacting with your site. For example, we've seen people accidentally click outside the parent browser window and bury the new window underneath it, then try to reopen the new window from the parent window and nothing appears to happen. They can't find their way back to the new window and conclude that the site is broken. . . .

> Users with many different types of disabilities have particular problems managing extra windows. People with motor skills impairments certainly don't relish having to struggle to click unwanted Close boxes. And low-vision users may not even know that a pop-up has appeared if they have zoomed in their screen magnifier to inspect a different part of the screen. Finally, blind users are severely impacted by the additional cognitive load of having to cope with multiple windows and remember what information was read aloud from which pop-up.

Nielsen and Loranger, however, do recommend an exception for PDFs and similar types of documents (pp. 70-71).

[496] <u>Section 9.3.4 of the W3C</u> *<u>HTML 4.01 Specification</u>* designates the "width" attribute of the <pre> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute. <u>Section 14.1 of the W3C</u> *<u>HTML 4.01 Specification</u>* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

Presidential Greetings *see Greetings*

Press Releases *see also Biographies #(1); Issues and Voting Information #(4); and WIDA*
  (1) Offices should be encouraged to have their press releases available on their website and to make them available in chronological order and in subject order.[497]
  (2) Offices should be encouraged to use WIDA for putting press releases on their site.
  (3) Press releases should have the same navigation links and banner as the rest of the site.[498]

Printing
  (1) Consider using a print style sheet that excludes the main navigation links and anything else that would not be relevant to a printed page.[499] If the banner is going to be excluded, be sure to add substitute in at least the name of the office where the banner was.
  (2) When specifying a serif font for screen display, consider specifying Times New Roman, rather than Georgia. When specifying a sans-serif font for screen display, consider specifying Arial, rather than Verdana. Georgia and Verdana were designed for screen display, whereas Times New Roman and Arial were designed for printing.[500]

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[497] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 46) observes that:

> The most important thing to consider is presenting the wealth of information the office produces in the most usable way possible. Virtually all offices already allow the press access to the most recent information by providing press releases arranged by date. But many users are interested in specific topics or issues. It is much more likely that they want to know the latest news or action on their topic of interest—say, the environment or the war in Iraq—than they want to see the last three press releases or floor speeches the Member has released. Organize all of the press resources by topic and type. Users are more likely to read articles and watch or listen to video or audio if they don't have to wade through an endless chronological list of unidentifiable files. While this meets the needs of the press, keep in mind that other key audiences, like lobbyists, academics, and interested constituents will also be served by this information.

The report (page 21) indicates that 96% of House websites provide press releases in chronological order and 35% of House websites provide press releases in subject order.

[498] Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

   The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

> **Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site.** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. *Sen. John Cornyn*'s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

   The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[499] For suggestions as to how to set up such a style sheet, see Eric Meyer's "CSS Design: Going to Print", published in A List Apart, May 10, 2002.

[500] For information on the history of the Georgia and Verdana type faces, see Daniel Will-Harris' *Georgia & Verdana Typefaces designed for the screen (finally)*.

Privacy Act Release Form *see Constituent Services #(4)*

📖 **Privacy Policy and Cookies** *see also Babel Fish*
   (1) Every website should have its own page setting out its privacy policy, i.e., how
        the office handles personal information that the office receives through its
        website. In addition to having a privacy notice written in English, there should
        also be a machine-readable (P3P) version of the notice.[501] A model privacy
        notice is set out in Appendix 6 of this document.
   (2) Ideally, there should be a link to the office's privacy policy on every page of the
        website.[502] At a minimum, the link should be in a clear and prominent place on
        the homepage and next to each form that requests personal information.[503] A link
        is not "in a clear and prominent place" if a click or mouse-over is required to
        display it.

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[501] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web
Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 40 and 95) identifies providing a privacy statement as an element of a
successful Congressional website.   The report (page 21) also notes that 61% of House Member, committee,
and leadership websites have privacy statements.
      The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web
Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 67) provides that "Privacy statements should be included on every Web site, but
currently only 55.49% of congressional offices provide them. They should be written in user-friendly
language that is designed to put visitors at ease about the information the site is collecting. If a Web site
requires the user's name and address before they can correspond with the office, the privacy statement
should explain why the information is being collected and what will happen to it later. It is especially
important to describe the steps that the office will take to safeguard any personal information it obtains."
   The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the
Information Age* (page 51) goes on to say that, "A good example to follow is that of *Sen. Debbie Stabenow
(D-MI)*. She posts an extensive privacy policy and her website is P3P-enabled. This means that when
users visit her site, their browsers will automatically check her policy against their preferences."
[502] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web
Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 21) notes that 51% of House Member, committee, and leadership websites have
links to their privacy statement on each page.
[503] The regulations issued pursuant to COPPA (the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act), set out at 16
C.F.R. § 312.4(b)(1), provide that:
         (1) *Placement of the notice.* (i) The link to the [website's privacy policy] notice must be clearly
      labeled as a notice of the website['s] . . . information practices . . .
          (ii) The link to the notice must be placed in a clear and prominent place and manner on the
      home page of the website . . .
          (iii) The link to the notice must be placed in a clear and prominent place and manner at each
      area on the website . . . where [users of the website] . . . directly provide, or are asked to provide,
      personal information, and in close proximity to the requests for information in such area.

The Federal Trade Commission's Federal Register statement issuing the Children's Online Privacy
Protection Rule (64 Fed. Reg. 59894) explains that:
      "Clear and prominent" means that the link must stand out and be noticeable to the site's visitors
      through the use, for example, of a larger font size in a different color on a contrasting background.
      The Commission does not consider "clear and prominent" a link that is in small print at the bottom
      of the home page, or a link that is indistinguishable from a number of other, adjacent links.

(3) Offices should be encouraged not to use cookies unless there is a "compelling need".[504] If an office does use cookies, the office should be strongly encouraged to provide notice of this in their privacy policy.

(4) Links to a website's privacy policy are **not** required to include a rel="privacy" attribute in the <a href> tag.[505]

Pseudo-classes *see Style Sheets #(4)*

Punctuation *see Apostrophes and Quotation Marks; and Quotations #(1)*

Punjabi language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Pushto language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Quotations *see also Apostrophes and Quotation Marks*

(1) Instead of using three periods to indicate an ellipsis (i.e., ". . ."), use the Unicode-compliant representation for an ellipsis: …

(2) The <blockquote> tag should be used for all indented quotations and should not be used for any other purpose.[506] Style sheets, not the <blockquote> tag, should be used to indent text that is not a quotation.[507]

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[504] There is a wide-spread misconception that Federal government offices are prohibited by law from using cookies (see, e.g., "White House Web Site Uses Forbidden Cookies Too," Associated Press, December 30, 2005, http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,180177,00.html). The regulations issued by the Office of Management and Budget pursuant to § 208 of the E-Government Act of 2002 (OMB Memoranum M-03-22, § III(D)(2)(a)(v)) permits the use of session cookies. It also permits the head of an agency to authorize the use of persistent cookies in that agency's website if the agency head declares there is a "compelling need" to use the technology and the site's privacy policy makes it clear what information is being collected, the purpose and use of the information, who will the information be disclosed to, and what will be done to safeguard the information. Nonetheless, given the public perception that it is illegal for government sites to use cookies, avoiding cookies may save a House office from embarrassment (see also "Hands in the cookie jar," by Declan McCullagh, CNET News.com, January 6, 2006, http://news.com.com/Infographic+Caught+with+hands+in+the+cookie+jar/2009-1028_3-6020368.html).

[505] To be compliant with § 6.12 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification*, Web pages that use the rel="privacy" attribute either in an <a> tag or in a <link> tag, should have the following attribute in the <head> tag:
          profile="http://lists.w3.org/Archives/Public/www-html/1997Sep/0046.html"

[506] Checkpoint 3.7 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should:
    [m]ark up quotations. Do not use quotation markup for formatting effects such as indentation. [Priority 2]
       For example, in HTML, use the Q and BLOCKQUOTE elements to markup short and longer quotations, respectively.
  Section 1 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further provides that:
       in HTML, even though the BLOCKQUOTE element may cause indented text in some browsers, it is designed to identify a quotation, not create a presentation side-effect. BLOCKQUOTE elements used for indentation confuse users and search robots alike, who expect the element to be used to mark up block quotations.

Reddit *see Social Bookmarking*

Reserves (Military) *see Military (Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guard)*

Reuse of Content *see also Browsealoud; Dates, Time, and Timeliness #0; File Names and Extensions #(1); Frames and Iframes; House Operating Status; Kids Pages #(2); Legislative Material #(1)and (2); RSS(2); Veterans #(1); Visiting Washington #(2); and WIDA #(5)*

(1) When an HTML page uses identical content in several places, consider using server-side includes, rather than Dreamweaver templates or libraries, or FrontPage Themes. Use of Dreamweaver templates or libraries (or use of FrontPage themes) requires that the entire site be loaded on to a local device in order to update content that is to be distributed throughout the site. With server-side includes, it is only necessary to have the one file being altered loaded on a local device.

(2) When using server-side includes, precede each include with a comment explaining the purpose of the include and follow each include with a comment indicating that that particular include has ended.

(3) Do not use <!--~!CMB--> or <!--~!CME--> tags within a server-side include.

Roman Numerals

(1) Roman numerals should be preceded by an <abbr> tag with a "title" attribute that indicates the meaning of the numeral; and should be followed by a </abbr> tag. For instance

World War <abbr title="Two">II</abbr>
Pope John-Paul <abbr title="the Second">II</abbr>

(2) Some Roman numerals are not readily distinguishable from other Latin numbers. Roman numerals for the number 2, for instance, when displayed in a sans-serif font looks like a Latin eleven. To avoid this sort of confusion, consider always styling Roman numerals with a serif font family. The common match-ups between serif and sans-serif fonts are:

sans-serif	serif
Verdana	**Georgia**
Arial	Times New Roman

For a more extensive list of serif/sans-serif match-ups, see Daniel Will-Harris' "Typefaces: that work together" at http://www.will-harris.com/typepairs.htm.

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[507]Guideline 1.3.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Information, structure, and relationships conveyed through presentation can be programmatically determined or are available in text. (Level A)".

Section F43 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* notes that an accessible web site should not use "structural markup in a way that does not represent relationships in the content". It specifically provides that <blockquote> tags should not be used with "text that is not a quotation to give it prominence by indenting it when displayed in graphical browsers."

(3) The Roman numeral representations set out as 2160 to 217F (i.e., Ⅰ to ⅿ) in the Unicode 5.0 Standard,[508] should not be used unless there is a substantial reason to do otherwise.[509]

Romanian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

RSS

(1) Offices using WIDA should be encouraged to make use of WIDA's RSS capability.[510] This capability allows anyone who subscribes to your RSS feed to be automatically notified every time you add a new WIDA document to your website.[511]

(2) If a website is using RSS, it is recommended that the site include a "What is RSS" page.[512] CAO-Web Solutions Branch-maintained "What is RSS" text can automatically be inserted using a server-side include or by using an iframe.[513] The "What is RSS" link should follow the links to the actual documents.

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[508] See http://unicode.org/charts/PDF/U2150.pdf.

[509] The *Unicode 5.0 Standard* (p. 499) provides:

> **Roman Numerals.** For most purposes, it is preferable to compose the Roman numerals from sequences of the appropriate Latin letters. However, the uppercase and lowercase variants of the Roman numerals through 12, plus L, C, D, and M, have been encoded for compatibility with East Asian standards. Unlike sequences of Latin letters, these symbols remain upright in vertical layout. Additionally, in certain locales, compact date formats use Roman numerals for the month, but may expect the use of a single character.

Additionally, Internet Explorer 6 (which, according to a July 9 to 15, 2008 CAO-WSB analysis constituted 30.30% of www.house.gov access) treats Ⅰ to ⅿ as unidentifiable characters. Browsealoud 4 does not honor Ⅰ to ⅿ, even if they are encapsulated by <abbr> tags (While Browsealoud 4 normally honors <abbr> tags, it does not honor them if they are only encapsulating blanks – Browsealoud 4 treats Ⅰ to ⅿ as if they were blanks).

[510] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 48. 49, and 95) identifies having an RSS feed as an element of a well-formed Congressional website. The report (pages 63, 64, 68, 69. 70, 73, 75, 79, 82) praises Rep. Xavier Becerra, Rep. Dan Burton, Rep. Mike Honda, Rep. James Linder, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, Rep. Ed Markey, Rep. Kevin McCarthy, Rep. Hilda Solis, Sen. John Cornyn, Sen Chris Dodd, House Republican Conference, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The report (page 21) also indicates that only 24% of House Member, committee, and leadership offices have RSS feeds.

[511] For more information, see "WIDA RSS Capability" at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → Tools → WIDA.

[512] Examples of "What is RSS" pages can be found at the websites of Rep. Marcy Kaptur, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, the House Administration Committee, and the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative.

[513] Websites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server (and do not use a virtual URL) are encouraged to use the server-side include:

```
<!--#include virtual="/include_content/rss.html" -->.
```

All other sites can use code along the lines of:

```
<iframe src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/rss.html" frameborder="0" scrolling="auto"
style="width:35em;height:50em;" title="What is Real Simple Syndication?" ><ul><li><a
href="http://www.house.gov/include_content/rss.html">What is Real Simple
Syndication?</a></li></ul></iframe>
```

Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the House's "What is RSS" page. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's website. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content*

(3) The homepage of any website with RSS feeds (and any pages that lead to documents that are the subject of RSS feeds) should prominently include an icon (that links to the RSS.xml page) in one of the following formats:

(a) [514]
(b) [515]
(c) [516]
(d) [517]

(4) Each page that is part of a website that has RSS feeds should include (between the <head> and </head> tags), for each RSS feed, a <link rel="alternate" type="application/rss+xml" /> tag with a "title" attribute that describes the feed and an "href" attribute that has the URL for the RSS XML file, e.g., <link

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Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 which provides that an accessible website should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

  Section 4 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further provides that:

> A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.
> Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:
> 1. navigation bars
> 2. the primary content of a page
>   . . .
> A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

  The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

> **Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site.** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. If you have a blue navigation toolbar on the left side of one page, there should be a blue navigation toolbar on the left side of every page. If you have links imbedded in text in one issue section, you should do the same thing in every issue section. *Rep. Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD)* uses the same horizontal and vertical navigation throughout his site. The only thing that changes on his pages is the content.

  The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[514] The RSS Advisory Board recommends using this icon.

[515] RSS

[516] RSS 2.0

[517] XML

rel="alternate" type="application/rss+xml" title="Headline news [RSS]"
href="http://www.house.gov/name/rss/news.xml" />.[518]

Russian language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Samoan language material[519] *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Schedule meeting with Member *see also Contact Information and Techniques #(4)*

📖 **Schedule of Member** *see also Contact Information and Techniques #(4)*
Offices should be encouraged to provide highlights of the Member's upcoming schedule.[520, 521] (Consider laying this information out calendar-style – see, e.g., the calendar of the Committee on Natural Resources (Republican Office).

Scholarships *see Student Financial Aid*

Screen readers *see Accesskey attribute #(1); Aural Style Sheets; Browsealoud; and Style Sheets #(3)*

Screen resolution *see Layout #(2)*

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[518] Pages with this tag, when viewed in Firefox, will show a special "live bookmark" icon in the URL area. Pages with this tag when viewed in Internet Explorer 7 will make the RSS icon active. The icon in both browsers becomes a drop-down list of available feeds that you can do with as desired.

[519] Rep. Neil Abercrombie's website includes a Samoan version of the Congressman's welcome message; see http://www.house.gov/abercrombie/welcomeletter_samoan.shtml.

[520] See, e.g., Rep. Mike Capuano's "Mike's Schedule" which provides a sampling of his schedule. See also, then-Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand's "Sunlight Report".

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 60 and 67) notes that

> Congressional Web sites can demonstrate accountability by providing voting records, rationales for key votes, and schedules – and they can do so without overburdening their staffs. Constituents are probably not interested in knowing about every meeting that takes place or every vote taken. Stick to the most relevant and current information: meetings with constituents, public Member appearances in the district or state, committee hearings, the House and Senate floor schedule . . .

> Most citizens do not understand, or are not familiar with, the intricacies of the congressional schedule. In our research with constituents, they assumed that their elected officials were golfing or on vacation when Congress is in recess. While there isn't much legislative activity to report during recesses, you can correct this misperception by posting a schedule of town hall meetings, reorganizing your home page content, or providing a preview of what the Member, committee, Leader, or Congress will be doing after the break. Every August we see scores of congressional Web sites that haven't been updated since mid-July. Don't let yours be one of them.

The report (on page 57) notes that only " 9.1% of Member sites had a district or state schedule and only 7.3% had such information posted within the last month".

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 48) identifies providing the Member's schedule as an element of a successful Congressional website.

[521] Rep. Cynthia McKinney's website used WIDA to provide her schedule.

Scripts *see also <applet> tags; <embed> tags; Event Handlers; Forms #(16); Navigation #(12); and <object> tags*

    (1) Wherever there is a script that conveys information – or where it conveys an important element of the website's design (e.g., when a script is used to present the website's banner) –, the <script> tag should be between the <body> tag and the </body> tag, and the </script> tag needs to be followed by:

        (a) <noscript>

        (b) information that will displayed to users who are using browsers that are not supporting scripts (this information should be the equivalent of what constituents using browsers supporting scripts would have received – it should be the information (or a link to it) and not merely a description of the information).[522]

- In the case of a script used to display multiple images, consider putting one of the graphics here. If appropriate, make that graphic a link to a separate page that displays all of the graphics.
- When possible, the information displayed to users who are using browsers that are not supporting scripts **should not** state that the user is receiving this message because scripting is not being supported. What it normally should do is provide the best equivalent of the material that the user would have received if scripting was enabled.

        (c) </noscript>

    (2) Every <script> tag should have a "type" attribute. Valid "type" attributes for <script> tags include, type="text/javascript" and type="text/vbscript". The "type" attribute performs the function that was previously performed by the

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[522] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(a) and (*l*)) provide that "A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content). . . . When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology."

    Guideline 1.1.1 of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

        All non-text content that is presented to the user has a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose, ... (Level A)

    Checkpoint 6.2 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should "Ensure that equivalents for dynamic content are updated when the dynamic content changes."

    Checkpoint 6.3 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should:

    Ensure that pages are usable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or not supported. If this is not possible, provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page. . . .

    For example, ensure that links that trigger scripts work when scripts are turned off or not supported (e.g., do not use "javascript:" as the link target). If it is not possible to make the page usable without scripts, provide a text equivalent with the NOSCRIPT element, or use a server-side script instead of a client-side script, or provide an alternative accessible page as per checkpoint 11.4. Refer also to guideline 1.

"language" attribute – the "language" attribute should not be used in <script> tags.[523]

(3) Unless there is a substantial reason to do otherwise, scripts should not be used to open windows.[524] (One of the relatively rare instances when there is a substantial reason to open a new window is to provide an outside page that provides information that will be used to fill out a form – for example, to access the U.S. Postal Service's Zip Code Lookup page when it is used to find a nine-digit zip code for a form that needs zip+4.)

Scroll Bars
    Scroll bars should look like scroll bars.[525]

Searching *see also Banners #(2); Dates, Time, and Timeliness #(3); File Names and Extensions #(3); Forms #(8); Legislative Material #(3); Navigation #(6) and (12); and PDF Files #(4)*

(1) Offices should be encouraged to include a website search capability[526] on all pages, in or near the top banner.[527] The search capability should

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[523] (Section 18.2.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "language" attribute of the <script> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute.

   The "language" attribute should not be confused with the "lang" attribute that specifies the human language of associated text (e.g., oui) or the "hreflang" attribute that specifies the primary language of a page being linked to, e.g.,

> Parliament of Canada

[524] Checkpoint 10.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that "*[u]ntil user agents* allow users to turn off spawned windows, do not cause pop-ups or other windows to appear and do not change the current window without informing the user."

   Prioritizing Web Usability, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (pp. 69 & 74) notes that:

> New browser windows, . . . [cause] problems for users who don't understand the concept of multiple windows. When possible, keep your Web site in the same browser window and ensure that the Back button works. Launching new windows on top of the parent window can stop many users from interacting with your site. For example, we've seen people accidentally click outside the parent browser window and bury the new window underneath it, then try to reopen the new window from the parent window and nothing appears to happen. They can't find their way back to the new window and conclude that the site is broken. . . .
>
>   Users with many different types of disabilities have particular problems managing extra windows. People with motor skills impairments certainly don't relish having to struggle to click unwanted Close boxes. And low-vision users may not even know that a pop-up has appeared if they have zoomed in their screen magnifier to inspect a different part of the screen. Finally, blind users are severely impacted by the additional cognitive load of having to cope with multiple windows and remember what information was read aloud from which pop-up.

Nielsen and Loranger, however, do recommend an exception for PDFs and similar types of documents (pp. 70-71).

[525] Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger's *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006, p.113, observes that:

> Unless your scrollbars *look* like scrollbars, users might not notice them. Unless your scrollbars *behave* like scrollbars, users might not know how to bring the content they want into view.

[526] For instructions for using the search engine provided for House websites through HIR, see http://housenet.house.gov/portal/server.pt?open=18&objID=602&parentname=CommunityPage&parentid= 20&mode=2&in_hi_userid=2&cached=true.

[527] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) identifies providing a functional search capability as an element of a

- have an input box where users can enter their search;
- have a button labeled "search" used to submit searches;[528] and
- produce a prioritized list of results on a new page.[529]

(2) Member websites that have a virtual URL should have the virtual URL on http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.shtml - as that page provides the list of URL that are spidered for the HIR search engine.

(3) The <isindex> tag should not be used to create search boxes or for any other purpose.[530] The <form> tag (along with <input>, <textarea>, and related tags) should be used to create search boxes.

(4) If the user is given the option of searching either (1) just the site or (2) a larger collection (e.g., the websites of the committees that the Member serves on, or all of the HOUSE.GOV domain), then the default should be searching just the current site.[531] See, e.g., the search box on Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's website, where the default is "Search This Site".

<select> tags *see Forms*

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successful Congressional website. The report (page 22) also notes that 63% of House websites provide search capabilities.

The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 51% of screen reader users always or often use the search functionality when it is available.

Prioritizing Web Usability, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (pp. 27 and 142) recommends that a search capability be provided in the upper right corner of each page.

[528] The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 96% of screen reader users use one of the following methods to locate the site search:

- Jump to the firms form element in a page
- Jump to the first text/edit field on the page
- Find the word "Search"
- Tab through page elements until the search form is encountered
- Read through the page contenht until the search form is encountered
- Jump to the first button on a page and go back one element.

Any of these approaches will quickly get the user to the search box if the search input field is in or near to banner and the submit button is labeled "search".

[529] Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger's *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006, p.140, notes that

The Three Things Users Expect from Search

- A box where they can type words
- A button labeled Search that whey click to run the search
- A list of top results that's linear, prioritized, and appears on a new page

Page 143 of the Nielsen/Loranger book notes that "When Search is not a box, users thend to overlook it."

[530] Section 17.8 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* and § C.6 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* designate the <isindex> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) element.

[531] Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger's *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006, p.143, recommends:

Don't offer the option of searching the entire Web. Web users already have their own favorite search engines, and when they want to search the Web, they'll go to those. Searching anything beyond your own site simply clutters up you pages. The only exception is if you have multiple Web sites. If so, a multi-site Search may be in order, but beware that it will complicate your user interface and reduce usability because people expect Web sites to offer single-site Search.

Serbian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Server-side Includes *see Reuse of Content*

📖 **Service Academy Nominations** *see also Forms*
- **(1)** Member offices should be encouraged to provide information about how to apply for a nomination to a service academy.[532]
- **(2)** The Service Academy Nominations section of a Member's website should include an application for requesting a nomination.[533] If the Member requires that the applicant sign the application, it is suggested that the form be HTML-based (instead of PDF), were the applicant would fill out the HTML-based application, press the "Generate Application" button, and the filled out application would be in a printable form without any navigation or anything else extraneous.[534]
- **(3)** The Service Academy Nominations page should be linked to from both the Constituent Services page and from the Kid's (or Student's) page.

Simpy *see Social Bookmarking*

Sindhi language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Site maps *see Navigation #(8)*

Skip-navigation links *see Accesskey attribute; and Navigation #(1) and (3)*

Slashdot *see Social Bookmarking*

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[532] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 45 and 95) identify providing instructions as to how to apply for a nomination to a service academy as an element of a well formed Congressional website. The report (page 82) praises Rep. Jim Langevin's "U.S. Service Academy Nominations" page for its "in-depth information and detailed guidance for young people seeking Service Academy nominations".

   Rep. John Linder's "Academy Nominations" page takes visitors step-by-step through the process and also includes a set of frequently asked questions.

[533] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 45) identifies providing "Service Academy Nomination applications and instructions" as an element of a successful Congressional website.

   The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 57) notes that:

> Many offices use their Web sites to direct constituents to contact them offline for the information and services they are seeking. Yet, people who choose the Web as their method of contacting a congressional office are doing so precisely because they prefer to have their needs met online. Respond to their needs accordingly, and you will find you have more satisfied "customers," at less effort and expense to the office than you ever thought possible.

[534] See, e.g., the U.S. Service Academy Nomination forms of Rep. John Adler, Rep. Steve Austria, Rep. John Boccieri Rep. Joseph Cao Rep. Bill Cassidy Rep. Jason Chaffetz

Slovakian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Slovenian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Small Businesses *see Business Assistance*

Social Bookmarking
   (1) Office should consider including social bookmarks on their site.[535] Sample coding for social bookmarks is set out in Appendix 1 of this document.
   (2) When using several social bookmarking icons together, be sure to proofread the result to avoid unintended messages. For instance, avoid placing the Facebook and YouTube icons next to each other –

Social Networking *see individual social networking services by name and see alsoBlogs; and Social Bookmarking*

Social Security numbers
     Offices should not request that users of their website send Social Security numbers by unsecured Web form or e-mail.[536] Where an office needs to have a Social Security number (e.g., for a Privacy Act release form or for a White House tour request), use a secured form.[537] If it is not possible to use a secured form consider using a form that will generate a document to be postal mailed (or faxed) to the office by the person filling out the form – see, e.g., Rep. Neil Abercrombie's casework authorization form.

Somali language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Spanish language material[538] *see Babel Fish; Disaster Preparation Information; Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

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[535] See, e.g., Rep. Buck McKeon's website.
[536] Item 21 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Checklist*, HISPUB 007.1.56, August 2008, provides that "All web forms must include direction for public users to not pass any sensitive data via the web form."
[537] Instructions for setting up secure forms are set out at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → Features and Scripts → Online Forms – Secure Forms.
[538] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 68) praises the website of Rep. Mike Honda for providing information in Spanish. Several Members of the House have websites that are completely or substantially bilingual (English/Spanish), including Rep. Jim Costa, Rep. Linda Sanchez, Rep. Loretta Sanchez, and Resident Commissioner Luis Fortuña.

Special Characters *see Character Entities*

Spurl *see Social Bookmarking*

StumbleUpon *see Social Bookmarking*

Strike-through text
 Either style sheets[539] or <del> tags, should be used to label struck-through text. The <s> tag or <strike> tag should not be used for this or any other purpose. [540]

📖 **Student Financial Aid**
 (1) Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with students, or with people who finance students)[541], that are hosted on an HIR Web server should be encouraged to include the CRS-maintained "Financial Aid for Students" page in their website. Offices not hosted on an HIR Web server should be encouraged to iframe the page.[542]

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[539] Use the "text-decoration: line-through" style sheets property.

[540] Section 15.2.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the <s> and <strike> tags as deprecated (i.e., outdated) elements.

[541] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (p. 46) notes that "Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans' Affairs* website provides information on veterans' benefits for its key audience."

[542] Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the generic "Student Financial Aid" page. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's website. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* which provides that an accessible website should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

 Section 4 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further provides that:

> A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.
> Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:
> 1. navigation bars
> 2. the primary content of a page
> . . .
> A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

 The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

> **Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page

(2) The Student Financial Aid page should be linked to from both the Constituent Services page and from the Kid's page.

Style Sheets *see also Aural Style Sheets; Browser Compatibility; Centering; File Names and Extensions #(5); Fonts; Graphics #(4); Headings; Layout; Lists #(1); Printing; Tables #(3); Tools for Validating Web Sites #(2); and Underlining*

(1) Websites need to be readable with style sheets turned off in order to comply with § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.[543]

(2) When using style sheets to create one or more columns of text, be sure to have padding between the left and right edges of the text and whatever is adjacent to the text.

(3) Be cautious when using @import to call up a style sheet, as Jaws (in default mode, prior to version 8) does not read style sheets delivered through @import.[544]

(4) When pseudo-classes are used in a style sheet, they should be in the order: link, visited, hover, active.[545] There is currently not agreement when precisely where the focus pseudo-class should be placed with respect to link, visited, hover, and active.[546]

(5) When assigning the name of a class (or the value of a "d" attribute), use the purpose of the data that will be in the class, not how the data is to be portrayed – the class name should indicate function, not form. For instance, "hotTopics" would be an appropriate class name, but "whiteOnRed" would not be an appropriate class name.[547] Note also that the value of each "class" attribute should start with a letter.[548]

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should follow the same pattern. **Sen. John Cornyn**'s Web site is a mode l of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[543] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(d)) provide that "Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet." A virtually identical standard is set out in Checkpoint 6.1 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0.*

[544] For more information on how Jaws interacts with style sheets, see "Does JAWS support cascading style sheets (CSS)?" Freedom Scientific (February 1, 2007).

The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 74% of screen reader users use Jaws.

[545] For a technical explanation of why this is needed, based on priorities within CSS, see Eric Meyer's explanation at http://meyerweb.com/eric/css/link-specificity.html.

[546] For more information on this issue, see http://www.webmasterworld.com/forum83/9334.htm.

[547] Section 1 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that:
When designing a document or series of documents, content developers should strive first to identify the desired structure for their documents before thinking about how the documents will be presented to the user. Distinguishing the structure of a document from how the content is presented offers a number of advantages, including improved accessibility, manageability, and portability.

Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006]), p.180, recommends that

(6) Unless there is a substantial reason to do otherwise, external style sheets should be used instead of internal or inline style sheets. Use of external style sheets (1) facilitates separation of form from function; and (2) facilitates consistency of presentation throughout the site.[549]

(7) External style sheets should always be used when the style sheet contains any of the following character strings:[550]

        <

        ]]>

        --

(8) Do not use HTML comments (e.g., <!-- text -->) to hide style sheets from older browsers, as XML-compliant browsers may treat the style sheet as a comment.[551]

Subcommittees *see Committee Assignments and Caucus memberships; and Committee Websites*

Support Office Websites *see "About" page*

Semantic or meta-structural names (names that explain the function performed by elements contained within) are best. You would feel pretty silly having labeled a part of your site "orangebox" when the client decides to go with blue. You would feel sillier still revising your style sheets under a deadline six months from now and trying desperately to remember whether "Gladys" was a navigational area, a sidebar, a search form, or what.

[548] Section 4.1.3 of the W3C *Cascading Style Sheets Level 2 Revision 1 (CSS 2.1) Specification* provides that:

In CSS, *identifiers* (including element names, classes, and IDs in selectors) can contain only the characters [a-z0-9] and ISO 10646 characters U+00A1 and higher, plus the hyphen (-) and the underscore (_); they cannot start with a digit, or a hyphen followed by a digit. Identifiers can also contain escaped characters and any ISO 10646 character as a numeric code (see next item). For instance, the identifier "B&W?" may be written as "B\&W\?" or "B\26 W\3F".

[549] Checkpoint 14.3 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible Web site should "[c]reate a style of presentation that is consistent across pages". Section 1 of the W3C *HTML Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* recommends that accessible Web sites "[u]se linked style sheets rather than embedded styles, and avoid inline style sheets."

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[550] Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Use W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

Section C.4 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition)* recommends "Use external scripts if your script uses < or & or]] > or --."

[551] Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Use W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

Section C.4 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition)* notes that "XML parsers are permitted to silently remove the contents of comments. Therefore, the historical practice of 'hiding' scripts and style sheets within 'comments' to make the documents backward compatible is likely to not work as expected in XML-based user agents."

Swahili language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Swedish language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Tables *see also Alignment; and Layout*
  (1) Row and column headings in tables should use <th> tags instead of <td> tags. Additionally, the <th> tag for each row heading should have a scope="row" attribute, and the <th> tag for each column heading should have scope="col" attribute.[552]
  (2) In complex tables (i.e., tables with nested column or row headings and subheadings), each heading (i.e., each <th> tag) should have an "id" attribute and each cell of the table (i.e., each <td> tag) should have a "headers" attribute that associates the cell with the appropriate headers.[553]
  (3) Style sheets should be used for layout, rather than using <table border="0"> tags.[554]

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[552] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(g)) provide that "Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables". A virtually identical standard is set out in Checkpoint 5.1 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0*.

[553] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(h)) provide that
   Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.
A virtually identical standard is set out in Checkpoint 5.2 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0*.

[554] Section F49 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* provides that:
   Although WCAG 2 does not prohibit the use of layout tables, CSS-based layouts are recommended in order to retain the defined semantic meaning of the HTML table elements and to conform to the coding practice of separating presentation from content. If a layout table is used, however, it is important that the content make sense when linearized.
One approach to replacing layout tables with style sheets is to use <div> tags with "class" attributes to invoke style sheets such as:
   .nav {float: left; width: 32%;}
   .maincontent {float: left; width: 32%; margin: 0 1%;}
   .supnav {float: right; width: 32%;}
In the example (for a 3-column layout), text in the "nav" class will appear in the left column, text in the "maincontent" class will appear in the middle column, and text in the "supnav" class will appear in the right column.
   Note: The total width is deliberately slightly less than 100% in order to make the layout compatible with various browsers that do not properly implement the CSS box model. This approach is suggested in Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006]), p. 297.
   Additional Note: Many of the Gecko-based browsers (including Firefox and Netscape 7) are unable to print more than one page of floated text. A solution to this bug suggested by Eric Meyer is basically to set up a **print** style sheet with "float:none". (See Eric Meyer's "CSS Design: Going to Print," published in A List Apart, May 10, 2002.) Keep in mind that the standard set out in checkpoint 3.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* that accessible websites should "[u]se relative rather than absolute units in markup language attribute values and style sheet property values." does not apply to printed output from a Web page – so it is permissible for a print style sheet to use fixed widths and fixed character sizes.

(4) Heights and widths within a table should be set with the style sheet "height" and "width" properties, not with the "height" and "width" attributes of the tags.[555]

(5) Rather than using the "nowrap" attribute to disable automatic wrapping of text in table cells, use the style sheets property "white-space:nowrap".[556]

(6) When using tables, consider including a sort feature.[557]

(7) Each <col> tag should end with "/>".[558]

Tagalog language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Tag Clouds
(1) Offices are encouraged to include tag clouds on their site.559

(2) Offices using tag clouds should provide a subject tag to every page in the site. Tagging only certain types of pages gives the user the misleading impression that clicking on an item in the tag cloud will connect them with all of the website's pages concerning that topic.

(3) Tag cloud subject tag(s) from a page should be included in the "contents" attribute of the page's <meta name="keywords" /> tag.

Tags (HTML)
(1) Every start tag must have a close tag (e.g., for every <p>, there must be a </p>. Every "empty" tag (i.e., tags that are self-contained, e.g., <area>, <base>, <br>, <col>, <frame>, <hr>, <img>, <input>, <link>, <meta>, and <param>) should

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For a strategy (and code) for setting up a 3-column layout with fixed-width columns on the left and right, a liquid center, and a full-screen width footer, see Matthew Levine's "In Search of the Holy Grail," A List Apart (January 30, 2006). **Note**, however, that the strategy in Levine's article does not work in Internet Explorer 5.5 – a WSB analysis of www.house.gov usage for July 9 to 15, 2008, indicates that IE 5.x constitutes 1.39% of the identifiable, non-robot access to the site. Additionally, Levine's approach uses the IE "star hack", which is no longer supported by IE starting with IE 7 (which constituted 46.32% of www.house.gov usage).

[555] Section 11.2.6 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "height" and "width" attributes of the <td> and <th> tags as deprecated (i.e., outdated) attributes. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[556] Section 11.2.6 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "nowrap" attribute as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[557] Instructions for implementing a sort function in a Web table can be found at Neil Crosby's "Standardista Table Sorting (A client-side JavaScript Table Sort)," Working With Me UK (February 26, 2006) and at Stuart Langridge's "Sortable: Male All Your Tables Sortable," As Days Pass By (April 2007). An implementation of the sort function can be found at the homepage of the Immigration Reform Caucus and at the videos page of Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama.

[558] Section 4.6 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "Empty elements must either have an end tag or the start tag must end with />. For instance, <br/> or <hr></hr>." Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[559] See, e.g., the websites of Rep. Mike Coffman, Rep. Gus Bilirakis, Rep. Martin Heinrich, Rep. Lynn Jenkins, Rep. Frank Kratovil, Jr., Rep. Ben R. Luján, Rep. Dan Maffei, and Rep. Tom McClintock.

end with "/>", e.g., <area alt="Smithfield" coords="1,1,10,10"
href="Smithfield.shtml" />.[560]

  (2) All tags must be completely nested – i.e., a tag that starts within an open tag/close tag pair, must itself be closed before the outer pair is closed – e.g., <div><p></p></div> is valid, but <div><p></div></p> is not.[561]

  (3) All tag element names must be in lower case ("<meta>" not "<META>").[562]

Tajik language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Tamil language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Technorati *see Social Bookmarking*

Telephone Numbers *see Contact Information and Techniques #(6) and #(13)*

Telugu language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

<textarea> tags *see Forms*

Text-only pages and sites

Having a text-only website, that parallels the content of the HTML version of the site, **does not** satisfy the requirement of providing an accessible website.[563]

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[560] Section 4.3 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that
    All elements other than those declared in the DTD as EMPTY must have an end tag. . . .
    CORRECT: terminated elements
      <p>here is a paragraph.</p><p>here is another paragraph.</p>
    INCORRECT: unterminated elements
      <p>here is a paragraph.<p>here is another paragraph.
  Section 4.6 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "Empty elements must either have an end tag or the start tag must end with / >. For instance, <br /> or <hr></hr>."
  Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[561] Section 4.1 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that:
    all the elements must nest properly.
    Although overlapping is illegal in SGML, it is widely tolerated in existing browsers.
    CORRECT: nested elements.
      <p>here is an emphasized paragraph.</p>
    INCORRECT: overlapping elements
      <p>here is an emphasized paragraph.</p>
  Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

[562] Section 4.2 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "XHTML documents must use lower case for all HTML element and attribute names." Checkpoint 11.1 [priority 2] of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* provides that accessible websites should "[u]se W3C technologies when they are available and appropriate for a task and use the latest versions when supported."

Thai language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Tigrinya language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Titles *see also Headings; Graphics #(5); Tables #(1)*
  (1) Each file should contain one (and only one) <title> tag. The <title> tag should be between the <head> tag and the </head> tag.[564]
  (2) The content of <title> tags should be unique for each page on the site, if practical.[565]
  (3) The words that convey the most information should be at the beginning of each title – preferably in the first two words.[566] While the name of the office should

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[563] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.22(k)) provide that
  A text-only page, with equivalent information or functionality, shall be provided to make a web site comply with the provisions of this part, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes.
Checkpoint 11.4 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that
  If, after best efforts, you cannot create an *accessible* page, provide a link to an alternative page that uses W3C technologies, is accessible, has *equivalent* information (or functionality), and is updated as often as the inaccessible (original) page. . . .
  Note. Content developers should only resort to alternative pages when other solutions fail because alternative pages are generally updated less often than "primary" pages. An out-of-date page may be as frustrating as one that is inaccessible since, in both cases, the information presented on the original page is unavailable. Automatically generating alternative pages may lead to more frequent updates, but content developers must still be careful to ensure that generated pages always make sense, and that users are able to navigate a site by following links on primary pages, alternative pages, or both. Before resorting to an alternative page, reconsider the design of the original page; making it accessible is likely to improve it for all users.
[564] Section 7.4.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Every HTML document **must** have a TITLE element in the HEAD section."
[565] *Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines*, 2nd edition, page 78, (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) notes that:
  Titles are used by search engines to identify pages. If two or more pages have the same title, they cannot be differentiated by users or the Favorites capability of the browser. If users bookmark a page, they should not have to edit the title to meet the characteristics mentioned above.
    Remember that some search engines only list the titles in their search results page.
[566] Checkpoint 13.8 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should
  [p]lace distinguishing information at the beginning of headings, paragraphs, lists, etc. . [Priority 3]
    Note. This is commonly referred to as "front-loading" and is especially helpful for people accessing information with serial devices such as speech synthesizers.
  Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger in their *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 276) note that:
  The main page title is especially important because it serves as the link to the page in search engine listings. Users speed through those listings, so your page title must convey your purpose in just a few words. Our eye-tracking studies show that users often read only the first words of the search listings, so it's no good to save your information carrying keywords for the end of the title.

not be in the first two words of the <title>, they should be included as part of the <title>.

(4) The content of the <title> tags should be as brief as practical.[567] For instance, instead of using:

> Service Academy Nominations | Congressman John Smith, Proudly Representing the 52nd District of Texas

try:

> Service Academy Nominations | Congressman John Smith, Texas 52nd District

(5) The content of the <title> tags should contain enough information to be meaningful when it appears as the title of the document in a search engine hit-list or when it appears in a browser status bar.

Tongan language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Tools for Validating Web Sites

In addition to InFocus, consider using the following free tools:

(1) W3C Markup Validation Service – will check for compliance with the W3C HTML and XHTML standards.[568]

(2) W3C CSS Validator – will check for compliance with the W3C Cascading Style Sheets standards (will only work on files that are compliant with at least one of the W3C[569] HTML or XHTML standards).

(3) W3C Link Checker – will test the links for unusual conditions, including 404 errors.[570]

(4) Vischeck – will simulate how images (or Web pages) look to people with different types of colorblindness.

(5) Contrast Analyzer – detects whether there is sufficient color contrast between the text and background colors.[571]

(6) Cynthia Says – checks for 508 compliance and for compliance with the W3C WCAG 1.0 standard. This is a good supplement to InFocus, because Cynthia

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[567] William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White's *The Elements of Style* (3rd edition, p. 23) points out that:
> Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell.

Krug's Third Law of Usability (set out on page 45 of Steve Krug's *Don't Make Me Think* (2nd ed., 2006)):
> Get rid of half the words on each page, then get rid of half of what's left.

[568] Section G134 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that web pages be validated.

[569] Other W3C validators are available at http://www.w3.org/QA/Tools/#validators.

[570] The default setting for the W3C Link Checker will test one page. To test an entire site, check the "Check linked documents recursively" box.

A downloadable version of the W3C Link Cheker is available at http://validator.w3.org/docs/checklink.html#install.

[571] The default setting tests according to the luminosity contrast ratio referenced in guideline 1.4.3 [level AA] of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 .

Says catches some accessibility problems that InFocus does not. (Be sure to check the box marked "Include the Alternative Text Quality Report").[572]

(7) ATRC Web Accessibility Checker - checks for compliance with the 508 standard, the WCAG 1.0 and 2.0 standards, as well as the German and Italian national accessibility standards. (Be sure to use the "change guideline" link to get to the page that specifies the standards that you are going to test against.)

(8) Readability Test – calculates the approximate grade level of the writing on a Web page using the Guuning-Fox Index and Flesch/Flesch–Kincaid Readability Tests (Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch–Kincaid Grade Level).[573]

(9) Web Accessibility Toolbar – provides an easy way to turn off style sheets or JavaScripts; resize browser windows; render pages in black and white; display headings and lists; test event handlers against accessibility rules; simulate a Lynx browser; simulate various vision disabilities; display language attributes; etc.

Tours *see Visiting Washington*

Tsonga language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Turkish language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Twitter

Offices that have a presence on Twitter[574] should consider not merely having a link to their content on twitter.com,[575] but displaying the content on their web site (see, e.g., the Twitter Stream of the House Republican Whip).

Typeface *see Fonts*

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[572] One option that Cynthia Says provides is to perform an analysis of the quality of "alt" attributes. The standards used by Cynthia Says to analyze "alt" attributes are set out at http://www.hisoftware.com/cc/altquality.htm. Cynthia Says also detects some deprecated attributes (e.g., "bgcolor" and "nowrap") as part of its WCAG priority 2 analysis.

[573] Section 5.1 of the W3C's *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0*, recommends that webmasters "consider using the Gunning-Fog reading measure" to implement WCAG 1.0 checkpoint 14.1 [priority 1], that accessible websites should "[u]se the clearest and simplest language appropriate for a site's content." Microsoft Word. Without specifying a particular test, Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger's *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006, p.34, recommends that websites written for adult audiences should be written at an 8th grade reading level.

[574] A list of Members of Congress who participate in Twitter is available at
  http://tweetcongress.org/officials/tweeting

[575] Regulations adopted by the House Administration Committee in 2008 provide that:

  In addition to their official (house.gov) Web site, a Member may maintain another Web site(s), channel(s) or otherwise post material on third-party Web sites.

  . . . .

  When a link to a Web site outside the Member's official cite is imbedded on the Member's official site, the Member's site must include an exit notice advising the visitor when they are leaving the House. This exit notice must also include a disclaimer that neither the Member nor the House is responsible for the content of the linked site(s).

Ukrainian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

📖 Unclaimed Property

On Member websites, consider including material concerning the Member's state's unclaimed property office. The National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators maintains a page that links to the offices of each state and territory at http://www.unclaimed.org/.

Under Construction *see also Layout #(4)*

"Under construction" icons and notices should not be used on Web page. If it is absolutely necessary to indicate that a page or feature is coming soon, then indicate when the material is expected to be there – even better, provide a Web form that people can use to request to be notified when the promised material has been posted.[576]

Underlining *see also Linking #(11)*

(1) Style sheets[577], not <u> tags, should be used to achieve underlining. [578]

(2) Do not use underlining for emphasis in normal text. Underlining should normally be reserved for hypertext links.[579] Text to be emphasized should be preceded by an tag and followed by a tag; and style sheets should be used to specify font weight, font size, and color.[580]

Upper case letters *see Capital letters*

Urchin *see Usage Statistics*

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[576] *Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 59) recommends:

> The main guideline for under-construction signs is to avoid them and not advertise features until you have them. If this is not possible, at least provide an estimate of when the information will be available. Even better, . . ., offer users the option of receiving an email announcement when the page goes live.

For a "history" of the use of "Under Construction" on the Web, see "The Construction Sign Museum" by Jeff Boulter.

[577] Use the "text-decoration: underline" style sheets property.

[578] Section A.3.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the <u> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) element. Section 14.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that "Style sheets . . . supersede the limited range of presentation mechanisms in HTML."

[579] Jakob Nielsen, in "Guidelines for Visualizing Links" (May 10, 2004) recommends:

> Don't underline any text that's not a link, even if your links aren't underlined. **Reserve underlining for links**. Because underlines provide a strong perceived affordance of clickability, users will be confused and disappointed if underlined text doesn't have an actual affordance to match this perception.

[580] One potentially legitimate exception to this standard (and even then, one to be used with care) is when you are reproducing text that originally existed as non-World Wide Web printed text. As Paul Ford notes in "Processing Processing" (September 2, 2003) (cited in Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (2nd edition, [2006], p. 175):

> When I'm publishing content from 1901 and it's in italics, it's in *italics,* not emphasized. Typography has a semantics that is subtle, changing, and deeply informed by history.

Urdu language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

URLs

The URL for every page of every House website (including the websites of Members, Committees, Leadership, Officers, and Support Offices) should begin with either WWW.HOUSE.GOV or should be in the style **OfficeName**.HOUSE.GOV where **OfficeName** is derived from the office's name.[581] Any office requesting a URL that does not conform to either of those styles must have written authorization from the Committee on House Administration (majority).[582]

Usage Statistics

Offices hosted on any of the HIR Web servers should be urged to examine their site's usage statistics through Urchin.

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[581] The *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, § 2), issued by the Committee on House Administration, provides that "Member's Web sites must be located in the HOUSE.GOV host-domain . . ." The *Handbook* (Web Sites, Name (URL)) further provides that:

> The URL name for an official Web site located in the HOUSE.GOV domain must be recognizably derivative or representative of the name of the Member or the name of the office sponsoring the Web site.
> The URL name for an official Web site located in the HOUSE.GOV domain may not:
> 1. Be a slogan.
> 2. Imply in any manner that the House endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service.

The *Committees' Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, General, § 3) likewise provides that "Web sites must be located in the HOUSE.GOV host-domain . . ." and (in Web Site Regulations, Name (URL)) that:

> 1. The URL name for an official Web site located in the HOUSE.GOV domain must be recognizably derivative or representative of the name of the committee.
> 2. The URL name may not be a slogan or imply in any manner that the House endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service.

Section 3.1 of *House IT Policy 003.0*: *The United States House of Representatives Information Technology Policy for Official Domain Names*, December 2008 (approved by the Committee on House Administration, January 22, 2009) indicates that ServiceName.house.gov is to be treated as the equivalent of OfficeName.house.gov.

[582] Section 3.4 of *House IT Policy 003.0*: *The United States House of Representatives Information Technology Policy for Official Domain Names*, December 2008 (approved by the Committee on House Administration, January 22, 2009) provides that:

> The Committee on House Administratoin must approve all requests for a domain name that does not conform to the standard naming convention.

Appendix A of the policy, however, sets out a list of pre-existing House office URLs that did not conform to the standards in the handbooks and provides that :

> The following domain names have been granted prior exception to House policies related to domain name conventions and are "grandfathered" from the domain name convention established herein. No other domain name exceptions will be approved.

In July of 2006 (prior to the adoption of House IT Policy 003.0), the House Administration Committee rejected a request from the Clerk to establish a lobbying.house.gov domain, but did approve lobbyingdisclosure.house.gov. Footnote 1 of House IT Policy 003.0 notes that:

> An exception to this restriction is that Officers of the House may request domain names to support the House as an institution, or to provision a mandated service to the House or to the general public. Existing examples of this exception include mail.house.gov and lobbydisclosure.house.gov.

USA.gov *see FirstGov*

U.S. Code[583]

   (1) Whenever a section of the U.S. Code is referred to on a Web page, it is recommended that the reference link to the full text of the section.[584]

   (2) URLs for individual sections of the U.S. Code should normally be in the format

   http://uscode.house.gov/quicksearch/get.plx?title=**TT**&section=**SS**

   where **TT** is replaced with the title number[585] and **SS** is replaced with the section number[586]. For example, the URL for the Privacy Act (which is title 5, section 552a of the U.S. Code) would be:

   http://uscode.house.gov/quicksearch/get.plx?title=5&section=552a

   (3) When a U.S. Code citation is given in legal citation style (e.g., 5 U.S.C. § 552a),

   (a) The citation should be preceded with a <cite> tag and followed by a </cite> tag;

   (b) Within the <cite> tags should be an <a href> tag linking the citation to the text of the U.S. Code section;

   (c) the <a href> tag should include rel="citation" attribute; and

   (d) the <a href> tag should also include a "title" attribute with a value that expands the citation shorthand into text, e.g.,

   <cite><a rel="citation"
   href="http://uscode.house.gov/quicksearch/get.plx?title=5&section=552a
   " title="title 5, section 552a of the United States Code">5 U.S.C. §
   552a</cite>

   (Note, that "§" will display as a section symbol, i.e., "§". It may also be necessary to use a style sheet to control the appearance of the citation (using the rel="citation" attribute, because browsers often assign an italic default to <cite> tags – whereas, U.S. Code citations are normally not intended to be displayed in italic.)

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[583] The U.S. Code is the official, subject-matter order, compilation of the Federal statutes (currently in force), of a general and permanent nature, The U.S. Code is compiled by the Office of the Law Revision Counsel of the U.S. House of Representatives. For more information, see http://uscode.house.gov/about/info.shtml.

[584] *Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines*, 2nd edition, page 10, (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), identifies providing "citatons and references" as one of the elements that project credibility in a website.

[585] U.S. Code title numbers run from 1 to 50. For a list of the subjects covered by each of the 50 titles, see http://uscode.house.gov/download/ascii.shtml.

[586] U.S. Code section numbers can include numerals, lower case letters, upper case letters, and up to one dash, e.g., "123456aaaa-2b". For these purposes, section numbers do not include material in parentheses, e.g., "(c)(3)" in "501(c)(3)" – in this instance the "(c)(3)" indicates that this is subsection "(c)(3)" of section 501.

Uzbek language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Validation Tools *see Tools for Validating Web Sites*

VBScript *see Forms #(16) and (17); Navigation #(12); and Scripts*

vCard *see Contact Information and Techniques #(13)*

📖 Veterans

(1) Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with veterans)[587] should be encouraged to include a page(s) on their website devoted to veterans' benefits.[588] The text of a CAO-Web Solutions Branch-maintained FAQ that links to appropriate pages on the websites of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Archives and Records Administration can automatically be inserted using a server-side include or by using an iframe.[589]

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[587] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (p. 46) notes that "Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans' Affairs* website provides information on veterans' benefits for its key audience."

[588] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (p. 42) sites the veterans section of Rep. Mike Honda's website as a good example of using a website to build relations with veterans. The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 39) also praises the veterans page on Rep. Dennis Moore's website.

[589] Websites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server (and do not use a virtual URL) are encouraged to use the server-side include along the lines of:

        `<ul><!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Veterans_content.htm" --></ul>`

  All other sites can use code along the lines of:

        `
<iframe src="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Veterans_content.htm" frameborder="0" scrolling="auto" style="width:35em;height:15em;" title="Veterans benefits frequently asked questions" >
Veterans benefits frequently asked questions
</iframe>
`

  Using the `<include>` or `<iframe>` is preferable to just linking to http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Veterans_content.htm. Using `<include>` or `<iframe>` retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's website. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* which provides that an accessible website should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

  Section 4 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further provides that:

> A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.
> Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:
> 1. navigation bars
> 2. the primary content of a page
> . . .

(2) The Library of Congress' Veterans History Project[590] is attempting to collect and preserve stories of wartime service of veterans of

- World War I (1914-1920),
- World War II (1939-1946),
- Korean War (1950-1955),
- Vietnam War (1961-1975),
- Persian Gulf War (1990-1995), and
- Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts (2001-present).

Consider, on Member websites (and on the websites of other House offices that deal regularly with veterans)[591], including either a link to the Project[592] or providing a form on the Member's website that constituents can use to participate in the Project (see. e.g., the "Fifth District War Heroes Project" portion of the "Veterans" page on Rep. Steve King's website).

(3) On Member websites (and on the websites of other House offices that deal regularly with veterans)[593], consider including a link to the Department of Veterans Affairs' National Gravesite Locator.[594]

(4) On Member websites, consider including a link to the office of veterans affairs of the Member's state.[595]

A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site: Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. **Sen. John Cornyn**'s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[590] Created by Pub. L. 106-380.

[591] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (p. 46) notes that "Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans' Affairs* website provides information on veterans' benefits for its key audience."

[592] http://www.loc.gov/vets/

[593] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (p. 46) notes that "Committees and leadership offices with natural constituencies can also provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans' Affairs* website provides information on veterans' benefits for its key audience."

[594] http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1

[595] A list of state offices of veterans affairs (with links to their websites) is available from the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs.

(5) Where there are facilities of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in (or near) a Member's district, the office should be encouraged to include information about the facilities (or at least links to their websites).[596, 597]

Vietnamese language material[598] *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

📖 **Visiting Washington** *see also Federal Bureau of Investigation tours; and Newseum*
   (1) Member offices should be encouraged to include a secure form[599] on their website for constituents to request tours of the U.S. Capitol building and other Washington, DC landmarks and attractions.[600]
   (2) Rather than linking to the CAO-Web Solutions Branch-maintained "Washington, DC – Tourist Information" page and/or the CAO-Web Solutions Branch-

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Note: the Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 45 and 95) identifies providing information about state and local resources as an element of a successful Congressional website.

[596] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 24) notes that "Too many congressional Web sites are generic — they fail to reflect the personality of the Member and the distinctiveness of the district or state."

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 95) identifies having "information about local or district resources" as an element of a well-formed Congressional website.

[597] Information on local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities is available at http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1.

[598] Rep. Mike Honda's website includes some pages in Vietnamese. See, e.g., http://honda.house.gov/biography_viet.shtml, http://honda.house.gov/welcomemessage-viet.shtml, and http://honda.house.gov/helpwithfederalagencies-viet.shtml.

[599] Instructions for using CAO-Web Solutions Branch's form_proc software to create tour request forms are available on HouseNet at Technology → Web Solutions → Features and Scripts → Create a Congressional Tour Form. Instructions for making this form secure are set out on HouseNet at Technology → Web Solutions → Features and Scripts → Online Forms – Secure Forms.

Form_proc is the software suggested in Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age*, (p. 57): "House offices can also simplify their e-mail management by utilizing the customized Web-based forms available from House Information Resources (i.e. for tour requests, scheduling requests, casework, feedback, etc.)."

The importance of Congressional offices keeping personal information about constituents secure was highlighted in Baltimore radio station WBAL's November 14, 2007, investigative report "White House Tours Could Lead to Identity Theft".

[600] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 40, 45, and 95) identifies providing tour information and request forms as an element of a successful Congressional website; and notes (page 50) that "On the best sites on Capitol Hill, all of the content is synthesized, overlapped, and cross-referenced. Constituent services sections contain communications tools for users to start the process of casework, or request a tour."   The report (page 21) also notes that 51% of House websites provide search capabilities. The report (pages 67 to 82) singles out the tour request pages on the websites of Rep. Mike Ferguson and then-Rep. Dave Weldon.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 57) observes that:

> Many offices use their Web sites to direct constituents to contact them offline for the information and services they are seeking. Yet, people who choose the Web as their method of contacting a congressional office are doing so precisely because they prefer to have their needs met online. Respond to their needs accordingly, and you will find you have more satisfied "customers," at less effort and expense to the office than you ever thought possible.

maintained "Visiting DC" page, offices should be encouraged to place the text of either or both those pages into a page on their own website (by using a server-side include or an iframe).[601]

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[601] To capture the text of the Tourist Information page, websites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server (and do not use a virtual URL) can use the server-side include:

```
<!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Tour_dc_content.htm" -->
```

All other sites can use code along the lines of:

```
<iframe src="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Tour_dc_content.htm"
scrolling="auto" style="width:35em; height:250em;" title="Washington DC tourist
information"><ul><li><a href="http://www.house.gov/house/tour_dc.shtml">Washington, DC
tourist information</a></li></ul></iframe>
```

To capture the text of the Visiting DC page, websites that are hosted on the HIR UNIX server (and do not use a virtual URL) can use the server-side include:

```
<!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Visitor_content.htm" -->
```

All other sites can use code along the lines of:

```
<iframe src="http://www.house.gov/house/subpage_content/Visitor_content.htm "
scrolling="auto" style="width:35em; height:50em;" title="Visiting Washington DC"><ul><li><a
href="http://www.house.gov/house/Visitor.shtml">Visiting Washington,,
DC</a></li></ul></iframe>
```

Using the <include> or <iframe> is preferable to just linking to the House's "Washington DC Tourist Information" or "Visiting Washington, DC" pages. Using <include> or <iframe> retains the consistent look and feel of the rest of the office's website. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* which provides that an accessible website should "[u]se navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

Section 4 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further provides that:

> A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.
> Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:
> 1. navigation bars
> 2. the primary content of a page
> . . .
> A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

> **Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site:** Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. **Sen. John Cornyn**'s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

(3) Links to external sites for this portion of a website should normally go to the external sites' tour (or visitor) page, rather than to their home page (e.g., go to http://www.supremecourtus.gov/visiting/visiting.html, rather than to http://www.supremecourtus.gov/).

Voice *see Multimedia files and Audio files; and Word Choice*

Voting Information *see Issues and Voting Information*

📖 **Waste**

   Offices may want to consider including a page on what they are doing to combat waste. See, e.g., Rep. Tom Feeney's "Washington Waste Watchers" page.[602]

Web Designer *see Commercial References*

Welcome Messages *see Homepage*

White House tours *see Visiting Washington*

WIDA *see also Blogs; Events Schedule; Floor Statements; Issues and Voting Information #(2); Press Releases; and Schedule of Member*

(1) Because WIDA-generated pages (including index pages) reside in a different directory than the rest of the website, it is important to verify that any relative links (including relative graphic links) still work, once site is on the production Web server.

(2) Where you have a link with a date range, be sure the documents linked to really conform to the date range.

(3) Offices using WIDA should be encouraged to use the WIDA "issues" feature[603] to:

   (a) generate a WIDA list page that is in issue order;[604] and

   (b) place a WIDAinc[605] on each of the pages in the "issues" section of their website that deal with the issues broken out by WIDA issue category.

(4) When using a WIDAinc with the "More" option, make use of the "Template" option and include in the template something along the lines of: <a

---

[602] See also the "Submit a Tip about Government Waste" page of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security Subcommittee, Republican Office.

[603] For more information on WIDA's "issues" feature, see at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → Tools → WIDA → WIDA Issues Feature.

[604] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 60) notes that "Most of our award-winning sites keep their press releases up-to-date and organized chronologically and by topic as well." The report (page 17) also notes that, at the time it was compiled, only 28.1% of House Member, committee, and leadership websites provided press releases organized by topic.

[605] Instructions for WIDAinc can be found at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → Tools → WIDA → WIDA Include (WIDAinc).

href="{HTMLFILE_LINK}" title="full text of the press release of {DATEL}">. [606, 607]

(5) Documents generated through WIDA should use navigation, banners, and footers that are identical with the rest of the website.[608] Use server-side includes to

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[606] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) recommends that "Links should be descriptive and clear enough that the user can tell where it leads."

Checkpoint 13.1 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should:

> Clearly identify the target of each link. [Priority 2]
> *Link text* should be meaningful enough to make sense when read out of context -- either on its own or as part of a sequence of links. Link text should also be terse.
> For example, in HTML, write "Information about version 4.3" instead of "click here". In addition to clear link text, content developers may further clarify the target of a link with an informative link title (e.g., in HTML, the "title" attribute).

Note that the Jaws screen reader can be configured so that it will read which ever is larger – the text of the link or the value of the "title" attribute. (The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), indicates that 74% of screen reader users use Jaws; and 23% use Window-Eyes.)

An alternative technique to using the "title" attribute, that has been suggested is to put the additional information within <span> tags and give the tag a class (e.g. class="hidden"), where the class places the text off screen and minimizes the size (e.g., position:absolute;left:-999em; font-size:1%).

A technique to avoid at the current time is adding the additional text to the link in a <span> with a class value that has a media="screen" style sheet with a display:none property and a media="aural" (or a media="speech") style sheet without the display:none property. The Jaws screen reader uses the screen style sheet (and not the aural (or speech) style sheet) to build its audio output. (See also, Gez Lemon's "Screen Readers and display:none," Juicy Studio (October 12, 2007), for an apparent bug in how Jaws and Window-Eyes processes the "display:none" property.)

[607] Using <a href="{HTMLFILE_LINK}" title="**{TITLE}**"> is discouraged because the **{TITLE}** field may include a quotation mark that may be interpreted as the end of the "title" attribute of the <a> tag.

[608] Checkpoint 13.4 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should "Use navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner."

Section 4 of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* further provides that:

> A consistent style of presentation on each page allows users to locate navigation mechanisms more easily but also to skip navigation mechanisms more easily to find important content. This helps people with learning and reading disabilities but also makes navigation easier for all users. Predictability will increase the likelihood that people will find information at your site, or avoid it when they so desire.
>
> Examples of structures that may appear at the same place between pages:
> 1. navigation bars
> 2. the primary content of a page
> . . .
> A navigation mechanism creates a set of paths a user may take through your site. Providing navigation bars, site maps, and search features all increase the likelihood that a user will reach the information they seek at your site. If your site is highly visual in nature, the structure might be harder to navigate if the user can't form a mental map of where they are going or where they have been. To help them, content developers should describe any navigation mechanisms. It is crucial that the descriptions and site guides be accessible since people who are lost at your site will rely heavily on them.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) recommends that Congressional websites should:

provide those features. With that technique, future changes in the website's design (including file names, navigation links, banners, and footers) will not require republishing all of the WIDA documents in order to keep the navigation functioning properly.

(6) When displaying WIDA index information, consider setting the information up in table form, with sort functionality. See, e.g., the "News" page of the Immigration Reform Caucus.

Wists *see Social Bookmarking*

Wolof language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

Word Choice *see also Jargon*

(1) Use a consistent voice throughout a website. For instance – unless there is an important reason to do otherwise – do not refer the Member as "I" in the biography, but as "Rep. Jones" in the rest of the website.[609] By the same token, use words consistently throughout the site – for instance, do not use "signup" in one place, but "sign-up" in another.[610]

(2) The words that convey the most information should be at the beginning of each sentence and paragraph.[611]

Keep your format and navigation consistent on every page of your site: Don't force your audience to learn new formatting and navigational rules on every page of your site. Each page should follow the same pattern. ***Sen. John Cornyn***'s Web site is a model of clearly and consistently organized information. The menu headers and options are clear, and they stay the same throughout the site.

   The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) also notes that "maintaining consistent design and navigation" is an important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[609] *Checkpoint 14.3 [priority 3] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that an accessible website should "[c]reate a style of presentation that is consistent across pages".

[610] Section 7.14 of the *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual* (2000) recommends using "signup".

[611] *Checkpoint 13.8 [priority 3] of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "[p]lace distinguishing information at the beginning of headings, paragraphs, lists, etc."

   Section 5.1(2) of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* recommends:

> State the topic of the sentence or paragraph at the beginning of the sentence or paragraph (this is called "front-loading"). This will help both people who are skimming visually, but also people who use speech synthesizers. "Skimming" with speech currently means that the user jumps from heading to heading, or paragraph to paragraph and listens to just enough words to determine whether the current chunk of information (heading, paragraph, link, etc.) interests them. If the main idea of the paragraph is in the middle or at the end, speech users may have to listen to most of the document before finding what they want. Depending on what the user is looking for and how much they know about the topic, search features may also help users locate content more quickly.

   Jakob Nielsen's article "F-Shaped Pattern For Reading Web Content" (April 17, 2006), based on a study of the eye movements of 232 website users, recommends that Web designers:

(3) To the extent practical, try to convey one idea per paragraph.[612]

(4) Use the clearest and simplest language appropriate to convey the message.[613] When a simple word and a complex word would both convey the same meaning, use the simple word – unless there is a substantial reason to do otherwise.[614]

(5) Use active voice, rather than passive voice.[615]

(6) Use simple sentence structure – rather than complex sentence structure – when practical.[616]

Write Your Representative *see Contact Information and Techniques #(1)*

WS_FTP software

When using WS_FTP software to transfer files to a website, the "Enable log" option should not be on. This is an important security matter, because files with ".log" extensions (e.g., ws_ftp.log) should not be contained in any directory within a House website – even if there are no links to it. The verify that "Enable log" is no on, press the "Options" button on WS_FTP – the "Enable log" checkbox should not be checked.

XHTML version *see <!DOCTYPE> declarations*

Start subheads, paragraphs, and bullet points with information-carrying words that users will notice when scanning down the left side of your content . . . . They'll read the third word on a line much less often than the first two words.

[612] Section 5.1(3) of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* recommends "Limit each paragraph to one main idea."

[613] Checkpoint 14.1 [priority 1] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Use the clearest and simplest language appropriate for a site's content."

Readability Test calculates the approximate grade level of the writing on a Web page using the Guuning-Fox Index and Flesch/Flesch–Kincaid Readability Tests (Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch–Kincaid Grade Level. Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger's *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006, p.34, recommends that websites written for adult audiences should be written at an 8th grade reading level.

[614] Section 5.1(5) of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* recommends "Favor words that are commonly used. For example, use 'begin' rather than 'commence' or use 'try' rather than 'endeavor.'"

Prioritizing Web Usability, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 80) observes that:

One of the biggest problems on the Web is that companies don't want to come clean and say what they are doing in plainspoken language on their sites. This continues to be critical because Web users are extremely impatient and allocate so little time to each page. The more florid the descriptions, the more users tune them out and go elsewhere. It's essential to quickly state what you are offering users and what's in it for them.

As William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White's *The Elements of Style* (3rd edition, p. 76) puts it:

Avoid the elaborate, the pretentious, the coy, and the cute. Do not be tempted by a twenty-dollar word when there is a ten-center handy, ready and able.

[615] Section 5.1(6) of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* recommends "Use active rather than passive verbs."

As William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White's *The Elements of Style* (3rd edition, p. 18) puts it:

The active voice is usually more direct and vigorous than the passive:

I shall always remember my first visit to Boston.

This is much better than

My first visit to Boston will always be remembered by me.

The latter sentence is less direct, less bold, and less concise.

[616] Section 5.1(7) of the W3C *Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* recommends "Avoid complex sentence structures."

XML prolog

Avoid use of the XML prolog (e.g., <?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>) because it will cause Internet Explorer 6 (Windows) and Opera 7 to go into quirks mode instead of standards mode (even with a valid <!DOCTYPE> declaration).[617]

<xmp> tags *see HTML*

Yahoo *see Maps and Directions; and Social Bookmarking*

Yoruba language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

YouTube *see also Multimedia Files and Audio Files #(4); and Social Bookmarking*

Offices with YouTube channels should notify the Director of New Media in either the Office of the Speaker or the Office of the Republican Leader, so that the channel can be added to the YouTube hub for the House.

Zulu language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text: and Linking #(14)*

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[617] Section 3.1.1 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 Specification* (2nd edition) provides that:

> An XML declaration [e.g., <?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>,] is not required in all XML documents; however XHTML document authors are strongly encouraged to use XML declarations in all their documents. Such a declaration is required when the character encoding of the document is other than the default UTF-8 or UTF-16 and no encoding was determined by a higher-level protocol.

Section C.1 of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification*, however cautions that:

> some user agents [e.g., Internet Explorer 6] interpret the XML declaration to mean that the document is unrecognized XML rather than HTML, and therefore may not render the document as expected. For compatibility with these types of legacy browsers, you may want to avoid using processing instructions and XML declarations. Remember, however, that when the XML declaration is not included in a document, the document can only use the default character encodings UTF-8 or UTF-16.

Jeffrey Zeldman, in the second edition [2006] of *Designing With Web Standards* (pp. 161 to 162), notes that:

> Many XHTML pages begin with an optional XML prolog, also known as an XML decloration. When used, the XML prolog precedes the DOCTYPE and namespace declarations . . . , and its mission in life is to specify the version of XML and declare the type of character encoding being used on the page.
>
> The W3C recommends beginning any XML document, including XHTML documents, with an XML prolog. . . .
>
> Unfortunately, several browsers, enven those from "nice" homes, can't handle their XML prolog. After imbibing this XML element, they stagger and stumble and soil themselves, bringing shame to their families and eventually loosing their place in society.
>
> Actually, the browsers go unpunished, and it's your visitors who suffer when the site files to work correctly. In some cases, your entire site might be invisible to the user. It might even crash the user's browser. In other cases, the site does not crash, but it displays incorrectly. (This is what happens when IE6/Windows encounters the prolog.)

Zeldman (p. 277) goes on to note that:

> Even with a complete XHTML DOCTYPE, IE6/WInodws will kick back into Quirks mode if you include the optional XML prolog. . . . Opera 7 suffers from the same bug.

Appendix 1: Social Bookmarking

Sample instructions for adding social bookmarking to House websites:

(1) On each Web page, between the <head> tag and the </head> tag, insert:

```
<!-- javascript for retrieving current URL -->
<script type="text/javascript" src="@include/get_url.js"></script>

<!-- javascript for exit message alert -->
<script type="text/javascript" src="@include/exit-msg.js"></script>
```

(2) On each Web page, between the <body> tag and the </body> tag, place the following code where the social bookmarking icon links are to appear:

```
<div class="bookmarkImages"><a id="digg" onclick="getURL('digg');
exitMsg()" href="http://digg.com/submit?phase=2&amp;" title="Digg!"><img
class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/digg.pn
g" alt="Digg!" title="Digg!" /></a>

<a id="reddit" onclick="getURL('reddit'); exitMsg()"
href="http://reddit.com/submit?" title="Reddit!" ><img class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/reddit.p
ng" alt="Reddit!" title="Reddit!" /></a>

<a id="Delicious" onclick="getURL('Delicious'); exitMsg()"
href="http://del.icio.us/post?" title="Del.icio.us!"><img class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/deliciou
s.png" alt="Del.icio.us!" title="Del.icio.us!" /></a>

<a id="Google" onclick="getURL('Google'); exitMsg()"
href="http://www.google.com/bookmarks/mark?op=add&amp;"
title="Google!"><img class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/google.
png" alt="Google!" title="Google!" /></a>

<a id="Live" onclick="getURL('Live'); exitMsg()"
href="https://favorites.live.com/quickadd.aspx?marklet=1&amp;mkt=en-
us&amp;top=0&amp;" title="Live!"><img class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/live.png
" alt="Live!" title="Live!" /></a>

<a id="Facebook" onclick="getURL('Facebook'); exitMsg()"
href="http://www.facebook.com/share.php?" title="Facebook!"><img
```

```
class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/faceboo
k.png" alt="Facebook!" title="Facebook!" /></a>

<a id="Slashdot" onclick="getURL('Slashdot'); exitMsg()"
href="http://slashdot.org/bookmark.pl?" title="Slashdot!" ><img
class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/slashdot
.png" alt="Slashdot!" title="Slashdot!" /></a>

<a id="Netscape" onclick="getURL('Netscape'); exitMsg()"
href="http://www.netscape.com/submit/?" title="Netscape!" ><img
class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/netscap
e.png" alt="Netscape!" title="Netscape!" /></a>

<a id="Technorati" onclick="getURL('Technorati'); exitMsg()"
href="http://technorati.com/faves/?" title="Technorati!"><img
class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/technor
ati.png" alt="Technorati!" title="Technorati!" /></a>

<a id="StumbleUpon" onclick="getURL('StumbleUpon'); exitMsg()"
href="http://www.stumbleupon.com/submit?" title="StumbleUpon!"><img
class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/stumble
upon.png" alt="StumbleUpon!" title="StumbleUpon!" /></a>

<a id="Spurl" onclick="getURL('Spurl'); exitMsg()"
href="http://www.spurl.net/spurl.php?" title="Spurl!"><img
class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/spurl.pn
g" alt="Spurl!" title="Spurl!" /></a>

<a id="Wists" onclick="getURL('Wists'); exitMsg()"
href="http://wists.com/r.php?" title="Wists!"><img class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/wists.pn
g" alt="Wists!" title="Wists!" /></a>

<a id="Simpy" onclick="getURL('Simpy'); exitMsg()"
href="http://www.simpy.com/simpy/LinkAdd.do?" title="Simpy!"><img
class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/simpy.p
ng" alt="Simpy!" title="Simpy!" /></a>
```

```
<a id="Newsvine" onclick="getURL('Newsvine'); exitMsg()"
href="http://www.newsvine.com/_tools/seed&amp;save?"
title="Newsvine!"><img class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/newsvin
e.png" alt="Newsvine!" title="Newsvine!" /></a>

<a id="Blinklist" onclick="getURL('Blinklist'); exitMsg()"
href="http://www.blinklist.com/index.php?Action=Blink/addblink.php&amp;"
title="Blinklist!"><img class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/blinklist
.png" alt="Blinklist!" title="Blinklist!" /></a>

<a id="Furl" onclick="getURL('Furl'); exitMsg()"
href="http://www.furl.net/storeIt.jsp?" title="Furl!" ><img
class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/furl.png
" alt="Furl!" title="Furl!" /></a>

<a id="Blogmarks" onclick="getURL('Blogmarks'); exitMsg()"
href="http://blogmarks.net/my/new.php?mini=1&amp;simple=1&amp;"
title="Blogmarks!"><img class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/blogmar
ks.png" alt="Blogmarks!" title="Blogmarks!" /></a>

<a id="Yahoo" onclick="getURL('Yahoo'); exitMsg()"
href="http://myweb2.search.yahoo.com/myresults/bookmarklet?"
title="Yahoo!"><img class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/yahoo.p
ng" alt="Yahoo!" title="Yahoo!" /></a>

<a id="Netvouz" onclick="getURL('Netvouz'); exitMsg()"
href="http://www.netvouz.com/action/submitBookmark?" title="Netvouz!"><img
class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/netvouz.
png" alt="Netvouz!" title="Netvouz!" /></a>

<a id="FeedMeLinks" onclick="getURL('FeedMeLinks'); exitMsg()"
href="http://feedmelinks.com/categorize?from=toolbar&amp;op=submit&amp;"
title="FeedMeLinks!"><img class="bookmarkImage"
src="http://www.house.gov/include_content/images/socialBookmarkings/feedmel
inks.png" alt="FeedMeLinks!" title="FeedMeLinks!" /></a>
</div>
```

(3) In the screen style sheet, consider adding the following properties:
   .bookmarkImages {text-align:center; margin: 0 auto;}

.bookmarkImage {border-style: none;}

(4) In the @include directory, create a file exit-msg.js with the following content:

```
// JavaScript External Link Exit Message
function exitMsg(){
    alert("You are now leaving the U.S. House of Representatives website. Thank
you for visiting. Neither this office, whose site contains the link, nor the U.S.
House of Representatives is responsible for the content of the non-House site you
are about to access.")
}
```

(5) In the @include directory, create a file get_url.js with the following content:

```
// Retrieve Current URL and title -->
function getURL(site) {
 var thisdoc = document.location;
 var thisdoctitle = document.title;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
 if (site == "digg") {
  document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
   "url=" + thisdoc + "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
 }
 if (site == "reddit") {
  document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
   "url=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
 }
  if (site == "Delicious") {
  document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
   "url=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
 }
 if (site == "Google") {
  document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
   "bkmk=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
 }
 if (site == "Live") {
```

```
        document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
         "url=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
        }
 if (site == "Facebook") {
        document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
         "u=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
        }
 if (site == "Slashdot") {
        document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
         "url=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
        }
 if (site == "Netscape") {
        document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
         "U=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
        }
 if (site == "Technorati") {
        document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
         "add=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
        }
 if (site == "StumbleUpon") {
        document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
         "url=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
        }
 if (site == "Spurl") {
        document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
         "url=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
        }
 if (site == "Wists") {
        document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
         "r=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
```

```
 }
 if (site == "Simpy") {
  document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
   "href=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
 }
 if (site == "Newsvine") {
  document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
   "u=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
 }
 if (site == "Blinklist") {
  document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
   "Url=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
 }
 if (site == "Furl") {
  document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
   "u=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
 }
 if (site == "Blogmarks") {
  document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
   "url=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
 }
 if (site == "Yahoo") {
  document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
   "u=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
 }
 if (site == "Netvouz") {
  document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
   "url=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
 }
 if (site == "FeedMeLinks") {
  document.getElementById(site).href=document.getElementById(site).href +
   "url=" + thisdoc+ "&title=" + thisdoctitle;
```

```
// alert(document.getElementById(site).href);
// alert(document.title);
 }


 }
```

Appendix 2: Federal Judicial Branch

Most House Member websites include a page on contacting Federal agencies. Many of these include some of the Federal courts. One way to personalize those pages is to include links to the specific U.S. Court of Appeal, U.S. District Court, and U.S. Bankruptcy Court that have jurisdiction within the Member's congressional district.

U.S. Courts of Appeals
The United States is divided into 12 judicial circuits: The 1st through 11th circuits and the District of Columbia circuit. Each of the 12 circuits has a U.S. Court of Appeals. These courts are generally referred to as the:

        U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1st Circuit
        U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit
            .
            .
            .
        U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit
        U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

The following is a list of all the circuit numbers by state:

Alabama – 11	Kentucky – 6	Ohio – 6
Alaska – 9	Louisiana – 5	Oklahoma – 10
American Samoa – 9	Maine – 1	Oregon – 9
Arizona – 9	Maryland – 4	Pennsylvania – 3
Arkansas – 8	Massachusetts – 1	Puerto Rico – 1
California – 9	Michigan – 6	Rhode Island – 1
Colorado – 10	Minnesota – 8	South Carolina – 4
Connecticut – 2	Mississippi – 5	South Dakota – 8
Delaware – 3	Missouri – 8	Tennessee – 6
District of Columbia – DC	Montana – 9	Texas – 5
Florida – 11	Nebraska – 8	Utah – 10
Georgia – 11	Nevada – 9	Vermont – 2
Guam – 9	New Hampshire – 1	Virgin Islands – 3
Hawaii – 9	New Jersey – 3	Virginia – 4
Idaho – 9	New Mexico – 10	Washington – 9
Illinois – 7	New York – 2	West Virginia – 4
Indiana – 7	North Carolina – 4	Wisconsin – 7
Iowa – 8	North Dakota – 8	Wyoming – 10
Kansas – 10	Northern Mariana Islands – 9	

The U.S. Courts of Appeals have a uniform naming convention for their URLs:
        http://www.ca**[CIRCUIT]**.uscourts.gov/

so that the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1st Circuit is at http://www.ca1.uscourts.gov/; the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit is http://www.ca2.uscourts.gov/; etc.

U.S. District Courts and U.S. Bankruptcy Courts
The United States is divided into approximately 100 judicial districts. Every state and territory contains at least one U.S. judicial district. Some states contain several judicial districts. Each judicial district has one U.S. District Court and one U.S. Bankruptcy Court. Some examples of U.S. District Courts are:
        U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska
        U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California
        U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia

Some examples of U.S. Bankruptcy Courts are:
        U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Alaska
        U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of California
        U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Virginia

Which judicial district a particular congressional district is in depends on what county (and state) the congressional district is in. Once you know all of the counties that are entirely or partially in a Member's congressional district,[618] go to
                    http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/lookup.html
and enter the state and county information. The system will supply you with the name of the judicial district for that county (as well as confirming the judicial circuit for the state). Some congressional districts include parts of more than one judicial district, so it is important to test all of the counties from the congressional district.

The U.S. District Courts have a uniform naming convention for their URLs:
        http://www.**[STATE POSTAL ABBREVIATION][ONE LETTER CODE INDICATING PART OF THE STATE]**d.uscourts.gov/

so the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska is http://www.akd.uscourts.gov/; the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of California is http://www.cand.uscourts.gov/; the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia is http://www.vaed.uscourts.gov/; etc.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Courts have a similar naming convention for their URLs:
        <http://www.**[STATE POSTAL ABBREVIATION][ONE LETTER CODE INDICATING PART OF THE STATE]**b.uscourts.gov/>

so the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Alaska is http://www.akb.uscourts.gov/; the U.S. Bankruptcy Court of the Northern District of California is

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[618] A complete list of counties, by congressional district, is contained in the *Congressional Directory* at http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cdirectory/browse.html.

http://www.canb.uscourts.gov/; the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Virginia is http://www.vaeb.uscourts.gov/; etc.

> **Note:** In the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the functions of the U.S. District Court and the U.S. Bankruptcy Court are consolidated into a single court – the U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands. The website for this court is http://www.nmid.uscourts.gov/.

Other Federal courts

There are several courts of national jurisdiction (and judicial branch offices) that you may also want to include in Member websites:

- U.S. Tax Court, http://www.ustaxcourt.gov/
- U.S. Court of Federal Claims, http://www.uscfc.uscourts.gov/
- U.S. Court of International Trade, http://www.cit.uscourts.gov/
- Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation, http://www.jpml.uscourts.gov/

- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, http://www.cafc.uscourts.gov/
- U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, http://www.vetapp.gov/
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, http://www.armfor.uscourts.gov/index.html

- U.S. Supreme Court, http://www.supremecourtus.gov/

    Other Federal Judicial Agencies:
- Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, http://www.uscourts.gov/
- Federal Judicial Center, http://www.fjc.gov/
- U.S. Sentencing Commission, http://www.ussc.gov/

Additionally, there is a very good tutorial on the Federal court system (compiled by the Federal Judicial Center) at http://www.fjc.gov/federal/courts.nsf.

Appendix 3: Caucus Web Sites

Websites of those caucuses (registered with the House Administration Committee as of November 8, 2007) that have websites:[619]

- 21st Century Health Care Caucus - http://patrickkennedy.house.gov/singlepage.aspx?NewsID=1285
- 9/11 Commission Caucus - http://maloney.house.gov/index.php?option=com_issues&task=view_issue&issue=2&Itemid=35
- Blue Dog Coalition - http://www.house.gov/melancon/BlueDogs/
- California Democratic Congressional Delegation - http://lofgren.house.gov/cdcd/index.aspx
- Coalition for Autism Research and Education - http://doyle.house.gov/autism.shtml
- Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus - http://honda.house.gov/capac/
- Congressional Automotive Caucus - http://www.house.gov/kildee/auto_caucus.shtml
- Congressional Bike Caucus - http://blumenauer.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=280&Itemid=162
- Congressional Black Caucus - http://www.house.gov/kilpatrick/cbc/index.shtml (also http://www.thecongressionalblackcaucus.com/)
- Congressional Brain Injury Task Force - http://pascrell.house.gov/work/braininjury.shtml
- Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues - http://www.house.gov/pallone/armeniancaucus.shtml
- Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues - http://maloney.house.gov/index.php?option=com_issues&task=view_issue&issue=12&Itemid=35
- Congressional Caucus on the Judicial Branch - http://schiff.house.gov/judicialcaucus/
- Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine - http://www.house.gov/larsen/meth/
- Congressional China Caucus - http://forbes.house.gov/Biography/chinacaucus.htm
- Congressional Climate Change Caucus - http://www.house.gov/olver/climatechange/index.html
- Congressional Coastal Caucus - http://www.house.gov/pallone/coastalcaucs.shtml
- Congressional Down Syndrome Caucus - http://mcmorris.house.gov/?sectionid=177&sectiontree=56,177
- Congressional E-911 Caucus - http://www.house.gov/shimkus/911home.htm

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[619] For the list of caucuses registered with the House Administration Committee, see http://cha.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=45&Itemid=37.

- Congressional Ethiopia and Ethiopian-Americans - http://www.honda.house.gov/ethiopiacaucus.shtml
- Congressional Hispanic Caucus - http://velazquez.house.gov/chc/
- Congressional International Anti-Piracy Caucus - http://schiff.house.gov/antipiracycaucus/
- Congressional Internet Caucus (Advisory Committee) - http://www.netcaucus.org/
- Congressional Kidney Caucus - http://www.house.gov/mcdermott/kidneycaucus/
- Congressional Labor and Working Families Caucus - http://lindasanchez.house.gov/laborcaucus/index.cfm
- Congressional Mental Health Caucus - http://www.napolitano.house.gov/mhcaucus/
- Congressional Mining Caucus - http://www.holden.house.gov/comm/
- Congressional Native American Caucus - http://www.house.gov/kildee/native_american_ca.shtml
- Congressional Prayer Caucus - http://www.house.gov/forbes/prayercaucus.htm
- Congressional Progressive Caucus - http://cpc.grijalva.house.gov
- Congressional Rural Housing Caucus - http://hinojosa.house.gov/crhc/index.shtml
- Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus - http://www.taylor.house.gov/shipbuildingcaucus/
- Congressional Steel Caucus - http://www.house.gov/visclosky/steel_caucus.htm
- Congressional Victims Rights Caucus - http://vrc.poe.house.gov/
- Congressional Vision Caucus - http://www.house.gov/green/cvc/
- Electronic Warfare Working Group - http://www.house.gov/pitts/ew.htm
- Generic Drug Equity Caucus - http://calvert.house.gov/genericdrug.asp
- House Baltic Caucus - http://www.house.gov/shimkus/baltic/baltic.shtml
- House Rural Health Care Coalition - http://www.pomeroy.house.gov/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7B9 98F12BA-9704-463E-9F61-3EB414CBDA2C%7D
- Immigration Reform Caucus - http://www.house.gov/bilbray/irc/
- Law Enforcement Caucus - http://www.house.gov/stupak/lawenforcement.shtml
- LGBT Equality Caucus - http://lgbt.tammybaldwin.house.gov/
- Medical Technology Caucus - http://www.house.gov/ramstad/caucus/Medtech/medical03.htm
- Modeling and Simulation Caucus - http://forbes.house.gov/Biography/mscaucus.htm
- National Guard and Reserve Components Caucus - http://stevebuyer.house.gov/ReserveCaucus/ngrcdir.html
- Public Broadcasting Caucus - http://blumenauer.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view &id=281&Itemid=163

- Republican Study Committee - http://rsc.tomprice.house.gov//default.aspx
- Silk Road Caucus - http://www.house.gov/pitts/initiatives/silkroad/silkroadmembers.htm
- Unexploded Ordinance (UXO) Caucus - http://blumenauer.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=282&Itemid=164
- Victory in Iraq Caucus – http://www.joewilson.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=34

Websites of those caucuses (not registered with the House Administration Committee as of November 8, 2007) that have websites:

- 30 Something Working Group - http://www.speaker.gov/30something/index.html
- Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus - http://langevin.house.gov/caucus_bipartisan_disabilities.shtml
- Congressional Caucus on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders - http://www.house.gov/pallone/fasd_caucus/
- Congressional Caucus on Sri Lanka and Sri Lankan Americans - http://www.house.gov/pallone/srilankancaucus.shtml
- Congressional Diabetes Caucus - http://www.house.gov/degette/diabetes/index.html
- Congressional Entertainment Industries Caucus - http://www.house.gov/watson/cec/
- Congressional Manufactured Housing Caucus - http://calvert.house.gov/manufhousing.asp
- Congressional Task Force on International HIV/AIDS - http://www.house.gov/mcdermott/issues_hivaids.shtml
- Congressional Wine Caucus - http://www.house.gov/radanovich/wine/
- Democratic Women's Working Group, http://www.speaker.gov/dwwg/index.html
- International Conservation Caucus - http://www.royce.house.gov/internationalconservation/default.aspx
- Reliable Energy Caucus - http://conaway.house.gov/EnergyCaucus/
- Suburban Agenda Caucus - http://www.house.gov/kirk/suburban.agenda/index.shtml

Appendix 4: <meta> and Related Tags

[Checkpoint 13.2 [priority 2] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0*](#) provides that an accessible website should "Provide metadata to add semantic information to pages and sites." The following is a suggested list of tags for use by offices of the U.S. House of Representatives. The list is designed to get the best return for the time invested in inserting the tags into Web pages. The tags are based on the following standards:

- [Dublin Core Metadata Element Set, Version 1.1 (revised)](#), Dublin Core Metadata Initiative; [620]
- [Platform for Internet Content Selection](#) (PICS) standard as promulgated by the Word Wide Web Consortium and implemented by [SafeSurf](#) and the [Internet Content Rating Association](#) (ICRA); and
- [Robot meta-tag standard](#), Spidering BOF Group (1996 Distributed Indexing/Searching Workshop of the World Wide Web Consortium).

The following list is divided into three parts. The first part consists of tags that can be expected to remain consistent throughout a website. The second part consists of tags that may change with each Web page. The third part consists of content for the labels.rdf file needed to comply with the current implementations of ICRA PICS labels and Dublin Core.

Note: When using these examples, replace text in ***red bold italics*** with text appropriate for your office's Web pages.

---

[620] "Dublin Core" is the official implementation of ISO Standard 15836-2003 and NISO Standard Z39.85-2001.

Tags That Are Likely to Remain Constant Throughout a Web Site[621]

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<link rel="schema.DC" href="http://purl.org/DC/elements/1.1/" /> <link rel="schema.DCTERMS" href="http://purl.org/DC/TERMS/" /> <link rel="meta" href="labels.rdf" type="application/rdf xml" title="ICRA labels" />	Identifies the location of the schemas for the Dublin Core 1.1 (revised), VW96, and ICRA PICS meta tags.
<link href="***http://www.house.gov/writerep/***" rel="EDITOR" title="Feedback form" />	Replace ***http://www.house.gov/writerep/*** with the URL of the electronic form that constituents can use to contact the office.[622]
<meta http-equiv="Reply-To" content="***john.doe@mail.house.gov***" /> <link href="mailto:***john.doe@mail.house.gov***" rel="AUTHOR" title="Feedback by e-mail" />	Your public e-mail address. If you do not have one, delete these tags.[623]

---

[621] Because these tags have values that are likely to remain consistent throughout the entire website, it is appropriate to have them contained in a server-side include, which could then be invoked on each HTML page.

The "profile" attribute of the <head> tag should **not** be used as a substitute for the server-side include. Section 7.4.4 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* (which defines the <head> tag "profile" attribute) reserves the profile file for definitions of the "name" attribute of each <meta> tag, rather than as a repository of the <meta> tags themselves. In the absence of a W3C standard for formatting profile files (§ 7.4.4 specifically provides that it "does not define formats for profiles"), the Global Multimedia Protocols Group has proposed that the profile file be a separate (X)HTML file that use the <dl>, <dt>, and <dd> tags to define the <meta> tag "name" attributes (see the GMPG's *XMDP: Introduction and Format Description*).

[622] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 66) recommends that "Every congressional Web site should prominently display basic contact information, including . . . their e-mail address or a link to their contact form".

[623] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 66) praises the website of Rep. John Larson for explaining why the office does not have a public e-mail address (see http://www.house.gov/larson/emailaddress.htm).

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<meta http-equiv="PICS-Label" content='(PICS-1.1 "http://www.classify.org/safesurf/" L gen true for "*http://www.house.gov/doe/*" r (SS~~000 1))' /> <meta http-equiv="pics-Label" content='(pics-1.1 "http://www.icra.org/pics/vocabularyv03/" l gen true for "*http://www.house.gov/doe/*" r (n 0 s 0 v 0 l 0 oa 0 ob 0 oc 0 od 0 oe 0 of 0 og 0 oh 0 c 0) gen true for "*http://www.house.gov/doe/*" r (n 0 s 0 v 0 l 0 oa 0 ob 0 oc 0 od 0 oe 0 of 0 og 0 oh 0 c 0))' />	Identifies your site as **not** containing: a chat room, profanity, heterosexual or homosexual themes, nudity or sexual material, violence, bigotry, promotion or glorification of drug use, other adult themes, gambling, promotion of tobacco use, promotion of alcohol use, promotion of weapon use, promotion of harm against people, material that might be perceived as setting a bad example for children, or material that might disturb young children." Replace ***http://www.house.gov/doe/*** with the name of the main URL of your website (on Member websites, this is normally either ***http://member's name.house.gov*** or ***http://www.house.gov/member's name/***).
<meta name="DC.subject.classification" scheme="DCTERMS.LCSH" content="United States. Congress" />	Library of Congress subject heading for the page. ***United States. Congress*** can be used as the LOC subject heading for any congressional Web page. For more specific Library of Congress subject headings (as well as more specific Library of Congress classification numbers and Dewy Decimal System classification numbers), see the Library of Congress Online Catalog.

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<meta name="DC.subject.classification" scheme="DCTERMS.LCC" content="JK1021" />	Library of Congress classification number *JK1021* can be used as the LOC classification number for any congressional Web page. For more specific Library of Congress classification numbers, see the Library of Congress Online Catalog.
<meta name="DC.subject.classification" scheme="DCTERMS.DDC" content="328" />	Dewy Decimal System classification number *328* can be used as the Dewy Decimal classification number for any congressional Web page. For more specific Dewy Decimal System classification numbers, see the Library of Congress Online Catalog.
<meta name="DC.format.medium" scheme="DCTERMS.IMT" content="text/html" />	Use on any page with an .htm, .html, .shtm, or .shtml extension.
<meta name="DC.coverage.spatial" scheme="DCTERMS.ISO3166" content="US" /> <meta name="DC.coverage.spatial" scheme="DCTERMS.TGN" content="United States (C,V)" />	Identifies the national geographic coverage of the page as the United States.
<link href="http://www.house.gov/*doe*/" rel="top" title="home page of *John W. Doe*" />	Location of the homepage of your website.
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=*UTF-8*" />	Identifies the character set using the standards set by the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA). Of the IANA sanctioned character sets, the World Wide Web Consortium suggests using the Unicode UTF-8 standard.[624, 625, 626] Note: selection of a character set **does not** affect the typefaces you select – it only determines which characters are valid characters.

[624] See, e.g., Bert Bos' "Character Encodings".
　　Use of UTF-8 (or UTF-16) is also consistent with the avoiding the problems associated with XML declarations (see footnote for <!DOCTYPE> declarations #(2)).
[625] UTF-8 is the successor to the series of standards that included ISO 8859-1.
[626] Aarron Walter, in *Building Finadable Websites*, (2008) page 26, recommends always having a <meta http-equiv="Content-Type"> tag on every web page.

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<!-- Web designer: *Jane Smith* (*House Information Resources*); site published: *date site was published* -->	Replace *Jane Smith* with the name of the designer(s) of the website. Replace *House Information Resources* with the name of the company that the designer works for.[627] Replace *date site was published* with the date that the entire site was published (rather than the date any particular page was later added or modified on).
<meta name="DC.creator" content="United States. Congress. House of Representatives. Office of *Representative John W. Doe*" /> <meta name="author" content="*Representative John W. Doe*, United States House of Representatives" /> <meta http-equiv="Owner" content="*Representative John W. Doe*, United States House of Representatives" />	Your office.
<meta name="DC.rights" content="United States Government work under 17 USC secs. 105, 403" />	Copyrights in congressional publications are controlled by sections 105 and 403 of title 17 of the United States Code.

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[627] References to the website's designer (or the designer's employer) should not be visible on the Web page itself. The *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, Content, § 5), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

> The content of a Member's Web site: . . .
>
> 5. May not include any advertisement for any private individual, firm, or corporation, or imply in any manner that the government endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service.

An identical requirement is contained in the *Committee's Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, Content, § e).

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<meta name="DC.relation.conformsTo" content="*Members'* Congressional Handbook (Web Sites standards), Committee on House Administration of the U.S. House of Representatives; Technical Standards for Web-based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications issued pursuant to section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, 36 C.F.R. section 1194.22; Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.0, World Wide Web Consortium (W3C); Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS) standard as promulgated by the Word Wide Web Consortium and implemented by SafeSurf and the Internet Content Rating Association; Dublin Core 1.1 (revised) meta tag standard, Dublin Core Metadata Initiative; Robot meta-tag standard, Spidering BOF Group (1996 Distributed Indexing/Searching Workshop of the World Wide Web Consortium); XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition), World Wide Web Consortium; Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (15 U.S.C. chapter 91); Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule (16 C.F.R. part 312)" />	The web page that lists what standards your site conforms. House committee websites should conform to the *Committees' Congressional Handbook*, rather than to the *Members' Congressional Handbook*.

Tags That May Vary With Each Page Within a Web Site

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<meta name="DC.title" content="*Welcome!*" />	Insert the title of the page.
<meta name="DC.description.abstract" content="*description of page of the Honorable John W. Doe, Congressman from the __th congressional district of your state*" /> <meta name="description" content="*description of page of the Honorable John W. Doe, Congressman from the __th congressional district of your state*" />	Brief description of the content (or purpose) of the page.[628] Use the same description in both tags.

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[628] Aarron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites*, (2008) page 24, notes that:

> The description of a site shown on search results pages often comes directly from your meta description tag if it exists, so it is important to write this content effectively. When writing your description, keep it concise and attractive to visitors, avoid hard-sell marketing-speak. . . . Speak to your visitors with respect and relevance to their needs rather than as a marketer making demands, and you'll get better results. If appropriate to your site, consider using a more informal voice, as so many organizations use frumpy corporate-speak, and it can be the factor that distinguishes you from your competitors on the search results page.
>
> Long meta descriptions get truncated when displayed on search result pages, so try to keep them between 150 and 200 characters long (maximum is 1024).

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<meta name="keywords" content="House of Representatives, Congress, Representative *John Doe, other important words*" />	List of words or phrases that may be useful to someone searching for your Web page. Use synonyms for important words that may not actually appear in the text of you Web page.[629] It is recommended that terms from the Congressional Research Services' Legislative Subject Terms controlled vocabulary be included.
<meta name="DC.identifier" scheme="DCTERMS.URI" content="*http://www.house.gov/doe/pagename.htm*" />	Insert the URL of the page.
<meta name="DC.date.modified" scheme="DCTERMS.WTN8601" content="*2002-12-02*" />	Date the page was last modified. Use the format yyyy-mm-dd.[630]
<meta name="DC.relation.isFormatOf" scheme="DCTERMS.URI" content="*http://www.house.gov/doe/OtherPageName.htm* />	If a copy of this page in a different format (e.g., a large font version, or a graphics-free version) exists, then use this tag to identify where it is. In the <link> tag, use: type="*text/html*" for .htm, .html, .shtm, or .shtml files, type="*image/jpeg*" for .jpg files, type="*image/gif*" for .gif files, or type="*application/pdf*" for .pdf files

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[629] Only use words that are relevant to what is on the page – do not use words that are irrelevant even if you believe that doing so will attract people to your site through search engines. In addition to the ethical questions that such practices raise, also consider Jakob Nielsen's and Hoa Loranger's observation in *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (p. 18):

> You might ask, "What's the harm in attracting users even if you don't have the product they want? The worst they can do is leave." But actually, they can do worse than leaving: They can never return. Once users have been disappointed several times after clicking your links in a search engine, they may well decide to ignore your site in the future.

[630] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 69) praises Rep. Shelley Berkley's website for indicating when each page was last updated.

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<meta name="DC.language" scheme="DCTERMS.RFC4646" content="*en-US*" /> <meta http-equiv="Content-Language" content="*en-US*" />	Identifies the language primarily used on the page as English (United States style). If your page is in another language, replace *es-US* according to the instructions set out in Appendix 5: *Language Identification* of this document.
<meta name="DC.type" scheme="DCTERMS.DCMIType" content="*Text*" />	Identifies that the page is primarily a non-interactive, text page. If the page is primarily an interactive form, then replace *Text* with *InteractiveResource*. If the page is primarily a graphic, replace *Text* with *Image*. For additional possible values, see the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative's DCMI Type Vocabulary
<meta name="DC.rights.accessRights" content="*public*" />	If the page is not to be available to the general public, replace *public* with a description of who may have access.
<meta name="robots" content="*INDEX, FOLLOW*" />	Allows the HIR indexing software (and other indexing software, e.g., Google) to make your Web page searchable and to follow any links on your page. If your page is primarily an interactive form, replace *FOLLOW* with *NOFOLLOW*.

Content of the labels.rdf file

Each site should include a labels.rdf file containing the following XML code:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="iso-8859-1"?>
<rdf:RDF
 xmlns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
 xmlns:rdfs="http://www.w3.org/2000/01/rdf-schema#"
 xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/"
 xmlns:dcterms="http://purl.org/dc/terms/"
 xmlns:label="http://www.w3.org/2004/12/q/contentlabel#"
 xmlns:icra="http://www.icra.org/rdfs/vocabularyv03#">
 <rdf:Description rdf:about="">
```

```
 <dc:creator rdf:resource="http://www.icra.org" />
 <dcterms:issued>2007-8-27</dcterms:issued>
 <label:authorityFor>http://www.icra.org/rdfs/vocabularyv03#</label:authorityFor>
</rdf:Description>
```

Appendix 5: Language Identification Codes [631]

If the material is in English (as used in the United States), then the language code is:
> en-US

If the material is **not** in English (as used in the United States), then to determine the language code:

(1) find out from the person who supplied you with the text:

> **(a)** What language is the material in?
> **(b)** Is the material in a version of the language that is associated with a particular country or region (e.g., Spanish as spoken in Mexico vs. Spanish as spoken throughout Latin America vs. Spanish as spoken in Spain)?
> **(c)** If the material is text (as opposed to being audio), what alphabet (or script) is the material in?

(2) Go to the IANA Language Subtag Registry at:
> http://www.iana.org/assignments/language-subtag-registry

(3) In the Registry, the information for language subtags is identified as **Type: language**. For instance:

> **Type:** language
> **Subtag:** fr
> **Description:** French
> **Added:** 2005-10-16
> **Suppress-Script:** Latn

Find the appropriate language subtag and use this as the first part of the language tag.

(4) In the Registry, the information for alphabet subtags is identified as **Type: script**. Find the appropriate script subtag.

> **(a)** If the script subtag is the same as the **Suppress-Script** value from the language subtag, then do not use the script tag. E.g., fr = French written with the Latin alphabet.
> **(b)** If the script subtag is not the same as the **Suppress-Script** value from the language subtag, then add a dash and the script subtag. E.g., ja-Latn = Japanese written with the Latin alphabet.

(5) In the Registry, the information for country or region subtags is identified as **Type: region**.

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[631] Checkpoint 4.3 [priority 3] of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provides that accessible websites should "Identify the primary natural language of a document." Checkpoint 4.1 [priority 1] provides that accessible websites should also "Clearly identify changes in the natural language of a document's text and any text equivalents (e.g., captions)."

   The standard for codes to identify individual languages is set out in RFC 4646 (a simplified version is available at the W3C's "Language tags in HTML and XML").

(a) If the language is normally associated with just one country (and the material is in that country's version of the language), then do not use the region subtag. E.g., ja = Japanese as used in Japan.

(b) Otherwise, add a dash and the region subtag. E.g.,

- es-PR = Spanish as used in Puerto Rico;
- es-419 = Spanish as used in Latin America;
- zh-Hant-TW = Chinese as used in Taiwan, written with traditional Han script.

Examples:

en-US	English as used in the United States
es-PR	Spanish[632] as used in Puerto Rico
es-MX	Spanish as used in Mexico
es-419	Spanish as used in Latin America
ar	Arabic[633] (written in Arabic script)[634]
ar-Latn	Arabic, written in Latin script
hy	Armenian[635] (written in Armenian script)[636]
hy-Latn	Armenian written in Latin script
ch	Chamorro (as used in Guam)
zh-Hans-CN	Chinese[637] as used in the Peoples Republic of China, written in simplified Han script[638]

[632] Spanish is the primary language of over 10% of the population in 49 of the 53 congressional districts of California; and is the primary language of over 50% of the population of California's 29th, 32nd, 35th, 39th, 40th, and 48th Congressional Districts, according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (pp. 137-189).

A collection of U.S. Government material in Spanish is available at
http://www.usa.gov/gobiernousa/index.shtml

[633] A collection of U.S. Government material in Arabic is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Arabic

[634] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Arabic script is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0600.pdf; with supplemental material at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0750.pdf, http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UFB50.pdf, and http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UFE70.pdf.

[635] Armenian is the primary language of over 10% of the population of California's 29th Congressional District, according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (p. 165).

A collection of U.S. Government material in Armenian is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Armenian

[636] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Armenian script is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0530.pdf; with supplemental material at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0530.pdf.

[637] Chinese is the primary language of over 10% of the population of California's 8th, 12th, and 29th Congressional Districts, according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (pp. 144, 148, and 165).

A collection of U.S. Government material in Chinese is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Chinese

[638] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Unihan (the CJK Unified Ideographs) is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/unihan.html.

zh-Hant-TW	Chinese as used in Taiwan, written in traditional Han script
cho	Choctaw
nl	Dutch[639] (Flemish)
fr-US	French as used in the United States[640] (including Acadian)
fr-CA	French as used in Canada
de	German[641]
el	Greek (modern)[642] (written in Greek script)[643]
ht	Haitian Creole[644]
haw	Hawaiian
he	Hebrew[645] (written in Hebrew script)[646]
he-Latn	Hebrew, written in Latin script
hi	Hindi[647] (written in Devanagari script)[648]
hi-Latn	Hindi, written in Latin script
hmn-Hmng	Hmong,[649] written in Pahawh Hmong script[650]
hmn-Latn	Hmong, written in Latin script
it	Italian[651]
ja	Japanese[652] (written in Han, Hiragana,[653] and Katakana[654] script)

[639] A collection of U.S. Government material in Flemish is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Dutch
[640] The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that 5.3% of households in Maine and 4.7% of households in Louisiana speak French.
    A collection of U.S. Government material in French is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#French
[641] A collection of U.S. Government material in German is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#German
[642] A collection of U.S. Government material in Greek is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Greek
[643] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for modern Greek script is set out at
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0370.pdf; with supplemental material at
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1F00.pdf.
[644] A collection of U.S. Government material in Haitian Creole is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Haitian-Creole
[645] A collection of U.S. Government material in Hebrew is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Hebrew
[646] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Hebrew script is set out at
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0590.pdf; with supplemental material at
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UFB00.pdf.
[647] A collection of U.S. Government material in Hindi is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Hindi
[648] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Devanagari script is set out at
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0900.pdf.
[649] A collection of U.S. Government material in Hmong is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Hmong
[650] For information on Pahawh Hmong script, see http://www.omniglot.com/writing/hmong.htm.
[651] A collection of U.S. Government material in Italian is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Italian
[652] A collection of U.S. Government material in Japanese is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Japanese
[653] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Hiragana script is set out at
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U3040.pdf.

ja-Latn	Japanese, written in Latin script
ko-Hang	Korean[655], as written in Hangeul script[656, 657]
ko-Hani	Korean, as written in Hanja script
ko-Latn	Korean, as written in Latin script
lo	Lao[658] (written in Lao script)[659]
lo-Latn	Lao, written in Latin script
nv	Navajo
fa	Persian (Farsi)[660] (as written in Arabic script)[661]
fa-Latn	Persian (Farsi), as written in Latin script
pl	Polish[662]
pt	Portuguese[663]
pt-BR	Portuguese as used in Brazil
pa	Punjabi[664] (written in Gurmukhi script)[665]
pa-Latn	Punjabi, written in Latin script
ru	Russian[666] (written in Cyrillic script)[667]
ru-Latn	Russian, written in Latin script

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[654] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Katakana script is set out at
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U30A0.pdf; with supplemental material at
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U31F0.pdf and http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UFF00.pdf.
[655] Korean is the primary language of over 5% of the population of California's 33rd Congressional District,
according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks:
Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (p. 169).
    A collection of U.S. Government material in Korean is available at
                http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Korean
[656] For information on the scripts associated with Korean, see
http://www.omniglot.com/writing/korean.htm.
[657] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Hangeul script is set out at
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UAC00.pdf.
[658] A collection of U.S. Government material in Lao is available at
                http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Laotian
[659] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Lao script is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0E80.pdf.
[660] Persian is the primary language of over 5% of the population of California's 30th Congressional District,
according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks:
Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (p. 166).
    A collection of U.S. Government material in Persian is available at
                http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Farsi
[661] For information on representing Persian text on the Web, see Behdad Esfahbad's *Persian Computing
with Unicode*, April 2004.
[662] A collection of U.S. Government material in Polish is available at
                http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Polish
[663] A collection of U.S. Government material in Portuguese is available at
                http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Portuguese
[664] A collection of U.S. Government material in Punjabi is available at
                http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Punjabi
[665] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Gurmukhi script is set out at
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0A00.pdf.
[666] A collection of U.S. Government material in Russian is available at
                http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Russian
[667] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Cyrillic script is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0400.pdf;
with supplemental material at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0500.pdf.

sm	Samoan[668]
tl	Tagalog[669] (as used in the Philippines, written in Latin script)
tl-Tglg	Tagalog (as used in the Philippines), written in Tagalog script[670]
th	Thai[671] (written in Thai script)[672]
th-Latn	Thai, written in Latin script
uk	Ukrainian[673] (written in Cyrillic script)
uk-Latn	Ukrainian, written in Latin script
vi	Vietnamese[674]

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[668] A collection of U.S. Government material in Samoan is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Samoan

[669] Tagalog is the primary language of over 5% of the population of California's 7th, 12th, 13th, and 51st Congressional Districts, according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (pp. 143, 148, 149, and 187).
   A collection of U.S. Government material in Tagalog is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Tagalog

[670] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Tagalog script is set out at
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1700.pdf.

[671] A collection of U.S. Government material in Thai is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Thai

[672] The Unicode 5.0 Standard for Thai script is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0E00.pdf.

[673] A collection of U.S. Government material in Ukrainian is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Ukrainian

[674] Vietnamese is the primary language of over 5% of the population of California's 15th, 16th, 46th, and 47th Congressional Districts, according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California's *California Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Legislative District* (pp. 151, 152, 182, and 183).
   A collection of U.S. Government material in Vietnamese is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Vietnamese

Appendix 6: Model Privacy Policy

1.   English Language Version[675]

The following text should be placed in an HTML file (preferably with a .shtml extension):

<h1>Privacy Policy</h1>

<p>We respect the privacy of our visitors and all those who come in contact with our office **&#8212;** be it in-person, through our website, or by mail, phone, or email. We therefore try to collect only such personal information as is needed to provide the information, service, or assistance that you request.**</p>**

<h2>Information We Collect Automatically</h2>

<p>If you visit our websites to browse, read, or download information:**<ul>**

<li>Your Web browser automatically sends us (and we may retain) information such as the:**<ul>**

**
Internet domain through which you access the Internet (<abbr title="for instance">**e.g.**</abbr>**, yourServiceProvider.com if you use a commercial Internet service provider, or yourSchool.edu if you use an Internet account from your school);**
**
**
Internet Protocol address of the computer you are using;
**
**
type of browser software and operating system you are using;
**
**
date and time you access our site; and
**
**
the Internet address of the site from which you linked directly to our site.
**

**
We will use this information as aggregate data to help us maintain this site, **<abbr title="for instance">e.g.**</abbr>**, to determine the number of visitors to different sections of our site, to ensure the site is working properly, and to help us make our site more accessible and useful.**
**

**
We will not use this information to identify individuals, except for site security or law enforcement purposes.
**

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[675] This model privacy policy is intended to be consistent with the privacy notice content regulations issued pursuant to the:
- Children's Online Privacy Protection Act - regulations set out at 16 C.F.R. § 312.4(b)(2);
- Privacy Act - regulations set out at OMB Memorandum M-99-18, attachment (Guidance and Model Language for Federal Web Site Privacy Policies);
- E-Government Act – regulations are set out at OMB Memorandum M-03-22, attachment A , § III.

\<li\>The office that maintains the Web server that our website resides on also has access to this information and is governed by its own **\<a href="[URL of the Web host's privacy policy[676]]" title="privacy policy of [insert name of organization hosting Web site[677]]">**privacy policy**\</a\>**. **\</li\>\</ul\>\</p\>**

\<h2\>Other Information We Collect\</h2\>

\<p\>If you choose to identify yourself (or otherwise provide us with personal information) when you call us, write to us, send us e-mail, or use our online forms:**\<ul\>**

\<li\>We will collect (and may retain) any personally identifying information, such as your name, street address, email address, and phone number, and any other information you provide to us. We will use this information to try to fulfill your request and may use it provide you with additional information at a later time. We will not disclose such information to third parties, except as specified in this privacy policy.**\</li\>**

\<li\>If you request information, services, or assistance, we may disclose your personal information to those third parties that (in our judgment) are appropriate in order to fulfill your request. If, when you provide us with such information, you specify that you do not want us to disclose the information to third parties, we will honor your request. Note, however, that If you do not provide such information, it may be impossible for us to refer, respond to or fulfill your request.**\</li\>**

Offices that store E-Newsletter distribution lists on servers outside of HOUSE.GOV should add:

\<li\>If you sign up for **[name of the office's e-newsletter]**, your subscription data (including your name and e-mail address) will be stored on a server outside of our office. The company that maintains that server may also have access to that information and is governed by its own **\<a href="[URL of the distribution service's privacy policy]" title="privacy policy of [insert name of the distribution service]">**privacy policy**\</a\>.\</li\>**

\<li\>If your communication relates to a law enforcement matter, we may disclose the information to law enforcement agencies that we deem appropriate.**\</li\>\</ul\>\</p\>**

---

[676] For HIR hosted websites, use "http://www.house.gov/house/privacy.shtml".
[677] For HIR hosted websites, use "House Information Resources".

\<h2\>How Long We Keep Information\</h2\>

\<p\>We may keep information that will collect for an unlimited period of time.**\</p\>**

\<h2\>Security\</h2\>

\<p\>Please note that electronic communication, particularly e-mail, is not necessarily secure against interception. Please **\<strong\>do not\</strong\>** send sensitive data (**\<abbr title="for instance"\>**e.g.**\</abbr\>**, Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers) by e-mail.**\</p\>**

Offices that want to rigorously comply with OMB Guidance for Implementing the Privacy Provisions of the E-Government Act of 2002 (OMB Memorandum M-03-22) should insert the following:

\<h2\>Privacy Act\</h2\>

\<p\>Although our office is not covered by the **\<a href="http://uscode.house.gov/quicksearch/get.plx?title=5&section=552a"\>**Privacy Act**\</a\>**, we will attempt to treat your information as if the Privacy Act applied to it.**\</p\>**

\<h2\>Cookies\</h2\>

\<p\>We do not use persistent **“**cookies**”** on this website. **[if session cookies are used, (1) indicate that here; (2) indicate what information is collected; (3) indicate what the information is used for; (4) provide an explanation what session cookies are, e.g., "Session cookies are temporary files that are erased when you close all browsers."; and (5) indicate if accepting cookies is voluntary or mandatory for using the site (or for using a specific portion of the website), e.g., "Accepting session cookies on our site is voluntary; you may still use the site if you decline cookies."]\</p\>**

\<h2\>Contacting Us\</h2\>

\<p\>If you would like to contact us concerning our privacy policy or our use of information collected through this website, please contact us at:**\</p\>**

> **\<p class="contactInfo"\>[Name of office]\<br /\>**
> **[Street Address]\<br /\>**
> **[City, State, and Zip Code]\</p\>**

\<p class="contactInfo"\>By telephone: **[telephone number]\</p\>**

\<p class="contactInfo"\>By e-mail: **[public e-mail address or URL for contact form]\</p\>**

2.   P3P Reference File[678]

The following text should be placed in an XML file named w3c/p3p.xml:

```
<?xml version="1.0" ?>
<META xmlns="http://www.w3.org/2000/12/P3Pv1">
 <POLICY-REFERENCES>
  <EXPIRY max-age="86400" />
   <POLICY-REF about="[URL of the P3P policy file, e.g.,
http://jones.house.gov/p3p/privacy.xml]">
    <INCLUDE>/*</INCLUDE>
    <EXCLUDE></EXCLUDE>
   </POLICY-REF>
 </POLICY-REFERENCES>
</META>
```

Note concerning \<EXPIRY max-age="86400" /\>:
"max-age="86400"" means that this XML file will not change in the next 24 hours (86,400 seconds = 24 hours). **If, you decide to change this file**, replace "max-age" with "date" and replace "86400" with the expiration date and time of this XML file, in the format: Thu, 02 Aug 2007 13:00:00 GMT

3.   P3P Policy File[679]

The following text should be placed in an XML file named w3c/policy.xml:

---

[678] This model privacy policy is intended to be consistent with the E-Government Act regulations set out at OMB Memorandum M-03-22, attachment A , § IV; and with § 2 of the W3C *Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

[679] This model privacy policy is intended to be consistent with the E-Government Act regulations set out at OMB Memorandum M-03-22, attachment A , § IV; and with § 3 of the W3C *Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

```
<?xml version="1.0" ?>
<POLICIES xmlns="http://www.w3.org/2000/12/P3Pv1">
  <POLICY name="default" discuri="[URL the English language version of your
  privacy notice]" xml:lang="en-US">
    <ENTITY>
      <DATA-GROUP>
        <DATA ref="#business.name">[Name of your office]</DATA>
        <DATA ref="#business.contact-info.postal.street">[Street address]</DATA>
        <DATA ref="#business.contact-info.postal.city">[city]</DATA>
        <DATA ref="#business.contact-info.postal.stateprov">[state]</DATA>
        <DATA ref="#business.contact-info.postal.postalcode">[zip code]</DATA>
        <DATA ref="#business.contact-info.postal.country">[country]</DATA>
        <DATA ref="#business.contact-info.telecom.telephone.intcode">1</DATA>
        <DATA ref="#business.contact-info.telecom.telephone.loccode">[your
        telephone area code]</DATA>
        <DATA ref="#business.contact-info.telecom.telephone.number">[your 7-digit
        telephone number]</DATA>
        <DATA ref="#business.contact-info.telecom.fax.intcode">1</DATA>
        <DATA ref="#business.contact-info.telecom.fax.loccode">[your fax area
        code]</DATA>
        <DATA ref="#business.contact-info.telecom.fax.number">[your 7-digit fax
        number]</DATA>
        <DATA ref="#business.contact-info.online.email">[your office's public e-
        mail address, if any]</DATA>
        <DATA ref="#business.contact-info.online.uri">[URL for your electronic
        contact form or use:  http://www.house.gov/writerep/]</DATA>
      </DATA-GROUP>
    </ENTITY>
    <ACCESS>
      <none />
    </ACCESS>
```

"*<ACCESS><none /></ACCESS>*" indicates that the users of the website do not have the right to access this data about them collected through the site. The other options set out in *§ 3.2.5 of the W3C Platform For Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification* are:

- <all /> - users have the right to access this data about them collected through the site
- <contact and other /> - users have the right to access this online and physical contact information about them as well as to certain other identified data
- <ident-contact /> - users have the right to access this online and physical contact information (e.g., postal address) about them collected through the site.
- <other-dent /> - user have the right to access other identified data collected through this website.

<DISPUTES-GROUP>
  <DISPUTES resolution-type="service" service="**[URL for your contact page]**">
    <LONG-DESCRIPTION>If you have concerns about our privacy policy (or about its implementation), please contact us at **[your phone number]**</LONG-DESCRIPTION>
    <REMEDIES>
     <correct />
    </REMEDIES>
  </DISPUTES>
</DISPUTES-GROUP>
<STATEMENT>
  <CONSEQUENCE>If you visit our websites to browse, read, or download information, your Web browser automatically sends us (and we may retain) information such as (1) the Internet domain through which you access the Internet (e.g., yourServiceProvider.com if you use a commercial Internet service provider, or yourSchool.edu if you use an Internet account from your school); (2) the Internet Protocol address of the computer you are using; (3) the type of browser software and operating system you are using; (4) the date and time you access our site; and (5) the Internet address of the site from which you linked directly to our site. We will use this information as aggregate data to help us maintain this site, e.g., to determine the number of visitors to different sections of our site, to ensure the site is working properly, and to help us make our site more accessible and useful. We will not use this information to identify individuals, except for site security or law enforcement purposes. The office that maintains the Web server that our website resides on also has access to this information and is governed by its own privacy policy.</CONSEQUENCE>
  <PURPOSE>
    <current />
    <admin />
    <develop />
    <other-purpose>site security or law enforcement</other-purpose>
  </PURPOSE>

"<PURPOSE><current /><admin /><develop /><other-purpose>site security or law enforcement</other-purpose></PURPOSE>" indicates that the information collected through the site will be used (1) to accomplish the task that the information was provided to the office to accomplish, (2) to administer the site, (3) to make improvements to the site, or (4) site security or law enforcement. A complete list of the possible values for the <PURPOSE> element is set out at *§ 3.3.4 of the W3C Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

  <RECIPIENT>
    <ours />

<div style="border:1px solid black">

The <ours /> tag within the <RECIPIENT> element indicates that the office that owns the website has access to the information.

</div>

```
<other-recipient>
  <recipient-description>In addition to our office, House Information Resources
  (the computer staff of the United States House of Representatives) may have
  access to this information.  Their privacy policy is set out at
  http://www.house.gov/house/privacy.shtml.  [If the website is hosted by a
  vendor add:  Additionally, [name of vendor providing Web hosting
  services to the office], which maintains the Web server that our website
  resides on, may have access to this information.  Their privacy policy is
  set out at [URL of vendor's privacy policy].]</recipient-description>
</other-recipient>
<unrelated>
  <recipient-description>law enforcement</recipient-description>
</unrelated>
```

<div style="border:1px solid black">

"*<unrelated><recipient-description>law enforcement</recipient-description>*
</unrelated>" indicates that the information collected through the site may be released to law enforcement agencies.

</div>

```
<unrelated>
  <recipient-description>anyone you authorize us to release information
  to</recipient-description>
</unrelated>
```

<div style="border:1px solid black">

"*<unrelated><recipient-description>anyone you authorize us to release information*
to</recipient-description></unrelated>" indicates that the information collected through the site may be released to anyone authorized by the person originally providing the information. For instance, if a constituent asks that a House office to intervene on their behalf with a government agency, and authorizes the office to use information provided by the constituent (e.g., the constituent's name, age, or telephone number), the office may provide that information to the government agency.

</div>

```
</RECIPIENT>
<RETENTION>
  <indefinitely />
</RETENTION>
```

"*<RETENTION><indefinitely /></RETENTION>*" indicates that information collected through the site may be retained indefinitely. A complete list of the possible values for the <RETENTION> element is set out at § 3.3.6 of the W3C *Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

```
<DATA-GROUP>
  <DATA ref="#dynamic.miscdata">
    <CATEGORIES>
      <physical />
      <online />
      <purchase />
      <computer />
      <navigation />
      <interactive />
      <content />
      <state />
      <preference />
      <government />
    </CATEGORIES>
```

A complete set of the possible values of the <CATEGORIES> element is set out at § 3.4 of the W3C *Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

```
    </DATA>
  </DATA-GROUP>
 </STATEMENT>
 </POLICY>
</POLICIES>
```

Note:
If the site uses cookies, add the following tags after </RETENTION>. A complete set of possible values for the <CATEGORIES> element is set out at § 3.4 of the W3C *Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

```
<DATA ref="#dynamic.cookies">
  <CATEGORIES>
    <physical /><uniqueid /><state /><preference />
  </CATEGORIES>
</DATA>
```

4.   P3P <link>[680]

Between the <head> tag and the </head> tag on each page on the website (not just on the Privacy Policy page), add:

<link rel="P3Pv1" href="**[URL of the policy reference file]**" />

For example: <link rel="P3Pv1" href="http://jones.house.gov/w3c/p3p.xml" />

5.   P3P compact policy[681]

If your site uses cookies, include a <meta> tag along the lines of the following example on each HTML page of your site, between the <head> and </head> tags:

<meta http-equiv='P3P' content='policyref=**[URL of the P3P reference file, e.g., http://www.house.gov/doe/w3c/p3p.xml]**, CP="**CUR ADM DEV OTP OUR OTR UNR IND PHY ONL UNI PUR COM NAV INT CNT STA PRE GOV DSP NON COR**"' />

A complete list of the "CP" attribute values is at § 4.2 of the W3C Platform for Privacy Preferences *1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

---

[680] These P3P <link> instructions are intended to be consistent with the E-Government Act regulations set out at OMB Memorandum M-03-22, attachment A , § IV; and with § 2.2.3 of the W3C *Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

[681] These P3P Compact Policy instructions are intended to be consistent with the E-Government Act regulations set out at OMB Memorandum M-03-22, attachment A , § IV; and with § 4 of the W3C *Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.