Suggested Web Site Best Practices

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House Information Resources
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U.S. House of Representatives

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Suggested House Web Site Best Practices

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

📖 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.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms *see also Forms #(16); 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); Financial Disclosure; and Funding Requests*
   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] Success Criterion 3.1.4 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 provides that, in an accessible website, "A mechanism for identifying the expanded form or meaning of abbreviations is available."
   James Kalbach, in *Designing Web Navigation*, 2007, page 126, notes that:
      screen readers often have a hard time with abbreviations, The vocalization software tries to make words out [of] abbreviations. Abbreviations for U.S. state names, for example, may sound like ahhk for AK (Alaska) or wah for WA (Washington). You can use an abbreviation tag to correlate abbreviations with their full meaning
For more information on techniques to use with the <abbr> tag, see Colin Lieberman's "The Accessibility Hat Trick: Getting Abbreviations Right," A List Apart (January 16, 2006).
   Section H28 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* identifies use of the <abbr> tag as one of the ways to comply with WCAG Success Criterion 3.1.4. Alternatives include:
   - Providing the abbreviation immediately after the expanded text (e.g., "United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR)") [§ G97];
   - Linking to the appropriate <dt> tag within a definition list [§§ G55 and H40];
   - Linking to a glossary (either to the appropriate definition using an <a href> tag or linking to a glossary using a <link rel="glossary">) tag [§§ G62 and H60]; or
   - Providing a function that searches an on-line dictionary [§ G70].
[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] Success Criterion 3.1.4 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 provides that, in an accessible website, "A mechanism for identifying the expanded form or meaning of abbreviations is available." Appendix A of the Guidelines defines "abbreviations" as including acronyms and initialisms.
   Section H28 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* identifies use of the <acronym> tag as one of the ways to comply with WCAG Success Criterion 3.1.4. Alternatives include:
   - Providing the acronym immediately after the expanded text (e.g., "United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR)") [§ G97];
   - Linking to the appropriate <dt> tag within a definition list [§§ G55 and H40];
   - Linking to a glossary (either to the appropriate definition using an <a href> tag or linking to a glossary using a <link rel="glossary">) tag [§§ G62 and H60]; or
   - Providing a function that searches an on-line dictionary [§ G70].
[5] See, for instance, the Science, Space, and Technology Committee (Democratic Office). The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (p. 45) praises the website for

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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**
  (1) Each website should include a page indicating:
      (a) what accessibility standard(s) the site attempts to comply with;[8]

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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 Democratic Whip for including information on the role of that office.

[6] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (p. 44) praises the website of the House 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 House Science Committee (Democratic Office) for providing:

Targeted information that allows interested parties and the press to see how the committee works—and what they do—shows the site has its audiences clearly defined..

[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 *About Us* 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:**
      (a) **Tagline** on the homepage: A few words or a brief sentence summarizing what the organization does.
      (b) **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.
      (c) **Fact sheet:** A section following the summary that elaborates on its key points and other essential facts about the organization.
      (d) **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

(b) physical accessibility of the Washington, DC and district offices;[9] and

(c) a way that persons with disabilities can contact the office if they have problems accessing the site.

(2) The accessibility policy page should either contain (or link to) tools to assist persons with disabilities.[10]

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 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.[11]

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[8] See, e.g., the "Accessibility" pages of Rep. Jason Chaffetz and Rep. Frank Lucas and the "Accessibility" page of the House of Representatives main website.

[9] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 17 praises the website of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee for pposting "information on hearing accessibility".

  See also the "Accessibility on the House Campus in Washington, DC" section of the "Accessibility" page on the House of Representatives main website.

[10] 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*)."

Examples of the two approaches can be found at:

- "Site Tools" portion of the "Accessibility" page on the websites of the Rep. Jason Chaffetz, Rep. Bob Goodlatte, Rep. Chellie Pingree, and Del. Kilili Sablan.
- Chief Administrative Officer's "Site Tools and Downloads" page, then-Rep. Heather Wilson's toolbox page, and the "Site Tools" page of the House of Representative main website.

[11] Checkpoint 9.5 [priority 3] of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* provided 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.

WCAG 1.0, however, has been superseded by the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*. The W3C *How to Meet WCAG 2.0, § 2.4.1* notes that use of the "accesskey" attribute is not required to meet the WCAG 2.0 standards and is suggested for those who what to exceed the standards.

  When the W3C WCAG 1.0 standard was in force, the Government of the United Kingdom 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

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(2) The name for the "accesskey" attribute must be in lower case ("<accesskey>" not "<acccessKey>" or "<Accesskey>").[12]

📖 **Accomplishments** *see also Biographies #(4)*

Highlight the office's accomplishments – particularly recent accomplishments.[13] Consider having a page of the website devoted to accomplishments[14] and perhaps even making "accomplishments" a major navigation button.[15]

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7 – Complaints procedure
8 – Terms and conditions
9 – Feedback form
0 – Access key details

The Canadian Government's *Common Look and Feel 1.0 standards best practices* – which largely followed the W3C WCAG 1.0 standard – on the other hand, provided 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.

The Opera browser has a built-in feature (Shift+Esc) to display a list of all of the links on the current page using an "accesskey" attribute and includes the attributes' contents. Where the link has a "title" attribute, Opera displays that information.

[12] Section 4.2 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "XHTML documents must use lower case for all HTML element and attribute names."

[13] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill,* [March 7, 2011], page 8 recommends that "All content [be kept] up to date, including . . . accomplishments".

The Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 6) 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 Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 62, 67, 71, 74, and 75) 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

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ActiveX controls *see <object> tags*

Acronyms *see Abbreviations and Acronyms*

<address> tags *see Contact Information and Techniques #(15)(o)*

Addresses (Postal) *see Contact Information and Techniques #(6) and #(14)*

Afrikaans language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Ajax *see also Scripts*
   Be cautions of using Ajax applications that cause browser "back" buttons to function in ways that the user does not expect.[16]

Albanian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Alignment *see also Centering*
   Style sheets, not the "align" attribute, should be used to set alignments.[17] Which style sheet property is appropriate to use for alignment depends on what is being aligned:

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priority issues"; then-Rep. Patrick Murphy's "local issues" page which highlighted 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."

   See also Rep. Charles Rangel's "Accomplishments" page (part of his "About Me" section).
[14] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Award Winners: Gold, page 9) praises the issues section of Rep. Howard Berman's website, for including "accomplishments and other major actions he has taken in Congress".

   The 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".

   See also, Rep. Tammy Baldwin's "Major Accomplishments" page.
[15] 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).
[16] Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, in *Prioritizing Web Usability* (page 67) notes that
      In user testing, we observe significant confusion whenever the Back button is not available or
      doesn't work. Expert users may know how to overcome the problems we have just described, but
      most users simply feel stuck and abandoned.
Steve Krug, in *Don't Make Me Think* (2nd ed., 2006), page 58, notes that "the Back button accounts for somewhere between 30 and 40 percent of all Web clicks."
[17] Sections 11.2.1, 11.2.2, 13.7.4, 15.1.2, 15.3, and 17.10 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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>.

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- 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.[18]
- Alignment of table captions (i.e., the \<caption\> tag) should ideally be done with the style sheets "caption-side" property. Internet Explorer versions before IE8, however, do not support the "caption-side" property.[19] 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).[20]

Amharic language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Ampersands

Ampersands (&) should only be used as part of character entities (e.g., \" or \ ).[21] To represent an ampersand in text (or as part of a URL), use: \&

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

[18] 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 World Wide Web Consortium's *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*.

[19] For a browser-by-browser review of support for \<table\>-related style sheet properties, see Peter-Paul Koch's "Fun with Tables".

A Google Analytics review of www.house.gov usage for June 28 to July 28, 2010, indicates that Internet Explorer 6.x and 7.x account for 15.15% of the identifiable, non-robot access to the site.

[20] See § 17.10 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *HTML 4.01 Specification*.

[21] Section C.12 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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

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<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.[22]

Appropriations requests *see Funding Requests*

"Approved by" Icons *see Compliance Icons*

Apostrophes, Quotation Marks, and Quotes

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:[23]

'	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
"	double quote

(3) Quotations that are enclosed is quotation marks should have a <q> tag[24] immediately after the open quotation mark and a </q> tag immediately before the close quotation mark, e.g.,

House Rule 17, clause 5 provides that, “**<q>**A person may not smoke or use a wireless telephone or personal computer on the floor of the House.**</q>**”

Note that because different browsers render the <q> tag differently,[25] style sheets should include the property:

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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.

[22] Section 13.4 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the <applet> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) element.

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

[24] Success Criterion 1.3.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

Section H49 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* specifically includes the <q> tag. Note that § 9.2.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that the <q> tag "is intended for short quotations (inline content) that don't require paragraph breaks."

[25] See Stacey Cordoni's "Long Live the Q Tag," A List Apart (September 26, 2006) and Section H49 (example 3) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0*.

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q:before, q:after {content: ""; }

(4) The <blockquote> tag should be used for all indented quotations and should not be used for any other purpose.[26] For instance, in

> Article I, § 2, ¶ 1 of the Constitution provides that:
>> The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

"<blockquote>" should precede "The House of Representatives" and "</blockquote> should follow "State Legislature." Note that style sheets, not the <blockquote> tag, should be used to indent text that is not a quotation.

(5) Where the source document of a quotation exists on the Internet, use the "cite" attribute of the <blockquote> tag (or of the <q> tag) to specify the URL of the source.[27] For instance:

> <blockquote **cite="http://www.rules.house.gov/ruleprec/110th.pdf#page=3"**>The Speaker shall take the Chair on every legislative day precisely at the hour to which the House last adjourned and immediately call the House to order.</blockquote>

(6) Where the natural language (e.g., English) source of a quotation is provided, the source should be proceeded by a <cite> tag and followed by a </cite> tag,[28] e.g.,

> **<cite>**House Rule 17, clause 5**</cite>** provides that, “<q cite="http://www.rules.house.gov/ruleprec/ 110th.pdf#page=32">A person may not smoke or use a wireless telephone or personal computer on the floor of the House.</q>”

(7) Instead of using three periods to indicate an ellipsis (i.e., ". . ."), use the Unicode-compliant representation for an ellipsis: …

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[26] Success Criterion 1.3.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

  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."

[27] Success Criterion 1.3.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[28] Success Criterion 1.3.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

  Section G115 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* notes that

> Using the appropriate semantic elements will make sure the structure is available to the user agent. This involves explicitly indicating the role that different units have in understanding the meaning of the content. The nature of a piece of content as a paragraph, header, emphasized text, table, etc. can all be indicated in this way . . . In HTML, for example, phrase-level elements such as em, abbr, and cite add semantic information within sentences, marking text for emphasis and identifying abbreviations and citations.

  Section H49 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* reports that Jaws and WindowEyes both support the <cite> tag.

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Arabic language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Archived House Websites

The National Archives and Records Administration's official copy of the House and Senate websites of the 109th,110th, and 111th Congresses 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.

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

Armed Forces *see District Information #(6); Military (Active Duty, reserves, and National Guard); Service Academy Nominations; and Veterans*

Armenian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Arrows

To display an arrow, use either a graphic or use a chacter that is defined as an arrow in the Unicode Standard – for instance,

- → (→)
- ↠ (↠)
- ⇒ (⇒)

Do not use punctuation marks (or mathematical symbols) that simply resemble arrows – for instance,

- < (>)[29]
- » (»)[30]

Using symbols for purposes other than what they were designed for can cause problems with screen readers and other assistive technologies.[31]

Art Competition *see Artistic Discovery Contest*

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[29] "Less than" symbol.

[30] Right double quotation mark (a close quote in French, Spanish, and Italian).

[31] Success Criterion 1.3.3 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Instructions provided for understanding and operating content do not rely solely on sensory characteristics of components such as shape, size, visual location, orientation, or sound."

The W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* suggests "Using an image with a text alternative for graphical symbols instead of a Unicode font glyph with the desired graphical appearance but different meaning".

Section F71 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* cautions against:

substituting characters whose glyphs look similar to the intended character, for that intended character. The Unicode character set defines thousands of characters, covering dozens of writing systems. While the glyphs for some of these characters may look like the glyphs for other characters in visual presentation, they are not processed the same by text-to-speech tools.

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📖 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[32] (at least for the last few congresses) and to make them available in chronological order and in subject order.[33]

(2) When adding articles, op-eds, and similar material on their website, offices are encouraged to use a content management system that will (a) allow an subject to be associated with the document; (b) automatically create index pages in chronological and subject order; and (c) allow specific parts (e.g., the title, date, and first y number of words, sentences, or paragraphs) of the x most recent documents (by subject, document type, or both) and a link to their full text to be placed anywhere on the site (e.g., on the homepage, show the titles of the 5 most recent op eds and provide a link to their full text). The Drupal content management system has been designated by the House Administraton Committee as the House of Representatives' "preferred development option."[34]

📖 Artistic Discovery Contest *see also Forms*

(1) Member offices that participate in the annual Congressional art competition should provide information about how their constituents can apply to be in the competition. Offices may also want to include information about previous winners of the contest from their district (along with pictures of their artwork).[35]

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[32] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 17, notes that one of the hallmarks of a quality congressional website is "The amount and quality of the media content, press releases, video, audio, and columns or op-ed pieces".

  The Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies having an archive of the Member's "columns or op-ed pieces" as an element of a successful Congressional website. The Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 75) praises the website of then-Sen. Chris Dodd for cross referencing to his op-eds throughout the site.

  See also Rep. Bill Pascrell's op-eds, which are available by issue or in chronological order.

[33] 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.

[34] The designation of Drupal as the House preferred development option was approved November 12, 2010, by Chairman Robert Brady, in response to November 5, 2010, memorandum "Approval for Implementation of Agreements between Web Vendors and the CAO for Public Website Hosting and Web Development Services" from House Chief Administrative Officer Daniel Strodel to Chairman Brady.

[35] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 64) praises the "Art Contest" page of then-Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite.

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(2) The Artistic Discovery Contest section of a Member's website should include a form for submitting an entry into the competition.[36] 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.[37]

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

Examples of other websites that include material on the Artistic Discovery Contest include the websites of Rep. Robert Aderholt, Rep. Tom Cole, Rep. Jim Cooper, Rep. Jerry Costello, Rep. Mike Honda, Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr., Rep. Devin Nunes, Rep. Reid Ribble, and Rep. Peter Welch. For more information on the Artistic Discovery Contest, see the HouseNet "Congressional Art Competition" page.

[36] 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.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 40) recommends that each congressional website:

> **Provide separate online Web forms for constituent service requests.**
> Congressional offices repeatedly report their frustration that time-sensitive requests for flags, tours, and, most importantly, federal assistance requests, get lost among the high volumes of issue-related constituent communications. This is often due to the fact that congressional Web sites are not explicit about how to place such requests. Consequently, messages are submitted through only one "contact" form, rather than through a tier-structured Web form that differentiates between the different reasons for contacting the office and guides constituents to the correct contact channel.
>
> There are ways in which these important requests for assistance can be funneled into separate queues that quickly direct the messages to the appropriate staffer, such as a caseworker or a staff assistant handling flags and tours. . . . [The "E-mail and Contact Center" on] the Web site of Senator Carl Levin . . . takes a multi-step approach to ensure that constituent service requests are not lost. After constituents select the purpose of their inquiry, they are directed to customized forms specific to their request: an order form for constituents wishing to have a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol, an issue-related Web form for citizens wishing to register their views, and a casework form for individuals who need assistance with a federal agency.
>
> CMF recommends that congressional offices explore ways to be more deliberate in their use of Web forms. A great deal of staff time could be saved and constituents better served by fully utilizing this technology on their Web sites.

[37] See, e.g., the Congressional Art Competition forms of Rep. Jeb Hensarling and Rep. Reid Ribble.

Atom *see RSS and Atom*

Attributes *see also Accesskey attribute; Apostrophes, Quotation Marks, and Quotes; Centering; Contact Information and Techniques #(14); 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 and Atom #(4); Scripts #(2); and Tables*

    (1) The value of each attribute should be in quotation marks or apostrophes (e.g., use colspan="2" or colspan='2', not colspan=2).[38]

    (2) The name of each attribute should be in lower case (e.g., use "href", not "HREF").[39]

    (3) Every attribute must have a value (e.g., use checked="checked", not just: checked).[40]

    (4) Line breaks[41] and multiple blanks should not be used in the value of an attribute.[42]

    (5) Attribute values are case-sensitive and should normally be in lower case.[43]

Audio files *see Multimedia files, Video files, and Audio files*

Aural Style Sheets

    If using aural style sheets,[44] keep in mind that Jaws[45] (starting with version 7.10) uses screen style sheets – not aural style sheets – to determine the text to be presented.[46]

Babel Fish *see also Language of Text; Linking #(16); and Privacy Policy and Cookies*

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

[39] Section 4.2 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition)* provides that "XHTML documents must use lower case for all HTML element and attribute names."

[40] Section 4.5 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[41] 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.

[42] Section C.5 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[43] Section 4.11 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

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

[45] 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.

[46] For more information on how Jaws interacts with style sheets, see "Does JAWS support cascading style sheets (CSS)?" Freedom Scientific (February 1, 2007).

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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.[47] 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)[48].

- 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*.)[49]

- 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."[50]

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[47] 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.

[48] 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 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.

[49] 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.

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

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Backgrounds *see also Centering; and Navigation #(1)*

(1) Background colors should be designated with style sheets (using the "background" property).[51] The "bgcolor" attribute should not be used for this purpose.[52]

(2) Background images should be designated with style sheets,[53] not with the "background" attribute.[54]

(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., Success Criterion 1.4.6 of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0.[55] Text and background contrast should be tested using a tool such as Colour Contrast Analyser.[56] 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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[51] Use the "background" property, rather than the "background-color" property.

Section F24 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* provides that "Unless an author specifies both foreground and background colors, then they (the author) can no longer guarantee that the user will get a contrast that meets the contrast requirements" of Success Criterion 1.4.3 (level AA) of the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0.

[52] Section 15.1.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

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

[54] Section 7.5.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[55] Success Criterion 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.

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

[56] Contrast Analyser 2.2 is available at http://www.paciellogroup.com/resources/contrast-analyser.html.

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(6) Every background graphic that is not purely decorative needs to include a "title" attribute (or its equivalent)[57] 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 "image of" or "link to" should not be used as part of a "title" attribute (or its equivalent).[58] **Note:** the one exception to this is with photographs. It is acceptable to use "photo of" in the "title" attribute if the image is a photograph.[59]

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

    (d) File names should not be used as the value of an "title" attribute.[60]

Bahasa language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

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[57] 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)."

    Success Criterion 1.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.
>
> . . .
>
> - **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").

[58] 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."

    Likewise, Aarron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites*, (2008) page 30, recommends

> avoiding text like "photo of …" or "image of …" as they unnecessarily clutter keyword density, and are redundant since the user/search engine will already be aware that the element is an image.

[59] 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 80% of screen reader users prefer that images of photographs be designated as "photo of". The survey does, however, caution that:

> **Note:** This should not be interpreted to mean that users prefer that all images be identified. In other words, this doesn't mean that alt="graphic of my house" is preferred over alt="my house". The results here refer to photographs only.

[60] 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."

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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.[61] The banner of a Member's website should also include the Member's state and the portion of the state that the Member represents.[62]
  (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[63] in the banner.[64] **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.[65]
  (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. Additionally (particularly when the banner graphics are coded as a background image), consider putting the

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[61] *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.

[62] See for instance, the banners of Rep. Brian Higgins (Western New York), Rep. Jim Moran (8th District of Virginia / Alexandria • Arlington • Fairfax County • Falls Church • Reston), and Rep. Betty Sutton (Northeast Ohio).

[63] 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."
  Success Criterion 2.3.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:
> Web pages do not contain anything that flashes more than three times in any one second period, or the flash is below the general flash and red flash thresholds.
  Success Criterion 2.3.2 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:
> Web pages do not contain anything that flashes more than three times in any one second period.
  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.

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

[65] 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.

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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.[66]

(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.[67]

- **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;").[68]

- **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.[69]

<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.[70]

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[66] 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.

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.

[67] An alternative technology that can be used, if appropriate, is Scalable Vector Graphics. For information on SVG, see the World Wide Web Consortium's website at http://www.w3.org/Graphics/SVG/.

[68] 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.

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

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(2) Each <base> tag should end with "/>".[71]

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

Bengali language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

📖 **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.[72]
  (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.[73] 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

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[70] Section 12.4 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.
[71] Success Criterion 4.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.
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>."
[72] 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.
   Guideline 1.6(a) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include biographical data on each Member. Guideline 1.6(f) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* recommends that legislative websites include "[s]tatistical and demographic data (current and historical) on members of parliament (gender, age, education, job, etc.)."
[73] 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.
The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 63) further 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.

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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.[74]

(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]".. 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
- the Member's upcoming schedule
- the Member's official photo

(4) The biography on the Member's website should be written so that:

- It is clearly up-to-date (e.g., it includes information from the current year);[75]
- It tells what the Member is doing now;
- It tells the Member's priorities and interests;
- It tells the Member's accomplishments; and
- It tells about the Member's expertise and experience.[76]

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

(5) Consider having having an expanded version of the biography as well as the "standard" version.[77]

(6) Where a Member has a name that has an unusual spelling or pronunciation, consider indicating how the name should be pronounced.[78]

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[74] Rep. Rush Holt's "Biography" page, 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.

[75] See, e.g., Rep. Frank Pallone's "About Me" page, which starts off with "On January 5, 2011 Frank Pallone, Jr. was sworn in for his 12th term"

   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.

[76] 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 then-Rep. Marion Berry's website for highlighting the Congressman's issues and accomplishments; praises (on page 40) the biography on then-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.

[77] Rep. Joe Pitts' "About" page provides a full biography, a short biography, a resume, and several autobiographical sketches – a well as photographs. Then-Rep. Dave Obey's "Short Biography for Introductions" page provided a condensed biographical sketch designed for introducing the Member at speaking engagements.   Rep. John Tierney's "Biography" page provides a detailed version, a short version, highlights, a large Spanish version, and a short Spanish version.

[78] See, e.g., the biography pages of:

- Speaker John Boehner (bay-ner)
- Rep. Jason Chaffetz (pronounced "Chay-Fits")

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Blinklist *see Social Networking*

<blockquote> tags *see Apostrophes, Quotation Marks, and Quotations #(4) and #(5)*

Blogmarks *see Social Networking*

Blogs *see also Twitter*
    (1) Offices are encouraged to have blogs on their website.[79] .
    (2) Blogs should be kept current.[80]

- [Rep. Cynthia Lummis](#) (pronounced "Luh-miss")
- [Rep. Jackie Speier](#) (pronounced SPEAR)

[79] The Congressional Management Foundation, in its 2010 *[111th Congress Gold Mouse Project](#)* [(Detailed Methodology, page 7)](#) identifies having a blog as one of the elements of a well formed Congressional website. Before deciding whether to have a blog, however, the Congressional Management Foundation's *[2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill](#)* [(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.

    The *National Journal*'s "Congress' Best (And Worst) Committee Web Sites" (November 30, 2009) praises the House Education and Labor Committee (now the Democratic Office of the Education and Workforce Committee) [blog](#).

CAO

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

Bolding

(1) Where bolding would be appropriate on a visual display, use \<strong\> tags, not \<b\> tags.[81]

(2) Other than in headings, bolding should normally be limited to a few words – entire sentences or paragraphs should normally not be bolded.[82] 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[83] (though use of properly coded headings is preferred).[84]

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[80] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill,* [March 7, 2011], page 8 recommends that "All content [be kept] up to date".

   The 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.

[81] Success Criterion 1.3.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

   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.

   Aarron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites*, (2008) page 28, recommends against the use of \<b\> tags, noting that they

> redundantly mark up the design of a page without communicating a meaningful hierarchy of the information. Search engines look for semantic markup with a high ration of content to code.

   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* (3ʳᵈ edition, [2009], p. 133):

> 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.

[82] 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.

[83] 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."

[84] Success Criterion 2.4.10 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Section headings are used to organize the content."

   Section G141 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends "Organizing a page using headings" and notes that:

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Bosnian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

\<br\> tags
>   **(1)** The "clear" property in style sheets should be used instead of the "clear" attribute of the \<br\> tag.[85]
>   **(2)** Each \<br\> tag should end with "/\>".[86]

Breadcrumbs *see Navigation #(23)*

📖 Browsealoud

Offices should consider including a Browsealoud link on each page (or as part of an accessibility toolbox that is linked to from each page[87]). 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).[88]

> 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.

[85] Section 15.1.3 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[86] Success Criterion 4.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

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>`."

[87] See e.g., the "Site Tools" portion of the "Accessibility" pages on the websites of the House of Representatives, Rep. Jason Chaffetz, Rep. Bob Goodlatte, Rep. Chelli Pingree, and Del. Kilili Sablan.

[88] 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

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Possible graphic links to Browsealoud include:

(1) [89]

(2) [90]

(3) [91]

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.[92] Sites should be checked against a range of browsers and

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website. A consistent look and feel assists with compliance with Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*, which provides that in an accessible website:

> Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

The World Wide Web Consortium's *Understanding WCAG 2.0* further provides that:

> Ensuring that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site helps users become comfortable that they will able to predict where they can find things on each page. This helps users with **cognitive limitations**, users with **low vision**, users with **intellectual disabilities**, and also those who are **blind**.

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".

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

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

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

[92] 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 third edition [2009] of *Designing With Web Standards* (pp. 28 & 30), notes that:

> In a misguided effort to reduce expenses, many 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. As I write these words, Firefox continues to take market share away from IE and even more people are getting their internet fix via mobile devices powered by Webkit and Opera Mini. 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.

versions of browsers.[93] Google Analytics indicates that from June 28 to July 28, 2011, the following browsers each accounted for at least 0.1% of the identifiable, non-robot access to house.gov:[94]

1. Internet Explorer 8.x   32.62%
2. Internet Explorer 7.x   14.03%
3. Internet Explorer 9.x   10.42%
4. Firefox 5.x   10.11%
5. Chrome   8.48%
6. Safari (Macintosh)   7.69%
7. Firefox 3.x   5.97%
8. Safari (iPad)   1.63%[95]
9. Firefox 4.x   1.45%
10. Safari (iPhone)   1.36%
11. Android   1.19%
12. Internet Explorer 6.x   1.12%
13. Safari (Winodws)   0.54%
14. Opera   0.20%

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.

[93] Zoe Mickley Gillenwater's *Flexible Web Design: Creating Liquid and Elastic Layouts with CSS*, (2009), page 130, notes that:

> It's important to test your pages in as many browsers as possible, but make sure that you test in more standards-compliant browsers first. Get the page working correctly in browsers like Firefox, Safari, and Opera before moving on to—and addressing the shortcomings of—less capable borwsers. To put it bluntly, test in just about anything other than Internet Explorer first, and then test in IE and worry about its bugs. It's much esier to code fo the standard and then hack against IE's bugs than it is to code for IE's bugs and then try to hack other browsers into imitating those often unpredictable and illogical bugs.

Detlev Fischer, in "The Accessibility of WIA-ARIA," A List Apart (November 30, 2010), additionally notes that:

> Many users . . . have no access to the latest and greatest technology. Therefore, accessibility testing is typically based on software that "users out there" are likely to encounter at the workplace. . . . This is why the German BITV-Test (BITV is the German federal regulation mandating accessible information technology) prescribes using a dated browser (currently Internet Explorer 7) that would typically be used in combination with a dated screen reader like JAWS 8 that does not yet support WAI-ARIA.

[94] Zytrax' "Browser ID (User-Agent) Strings" is a useful tool for identifying the browser types associated with specific Web server log entries.

[95] 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.

15. Safari (iPod)	0.16%
16. Blackberry	0.14%
17. Internet Explorer with Chrome Frame	0.12%

(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.

Browser Tabs *see Pop-up Windows*

Bulgarian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Burmese language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

📖 **Business Assistance**

   Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with people seeking business opportunities with the Federal government)[96] should be encouraged to include in their website:

(1) The CRS-maintained "Business Opportunities with the Federal Government" material.[97, 98]

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[96] 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."

[97] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 46) praises the website of Sen. Tom Carper for broadening

> the scope and depth of his site by including related Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports and links to federal agency and other third party Web sites in his issue pages.

   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

[98] 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 Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* which provides that in an accessible website:

> Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

The World Wide Web Consortium's *Understanding WCAG 2.0* further provides that:

> Ensuring that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site helps users become comfortable that they will able to predict where they can find things on each page. This helps users with **cognitive limitations**, users with **low vision**, users with **intellectual disabilities**, and also those who are **blind**.

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

(2) Information for small businesses (see, e.g., Rep. Trent Franks' "Small Business Assistance" page). [99]

(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 #(16)*

Campaign material *see Election Campaign Material*

Cantonese language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Capital letters

 Use of all capital letters in text or in a heading is the equivalent of shouting and should generally be avoided. [100]

Capitol tours *see Visiting Washington*

CAPTCHA [101]

 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

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   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".

[99] 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 > Small Business" page on then-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.

 See also Rep. Peter Welch's "Business" page.

[100] The November 12, 1997 minutes of the World Wide Web Consortium'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."

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

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an approach is inaccessible by many persons with vision disabilities.[102] One alternative
to CAPTCHA is to use a logic test where the user is asked a simple mathematical (or
other question).[103] 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.[104]

<caption> tags *see Alignment*

Casework *see also Contact Information and Techniques #(16); 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".[105] If the term must be used, then define it clearly.[106]

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[102] Section 1 of the World Wide Web Consortium'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.

Success Criterion 1.1.1 (level A) of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in
an accessible website, CAPTCHA can be used if:

> text alternatives that identify and describe the purpose of the non-text content are provided, and
> alternative forms of CAPTCHA using output modes for different types of sensory perception are
> provided to accommodate different disabilities.

To meet the requirement of "using output modes for different types of sensory perception," § G144 of the
W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* suggests giving the user a pair of tests to choose one from, e.g.:

- both a visual task, such as typing words displayed in a image, and an audio task, such as typing
  letters spoken in an audio file. . . .
- In addition to the visual CAPTCHA, . . . [include] a CAPTCHA with a form field that asks,
  "What is two plus seven?" with a text entry field that allows users to enter the correct answer.

[103] Section 3 of the World Wide Web Consortium'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.

[104] Success Criterion 3.1.5 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility
Guidelines 2.0* suggests using 7th to 8th (or 9th) grade – rather than 2nd or 3rd grad – when it provides that for
a website to be accessible:

> When text requires reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level after
> removal of proper names and titles, supplemental content, or a version that does not require
> reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level, is available.

[105] 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 G153 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends "Avoid
professional jargon, slang, and other terms with a specialized meaning that may not be clear to people" in
order to comply with Success Criterion 3.1.5 (level AAA) of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility
Guidelines 2.0* – which provides that for a website to be accessible:

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Caucuses *see also "About" page; Committee Assignments and Caucus memberships; Contact Information and Techniques #(14); and Social Networking*
　Caucuses should consider including the following items in their website:
- Home[107]
- About Us[108]
    - Chairman's Message[109]
    - Chairman's Bio
    - Membership[110]
    - Purpose, Mission, & Goals[111]
    - History & Accomplishments[112]

　　　When text requires reading ability more advanced than the <u>lower secondary education level</u> after removal of proper names and titles, <u>supplemental content</u>, or a version that does not require reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level, is available.

[106] See, e.g., Rep. Xavier Becerra's "Help With Federal Agencies (Casework)" page and Rep. Ed Towns's "Help With a Federal Agency" page, which prominently define "casework".

　Collin Burden, writing for the Congressional Management Foundation in "Back to Basics: The Foundations of a Good Website" (April 14, 2011), praises the "How to . . . Request Casework Assistance" page of Sen. Dianne Feinstein for providing "Clear, detailed information about what casework is and how to get help, as well as an FAQ".

[107] See *Homepage*, below.

[108] See *About page (or section)*, above.

[109] If there is a Chairman's message, it is better to have that as a separate page than to have it take up real estate on the homepage.

　The Congressional Management Foundation's 1999 report *Building Web Sites Constituents Will Use* (page 16) recommends against welcome messages or cover pages. The Foundation's 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 space. "Welcome to my Web site. I hope you find what you are looking for," is a waste of visitors' time.

　Rep. Steve Cohen addresses this issue by not including his welcome message on his homepage, but instead provides a link to the message.

　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.

[110] See, e.g.,
- Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus "Members" page
- Congressional Black Caucus "Members" page and "Commmittees" page
- New Democrat Coalition "Members" page
- Republican Study Committee "Member Activity" page

[111] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (p. 45) praises the "About" page of the House Science Committee (Democratic Office) 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 (p. 44) praises the 109th Congress website of the House 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 47) also praises the website of the House Majority Leader (which was then the website of the House Democratic Whip) for their including information on the role of the office.

[112] See, e.g., the Congressional Black Caucus "History and Agenda" page.

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- o   Task Forces[113]
- Contact Us[114]
  - o   Mailing Lists[115]
- Events[116]
- Media Center
  - o   Blogs
  - o   Dear Colleagues
  - o   In the News[117]
  - o   Newsletters
  - o   Op Eds
  - o   Photos
  - o   Pod Casts
  - o   Press Contacts
  - o   Press Kit
  - o   Press Releases
  - o   RSS/Atom feeds
  - o   Videos
- Issues and Legislation[118]
- Resources
  - o   Facts and Figures
  - o   Glossary[119]
  - o   Reports and Documents
  - o   Related Organizations
- Privacy Policy
- Accessibility
- Site map

Census data *see District Information #(5)*

Centering

   Style sheets, not <center> tags (or align="center" attributes), should be used to achieve centering.[120] Which style sheet property is appropriate to use for centering depends on what is being centered,

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[113] Those caucuses that have task forces, use them the same way that committees use subcommittees. See, e.g., Blue Dog Coalition, Congressional Black Caucus, and New Democrat Coalition.

[114] This page should feature a form for communicating to the caucus. It should also include a link to the RSS Feeds page.

[115] This page should include links to the "Media Center: Newsletters" page and the "Media Center: RSS Feeds" page.

[116] See, e.g., the calendar on the homepage of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus.

[117] This is intended to be the place for press references to the Caucus.

[118] See, e.g., the Congressional Health Caucus "Topics" page.

[119] See, e.g., the Congressional Health Care Caucus "Health Care Glossary". The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age*, (p. 33) praises the Agriculture Committee for having

> on its site a glossary of agricultural terms as well as several pages of "fact sheets" that make the wide range of issues within the committee's jurisdiction easy to understand.

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- centered text should use the style sheets property "text-align:center"
- background images being centered should use the style sheets property "background"[121]
- all other items being centered (e.g., the <hr>, <iframe>, <img>, <input>, and <object> tags) should use "margin: 0 auto;"[122]

Certification Icons *see Compliance Icons*

Chamorro language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Character Entities *see also Ampersands; Navigation #(6); Apostrophes, Quotation Marks and Quotations #(5); Arrows; Roman Numerals #(3); Symbols; and U.S. Code #(3)*

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.[123] Such tables should conform to the standards for accessible tables.

Children *see COPPA; Kids' pages; and Missing and Exploited Children*

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[120] Section 15.1.2 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

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

[122] 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 World Wide Web Consortium's *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*.

[123] 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)."

Success Criterion 1.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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, ...

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.

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Chinese language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Chuukese language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Cite attribute *see Apostrophes, Quotation Marks, and Quotes #(5)*

<cite> tag *see Apostrophes, Quotation Marks, and Quotes #(6)*

Classes *see also Contact Information and Techniques #(14)*
(1) When assigning the name of a class, 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.[124] Note also that the value of each "class" attribute should start with a letter.[125]
(2) When a class has a style sheet property that results in the text being only available to assistive technologies,[126] consider assigning a name to the class along the lines of class="screen-reader-info".[127]

<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.[128]

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[124] Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (3rd edition, [2009]), pp.151-152, recommends that 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.

[125] Section 4.1.3 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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".

[126] For a discussion of these techniques, see Gez Lemon's "Invisible Form Prompts," Juicy Studio, September 18, 2004.

[127] "Screen-reader-info" is suggested here rather than the more traditional "hidden", so that it will be clear on a manual inspection that the purpose of the class is only for accessibility purposes and not to fool search engines. See, e.g., "Hiding screen-reader text from visual browsers," Webmaster World (January 26, 2007).

[128] 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,

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(2) It is not necessary to just use "browser safe" colors.[129]

(3) Text colors should be designated with style sheets (using the "color" property). The "text" attribute should not be used for this purpose.[130]

(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.[131] 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.

☠ Commercial references *see also District Information #(3)*

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.[132]

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for example from context or markup." Likewise, Success Criterion 1.4.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[129] 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."

[130] Section 7.5.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[131] Section 3.2.4 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

[132] 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.

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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
(1) Member offices should be encouraged to:
- list the committees, subcommittees, and caucuses[133] that the Member serves on;[134]
- provide links to those committees, subcommittees[135] and caucuses; [136] and
- explain the purpose of each committee, subcommittee, and caucus. [137]

(2) When the website of a Member who is in the minority party contains a link to a committee website, consider linking to the website of the minority office of that committee, rather than to the full Committee.

📖 Committee Websites *see also "About" page; Contact Information and Techniques #(14); Legislative Material #(1); Schedule of the Member (or Office); Social Networking; and Twitter*

An identical requirement is contained in the *Committee's Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, Content, § 5).

[133] 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 five 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 "Committees and Caucuses" page of Rep. Illeana Ros-Lehtinen, provides a description of the purpose of each committee and caucus she chairs or co-chairs.

A reasonably comprehensive list of caucus websites is set out in Appendix 3: *Caucus Web Sites* of this document.

[134] Guideline 1.6(a) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include information on each Member's committee and/or commission assignments.

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

[136] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age*, (p. 46) praises Rep. Mike Honda's "Committee Work" page for indicating the Congressman's committee assignments. Rep. Honda has and explanation of what each committee does and provides links to the committees and subcommittees that he serves on (indicating which subcommittee he serves as ranking member), Rep. Honda's "Caucus Participation" page provides links to the caucuses that he chairs or is Chairman Emeritus.

[137] 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. Steve Israel's "Member Organizations" page and Rep. Pete Session's "Awards and Recognition" page.

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> **(1)** Committee websites should include:
>> **(a)** transcripts of hearings held by the committee[138] (and, if practical, webcasts of the hearings)[139]
>> **(b)** full text of reports issued by the committee[140]
>> **(c)** full text of the committee's rules[141]
>> **(d)** a calendar of the committee's activities (including upcoming hearings)[142].[143] (Consider laying this information out calendar-style – see, e.g., the calendar of the Committee on Natural Resources.)

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[138] 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 former House Agriculture Committee's hearings page which had both the prepared statements and the GPO printed transcripts).
  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.

[139] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 46) encourages committees to include web casts of hearings on their websites. See, e.g., the "Hearings" section of the Education and Workforce Committee's website.
  The Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Findings, page 14), indicates that, in 2009, 71% of all congressional committee websites included webcasts. The report (Award Winners: Platinum, page 5) goes on to praise the House Science and Technology Committee (now the Democratic Office of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee) for providing "webcasts of past hearings and witness testimony".
  The Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill,* [March 7, 2011], page 17 praises the website of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee for including "a raw transcript and video of the hearings . . . [as well as] Member statements . . . [and] witness testimony".

[140] 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 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Award Winners: Platinum, page 5) praises the House Science and Technology Committee (now the Democratic Office of the Science, Space and Technology Committee) for providing copies of the committee's reports.
  The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 46 and 49) praises the then-House Ways and Means Committee and the House Judiciary Committee for including the full text of their committee reports on their sites.

[141] 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.

[142] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Findings, page 13), indicates that, in 2009, 85% of all congressional committee websites included the committee's schedule of hearings. The report (Award Winners: Platinum, page 5) goes on to praise the House Science and Technology Committee for providing "an up-to-date hearing schedule".
  The Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill,* [March 7, 2011], page 17 praises the website of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee for including the committee's hearings schedule.

[143] The *National Journal*'s "Congress' Best (And Worst) Committee Web Sites" (November 30, 2009) notes that top-rated committee websites feature legislative calendars and particularly praises the legislative calendar of the House Education and Labor Committee.

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       (e) material related to each subcommittee[144]

  (2) On committee websites, consider providing the results of roll call votes.[145]

  (3) On committee websites, include a method to allow citizens to electronically communicate with the office[146] (preferably through a form[147, 148]). When using a

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[144] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill,* [March 7, 2011], page 10 praises the website for the Natural Resources Committee for including "hot topics and information for each subcommittee" and for making "[r]elated hearings and documents . . . also available".

[145] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 46) encourages committees to include committee votes on their websites. The Education and Labor Committee provides roll call votes in its "Markups" section.

[146] 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.

The Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Award Winners: Platinum, page 5) praises the House Science and Technology Committee (now the Democratic Office of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee) for "allowing users to [electronically] send a comment to the committee". The committee provides a form for media comments and a separate form for comments from the general public.

The Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, pages 45 to 46) notes that:

> It is easy to understand why committee and leadership offices might be reticent to open themselves up to contact from individual citizens. Because their actions have national impact, the challenge of answering mail from every state and congressional district would be daunting for them. While committee and leadership offices typically have significantly more resources than the rank and file Member offices, they still are not in a position to respond to communications from across the United States.
>
> . . .
>
> Even if committee and leadership offices do not have the ability to reply, they could still benefit from the feedback that they receive. It could even help to shape the congressional agenda and provide a critical perspective on the direction of public policy long before legislation is brought to a vote on the House or Senate floor.
>
> . . .
>
> Some of the committee and leadership offices do solicit public feedback provide forms similar to those found on Members' personal Web sites.
>
> The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is one example of a panel that accepts public comment . . . . The committee is careful, however, to set expectations, saying, "While it is not possible for Chairman Waxman or the committee's staff to respond to every message, please be assured that your comments will be carefully considered." In addition to their general comment form, they also maintain a "Waste, Fraud, and Abuse of Taxpayer Dollars" tip page, and they report receiving between 100 and 200 citizen messages during the course of an average week.

[147] 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.

[148] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 53) suggests that:

> The following list illustrates the typical fields that will probably be necessary to verify senders as constituents of the Member:
> • Prefix
> • First name
> • Last name

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form – and not a public e-mail address – consider including an explanation as to why a public e-mail address is not being provided.[149]

(4) 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.[150]

(5) 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).[151]

Communication *see Contact Information and Techniques*

📖 Compliance Icons

(1) 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. For instance:

Likewise, websites that comply with other standards – or which have been validated by testing software that issue compliance icons – should consider

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• Address 1
• Address 2
• City
• State
• Zip + 4
• Telephone number (optional)
• Issue Code (chosen by each office)
• Comment or message field

[149] 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.

[150] See, e.g., the individual subcommittee pages on the website of the Natural Resources Committee.

[151] 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 "*tip 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."

displaying appropriate icons.[152]

    (2) Where a site has previously qualified to display a compliance icon but has been significantly modified since that time, the icon should only be displayed if the site has been retested since the modifications were made – in order to insure that the site is still compliant.

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 also Business Assistance; Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance; Issues and Voting Information #(4); Legislative Material #(1); and Student Financial Aid*

   Offices are encouraged to make use of Congressional Research Service issue briefs and reports.[153]

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[152] Icons to indicate compliance with other standards can be found at:
- other World Wide Web Consotrium (W3C) standards - http://www.w3.org/QA/Tools/Icons
- Dublin Core metadata standard - http://dublincore.org/about/#banner
- 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 (W3C XHTML 1.0; W3C CSS; and W3C WCAG version 1.0, level AA), Rep. Jim Saxton (W3C XHTML 1.0 checked), and the LGBT Equality Caucus (W3C WCAG version 1.0, level AA).   The California State Legislature displays compliance icons on their homepage (W3C WCAG version 1, level AA; W3C XHTML 1.0; and W3C CSS 2.0).

[153] 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."

📖 **Constituent Recognitions** *see also Greetings*

   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).[154]

📖 **Constituent Services** *see Artistic Discovery Contest; Business Assistance; Consumer Protection Information; Casework; Disaster Preparedness Information; District Information #(4); Flags; FirstGov; Government Resources; Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance; Graphics #(15); Greetings; Identity Theft Information; Internships; Missing and Exploited Children; Navigation #(5); Page Program; Service Academy Nominations; Student Financial Aid; Unclaimed Property; Veterans; and Visiting Washington*

  (1) Each constituent service that an office offers should be included in the office's website.[155]

  (2) Each website should address the problems that the office's constituents most commonly seek the office's help with. With each of those problems should be a solution[156] (or failing that, at least instructions as to how to best get a solution).

  (3) Where possible, include step-by-step instructions for what a constituent needs to do (and provide) to get assistance.[157] Provide different instructions depending on the type of assistance needed. [158]

Instructions for linking to Congressional Research Service reports are available at http://housenet.house.gov/portal/server.pt?open=18&objID=600&parentname=CommunityPage&parentid=34&mode=2&in_hi_userid=2&cached=true.

[154] 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.

  The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (pages 21 and 25) praises Sen. Tom Carper's website for highlighting Delawareans by "posting constituent photo galleries and congratulating constituents on their accomplishments"; and the website of then-Rep. Richard Pombo for having "An extensive gallery of constituent photos". See also Del. Kilili Sablan's "Constituent Photos" page

[155] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 11 recommends that each Member website should answer the question "What services can my Member provide me with and how does the process work?"

[156] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 11 recommends that the constituent service and casework portion of each congressional website include "the most common problems and solutions". The report sites Rep. Ed Royce's "U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services" page as a good example for providing "[r]esources specific to the district and answers to the most common problems or questions."

  Collin Burden, writing for the Foundation in "Back to Basics: The Foundations of a Good Website" (April 14, 2011), praises the "How to . . . Request Casework Assistance" page of Sen. Dianne Feinstein for providing "Clear, detailed information about what casework is and how to get help, as well as an FAQ".

[157] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) 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 (Findings, page 16) also indicates that, in 2009, 49% of all congressional Member websites did not include guidance on requesting assistance from the office. The report (Award Winners: Platinum, page 3) goes on to praise the website of Sen. Lisa Murkowski for having "FAQs and clear guidance for citizens that may have casework needs."

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(4) 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".[159]

(5) Consider including a Privacy Act release form.[160] Because an actual signature is needed on the forms, consider using an HTML form to capture the information and then generate a filled out form to be signed and mailed to the office.[161]

(6) Consider including information about services regardless of whether they are provided by Federal, state, or local agencies.[162] 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

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The Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 30 to 38) praises then-Rep. Brian Baird's website for having "an informative FAQ section, which contains casework questions, [and] an example of an actual case"; then-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 then-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; praises (page 49) Rep. Jim Gerlach's website for providing "well thought-out casework information"; 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.
[158] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill,* [March 7, 2011], page 11, praises the casework section of Rep. Ed Royce's website, noting that "[e]ach area of casework has a description of what the service is, how to get help from the agency, and how to get help from the congressional office."
[159] 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. Ben Chandler uses "How Can We Help You?". Rep. Spencer Bachus uses "Helping You". Rep. Carolyn Maloney uses "How Can I Help?". Then-Rep. Dennis Moore used "Assistance".
[160] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies including "a casework privacy release form" as an element in a well constructed Congressional website.
[161] See, e.g., the "Federal Agencies—Getting Help" pages on the websites of Rep. Bob Goodlatte, Rep. Reid Ribble, and Del. Kilili Sablan.
[162] 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."

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with the right office (for an example of this approach, see the "Local Help" section of Rep. Congressman David Wu's "Constituent Services" page).

(7) Consider organizing the Constituent Services portion of the website by function, rather than by agency name.[163] 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 solve their problem.

(8) 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.[164]

(9) Consider making constituent services information available in languages in addition to English.[165]

📖 **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 Rep. Mike Coffman, Rep. Judy Chu, Rep. Bob Goodlatte, and Rep. Larry Kissell[166, 167] which feature Federal Trade Commission information on:

- Business Opportunities
- Children's Online Privacy Protection
- Computers and Technology
- Credit and Insurance
- Credit and Loans
- Cross-Border Fraud
- "Do Not Call" Registry
- Funerals

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[163] 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."

[164] 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."

[165] See, e.g., Rep. Mike Honda (Spanish and Vietnamese), Rep. Betty McCollum (Hmong, Russian, Somali, and Spanish), Rep. Charles Rangel (Spanish), and Rep. Loretta Sanchez (Spanish).

[166] See also the "Consumer Protection" page of Rep. Nancy Pelosi and the "Consumers" page of Rep. Peter Welch.

[167] 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: Rep. Judy Biggert, Rep. William Lacy Clay, Rep. John Dingell, Sen. Byron Dorgan, then-Rep. Phil English, Rep. J. Randy Forbes, Rep. Gene Green, Rep. Mary Bono Mack, Rep. Henry Waxman, Sen. Barbara Boxer, Sen. Jon Kyl, Sen. James Inhofe, and Sen. Blanche Lincoln.

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

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- Gas Saving Tips
- Home Energy Savings
- Information Security
- Investments
- Mail Fraud
- Native Art from Alaska
- Office Supply Scams
- Spam
- Weight Loss Scams

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

📖 **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[168] (preferably through a form[169] on

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[168] 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.

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.

   The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, pages 27 and 45 to 46) notes that every House and Senate Member website contains a method for constituents to electronically communicate with the office and encourages congressional committees and leadership offices to also provide citizens with an electronic method to communicate with those offices. The 2008 report (page 34) indicates that 43% of congressional committees (majority and minority offices) provide this and 53% of congressional leadership offices also provide this. The report also notes that:

> It is easy to understand why committee and leadership offices might be reticent to open themselves up to contact from individual citizens. Because their actions have national impact, the challenge of answering mail from every state and congressional district would be daunting for them. While committee and leadership offices typically have significantly more resources than the rank and file Member offices, they still are not in a position to respond to communications from across the United States.
> . . .
> Even if committee and leadership offices do not have the ability to reply, they could still benefit from the feedback that they receive. It could even help to shape the congressional agenda and provide a critical perspective on the direction of public policy long before legislation is brought to a vote on the House or Senate floor.
> . . .
> Some of the committee and leadership offices do solicit public feedback provide forms similar to those found on Members' personal Web sites.
>   The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is one example of a panel that accepts public comment . . . . The committee is careful, however, to set expectations, saying, "While it is not possible for Chairman Waxman or the committee's staff to respond to every

the "Contact Me" page[170]). 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.[171]

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message, please be assured that your comments will be carefully considered." In addition to their general comment form, they also maintain a "Waste, Fraud, and Abuse of Taxpayer Dollars" tip page, and they report receiving between 100 and 200 citizen messages during the course of an average week.

The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111ᵗʰ Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 4) identifies "Foster[ing] interaction both on and offline" as one of the 5 core principles of successful congressional websites.

Guideline 1.5(e) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include "Contact information (addresses, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail) of each [committee, commission, and similar] body." Guideline 1.6(c) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* recommends that legislative websites include "[c]ontact information for each member of parliament including his or her e-mail address."

[169] 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.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 53) suggests that:

> The following list illustrates the typical fields that will probably be necessary to verify senders as constituents of the Member:
> • Prefix
> • First name
> • Last name
> • Address 1
> • Address 2
> • City
> • State
> • Zip + 4
> • Telephone number (optional)
> • Issue Code (chosen by each office)
> • Comment or message field

[170] 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 Success Criterion 3.2.3 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*, which provides that in an accessible website:

> Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

The World Wide Web Consortium's *Understanding WCAG 2.0* further provides that:

> Ensuring that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site helps users become comfortable that they will able to predict where they can find things on each page. This helps users with **cognitive limitations**, users with **low vision**, users with **intellectual disabilities**, and also those who are **blind**.

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

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(2) Consider including - at least in the "Contact Me" page - an electronic newsletter[172] subscription sign-up opportunity (e.g., via Listserv).

(3) Consider including a staff directory.[173]

(4) Consider including a form to allow constituents to schedule a meeting with the Member.[174]

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important element in making websites "easy for all Americans to use, including constituents with disabilities".

[171] 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. See also, the "Why don't I have a regular email address?" portion of the "Email Me" pages of the websites of Rep. Diane Black, Rep. Tom Petri, and Rep. Reid Ribble,

[172] 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.

[173] 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.

   Collin Burden, writing for the Foundation in "Back to Basics: The Foundations of a Good Website" (April 14, 2011), praises the "How to . . . Request Casework Assistance" page of Sen. Dianne Feinstein for listing "the staff that handles each area of casework".

   The "Staff Members" page of Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen's website includes the title and e-mail address of each staffer and a list of each issue area that the staffer is responsible. 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. The "DC Staff " and "Dallas Staff" pages on Rep. Pete Session's website provide a biographical sketch of each staffer and includes the staffer's areas of responsibility.

   Sen. Lisa Murkowski's "Staff Directory" page indicates the area of responsibility of each staffer. The Office of General Counsel's "OGC Attorneys" page provides a biographical sketch of each of the attorneys on the staff.

   The Congressional Black Caucus lists its staff at the end of the caucus's press kit.

   The *National Journal*'s "Congress' Best (And Worst) Committee Web Sites" (November 30, 2009) praises the House Education and Labor Committee's staff directory page.

[174] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Award Winners: Platinum, page 3) praises Sen. Lisa Murkowski's website for giving "users the ability to request a meeting online".

   The 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 then-Rep. Christopher Carney, then-Rep. Brad Ellswoth, then-Rep. Mark Ferguson, and Rep. 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.

   The Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 40) recommends that each congressional website:

   Provide separate online Web forms for constituent service requests.
   Congressional offices repeatedly report their frustration that time-sensitive requests for flags, tours, and, most importantly, federal assistance requests, get lost among the high volumes of issue-related constituent communications. This is often due to the fact that congressional Web sites are not explicit about how to place such requests. Consequently, messages are submitted through only one "contact" form, rather than through a tier-structured Web form that differentiates between the different reasons for contacting the office and guides constituents to the correct contact channel.

(5) Consider including a form to allow constituents to invite the Member to attend an event.[175]

(6) Consider including the regular office hours along with the addresses (and phone numbers) of the Member's Washington and district offices.[176]

There are ways in which these important requests for assistance can be funneled into separate queues that quickly direct the messages to the appropriate staffer, such as a caseworker or a staff assistant handling flags and tours. . . . [The "E-mail and Contact Center" on] the Web site of Senator Carl Levin . . . takes a multi-step approach to ensure that constituent service requests are not lost. After constituents select the purpose of their inquiry, they are directed to customized forms specific to their request: an order form for constituents wishing to have a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol, an issue-related Web form for citizens wishing to register their views, and a casework form for individuals who need assistance with a federal agency.

CMF recommends that congressional offices explore ways to be more deliberate in their use of Web forms. A great deal of staff time could be saved and constituents better served by fully utilizing this technology on their Web sites.

See also Rep. Trent Franks' "Scheduling Request" page, Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr.'s "Schedule a Meeting" page and Rep. Reid Ribble's "Schdeule a Meeting" page.

[175] See e.g., Rep. Devin Nunes's "Scheduling" page, Rep. Judy Chu's "Speaking Invitation Request Form," and Rep. Reid Ribble's "Invite Me to Speak" page.

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[176] 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.

The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 4) identifies "Foster[ing] interaction both on and offline" as one of the 5 core principles of successful congressional websites.

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."

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(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).[177]

(8) Offices are urged to include a fax number on their website.[178]

(9) Consider including information as to how soon a constituent can expect to get a response (after the constituent submits a request to the office) and how they will be contacted.[179] Either the information or a link to a page with the information

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[177] 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.

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

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Guideline 1.5(e) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include fax numbers for each committee, commission, and similar body.

[179] 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."

The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 40 et seq.) recommends that congressional offices:

> **Develop and post your correspondence policies online.**
> While the volume of communications to congressional offices is at an all time high, few offices actually post substantive information on their Web sites about their correspondence policies. Because each office has different procedures, constituents would be well served if they could easily access specific Members' policies on their Web sites. Specific information would vary from office to office, of course, but a thorough communications policy would include: guidance on the most effective ways to communicate, an estimate of how long a response can be expected to take, an overview of what information the office needs to properly process the message and respond, information about delays in postal mail delivery, and any other requirements or restraints the office may place on e-mail communications. One good example of this type of guidance can be found on the Web site of Congressman Earl Blumenauer. As part of the "Contact Earl" section, a page on "Effective Advocacy" gives visitors directions on how they can be the most effective in their communications by knowing how to make requests of the office. The Web site says, "The communications that receive the most attention in our office often ask for something specific, such as signing on to a specific piece of legislation, or voting in a particular way on a bill. Of course, we always appreciate updates and general information on issues you care about. However, you should think about whether there is something specific you would like Congressman Blumenauer to do."

should be included in the "thank you" page generated when a constituent transmits a message to the office via a web form on the office's website.[180]

(10) On general purpose contact forms (and on other forms as appropriate) include a "no response necessary" checkbox, so that constituents can alert the office that they do not expect a personal response.[181]

(11) 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.[182]

(12) 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.[183] Offices using this approach should be encouraged to indicate why the address information is being requested.

On Senator Kent Conrad's "Email Policy" page, he answers the relevant questions about why he only responds to North Dakotans, why constituents are required to give their postal address, and how long they can expect to wait before receiving a response.

Stating the office's policies upfront can set expectations and smooth interactions between Member offices and their constituents.

[180] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 41) notes that:

E-mail does make it easier for pen pals to prolong the debate, but there are some easy techniques for managing their expectations. For example, making response policies clear on your Web site and in a "re-direct message" pointing back to the Web site if they would like to send in an additional message can reduce pen pals.

[181] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 44) recommends that offices:

Consider utilizing a "no response necessary" checkbox or a "register my views" Web form. Sometimes constituents do not expect – or want – a response to their message. Instead they merely wish to register their views. Consider utilizing a "no response necessary" checkbox or a "register my views" Web form. Sometimes constituents do not expect – or want – a response to their message. Instead they merely wish to register their views. One way to ease the burden on congressional staff and meet constituent expectations is to add a "no response necessary" checkbox on the Member's Web form or create a separate mechanism such as an online poll or survey where citizens can simply state an opinion.

[182] Items 24 and 26 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Standard* (HISPUB 007.1.56, April 2011) provide that:

24. 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.

26. 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 then-Rep. Dennis Moore's website for including an "'inform a friend' feature [that] allows users to share the site with others via e-mail"

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

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(13) 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.[184]

(14) References to the town name of a district office should be consistent within a website. For instance, references to a particular district office should not be identified as being in Aspen Hill, MD 20906 in one part of a website, but as being in Silver Spring, MD 20906 in another part of the website.[185]

(15) Contact information from an office should be coded in conformance with the hCard Microformat Standard,[186] specifically:

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

        101 First Street

    (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.,

        2401 Rayburn House Office Building

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

        Springfield

    (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

        Virginia

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

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[184] 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.

Jakob Nielsen, in **"**Why WSJ Mobile App Gets ** Customer Reviews" (July 5, 2011) notes that:

> our tests of hundreds of mobile apps have clearly shown a strong user preference for engaging with the top option; this is similar to what we see when testing mobile sites. Even though phone screens are small, users might still overlook the last option as they focus their attention on the top of the screen.

[185] Success Criterion 3.2.4 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 provides that in a accessible website, "Components that have the same functionality within a set of Web pages are identified consistently."

> *Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines*, 2nd edition, page 102 (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), recommends that websites should "[e]nsure that the format of common items is consistent from one page to another."

[186] 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.

The hCard Microformat Standard is based on RFC 2426 (the vCard MIME Directory Profile) and is consistent with the World Wide Web Consortium's (X)HTML specification.

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```
<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>
```

(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>
```

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```
        <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[187] 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>,
            <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[188] 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>
```

---

[187] 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.

[188] Section 7.5.6 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

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(16) When practical, include the office's phone number and address[189] on each page.[190]

(17) The main content of the contact page should have a link to the site's constituent services and/or casework pages.[191]

(18) Consider providing tips on how to communicate effectively with the office.[192]

Content *see specific content; and Word Choice*

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

Cookies *see Privacy Policy and Cookies*

CoolIris

When making arrangements to use CoolIris for a House office, use Apps.gov to acquire the license – do not use CoolIris.com. The terms of service are different.   Apps.gov provides the terms of service that the General Services Administration has negotiated for government agencies.

COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) *see Forms #(11); Kids' pages; and Privacy Policy and Cookies*

☠ Copyrighted material

(1) Copyrighted material[193] should be used only with the written permission of the copyright owner.

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[189] Guideline 1.5(e) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include "Contact information (addresses, telephone and fax numbers,e-mail) of each [committee, commission, and similar] body."

[190] 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."

[191] 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.

[192] 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." Rep. Earl Blumenauer's "Effective Advocacy" page is likewise praised by the Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 40 et seq.)

The October 10, 2006, issue of the Foundation's *Congress Online* Newsletter praises then-Rep. Lincoln Davis' "Communicate Effectively" page. See also, the "Help Filing a Case with My Office" portion of then-Rep. Marion Berry's "Help With a Federal Agency" page.

The Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Findings, page 16) indicates that, in 2009, 68% of all congressional Member websites did not include guidance on communicating with the office.

See also, footnote 157.

[193] 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;

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(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.[194]

(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)*

Courts *see Government Resources #(1)*

Croatian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

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(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.

[194] 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.

Czech language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Danish language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

☠ **Dates, Time, and Timeliness** *see also Download time; and Forms #(12)*
   (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.[195]
   (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.[196]
   (3) Information on the website should be kept up to date.[197] The information should also convey the idea that it is current (see, e.g., Rep. Frank Pallone's "About Me" page, which starts off with "On January 5, 2011 Frank Pallone, Jr. was sworn in for his 12th term").

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

[196] 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."

   Success Criterion 3.1.3 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that for a website to be accessible:

   A mechanism is available for identifying specific definitions of words or phrases used in an unusual or restricted way, including idioms and jargon.

[197] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 8 recommends that "All content [be kept] up to date, including issue pages, vote rationales, accomplishments, video, and audio". The report notes that "Information was considered timely if it was clearly from the current session of Congress". The report (page 9) cites Rep. Carolyn Maloney's "Health Care Reform" page as an example of the main content of a page being "updated with the most significant, recent action".

   The January 30, 2006 edition of the 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!

The 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.

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(4) When practical, 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.[198]

default values *see Attributes #(3); and Listserv and E-Newsletters #(5)*

Delicious *see Social Networking*

Demographics *see District Information #(5); and Navigation #(1)*

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

📖 **Disaster Preparedness Information** *see also Health Services or Issues*
   Member offices should consider including information on their websites concerning disaster preparedness information.
- Rep. Mary Bono's website, for instance, provides earthquake preparation information.[199]
- The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration has hurricane and Atlantic tropical storm tracking widgets available at http://www.noaawatch.gov/widgets/.[200]

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[198] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111ᵗʰ Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 4) identifies "Know your audience(s)" as one of the 5 core principles of successful congressional websites.
   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.

[199] 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 has included information on ice storm preparedness. Rep. Gus Bilirakus' "Hurricane Season" page, Rep. Steve Scalice's "Hurricane Preparedness" page, and then-Rep. Robert Wexler's "Hurricane Preparedness Guide" provide information on hurricane preparedness. Rep. Adam Smith's "Flooding Assistance" page includes information on flood preparedness.

[200] Concerning current disasters, the September 13, 2001 issue of the Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online* Newsletter advises that:
      updating congressional Web sites is not, and should not be, the top priority of Member offices. However, your Web site must remain current and sensitive to pressing public needs, especially when a national disaster occurs. You don't want to convey the message that your office has not refocused its energies to help constituents cope with this crisis. Your Web site offers an excellent means for providing what constituents need, when they need it, and how they need it.
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.

📖 **District Information**[201] *see also Banner #(7); Constituent Recognitions; Funding Requests; Maps and Directions; Navigation #(5); and Government Resources #(1)*

(1) Member websites should indicate what makes their district unique.[202]

(2) 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; then-[Rep. Ray LaHood's "Abraham Lincoln's Legacy" page](#) that linked the current 18th District of Illinois with the district represented by Abraham Lincoln when he was a member of the House of Representatives (1847-1849); and Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's former "[Interesting First District Facts](#)" page which provided information on noteworthy events from the 1800s to the present that occurred in what is now the 1st District.[203, 204]

(3) 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 § 5)*, 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)[205] and linking to informational pages – not pages primarily containing solicitations for money, volunteerism, or other things of value[206, 207]; and

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[201] [Guideline 1.6(a)](#) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include information about each Member's district.

[202] The Congressional Management Foundation's *[Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill,](#)* [March 7, 2011], page 13, praises the website of [Rep. Virginia Foxx](#) for including "a description of the district and what makes it unique."

[203] See also, Rep. Michael Cupuano's "[8th District Over the Years](#)" page which provides biographical sketches of all the Members of the House who have represented what is now the 8th District of Massachusetts from 1823 to the present and also tracks the districts boundaries since 1823.

[204] 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).

[205] The *[House Ethics Manual (2008 ed., p. 350),](#)* issued by the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (now the House Ethics Committee), provides that "Members and employees should undertake for one individual or business no more than they would be willing to do for others similarly situated."

[206] 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

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(b) Including a statement on the Web page with the links, that these links are not intended to be an endorsement.[208]

(4) 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).[209] Consider placing these references in the District Information section of the website and in the Constituent Services section of the website and in the Federal Government section of the website.[210]

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can avoid engaging in solicitations which is prohibited under House rules, including solicitations for money, volunteerism, or other things of value.

[207] 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.

[208] 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.*

[209] 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 Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) also identifies having "information about local or district resources" as an element of a well-formed Congressional website.

The Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 11, praises Rep. Ed Royce's "U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services" page for providing "[r]esources specific to the district." The report also recommends that congressional websites provide "links to federal agencies."

[210] Sources for this information include:

- Bureau of Land Management - http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en.html
- Department of Energy - http://phonebook.doe.gov/field.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
- Drug Enforcement Administration - http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/agency/domestic.htm
- Employee Benefits Security Administration - http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/aboutebsa/org_chart.html#section13
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: http://eeoc.gov/field/index.cfm
- Federal Bureau of Investigation: http://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field/listing_by_state
- Federal Highway Administration - http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/field.html
- Food and Nutrition Service - http://www.fns.usda.gov/cga/contacts/fieldoffices/default.htm
- Internal Revenue Service: http://www.irs.gov/localcontacts/index.html
- Minority Business Development Agency: http://www.mbda.gov/main/offices
- National Archives and Records Administration: http://www.archives.gov/locations/states.html
- National Forest Service - http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/map/finder.shtml
- National Park Service: http://www.nps.gov/findapark/#
- Railroad Retirement Board - http://www.rrb.gov/field/field.asp

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(5) Member offices should be encouraged to include Census Bureau data about their district.[211]

(6) 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.[212]

(7) Member offices should consider providing information about the counties, towns, and other localities within their district.[213] 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.[214]

(8) 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.[215]

- Secret Service - http://www.secretservice.gov/field_offices.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. Export Assistance Center - http://www.export.gov/eac/
- U.S. Geological Survey – Water Resources Offices: http://www.usgs.gov/contact_us/

[211] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies providing "District/state demographic statistics" as an element of a well-formed Congressional website.

   The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 13, praises the website of Rep. Virginia Foxx for including a link to census data. The report (page 12) notes that in the Foundation's 111th Congress review of congressional websites, "27% of Member websites had links to census information about their state or district."

   Web pages devoted to census data for 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. Census information on American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and U.S. Virgin Islands is available at http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/islandareas/index.html.

[212] See, e.g., the "Guard and Reserves" page on Rep. Rush Holt's former website.

[213] 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., Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.) 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. Some state associations of counties also provide that information (e.g., California, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina).

[214] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 30) praises then-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."

   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 former "1st District of Nebraska" page, Rep. Jim McDermott's homepage interactive map, and Rep. Benny Thompson's "Second District" page.

[215] See, e.g., Rep. Charles Rangel's "Moving to the District" page and Rep. Bobby Rush's "Moving to the District" page.

<!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[216]:

<!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 World Wide Web Consotrium's *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.[217]

📖 Documents, Availability of Government

(1) Consider including information on how to obtain Federal government documents.[218]

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[216] Section 3.1.1(4) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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">

[217] Section 3.1.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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> 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 Google Analytics review of www.house.gov usage for June 28 to July 28, 2011, indicates that Internet Explorer 6 accounted for 1.12% of the identifiable, non-robot access to the site (Opera usage added another 0.20%).

[218] Guideline 1.10(b) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include:

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(2) On a Member's site that includes an "Obtaining Federal Documents" page, include a link to the Federal Depository Libraries in either the Member's state[219] or district[220].

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

Each Web page (including all major functions on it) should take no more than 10 seconds to download at connection speeds used by the bulk of the website's visitors. A download time of 1 to 2 seconds will provide a far better user experience.[221]

Dutch (Flemish) language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Drupal

The Drupal content management system has been designated by the House Administraton Committee as the House of Representatives' "preferred development option."[222]

Information about how and where to obtain . . . [legislative] publications and documentation either directly through the website or through other means if not available online.
For examples, see Rep. Buck McKeon's "Search for Federal Documents" page and Rep. Ted Poe's "Obtaining a Fedral Document" page.

[219] The following URL will generate links to all of the Federal Depository Libraries within a state:
http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/FDLPdir.jsp?flag=searchp&st_12=**SS**
where **SS** should be replaced with the 2-character postal abbreviation for the state.

[220] For a list of all of the Federal Depository Libraries in a particular congressional district, go to http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/FDLPdir.jsp?mode=6 and use the Advanced FLD Search form. Note that all congressional district numbers must be entered as two-digit numbers (e.g., the 8th congressional district should be entered as "08").

[221] Jakob Nielsen, in "Website Response Times" (June 21, 2010), observes that:

- **0.1 seconds** gives the feeling of **instantaneous** response — that is, the outcome feels like it was caused by the user, not the computer.
- **1 second** keeps the user's flow of thought **seamless**. Users can sense a delay, and thus know the computer is generating the outcome, but they still feel in control of the overall experience and that they're moving freely rather than waiting on the computer.
- **10 seconds** keeps the user's **attention**. From 1–10 seconds, users definitely feel at the mercy of the computer and wish it was faster, but they can handle it. After 10 seconds, they start thinking about other things, making it harder to get their brains back on track once the computer finally does respond. . . .

A 10-second delay will often make users **leave a site** immediately. And even if they stay, it's harder for them to understand what's going on, making it less likely that they'll succeed in any difficult tasks.

Even a few seconds' delay is enough to create an **unpleasant** user experience. Users are no longer in control, and they're consciously annoyed by having to wait for the computer. Thus, with repeated short delays, users will give up unless they're extremely committed to completing the task. The result? You can easily lose half your sales (to those less-committed customers) simply because your site is a few seconds too slow for each page.

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."

[222] The designation of Drupal as the House preferred development option was approved November 12, 2010, by Chairman Robert Brady, in response to November 5, 2010, memorandum "Approval for

Earmarks *see Funding Requests*

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.[223]
   (2) House websites should not contain election campaign information or links to election campaign sites.[224]

Elements *see Tags (general rules)*

Ellipsis *see Apostrophes, Quotation Marks, and Quotations #(5)*

E-mail addresses *see also Contact Information and Techniques #(14)*
   Official House websites should **not** include e-mail addresses for a Member's election campaign office. [225]

Implementation of Agreements between Web Vendors and the CAO for Public Website Hosting and Web Development Services" from House Chief Administrative Officer Daniel Strodel to Chairman Brady.

[223] The *House Ethics Manual* (2008 ed., pp. 177-178), issued by the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (now the House Ethics Committee), 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.

[224] 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, §§ 1 to 2). 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.

[225] 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, §§ 1 to 2). 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.

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.[226]

<embed> tags

(1) When possible,[227] the <object> tag, not the <embed> tag, should be used to insert programs into HTML pages. The <embed> tag is not compliant with the World Wide Web Consotrium's XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) standard.[228]

(2) If it is necessary to use an <embed> tag,

   (a) the <embed> tag should have a "pluginspage" attribute. The value of the attribute should be the URL for downloading an appropriate viewer.[229] For instance, pluginspage="http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" for a Flash player.

   (b) the <embed> tag, should be followed by

   - a <noembed> tag;
   - information to be displayed to users who are using browsers that are not supporting <embed>; and
   - a </noembed> tag.[230]

   Notes:

   - The information between the <noembed> and the </noembed> tags should be the equivalent of what users of browsers that support <embed> would have received. It should be the information (or a link to it) and not merely a description of the information).[231]
   - In the case of an <embed> 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.

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[226] Item 26 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers SecurityStandard*, HISPUB 007.1.56, April 2011, 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 then-Rep. Dennis Moore's website for including an "'inform a friend' feature [that] allows users to share the site with others via e-mail"

[227] 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."

[228] Use of proprietary tags is not compliant with the World Wide Web Consortium's XHTML 1.0 specification. 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).

[229] 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*)."

[230] Section H46 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* suggests using <noembed> with <embed>, but does not recommend using <embed> at all, noting that "[a]lthough embed is widely supported in user agents - it is not a valid part of HTML or XHTML."

[231] 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."

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- When possible, the information displayed to users who are using browsers not supporting the <embed> **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.

Employment Opportunities *see Job Opportunities*

E-Newsletters *see Listserv and E-Newsletters*

Entities *see Character Entities*

Estonian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

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).[232] For instance, use

   but not

   (2) An "onclick" event handler does not need to have a redundant "onkeypress" event handler.[233]

   (3) Rather than using the "onmouseout" event handler to convey information (or to provide functionality),[234] either:

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[232] Section 4.2 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[233] 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."

   Success Criterion 2.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

        All functionality of the content is operable through a keyboard interface without requiring specific timings for individual keystrokes, except where the underlying function requires input that depends on the path of the user's movement and not just the endpoints.

Success Criterion 2.1.3 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* further provides that in an accessible website:

        All functionality of the content is operable through a keyboard interface without requiring specific timings for individual keystrokes.

Section SCR20 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0*, however, provides that:

        Although `click` is in principle a mouse event handler, most HTML and XHTML 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 [with a corresponding `.keypress` event].

> > > **(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; or
> > >
> > > **(c)** replace the "onmouseout" event handler with a different technique that provides the same functionality.[235]
> >
> > **(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,[236] if possible. If it is not possible to replace onmouseover with a:hover then,[237] either:
> >
> > > **(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; or

---

[234] 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."

   Success Criterion 2.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*   provides that in an accessible website:

> All functionality of the content is operable through a keyboard interface without requiring specific timings for individual keystrokes, except where the underlying function requires input that depends on the path of the user's movement and not just the endpoints.

Success Criterion 2.1.3 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* further provides that in an accessible website:

> All functionality of the content is operable through a keyboard interface without requiring specific timings for individual keystrokes.

   Section SCR20 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0*, goes on to recommend that "mouseout" events be paired with "blur" events (e.g., if "onmouseout" is used, then pair it with "onblur").

[235] 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.

[236] 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 World Wide Web Consortium's *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*.

[237] 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."

   Success Criterion 2.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*   provides that in an accessible website:

> All functionality of the content is operable through a keyboard interface without requiring specific timings for individual keystrokes, except where the underlying function requires input that depends on the path of the user's movement and not just the endpoints.

Success Criterion 2.1.3 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* further provides that in an accessible website:

> All functionality of the content is operable through a keyboard interface without requiring specific timings for individual keystrokes.

   Section SCR20 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0*, goes on to recommend that "mouseover" events be paired with "focus" events (e.g., if "onmouseover" is used, then pair it with "onfocus").

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(c) replace the "onmouseover" event handler with a different technique that provides the same functionality.[238]

Events Schedule *see Schedule of Member (or Office)*

Expenditures *see Financial Disclosure; and Funding Requests*

Facebook *see also Social Networking*
(1) Offices are encouraged to
    (a) have a presence on Facebook, [239]
    (b) have a link (on the Facebook presence) to the office's official House website; and
    (c) either
        (i) have a link on their House website to their content on facebook.com;[240] or
        (ii) Displaying their Facebook Connect on their website (see, e.g., in the "Social Media Update" portion of Rep. Brian Higgins' homepage).
(2) The content of Facebook entries should use the Member's voice and should not be merely a list of events.
(3) When using Facebook Conect to display content from an office's Facebook page on   the office's official House website page that is serving at least one https file, the Facebook Connect URLs need to also be https.[241]
(4) When making arrangements to use Facebook for a House office, use Apps.gov to acquire the license – do not use Facebook.com. The terms of service are different.   Apps.gov provides the terms of service that the General Services Administration has negotiated for government agencies.

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[238] 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.

[239] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111ᵗʰ Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies using Facebook and Twitter as elements of a well-formed Congressional website. The report (*Findings, page 15*), indicates that, in 2009
- 21% of all congressional Member websites included links to the Member's Facebook profile;
- 18% of all Member websites included a link to the Member's Twitter feed;
- 18% of all committee websites included a link to the committee's Twitter feed; and
- 10% of all committee websites included a link to the committee's Facebook profile.

The report (Award Winners: Platinum, page 3) praises Sen. Lisa Murkowski's website for providing "links to Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and social bookmarking links".

[240] Collin Burden, writing for the Congressional Management Foundation in "The Quick Fix: Improve Your Website Easily" (June 9, 2011) recommends that "If you are already using tools like Facebook and Twitter in an official capacity, make sure it is reflected on your website." The Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 19 praises the website of Rep. Erik Paulsen for linking to his Facebook site.

[241] For more information, see "Facebook Connect Via SSL"at http://wiki.developers.facebook.com/index.php/Facebook_Connect_Via_SSL.

Farsi language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Favicons
    (1) Each Web page should specify its favicon[242] with a <link rel="SHORTCUT ICON" /> tag, where the "href" attribute specifies the URL of the image to be used as the favicon,[243] e.g.:
        <link rel="SHORTCUT ICON" href="http://altmire.house.gov/favicon.ico" />
    (2) Favicon file names must end with a .ico extension.[244]
    (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 #(14)*

☠ **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*

Feedburner
    When making arrangements to use FeedBurner (for managing RSS and Atom feeds) for a House office, use Apps.gov to acquire the license – do not use Feedburner.com or Google.com. The terms of service are different.   Apps.gov provides the terms of service that the General Services Administration has negotiated for government agencies.

Feedlinks *see Social Networking*

<fieldset> tags *see Alignment; and Forms #(25)*
    The <fieldset> tag should only be used within forms.[245]

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[242] 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.:

◆

[243] 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. Brian Bilbray – state outline
- Rep. Mike Ross – state outline and symbol
- Rep. Trent Franks – framed Great Seal of the United States
- Rep. Gabrielle Giffords – cactus
- Rep. Mary Bono Mack – leaf
- Rep. Laura Richardson – state abbreviation and district number
- Rep. Buck McKeon – Member's portrait

[244] 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".

CAO

File Names and Extensions *see also Banners #(8); Favicons #(2); Graphics #(1)(f); Log files; and URLs*

(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).[246]

(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".[247]

(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/.

(6) Don not use words such as "test", "development", "backup", or "readme" as part of file or directory names.[248]

📖 **Financial Disclosure** *see also Funding Requests*

(1) Member offices should consider placing a copy of the Member's financial disclosure statement on their website.[249] In the absence of providing a PDF copy

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[245] Success Criterion 1.3.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

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 the <fieldset> and <legend> tags should not be used "to give a border to text".

[246] 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.

[247] 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).

[248] Item 9 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Standard* (HISPUB 007.1.56, April 2011) directs: "Remove all test, dev, backup, and unnecessary files."

[249] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, pages 18-19) identifies the public disclosure forms on the Clerk's website as information constituents should have before contacting their Member.

Rep. Darrell Issa appears to have been the first Member of the House to publish his financial disclosure statement on his website (July 20, 2007).

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of the actual document, Member offices should include a link to the Clerk's "Financial Disclosure Reports" page.[250]

(2) Member offices should consider placing a copy of the Member's Post-Travel Disclosure Forms (that the Member has filed with the Clerk of the House) on their website.[251] In the absence of providing a PDF copy of the actual documents, Member offices should include a link to the Clerk's "Gift and Travel Filings" page.[252]

(3) Member offices should consider placing a copy of the Member's Official Foreign Travel Reports (that the Member has filed with the Clerk of the House) on their website. [253] In the absence of providing a PDF copy of the actual documents, Member offices should include a link to the Clerk's "Foreign Travel Reports" page.[254]

(4) Offices should consider placing on their website, a copy of their portion of the quarterly *Statement of Disbursements of the House*.[255]

Finnish language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

📖 **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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[250] The Clerk's "Financial Disclosure Reports" page is at http://clerk.house.gov/public_disc/financial.html. House Rule XXVI, clause 1 House Rule XXVI, clause 1, provides that this information is to be "printed as a House document, which shall be made available to the public."

See also the "Financial Disclosures" pages of Rep. Michael Grimm, Rep. Bobby Rush, and Rep. Ed Towns.

[251] 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.'"

[252] The Clerk's website has this information available at http://clerk.house.gov/public_disc/giftTravel.aspx. House Rule XXV, clause 5(b)(5), provides that the Clerk of the House is to make this information "available for public inspection as soon as possible after they are received."

See also the "Financial Disclosures" pages of Rep. Michael Grimm, Rep. Bobby Rush, and Rep. Ed Towns.

[253] 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.'"

[254] The Clerk's "Foreign Travel Reports" page is at http://clerk.house.gov/public_disc/foreign/index.html.

[255] The full text of the *Statement of Disbursements of the House* is available at http://disbursements.house.gov/. On June 3, 2009, the Speaker of the House directed the Chief Administrative Officer to "publish the quarterly Statement of Disbursements for the House of Representatives in an online format at the earliest date."

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.'"

See also the "Financial Disclosures" pages of Rep. Michael Grimm, Rep. Bobby Rush, and Rep. Ed Towns.

House websites should, therefore, not contain references to FirstGov.gov, except in a historical context. Additionally, House offices should link[256] 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.[257]

   (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.[258]

   (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 former "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" or "Have a Flag flown over the Capitol"[259].

Flash *see also <embed> tags*

   (1) Be cautions of using Flash, because:

      (a) iPhones, iPods, and iPads do not support Flash;[260] and

      (b) persons using assistive technology often have difficulty using Flash.[261]

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[256] 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.

[257] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies having information on how to request a flag as an element of a well-formed Congressional website.

   The Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 59) praises Rep. John Carter's site for allowing "constituents [to] . . . initiate basic service requests for flags".

[258] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 95) identifies having a "flag request form" as an element of a well-formed Congressional website. Instructions for implementing the E-Flag Calculator are available at https://housenet.house.gov/portal/server.pt/document/614/e-flag_calculator.

[259] Rep. Joseph Crowley's "Constituent Services" page uses "Request a Flag Flown Over the U.S. Capitol".

[260] See Steve Jobs' "Thoughts on Flash," April 2010.

[261] The December 2008/January 2009 Survey of Preferences of Screen Reader Users, conducted by WebAIM (Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University), reports that:

> 71.5% of screen reader users reported that Flash is difficult while only 14.2% reported that it is easy. Responses varied little based on proficiency, time spent using a screen reader, and disability.

CAO

(2) Each graphic in a Flash application should have a text equivalent.[262] Instructions for designating a text equivalent in Flash are set out in the [Adobe Flash Accessibility Design Guidelines](#). As with images in HTML, text equivalents of images in Flash should convey the information that the graphic provides.

    (a) If the graphic includes text, the text equivalent should include that text (though, any abbreviations should be spelled out).[263]

    (b) Phrases such as "image of" or "link to" should not be used as part of a text equivalent.[264] Likewise, the text equivalent should normally not state that it is being displayed because scripting, style sheets, or similar technologies are not being used.[265] **Note:** the one exception to this is with photographs. It is acceptable to use "photo of" in the text equivalent if the image is a photograph.[266]

It is very clear from these results and the **many** strong comments about Flash inaccessibility that screen reader users have significant issues accessing Flash content.

[262] 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)."

[Success Criterion 1.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

. . .

- **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.

[263] [Section H37 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[264] 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."

Aaron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites*, (2008), page 30, recommends that "alt" attributes avoid text like "photo of …" or "image of …" as they unnecessarily clutter keyword density, and are redundant since the user/search engine will already be aware that the element is an image.

[265] [Section G94 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0*](#) recommends that (to comply with Web Content Accessibility Success Criterion 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.

[266] 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 80% of screen reader users prefer that images of photographs be designated as "photo of". The survey does, however, caution that:

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(c) Abbreviations should not be used in a text equivalent.

(d) File names should not be used as the value of a text equivalent.[267]

(3) Flash videos and animations should not be set to run in a continuous loop.[268]

(4) When using any of the Flash components that have a corresponding accessibility object (e.g., Button, CheckBox, ComboBox, DataGrid, LabelButton, List, RadioButton, and SelectableList),[269] be sure that the appropriate accessibility object is enabled.[270]

Note: This should not be interpreted to mean that users prefer that all images be identified. In other words, this doesn't mean that alt="graphic of my house" is preferred over alt="my house". The results here refer to photographs only.

[267] Section F30 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* identifies using a file name as an alternative text value as a failure to comply with Web Content Accessibility Success Criterion 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."

[268] The Adobe Flash Accessibility Design Guidelines

When a screen reader encounters content created with Flash, it loads the current state of the movie and notifies the user. With the Window-Eyes screen reader, the user hears, "Loading…load done." Once a piece of content has been read, the screen reader moves on to read other parts of the content and the rest of the page.

. . . As the content changes, Adobe Flash Player 10 software sends a signal to the screen reader notifying it that there has been a change. When the screen reader receives this notification, it automatically returns to the top of the page and begins reading it again.

When Flash Player encounters . . . [content set in a continuous loop], it will send repeated notifications to the screen reader of changes in the content, and the screen reader will continually return to the top of the page. This problem can seriously erode the experience for screen reader users.

While the Window-Eyes screen reader allows users to stop a Flash application (by using Alt-Shift-M), the Jaws screeen reader does not appear to support such a function. 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, however, 74% of screen reader users use Jaws.

Success Criterion 2.2.2 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

For moving, blinking, scrolling, or auto-updating information, all of the following are true: (Level A)

- **Moving, blinking, scrolling:** For any moving, blinking or scrolling information that (1) starts automatically, (2) lasts more than five seconds, and (3) is presented in parallel with other content, there is a mechanism for the user to pause, stop, or hide it unless the movement, blinking, or scrolling is part of an activity where it is essential; and

- **Auto-updating:** For any auto-updating information that (1) starts automatically and (2) is presented in parallel with other content, there is a mechanism for the user to pause, stop, or hide it or to control the frequency of the update unless the auto-updating is part of an activity where it is essential.

[269] See http://help.adobe.com/en_US/FlashPlatform/reference/actionscript/3/mx/accessibility/package-detail.html for an extensive list.

[270] Instructions for enabling accessibility objects are set out in the Adobe Flash Accessibility Design Guidelines.

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Flickr *see also Social Networking*

When making arrangements to use Flickr for a House office, use Apps.gov to acquire the license – do not use Flickr.com. The terms of service are different.   Apps.gov provides the terms of service that the General Services Administration has negotiated for government agencies.

📖 **Floor Statements**

Member offices should be encouraged to include Floor statements made by the Member.[271] The official text of all House Floor statements is available in the Congressional Record – which is available on the Internet (through Thomas).[272] Alternatively, offices may provide their own transcripts.[273] It is recommended that floor statements be presented both in chronological order and in subject order.[274]

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.[275]

    (2) Font sizes (for material that will be displayed on a screen)[276] should be specified in ems or percentages, not in points, picas, centimeters, inches, or pixels.[277]

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[271] 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).

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

[273] See, e.g., Rep. Jason Altmire's website.

[274] 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.

[275] Section 15.2.2 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

Aaron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites*, (2008) page 28, recommends against the use of <font> tags, noting that they

> redundantly mark up the design of a page without communicating a meaningful hierarchy of the information. Search engines look for semantic markup with a high ration of content to code. The <font> tag along can create an exponentially negative effect to this ratio.

[276] 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.

[277] Success Criterion 1.4.4 (Level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

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(3) Style sheets associated with the <body> tag should be used to set the document-wide default values for text size, color, and typeface.[278] The <basefont> tag should not be used for this or any other purpose.[279]

(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.[280]

(5) When specifying a font family, use a series of fonts[281] with a generic font as the last in the series.[282]

(6) Provide a method to help the user increase the size of the text.[283]

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.

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

[279] Section 15.2.2 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[280] Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger in their *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 233) describe Arial, Georgia, Times New Roman, and Verdana as follows:

Font Name	Online Readability	Character/Tone
Arial	Readable at reasonable sizes. Good at font points 10 or above.	Modern, clean, basic, no-frills. Generally liked by people of all ages.
Georgia	The best serif font designed for online reading. Generally good at font sizes 10 and above.	Traditional-looking, but more modern-looking and readable than Times New Roman. Good online serif alternative.
Times New Roman	Good for printed materials. Onscreen, readability quickly diminishes at small point sizes. Only good at font sizes 12 or higher.	Traditional-looking. Not recommended if you want to appear professional. Generally not preferred by audiences of any age.
Verdana	The most readable online font, even in small type.	Modern, simple, professional. The recommended font for use in body text, where readability is critical. High in user preference.

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

[281] 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/.

[282] Section 15.3 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

[283] Success Criterion 1.4.4 (Level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

Section G187 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0*, suggests providing:

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📖 **Foreclosure Information**

(1) Member offices should consider including information on their websites concerning home foreclosure and how to avoid it, see e.g., Rep. Hank Johnson's "Home Foreclosure Help Center".[284]

(2) Where the website has a page on legislation dealing with foreclosure (or housing) and a page on foreclosure resources, make sure each one has a link to the other.[285]

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controls that allow the user to incrementally increase or decrease the text size of all of the text on the page to a size that is at least 200% of the default text size.

This can be achieved by providing links, buttons or linked images and the controls themselves should be as easy to find (ex. prominently positioned within the page, presented in a larger text size, hight contrast, etc.) as possible.

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.

See also the website of Rep. Howard Berman, which has this feature and also has a "Changing Page Size" page that explains different ways of changing display size. Another version of this approach can be found on the British Broadcasting Corporation's "How to Make Your Text Larger" page.

[284] See also, Rep. Howard Berman's "Resources for Homeowners" page, Rep. Jim Langevin's "Foreclosure Resources" page, Rep. Jim Moran's "Foreclosure Guidance" page, and Rep. Peter Walch's "Housing" page.

Additional material is available through the Federal Trade Commission's "Money Matters: Your Home" page.

[285] 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 58) quotes Rob Pierson, President of the House Systems Administrators Association and then-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 (pages 42 and 50) 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.

…

On the best sites on Capitol Hill, all of the content is synthesized, overlapped, and cross-referenced.

The 2007 report (page 69, 75, and 79) specifically praises the websites of

- Rep. Carolyn Maloney – noting that "All the information on the site is cross-referenced and integrated into multiple sections";

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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.[286] 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.[287]
    (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.),[288] they should all have a consistent look and feel.[289]

- then-Sen. Chris Dodd – noting that "By cross-referencing press releases, op-eds, blog posts, and other related documents, the site ensures that its users will find relevant content regardless of where they look for it";
- Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (Republican Office) – noting that "The content 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. Providing a variety of content in a number of different ways ensures that users will find the information that interests them, regardless of where they look for it."

[286] Item 33 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers SecurityStandard* (HISPUB 007.1.56, April 2011) provides that:
> All forms based submissions must be encrypted with Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) to protect potentially sensitive information. INFOSEC can provide a certificate if needed.

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

[287] 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.

[288] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 40) recommends that each congressional website:
> **Provide separate online Web forms for constituent service requests.**
> Congressional offices repeatedly report their frustration that time-sensitive requests for flags, tours, and, most importantly, federal assistance requests, get lost among the high volumes of issue-related constituent communications. This is often due to the fact that congressional Web sites are not explicit about how to place such requests. Consequently, messages are submitted through only one "contact" form, rather than through a tier-structured Web form that differentiates between the different reasons for contacting the office and guides constituents to the correct contact channel.
>   There are ways in which these important requests for assistance can be funneled into separate queues that quickly direct the messages to the appropriate staffer, such as a caseworker or a staff assistant handling flags and tours. . . . [The "E-mail and Contact Center" on] the Web site of Senator Carl Levin . . . takes a multi-step approach to ensure that constituent service requests are not lost. After constituents select the purpose of their inquiry, they are directed to customized forms specific to their request: an order form for constituents wishing to have a flag flown over the

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(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.[290] Where most (or all) of the fields in a form are required, do not mark each field as required.[291]

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

    (a) Use a red asterisk to identify required fields. When using this technique, include a title="required field" attribute in a tag pair surrounding the asterisk (e.g., *).[292]

U.S. Capitol, an issue-related Web form for citizens wishing to register their views, and a casework form for individuals who need assistance with a federal agency.

    CMF recommends that congressional offices explore ways to be more deliberate in their use of Web forms. A great deal of staff time could be saved and constituents better served by fully utilizing this technology on their Web sites.

[289] *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 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".

    Success Criterion 3.2.4 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 provides that in a accessible website, "Components that have the same functionality within a set of Web pages are identified consistently."

    Likewise, Luke Wroblewski, in *Web Form Design*, 2008, page 37 recommends that when drafting the content of a web form, "Ensure that your forms speak with one voice, despite questions from several different people or departments."

[290] 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."

[291] 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."

[292] 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:

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(b) Highlight in yellow[293] those cells that correspond to required fields.[294] Highlighting those cells, however, should not be the only method used to indicate that the field is a required field.[295]

(c) Use a stronger than usual border around those cells that correspond to required fields. Placing a border around those cells, however, should not be the only method used to indicate that the field is a required field.[296]

(d) Underlining should not be used to indicate that a field is a required field.[297]

(e) Any instructions indicating how to identify required fields should precede the form.[298]

(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.[299]

(7) Avoid requiring constituents to provide their telephone number on web forms – make providing that information optional instead.[300]

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.

[293] Consider #FFFFCC.

[294] 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.

[295] 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, Success Criterion 1.4.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[296] Success Criterion 1.3.3 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Instructions provided for understanding and operating content do not rely solely on sensory characteristics of components such as shape, size, visual location, orientation, or sound."

[297] 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.

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

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

[299] 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.

[300] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 45) recommends that offices:

Make telephone numbers optional. Many congressional offices prefer to call constituents if their issue is particularly complex or urgent. As a result, some make the telephone number field on their Web forms mandatory. However, because it is not essential in replying to the constituent, and because many Americans prefer not to give out their telephone numbers, CMF recommends

(8) Every form should either have a "submit" button (or its equivalent) or clear instructions as to how to activate the form.[301]

(9) When deciding on the text of a form button, be unambiguous[302] and use the fewest words necessary to convey your meaning. For instance, use

- "Search" to submit a search request[303]
- "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).[304]

(10) Do not include a "Reset" button on a form, unless there is a substantial need to have it.[305]

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making this field optional. Many citizens will still fill in the field, but it will not alienate constituents who simply prefer to hear back from the office with a written response.

[301] 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."

   Success Criterion 3.3.2 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Labels or instructions are provided when content requires user input."

[302] 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."

   Success Criterion 3.3.2 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Labels or instructions are provided when content requires user input." Section G131 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that "the label for any interactive component within Web content . . .[make] the component's purpose clear."

   Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines, 2nd edition, page 122 (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), suggests that:

   The label of a pushbutton should clearly indicate the action that will be applied when the pushbutton is clicked.

[303] Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger in their *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 146) recommend using "Search" – rather than "Go" – as the text of the button to activate a search.

[304] See, e.g., the U.S. Service Academy Nomination forms of Rep. Reid Ribble and Del. Kilili Sablan.

[305] 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:

(11) Forms should not ask for more information than the office needs.[306, 307]

(12) 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.

(13) 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).[308] **Do not assume** that the user will have read either the instructions on the original form or instructions on the confirmation page.[309]

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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.)

[306] 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. The "Privacy Policy" page of the America Speaking Out portion of the website of the House Republican Leader includes the following language:

> **Children's Online Privacy Protection.** Because we care about the safety and privacy of children online, we comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA). COPPA and its accompanying FTC regulation establish United States federal law that protects the privacy of children using the Internet. We do not knowingly contact or collect personal information from children under 13. Our site is not intended to solicit information of any kind from children under 13.
>
> It is possible that by fraud or deception we may receive information pertaining to children under 13. If we are notified of this, as soon as we verify the information, we will immediately obtain parental consent or otherwise delete the information from our servers. If you want to notify us of our receipt of information by children under 13, please contact us.

[307] 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?

[308] Jakob Nielsen's "Scrolling and Attention" (March 22, 2010) reports that over 80% of user views on a web page take place above the fold. Nielsen notes that:

> The implications are clear: the material that's the **most important for the users' goals or your business goals should be above the fold**. Users do look below the fold, but not nearly as much as they look above the fold.

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

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(14) Each field in a form needs to be associated with the instruction indicating what information is to go in the field.[310] Normally, each visible input field[311] in a form (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.[312] For example:

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

    (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,[313]

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.

[310] 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."

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

[311] This does not apply to <input> tags with any of these attributes:

5. type="hidden"
6. type="reset"
7. type="submit"

since the <input> tag with such an attribute does not create a visible input field.

[312] Section H44 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends using <label> tags to implement Success Criterion 3.3.2 (level A) of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*. (which provides that in an accessible website, "Labels or instructions are provided when content requires user input.").

[313] 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 World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

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<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.[314]

(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="screen-reader-info")[315], where the class places the text off screen and minimizes the size (e.g., position:absolute;left:-999em; font-size:1%);[316] 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).

(15) 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

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[314] Section H44 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* (for implementing WCAG 2.0 Success Criterion 3.3.2 (Level A)) specifies that:

the label is positioned after input elements of type="checkbox" and type="radio"

Section G162 goes on to provide that:

When labels for form fields are positioned where the user expects them visually, it is easier to understand complex forms and to locate specific fields. . . . Labels for radio buttons and checkboxes are positioned after the field.

These positions are defined because that is the usual (and therefore most predictable) position for . . . radiobuttons and checkboxes. . . .

Checkboxes and radio buttons have a uniform width while their labels often do not. Having the radio button or checkbox first therefore allows both the buttons and the labels to line up vertically.

Jonathan Avila (Chief Accessibility Officer at SSB Bart Group) notes that:

Having labels on the right for radio buttons and checkboxes is very important to users of screen magnification software. Screen magnification will align the left edge of the magnified area before the checkmark and the text of the checkmark and radio button will often go past the edge of the magnified area on the right. When the label is on the left the checkmark would likely be out of view.

[315] "Screen-reader-info" is suggested here rather than the more traditional "hidden", so that it will be clear on a manual inspection that the purpose of the class is only for accessibility purposes and not to fool search engines. See, e.g., "Hiding screen-reader text from visual browsers," Webmaster World (January 26, 2007).

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

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example, the "What is the general topic of your message?" pull-down on Rep. Dan Boren's "Contact Dan Online Form" page.[317]

(16) 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.[318] **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.[319]

- 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.[320]

(17) Avoid using a drop-down menu for honorifics (e.g., Mr. or Ms.). If you must use a drop down then keep the list simple.[321]

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[317] Success Criterion 2.4.10 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* further provides that in an accessible website, "[s]ection headings are used to organize the content."

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."

[318] Success Criterion 3.1.4 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 provides that, in an accessible website, "A mechanism for identifying the expanded form or meaning of abbreviations is available."

[319] 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).

[320] 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.

[321] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 44) recommends that offices:

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(18) JavaScripts, VBScripts, and other scripts should not be used as the exclusive way to submit forms.[322]

(19) 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.[323, 324]

(20) Any <input> tag with a type="text" attribute should not have a "value" attribute.

(21) If a <form> tag has a "name" attribute, it should also have an "id" attribute with the same value [325] 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.)[326]

(22) Within every group of radio buttons, the <input> tag for one of the buttons should have a checked="checked" attribute.[327]

Limit the number of prefixes offered on the Member's Web site. . . . Since we first started researching Congress' use of the Internet in 1998, we have noticed that congressional offices utilize many different sets of prefixes that are often required fields on their Web forms. In an effort to be inclusive, one congressional office lists 125 possible prefixes – from the usual suspects like "Mr.," "Mrs.," "Dr.," and "Ms.," to numerous prefixes for those serving in each branch of the U.S. Military. Other offices provide prefixes for select members of the clergy, like "Pastor" and "Sister" but exclude their equivalents in other religions. CMF recommends that offices utilize a simple list of the most frequent iterations, or opt for a blank fill-in field rather than an exhaustive pull-down list that could – and probably will – exclude someone. A lengthy drop-down list also increases the likelihood of user error, and could result in more time-consuming data entry fixes later.

[322] 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.

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

[324] 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.

[325] Section 4.10 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

[326] Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (3rd edition, [2009]), pp.151-152, recommends that 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.

[327] Section 17.2.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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).

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(23) Within every <select> tag, one of the <option> tags should have a selected="selected" attribute.[328]

(24) Each <input> and <option> tag should end with "/>".[329]

(25) 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),[330] use the <fieldset> and <legend> tags.[331]

(26) Consider including a forms library.[332]

(27) 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 <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[333] *see also Alignment; Browsealoud; Banners #(3); Centering; Kids Pages #(2); Legislative Material #0 and (2); RSS and Atom #(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

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[328] Section 17.6.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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).

[329] Success Criterion 4.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

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>."

[330] See, e.g., the Congressional Commendation forms of Rep. Judy Chu and Rep. Bob Goodlatte.

[331] Section 17.10 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

[332] 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 then-Rep. Christopher Carney's website, which "allows users to quickly identify and easily fill out the relevant forms."

See also the forms libraries of Rep. Bob Goodlatte, Rep. Jim Moran, and Rep. Chellie Pingree.

[333] For further material on use of iframes, see the HIR Web Systems Iframes Blog.

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House of Representatives and that neither the office nor the House are responsible for the content.[334]

(2) If a <frame> tag or a <iframe> tag has a "name" attribute, it should also have an "id" attribute with the same value [335] 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.)[336]

(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.[337] Where the <frame> or

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[334] The *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, §§ 5 to 7), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

    5. 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.

    6. 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.

    7. When a link to a web site outside the Member's official site 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).

The *Committees' Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, General, § 5) 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.

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

[335] Section 4.10 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *XHTML 1.0 (2ⁿᵈ edition) Specification* 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.

[336] Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (3ʳᵈ edition, [2009]), pp.151-152, recommends that

    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.

[337] 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."

    Success Criterion 4.1.2 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

    For all user interface components (including but not limited to: form elements, links and components generated by scripts), the name and role can be programmatically determined; states, properties, and values that can be set by the user can be programmatically set; and notification of changes to these items is available to user agents, including assistive technologies.

Section H64 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* specifically recommends using the title attribute of the frame and iframe elements to comply with Success Criterion 4.1.2 – noting that:

    This provides a label for the frame so users can determine which frame to enter and explore in detail. It does not label the individual page (frame) or inline frame (iframe) in the frameset.

<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.[338]

(4) Each <frame> tag should end with "/>"[339]

(5) Any file referenced by the "src" attribute of an <iframe> tag should be a fully valid HTML file, e.g., it should include a <!DOCTYPE> declaration and <html>, <body>, </body>, and </html> tags.[340]

French language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

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[338] 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)."

Success Criterion 1.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

. . .

- **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.

[339] Success Criterion 4.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

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>."

[340] Section 13.5 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that:

An embedded document [i.e., a document brought in by an iframe element or an object element] is entirely independent of the document in which it is embedded. For instance, relative URIs within the embedded document resolve according to the base URI of the embedded document, not that of the main document. An embedded document is only rendered within another document (e.g., in a subwindow); it remains otherwise independent.

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📖 **Frequently Asked Questions** *see also Constituent Services #(3)*
   Offices should be encouraged to have FAQs in their website.[341] The website of the late [Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald](#), for instance, had FAQs as a primary navigation item.[342] See also, [Rep. Trent Franks's "Frequently Asked Questions – FAQ's" page](#) and [Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's former constituent services FAQ](#).

FTP software *see WS_FTP software*

Furl *see Social Networking*

📖 **Funding Requests** *see also Legislative Materials*
   (1) Member offices should include on their websites the following information about each appropriation request that they make to the House Appropriations Committee:

   - 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.[343]

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[341] The Congressional Management Foundation's *[Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill](#)*, [March 7, 2011], page 15, praises the website of the [Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee](#) for having "an extensive FAQ that touches on everything from the committee's jurisdiction to the definition of 'recess'."

   Collin Burden, writing for the Foundation in "[Back to Basics: The Foundations of a Good Website](#)" (April 14, 2011), praises the FAQ on Sen. Dianne Feinstein's "[How to . . . Request Casework Assistance](#)" page.

   The Foundation's 2010 *[111th Congress Gold Mouse Project](#)* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies having FAQs about Congress and FAQs regarding constituent casework as elements of a well-formed Congressional website.

   The 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."

   The Congressional Management Foundation's *[2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill](#)* ([pages 30 to 38, 56 and 59](#)) praises the casework FAQs of [then-Reps. Marion Berry](#), [John Linder](#), and [Brian Baird](#); and Reps. [Xavier Becerra](#), [John Larson](#), 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](#).

   [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.

[342] See also, the website of [Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney](#).

[343] 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,

(2) Member offices should be encouraged to provide an explanation of what funding request or earmark is.[344] Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's former "First District Earmarks" page, for instance, started with an explanation of what earmarks are and the criteria he uses before seeking an earmark; and then listed the earmarks that he has succeeded in getting and provided a description of each. See also, Rep. Kevin Brady's "Taxpayers: Your Have the Right to Know My Earmark Requests" page.[345]

Georgian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

German language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Gift reports *see Financial Disclosure*

Google *see Feedburner, Google Analytics; Maps and Directions; Searching #(1); and Social Networking*

- An explanation of the request, including purpose, and why it is a valuable use of taxpayer funds.

Examples of appropriation request pages include Rep. Dan Boren's "Congressional earmarks for Oklahoma's Second Congressional District" page, Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's former "First District Earmarks" page, Rep. Rush Holt's "Investing in Central New Jersey" page, Rep. Darrell Issa's "Appropriations Project Requests" page, and Rep. John Mica's "FY10 Appropriations" page.

   The November 6, 2009 Dear Colleage from the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, concerning "The Water Resources Development Act of 2010" provides that the committee will not consider any requests to include projects in the Act unless the request has been posted on the requesting Member's website.

[344] 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."

   Success Criterion 3.1.3 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that for a website to be accessible:

   A mechanism is available for identifying specific definitions of words or phrases used in an unusual or restricted way, including idioms and jargon.

[345] 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. Maurice Hinchey's "Appropriations Requests FY2011" page, Rep. Dan Boren's "Congressional earmarks for Oklahoma's Second Congressional District" page; and Rep. Al Green "Appropriations Requests" (FY10), "Transportation Requests," and "Water Resources Development Act 2010 Requests".

Google Analytics *see also Appendix 6: Model Privacy Policy (1. English Language Version (Cookies)*

When making arrangements to use Google Analytics for a House office, use Apps.gov to acquire the license – do not use Google.com. The terms of service are different. Apps.gov provides the terms of service that the General Services Administration has negotiated for government agencies.

📖 **Government Resources** *see also Constituent Services; District Information #(4); FirstGov; and Linking #(6)*

(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.[346] See Appendix 2: *Federal Judicial Branch* of this document for information on Federal Judicial websites.

(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.[347]

(3) Consider including a link to USA.gov (formerly FirstGov).[348] See, e.g., Rep. David Wu's "Constituent Services" page.

(4) Consider including a link to the U.S. House of Representatives homepage on each page.[349]

Grammar *see Word Choice*

📖 **Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance**

Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with grant applicants)[350], 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.[351] Offices not hosted on an HIR Web server should be encouraged to iframe the page.[352]

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[346] 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 2010 *111ᵗʰ Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies having "information about local or district resources" as an element of a well-formed Congressional website.

See, e.g., Rep. Mike Doyle's "Judicial Branch" page and Rep. Reid Ribble's "Local" Agencies" page.

[347] http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm.

[348] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111ᵗʰ Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies having a link to USA.gov as an element of a well-formed Congressional website.

[349] See, e.g., the websites of Rep. Jason Chaffetz, Rep. Marcia Fudge, Rep. Bob Goodlatte Rep. Brett Guthrie, Rep. Chellie Pingree, and Del. Kilili Sablan.

[350] 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."

[351] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 46) praises the website of Sen. Tom Carper for broadening

Graphics *see also Alignment; Backgrounds; Banners; Centering; Colors; CoolIris; Favicons; Layout #(5); Lists #(1); Multimedia files, Video 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 (perhaps 100 x 75 pixels) that link large versions of the image.[353]

(3) Every graphic needs to include an "alt" attribute (or its equivalent).[354, 355] The "alt" attribute (or its equivalent) should convey the information that the graphic provides.

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the scope and depth of his site by including related Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports and links to federal agency and other third party Web sites in his issue pages.

[352] 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 Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* which provides that in an accessible website:

> Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

The World Wide Web Consortium's *Understanding WCAG 2.0* further provides that:

> Ensuring that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site helps users become comfortable that they will able to predict where they can find things on each page. This helps users with **cognitive limitations**, users with **low vision**, users with **intellectual disabilities**, and also those who are **blind**.

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".

[353] Easy Thumbnails – a free utility from Fookes Software – can be used to generate thumbnail images.

[354] 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)."

Success Criterion 1.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.
>
> . . .
>
> - **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.

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> **(a)** If the graphic includes text, the "alt" attribute (or its equivalent) should include that text (though, any abbreviations should be spelled out).[356]
>
> **(b)** If the graphic conveys no information (e.g., it is purely decorative), then set the value of the "alt" attribute to a null ("").[357]
>
> **(c)** When using an "alt" attribute with a value that exceeds 100 to 125 characters, also use a "longdesc" attribute.[358]
>
> **(d)** Phrases such as "image of" or "link to" should not be used as part of an "alt" attribute (or its equivalent).[359] Likewise, the "alt" attribute (or its

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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 descriptive text between the <applet> tag and the </applet> tag. With objects, § H53 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends placing the descriptive text between the <object> tag and the </object> tag.

[355] Aaron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites: Web Standards, SEO, and Beyond*, (2008), page 5, notes that:

> Content in alt and title attributes . . . provides more context and relevance for a search engine to understand what a page is about and can more accurately connect searchers with your page. Best practices for findability and accessibility often overlap.

[356] Section H37 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[357] Section F39 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* provides that "alt" attributes such as alt="image"or alt="spacer" fail to meet the accessibility standards and should not be used and further that:

> The alt attribute must be proved and have a null value (i.e., alt="" or alt=" ") to avoid a failure of this Success Criterion.

Note: Although alt=" " is valid, alt="" is recommended.

[358] 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 A.1.8 of the New York State Government's Information Technology Policy NYS-P08-005 ("Accessibility of State Agency Web-based Information and Applications," January 14, 2009) provides that

> A longdesc attribute is required within an element if alt text exceeds 150 characters. A descriptive link will also be provided.

Statewide Policy P130 Rev. 1.0 (Attachment A) from the Arizona Information Technology Agency (September 12, 2008) suggests using the "longdesc" attribute when the value of the "alt" attribute exceeds 12 words.

Aaron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites*, (2008) page 30, recommends using the "longdesc" attribute if the description would exceed 99 characters.

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 World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that (to comply with Web Content Accessibility Success Criterion 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."

[359] 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:

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equivalent) should normally not state that it is being displayed because scripting, style sheets, or similar technologies are not being used.[360] **Note:** the one exception to this is with photographs. It is acceptable to use "photo of" in the "alt" attribute if the image is a photograph.[361]

  (e) Abbreviations should not be used in an "alt" attribute.

  (f) File names should not be used as the value of an "alt" attribute.[362]

(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.[363]

(5) It is recommended that headings (particularly on text-heavy pages that deal with multiple topics) be supplemented with relevant icons.[364]

(6) Every <img> tag should either have a "width" attribute and a "height" attribute[365] or should have the height and width set through style sheets.

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."

Aarron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites*, (2008), page 30, recommends that "alt" attributes avoid text like "photo of …" or "image of …" as they unnecessarily clutter keyword density, and are redundant since the user/search engine will already be aware that the element is an image.

[360] Section G94 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that (to comply with Web Content Accessibility Success Criterion 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.

[361] 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 80% of screen reader users prefer that images of photographs be designated as "photo of". The survey does, however, caution that:

Note: This should not be interpreted to mean that users prefer that all images be identified. In other words, this doesn't mean that alt="graphic of my house" is preferred over alt="my house". The results here refer to photographs only.

[362] Section F30 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* identifies using a file name as an "alt" value as a failure to comply with Web Content Accessibility Success Criterion 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."

[363] The World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* suggests "[u]sing Unicode text and style sheets instead of images of text" as a way of maximizing accessibility. .

[364] Section G103 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* notes that:

Users with disabilities that make it difficult to decode words and sentences are likely to have trouble reading and understanding complex text. Charts, diagrams, animations, photographs, graphic organizers, or other visual materials often help these users

as a technique to satisfy Success Criterion 3.1.5 (level AAA) of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* ("When text requires reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level after removal of proper names and titles, supplemental content, or a version that does not require reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level, is available.")

[365] Section 13.7.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

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(7) The width of borders around graphics should be set by style sheets,[366] not by the "border" attribute of the <img> tag.[367]

(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.[368]

(9) If an <img> tag has a "name" attribute, it should also have an "id" attribute with the same value.[369] 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.)[370]

(10) Graphics originally developed for (or originally paid for by) an election campaign should not be used on House websites.[371]

(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:

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[366] Use the "border-width" style sheets property together with the "border-style" property.

[367] Section 13.7.3 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[368] 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 World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[369] Section 4.10 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

[370] Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (3rd edition, [2009]), pp.151-152, recommends that
   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.

[371] 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.

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- **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.
- **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".[372]

(13) Except when absolutely necessary, spacer images should not be used for layout. Style sheets should be used to control layout.[373]

(14) Each <img> tag should end with "/>".[374]

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[372] 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.

[373] Section C18 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that style sheets (rather than spacer images) should be used to control layout.

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(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.

(16) Unless there is a substantial reason to do otherwise, there should not be more than one moving image area in the same screen view. If it is necessary to have two moving image area in the same screen view, then they should be well separated.

Graphs *see Charts and Graphs*

Greek language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

📖 **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 from high school or college; becoming an Eagle Scout; receiving U.S. citizenship; or election or appointment to public office).[375] Consider including an HTML form[376] to allow constituents to make the request electronically.[377]

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[374] Success Criterion 4.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

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>`."

[375] Members including such a service on their website include Rep. Howard Berman, Rep. Reid Ribble, 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 *House Ethics Manual* nor the *Franking Manual* specifically address whether House websites can invite constituents to request Member recognitions of birthdays, anniversaries, etc. What the *House Ethics Manual* 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.

[376] 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.

[377] See, e.g., the "Congressional Commendation" pages of Rep. Bob Goodlatte and Rep. Reid Ribble.

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.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 40) recommends that each congressional website:

Provide separate online Web forms for constituent service requests.

Congressional offices repeatedly report their frustration that time-sensitive requests for flags, tours, and, most importantly, federal assistance requests, get lost among the high volumes of issue-related constituent communications. This is often due to the fact that congressional Web sites are not explicit about how to place such requests. Consequently, messages are submitted through only one "contact" form, rather than through a tier-structured Web form that differentiates between the different reasons for contacting the office and guides constituents to the correct contact channel.

There are ways in which these important requests for assistance can be funneled into separate queues that quickly direct the messages to the appropriate staffer, such as a caseworker or a staff assistant handling flags and tours. . . . [The "E-mail and Contact Center" on] the Web site of Senator Carl Levin . . . takes a multi-step approach to ensure that constituent service requests are not lost. After constituents select the purpose of their inquiry, they are directed to customized

(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.[378]

Gujarati language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Haitian-Creole language material [379] *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Hawaiian language material *see Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

hCard *see Contact Information and Techniques #(14)*

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.).[380] Use style sheets to set the typeface,

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forms specific to their request: an order form for constituents wishing to have a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol, an issue-related Web form for citizens wishing to register their views, and a casework form for individuals who need assistance with a federal agency.

    CMF recommends that congressional offices explore ways to be more deliberate in their use of Web forms. A great deal of staff time could be saved and constituents better served by fully utilizing this technology on their Web sites.

[378] 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. Reid Ribble, and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen; and the "Official Greetings" page of Rep. Chris Van Hollen.

    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 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)

[379] Rep. Alcee Hastings has a Creole (Kreyol) version of his website at http://www.alceehastings-kr.house.gov/.

[380] Success Criterion 1.3.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

    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.

    Section H69 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* also suggests that the proper use of the <h1> to <h6>. tags can be used to satisfy Success Criterion 2.4.1 (level A) of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* (providing a "mechanism . . . to bypass blocks of content that are repeated on multiple Web pages") because

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bolding, font-size, alignment, etc. so that the result is both esthetically pleasing and consistent throughout the site.[381]

(2) The words that convey the most information should be at the beginning of each heading – preferably in the first two words.[382]

(3) Headings should generally not exceed 60 characters.[383]

(4) An "id" attribute should be associated with each heading so that links can go directly to that spot.

(5) The <h1>, <h2>, <h3>, <h4>, <h5>, and <h6> tags should be used to indicate headings and should not be used for any other purpose.[384]

(6) Headings should always have content associated with them. If there is no content associated with a heading, the heading should normally be eliminated.

(7) Headings contained in a box should normally be centered vertically, so there is equal padding above and below the text of the heading.

JAWS and WindowEyes all provide navigation via headings and provide information about the level of the heading. The Opera browser provides a mechanism to navigate by headings. Additional plugins support navigation by headings in other user agents.

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.

[381] Success Criterion 2.4.10 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Section headings are used to organize the content."

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.

[382] The World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

[383] Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger in their *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 277) recommend that headings "be short (60 characters maximum) and meaningful."

[384] Success Criterion 1.3.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

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 <h1> to <h6> tags should not be used simply to create visual effects.

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Suggested Web Site Best Practices   8/12/11
                                                                  version 36 rev

📖 **Health Services or Issues**

If an office has a health services[385] or health issues page, consider using one or more of the widgets available from the Centers for Disease Control at http://cdc.gov/Widgets/, e.g.,

- Swine Flu information (available in English or Spanish)
- Swine Flu prevention tips
- Smoking and Tobacco use
- Everyday Health (available in English or Spanish)
- CDC Public Health Data and Statistics
- National Environmental Public Health Training Program
- FDA Peanut-Containing Product Recall list
- Flu IQ quiz
- FluView National Flu Activity Map
- Seasonal Flu Updates
- CDC Emergency Text Messages

Hebrew language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Hiligaynon language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Hindi language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Hmong language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Homeland Security threat index

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 .

Homeowner Information *see Foreclosure Information*

📖 **Homepage** *see also Navigation #(3) and (14); 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

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[385] See, e.g., then-Rep. Rick Boucher's "Avoid Getting Sick this Flu Season" page.

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scrolling down.[386] It is strongly recommended that as much of that the initial screen be composed of fresh, frequently updated information as possible.[387]

(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).[388]

(3) Try to keep the homepage short.[389]

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[386] 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.

[387] 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.

[388] The Congressional Management Foundation's 1999 report *Building Web Sites Constituents Will Use* (page 16) recommends against welcome messages or cover pages. The 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 space. "Welcome to my Web site. I hope you find what you are looking for," is a waste of visitors' time.

Rep. Steve Cohen addresses this issue by not including his welcome message on his homepage, but instead provides a link to the message.

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.

[389] 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

Honorifics *see Contact Information and Techniques #(14); and Forms #(17)*

HOUSE.GOV Domain *see also Linking #(1)*
   Every Member's website and every committee's website must be in the HOUSE.GOV domain.[390]

Housing Information *see Foreclosure Information*

<hr> tags *see also Alignment; and Centering*
   (1) Instead of using the "noshade" attribute or the "size" attribute in <hr> tags, use style sheets.[391]
   (2) Instead of using the "size" attribute in <hr> tags, use the "height" property in style sheets.[392]
   (3) Each <hr> tag should end with "/>".[393]

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        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.

[390] The *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, §§ 2 and 6), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:
   2. 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.
   6. 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 *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.
[391] Section 15.3 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.
[392] Section 15.3 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."
[393] Success Criterion 4.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.
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>."

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HTML *see also Attributes; <!DOCTYPE> declarations; and Tags (HTML)*

    (1) Use either the <code> tag[394] 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.[395]

    (2) Rather than using the "version" attribute of the <html> tag, place a <!DOCTYPE> declaration at the beginning of each page.[396]

    (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).[397] 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 World Wide Web Consotrium's Markup Validation Service (http://validator.w3.org/).[398] 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 #(16)*

Hurricane Preparation Information *see Disaster Preparation Information*

Hyphenation *see Word Choice*

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[394] Section 9.2.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *HTML 4.01 Specification*, provides that the <code> tag "Designates a fragment of computer code."

[395] The World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

[396] Section 7.3 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "version" attribute of the <html> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute.

[397] Section 3.1.1(3) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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">

    The World Wide Web Consortium's *Internationalization Best Practices: Specifying Language in XHTML & HTML Content* recommends using the "lang" and "xml:lang" attributes of the <html> tag to designate the default language that will be used by software (e.g., web browsers, voice browsers, spell checkers, or style processors) to process the text of the web page. (By contrast, the W3C document recommends that the <meta http-equiv="Content-Language"> and <meta name="DC.language"> tags to designate the language(s) for the intended human audience of the web page as a whole.)

[398] Section G134 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that web pages be validated.

Ice Storm Preparation Information *see Disaster Preparation Information*

Icelandic language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Icons *see Compliance Icons; Favicons; Graphics; and Navigation #(8)*

Id attribute *see also Forms #(9) and (21); Frames and Iframes #(2); Graphics #(9); Headings #(4); Image Maps #(1); Linking #(14); 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.[399]
- **(2)** No two tags on the same page may have the same "id" attribute.[400]
- **(3)** The value of each "id" attribute should start with a letter.[401]

📖 **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.[402] .
- **(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.

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[399] Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (3rd edition, [2009]), pp.151-152, recommends that
> 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.

[400] Success Criterion 4.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website,
> In content implemented using markup languages, . . . any IDs are unique, except where the specifications allow these features.

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."

[401] Section 6.2 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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".

[402] 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. Melissa Bean, Rep. Mike Honda, then-Rep. Darlene Hooley, Rep. Todd Platts, Sen. Herb Kohl, and Sen. Joe Lieberman.

See also the "Identify Theft" page of Rep. Reid Ribble; and the "Identity Theft Prevention and Recovery" page of Rep. Anna Eshoo.

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Iframes *see Frames and Iframes*

Igbo language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Ilocano language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

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.[403]
  - If there is more than one <map> tag on a page, the "id" value of each one must be unique.[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]
- **(2)** Do not use server-side image maps if the same functionality can be provided using client-side image maps.[406] (Client-side image maps have a "usemap" attribute in the <img> tag. Server-side image maps have an ismap="ismap"

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[403] Section 4.10 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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).

[404] Section 4.10 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "there can only be a single attribute of type ID per element".

[405] Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (3rd edition, [2009]), pp.151-152, recommends that
> 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.

[406] 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."

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)".

Success Criterion 2.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:
> All functionality of the content is operable through a keyboard interface without requiring specific timings for individual keystrokes, except where the underlying function requires input that depends on the path of the user's movement and not just the endpoints.

The W3C's *Comparison of WCAG 1.0 Checkpoints to WCAG 2.0, in Numerical Order* notes that "Server-side image maps are not keyboard accessible."

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attribute[407] 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.[408]

(3) Every <area> tag should have an "alt" attribute.[409]

(4) Each <area> tag should end with "/>".[410]

Images *see Favicons; Graphics; and Photo Albums*

📖 Immigration

(1) Member offices should consider having a page devoted to services for immigrants.[411]

(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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[407] Section 4.5 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that all attributes must be given values (e.g., ismap="ismap" not just: ismap).

[408] 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."

[409] 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)."

   Success Criterion 1.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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, ...

Section H24 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends using the "alt" attribute of the <area> tag to meet the requirement of Success Criteria 1.1.1.

   Section 13.8 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that <img> tags and <area> tags must have "alt" attributes.

[410] Success Criterion 4.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

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>`."

[411] See, e.g., the "Immigration" page of Rep. Mike Honda.

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Security.[412] House websites should, therefore, not contain references to INS, except in a historical context.[413]

<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).[414]
- **(2)** The Internships page should be linked to from both the Constituent Services page and from the Kid's page.

Ipsum *see Layout #(4)*

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[412] For the disposition of other functions formerly performed by INS, see
http://149.101.23.2/graphics/othergov/roadmap.htm.

[413] 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 indicated that 21% of House Member websites contained at least one reference to the INS as if the agency was still operational.

[414] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111ᵗʰ Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies providing information on Congressional internships and admission to the military academies as elements of a well-formed Congressional website. The report (Award Winners: Gold, page 22) praises the "clear instructions for . . . applying for internships" on the website of then-Rep. George Radanovich.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 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".

See also Rep. Peter Welch's "Internships" page.

 Issues and Voting Information *see also Dates, Time, and Timeliness #(2);*
Legislative Material; Navigation #(5)
Offices should be encouraged to have a section of their website devoted to the Member's
stands on issues.[415, 416]

> **(a)** Issue information should be kept up-to-date and indicate what is being done
> on the issue.[417]

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[415] Brad Fitch, writing for the Congressional Management Foundation in "How to Win a Congressional
Website Award: Solid Issue Information" (May 13, 2011) notes that, "if CMF had to identify one key
element of successful websites, it would be this: rich issue content."

The Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 11,
41, and 50) goes on to provide 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. . . .
> Past letters written to constituents explaining the Member's stance and actions on an issue can
> populate the issues page . . . .
The report (page 43) notes that:
> Citizens are always going to be interested in the Member's stance on national issues and 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 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.
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"
- then-Rep. Bob Inglis's "Issues" section for being "extensive and informative"
The 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."
The Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Award Winners: Platinum, page 3) praises
Sen. Lisa Murkowski's "Issues" page for providing "information on important issues and the Senator's
legislative priorities." The report (Award Winners: Platinum, page 4) also praises Rep. Steve Israel's
"Issues" section for providing information on "the Congressman's actions, views, and positions on a
variety of issues facing Congress".
[416] 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.
[417] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project:
Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 8 recommends that "All
content [be kept] up to date, including issue pages".   The report (page 9) also recommends that

> **(b)** Issue information should include not only Federal issues, but state and local issues as well.[418]
>
> **(c)** Issues that are the Member's priorities should be identified as such.[419]
>
> **(d)** A broad range of issues should be included.[420]
>
> **(2)** Member offices are encouraged to have a portion of their website devoted to the Member's voting record.[421, 422]

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congressional websites indicate "what's being done" with issues important to the Member, the Member's district, or the Member's state.

  The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111ᵗʰ Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 6) identifies – as an element of a successful Congressional website – having information about issues:

- clearly pertain to the current Congress, and
- not be so generic that it is unclear that the information is current.

[418] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111ᵗʰ Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 6) identifies having information about "state and local issues" as an element of a successful Congressional website.

  The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 21) indicates that 98% of House Member websites provided information on Federal issues, but only 39% provided information on state and local issues. The report (pages 62, 63, 71, and 80) praises the websites of

- then-Rep. Tom Allen for having "State topics . . . highlighted in the 'Maine issues' section";
- then-Rep. John Boozman for giving "National, local, and Member issues . . . equally extensive treatment";
- then-Rep. Patrick Murphy for having a "page of the issues section devoted to 'local issues' specifically for constituents"; and
- Rep. John Larson for having an "issues section [that] contains updated and thorough information on national and local issues".

[419] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111ᵗʰ Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 6) identifies having information on the Member's "priority issues" as an element of a successful Congressional website.

  The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 21) indicates that 98% of House Member websites provided information on Federal issues, but only 50% provided information on the Member's issues.

[420] The House Member websites that received Congressional Management Foundation Gold Mouse Awards in the 111ᵗʰ Congress averaged 16 issues per each (ranging from 29 (Rep. Carolyn Maloney) to 9 (Rep. Erik Paulsen). Rep. Steve Israel's site (the one House Member site to win a Platinum Mouse Award) had 16 – the average of the Gold Mouse sites.

  Brad Fitch, writing for the Foundation in "How to Win a Congressional Website Award: Solid Issue Information" (May 13, 2011) , notes that:

> CMF research suggests that offices need only identify about 10 issues to satisfy constituents' interests, including local issues unique to the district or state. Offices usually have hundreds of constituent letters, approved by the Member, which could suffice as the basis of an 'issue position' on a website.
>
>   I'm not suggesting that you articulate a chapter and verse, section-by-section analysis of your Member's position on every issue. But a three-paragraph articulation on the key issues of the day will go a long way to build trust amongst constituents. Moreover - and here's the icing on the cake - it will reduce your constituent mail volume. Why? Because if a person gets an answer to a question on your website they won't seek the answer by sending an email to your office.

[421] 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

To implement this recommendation, Member offices are urged **not** to simply link to the "Legislation & Votes" page[423] 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 Congress and Session[424], 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 112th Congress, 1st session - http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2011/index.asp
- roll call votes of the 111th Congress, 2nd session - http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2010/index.asp

Beyond these links, consider also[425] providing an explanation of how to read the roll call vote information.[426] Rep. Steve Israel's "Voting Record" page[427]

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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 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 6) identifies providing "the Member's voting record" as an element of a successful Congressional website. The report (Findings, page 16) indicates that 54% of congressional Member websites have this information.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 76) praises the website of Sen. John Thune for having the "Senator's voting record . . . on the site in an easily readable format".

[422] Guideline 1.6(d) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include information on the "[a]ctivities of individual members of parliament, such as . . . [the Member's] voting record".

[423] http://clerk.house.gov/legislative/legvotes.aspx. 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/).

[424] 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."

[425] 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."

[426] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 6) identifies explaining "how to read and use roll call votes" as an element of a successful Congressional website. The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 73) praises Rep. Adam Schiff's "Voting

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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).

Also, consider providing explanations of the Member's votes on roll call votes of particular interest.[428] This information should be kept up to date.[429] If setting out information on roll call votes of particular interest, consider organizing them in issue order, rather than just in bill number order.[430]

(3) In addition to having a section of Member websites devoted to how the Member voted, offices are also encouraged to use the roll call vote widget developed by the CAO-Web Solutions Branch that provides summary information on the Member's recent votes.[431] This takes up a relatively small amount of space on a page and can be placed on every page.

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."

[427] See also, Rep. Judy Chu's "How to read the Roll Call Information" page.

[428] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 6) identifies providing "rationales for votes" (particularly recent votes from the current Congress) as an element of a successful Congressional website.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 43) 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' "Votes" 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 [was then] . . . updated weekly and . . . [offered] users a look at key votes and how the Congressman voted."

[429] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 8 recommends that "All content [be kept] up to date, including . . . vote rationales".

[430] 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.

[431] To activate this feature, use:

```
<!--#exec cgi="/htbin/http_votes?&member_state=ST&member_name=EVS
NAME&max=#&rt_site=HOSTNAME&rt_name=RESULTS TEMPALTE" -->
```

where:

- **ST** is replaced with the 2-letter postal abbreviation of the Member's state
- **EVS NAME** is replaced with the Electronic Voting System name for the Member (EVS names are normally the Member's last name. See http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2011/roll001.xml for a list of EVS names.)
- **#** is replaced with the number of roll call votes to be displayed (the value should be from 1 to 10)
- **RESULTS TEMPALTE** is replaced with the full pathname to the results template file.

The results template can be customized. The following variables are available for use in the template:

- [DATE]
- [MMDDYYYY] (mm-dd-yyyy)
- [MMDDYY] (mm-dd-yy)
- [MMDD] (mm-dd)
- [CONGRESS]

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(4) 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).[432]

(5) Where the Member has made floor statements (or issued press releases, op eds, videos, blog posts, letters, legislation, etc.) on an issue that is included in the issues section of their website, include a link to the text of each relevant document.[433]

- [YEAR]
- [BILL] (H R xx)
- [BILLBOTS] (H.R.xx)
- [VOTED]
- [RC]

Examples of the HIR roll call vote widget can be found on the websites of Rep. Lois Capps, Rep. Jason Chaffetz, and Rep. John Garamendi.

[432] 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:

- 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."
- then-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.

[433] See, e.g., the "Holt on the Issues" section of Rep. Rush Holt's website.

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

(6) 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.[434]

> 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 "On the Issues" section of the website 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 the "Issues" section of Sen. Orin Hatch's website for including "relevant press releases . . . [that] users can access them by topic."

The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (pages 24) praises the website of Rep. John Larson noting that "*Related documents and press releases* are . . . found throughout the issue and legislative pages. This context and additional information helps constituents better understand the issues and their impacts".

The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], pages 9 and 10, praises Rep. Carolyn Maloney's "Health Care Reform" page for linking "to all the latest relevant information, not just press releases" and Rep. Randy Forbes's "Issues" section for linking to "Relevant video, blog posts, and press releases for each issue," as well as for having "Links to actions taken on each issue, including relevant letters, sponsored and cosponsored legislation, and votes". The report (page 17) goes on to note that one of the hallmarks of a quality congressional website is "The amount and quality of the media content, press releases, video, audio, and columns or op-ed pieces".

[434] 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 58) quotes Rob Pierson, President of the House Systems Administrators Association and then-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 (pages 42 and 50) 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.
>
> …
>
> On the best sites on Capitol Hill, all of the content is synthesized, overlapped, and cross-referenced.

The 2007 report (page 69, 75, and 79) specifically praises the websites of

- Rep. Carolyn Maloney – noting that "All the information on the site is cross-referenced and integrated into multiple sections";
- then-Sen. Chris Dodd – noting that "By cross-referencing press releases, op-eds, blog posts, and other related documents, the site ensures that its users will find relevant content regardless of where they look for it";
- Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (Republican Office) – noting that "The content is also fully integrated and cross-referenced throughout the site. For instance, the

(7) Where the website (1) has a newsletter subscription form that allows the user to indicate what issues they are interested in and (2) the website also has a page in its issues section devoted to that issue, **then** the office should consider having a link from that issues page to the newsletter subscription page. That link should focus on the issue (e.g., putting a link on the site's "national defense" page that says "Are you interested in receiving my email updates on defense issues?"). If the user chooses the link, then take the user to the newsletter sign-up page and pre-select the checkbox indicating that they want to receive email updates concerning defense issues.

Italian language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Italics

(1) Where italics would be appropriate on a visual display, use <em> tags, not <i> tags. [435]

(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 #(16)*

☠ Jargon

Avoid using jargon, as it may confuse or alienate constituents. [436]

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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. Providing a variety of content in a number of different ways ensures that users will find the information that interests them, regardless of where they look for it."

[435] Success Criterion 1.3.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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. ".

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.

Aarron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites*, (2008) page 28, recommends against the use of <i> tags, noting that they

redundantly mark up the design of a page without communicating a meaningful hierarchy of the information. Search engines look for semantic markup with a high ration of content to code.

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* (3rd edition, [2009], p. 133):

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.

[436] 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,

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JavaScript *see Forms #(17) and (19); Navigation #(17); and Scripts*

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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."

Section G153 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends "Avoid professional jargon, slang, and other terms with a specialized meaning that may not be clear to people" in order to comply with Success Criterion 3.1.5 (level AAA) of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* – which provides that for a website to be accessible:

> When text requires reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level after removal of proper names and titles, supplemental content, or a version that does not require reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level, is available.

Additionally, Success Criterion 3.1.3 (level AAA) of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that for a website to be accessible:

> A mechanism is available for identifying specific definitions of words or phrases used in an unusual or restricted way, including idioms and jargon.

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📖 **Job of a Member of Congress** *see also Biographies #(3)*

Each Congressional website should indicate what the Member (or Chairman) does.[437] Consider presenting a description of a typical day (or week) of the Member as a way for providing this information.[438]

📖 **Job Opportunities**

Consider providing information on job opportunities.[439] 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.)[440]

(2) U.S. House of Representatives' employment opportunities page.

Judicial Branch *see Government Resources #(1)*

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[437] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 13,,recommends that Congressional websites answer the question: "What is the Member doing in Congress?"

The Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 42) identifies providing information on "what a Member does" as an element of a successful Congressional website; and notes (page 21) that only 6% of House websites include information about what a Member does.

Along the same lines, Guideline 1.6(b) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) similarly recommends that legislative websites a "[d]escription of representative duties and functions of members."

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (p. 35) praises Rep. John Larson's website for linking to the Indiana University Center on Congress's "Members of Congress and What They Do" page (now "How Does Congress Work?").

The October 10, 2006 issue of the Foundation's *Congress Online* newsletter praises Rep. José Serrano's "The Job of a Congressman."

See also, former-Rep. Lee Hamilton's "The Job of a Congressman."

[438] 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 Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (p. 30) praises then-Rep. Brian Baird's website for having "A Day on Capitol Hill" slideshow.

TheFoundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 67) praises the "A Day in the Life of Congressman Randy Forbes" audio column on the website of Rep. J. Randy Forbes.

The October 10, 2006 issue of the Foundation's *Congress Online* newsletter praises Rep. Adam Smith's "A Day in the Life."

Other examples include former-Rep. Bud Cramer's "A Typical Week".and Rep. Linda Sánchez' kid's version of a typical congressional day as seen from the point of view of her dog Chavo.

[439] See also, Rep. Dave Camp's "Federal Job Postings" page.

[440] 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. Mo Brooks), California (Rep. Tom McClintock), Colorado (Rep. Mike Coffman), Florida (Rep. David Rivera), Maine (Rep. Chellie Pingree), and Virginia (Rep. Bob Goodlatte).

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Kannada language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Khmer language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

📖 **Kids' pages**

(1) COPPA (the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998)[441] provides extensive requirements for websites (or Web pages) aimed at pre-teenage children that request personal information[442]. The requirements include getting parental consent before collecting, using, or disclosing personal information from children.[443] 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.[444]

(2) The primary audience of a kids' page is different than the primary audience of most other pages on a House website.[445] Kids pages should be kid friendly (see,

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[441] 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.

[442] "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;
(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.

[443] The narrow exceptions to the parental consent requirement, are set out in § 312.5(c) of the COPPA regulations.

[444] 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.

[445] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 4) identifies "Know your audience(s)" as one of the 5 core principles of successful congressional websites.

Eyetracking Web Usability by Jakob Nielsen and Kara Pernice, 2010 (page xviii) notes that 'We know that the way children use Web sites differs strikingly from the way adults do, leading to highly different usability guidelines". For more information on designing web pages with kids as the primary audience, see Jakob Nielsen's "Children's Websites: Usability Issues in Designing for Kids," September 13, 2010; and Nielsen's "Usability of Websites for Teenagers," January 31, 2005.

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e.g., then-Rep. Henry Hyde's kid's zone[446] – 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[447]).[448]

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[446] Similar layouts are used on the websites of Rep. Dan Boren, then-Rep. Phil English, and Rep. Randy Neugebauer.

[447] 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 Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*, which provides that in an accessible website:

> Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

The World Wide Web Consortium's *Understanding WCAG 2.0* further provides that:

> Ensuring that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site helps users become comfortable that they will able to predict where they can find things on each page. This helps users with **cognitive limitations**, users with **low vision**, users with **intellectual disabilities**, and also those who are **blind**.

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) When practical, organize kid resources by grade level. See, e.g., the "Kids" page of Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama.[449]

Kirundi language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Korean language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Kurdish language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Kyrgyz language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

<label> tags *see Forms #(14)*

Language of Text *see also Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Linking #(16); 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[450] 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.[451] For instance, on an XHTML

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[448] *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."

[449] 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".

[450] Success Criterion 3.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "The default human language of each Web page can be programmatically determined."

  Section H57 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* notes that
    Identifying the language of the document is important for a number of reasons:
- It allows braille translation software to substitute control codes for accented characters, and insert control codes necessary to prevent erroneous creation of Grade 2 braille contractions.
- Speech synthesizers that support multiple languages will be able to orient and adapt to the pronunciation and syntax that are specific to the language of the page, speaking the text in the appropriate accent with proper pronunciation.
- Marking the language can benefit future developments in technology, for example users who are unable to translate between languages themselves will be able to use machines to translate unfamiliar languages.
- Marking the language can also assist user agents in providing definitions using a dictionary.

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1.0-compliant 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.[452] 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[453] by using the "lang" attribute and "xml:lang" attribute[454] 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

> Subcomité Congresional Aprueba Proyecto de Ley de Fortuño

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[451] The World Wide Web Consortium's *Internationalization Best Practices: Specifying Language in XHTML & HTML Content* recommends using the "lang" and/or "xml:lang" attributes of the <html> tag to designate the default language that will be used by software (e.g., web browsers, voice browsers, spell checkers, or style processors) to process the text of the web page. By contrast, the W3C document recommends that the <meta http-equiv="Content-Language"> and <meta name="DC.language"> tags to designate the language(s) for the intended human audience of the web page as a whole.

[452] The World Wide Web Consortium's *Internationalization Best Practices: Specifying Language in XHTML & HTML Content* recommends using the <meta http-equiv="Content-Language"> and <meta name="DC.language"> tags to designate the language(s) for the intended human audience of the web page as a whole. By contrast, the W3C document recommends that the <html> tag be used to designate the language that will be used by software (e.g., web browsers, voice browsers, spell checkers, or style processors) to process the text of the web page.

Section 6 (Best Practice 10) of *Internationalization Best Practices* suggests that where the intended human audience of the web page (as a whole) is represented by more than one language, the value of the "content" attribute should be the language code of each language, separated by a comma and a space. For instance, use content="en-US, es-MX" to indicate that the intended audience is composed of practitioners of English as used in the United States and practitioners of Spanish as used in Mexico.

[453] Success Criterion 3.1.2 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "The human language of each passage or phrase in the content can be programmatically determined except for proper names, technical terms, words of indeterminate language, and words or phrases that have become part of the vernacular of the immediately surrounding text.

[454] Section C.7 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

Section H58 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* also recommends using the "lang" and "xml:lang" attributes when using XHTML 1.0.

Lao language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Latvian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Law references *see U.S. Code*

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)[455] should be specified in ems or percentages, not in points, picas, centimeters, inches, or pixels.[456]
    (2) Web pages should be sufficiently scalable that a horizontal scroll bar should not be necessary at 800 x 600 screen resolution.[457] Completely liquid layout that is

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[455] 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.

[456] Success Criterion 1.4.4 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

Success Criterion 1.4.8(5) (level AAA) also provides that in an accessible website:

> For the visual presentation of blocks of text, a mechanism is available [so that] . . .
>> Text can be resized without assistive technology up to 200 percent in a way that does not require the user to scroll horizontally to read a line of text on a full-screen window.

Sections C12, C13, and C14 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommend using percentages, CSS size names (e.g., large, x-large, or xx-large.), or ems, respectively, to specify font sizes. Section C24 also suggests using percentages to set container sizes.

[457] 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:

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scalable to all screen resolutions is highly desirable.[458] The Fluid 960 Grid System[459] (developed by Stephen Bau) provides a standards compliant methodology for layout out web pages optimized for 1024×768 (Rep. Chellie Pingree's website uses this methodology).

(3) Offices should be encouraged to fill at least two-thirds of each Web page with substantive material.[460]

(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.[461] 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.[462] Before publishing a website, it is good practice to search the text of the site for such words as "dummy", "test", and "ipsum".[463]

(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.

- **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.
- **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.?

[458] Success Criterion 1.4.4 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

Section G146 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends the use of liquid layouts.

[459] See http://www.designinfluences.com/fluid960gs/.

[460] 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.".

[461] 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.

[462] See, for instance, "Congressional Websites: The Bright, Bland, and Bizarre," *The Hill*, June 20, 2007.

[463] This approach is consistent with Item 9 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Standard* (HISPUB 007.1.56, April 2011) directs: "Remove all test, dev, backup, and unnecessary files."

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(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).[464]

(7) When removing a feature from a page, make sure that this does not result in either a hole in the page's design or an unbalanced page. It sometimes may be necessary to re-organize the layout of a page, if a feature is removed.

Legal citations *see U.S. Code*

<legend> tags *see Alignment; and Forms #(25)*

 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[465, 466] during at least the current Congress.[467] (In the case of committee websites, link to legislation referred to the committee.)[468]

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[464] Jakob Nielsen's "Scrolling and Attention" (March 22, 2010) reports that over 80% of user views on a web page take place above the fold. Nielsen notes that:

> The implications are clear: the material that's the **most important for the users' goals or your business goals should be above the fold**. Users do look below the fold, but not nearly as much as they look above the fold.

In *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 46), Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger note that, in their usability testing:

> Users with more Web experience scrolled more than those with less experience. Our low-experience users scrolled 38 percent of long pages, whereas the high-experience users scrolled 46 percent of these pages. There are two possible explanations for this: First, experienced users are more aware that poorly designed Web sites sometimes hide important information below the fold, and second, they are faster at picking out relevant information by scanning Web pages, so they are more willing to taker the time to do it.

[465] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111ᵗʰ Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 6) 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. The Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 14,praises the "Issue Areas & Legislative Accomplishments" page of Rep. Howard Berman for including "Links to sponsored legislation".

Guideline 1.6(d) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include information on the "Activities of individual members of parliament, such as legislative proposals, questions, interpellations, motions, political declarations, voting record, etc."

[466] For instructions as to how to link to this information on the Library of Congress's Thomas system, see:
- 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

An alternative is to actually provide the information on the Member's website, see, e.g., Rep. Gabrielle Giffords' "Sponsored Legislation" page and then-Rep. Tom Perrillo's "Sponsored Legislation" page.

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- Current House Floor Proceedings[469]
- House Legislative Schedule[470, 471]
- Annual House calendar (available as a server-side include or as an iframe)[472, 473]

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[467] The Congressional Management Foundation's "Use Web Stats, and Other Tips for Improving Your Website" (March 17, 2011) identifies "Update sponsorship and co-sponsorship links" as one of the "top 10 things you can do immediately to improve the quality of your website".

[468] For instructions as to how to link to legislation referred to a committee, see http://www.congress.gov/help/THOMAS_links/bss.html#bsscommittee.

[469] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) indicates that providing the current Floor proceedings is an element of a successful congressional website.

TheFoundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 16, notes that in 2010 "53% of Member websites had links to the floor proceedings" and praises Rep. Mike Ross's "Currently on the House Floor" page for providing "Links to information on what Congress is doing, including . . . what's on the floor today". Rep. Ross's page includes links to:

- Current House Proceedings compiled by the Clerk of the House – http://clerk.house.gov/floorsummary/floor.aspx
- Twitter version of the Current House Proceedings compiled by the Mountaintop Group – http://twitter.com/#!/HouseFloor
- Span Live - http://www.c-span.org/Live-Video/C-SPAN/

Guideline 1.3(c) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include a "[s]chedule of general activities and events occurring in the parliament today and planned for the future."

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."

[470] http://www.house.gov/legislative/

[471] 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.

The Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 16, praises Rep. Mike Ross's "Currently on the House Floor" page for providing "Links to information on what Congress is doing, including the schedule for the week".

Guideline 1.3(c) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include a "[s]chedule of general activities and events occurring in the parliament today and planned for the future."

[472] 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"><ul><li><a
href="http://www.house.gov/house/House_Calendar.shtml">Annual House
calendar</a></li></ul></iframe>
```

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- Majority and/or Minority schedule materials: [474, 475]
    - Majority Leader's Daily Schedule[476]
    - Majority Leader's Weekly Schedule [477]
    - Majority Leader's annual House Calendar[478]
    - Democratic Whip's Daily Whip[479]
    - Democratic Whip's Nightly Whip[480]
    - Democratic Whip's Weekly Whip[481]

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 Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*, which provides that in an accessible website:

> Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple <u>Web pages</u> within a <u>set of Web pages</u> occur in the <u>same relative order</u> each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

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> Ensuring that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site helps users become comfortable that they will able to predict where they can find things on each page. This helps users with **cognitive limitations**, users with **low vision**, users with **intellectual disabilities**, and also those who are **blind**.

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> **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".

[473] Guideline 1.3(c) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include a "[s]chedule of general activities and events occurring in the parliament today and planned for the future."

[474] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 16, recommends that congressional websites include "the chamber's schedule".

The 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 Democratic Whip's calendar, the current House floor proceedings, and the Democratic Whip's daily notice.

Guideline 1.3(c) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include a "[s]chedule of general activities and events occurring in the parliament today and planned for the future."

[475] Rep. Steve Israel's "Currently in Congress" page includes material from both the majority and minority whips. The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111ᵗʰ Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Award Winners: Platinum, page 4) praises Rep. Israel's site as being "a resource for information about the work of Congress".

[476] http://www.majorityleader.gov/floor/daily.html

[477] http://www.majorityleader.gov/floor/weekly.html

[478] http://www.majorityleader.gov/Calendar/

[479] http://www.democraticwhip.gov/floor-resources/the-daily-whip

[480] http://www.democraticwhip.gov/floor-resources/the-nightly-whip

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- o Democratic Whip's annual Legislative Calendar[482]
- Legislation: bills and resolutions[483, 484] of at least the current Congress[485]
- Congressional Record[486, 487]
  - o About the Congressional Record[488] (prepared by the Library of Congress)[489]
- Committee reports[490]
- Committee hearings (full transcripts[491] and notices of upcoming hearings[492])
- *How Our Laws Are Made*[493, 494, 495]

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[481] http://www.democraticwhip.gov/floor-resources/the-weekly-whip

[482] http://www.democraticwhip.gov/floor-resources/legislative-calendar

[483] http://thomas.loc.gov/home/bills_res.html

[484] 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."

Guidelines 2.2(b), (d), (e), and (f) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) also recommend that legislative websites include the "[t]ext and status of all proposed legislation"; the "[t]ext and final status of proposed legislation from previous years"; the "[t]ext and actions taken on all enacted legislation"; and a "searchable database of current and previously proposed legislation and of enacted legislation."

[485] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 8, notes that in the 111th Congress, "While 42% of Member sites had a THOMAS search box, only 22% searched the current Congress".

[486] http://thomas.loc.gov/home/LegislativeData.php?&n=Record

[487] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies having "[l]inks directly to the *Congressional Record*" as one of the elements in a well-formed congressional website.

[488] http://thomas.loc.gov/home/cr_help.htm

[489] Consider also providing a link to the House Rules Committee's "Basic Training: The House Calendar, Journal, and Congressional Record" (http://www.rules.house.gov/News/PRArticle.aspx?NewsID=37) or the House Rules Committee Democratic Office's "Using the Congressional Record" (http://www.rules.house.gov/archives/pop022299_ho3.htm).

[490] http://thomas.loc.gov/home/LegislativeData.php?&n=Reports

[491] 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 and from the House Library at http://clerk.house.gov/library/hearings.html.

[492] The list of today's hearings compiled by the House Radio-Television Correspondents' Gallery is available at http://radiotv.house.gov/hearings.shtml or http://www.house.gov/daily/comlist.html.

[493] http://thomas.loc.gov/home/lawsmade.toc.html

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- House Rules and Precedents[496]

(2) Offices should be encouraged to have a description of how legislation becomes law.[497] 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.[498]

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[494] Consider also including the kids' version of "How Our Laws Are Made" (compiled by the Clerk of the House):

- Young learners: http://kids.clerk.house.gov/young-learners/lesson.html?intID=31
- Grade school: http://kids.clerk.house.gov/grade-school/lesson.html?intID=17
- Middle school: http://kids.clerk.house.gov/middle-school/lesson.html?intID=17
- High school: http://kids.clerk.house.gov/high-school/lesson.html?intID=17

[495] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies providing information about how a bill becomes a law as an element of a successful Congressional website. The report (Findings, page 13) indicates that, in 2009, 49% of all congressional Member websites included information on how a bill becomes law. The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 72) praises the website of Rep. Paul Ryan for providing this information.

[496] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 15, praises Rep. Jason Altmire's "Legislative Information" page for including "Links to information on the rules, precedents, and procedures of the House". Rep. Altmire's page includes links to the

- General Parliamentary Procedure, ,
- House Committee Procedures, and
- House Floor Procedures

pages originally compiled by the House Rules Committee; as well as the House and Senate parliamentary procedure page originally prepared by the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress,
    Guideline 2.1(e) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) also recommends that legislative websites include the "[f]ull text of the Standing Orders, Rules of Procedure or similar rule-setting documents.
    Links to the full text of the Rules and Precedents of the House are available through the House Rules Committee at http://www.rules.house.gov/singlepages.aspx?NewsID=10&RSBD=21 .
    Additional links related to the Rules and Precedents of the House that you might want to consider including are:

- Parliamentary Bootcamp (compiled by the House Rules Committee)
- Important Policies (compiled by the House Rules Committee)

[497] 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.
    Note: Guideline 2.1(d) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) also recommends that legislative websites include an "[o]verview of parliamentary procedure and routine order of business.".

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(3) Links to legislation, legislation sponsored by the Member, the Congressional Record, committee reports, and the annual House schedule, should include links for that information from at least the current year.[499]

(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.[500, 501] Links **should not** be to Web pages in

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[498] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Award Winners: Gold, page 9) praises the legislative process material on the website of Rep. Howard Berman. That material was taken from the House's "Legislative Process" page.

   Offices with 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">
<a
   href="http://www.house.gov/house/Tying_it_all.shtml">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 Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*, which provides that in an accessible website:

   Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

The World Wide Web Consortium's *Understanding WCAG 2.0* further provides that:

   Ensuring that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site helps users become comfortable that they will able to predict where they can find things on each page. This helps users with **cognitive limitations**, users with **low vision**, users with **intellectual disabilities**, and also those who are **blind**.

   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] 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."

[500] Instructions for linking to specific legislation within Thomas can be found at http://www.congress.gov/help/handles.html .

[501] *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.

the Library of Congress' Legislative Information System (LIS)[502] because it is only accessible to congressional offices.

Library of Congress products *see Congressional Research Service products; Legislative material #(4); and Veterans #(2)*

LinkedIn *see also Social Networking*

    When making arrangements to use LinkedIn for a House office, use Apps.gov to acquire the license – do not use Linkedin.com. The terms of service are different.   Apps.gov provides the terms of service that the General Services Administration has negotiated for government agencies.

Linking *see also Biographies #(1); Business Assistance; Committee Assignments and Caucus memberships; Contact Information and Techniques #(14); District Information #(3); Forms #(5)(d); Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance; Graphics #(2); Issues and Voting Information #(6); Legislative Material; Lists #(3); Maps and Directions #(2); <meta> tags and <link> tags; Multimedia files, Video files, and Audio files; Navigation; PDF files; Privacy Policy; Student Financial Aid; Underlining #(2); U.S. Code; and Visiting Washington*

   (1) Any hypertext link to a Web page that is not part of either
- HOUSE.GOV
- LOC.GOV, or
- a "grandfathered" domain listed in Appendix A of the House domain names policy[503]

   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

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[502] Domain CONGRESS.GOV.

[503] Appendix A 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), lists the following domains:
- csce.gov
- democraticwhip.gov
- democrats.gov
- dems.gov
- gop.gov
- gopleader.gov
- housedemocrat.gov
- housedemocratic.gov
- housedemocrats.gov
- housedems.gov
- jct.gov
- majorityleader.gov
- majoritywhip.gov
- republicans.gov
- speaker.gov

content of the site being linked to.[504] Alternative techniques for adding such a message include:

(a) Alternative 1:

1. Between the <head> tag and the </head> tag, insert
    <script type="text/javascript" src="http://**office.house.gov**/exit-msg.js"></script>
    where the URL for the site is substituted for **office.house.gov**

2. Add an onclick="return (exitMsg())" attribute to any <a href> tag that links to a website other than one in the HOUSE.GOV or LOC.GOV domains

3. On the root directory of your website, create a file named exit-msg.js with the following content:

```
// JavaScript External Link Exit Message
function exitMsg(){
    var answer = confirm("You are now leaving the U.S. House of Representatives Web site. 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.")

    if (!answer)
    return false;

    return true;
    //end of Exit Message
    }
```

(b) Alternative 2: Follow the instructions that are set out at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → HTML Scripts & Products → Exit Message to External Web Sites. Offices using the HIR-supplied exit should

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[504] The *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, §§ 5 to 7), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. When a link to a web site outside the Member's official site 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).

The *Committees' Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, General, § 5) 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.

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be encouraged to establish an @leave_site file to retain their site's look and feel when generating the exit message.[505]

(2) When linking to pages on non-governmental websites, be sure to link to informational pages – not to pages primarily containing solicitations for money, volunteerism, or other things of value.[506]

(3) Rather than linking to other sites, offices should be encouraged to provide material within their own website.[507]

(4) When a Web site has two or more pages that deal with similar subjects, there should be links between each of the pages – outside of the main navigation.[508] One way to do this is with a "see "also" link(s) at the end of the main content.[509]

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[505] Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

The World Wide Web Consortium's *Understanding WCAG 2.0* further provides that:

> Ensuring that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site helps users become comfortable that they will able to predict where they can find things on each page. This helps users with **cognitive limitations**, users with **low vision**, users with **intellectual disabilities**, and also those who are **blind**.

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".

[506] 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.

[507] 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 constituent concerns and problems online rather than pushing them off to another website or directing them off line."

[508] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 42) 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.

The report (page 79) praises the 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."

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(5) 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.[510, 511] (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.)

(6) 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).[512]

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.

See also, e.g., then-Rep. Rick Boucher's press release concerning the release of a discussion draft of privacy legislation – which includes a link to the full text of the discussion draft and an executive summary

[509] In *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 38), Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger recommend (particularly with visitors who arrive at your Web site through a search engine):

> Embellish the answer with rich "See Also" links related to content and services. Global navigation won't do the trick because answer-seekers will ignore it. Remember, there are not interested in your site. But contextual links will make the most eager users dig deeper . . . . "See Also" links can be embedded or placed at the end of the article, where they serve as a follow-up call to action.

[510] 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 53% of screen reader users find pop-up windows somewhat difficult (28%) or very difficult (25%) to use.

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 (pp. 70-71), however, do recommend an exception for PDFs and similar types of documents.

[511] The homepage of the Immigration Reform Caucus is an example of proper use of the "target" attribute to control the contents of an <iframe>.

[512] 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**

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(7) Do not use "link to," "click here," or similar phrases in the text of links.[513]

(8) 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.[514] To avoid ambiguities, the same text should not be used for links that go to different pages. 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.[515]

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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 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."

[513] 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."

[514] 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."

   Prioritizing Web Usability, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 53), recommends:
     Ensure that links and category descriptions explicitly describe what users will find at the destination.
     Faced with several navigation options, it's best if users can clearly identify the trail to [what they want
     to find] . . . Don't use made-up words or your own slogans as navigation options . . .

[515] Success Criterion 2.4.4 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:
       The purpose of each link can be determined from the link text alone or from the link text together
       with its programmatically determined link context, except where the purpose of the link would be
       ambiguous to users in general.
Section H33 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0*, however, recommends using the "title" attribute only if is not practical to make the text of the link sufficiently descriptive and it is not practical to style the additional text so that the text is hidden from non-screen reader browsers.

   Note that the Jaws screen reader can be configured so that it will read which ever is longer – 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.

   A technique along the lines suggested by § H33 is to hide the text (instead of using the "title" attribute) by puting the additional information within <span> tags and give the tag a class (e.g. class="screen-reader-info"), where the class places the text off screen and minimizes the size (e.g., position:absolute;left:-999em; font-size:1%). (Note: "Screen-reader-info" is suggested here rather than the more traditional "hidden", so that it will be clear on a manual inspection that the purpose of the class is only for accessibility purposes and not to fool search engines. See, e.g., "Hiding screen-reader text from visual browsers " Webmaster World (January 26, 2007)).

   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 (1) a media="screen" style sheet with a display:none property and (2) 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.)

   The Opera browser has a built in function (Tools → Links) to display all of the links on a page – with their respective link text. Jim Thatcher, in *Web Accessibility: Web Standards and Regulatory Compliance*, 2006, page 208, notes that:
       With JAWS, Ins+F7 brings up the list. With Home Page Reader, Ctrl+L generates a list. The
       Window-Eyes command is Ins+Tab.

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(9) 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. The "rel" attribute specifies the relationship between the current page and the page (or internal anchor) being linked to. The values most frequently used[516] 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.[517] A special case is the first document in a series: this gets the value "start".[518, 519] The "rev" attribute functions the same way as the "rel" attribute, except it specifies the relationship from the file being linked to the file being linked from (rather than the other way around).[520]

(10) The color of links should be set by style sheets[521] and not by the "alink," "link," or "vlink" attributes of the <body> tag.[522]

(11) The colors used for hypertext links should be consistent throughout the site.[523]

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[516] For a complete list of the standard values for the "rel" and "rev" attributes, see § 6.12 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *HTML 4.01 Specification*.

[517] For example:
Next ¦
Previous

[518] For instance
Previous

[519] Even though § 6.12 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.)

[520] 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

[521] Use the "a:active {color: _____}" style sheets property.

[522] Section 7.5.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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 Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*, which provides that in an accessible website:
    Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

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(12) 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.[524]

(13) Links should look like links.[525] 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).

(14) The larger the link area, the easier it is to use.[526]

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[523] Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

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 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".

[524] 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 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.

[525] 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."

Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines, 2nd edition, page 144 (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), recommends ensuring "that all clickable images are either labeled or readily understood by typical users."

[526] *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."

CAO

(15) If an <a> tag has a "name" attribute, it should also have an "id" attribute with the same value.[527] 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.)[528]

(16) When linking to a Web page that has a primary language[529] that is different from the primary language of the current page, include an "hreflang" attribute[530] in the <a href> tag that created the link.[531]

(17) An <a> tag should not be nested within another <a> tag.[532]

<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).[533]

(b) When using graphics as bullets, use <ul> and <li> tags with the Cascading Style Sheets "list-style-image" property.[534]

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[527] Section 12.2.3 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

[528] Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (3ʳᵈ edition, [2009]), pp.151-152, recommends that
    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.

[529] The primary language of a page is the language specified by the "lang" and "xml:lang" attributes of the <html> tag.

[530] 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.

[531] Success Criterion 3.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 provides that in a accessible website, "[t]he default human language of each Web page can be programmatically determined."

[532] Appendix B of the W3C *XHTML 1.0 (2ⁿᵈ edition) Specification* provides that an "a [element] must not contain other a elements".

[533] 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].

[534] Success Criterion 1.3.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

CAO

(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.[535]

(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.[536]

(3) Lists should be in alphabetical order, unless there is a reason to organize them in a different manner.[537]

(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 visually scan the list.[538]

(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.[539]

(6) The <ul> tag should be used instead of the <dir> tag or the <menu> tag.[540]

(7) The "compact" attribute of the <li>, <ol>, and <ul> tags should not be used.[541]

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.

[535] Section 10.2 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[536] 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.)

[537] *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.

[538] 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."

[539] 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."

[540] Section 10.4 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the <dir> tag and the <menu> tag as deprecated (i.e., outdated) elements.

CAO

(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.[542] Note, however, Internet Explorer (prior to version 8) does not support the "counter-reset" property.[543]

📖 **Listserv and E-Newsletters** *see also Contact Information and Techniques #(2); and Issues and Voting Information #(7)*

(1) Offices with electronic newsletters should be encouraged to use the HIR Listserv service to maintain their subscriber lists.[544]

(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.[545, 546]

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[541] Section 10.2 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

[542] Section 10.2 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[543] For a browser-by-browser review of support for style sheet selectors and declarations, see Peter-Paul Koch's "CSS contents and browser compatibility".

   A Google Analytics review of www.house.gov usage for June 28 to July 28, 2011, indicates that Internet Explorer 6.x and 7.x accounted for 15.15% of the identifiable, non-robot access to the site.

[544] For more information on the HIR Listserv service, see HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → Tools → Listserv.

[545] 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. The "Privacy Policy" page of the America Speaking Out portion of the website of the House Republican Leader includes the following language:

> **Children's Online Privacy Protection.** Because we care about the safety and privacy of children online, we comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA). COPPA and its accompanying FTC regulation establish United States federal law that protects the privacy of children using the Internet. We do not knowingly contact or collect personal information from children under 13. Our site is not intended to solicit information of any kind from children under 13.
>
> It is possible that by fraud or deception we may receive information pertaining to children under 13. If we are notified of this, as soon as we verify the information, we will immediately obtain parental consent or otherwise delete the information from our servers. If you want to notify us of our receipt of information by children under 13, please contact us.

[546] Luke Wroblewski, in *Web Form Design*, 2008, page 22, also 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?

CAO

(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).[547]

(4) Consider providing an opportunity to subscribe to the e-newsletter on each page of the website.[548] A newsletter subscription opportunity, however, should not be included on the site's "Kids" page.[549]

(5) 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".[550]

Lithuanian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

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[547] 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.

See, e.g., Rep. Todd Platts' "E-Newsletter" page.

[548] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 44) recommends that:

> Offices should look for every opportunity to invite citizens to subscribe to their e-mail newsletters. This can keep Members in touch with constituents interested in what is happening in Washington, as well as in the Member's state or district. One of the easiest ways to build that list is to include an option on your Web form for constituents to subscribe to regular e-mail updates. In fact, our research shows that a majority of citizens, regardless of whether or not they have communicated with their Members, want their representatives to keep them informed about what is happening at the federal level.

[549] The standard set out in § 1303(b)(1)(C) of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA) prohibits (on a website or web page targeted for children) 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. The "Privacy Policy" page of the America Speaking Out portion of the website of the House Republican Leader includes the following language:

> **Children's Online Privacy Protection.** Because we care about the safety and privacy of children online, we comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA). COPPA and its accompanying FTC regulation establish United States federal law that protects the privacy of children using the Internet. We do not knowingly contact or collect personal information from children under 13. Our site is not intended to solicit information of any kind from children under 13.

> It is possible that by fraud or deception we may receive information pertaining to children under 13. If we are notified of this, as soon as we verify the information, we will immediately obtain parental consent or otherwise delete the information from our servers. If you want to notify us of our receipt of information by children under 13, please contact us.

[550] 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.)

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Live *see Social Networking*

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. [551]

Lorem Ipsum *see Layout #(4)*

Macedonian language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

<map> tags *see Image Maps*

📖 **Maps and Directions** *see also Image Maps*
   (1) Consider including maps and directions to the office's district and Washington offices. [552]
   (2) Include in each Member site, a map of the Member's district. [553] Where the map shows towns, counties, and other sites, it is recommended that the references to

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[551] Item 28 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Standard* (HISPUB 007.1.56, April 2011) provides that:

> Filters should be implemented at the web server layer to intercept malicious URLs and return a 404 error for any URL that doesn't pass the filter. . . .
>
> For file extension requests, the filter should block the following extensions and return a 404 error: . . .
> *.log
> . . .

[552] 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."

   See also Rep. Ed Towns's "Contact Me" page, Rep. Ellen Taucher's "D[istrict] O[ffice] Directions" page, Rep. Todd Platts's "Driving to Our Nation's Capitol" page, Rep. Eric Cantor's "Directions to Offices" page, then-Rep. Zach Wamp's "Offices of Congressman Zach Wamp" page, and Rep. Michele Bachman's "Directions to My Office" page.

   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.

   Rep. John Garamendi's "Our District" page has a Google Map with push pins indicating the location of each district office. The map also has a key that indicates that each district office is marked with a

graphic.
   Rep. Geoff Davis has an interactive map of his district (on the bottom of each page on his website) that shows the outline of the counties in his district and a target showing the location of each of his district offices. Clicking on any of the targets results in the address of the district office being displayed with a link to a page on the Congressman's site that provides directions that that district office.

[553] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 12, praises the website of Rep. Virginia Foxx for including a map of her district.

those localities on the district map be made into links[554] to either those localities' websites 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.[555] (In addition to having links on the map, also provide plain text links.)[556]

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.

[554] 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, Success Criterion 2.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> All functionality of the content is operable through a keyboard interface without requiring specific timings for individual keystrokes, except where the underlying function requires input that depends on the path of the user's movement and not just the endpoints.

The W3C's *Comparison of WCAG 1.0 Checkpoints to WCAG 2.0, in Numerical Order* notes that "Server-side image maps are not keyboard accessible.")

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.

[555] See, e.g., Rep. Dan Boren's "Second Congressional District of Oklahoma" page, Rep. Bud Cramer's former "5th District of Alabama" page, and Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's former "1st District of Nebraska" page. See also former-Rep. Pete Hoekstra's "Interactive Map" page.

Rep. John Garamendi's "Our District" page has a Google Map with push pins indicating the location of each city and county in his district. The map also has a key that indicates that each city is marked with a

graphic and each county is marked with a

graphic.

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.

[556] See, e.g., Rep. John Garamendi's "Our District" page.

CAO

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.

    (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 World Wide Web Consotrium's XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) standard.[557] 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.[558]

    (4) Rather than using the "padding-top", "padding -right", "padding -bottom", or "padding -left" style sheet properties, use the "padding" property.[559]

Mastheads *see Banners*

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[557] Use of proprietary attributes is not compliant with the World Wide Web Consortium's XHTML 1.0 specification.

[558] Section 8.3 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

[559] Section 8.4 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

Malay language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Malayalam language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Marshallese language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

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.
> **(2)** Each <link> and <meta> tag should end with "/>".[560]

Microformats *see Contact Information and Techniques #(14)*

📖 **Military (Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guard)** *see District Information #(6); Service Academy Nominations; and Veterans*
    Member offices (and other House offices that have constituencies in the armed services)[561] 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 former-Rep. Thelma Drake's website.[562]

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[560] Success Criterion 4.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

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>`."

[561] 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."

[562] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 56) praises the website of then-Rep. Thelma Drake for focusing on the needs of those in military service.

    The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 82) praises then-Rep. Neil Abercrombie's website, noting that:
> Rep. Neil Abercrombie's (D-HI) site has targeted information for members of the military, including information on the Veterans' Administration data breach and links to information and services for each branch of the military.

    See also, Rep. Robert Brady's "Reservist Support Center" page, Rep. Peter DeFazio's "Resources for Guard and Reserve Members" page and Rep. Peter Welch's "Active Duty Military" page.

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Microformats *see Contact Information and Techniques #(14)*

Minority Leader's Solution Groups *see Committee Assignments and Caucus Memberships*

📖 **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.[563]

Mongolian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

MP3 files *see Multimedia files, Video files, and Audio files*

📖 **Multimedia files, Video files, and Audio files** *see also Banners #(3); Graphics; <object> tag #(3); Social Networking; and YouTube*
   (1) In Member websites, consider including multimedia files of the Member's floor speeches and other speeches (at least for the last few congresses).[564]
   (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.[565] One technique for doing this is to include a link on each page of the website to a "tool box" page on the site that contains links to the software.[566] Multimedia players are available at:

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[563] 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.

[564] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, pages 6and 7) indicates that providing current video clips is one of the elements of a well-formed congressional website.   The report (Findings, page 14) also indicates that, in 2009, 83% of all congressional Member websites included videos.

   The Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 63 to 79) praises the video galleries of the following House offices: Reps. Xavier Becerra, Mike Ferguson (floor speeches), Randy Forbes, Ed Markey, Frank Pallone, Jr., Adam Schiff, and Hilda Solis; then-Reps. John Boozman, Christopher Carney and Jerry Moran; and the House Republican Conference.

   The Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 17, notes that one of the hallmarks of a quality congressional website is "The amount and quality of the media content, press releases, video, audio, and columns or op-ed pieces".

[565] 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*)."

[566] Examples can be found at the "Site Tools" portion of the "Accessibility" page on the websites of the Rep. Jason Chaffetz, Rep. Bob Goodlatte, Rep. Chellie Pingree, and Del. Kilili Sablan. See also, the Chief Administrative Officer's "Site Tools and Downloads" page, then-Rep. Heather Wilson's toolbox page, and the "Site Tools" page of the House of Representative main website.

- 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.[567]

(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.[568]

(5) Files that include audio need to provide access to a written transcript.[569]

(6) Whenever possible, multimedia files that include audio should have closed captioning[570] that coordinates a transcript of the words with the action. Where closed captioning is not available, the transcript needs to use some other

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[567] 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.

[568] On October 2, 2008, Rep. Robert Brady, Chairman of the House Administration Committee, announced that the Committee approved revisions to the regulations governing the use of third-party websites by Members and committees The regulations adopted by the Committee 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.
>
> 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.

[569] 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)."

> Success Criterion 1.2.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website with pre-recorded audio:
>
> An alternative for time-based media is provided that presents equivalent information for prerecorded audio-only content.

[570] The regulations under § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (36 C.F.R. § 1194.24(c)) provide that

> All training and informational video and multimedia productions which support the agency's mission, regardless of format, that contain speech or other audio information necessary for the comprehension of the content, shall be open or closed captioned.

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technique to coordinate the words with the action in order to comply with § 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.[571, 572]

(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.[573]

(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.[574]

(9) Avoid using auto-loading multimedia files where the user does not have advance notice that the file will load.[575]

(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),[576] use

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[571] 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 (level A) and 1.2.4 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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. . . .

> **1.2.4 Captions (Live):** Captions are provided for all live audio content in synchronized media.

[572] More information on closed captioning:
- Basic instructions for implementing closed captioning on YouTube videos - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meCIER_s7Ng
- Subtitle Workshop (software to create closed captions) - http://www.urusoft.net/products.php?cat=sw
- Automatic captioning in YouTube - http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2009/11/automatic-captions-in-youtube.html
- National Association of the Deaf – Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) Captioning Key for Educational Media (style manual for closed captioning) - http://www.captioningkey.org/

[573] Guidelines 1,2,3 (level A) and 1.2.5 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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. . . .

> **1.2.5 Audio Description (Prerecorded):** Audio description is provided for all prerecorded video content in synchronized media.

[574] 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.

[575] 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."
Success Criterion 1,4,2 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> If any audio on a Web page plays automatically for more than 3 seconds, either a mechanism is available to pause or stop the audio, or a mechanism is available to control audio volume independently from the overall system volume level.

[576] 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 53% of screen reader users find pop-up windows somewhat difficult (28%) or very difficult (25%) to use.

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an <iframe> (or similar technique) to have the viewer play on the current page. For examples, see the homepage of Rep. Ron Klein.

(11) Collections of multimedia, audio, and video material should be kept up to date.[577]

MySpace *see also Social Networking*

When making arrangements to use MySpace for a House office, use Apps.gov to acquire the license – do not use Myspace.com. The terms of service are different. Apps.gov provides the terms of service that the General Services Administration has negotiated for government agencies.

Name attribute

(1) With <a>, <form>, <frame>, <iframe>, <img>, or <map> tags, an "id" attribute should normally be used instead of a "name" attribute.[578] 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.[579]

(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.[580]

(3) The value of each "name" attribute should start with a letter.[581]

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[577] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 8, recommends that "All content [be kept] up to date, including . . . video, and audo".

[578] Section 4.10 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

[579] Section 4.10 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[580] Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (3rd edition, [2009]), pp.151-152, recommends that 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.

[581] Section 6.2 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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

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National Guard *see Military (Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guard)*

Navajo language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

📖 **Navigation** *see also Accesskey attribute; Biographies #(3); Flags #(4); Linking; Printing; Privacy Policy #(2); RSS and Atom; Searching; and Site Maps*

(1) When designing the main navigation, consider including navigation that targets audiences of particular interest to the office. See, particularly, the "myHank Control Panel" on Rep. Hank Johnson's website which targets constituents, seniors, journalists, veterans, Spanish speakers, and students. [582, 583]

(2) There needs to be a mechanism to allow users of assistive technologies to skip past the navigation links.[584] One approach to this is to precede the main

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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".

[582] See also the "Resources" pages of Rep. Joe Heck, Rep. Tom Marino, and Rep. Reid Ribble; and the "5th District" page of Rep. Dale Kildee.

[583] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 4) identifies "Know your audience(s)" as one of the 5 core principles of successful congressional websites.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 54) further 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.

James Kalbach, in *Designing Web Navigation*, 2007, pages 219-220, praises NASA's homepage for providing "navigation options [that] speak to different user groups" – Kids, Students, Educators, Media & Press, Researchers, Industry, and Employees.

[584] 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."

Success Criterion 2.4.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, a "mechanism is available to bypass blocks of content that are repeated on multiple Web pages."

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.

navigation with a "skip to main content" link[585] with a "class" attribute that has the media="screen" style sheet properties {position:absolute;left:-999em;}.[586]

(3) The top banner should be a link to the homepage.[587] The alternative of using the top banner as a skip-navigation link means that either

- 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.

(4) At the bottom of the main content on each page, consider having a link that goes back to the top of the main content.[588]

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[585] 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 content," and only 11% preferred "skip navigation".

[586] Graham Armfield, in "Providing Skip Links in Your Pages" (Oct. 14, 2010) suggests using CSS to display the skip navigation link whenever the link is tabbed to. That way, the feature is available to persons using the keyboard tab, regardless of whether they are also using a screen reader. This efect can be accomplished by assigning the {position:absolute;left:-999em;} properties to the class when the pseudo-class is link, visited, or hover; and to assign the properties {top:0px; left:0px;} where the pseudo-class is active or focus. For example, if the class was "skip-nav" the CSS properties could be:

```
a.skip-nav:link, a.skip-nav:visited, a.skip-nav:hover {
        position:absolute;
        left:-999em;}
a.skip-nav:active, a.skip-nav:focus {
        top:0px;
        left:0px;}
```

James Kalbach, in *Designing Web Navigation*, 2007, page 91, notes that:

> Another strategy is to show navigation at the bottom of the page and to have a Skip to Navigation link at the top of the page for keyboard-based browsers. Then, at the bottom of the navigation, include a Back to Content link to bring users back to the content of the page.

For other alternative approaches, see:

- "'Skip Navigation' Links," WebAIM, Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University
- "Skip Navigation Links," by Jim Thacher

[587] Steve Krug, in *Don't Make Me Think* (2nd ed., 2006), page 66 (with pages 63 to 64), notes that:

> There's an emerging convention that the Site ID [– the site owner's branding normally in the upper left corner of each page –] 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:

> 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.

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(5) Labels on navigation links should be personal/friendly, e.g.,
- "Where I Stand" (rather than "Issues")[589]
- "How I Voted"
- "How Can I Help You" (rather than "Constituent Services" or "Casework")[590]
- "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 the labels for two (or more) navigation links are similar and provide related information, consider making one of the pages the primary page and have the other(s) link from that primary page.

(7) Navigation should instantly be recognizable and should stand out.[591]

(8) Where practical, supplement navigation buttons (or links) with relevant icons.[592, 593]

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[588] For examples, see the interior pages of Rep. Jim Langevin's website and the websites of the Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine and the Science, Space, and Technology Committee (Democratic Office).

James Kalbach, in *Designing Web Navigation*, 2007, page 104, points out a small potential draw-back to this approach:
> Sometimes a sitewide decision is made to include "Back to Top" links on all pages. These links may then appear on pages that don't scroll.

Note, however, that even on pages that do not scroll, the "Back to the Top" link may be useful to persons with vision disabilities using screen readers. It may also be useful for persons with motor disabilities using assistive technologies.

[589] Another alternative is "My Work in Congress" – see Rep. Frank Pallone's website.

[590] 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.'"

Rep. Ben Chadler uses "How Can We Help You?" and "Assistance with Federal Agencies". Rep. Frank Pallone uses "How Can I Help". Former Rep. Spencer Bachus used "Helping You" and "Help with Federal Agencies". Former Rep. Christopher used "Assistance for You" as the page name and prominently defined the term "casework".

[591] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 7, lists as the first question that a congressional office should answer about their website is: "Can I navigate the website and find what interests me even if I've never used the site before?"

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 11) further notes that:
> All the content in the world is not going to be helpful to users if they cannot find what they are looking for. Because everyone has a different level of familiarity with the Internet, as well as with Congress and their own Representative or Senator, it is important that every Web site make its content as easy to find and as easy to navigate as possible.

Jakob Nielsen and Kara Pernice in *Eyetracking Web Usability*, 2010 (page 64) recommends that web pages include "[p]erceptible menus, with some graphic or color delineation, across the top and usually on the left."

[592] Section G103 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* notes that:
> Users with disabilities that make it difficult to decode words and sentences are likely to have trouble reading and understanding complex text. Charts, diagrams, animations, photographs, graphic organizers, or other visual materials often help these users.

(9) Graphics that look like navigation buttons should function as navigation buttons.[594]

(10) The text of navigation buttons should normally be centered vertically, so there is equal padding above and below the text of the button.

(11) If the navigation is arranged vertically, the labels should be left-justified. Left-justified information is much easier to scan than right-justified information.[595]

(12) Use subtle breaks between navigation buttons, rather than using solid breaks.[596]

(13) 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.[597]

(14) Consider making the first primary navigation button a link to the site's homepage[598]. The remaining navigation should be in alphabetical order, unless there is a reason not to do so.

(15) 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.[599]

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as a technique to satisfy Success Criterion 3.1.5 (level AAA) of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* ("When text requires reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level after removal of proper names and titles, supplemental content, or a version that does not require reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level, is available.")

[593] See the left-side navigation on Rep. Geoff Davis's website (which was cited as a good example of "menu options [that] are clear and easy to read," in the Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill,* [March 7, 2011], page 8).

See also the websites of Rep. Sandy Adams, Rep. Bob Filner, Rep. Jim Langevin, Rep. Jared Polis, and Rep. Bill Posey.

James Kalbach, in *Designing Web Navigation*, 2007, page 280, notes that:
> The use of icons can increase the scent of information . . . . This is particularly true when users are quickly scanning lots of information. If given a clear meaning and purpose, icons are more than decoration. They work in conjunction with text to provide a better overall sense of orientation.

[594] *Eyetracking Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Kara Pernice, 2010 (page 152) notes that:
> Users waste looks and clicks on . . . faux buttons, which let them down and make them feel stupid. . . . [I]tems that are not buttons shouldn't look like clickable buttons."

[595] For more information on this technique, see Jakob Nielsen's "Right-Justified Navigation Menus Impede Scannability" (April 28, 2008).

[596] Steve Krug, in *Don't Make Me Think* (2nd ed., 2006), page 39, recommends using grayed horizontal lines between navigation items – rather than solid lines – because the solid lines "add a lot of noise. Graying the lines . . . make the menus much easier to scan."

[597] 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.

[598] *Eyetracking Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Kara Pernice, 2010 (page 65) recommends including a "*Home* button in or near the menu on the far left of all pages except 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".

[599] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill,* [March 7, 2011], page 8, praises Rep. Geoff Davis's "Economy" page for having "content [that] is scanable with links to skip to different sections and to more detailed information". The report (page 9) also praises the jump menu on Rep. Carolyn Maloney's "Health Care Reform" page.

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(16) The formatting of navigation links should be consistent throughout the site.[600]

(17) JavaScripts, VBScripts, and other scripts should not be used as the exclusive way to navigate to the pages on the website.[601] In addition to accessibility problems that may cause,[602] many indexing spiders are not able to follow scripted links.

(18) 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

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Section G124 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends:

> providing a list of links to the different sections of the content. The links in this list, like a small table of contents at the beginning of the content, set focus to the different sections of the content. This technique is particularly useful for pages with many independent sections, such as portals.

James Kalbach, in *Designing Web Navigation*, 2007, page 103, notes that:

> Some web pages can be very long. In these cases, it may be advantageous to add internal page links that allow people to jump from one section of a page to another. . . . It's customary to then provide a reciprocal link back to the top . . .
>
> Beyond the quick access to content sections, internal links provide an overview of page content, much like a table of contents. It may be very difficult to get a sense of what's included on a longer page simply by scrolling and reading the page headers. Sometimes a set of internal page links may even appear to be part [of] the local navigation scheme.

[600] Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple <u>Web pages</u> within a <u>set of Web pages</u> occur in the <u>same relative order</u> each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

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 Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40), in its discussion of the elements of a successful Congressional website, 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-Reps. Tom Allen, Brad Ellsworth, and Patrick Murphy; and Reps. Adam Schiff, and Hilda Solis, and the House Ways and Means Committee.

Collin Burden, writing for the Foundation in "Back to Basics: The Foundations of a Good Website" (April 14, 2011), praises the website of Sen. John Thune for having "Consistent and clear menu options [that] make navigation easier".

[601] James Kalbach, in *Designing Web Navigation*, 2007, page 178, notes that:

> To be cross-platform compatible, the content and navigation you design has to work if scripting languages are turned off and plug-ins are absent.

[602] The *Guide to the Section 508 Standards for Electronic and Information Technology* (June 21, 2001), issued as a white paper by the U.S. Access Board, takes the postion that a link in the format:

> Start myFunction

"does not cause accessibility problems for assistive technology."

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and then separate pages for each issue), consider providing links to each of the subportions from each of the subportions.[603]

(19) 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.[604]

(20) Because of the different priority schemes for rendering content that overlays other content, it is important to test drop-down navigation in multiple browsers.[605]

(21) 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.[606]

(22) 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.[607]

(23) Each page should include breadcrumbs that indicate where the page falls in the hierarchy of the website.[608]

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[603] 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."

[604] 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.

[605] See "Browser Compatibility," above, for a list of browsers used most frequently to access the HOUSE.GOV domain.

[606] *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.

[607] See, e.g., the "Services" portion of the websites of Rep. Jason Chaffetz, Rep. Marcia Fudge, Rep. Bob Goodlatte, Rep. Brett Guthrie, Rep. Chellei Pingree, and Del. Kilili Sablan..

[608] Success Criterion 2.4.8 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> Information about the user's location within a set of Web pages is available.

Section G65 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* provides that:

> A breadcrumb trail helps the user to visualize how content has been structured and how to navigate back to previous Web pages, and may identify the current location within a series of Web pages. A breadcrumb trail either displays locations in the path the user took to reach the Web page, or it displays the location of the current Web page within the organization of the site.

(24) Outside of the main navigation, there should be utility navigation which includes links to pages such as the site map, accessibility tools, and privacy policy. The utility navigation should be unobtrusive, but placed where it is easily found – e.g., in both the upper right and lower right of each page.[609]

Breadcrumb trails are implemented using links to the Web pages that have been accessed in the process of navigating to the current Web page. They are placed in the same location within each Web page in the set.

It can be helpful to users to separate the items in the breadcrumb trailing with a visible separator. Examples of separators include ">", "|", "/", and "::".

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 40) identifies providing "'breadcrumbs' which indicate what specific section of the site the user is in" as an element of a successful Congressional Web site. The report (pages 64 to 73) singles out the use of interactive breadcrumbs on the Web sites of then-Reps. Brad Ellsworth, Jerry Moran, and Patrick Murphy; and Reps. Kevin McCarthy and Adam Schiff.

In *Eyetracking Web Usability*, 2010 (page 156), Jakob Nielsen and Kara Pernice note that:

Breadcrumbs—the navigation trails that show people where they are on a Web site—are godsends on sites that have convoluted information architecture. . . .

People look at breadcrumbs 31 percent of the time. When you consider the many other places where users can also navigate . . ., this is quite a bit. . . .

Breadcrumbs deserve a place in Web interfaces because they typically are simple and contextual.

Steve Krug, in *Don't Make Me Think* (2nd ed., 2006), pages 78-79 recommends these "best practices" for breadcrumbs:

> **Put them at the top.** . . .
> **Use > between levels.** Trial and error seems to have shown that the best separator between levels is the "greater than" character (>). . . . The colon (:) and slash (/) are workable, but > seems to be the most satisfying and self-evident—probably because it visibly suggests forward motion down through the levels.
> **Use tiny type** . . .
> **Use the words "You are here**." Most people will understand what the Breadcrumbs are, but since it's tiny type anyway it doesn't hurt to make them self-explanatory.
> **Boldface the last item.** . . .
> **Don't use them instead of a page name.** There have been a lot of attempts to make the last item in the Breadcrumbs list do double duty, eliminating the need for a separate page name. . . . This seems like it should work, but it doesn't, probably because it fights our expectation that headings are flush left or centered, not dangling in the middle of the page at the end of a list.

[609] Jakob Nielsen and Kara Pernice, in *Eyetracking Web Usability*, 2010 (pages 140-142) note that:

We believe people have learned that utility menus hold administrative, or operational, information about the organization: jobs, locations, contact info, privacy policy, help, and the site map. When people in our study needed this kind of information, they looked toward the very top and the very bottom of pages.

Utility navigation typically has small text that is lighter than the rest of the page text but still easy to see and is located at the very top (above main navigation and banners) and very bottom of pages. The location and look of utility navigation helps people differentiate if from the global nav. So, for the most part, it is a positive thing that people do not always look at it. This is selective disregard. . . .

In sum, utility navigation should not compete for attention with other elements on a page. It should look faded and less significant than the site's main navigation. This look and placement will help people recognize utility navigation easily.

Nielsen and Pernice (page 67) speak well of utility navigation that does not "distract the user but are obvious and easy to ignore or find, as appropriate."

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Very simple icons (accompanying the text of the links) help convey the meaning of the links – see, e.g., the utility links in the upper right portion of Rep. Jim Langevin's website.[610]

Nepali language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Netscape *see Browser Compatibility #(1); <hr> tags #(1); Margins and Padding #(2); Social Networking; and Tables #(3)*

Netvouz *see Social Networking*

News media *see Press Releases*

Newsletters *see Listserv and E-Newsletters*

Newsvine *see Social Networking*

Northern Sotho language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Norwegian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Numbers *see Roman Numerals*

<object> tag[611] *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,[612] not by the "border" attribute of the <object> tag.[613]
- **(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.[614]

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[610] Section G103 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* notes that:
> Users with disabilities that make it difficult to decode words and sentences are likely to have trouble reading and understanding complex text. Charts, diagrams, animations, photographs, graphic organizers, or other visual materials often help these users

as a technique to satisfy Success Criterion 3.1.5 (level AAA) of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* ("When text requires reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level after removal of proper names and titles, supplemental content, or a version that does not require reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level, is available.")

[611] 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).

[612] Use the "border-width" style sheets property.

[613] Section 13.7.3 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

(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.[615]

Office Hours *see Contact Information and Techniques #(6)*

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*

Opt-in and opt-out *see Listserv and E-Newsletters #(5)*

Padding *see Margins and Padding*

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[614] 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 World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[615] Section 13.3 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that the "type" attribute of the <object> tag "is optional but recommended when data is specified since it allows the user agent to avoid loading information for unsupported content types. If the value of this attribute differs from the HTTP Content-Type returned by the server when the object is retrieved, the HTTP Content-Type takes precedence."

Other "type" attribute values for the <object> tag include:

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

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📖 Page Program

On August 8, 2011, the Speaker and Minority Leader issued a joint Dear Colleague announcing that House participation in the Congressional Page Program will be discontinued no later than August 31, 2011.[616] House offices with websites that contain information on how to apply to become a Congressional Page should either:

(a) Eliminate the page(s); or

(b) Replace the page(s) with information on the history of the program.[617]

\<param\> tags

Each \<param\> tag should end with "/\>".[618]

📖 Parents

(1) Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with parents)[619] 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 and the "Parents" page of Del. Kilili Sablan.[620] 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.[621]

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[616] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 8 recommends that "All content [be kept] up to date".

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

> We also saw an overwhelming amount of outdated content on Member Web sites, ... This is troublesome because few constituents will . . . 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!

The 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.

[617] Information on the history of the Page Program (compiled by the Clerk of the House) is currently available at http://pageprogram.house.gov/history.html. Additionally, the Speaker and Minority Leader have directed the Historian of the House to compile an official history of the program.

[618] Success Criterion 4.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

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>`."

[619] 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."

[620] See also the "Parents" pages of Rep. Diane Black, Rep. John Garamendi and Rep. Thaddeus McCotter.

[621] 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

(2) The parent information page should have a link to the site's kids' page.

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.[622] Note that if the link to the software points to a non-House of Representatives website, an appropriate exit message needs to be given.[623]
  (3) All input fields (including radio buttons and checkboxes) on a PDF should have a tooltip[624] explanation of what information should be provided in the field.[625]
  (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.[626]

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specifically targeted audiences" and praises the "For > Parents" page on then-Rep. Dennis Moore's website.

[622] See, 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*)."

[623] 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.

[624] 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.)

[625] Success Criterion 4.1.2 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website "For all user interface components (including but not limited to: form elements, links and components generated by scripts), the name and role can be programmatically determined; states, properties, and values that can be set by the user can be programmatically set; and notification of changes to these items is available to user agents, including assistive technologies."

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.

[626] *Prioritizing Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger, 2006 (p. 36), notes that:

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☠ **Petitions**

House regulations do not permit House Member or committee websites to have petitions.[627]

Phone Numbers *see Telephone Numbers*

📖 **Photo Album** *see also Linking #(9)*

(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](#)[628, 629]
- [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)
- [SmoothGallery](#)

(2) Consider dividing a Member's photo album into sections (including one devoted to recognizing constituents[630]). See, for instance, Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's [photo

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> 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.

[627] The *[Members' Congressional Handbook](#)* [(Web Sites, Content](#), § 4), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

> The content of a Member's Web site: . . .
> 4. May not generate, circulate, solicit, or encourage signing petitions.

The *[Committee's Congressional Handbook](#)* [(Web Site Regulations, Content](#), § 4), issued by the House Administration Committee, provides that:

> The content of a committee Web site may not: . . .
> 4. Generate, circulate, solicit or encourage signing petitions.

[628] 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.

[629] 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).

[630] 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.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *[Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age](#)* [(pages 21 and 25)](#) praises [Sen. Tom Carper](#)'s website for highlighting Delawareans by "posting constituent photo galleries and congratulating constituents on their accomplishments"; and the

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album which is divided into "In the District," "Nebraska Breakfast Gallery," "Nebraska Visitors," and "Working in Nebraska."

📖 **Photo of Member** *see also Biographies #(3); and Graphics #(3)(d)*

Include the official photograph of the Member, Chairman, or Ranking Member[631] (including a high resolution version)[632]

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 #(16)*

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."[633] 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[634]

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website of then-Rep. Richard Pombo for having "An extensive gallery of constituent photos". See also Del. Kilili Sablan's "Constituent Photos" page.

[631] Guideline 1.6(a) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include a photo of each Member.

[632] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 46) identifies having an "official biography and high resolution Member photograph" as a standard part of a well formed congressional website. See, e.g., Rep. Erik Paulsen's "High Resolution Photo" page.

[633] The *Committee's Congressional Handbook* (Web Site Regulations, Content, § 1). issued by the House Administration Committee, provides an identical restriction on House committee websites.

[634] 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.

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(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 Rep. David Wu.)

(4) Offices should consider displaying the results of their surveys in graphic form (see, e.g., Rep. David Wu's "Vote Results" page).

Pop-up Windows

   Pop-up windows (or new browser tabs) should not be used, unless there is a substantial reason to have them.[635] (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 Zip Code Lookup page 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 #(16)*

Postal Abbreviations *see Abbreviations and Acronyms; and Forms #(16)*

Postal Addresses *see Contact Information and Techniques #(6), #(14), and #(15)*

The report (pages 32 to 40) specifically praises the websites of, Rep. Jeff Miller, and then-Reps. Marion Berry, John Linder and Charlie Norwood for their use of polls and surveys.

[635] 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 53% of screen reader users find pop-up windows somewhat difficult (28%) or very difficult (25%) to use.

   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 (pp. 70-71), however, do recommend an exception for PDFs and similar types of documents.

   Aarron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites*, (2008) page 29 notes that:
   Often pop-up window documents have no site identity or navigation, so when there are indexed and viewed individually the user is provided no clue to their location or how to navigate. The JavaScript often used to spawn pop-up windows is not executable by search engine spider, creating a roadblock to indexing. . . . [i]n general, pop-up windows should be avoided.

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<pre> tags

Instead of using the "width" attribute in <pre> tags, use the style sheets "width" property (with the value set in ems).[636]

Prefixes of names *see Contact Information and Techniques #(14); and Forms #(17)*

Presidential Greetings *see Greetings*

📖 **Press Kits**

Offices should consider including a press kit on their website.[637] The kit should include items that are of particular interest to representatives of the media, but not necessarily of interest to the general public. Items that might be included in a website's press kit include:

- Contact information for the office's press secretary/communications director[638]
- High resolution photograph of the Member[639]
- Long and short biographical sketches of the Member
- Electronic form to request an interview with the Member[640]
- How to pronounce the Member's name (particularly if the spelling or the pronunciation is unusual).[641]

📖 **Press Releases** *see also Biographies #(1); and Issues and Voting Information #(5)*
  (1) Offices should have all of their press releases (at least for the last few congresses) available on their website[642] and to make them available in chronological order and in subject order.[643]

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[636] Section 9.3.4 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "width" attribute of the <pre> 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."

[637] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 18, praises the "Press Resources" section of Rep. Sam Farr's "Newsroom" page for providing "Links and information specifically for the press".

See also, the press kits of Rep. Steve Israel, Rep. Al Green, Rep. Jim Langevin, Rep. Gary Peters, Rep. Jared Polis, and Rep. John F. Tierney

[638] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 46) indicates that providing "names and contact information for staff who deal with the press" is one of the elements of a well-formed congressional Web site. The report (page 21) indicates that 61% of all House Member, committee, and leadership Web sites included this information.
  For example, see Rep. Frank Lucas's "Media Center."

[639] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 46) identifies having an "official biography and high resolution Member photograph" as a standard part of a well formed congressional website. See, e.g., Rep. Erik Paulsen's "High Resolution Photo" page.

[640] See, e.g., Rep. Steve Israel's "Request an Interview" page.

[641] See, e.g., Rep. Tom Petri's "Media Center" page:
   Broadcasters, the Congressman's last name is pronounced: "PEA-try"

[642] Guideline 1.3(h) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include "[t]exts of official press releases of the parliament."

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(2) Offices should be encouraged to use a content management system that will (a) allow an subject to be associated with the document; (b) automatically create index pages in chronological and subject order; and (c) allow specific parts (e.g., the title, date, and first y number of words, sentences, or paragraphs) of the x most recent documents (by subject, document type, or both) and a link to their full text to be placed anywhere on the site (e.g., on the homepage, show the titles of the 5 most recent press releases and provide a link to their full text).

(3) Press releases should have the same navigation links and banner as the rest of the site.[644]

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.[645] 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 printing, consider specifying Times New Roman, rather than Georgia. When specifying a sans-serif font for printing, consider specifying Arial, rather than Verdana. Georgia and Verdana were designed for

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[643] 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 Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill,* [March 7, 2011], page 17 indicates that (as of 2010) 98% of Congressional Member websites provide press releases in chronological order, but only 40% make them sortable by topic.

[644] Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

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 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".

[645] 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.

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screen display, whereas Times New Roman and Arial were designed for printing.[646]

Privacy Act Release Form *see Constituent Services #(5)*

📖 **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.[647] A model privacy notice is set out in Appendix 6: *Model Privacy Policy* of this document.
   (2) Ideally, there should be a link to the office's privacy policy on every page of the website.[648] 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.[649] A link

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

[647] 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."

   Eyetracking Web Usability by Jakob Nielsen and Kara Pernice, 2010 (page 163), notes that:
      People look at *Privacy Policy* links only 1 percent of the time. . . . This is not to suggest that sites drop privacy policy information because it is looked at so seldom. Privacy policies keep a site's credibility high and increase trust, so we recommend that you offer a link to yours in the site navigation.

[648] 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.

   Eyetracking Web Usability by Jakob Nielsen and Kara Pernice, 2010 (page 163), notes that:
      Privacy policies keep a site's credibility high and increase trust, so we recommend that you offer a link to yours in the site navigation.

[649] 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:

is not "in a clear and prominent place" if a click or mouse-over is required to display it.

(3) Offices should be encouraged not to use cookies unless there is a "compelling need".[650] 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.[651]

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(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.

[650] 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, attachment A, § III(D)(2)(a)(v)) permied the use of session cookies. It also permited 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.

The "compelling need" standard in OMB Memoranum M-03-22 was overrriden by OMB Memorandum M-10-22, June 22, 2010 (Guidance for Online Use of Web Management and Customization Technologies). M-10-22 does require that when using cookies or similar technology, the following information must be included in the website's privacy policy:

i.   the purpose of the web measurement and/or customization technology;
ii. the usage Tier [i.e., tier 1 for session cookies, tier 2 for persistent cookies where personally identifiable information is not captured, or tier 3 for persistent cookies where personally identifiable information is captured], session type, and technology used;
iii. the nature of the information collected;
iv. the purpose and use of the information;
v.   whether and to whom the information will be disclosed;
vi. the privacy safeguards applied to the information;
vii. the data retention policy for the information;
viii. whether the technology is enabled by default or not and why;
ix. how to opt-out of the web measurement and/or customization technology;
x.   statement that opting-out still permits users to access comparable information or services; and
xi. the identities of all third-party vendors involved in the measurement and customization process.

Notwithstanding all this, 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).

[651] To be compliant with § 6.12 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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:

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Pseudo-classes *see Style Sheets #(4)*

Punctuation *see Apostrophes, Quotation Marks and Quotations*

Punjabi language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Pushto language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

<q> tags *see Apostrophes, Quotation Marks, and Quotations #(3) and #(5)*

Quotations *see Apostrophes, Quotation Marks, and Quotations*

Reddit *see Social Networking*

Republican Leader's Solution Groups *see Committee Assignments and Caucus Memberships*

Reserves (Military) *see Military (Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guard)*

Response time *see Download time*

Republican Leader's Solution Groups *see Committee Assignments and Caucus Memberships*

Reuse of Content *see also Browsealoud; Dates, Time, and Timeliness; File Names and Extensions #(1); Frames and Iframes; Kids Pages #(2); Legislative Material #0and (2); RSS and Atom #(2); Veterans #(1); and Visiting Washington #(2)*
    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.
   (1) 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.
   (2) Do not use <!--~!CMB--> or <!--~!CME--> tags within a server-side include.

Roll Call Votes *see Committee Websites #(2); Issues and Voting Information #(2) and (3); and Navigation #(5)*

profile="http://lists.w3.org/Archives/Public/www-html/1997Sep/0046.html"

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.

(3) The Roman numeral representations set out as 2160 to 217F (i.e., Ⅰ to ⅿ) in the Unicode 6.0 Standard,[652] should not be used unless there is a substantial reason to do otherwise.[653]

Romanian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

RSS and Atom *see also Feedburner*

(1) Offices should be encouraged to provide an RSS or Atom capability.[654] This capability allows anyone who subscribes to your RSS (or Atom) feed to be

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[652] See http://unicode.org/charts/PDF/U2150.pdf.

[653] The *Unicode 6.0 Standard* (p. 486) 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 June 28 to July 28, 2011, Google Analytics review – constituted 1.12% of www.house.gov access) treats Ⅰ to ⅿ as unidentifiable characters. Browsealoud 4 for Windows 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).

[654] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies having an RSS feed as an element of a well-formed Congressional website. The report (Findings, page 14) also indicates that, in 2009, 56% of all congressional Member websites (and 51% of all congressional committee websites) included RSS feeds. The report (Award Winners: Platinum, pages 3 to 5) praises the websites of Sen. Lisa Murkowski, Rep. Steve Israel, and the House Science and

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automatically notified every time you add a new RSS-enabled (or Atom-enabled) document to your website.

(2) If a website is using RSS, it is recommended that the site include a "What is RSS" page.[655] CAO-Web Solutions Branch-maintained "What is RSS" text can automatically be inserted using a server-side include or by using an iframe.[656] The "What is RSS" link should follow the links to the actual documents.

Technology Committee (now the Democratic Office of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee) for providing RSS feeds.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (pages 63, 64, 68, 69. 70, 73, 75, 79, 82) praises Rep. Xavier Becerra, Rep. Dan Burton, Rep. Mike Honda, then-Rep. James Linder, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, Rep. Ed Markey, Rep. Kevin McCarthy, then-Rep. Hilda Solis, Sen. John Cornyn, then-Sen Chris Dodd, House Republican Conference, and House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform for their RSS feeds. The report (page 21) also indicates that only 24% of House Member, committee, and leadership offices have RSS feeds.

The *National Journal*'s "Congress' Best (And Worst) Committee Web Sites" (November 30, 2009) praises the House Education and Labor Committee's use of RSS feeds.

[655] 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 World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative.

[656] 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 Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*, which provides that in an accessible website:

Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

The World Wide Web Consortium's *Understanding WCAG 2.0* further provides that:

Ensuring that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site helps users become comfortable that they will able to predict where they can find things on each page. This helps users with **cognitive limitations**, users with **low vision**, users with **intellectual disabilities**, and also those who are **blind**.

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".

(3) The homepage of any website with RSS or Atom feeds (and any pages that lead to documents that are the subject of RSS or Atom feeds) should prominently include an icon (that links to the RSS.xml or Atom.xml page) in one of the following formats:

    (a) [657]

    (b) [658]

(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 rel="alternate" type="application/rss+xml" title="Headline news [RSS]" href="http://www.house.gov/name/rss/news.xml" />. [659]

Atom feeds should be treated the same way as RSS feeds, except each occurance of "RSS" whould be replaced with "Atom".

Russian language material *see Babel Fish; Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Samoan language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Schedule meeting with Member (or Office) *see also Contact Information and Techniques #(4)*

📖 **Schedule of Member (or Office)** *see also Contact Information and Techniques #(4)*
    (1) Offices should be encouraged to provide highlights of the Member's upcoming schedule on their website. [660] (Consider laying this information out calendar-style – see, e.g., the calendar of the Committee on Natural Resources).

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[657] The RSS Advisory Board recommends using this icon.

[658] XML

[659] 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.

[660] See, e.g., the "Events" tab on Rep. John Garamendi's homepage which provides upcoming events and his "John's Calendar" page which provides an archive of prior events. See also, Rep. Mike Capuano's "Mike's Schedule" which provides a sampling of his schedule; then-Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand's "Sunlight Report"; and the "Culberson's Calendar" portion of Rep. John Culberson's homepage.

The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Award Winners: Platinum, page 3) praises Sen. Lisa Murkowski's "Upcoming and Past events" page for allowing visitors to "see the Senator's schedule".

The 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.

The 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.

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(2) Where the office is sponsoring a hearing or other event, include information on the accessibility of the location – particularly for persons with disabilities.[661]

Scholarships *see Student Financial Aid*

Screen readers *see Accesskey attribute #(1); Aural Style Sheets; Browsealoud; and Style Sheets #(3)*

Screen resolution *see Layout #(2)*

Scripts *see also <applet> tags; <embed> tags; Event Handlers; Forms #(17); Navigation #(17); 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> tag and a </noscript> tag.

Between the <noscript> tag and the </noscript> tag should be the information that will be 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.[662]

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 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. See also then-Rep. Cynthia McKinney's "District Days" page.

[661] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill,* [March 7, 2011], page 17 praises the website of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee for pposting "information on hearing accessibility".

See also the "Accessibility" page on the House of Representatives main website.

[662] 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."

Success Criterion 1.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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,

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- 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.
- 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.
- In the special case of a script that has associated coding that degrades gracefully **and** keeps all the information available when scripts are not enabled, it is appropriate to just insert a comment to that effect, e.g.,

    <noscript><!-- The above feature is designed to degrade gracefully so that the same information is available, whether scripting is enabled or not --></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 "language" attribute – the "language" attribute should not be used in <script> tags.[663]

(3) Unless there is a substantial reason to do otherwise, scripts should not be used to open windows.[664] (One of the relatively rare instances when there is a substantial

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Section F20 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* provides that a webpage fails to meet the requirements of Guideline 1.1.1 if does not update "text alternatives when changes to non-text content occur".

[663] Section 18.2.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the "language" attribute of the <script> tag as a deprecated (i.e., outdated) attribute and specifies that the "type" attribute should be used to perform the function that had previously been performed by the "language" 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

[664] 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 53% of screen reader users find pop-up windows somewhat difficult (28%) or very difficult (25%) to use.

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.

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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.)

(4) External scripts (i.e., scripts called by a <link> tag) should always be used when the script contains any of the following character strings:[665]

>   <
>   &
>   ]]>
>   --

(5) jQuery scripts may conflict with other JavaScripts. To avoid this type of problem, see the techniques set out in jQuery's "Using jQuery with Other Libraries". Within the CAO-Web Solutions Branch MoveableType environment, use:

```
<html>
 <head>
   <script src="prototype.js"></script>
   <script src="jquery.js"></script>
   <script>
    var $j = jQuery.noConflict();

    // Use jQuery via $j(...)
    $j(document).ready(function(){
     $j("div").hide();
    });

    // Use Prototype with $(...), etc.
    $('someid').hide();
   </script>
 </head>
 <body></body>
</html>
```

Scroll Bars

Scroll bars should look like scroll bars.[666]

Searching *see also Banners #(2); Dates, Time, and Timeliness #(3); File Names and Extensions #(3); Forms #(9); Legislative Material #(3); Navigation #(6) and (17); and PDF Files #(4)*

(1) Offices should be encouraged to include a website search capability[667] on all pages,[668] in or near the top banner.[669] The search capability should

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Nielsen and Loranger (pp. 70-71), however, do recommend an exception for PDFs and similar types of documents.

[665] Section C.4 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition)* recommends "Use external scripts if your script uses < or & or]]> or --."

[666] 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.

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- actually work – testing the search capability is important;[670]
- have an input box where users can enter their search;[671]
- have a button labeled "search" used to submit searches;[672] and

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[667] 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 successful Congressional website.   The Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Findings, page 16), notes that – in 2009 – 20% of congressional websites did not provide functioning 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.

For instructions for using the search engine provided for House websites through HIR, see HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → Features and Scripts → Search Sites.

[668] *Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines*, 2nd edition, page 182, (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) notes that:

> A search option should be provided on all pages where it may be useful–users should not have to return to the homepage to conduct a search.

[669] *Eyetracking Web Usability*, by Jakob Nielsen and Kara Pernice, 2010 (page 65) recommends placing an "open search field in the upper-right corner of all pages".

The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 8, praises the search bar on Rep. Geoff Davis's website, which is at the top of each page of the website, along with links to the site map and other navigation tools.

[670] The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 20) notes that (emphasis added):

> 12% more House Member and 11% more Senate Member sites had *functional* search engines in 2007 compared to the previous year. While this is encouraging, it is alarming that a third of House Member sites and a fifth of Senate Member sites did not have them at all. Among committee Web sites, from 2006 to 2007 there were 23% more sites that did NOT have a *functional* search engine.

The Foundation's *Lessons from the 111th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [June 28, 2010], page 6, indicates that in Foundation's 111th Congress review, "20% of Member sites did not have a functional search engine".

Collin Burden, writing for the Foundation in "The Quick Fix: Improve Your Website Easily" (June 9, 2011), asks:

> Does your search box work? Is it searching your website, or that of a fellow Member? Is it searching the entire Internet? Is it giving the exact same results, even when two different words are used, or no results at all? In past evaluations, we've seen all of these problems. The only way to know for sure is to test it.

[671] Steve Krug, in *Don't Make Me Think* (2nd ed., 2006), page 67, recommends that:

> Unless a site is very small and very well organized, every page should have either a search box or a link to a search page. And unless there's very little reason to search your site, it should be a search box.

[672] 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 first 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 content 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".

- produce a prioritized list of results on a new page.[673]

(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 URLs 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.[674] 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 the entire HOUSE.GOV domain), then the default should be searching just the current site.[675]

<select> tags *see Forms*

📖 Seniors

(1) Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with seniors)[676] should be encouraged to include a page(s) on their website devoted to seniors' resources.[677]

(2) On Member websites, consider including a link to the office of aging of the Member's state.[678]

Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger in their *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 146) recommend using "Search" – rather than "Go" – as the text of the button to activate a search.

Steve Krug, in *Don't Make Me Think* (2nd ed., 2006), page 38, offers that:
> The word "**SEARCH,**" . . . is one of the two perfect labels for a search box button . . . . "Go" is the other one, but only if you also use the word "Search" as a label for the box.

[673] 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 tend to overlook it."

[674] Section 17.8 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

[675] 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.

[676] 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."

[677] See, e.g., the "Senior Citizens" pages on the websites of Rep. Diane Black and Rep. Reid Ribble.

[678] A list of state offices of veterans affairs (with links to their websites) is available from the National Association of State Units on Aging.

Note: the Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project (Detailed Methodology, page 7)* identifies providing information about state and local resources as an element of a successful Congressional website.

Serbian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

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.[679]
  (2) The Service Academy Nominations section of a Member's website should include an application form for requesting a nomination.[680] 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-

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[679] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies providing instructions as to how to apply for a nomination to a service academy as an element of a well formed Congressional website.

   The Congressional Management Foundation's *2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (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".

   Then-Rep. John Linder's "Academy Nominations" page takes visitors step-by-step through the process and also includes a set of frequently asked questions.

   Rep. Hank Johnson's website provides its "Academy Nominations" page in both English and Spanish – as does the website of Rep. Charles Rangel.

[680] 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 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.

   The Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 40) recommends that each congressional website:

> **Provide separate online Web forms for constituent service requests.**
> Congressional offices repeatedly report their frustration that time-sensitive requests for flags, tours, and, most importantly, federal assistance requests, get lost among the high volumes of issue-related constituent communications. This is often due to the fact that congressional Web sites are not explicit about how to place such requests. Consequently, messages are submitted through only one "contact" form, rather than through a tier-structured Web form that differentiates between the different reasons for contacting the office and guides constituents to the correct contact channel.
> There are ways in which these important requests for assistance can be funneled into separate queues that quickly direct the messages to the appropriate staffer, such as a caseworker or a staff assistant handling flags and tours. . . . [The "E-mail and Contact Center" on] the Web site of Senator Carl Levin . . . takes a multi-step approach to ensure that constituent service requests are not lost. After constituents select the purpose of their inquiry, they are directed to customized forms specific to their request: an order form for constituents wishing to have a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol, an issue-related Web form for citizens wishing to register their views, and a casework form for individuals who need assistance with a federal agency.
> CMF recommends that congressional offices explore ways to be more deliberate in their use of Web forms. A great deal of staff time could be saved and constituents better served by fully utilizing this technology on their Web sites.

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.[681]

(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 Networking*

Sindhi language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

📖 **Site maps** *see also Navigation #(24)*
(1) Each web site should include a site map.[682]

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[681] See, e.g., the U.S. Service Academy Nomination forms of Rep. Judy Chu, Rep. Mike Quigley, and Del. Kilili Sablan.
[682] Success Criterion 2.4.5 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> More than one way is available to locate a Web page within a set of Web pages except where the Web Page is the result of, or a step in, a process.

Section G63 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* suggests using a site map to meet Success Criterion 2.4.5 and notes that:

> A site map is a Web page that provides links to different sections of the site. To make the site map available within the site, at a minimum every page that is listed in the site map contains a link to the site map. . . .
>
> There are different types of site maps. The simplest and most common kind of site map is an outline that shows links to each section or sub-site. Such outline views do not show more complex relationships within the site, such as links between pages in different sections of the site. The site maps for some large sites use headings that expand to show additional detail about each section.
>
> A site map describes the contents and organization of a site. It is important that site maps be updated whenever the site is updated. A Web page that does not link to all the sections of a site, that presents an organization that is different from the site's organization, or that contains links that are no longer valid is not a valid site map.

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,

(2) Each page of the website should either:

  (a) have a link to the site map;[683]

  (b) contain the content of the site map (e.g., as part of the footer on each page);[684] or

  (c) both.

(3) The link (or navigation button) to a site map should say "Site Map".

(4) The site map itself should be easy to read[685] and not require mouse-over, clicking on expand buttons, or any other action on the viewer's part.[686]

(5) Labels used in the site map should match the text used in the page titles.[687]

(6) The site map should be modified[688] whenever

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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[enturn] 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** — . . .

- 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 then-Reps. Patrick Murphy and Hilda Solis, Rep. Adam Schiff, the Science and Technology Committee (now the Democratic Office of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee), the House Republican Conference, and Sen. John Cornyn.

Collin Burden, writing for the Foundation in "Back to Basics: The Foundations of a Good Website" (April 14, 2011), praises the sitemap of Sen. John Thune.

 Kim Siever's "Spruced-Up Site Maps", A List Apart (March 30, 2005) suggests a non-boring layout for site maps.

 Guideline 1.1(d) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include "An explanation of the organization of the website."

[683] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 8, praises the site map link on Rep. Geoff Davis's website, which is at the top of each page of the website, along with the site search box.

[684] See, e.g., the websites of Reps. Tammy Baldwin and Nancy Pelosi.

[685] James Kalbach, in *Designing Web Navigation*, 2007, page 63, recommends that "Site maps should . . . be fairly simple and easy to scan."

[686] Jakob Nielsen, in "Site Map Usability" (August 12, 2008), states that:

The two main usability guidelines for site maps are:

 o **Call it "Site Map"** and use this label to consistently link to the site map throughout the site.

 o **Use a static design**. Don't offer users interactive site map widgets. The site map should give users a quick visualization without requiring further interaction (except scrolling, if necessary)."

[687] James Kalbach, in *Designing Web Navigation*, 2007, page 63, notes that:

It is . . . crucial that labels used in the site map match the main navigation categories, as well as page titles.

[688] Success Criterion 2.4.5 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

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        (a) A page linked from the site map is deleted

        (b) The title of a page referenced in the site map is modified

        (c) A page is added to the site that is at the same hierarchical level as pages included in the site map.

Skip navigation links *see Accesskey attribute; and Navigation #(2)*

Slashdot *see Social Networking*

Slovakian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Slovenian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Small Businesses *see Business Assistance*

Social Bookmarking *see Social Networking*

Social Media *see Social Networking*

Social Networking *see also Blogs; Facebook; LinkedIn; Twitter; and YouTube*

    (1) Offices that have pages on social networking sites should have links to each of their pages on each page of the website.[689] Since the social networking sites are outside of the HOUSE.GOV domain, they should to include an exit message.[690]

More than one way is available to locate a Web page within a set of Web pages except where the Web Page is the result of, or a step in, a process.

Section G63 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* suggests using a site map to meet Success Criterion 2.4.5 and notes that:

It is important that site maps be updated whenever the site is updated. A Web page that does not link to all the sections of a site, that presents an organization that is different from the site's organization, or that contains links that are no longer valid is not a valid site map.

[689] Collin Burden, writing for the Congressional Management Foundation in "The Quick Fix: Improve Your Website Easily" (June 9, 2011) recommends that

If you have an **official social media page, make sure you link to it on your website**. Users come from a variety of sources, so it's a good idea to integrate your web presence whenever possible. If you are already using tools like Facebook and Twitter in an official capacity, make sure it is reflected on your website.

The Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies using Facebook and Twitter as elements of a well-formed Congressional website. The Foundation's report (*Findings*, page 15), indicates that, in 2009

- 21% of all congressional Member websites included links to the Member's Facebook profile;
- 18% of all Member websites included a link to the Member's Twitter feed;
- 18% of all committee websites included a link to the committee's Twitter feed; and
- 10% of all committee websites included a link to the committee's Facebook profile.

The report (Award Winners: Platinum, page 3) praises Sen. Murkowski's website for providing "links to Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and social bookmarking links". The report (Award Winners: Platinum, page 4) also praises Rep. Steve Israel's website for allowing visitors to "connect to the Congressman on Twitter and through RSS feeds, as well as view videos created for the Congressman's YouTube channel."

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(2) When using several social networking 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 –

(3) Offices with a social media presence should maintain one account for official material and a separate account for campaign material.

(**Note:** Regulations issued by the House Administration Committee allow Members to post official material on third-party websites, but require that they meet the content regulations that apply to official Member sites.[691] Those content regulations prohibit Members from placing campaign material (including links to campaign sites) on their official website.[692] The House Ethics Committee has also advised that Member campaign websites may not link to a Member's official site.[693] The Rules of the House prohibit using broadcasts of House floor (and committee) proceedings for political purposes.[694])

See, also the website of Rep. Brad Sherman, which has a link to the Congressman's pages on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube on each page of his house.gov website.

[690] On October 2, 2008, Rep. Robert Brady, Chairman of the House Administration Committee, announced that the Committee approved revisions to the regulations governing the use of third-party websites by Members and committees. The regulations adopted by the Committee 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.

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.

[691] 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.

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.

[692] The *Members' Congressional Handbook* (Web Sites, Content, §§ 1 and 2), issued by the House Administration Committee, provide 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.

[693] The *House Ethics Manual* (2008 ed., p. 131), issued by the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct (now the House Ethics Committee), provides that:

As to Member campaign websites, the Standards Committee has advised that –

- Such a site may not include a link to the Member's House website; and
- The Member's House website may not be advertised on his or her campaign website or in materials issued by the campaign.

[694] House Rule V, cl. 2(a), (c)(1) provides that:

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(4) When making arrangements to establish a social networking account for a House office, use Apps.gov to acquire the license – do not use the method used by the general public. The terms of service are different.   Apps.gov provides the terms of service that the General Services Administration has negotiated for government agencies.

Social Security numbers
 Offices should not request that users of their website send Social Security numbers by unsecured Web form or e-mail.[695] 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.[696] 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.

Somali language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Spanish language material[697] *see also Babel Fish; Disaster Preparation Information; Health Services or Issues; Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*
 Members representing substantial numbers of Spanish-speaking constituents should consider translating their entire website (or at least important pages) into Spanish. [698]

> The Speaker shall administer, direct, and control a system for complete and unedited audio and visual broadcasting and recording of the proceedings of the House. . . . Coverage made available under this clause, including any recording thereof . . . may not be used for any political purpose . . . .

House Rule XI, cl. 4(b) provides that:
> radio and television tapes and television film of any [committee hearing or meeting] . . . may not be used, or made available for use, as partisan political campaign material to promote or oppose the candidacy of any person for elective public office.

See also "Graves' Campaign Pulls Down Video of Swearing-In", *Roll Call*, June 15, 2010.
[695] Item 25 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Standard*, HISPUB 007.1.56, April 2011, provides that "All web forms must include direction for public users to not pass any sensitive data via the web form."
 Rep. Trent Franks' "Scheduling Request" page contains a white exclamation mark in an orange circle, followed by the message "Do not submit any data of a sensitive nature over this form. Please contact Trent's office directly." – all on a yellow background.
[696] Item 33 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Standard* (HISPUB 007.1.56, April 2011) provides that:
> All forms based submissions must be encrypted with Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) to protect potentially sensitive information. INFOSEC can provide a certificate if needed.

Instructions for setting up secure forms are set out at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → Features and Scripts → Online Forms – Secure Forms.
[697] 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 Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi, Rep. Charles Rangel, Rep. Silvestre Reyes, Rep. Loretta Sanchez, and Rep. Nydia Velázquez. See also the press releases of Del. Donna Christensen and Rep. Hank Johnson.
[698] 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

Speaker's Working Groups *see Committee Assignments and Caucus Memberships*

Special Characters *see Character Entities; and Symbols*

Spurl *see Social Networking*

StumbleUpon *see Social Networking*

Strike-through text
   Either style sheets[699] 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. [700]

 Student Financial Aid
   (1) Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with students, or with people who finance students)[701], that are hosted on an HIR Web server should be encouraged to include the CRS-maintained "Financial Aid for Students" page in their website.[702] Offices not hosted on an HIR Web server should be encouraged to iframe the page.[703]

Spanish. Several Members of the House have websites that are completely or substantially bilingual (English/Spanish), including Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi, Rep. Charles Rangel, Rep. Silvestre Reyes, Rep. Loretta Sanchez, and Rep. Nydia Velázquez. See also the press releases of Del. Donna Christensen and Rep. Hank Johnson.

[699] Use the "text-decoration: line-through" style sheets property.

[700] Section 15.2.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *HTML 4.01 Specification* designates the <s> and <strike> tags as deprecated (i.e., outdated) elements.

[701] 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."

[702] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (page 46) praises the website of Sen. Tom Carper for broadening
> the scope and depth of his site by including related Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports and links to federal agency and other third party Web sites in his issue pages.

[703] 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 Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*, which provides that in an accessible website:
> Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

The World Wide Web Consortium's *Understanding WCAG 2.0* further provides that:
> Ensuring that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site helps users become comfortable that they will able to predict where they can find things on each page. This helps users with **cognitive limitations**, users with **low vision**, users with **intellectual disabilities**, and also those who are **blind**.

   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.[704]

(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.[705]

(4) When pseudo-classes are used in a style sheet, they should be in the order: link, visited, hover, active.[706] There is currently not agreement when precisely where the focus pseudo-class should be placed with respect to link, visited, hover, and active.[707]

(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.[708] Note also that the value of each "class" attribute should start with a letter.[709]

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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".

[704] 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."

[705] 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.

[706] 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.

[707] For more information on this issue, see http://www.webmasterworld.com/forum83/9334.htm.

[708] Jeffrey Zeldman's, *Designing With Web Standards* (3rd edition, [2009]), pp.151-152, recommends that 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.

[709] Section 4.1.3 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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

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(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.[710]

(7) External style sheets should always be used when the style sheet contains any of the following character strings:[711]

> <
> &
>]]>
> --

(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.[712]

Subcommittees *see Committee Assignments and Caucus memberships; and Committee Websites*

Support Office Websites *see "About" page*

Swahili language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Swedish language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Symbols *see also Arrows; Banners #(4);Character Entities; and Lists #(1)*

   Do not use punctuation marks (or mathematical symbols) as decorations on web pages. Using them that way can cause problems with screen readers and other assistive technologies.[713] Rather than using those characters that way, use one of the symbols that the Unicode 6.0 standard[714] designates as a decoration.

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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".

[710] 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".

[711] Section C.4 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *XHTML 1.0 Specification (2nd edition)* recommends "Use external style sheets if your style sheet uses < or & or]]> or --."

[712] Section C.4 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[713] Success Criterion 1.3.3 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website, "Instructions provided for understanding and operating content do not rely solely on sensory characteristics of components such as shape, size, visual location, orientation, or sound."

   The W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* suggests "Using an image with a text alternative for graphical symbols instead of a Unicode font glyph with the desired graphical appearance but different meaning".

   Section F71 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* cautions against:

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- For example, the character entity » displays as: ». This is intended to be a right double quote (a close quote in French, Spanish, and Italian). Rather than using it as an arrow, use a character that is intended to be an arrow, e.g., → (→), ↠ (↠), or ⇒ (⇒).
- Browser support varies for lesser-used Unicode characters. Make sure that at least the major browsers support the particular characters you want to use, before using them. For instance, the Unicode Dingbat characters[715] are (for the most part) supported by Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Chrome; but they are not supported by the Blackberry browser. (The Blackberry browser replaces them with a black rectangle.) While this may not be so important when the character is being used for purely decorative purposes, if is much more important when the characters are being used to actually convey information.

Tables *see also Alignment*

(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.[716]

(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.[717]

(3) Style sheets should be used for layout, rather than using <table border="0"> tags.[718]

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substituting characters whose glyphs look similar to the intended character, for that intended character. The Unicode character set defines thousands of characters, covering dozens of writing systems. While the glyphs for some of these characters may look like the glyphs for other characters in visual presentation, they are not processed the same by text-to-speech tools.

[714] See http://www.unicode.org/charts/ for a list of the hex values of all Unicode characters.

[715] See http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U2700.pdf.

[716] 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".
    Success Criterion 1.3.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that for a website to be accessible, the "Information, structure, and relationships conveyed through presentation can be programmatically determined or are available in text." Specifically, § H51 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends use of <th> tags and § H63 recommends "Using the scope attribute to associate header cells and data cells in data tables".

[717] 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.
.   Success Criterion 1.3.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that for a website to be accessible, the "Information, structure, and relationships conveyed through presentation can be programmatically determined or are available in text." Specifically, § H43 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends – for complex tables – "Using id and headers attributes to associate data cells with header cells in data tables".

[718] Section F49 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.

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(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.[719]

(5) Rather than using the "nowrap" attribute to disable automatic wrapping of text in table cells, use the style sheets property "white-space:nowrap".[720]

(6) When using tables, consider including a sort feature.[721]

(7) Each <col> tag should end with "/>".[722]

Section 11.1 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification*, however, provides that:

> Tables should not be used purely as a means to layout document content as this may present problems when rendering to non-visual media. Additionally, when used with graphics, these tables may force users to scroll horizontally to view a table designed on a system with a larger display. To minimize these problems, authors should use style sheets to control layout rather than tables.

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 Success Criterion 1.4.4 (Level AA) of the W3C *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* 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" (with the associated W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0*, in §§ C12, C13, and C14, recommendations that font sizes be specified by use of percentages, using named font sizes (e.g., as the "font-size: larger" property in CSS), or by using ems as the font size unit). 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.

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 Levine's approach uses the IE "star hack", which is no longer supported by IE starting with IE 7 (a Google Analytics review of www.house.gov usage for June 28 to July 28, 2011, indicates that IE 7, IE 8, and IE9 constituted 57.07% of www.house.gov usage).

[719] Section 11.2.6 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[720] Section 11.2.6 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[721] 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).

[722] Success Criterion 4.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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)

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Tabs *see Pop-up Windows*

Tagalog language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Tag Clouds
   (1) Offices are encouraged to include tag clouds on their site.[723]
   (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) *see also 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 end with "/>", e.g., <area alt="Smithfield" coords="1,1,10,10" href="Smithfield.shtml" />.[724]
   (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.[725]

   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.
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>."
[723] See, e.g., the websites of Rep. Gus Bilirakis, Rep. Martin Heinrich, Rep. Lynn Jenkins, and Rep. Ben R. Luján.
[724] Success Criterion 4.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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.
   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>."
[725] Section 4.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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>

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(3) All tag element names must be in lower case ("<meta>" not "<META>").[726]

Tajik language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Tamil language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Technorati *see Social Networking*

Telephone Numbers *see also Contact Information and Techniques #(6), #(14), and #(16); Forms #(7) and #(14)(b); and Kids Pages #(1)*
     The format of telephone numbers should be consistent within the website. For instance, do not use (202) 226-2140 in one part of the website, but 202-226-2140 in another.[727]

Telugu language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

<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.[728]

Thai language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Tigrinya language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

          INCORRECT: overlapping elements
               <p>here is an emphasized paragraph.</p>
[726] Section 4.2 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *XHTML 1.0 (2nd edition) Specification* provides that "XHTML documents must use lower case for all HTML element and attribute names."
[727] *Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines*, 2nd edition, page 102 (compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), recommends that "telephone numbers should be consistently punctuated".
[728] 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.
     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 37% of screen reader users always or often use text-only versions of websites whenever they are available. The report notes that:
          More proficient screen reader users were much less likely to use text-only versions than less
          proficient users. This may suggest that proficient users employ sufficient techniques to render the
          main version acceptable to them. Or, it may suggest that proficient users do not gain value in using
          text-only versions, which are often less than optimal.

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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.[729]

(2) The content of <title> tags should be unique for each page on the site, if practical.[730]

(3) The words that convey the most information should be at the beginning of each title – preferably in the first two words.[731] While the name of the office should not be in the first two words of the <title>, they should be included as part of the <title>.[732]

(4) The content of the <title> tags should be as brief as practical.[733] For instance, instead of using:

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[729] Success Criterion 2.4.2 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that for a website to be accessible, the "Web pages have titles that describe topic or purpose." Section H25 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that:

> All HTML and XHTML documents, including those in individual frames in a frameset, have a title element in the head section that defines in a simple phrase the purpose of the document. This helps users to orient themselves within the site quickly without having to search for orientation information in the body of the page.

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."

[730] *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.

[731] 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.

[732] Aarron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites*, (2008) page 21, recommends the following format:

> <title> page title | organization or site name | short keyword-rich phrase</title>

and notes that:

> Listing the page title and organization/site name first gives visitors a quick way to identify the page and site they are on even when they have their browser minimized. The way you write your <title> tags will affect the legibility of your website traffic statistics. Typically, Web statistics packages will list the pages visitors have been viewing by showing the <title> tag text. If you place your keywords first in the <title> tag, you will have a rough time discerning which pages your visitors are viewing.

[733] Aarron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites*, (2008) page 21 recommends that the content of <title> tags should be kept "concise (less than 12 words) and natural rather than an everything-plus-the-kitchen-sink listing."

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.

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> 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.[734]

Tongan language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Tools for Validating Web Sites *see also Compliance Icons*

In addition to InFocus, consider using the following free tools:

(1) W3C Markup Validation Service – will check for compliance with the World Wide Web Consotrium (W3C) HTML and XHTML standards.[735]

(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[736] HTML or XHTML standards).

(3) W3C Link Checker – will test the links for unusual conditions, including 404 errors.[737]

(4) Vischeck – will simulate how images (or Web pages) look to people with different types of colorblindness.

(5) Contrast Analyser – detects whether there is sufficient color contrast between the text and background colors.[738]

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[734] Success Criterion 2.4.2 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that for a website to be accessible, the "Web pages have titles that describe topic or purpose." Section H25 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that:

> All HTML and XHTML documents, including those in individual frames in a frameset, have a title element in the head section that defines in a simple phrase the purpose of the document. This helps users to orient themselves within the site quickly without having to search for orientation information in the body of the page.

Section 7.4.2 of the W3C *HTML 4.01 Specification* provides that:

> Since users often consult documents out of context, authors should provide context-rich titles. Thus, instead of a title such as "Introduction", which doesn't provide much contextual background, authors should supply a title such as "Introduction to Medieval Bee-Keeping" instead.

Aarron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites*, (2008) page 21, notes that:

> The title tag text is the main heading and link to a site when shown on search results pages, and often determines whether or not a user decides to visit your site.

[735] Section G134 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Techniques for WCAG 2.0* recommends that web pages be validated.

[736] Other World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) validators are available at http://www.w3.org/QA/Tools/#validators.

[737] 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.

[738] The default setting tests according to the luminosity contrast ratio referenced in Success Criterion 1.4.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 .

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(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 Says catches some accessibility problems that InFocus does not. (Be sure to check the box marked "Include the Alternative Text Quality Report").[739]

(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 "Options" link to specify the standard(s) 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).[740]

(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*

Travel reports *see Financial Disclosure #(2), (3)*

Tsonga language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Turkish language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Twitter *see also Social Networking*
  (1) Offices are encouraged to
     (a) have a presence on Twitter;[741]

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[739] 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.

[740] Success Criterion 3.1.5 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that for a website to be accessible:

> When text requires reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level after removal of proper names and titles, supplemental content, or a version that does not require reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level, is available

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.

[741] A list of Members of Congress who participate in Twitter is available at
http://tweetcongress.org/list

An analysis of Twitter use by Members of Congress in late July and early August 2009, is contained in *Social Networking and Constituent Communication: Member Use of Twitter During a Two-Week Period in the 111th Congress*, Congressional Research Service report R40823 (September 21, 2009).

The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies using Facebook and Twitter as elements of a well-formed Congressional website. The report (*Findings*, page 15), indicates that, in 2009
- 21% of all congressional Member websites included links to the Member's Facebook profile;

(b) have a link on the Twitter presence to the office's official House website, and

(c) either:

    (i) have a link on their House website to their content on twitter.com;[742] or

    (ii) displaying their Twitter stream on their website (see, e.g., the "Social Media Update" portion of Rep. Brian Higgins' homepage: the "Twitter Buzz" of the House Republican Whip; and the "UAV Twitter Stream" of the Congressional Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Caucus.).

(2) Tweets should more than just headlines.[743]

Typeface *see Fonts*

Ukrainian language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

📖 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/.[744]

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.[745]

- 18% of all Member websites included a link to the Member's Twitter feed;
- 18% of all committee websites included a link to the committee's Twitter feed; and
- 10% of all committee websites included a link to the committee's Facebook profile.

The report (Award Winners: Platinum, pages 3 to 5) praises Sen. Lisa Murkowski's website for providing "links to Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and social bookmarking links"; Rep. Steve Israel's website for allowing visitors to "connect to the Congressman on Twitter"; and the House Science and Technology Committee (now the Democratic Office of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee) for "allowing users to . . . follow the work of the committee on Twitter to keep abreast of its latest actions."

[742] Collin Burden, writing for the Congressional Management Foundation in "The Quick Fix: Improve Your Website Easily" (June 9, 2011) recommends that "If you are already using tools like Facebook and Twitter in an official capacity, make sure it is reflected on your website." The Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 19 praises the website of Rep. Erik Paulsen for linking to his Twitter site.

[743] The Congressional Management Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 19 praises the tweets of Rep. Erik Paulsen, noting that the "Posts are tailored toward the medium and go beyond just a headline service".

[744] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies having "information about local or district resources" as an element of a well-formed Congressional website.

[745] *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

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Underlining *see also Linking #(13)*
>   **(1)** Style sheets[746], not <u> tags, should be used to achieve underlining. [747]
>   **(2)** Do not use underlining for emphasis in normal text. Underlining should normally be reserved for hypertext links.[748] 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.[749]

Upper case letters *see Capital letters*

Urchin *see Usage Statistics*

Urdu language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

URLs *see also File Names and Extensions*
    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.[750] Any office requesting a URL that does

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> available. Even better, . . ., offer users the option of receiving an email announcement when the page goes live.

    The Congressional Management Foundation's *Congress Online 2003: Turning the Corner on the Information Age* (p. 6) identifies "having 'under construction' notices, rather than content, in key areas of the site" as a sign of a failing website.

    For a "history" of the use of "Under Construction" on the Web, see "The Construction Sign Museum" by Jeff Boulter.

[746] Use the "text-decoration: underline" style sheets property.

[747] Section A.3.1 of the World Wide Web Consortium's *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."

[748] 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.

[749] 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* (3rd edition, [2009], p. 133):

> 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.

[750] 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.

not conform to either of those styles must have written authorization from the Committee on House Administration.[751]

Usage Statistics *see also Google Analytics*
    Offices hosted on any of the HIR Web servers should be urged to examine their site's usage statistics through Urchin.

USA.gov *see FirstGov*

U.S. Code[752]
    (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.[753]
    (2) URLs for individual sections of the U.S. Code should normally be in the format

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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.

[751] 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 Administration 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.

[752] 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.

[753] *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.

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http://uscode.house.gov/quicksearch/get.plx?title=**TT**&section=**SS**

where **TT** is replaced with the title number[754] and **SS** is replaced with the section number[755]. 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) Between the <cite> tag and the </cite> tag, 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.)

Uzbek language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

Validation Tools *see Tools for Validating Web Sites*

VBScript *see Forms #(17) and (19); Navigation #(17); and Scripts*

vCard *see Contact Information and Techniques #(14)*

📖 **Veterans**
  (1) Member offices (and other House offices that deal regularly with veterans)[756] should be encouraged to include a page(s) on their website devoted to veterans'

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[754] 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.

[755] 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.

[756] 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

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benefits.[757] 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.[758]

(2) The Library of Congress' Veterans History Project[759] 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).

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provide service information online. The *House Committee on Veterans' Affairs* website provides information on veterans' benefits for its key audience."

[757] 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 Foundation's *2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill* (page 39) also praises the veterans page on then-Rep. Dennis Moore's website.

[758] 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:

        <!--#include virtual="/house/subpage_content/Veterans_content.htm" -->

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 Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*, which provides that in an accessible website:

        Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

The World Wide Web Consortium's *Understanding WCAG 2.0* further provides that:

        Ensuring that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site helps users become comfortable that they will able to predict where they can find things on each page. This helps users with **cognitive limitations**, users with **low vision**, users with **intellectual disabilities**, and also those who are **blind**.

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 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".

[759] Created by Pub. L. 106-380.

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Consider, on Member websites (and on the websites of other House offices that deal regularly with veterans)[760], including either a link to the Project[761] or providing a form on the Member's website that constituents can use to participate in the Project.[762]

(3) On Member websites, consider including a link to the office of veterans affairs of the Member's state.[763]

(4) 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).[764, 765]

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[760] 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."

[761] http://www.loc.gov/vets/

[762] 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.

The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 40) recommends that each congressional website:

> **Provide separate online Web forms for constituent service requests.**
> Congressional offices repeatedly report their frustration that time-sensitive requests for flags, tours, and, most importantly, federal assistance requests, get lost among the high volumes of issue-related constituent communications. This is often due to the fact that congressional Web sites are not explicit about how to place such requests. Consequently, messages are submitted through only one "contact" form, rather than through a tier-structured Web form that differentiates between the different reasons for contacting the office and guides constituents to the correct contact channel.
>
> There are ways in which these important requests for assistance can be funneled into separate queues that quickly direct the messages to the appropriate staffer, such as a caseworker or a staff assistant handling flags and tours. . . . [The "E-mail and Contact Center" on] the Web site of Senator Carl Levin . . . takes a multi-step approach to ensure that constituent service requests are not lost. After constituents select the purpose of their inquiry, they are directed to customized forms specific to their request: an order form for constituents wishing to have a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol, an issue-related Web form for citizens wishing to register their views, and a casework form for individuals who need assistance with a federal agency.
>
> CMF recommends that congressional offices explore ways to be more deliberate in their use of Web forms. A great deal of staff time could be saved and constituents better served by fully utilizing this technology on their Web sites.

[763] 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.

 Note: the Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project (Detailed Methodology, page 7)* identifies providing information about state and local resources as an element of a successful Congressional website.

[764] 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 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* (Detailed Methodology, page 7) identifies having "information about local or district resources" as an element of a well-formed Congressional website.

(5) Where the website has both a page on legislation dealing with veterans and a page on veterans' benefits), make sure each one has a link to the other.[766]

Vietnamese language material[767] *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

  📖 **Visiting Washington** *see also Federal Bureau of Investigation tours; and Newseum*
    (1) Member offices should be encouraged to include a secure form[768] on their website for constituents to request tours of the U.S. Capitol building and other Washington, DC landmarks and attractions.[769]

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[765] Information on local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities is available at http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1.

[766] 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 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 then-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 (pages 42 and 50) 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.
>
> …
>
> On the best sites on Capitol Hill, all of the content is synthesized, overlapped, and cross-referenced.

The 2007 report (page 69, 75, and 79) specifically praises the websites of

- Rep. Carolyn Maloney – noting that "All the information on the site is cross-referenced and integrated into multiple sections";
- then-Sen. Chris Dodd – noting that "By cross-referencing press releases, op-eds, blog posts, and other related documents, the site ensures that its users will find relevant content regardless of where they look for it";
- Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (Republican Office) – noting that "The content 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. Providing a variety of content in a number of different ways ensures that users will find the information that interests them, regardless of where they look for it."

[767] Rep. Mike Honda's website includes some pages in Vietnamese. See, e.g., the Vietnamese versions of Rep. Honda's biography, and "Federal Casework" pages.

[768] 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

(2) Rather than linking to the CAO-Web Solutions Branch-maintained "Washington, DC – Tourist Information" page and/or the CAO-Web Solutions Branch-maintained "Visiting DC" page, offices should be encouraged to place the text of

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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".

   Item 33 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Standard* (HISPUB 007.1.56, April 2011) provides that:

> All forms based submissions must be encrypted with Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) to protect potentially sensitive information. INFOSEC can provide a certificate if needed.

[769] 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 then-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.

   The Congressional Management Foundation's *Communicating with Congress: Recommendations for Improving the Democratic Dialogue* (2008, page 40) recommends that each congressional website:

> **Provide separate online Web forms for constituent service requests.**
> Congressional offices repeatedly report their frustration that time-sensitive requests for flags, tours, and, most importantly, federal assistance requests, get lost among the high volumes of issue-related constituent communications. This is often due to the fact that congressional Web sites are not explicit about how to place such requests. Consequently, messages are submitted through only one "contact" form, rather than through a tier-structured Web form that differentiates between the different reasons for contacting the office and guides constituents to the correct contact channel.
>   There are ways in which these important requests for assistance can be funneled into separate queues that quickly direct the messages to the appropriate staffer, such as a caseworker or a staff assistant handling flags and tours. . . . [The "E-mail and Contact Center" on] the Web site of Senator Carl Levin . . . takes a multi-step approach to ensure that constituent service requests are not lost. After constituents select the purpose of their inquiry, they are directed to customized forms specific to their request: an order form for constituents wishing to have a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol, an issue-related Web form for citizens wishing to register their views, and a casework form for individuals who need assistance with a federal agency.
>   CMF recommends that congressional offices explore ways to be more deliberate in their use of Web forms. A great deal of staff time could be saved and constituents better served by fully utilizing this technology on their Web sites.

   See also, Rep. Judy Chu's "Tour Request Form".

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either or both those pages into a page on their own website (by using a server-side include or an iframe).[770]

(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, Video files, and Audio files; and Word Choice*

Votes *see Committee Websites #(2); Issues and Voting Information #(2) and (3); Navigation #(5); and Polls and Surveys*

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[770] 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">
Washington, DC tourist information
</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">
Visiting Washington, DC
</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 Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*, which provides that in an accessible website:

Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

The World Wide Web Consortium's *Understanding WCAG 2.0* further provides that:

Ensuring that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site helps users become comfortable that they will able to predict where they can find things on each page. This helps users with **cognitive limitations**, users with **low vision**, users with **intellectual disabilities**, and also those who are **blind**.

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 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".

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📖 **Waste**

Offices may want to consider including a page on what they are doing to combat waste. See, e.g., then-Rep. Tom Feeney's "Washington Waste Watchers" page.[771]

Web Analytics *see Usage Statistics; and Appendix 6: Model Privacy Policy (1. English Languague Version (Cookies))*

Web Designer *see Commercial References*

Welcome Messages *see Homepage #(2)*

White House tours *see Visiting Washington*

WIDA

WIDA is a content management system developed by HIR in the 1990's. House offices that are still using WIDA are urged to convert to a modern content management system – preferably Drupal.[772] The following best practices are recommended for offices that have not yet migrated from WIDA:

(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[773] to:

(a) generate a WIDA list page that is in issue order;[774] and

(b) place a WIDAinc[775] 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

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[771] 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.

[772] The designation of Drupal as the House preferred development option was approved November 12, 2010, by Chairman Robert Brady, in response to November 5, 2010, memorandum "Approval for Implementation of Agreements between Web Vendors and the CAO for Public Website Hosting and Web Development Services" from House Chief Administrative Officer Daniel Strodel to Chairman Brady.

[773] For more information on WIDA's "issues" feature, see at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → Tools → WIDA → WIDA Issues Feature.

[774] 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.

[775] Instructions for WIDAinc can be found at HouseNet → Technology → Web Solutions → Tools → WIDA → WIDA Include (WIDAinc).

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href="{HTMLFILE_LINK}" title="full text of the press release of {DATEL}">.[776, 777]

(5) Documents generated through WIDA should use navigation, banners, and footers that are identical with the rest of the website.[778] Use server-side includes to

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[776] 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."

   Success Criterion 2.4.4 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> The purpose of each link can be determined from the link text alone or from the link text together with its programmatically determined link context, except where the purpose of the link would be ambiguous to users in general.

Section H33 of the W3C *Techniques for WCAG 2.0*, however, recommends using the "title" attribute only if is not practical to make the text of the link sufficiently descriptive and it is not practical to style the additional text so that the text is hidden from non-screen reader browsers.

   Note that the Jaws screen reader can be configured so that it will read which ever is longer – 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="screen-reader-info"), where the class places the text off screen and minimizes the size (e.g., position:absolute;left:-999em; font-size:1%). (Note "Screen-reader-info" is suggested here rather than the more traditional "hidden", so that it will be clear on a manual inspection that the purpose of the class is only for accessibility purposes and not to fool search engines. See, e.g., "Hiding screen-reader text from visual browsers," Webmaster World (January 26, 2007).)

   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 (1) a media="screen" style sheet with a display:none property and (2) 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.)

[777] 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.

[778] Success Criterion 3.2.3 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* provides that in an accessible website:

> Navigational mechanisms that are repeated on multiple Web pages within a set of Web pages occur in the same relative order each time they are repeated, unless a change is initiated by the user.

The World Wide Web Consortium's *Understanding WCAG 2.0* further provides that:

> Ensuring that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site helps users become comfortable that they will able to predict where they can find things on each page. This helps users with **cognitive limitations**, users with **low vision**, users with **intellectual disabilities**, and also those who are **blind**.

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> **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.

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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.

Widgets *see Disaster Preparedness Information; Health Services or Issues; Issues and Voting Information #(3); and Site Maps #(4)*

Winter Storm Preparation Information *see Disaster Preparation Information*

Wists *see Social Networking*

Wolof language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

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.[779] By the same token, use words consistently throughout the site – for instance, do not use "signup" in one place, but "sign-up" in another.[780]
(2) The words that convey the most information should be at the beginning of each sentence and paragraph.[781]
(3) To the extent practical, try to convey one idea per paragraph.
(4) Use the clearest and simplest language appropriate to convey the message.[782] 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.[783]

The 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".

[779] Success Criterion 3.2.4 (level AA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 provides that in a accessible website, "Components that have the same functionality within a set of Web pages are identified consistently."

Likewise, Luke Wroblewski, in *Web Form Design*, 2008, page 37 recommends that when drafting the content of a web form, "Ensure that your forms speak with one voice, despite questions from several different people or departments."

[780] The *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual* (2008), page 169, recommends using "signup".

[781] 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.

In *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006 (page 82), Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger note that "in Web writing, it's always best to start with the conclusion, so that people who read only the first line or two on a page still get the main point."

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(5) Use active voice, rather than passive voice.[784]

(6) Use simple sentence structure – rather than complex sentence structure – when practical.

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.[785] The verify that "Enable log" is not on, press the "Options" button on WS_FTP – the "Enable log" checkbox should not be checked.

XHTML version *see <!DOCTYPE> declarations*

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[782] Success Criterion 3.1.5 (level AAA) of the World Wide Web Consortium's *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0* – which provides that for a website to be accessible:

> When text requires reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level after removal of proper names and titles, supplemental content, or a version that does not require reading ability more advanced than the lower secondary education level, is available.

    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.

    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.

[783] *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.

[784] William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White's *The Elements of Style* (3rd edition, p. 18) recommends using the active voice, noting that:

> 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.

[785] Item 28 of *The United States House of Representatives Information Security Publication – Web Site Developers Security Standqrd* (HISPUB 007.1.56, April 2011) provides that:

> Filters should be implemented at the web server layer to intercept malicious URLs and return a 404 error for any URL that doesn't pass the filter. . . .
>
> For file extension requests, the filter should block the following extensions and return a 404 error:
> . . .
> *.log
> . . .

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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).[786]

<xmp> tags *see HTML*

Yahoo *see Maps and Directions; and Social Networking*

Yoruba language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

YouTube *see also Multimedia Files, Video files, and Audio Files #(4); and Social Networking*

(1) Offices with YouTube channels[787] should notify the Director of New Media in either the Office of the Speaker or the Office of the Minority Leader, so that the channel can be added to the [YouTube hub for the House].[788]

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[786] [Section 3.1.1 of the] World Wide Web Consortium's *[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 third edition [2009] of *Designing With Web Standards* (p. 118), notes that:

> Many XHTML pages begin with an optional XML prolog, also known as an XML declaration. 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 in the page.
>
> The W3C recommends beginning any XML document, including XHTML documents, with an XML prolog. . . .
>
> Unfortunately, several browsers, even 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 encounters the prolog.)

Zeldman (p. 225) goes on to note that:

> Even with a complete XHTML DOCTYPE, IE6 will kick back into Quirks mode if you include the optional XML prolog. . . . Opera 7 suffers from the same bug. Actually, IE6 slips into Quirks mode if anything, not just the prolog, precedes the DOCTYPE declaration.

[787] The Congressional Management Foundation's 2010 *111th Congress Gold Mouse Project* ([Award Winners: Platinum, page 3]) praises [Sen. Murkowski]'s website for providing "links to Twitter, Facebook,

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(2) Offices with a YouTube channel should have a link on the YouTube channel to the office's official House website, and either:

    (a) have a link on their House website to their content on youtube.com;[789] or

    (b) display their YouTube content on their website.

(3) When making arrangements to use YouTube for a House office, use Apps.gov to acquire the license – do not use Youtube.com. The terms of service are different.   Apps.gov provides the terms of service that the General Services Administration has negotiated for government agencies.

Zulu language material *see Government Resources #(2); Language of Text; and Linking #(16)*

MySpace, and social bookmarking links". The report (Award Winners: Platinum, page 4) also praises Rep. Steve Israel's website for allowing visitors to "connect to the Congressman on Twitter and through RSS feeds, as well as view videos created for the Congressman's YouTube channel."

[788] Contact information for the New Media Directors of the Speaker and Minority Leader is available at http://webdemo.house.gov/index-member.shtml#social-media.

[789] Collin Burden, writing for the Congressional Management Foundation in "The Quick Fix: Improve Your Website Easily" (June 9, 2011) recommends that "If you are already using tools like Facebook and Twitter in an official capacity, make sure it is reflected on your website." The Foundation's *Preparing for the 112th Congress Gold Mouse Project: Becoming One of the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill*, [March 7, 2011], page 19 praises the website of Rep. Erik Paulsen for linking to his YouTube site.

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[Appendix 1: Reserved]

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
	Nebraska – 8	Utah – 10
Florida – 11	Nevada – 9	Vermont – 2
Georgia – 11	New Hampshire – 1	Virgin Islands – 3
Guam – 9	New Jersey – 3	Virginia – 4
Hawaii – 9	New Mexico – 10	Washington – 9
Idaho – 9	New York – 2	West Virginia – 4
Illinois – 7	North Carolina – 4	Wisconsin – 7
Indiana – 7	North Dakota – 8	Wyoming – 10
Iowa – 8	Northern Mariana	
Kansas – 10	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,[790] go to
>   http://www.pacer.gov/psco/cgi-bin/district.pl
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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[790] A complete list of counties, by congressional district, is contained in the *Congressional Directory* at http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cdirectory/browse.html.

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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.[791] 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.uscourts.cavc.gov/
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, http://www.armfor.uscourts.gov/index.html

- U.S. Supreme Court,[792] 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.

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[791] See, 48 U.S.C. § 1822(a).

[792] Guideline 1.11(a) of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites* (2009) recommends that legislative websites include a link to the national supreme court.

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Appendix 3: Caucus Web Sites

Websites of those caucuses (registered with the House Administration Committee as of August 9, 2011) that have websites:[793]

- Americans Abroad Caucus - http://joewilson.house.gov/Caucus/AmericansAbroadCaucus.htm
- Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus - http://disabilitiescaucus.langevin.house.gov/
- Blue Dog Coalition - [794]
- Coalition for Autism Research and Education - http://doyle.house.gov/autism.shtml
- Congressional Animal Protection Caucus – http://animalprotectioncaucus.moran.house.gov/
- Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus - http://capac.chu.house.gov/
- Congressional Automotive Caucus - http://kildee.house.gov/about/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://cbc.cleaver.house.gov/
- 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 India and Indian-Americans - http://joewilson.house.gov/Caucus/CongressionalCaucusonIndiaandIndianAmericans.htm
- Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues - http://maloney.house.gov/index.php?option=com_issues&task=view_issue&issue=12&Itemid=35
- Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine - http://www.house.gov/larsen/meth/
- Congressional China Caucus - http://forbes.house.gov/Biography/chinacaucus.htm
- Congressional Cybersecurity Caucus - http://cybercaucus.langevin.house.gov/
- Congressional Defense Energy Security Caucus - http://desc.hinchey.house.gov/
- Congressional Diabetes Caucus - http://diabetes.degette.house.gov
- Congressional Down Syndrome Caucus - http://mcmorris.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=177&sectiontree=56,177
- Congressional Entertainment Industries Caucus - http://ceic.bradsherman.house.gov/
- Congressional Health Care Caucus - http://health.burgess.house.gov/
- Congressional Hispanic Caucus - http://chc.velazquez.house.gov/

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[793] For the list of caucuses registered with the House Administration Committee, see http://cha.house.gov/member_orgs.aspx.
[794] In the 111th Congress, the URL was http://www.house.gov/melancon/BlueDogs/.

- Congressional Internet Caucus (Advisory Committee) - http://www.netcaucus.org/
- Congressional Kidney Caucus - http://mcdermott.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=289&Itemid=61
- Congressional Labor and Working Families Caucus - http://lindasanchez.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=472&Itemid=53
- Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus - http://lgbt.tammybaldwin.house.gov/
- Congressional Mental Health Caucus - http://mhcaucus.napolitano.house.gov/
- Congressional Military Families Caucus - http://www.facebook.com/militaryfamilycaucus
- Congressional Modeling and Simulation Caucus - http://forbes.house.gov/Biography/mscaucus.htm
- Congressional Native American Caucus - http://kildee.house.gov/about/native-american-ca.shtml
- Congressional Natural Gas Caucus - http://naturalgascaucus.murphy.house.gov/
- Congressional Neuroscience Caucus - http://blumenauer.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1832%3Aneuroscience-caucus&catid=64&Itemid=123
- Congressional Olympic and Paralympic Caucus - http://olympicparalympiccaucus.langevin.house.gov/
- Congressional Prayer Caucus - http://www.house.gov/forbes/prayercaucus.htm
- Congressional Rural Caucus - [795]
- Congressional Rural Housing Caucus - https://forms.house.gov/hinojosa/crhc/index.shtml
- Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus - http://shipbuilding.wittman.house.gov/
- Congressional Transparency Caucus - http://transparencycaucus.quigley.house.gov/caucus/
- Congressional Travel & Tourism Caucus - http://www.farr.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=120&Itemid=93
- Congressional Unmanned Systems Caucus - http://unmannedsystemscaucus.mckeon.house.gov/
- Congressional Urban Caucus - http://fattah.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=107&sectiontree=107
- Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus - http://vrc.poe.house.gov/
- Congressional Vision Caucus - http://www.house.gov/green/cvc/
- Congressional Wine Caucus - [796]
- Electronic Warfare Working Group - http://www.house.gov/pitts/EW/index.shtml

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[795] In the 111th Congress, the URL was http://ruralcaucus.childers.house.gov/. An archive copy is available at http://webharvest.gov/congress111th/20101202070901/http://ruralcaucus.childers.house.gov/.
[796] In the 111th Congress, the URL was http://www.house.gov/radanovich/wine/.

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- GOP Doctors Caucus - http://doctorscaucus.gingrey.house.gov/
- House Baltic Caucus - [797]
- House Small Brewers Caucus - http://smallbrewers.defazio.house.gov/
- Immigration Reform Caucus - http://irc.bilbray.house.gov/
- Law Enforcement Caucus - [798]
- Medical Technology Caucus - http://mtc.paulsen.house.gov/
- National Guard and Reserve Components Caucus - [799]
- Republican Study Committee - http://rsc.jordan.house.gov/default.aspx
- Sustainable Energy and Environment Caucus - http://www.house.gov/inslee/SEEC/
- Unexploded Ordinance (UXO) Caucus - http://blumenauer.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=282&Itemid=164

Websites of those caucuses (not registered with the House Administration Committee as of August 9, 2011) that have websites:

- 9/11 Commission Caucus - http://maloney.house.gov/911caucus/
- Bulgaria Caucus - http://joewilson.house.gov/Caucus/BulgariaCaucus.htm
- Congressional Caucus on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders - http://www.house.gov/pallone/fasd_caucus/
- Congressional Climate Change Caucus - [800]
- Congressional Coastal Caucus - http://www.house.gov/pallone/coastalcaucs.shtml
- Congressional Ethiopia and Ethiopian-Americans Caucus - http://honda.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=66&Itemid=58
- Congressional Mining Caucus - http://www.holden.house.gov/comm/
- Congressional Progressive Caucus - http://cpc.grijalva.house.gov
- Congressional Task Force on International HIV/AIDS - http://mcdermott.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=23&Itemid=37#one
- International Conservation Caucus - http://www.royce.house.gov/internationalconservation/default.aspx
- Livable Communities Task Force - http://blumenauer.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1553:livable-communities-task-force&catid=55
- New Democrat Coalition - http://ndc.crowley.house.gov/

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[797] In the 111th Congress, the URL was http://www.house.gov/shimkus/baltic/baltic.shtml.

[798] In the 111th Congress, the URL was http://www.house.gov/stupak/lawenforcement.shtml. An archive copy is available at http://webharvest.gov/congress111th/20101203101149/http://www.house.gov/stupak/lawenforcement.shtml.

[799] In the 111th Congress, the URL was http://stevebuyer.house.gov/ReserveCaucus/ngrcdir.html. An archive copy ios available at http://webharvest.gov/congress111th/20101202095323/http://stevebuyer.house.gov/ReserveCaucus/default.aspx.

[800] In the 111th Congress, the URL was http://www.house.gov/olver/climatechange/index.html.

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- Public Broadcasting Caucus - http://blumenauer.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=281&Itemid=163
- Reliable Energy Caucus - http://conaway.house.gov/EnergyCaucus/
- Silk Road Caucus - http://www.house.gov/pitts/initiatives/silkroad/silkroadmembers.htm
- Victory in Iraq Congressional Caucus – http://joewilson.house.gov/Caucus/VictoryinIraqCaucus.htm

Appendix 4: <meta> and Related Tags

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, Dublin Core Metadata Initiative;[801]

- Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS) standard as promulgated by the Word Wide Web Consortium and implemented by SafeSurf and the ICRA[802;803] 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.

Tags That Are Likely to Remain Constant Throughout a Web Site[804]

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 and ICRA PICS meta tags.

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[801] "Dublin Core" is the official implementation of ISO Standard 15836:2009 and ANSI/NISO Standard Z39.85-2007.

[802] ICRA was the Internet Content Rating Association. It is now part of the Family Online Safety Institute.

[803] The PICS standard was superseded by the World Wide Web Consortium's's POWDER (Protocol for Web Description Resources) standard on September 1, 2009. SafeSurf and ICRA continue to support the PICS standard, however.

[804] 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 uses the <dl>, <dt>, and <dd> tags to define the <meta> tag "name" attributes (see the GMPG's *XMDP: Introduction and Format Description*).

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HTML Code	Description/Comments
<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.[805]
<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.[806]
<meta http-equiv="PICS-Label" content='(PICS-1.1 "http://www.classify.org/safesurf/" L gen true for "*http:/doe.house.gov/*" r (SS~~000 1))' /> <meta http-equiv="pics-Label" content='(pics-1.1 "http://www.icra.org/pics/vocabularyv03/" l gen true for "*http://doe.house.gov/*" 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://doe.house.gov/*" 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/*).[807]

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[805] 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".

[806] 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).

[807] This <meta> tag is based on the World Wide Web Consortium's PICS (Platform for Internet Content Selection) standard. The PICS standard was superseded by the W3C's POWDER (Protocol for Web Description Resources) standard on September 1, 2009. SafeSurf and ICRA continue to support the PICS standard, however.

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HTML Code	Description/Comments
<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]().
<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://*doe*.house.gov/" rel="top" title="home page of *John W. Doe*" />	Location of the homepage of your website.

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<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.[808, 809, 810] Note: selection of a character set **does not** affect the typefaces you select – it only determines which characters are valid characters.
<!-- Published by *House Information Resources*, *date site was published*; team: *Jane Doe* (Project Coordinator), *Richard Roe* (Developer), *John Smith* (Designer) -->	Replace *Jane Doe*, *Richard Roe*, and *John Smith* with the names of the team. Replace *House Information Resources* with the name of the company that the designer works for.[811] 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).

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[808] 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)).

[809] UTF-8 is the successor to the series of standards that included ISO 8859-1.

[810] Aarron Walter, in *Building Findable Websites*, (2008) page 26, recommends always having a <meta http-equiv="Content-Type"> tag on every web page.

[811] 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, § 5).

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HTML Code	Description/Comments
<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.
<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) 2.0, 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 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.

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<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.[812] Use the same description in both tags.
<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.[813] 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.[814]

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[812] 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).

[813] 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.

[814] 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.

CAO

HTML Code	Description/Comments
<meta name="DC.relation.isFormatOf" scheme="DCTERMS.URI" type="*text/html*" content="*http://doe.house.gov/OtherPageName.htm* />	If a copy of this page in a different format[815] (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*" where the copy is an .htm, .html, .shtm, or .shtml file, type="*image/jpeg*" for .jpg files, type="*image/gif*" for .gif files, or type="*application/pdf*" for .pdf files
<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[816] 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 Codes* of this document.

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[815] The World Wide Web Consortium's *Understanding WCAG 2.0*, appendix C notes that:

> Metadata can be used to locate and also to describe alternate pages where there are multiple versions of a page which have been developed, especially where the alternate pages are optimized for individuals with different disabilities. The user can use the metadata both to locate the alternate versions and to identify characteristics of the versions, so that they can find the one that best meets their needs .

[816] The World Wide Web Consortium's *Internationalization Best Practices: Specifying Language in XHTML & HTML Content* recommends using the <meta http-equiv="Content-Language"> and <meta name="DC.language"> tags to designate the language(s) for the intended human audience of the web page as a whole. By contrast, the W3C document recommends that the <html> tag be used to designate the language that will be used by software (e.g., web browsers, voice browsers, spell checkers, or style processors) to process the text of the web page.

Section 6 (Best Practice 10) of *Internationalization Best Practices* suggests that where the intended human audience of the web page (as a whole) is represented by more than one language, the value of the "content" attribute should be the language code of each language, separated by a comma and a space. For instance, use content="en-US, es-MX" to indicate that the intended audiance is composed of practitioners of English as used in the United States and practitioners of Spanish as used in Mexico.

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HTML Code	Description/Comments
<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 [817]

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.

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[817] Success Criterion 3.1.1 (level A) of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 provides that in a accessible website, "[t]he default human language of each Web page can be programmatically determined." Success Criterion 3.1.2 (level AA) provides that:

> The human language of each passage or phrase in the content can be programmatically determined except for proper names, technical terms, words of indeterminate language, and words or phrases that have become part of the vernacular of the immediately surrounding text.

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").

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(5) In the Registry, the information for country or region subtags is identified as **Type: region**.

- **(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[818] as used in Puerto Rico
es-MX	Spanish as used in Mexico
es-VI	Spanish as used in the U.S. Virgin Islands
es-419	Spanish as used in Latin America
ar	Arabic[819] (written in Arabic script)[820]
ar-Latn	Arabic, written in Latin script
hy	Armenian[821] (written in Armenian script)[822]
hy-Latn	Armenian written in Latin script
ch	Chamorro[823] (as used in Guam)
zh-Hans-CN	Chinese[824] as used in the Peoples Republic of China, written in simplified Han script[825]

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[818] 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

[819] A collection of U.S. Government material in Arabic is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Arabic

[820] The Unicode 6.0.0 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.

[821] 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

[822] The Unicode 6.0.0 Standard for Armenian script is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0530.pdf; with supplemental material on Armenian ligatures at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UFB00.pdf.

[823] A collection of U.S. Government material in Chamorro is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang_list.htm#Chamorro

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zh-Hant-TW	Chinese as used in Taiwan, written in traditional Han script
cho	Choctaw
nl	Dutch[826] (Flemish)
fr-US	French as used in the United States[827] (including Acadian)
fr-CA	French as used in Canada
de	German[828]
el	Greek (modern)[829] (written in Greek script)[830]
ht	Haitian Creole[831]
haw	Hawaiian
he	Hebrew[832] (written in Hebrew script)[833]
he-Latn	Hebrew, written in Latin script
hi	Hindi[834] (written in Devanagari script)[835]
hi-Latn	Hindi, written in Latin script
hmn-Hmng	Hmong,[836] written in Pahawh Hmong script[837]
hmn-Latn	Hmong, written in Latin script

[824] 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

[825] The Unicode 6.0.0 Standard for Unihan (the CJK Unified Ideographs) is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/unihan.html.

[826] A collection of U.S. Government material in Flemish is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Dutch

[827] 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

[828] A collection of U.S. Government material in German is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#German

[829] A collection of U.S. Government material in Greek is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Greek

[830] The Unicode 6.0.0 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.

[831] A collection of U.S. Government material in Haitian Creole is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Haitian-Creole

[832] A collection of U.S. Government material in Hebrew is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Hebrew

[833] The Unicode 6.0.0 Standard for Hebrew script is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0590.pdf; with supplemental material on Hebrew ligatures at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UFB00.pdf.

[834] A collection of U.S. Government material in Hindi is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Hindi

[835] The Unicode 6.0.0 Standard for Devanagari script is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0900.pdf with supplemental material at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UA8E0.pdf.

[836] A collection of U.S. Government material in Hmong is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Hmong

[837] For information on Pahawh Hmong script, see http://www.omniglot.com/writing/hmong.htm.

it	Italian[838]
ja	Japanese[839] (written in Han, Hiragana,[840] and Katakana[841] script)
ja-Latn	Japanese, written in Latin script
ko-Hang	Korean[842], as written in Hangeul script[843, 844]
ko-Hani	Korean, as written in Hanja script
ko-Latn	Korean, as written in Latin script
lo	Lao[845] (written in Lao script)[846]
lo-Latn	Lao, written in Latin script
nv	Navajo[847]
fa	Persian (Farsi)[848] (as written in Arabic script)[849]
fa-Latn	Persian (Farsi), as written in Latin script
pl	Polish[850]
pt	Portuguese[851]
pt-BR	Portuguese as used in Brazil
pa	Punjabi[852] (written in Gurmukhi script)[853]

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[838] A collection of U.S. Government material in Italian is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Italian

[839] A collection of U.S. Government material in Japanese is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Japanese

[840] The Unicode 6.0.0 Standard for Hiragana script is set out at
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U3040.pdf.

[841] The Unicode 6.0.0 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, http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1B000.pdf, and
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UFF00.pdf.

[842] 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

[843] For information on the scripts associated with Korean, see
http://www.omniglot.com/writing/korean.htm.

[844] The Unicode 6.0.0 Standard for Hangeul script is set out at
http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UAC00.pdf.

[845] A collection of U.S. Government material in Lao is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Laotian

[846] The Unicode 6.0.0 Standard for Lao script is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0E80.pdf.

[847] A collection of U.S. Government material in Navajo is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/navajo.htm

[848] 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

[849] For information on representing Persian text on the Web, see Behdad Esfahbad's *Persian Computing
with Unicode*, April 2004.

[850] A collection of U.S. Government material in Polish is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Polish

[851] A collection of U.S. Government material in Portuguese is available at
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Portuguese

[852] A collection of U.S. Government material in Punjabi is available at

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pa-Latn	Punjabi, written in Latin script
ru	Russian[854] (written in Cyrillic script)[855]
ru-Latn	Russian, written in Latin script
sm	Samoan[856]
tl	Tagalog[857] (as used in the Philippines, written in Latin script)
tl-Tglg	Tagalog (as used in the Philippines), written in Tagalog script[858]
th	Thai[859] (written in Thai script)[860]
th-Latn	Thai, written in Latin script
uk	Ukrainian[861] (written in Cyrillic script)
uk-Latn	Ukrainian, written in Latin script
vi	Vietnamese[862]
vic	Virgin Islands Creole English

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http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Punjabi

[853] The Unicode 6.0.0 Standard for Gurmukhi script is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0A00.pdf.

[854] A collection of U.S. Government material in Russian is available at http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Russian

[855] The Unicode 6.0.0 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, http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U2DE0.pdf, and http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/UA640.pdf.

[856] A collection of U.S. Government material in Samoan is available at http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Samoan

[857] 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

[858] The Unicode 6.0.0 Standard for Tagalog script is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1700.pdf.

[859] A collection of U.S. Government material in Thai is available at http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Thai

[860] The Unicode 6.0.0 Standard for Thai script is set out at http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0E00.pdf.

[861] A collection of U.S. Government material in Ukrainian is available at http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/multilanguage/multilang.htm#Ukrainian

[862] 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*[863]

> The following text should be placed in an HTML file (preferably with a .shtml extension). Recommended HTML coding is indicated in **bold green**. Text in **[bracketed bold red]** should be replaced with their actual values. Notes are contained in boxes.

\<h1 id="philosophy"\>Privacy Policy\</h1\>

\<p\>We respect the privacy of our visitors and all those who come in contact with our office **—** 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 id="auto"\>Information We Collect Automatically\</h2\>

\<p\>If you visit our website to browse, read, or download information:**\<ul\>**

\<li\>Your Web browser automatically sends us (and we may retain) information such as the:**\<ul\>**

\<li\>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 a school);**\</li\>**
\<li\>Internet Protocol address of the computer you are using;**\</li\>**
\<li\>type of browser software and operating system you are using;**\</li\>**
\<li\>date and time you access our site; and**\</li\>**
\<li\>the Internet address of the web page from which you linked directly to our site.**\</li\>\</ul\>\</li\>**

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[863] 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.

The contact information is also coded in conformance with the hCard Microformat Standard.

Additional regulations for executive branch agencies concerning privacy notices can be found at:

- Guidance for Online Use of Web Measurement and Customization Technologies, OMB Memorandum M-10-22 (June 25, 2010);
- Guidance for Agency Use of Third-Party Websites and Applications, OMB Memorandum M-10-23 (June 25, 2010)

**
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.
**

**
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**.**
</p>**

<h2 id="otherInfo">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>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.**
**

Offices that store E-Newsletter distribution lists on servers outside of HOUSE.GOV should add:

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 service provider 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

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[864] For HIR hosted websites, use "http://www.house.gov/house/privacy.shtml".
[865] For HIR hosted websites, use "House Information Resources".

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**policy of [insert name of the distribution service]">privacy policy.
**

If your communication relates to a law enforcement (or system security) matter, we may disclose the information to law enforcement (or system security) agencies that we deem appropriate.
</p>

<h2 id="retentionTime">How Long We Keep Information</h2>

<p>We may keep information that we collect for an unlimited period of time.</p>

<h2 id="security">Security</h2>

<p>Please note that electronic communication, particularly e-mail, is not necessarily secure against interception. Please do not 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 the OMB Guidance for Implementing the Privacy Provisions of the E-Government Act of 2002 (OMB Memorandum M-03-22) should insert the following:

<h2 id="privacyAct">Privacy Act</h2>

<p>Although our office is not covered by the Privacy Act, we will attempt to treat your information as if the Privacy Act applied to it.</p>

<h2 id="cookies">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>

If the website is using Google Analytics:

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(1) In the above paragraph, replace "**<p>**We" with "**<p>**Except as noted in the ****Google Analytics section**** below, we"

(2) After the **</p>**, add:

<h3 id="google-analytics">Google Analytics</h3>

<p>We use a tool called **“**Google Analytics**”** to collect information about use of this site. Google Analytics collects information such as how often users visit this site, what pages they visit when they do so, and what other sites they used prior to coming to this site. We use the information we get from Google Analytics only to improve this site. Google Analytics collects only the **<abbr title="Internet Protocol">**IP**</abbr>** address assigned to you on the date you visit this site, rather than your name or other identifying information. We do not combine the information collected through the use of Google Analytics with personally identifiable information. Although Google Analytics plants a permanent cookie on your web browser to identify you as a unique user the next time you visit this site, the cookie cannot be used by anyone but Google. Google**’**s ability to use and share information collected by Google Analytics about your visits to this site is restricted by the Google Analytics Terms of Use and the Google Privacy Policy. The Google Analytics Terms of Use are available online at ****http://www.google.com/analytics/tos.html****. The Google Privacy Policy is available online at ****http://www.google.com/privacypolicy.html****. You can prevent Google Analytics from recognizing you on return visits to this site by ****disabling cookies**** on your browser.**</p>**

<h2 id="contact">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="vcard">[Name of office]

[Street Address]
[City] , [State]
[Zip Code]

**

****By telephone: **[telephone number]**

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****By e-mail: **[public e-mail address or URL for contact form]</p>**

2. *P3P Reference File*[866]

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*[867]

The following text should be placed in an XML file named w3c/policy.xml:

```
<?xml version="1.0" ?>
```

---

[866] 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 World Wide Web Consortium's *Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

[867] 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 World Wide Web Consortium's *Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

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```
<POLICIES xmlns="http://www.w3.org/2000/12/P3Pv1">
  <POLICY name="default" discuri="[URL of 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">United States of
        America</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 World Wide Web Consotrium's *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.

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```
<DISPUTES-GROUP>
  <DISPUTES resolution-type="service" service="[URL of 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 a 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 web page 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 World Wide Web Consotrium's *Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

```
<RECIPIENT>
```

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<ours />

<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>

"*<unrelated><recipient-description>law enforcement</recipient-description> </unrelated>*" indicates that the information collected through the site may be released to law enforcement agencies.

<unrelated>
  <recipient-description>anyone you authorize us to release information to</recipient-description>
</unrelated>

"*<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.

</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 World Wide Web Consotrium's *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 World Wide Web Consotrium's *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 World Wide Web Consotrium's *Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

```
<DATA ref="#dynamic.cookies">
  <CATEGORIES>
    <physical /><uniqueid /><state /><preference />
  </CATEGORIES>
```

CAO

```
</DATA>
```

4. *P3P <link>*[868]

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*[869]

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 set out at § 4.2 of the World Wide Web Consotrium's Platform for Privacy Preferences *1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

---

[868] 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 World Wide Web Consortium's *Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

[869] 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 World Wide Web Consortium's *Platform for Privacy Preferences 1.0 (P3P1.0) Specification*.

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