



USDA

USDA Web Style Guide
Version 2.0

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1 Introduction

USDA has numerous Web sites representing its various agencies and staff offices, as well as an abundant number of Web-based applications used within those agencies and staff offices. Many of these Web sites and applications have unique navigation models, content structures, and visual presentations. This presents a challenge to the citizens, business partners, and employees who come to USDA to find information, complete forms, or conduct transactions. Each time users visit a given site or application, it is often necessary to “re-learn” the navigational structure and other features. In order to overcome these challenges, an enterprise-wide User Interface (UI) Web Style Guide has been created for USDA agencies and staff offices to leverage in designing and developing their Web sites and Web-based applications.

The USDA Web Style Guide defines guidelines and standards for look, feel, and navigation to promote consistency while also improving the overall user experience. The guide will help reinforce and protect the integrity of the USDA brand. Therefore, it is critical that designers and developers use this guide to better understand how to apply the new USDA Web standards to all public-facing agency and staff office Web sites and Web-based applications.

For the purposes of this document, “public-facing” refers to any Web page or Web application page that can be viewed by external (non-USDA) customers. Also included is any Web page or application that targets all USDA employees, such as a USDA enterprise application. Web pages that fall in either of the categories mentioned above are within the scope of the USDA Web Style Guide and must follow the standards described herein.

1.1 Style Guide Contents

This Style Guide is your blueprint for building new Web pages. While it is not possible to plan for every contingency, you should find all the resources and framework you need to make informed decisions in your Web page development efforts.

The guide provides the following detailed information:

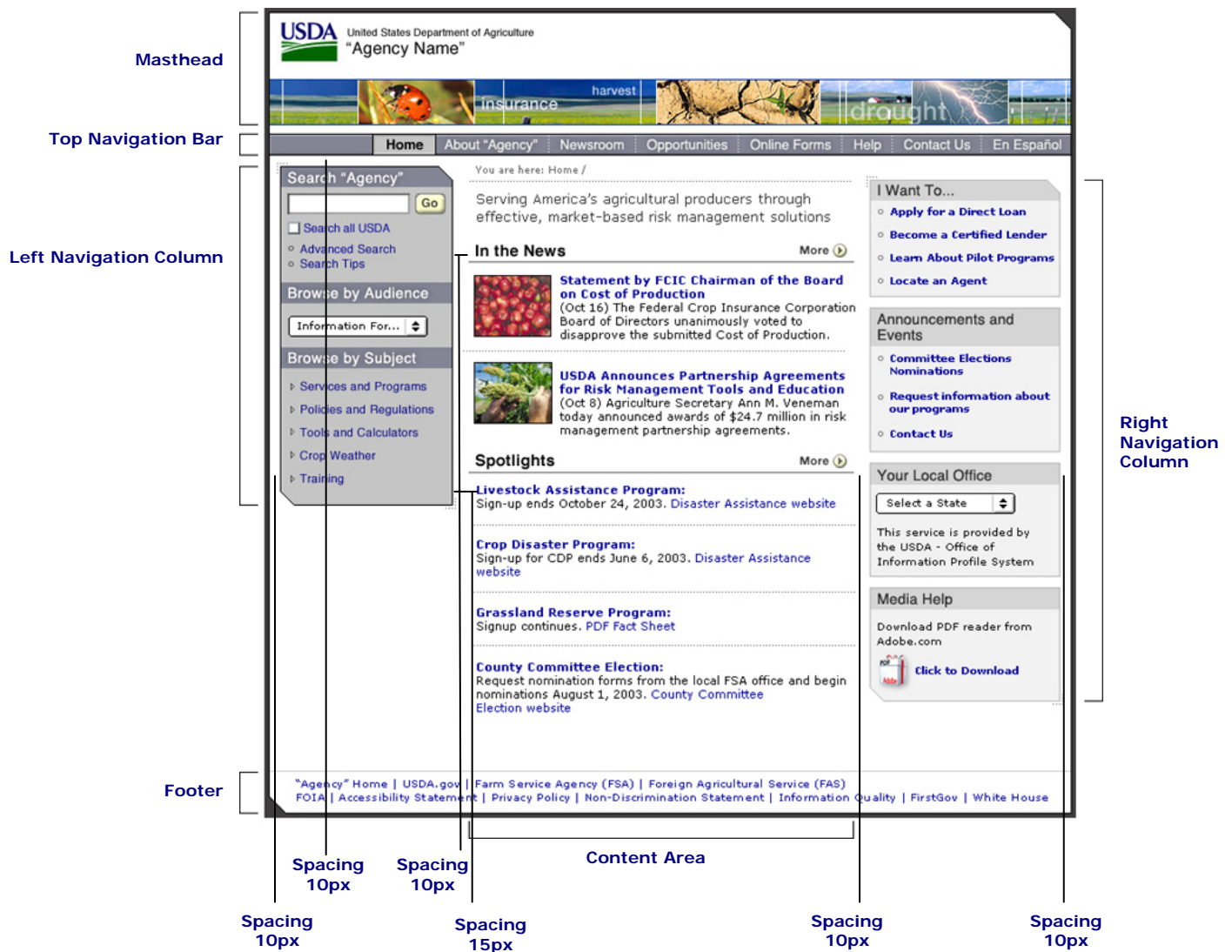
- Templates displaying varying levels of Web pages and types of content, to provide designers and developers with examples of how to display commonly used information among agencies,
- Instructions on how to design Web-based applications,
- Specifications for layout, global navigation, color palettes, and typography to ensure that a consistent look and feel is maintained throughout all sites,
- Guidelines and advice on how to prepare editorial content for your Web pages to maximize users' ability to locate and understand information,
- Section 508 accessibility requirements to help your agency pages meet and exceed these standards, and
- Summary of USDA audience types, based on an extensively conducted audience analysis, to assist you in knowing more about your customers.

2 Informational Web Pages and Sites

The primary function of an informational Web page or site is to deliver content to USDA’s customers. Examples of informational Web sites in USDA include ‘USDA.gov’, as well as the various Web sites maintained by USDA agencies, staff offices, programs, and regional/local USDA offices. The primary objective of these pages or sites is to disseminate information to citizens, business partners, and USDA employees.

This section outlines specific design standards to be employed when designing and developing public-facing informational Web sites or pages. Instructions are provided for how to handle specific page components, such as page layout and navigation elements. In addition, specific examples such as how to present tabular or graphical data within the confines of an agency Web site are presented in this section.

All informational Web sites and pages are to be centered and can be structured within the following six sections: the *Masthead*, *Top Navigation Bar*, *Left Navigation Column*, *Right Navigation Column*, *Footer* and *Content Area*. Specifications for designing and developing each of these sections are outlined in the subsequent pages of this chapter.



2.1 Masthead

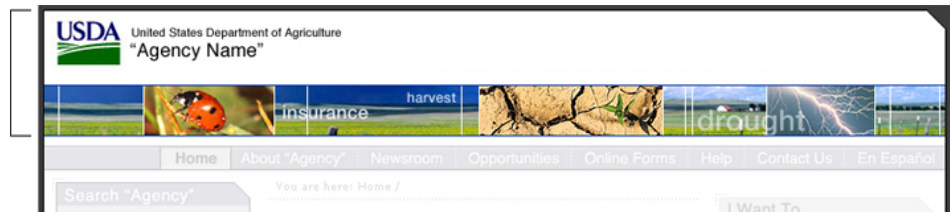
The Masthead is the main branding area for your agency or staff office informational Web site and will appear on every page. It consists of the *Branding Area* and *Photo Banner*. Various options for handling the Masthead component of your informational Web site are described below. You may choose from any of these options.

Masthead Option 1

This option closely resembles the ‘USDA.gov’ Masthead, with the same image and typography sizes and relationships. The images used should be directly relevant to the specific mission of your agency. This type of Masthead can be developed quickly with minimal effort.

Note: Masthead Option 1 requires 8px image space between the Photo Banner and the Top Navigation Bar.

Masthead Option 1



Masthead Components

1. Branding Area

This is the area at the top of the Masthead where the USDA logo, United States Department of Agriculture, and your Agency Name appear at the top left. The size, position, and placement of these Branding Area elements cannot be altered.

Attributes: Logo and text: “United States Department of Agriculture” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 10px / Text: “Agency Name” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 16px / Color: #000099 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: masthead_logo.gif / Width: 767px / Height: 64px / Cutsheet Name: masthead.psd

2. Photo Banner

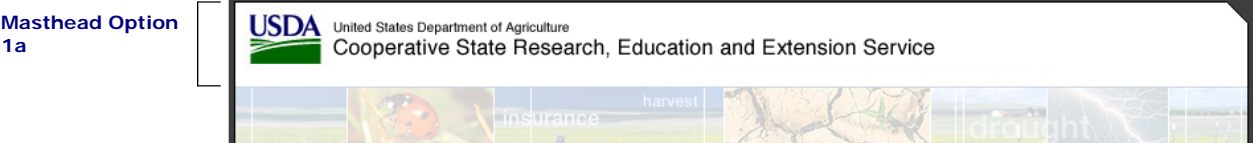
The Photo Banner is a series of images that represents the diversity of your agency. Each agency is responsible for providing and updating the images used.

Attributes: Image: masthead_banner.gif / Width: 767px / Height: 44px / Cutsheet Name: masthead.psd

2.1 Masthead continued

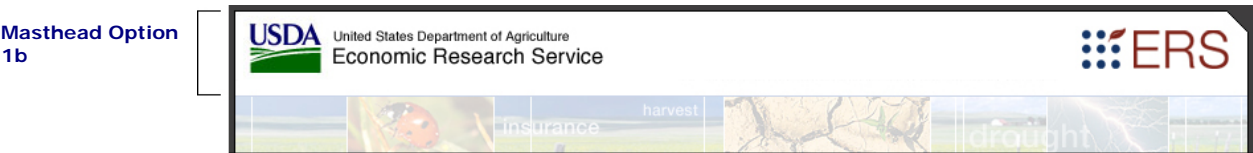
Masthead Option 1a

Agency names vary in complexity and length. The following example shows how a long agency name would appear using Masthead Option 1.



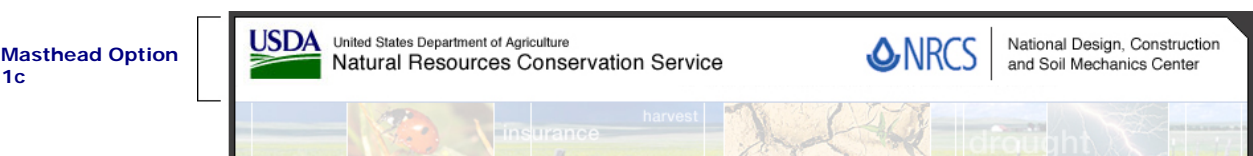
Masthead Option 1b

Some agencies have already conducted efforts to design specific logo treatments for their Web sites. The following example shows how an agency could incorporate existing logo treatments into Masthead Option 1.



Masthead Option 1c

Some agencies, in addition to their own logo treatments, have developed sub-branding for sites such as field, regional, local, or state offices. These agencies require flexibility to be able to incorporate additional text into the Masthead area. The following example shows how an agency could incorporate existing logo treatments as well as sub-branding elements into Masthead Option 1.



2.1 Masthead continued

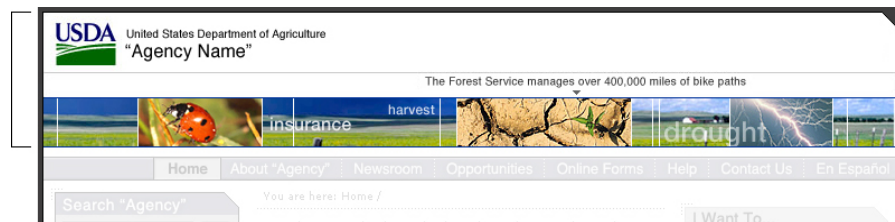
Masthead Option 2

This Masthead option has the same size and relationships as the ‘USDA.gov’ Masthead. This Masthead includes “Did You Know” factoid animations. Additionally, the images in the Photo Banner should be relevant to the specific mission of your agency.

Agencies are welcome to incorporate this kind of element if they have the resources to maintain it. This design works well if there are enough facts to support it. ¹

Note: Masthead Option 2 requires 8px image space between the Photo Banner and the Top Navigation Bar.

Masthead Option 2



Masthead Components

1. Branding Area

This is the area at the top of the Masthead where the USDA logo, United States Department of Agriculture, and your Agency Name appear at the top left. The size, position, and placement of these Branding Area elements cannot be altered.

Attributes: Logo and text: “United States Department of Agriculture” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 10px / Text: “Agency Name” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 16px / Color: #000099 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: masthead_logo2.gif / Width: 767px / Height: 53px / Cutsheet Name: masthead2.psd

2. “Did You Know” Factoid

The animated GIF highlights three facts about the agency that visitors may not know. These facts correspond to the three photos within the Photo Banner. The GIF, along with the Photo Banner, should change on a daily basis.

Attributes: Text (For example: “The forest service manages over 400,000 miles of bike paths”) / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 10px / Color: #333333 / Rollover: None / Rollover color: None / Image: masthead_anim_forest.gif / Width: 767px / Height: 22px / Cutsheet Name: presence_home.psd

Animation: 3 frames / 10 seconds per frame

¹ The annual USDA Fact Book is a good source of information to populate this area.

2.1 Masthead continued

3. Photo Banner

The Photo Banner is a series of images that represents the diversity of the agency and corresponds to the factoid above. This image and the corresponding “Did You Know” factoid animation should change on a daily basis. An archive of “Did You Know” factoid animations and Photo Banners is available for rotation.

Attributes: Three thematic images to match the animated GIF factoids / Font: None / Image: masthead_banner.gif / Width: 767px / Height: 46px / Cutsheet Name: agency_one.psd

Masthead Option 3

This Masthead option uses a photo image as the background for the Branding Area. It integrates the two areas into one unit.



Masthead Components

1. Branding Area

This is the area at the top of the Masthead where the USDA logo, United States Department of Agriculture, and the Agency Name appears at the top left. The size, position, and placement of the Branding Area elements cannot be altered.

Attributes: Logo and text: “United States Department of Agriculture” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 10px / Text: “Agency Name” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 16px / Color: #323467 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: masthead_logo4.gif / Width: 767px / Height: 86px / Cutsheet Name: masthead4.psd

2.2 Top Navigation Bar

The Top Navigation Bar appears in the same place on every page of the informational Web site. Agencies have flexibility in determining which Top Navigation sections are appropriate for their agency. However, there are some items that must always be included in the Top Navigation Bar. These are: *Home*, *About “Agency”*, *Help*, and *Contact Us*.

Top Navigation Bar



Top Navigation Components

The Top Navigation Bar includes a rollover state. When you roll over each section of the Top Navigation Bar, the section type changes color and appearance. When you are in a particular screen of the Web site or application, the corresponding Top Navigation will remain locked in the rollover state.

Content: “Home, About ‘Agency’, Newsroom, Opportunities, Online Forms, Help, Contact Us, En Español” /
Font: Helvetica Medium / **Size:** 13px / **Color:** #FFFFFF / **Rollover:** Color and Background /
Rollover Color: #000000

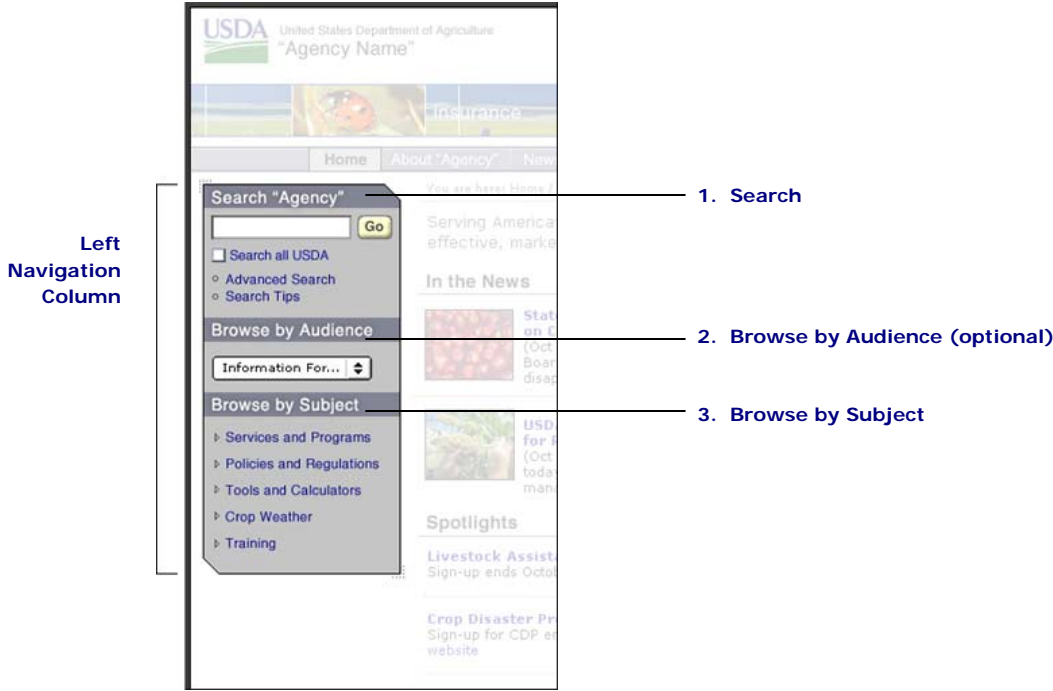
Images:

nav_top_home.gif, nav_top_home_over.gif / Width: 54px / Height: 21px
 nav_top_about.gif, nav_top_about_over.gif / Width: 107px / Height: 21px
 nav_top_newsroom.gif, nav_top_newsroom_over.gif / Width: 82px / Height: 21px
 nav_top_help.gif, nav_top_help_over.gif / Width: 47px / Height: 21px
 nav_top_contact, nav_top_contact_over.gif / Width: 84px / Height: 21px
 nav_top_opportunities, nav_top_opportunities_over.gif / Width: 97px / Height: 21px
 nav_top_espanol, nav_top_espanol_over.gif / Width: 85px / Height: 21px
 nav_top_onlineforms, nav_top_onlineforms_over.gif / Width: 98px / Height: 21px
 Cutsheet Name: global_nav.psd

2.3 Left Navigation Column

The Left Navigation Column appears on every page of your agency informational Web site. The components within the Left Navigation Column always appear in the same location on every page. There are three main ways to find information:

- Users can *Search* for specific information.
- *Browse by Audience*, an optional component, will direct users based on audience type.
- *Browse by Subject* will direct users by common topics of interest.



Left Navigation Column Components

1. Search

The Search area consists of a search field, “Go” Button, “Search all USDA” checkbox, “Advanced Search” link and “Search Tips” link. If populated, the “Search all USDA” checkbox allows users to search all of USDA in addition to the agency site.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 171px / Variable Height / Content: “Search” image / Form Field and Button: button_go.gif / Cutsheet Name: buttons.psd

Navigation Headings: Text: “Search ‘Agency’” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 14px / Color: #FFFFFF / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: r_c_head_search.gif / Width: 171px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: nav_columns.psd

2.3 Left Navigation Column continued

Other Headings: Text: “Advanced Search” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 11px /
Color: #000099 / Rollover: Underline / Rollover Color: None / Image: r_c_nav_advanced.gif /
Width: 171px / Height: 15px / Cutsheet Name: presence_home.psd

Other Headings: Text: “Search Tips” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 11px /
Color: #000099 / Rollover: Underline / Rollover Color: None / Image: r_c_nav_tips.gif /
Width: 171px / Height: 15px / Cutsheet Name: presence_home.psd

2. Browse by Audience (optional)

This area contains a drop-down menu that provides information based on specific types of users, such as “Producer”. Many agencies have conducted audience analyses or other relevant audience studies to understand the specific needs of users. These agencies should use this area of the site to tailor information to specific user groups. The recommended number of audience links is 10 or less; however, the maximum number is 15.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 171px / Variable Height / Content: “Browse by Audience” image and drop-down menu of audience types.

Navigation Headings: Text: “Browse by Audience” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 14px /
Color: #FFFFFF / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: r_c_head_audience.gif /
Width: 171px / Height: 30px / Cutsheet Name: nav_columns.psd

3. Browse by Subject

This area contains links to common topics of interest. The subjects in this list should be based on the top level of your agency’s taxonomy model. The recommended number of subject links is 10 or less; however, the maximum number is 15.

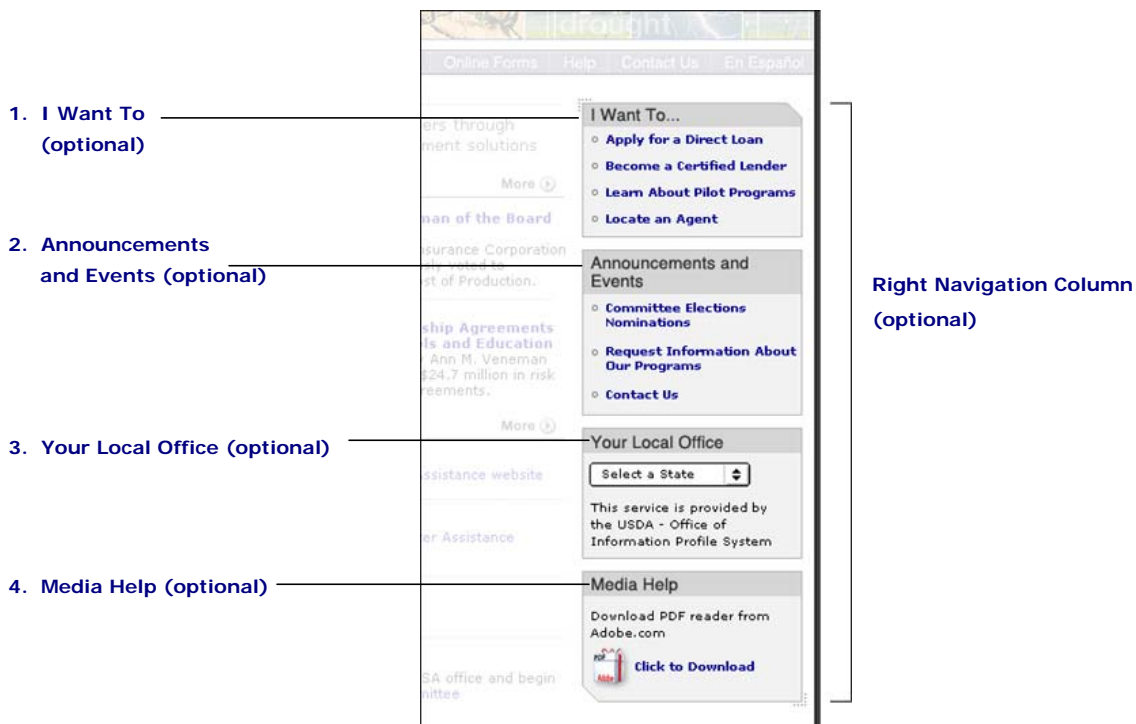
Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 171px / Variable Height / Content: “Browse by Subject” image and bulleted list of various subjects

Navigation Headings: Text: “Browse by Subject” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 14px /
Color: #FFFFFF / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: r_c_head_subject.gif /
Width: 171px / Height: 30px / Cutsheet Name: nav_columns.psd

Other Headings: Text: “Services and Programs” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 11px /
Color: #000099 / Rollover: Underline / Rollover Color: None / Image: r_c_nav_agricultural.gif /
Width: 171px / Height: 15px / Cutsheet Name: nav_columns.psd

2.4 Right Navigation Column

The Right Navigation Column is an optional component on your Web site. The Right Navigation Column contains complementary and supplementary links based on the page users are on. The information in the Right Navigation Column changes on every page. Some utility pages such as *Data Presentation*, *Error Page*, *New User Registration* or *Local Navigation* will not require a Right Navigation Column.



Right Navigation Components

Each agency is responsible for defining the components of the Right Navigation Column. The content of this section will vary on an agency-by-agency basis, depending on the information architecture of the respective agency's site. Some suggested options are described below for your reference.

1. I Want To (optional)

This is an optional component that lists common and important tasks relevant to your agency such as *Apply for a Direct Loan*, *Become a Certified Lender*, *Learn about Pilot Programs*, *Locate an Agent*, etc. Topics listed in this component are limited to a maximum of five.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 188px / Variable Height / Content: "I Want To" image and bulleted list of various tasks.

Navigation Headings: Text: "I Want To" / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 14px / Color: #313131 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: l_c_head_iwantto.gif / Width: 188px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: nav_columns.psd

2.4 Right Navigation Column continued

2. Announcements and Events (optional)

This is a section in the Right Navigation Column that lists information such as important reports, announcements, upcoming events and publications.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 188px / Variable Height / Content: “Announcements and Events” image and bulleted list of various links.

Navigation Headings: Text: “Announcements and Events” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 14px / Color: #313131 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: l_c_head_announcements.gif / Width: 188px / Height: 39px / Cutsheet Name: nav_columns.psd

3. Your Local Office (optional)

This is an agency specific feature and may be used to promote a notable item or application. In the example above, the space is used to assist users to locate a local office.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 188px / Variable Height / Content: “Your Local Office” image and text

Navigation Headings: Text: “Your Local Office” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 14px / Color: #313131 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: l_c_head_yourlocaloffice.gif / Width: 188px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: nav_columns.psd

4. Media Help (optional)

This is an optional component that provides links to download plug-ins that may be needed on that particular page.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 188px / Variable Height / Content: “Media Help” image and text

Navigation Headings: Text: “Media Help” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 14px / Color: #313131 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: l_c_head_mediahelp.gif / Width: 188px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: nav_columns.psd

2.5 Footer

The Footer consists of two lines of HTML links. The first line has four required links: “Agency” Home, *USDA.gov*, Site Map, and *Policies and Links*. The remaining space on this first line can be devoted to agency-specific items, such as links to agencies in the same mission area, and/or links to related Web sites. It is up to each agency to decide what to place on this line. The second line must contain the following links: *FOIA*, *Accessibility Statement*, *Privacy Policy*, *Non-Discrimination Statement*, *Information Quality*, *FirstGov*, and *White House*.



Footer Components

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 10px / Color: #000099 / Text-Decoration: None /
 Hover: Underline

2.6 Content Area

The center portion of the page is devoted to content. Required elements within the Content Area are: *Bread Crumb Trail*, *Headline Bars*, *Headlines*, *Body Text*, and *Divided Lines*. *Imagery* is an optional component that may be used where relevant. The Content Area may extend across the page if no Right Navigation Column is needed.

Content Area

Content Area Components

This section focuses on the components of the Content Area; however, it does not go into detail about specific types of content that should be included. This decision will be left to the discretion of the agency and will vary on an agency-by-agency basis.

1. Bread Crumb Trail

The Bread Crumb Trail is a navigation tool that allows users to see where the current page is in relation to the Web site or application’s hierarchy. Pages visited (other than the current page) will be

2.6 Content Area continued

displayed as HTML links. The Bread Crumb Trail allows users to know where they are and they have been within the Web site or application at any given time.

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 10px / Color: #666666 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: Underline

2. **Headline Bars**

Headline Bars designate a section of content and have been created as graphic elements. The Headline Bar may vary in width. It may measure half of the Content Area column; full length of the Content Area column; or extend to the right margin of the page if a Right Navigation Column is not required. The Divider Line is a graphic device used to separate stories within a Headline Bar area.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 368px / Height: 23px

Headings: Text: “In the News” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 15px / Color: #00000 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: content_head_inthenews.gif / Width: 368px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

Other Headings: Text: “Spotlights” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 15px / Color: #000000 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: content_head_spotlights.gif / Width: 368px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

3. **Headline**

A Headline is displayed as bold HTML text and always functions as an HTML link. A Headline may stand alone or may be followed by Body Text.

Attributes: Font: Verdana Bold / Size: 11px / Color: #000099 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: Underline

4. **Body Text**

Body text is HTML text that represents descriptive copy. Body Text may contain HTML links, which must appear in blue type.

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 11px / Color: #000000 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: None / Link Color: #000099

5. **Divider Line**

The Divider Line is a graphic device used to separate stories within a Headline Bar area.

Attributes: Width: 368px / Height: 10px / Cutsheet Name: presence_home.psd

2.6 Content Area continued

6. Imagery (optional)

Imagery is a photo or graphic used to visually support content. This is an optional component that may be used where relevant. Imagery may be horizontal or vertical in format but must be scaled and cropped to the pixel dimensions provided below. All imagery must have a one pixel black border.

Attributes: Not required / Portrait Orientation: Width 70px, Height 80px /
Landscape Orientation: Width 80px, Height 70px

3 Interactive Web Application Pages

Interactive Web application pages allow users to perform a transaction or interaction, such as exchanging data with an interface. Examples of interactive Web applications include USDA enterprise applications such as AgLearn, as well as agency-specific applications such as the Farm Service Agency’s Electronic Loan Deficiency Payment (eLDP) application. Typically, applications such as these are defined as “stand-alone”, since they operate outside of the confines of an agency Web site. While these applications are required to comply with the USDA Web standards, there is more flexibility as to which page components must be included in an application.

Web applications are structured within the following sections: the *Masthead*, *Top Navigation Bar*, *Left Navigation Column*, *Right Navigation Column*, *Footer* and *Content Area*. Specifications for designing and developing each of these sections are outlined in the subsequent pages of this chapter.

The screenshot shows the 'Inquire About A Producer' page. The layout is annotated with the following sections and components:

- Masthead:** USDA United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency logo and 'Electronic Loan Deficiency Payments' text.
- Top Navigation Bar (optional):** Home, About eLDP, What's New, E-Forms, Local Offices, Help, Contact Us, Logout.
- Left Navigation Column (optional):** Search eLDP (with search box and Go button), Search all USDA, Advanced Search, Search Tips, Producer Certification (Add, Change, Inquire, Delete, Disable, Enable), Application Functions (Add, Inquire, Delete).
- Content Area:**
 - Breadcrumbs: You are here: Home / Producer Certification / Inquire
 - Section: Inquire About A Producer
 - Metadata: County FSA Officer: JASPER, State/County Code: IA099, Telephone: (641) 792-2222
 - Form fields: Producer Name (with 'Starts With' dropdown), Tax Id, Tax Id Type (dropdown), Crop Year (dropdown).
 - Buttons: Search, Show All
 - Results: 1 to 10 of 29 Records Found
 - Table: Search Results with columns: Producer Name, Tax Id, Tax Id Type, Address, City, State, Email Address.
 - Table Data:

Producer Name	Tax Id	Tax Id Type	Address	City	State	Email Address
<input type="checkbox"/> Artis Knudson	504662169	s	PO Box 2812	Grand City	CO	aknudson@aol.com
<input type="checkbox"/> Arvid R Knudson	504585135	s	PO Box 2812	Grand City	CO	arnudson@aol.com
<input type="checkbox"/> Bill Water	506566985	s				
<input type="checkbox"/> Daniel G Huber	504588182	s	15 Galeon Way	Hot Springs Village	AR	huber1234@aol.com
 - Footer (optional): eLDP Home | USDA.gov | Farm Service Agency (FSA) | USDA Intranet, Accessibility Statement | Privacy Policy | Non-Discrimination Statement

Spacing 10px is indicated between the Masthead, Top Navigation Bar, Left Navigation Column, Footer, and Content Area.

3.1 Masthead

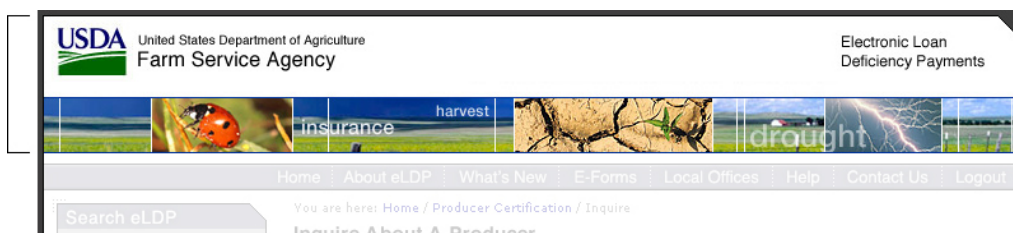
The Masthead is the main branding area for your interactive Web application pages and will appear on every page. It consists of the *Branding Area* and *Photo Banner*. An option for handling the Masthead component of your interactive Web application page is described below. You are also free to choose from the Masthead options presented in Section 2.1 for Informational Web sites and pages.

Masthead Option 1

This option closely resembles the ‘USDA.gov’ Masthead, with the same image and typography sizes and relationships. The images used should be directly relevant to the specific mission of your agency. This type of Masthead can be developed quickly with minimal effort.

Note: Masthead Option 1 requires 8px image space between the Photo Banner and the Top Navigation Bar.

Masthead Option 1



Masthead Components

1. Branding Area

This is the area at the top of the Masthead where the USDA logo, United States Department of Agriculture, and your Agency (or Application) Name appear at the top left. The size, position and placement of these Branding Area elements cannot be altered.

Attributes: Logo and text: “United States Department of Agriculture” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 10px / “Agency or Application Name” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 16px / Electronic Loan Deficiency Payments / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 12px / Color: #000099 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: masthead_logo.gif / Width: 767px / Height: 64px / Cutsheet Name: masthead.psd

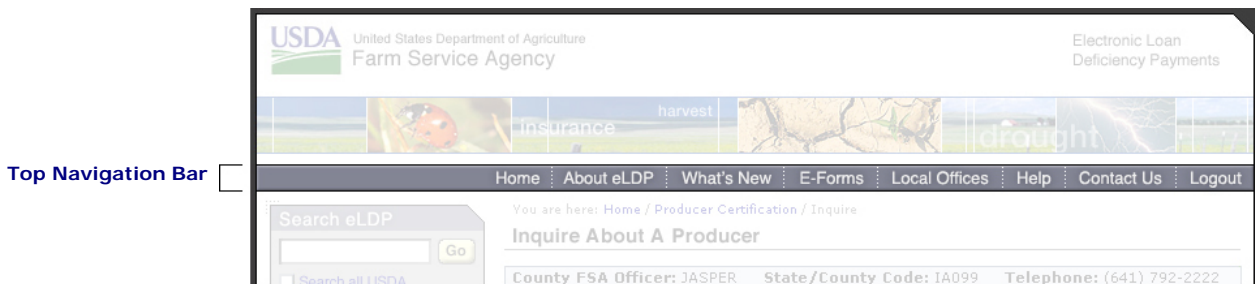
2. Photo Banner

The Photo Banner is a series of images that represent the diversity of your agency. Each agency is responsible for providing and updating the images used.

Attributes: Image: masthead_banner.gif / Width: 767px / Height: 44px / Cutsheet Name: masthead.psd

3.2 Top Navigation Bar

The Top Navigation Bar appears on every page of your agency application if a Top Navigation Bar is necessary for the application. The Top Navigation Bar is only optional when the application does not require a top navigation bar. Agencies have flexibility in determining which Top Navigation sections are appropriate for their agency. However, there are some items that must always be included in the Top Navigation Bar. These are: *Home*, *Help*, and *Contact Us*.



Top Navigation Components

The Top Navigation Bar includes a rollover state. When you roll over each section of the Top Navigation Bar, the section type changes color and appearance. When you are in a particular screen of the Web site or application, the corresponding Top Navigation will remain locked in the rollover state.

Content: “Home, About ‘Application’, What’s New, E-Forms, Local Offices, Help, Contact Us” /
Font: Helvetica Medium / **Size:** 13px / **Color:** #FFFFFF / **Rollover:** Color and Background /
Rollover Color: #000000

3.3 Left Navigation Column

The Left Navigation Column appears on every page of your agency application if a left navigation column is necessary for the application. This Left Navigation Column is only optional if the application does not require a left navigation column. You will be able to tailor these section headings to fit your application needs.



Left Navigation Column Components

1. Search (optional)

The Search area consists of a search field, “Go” Button, “Search all USDA” checkbox, “Advanced Search” link and “Search Tips” link. If populated, the “Search all USDA” checkbox allows users to search all of USDA in addition to the application site.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 171px / Variable Height / Content: “Search” image / Form Field and Button: button_go.gif / Cutsheet Name: buttons.psd

Navigation Headings: Text: “Search ‘Agency’” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 14px / Color: #FFFFFF / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: r_c_head_search.gif / Width: 171px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: nav_columns.psd

3.3 Left Navigation Column continued

Other Headings: Text: “Advanced Search” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 11px /
Color: #000099 / Rollover: Underline / Rollover Color: None / Image: r_c_nav_advanced.gif /
Width: 171px / Height: 15px / Cutsheet Name: presence_home.psd

Other Headings: Text: “Search Tips” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 11px /
Color: #000099 / Rollover: Underline / Rollover Color: None / Image: r_c_nav_tips.gif /
Width: 171px / Height: 15px / Cutsheet Name: presence_home.psd

2. **Producer Certification (optional)**

This area contains links to common functions within the application. The recommended number of links is 10 or less; however, the maximum number is 15.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 171px / Variable Height / Content: “Producer Certification” image and bulleted list of various subjects

Navigation Headings: Text: “Producer Certification” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 14px /
Color: #FFFFFF / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Width: 171px / Height: 30px

3. **Application Functions (optional)**

This area contains links to common functions within the application. The recommended number of links is 10 or less; however, the maximum number is 15.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 171px / Variable Height / Content: “Application Functions” image and bulleted list of various subjects

Navigation Headings: Text: “Application Functions” / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 14px /
Color: #FFFFFF / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Width: 171px / Height: 30px

Other Headings: Text: “Inquire” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 11px / Color: #000099 /
Rollover Color: None / Width: 171px / Height: 15px

3.4 Footer

The Footer consists of HTML links on two lines. The required links on the first line include: “*Application*” *Home* and *USDA.gov*. Depending on the nature of the application, it may be required to include two additional links in the first line: *Site Map* and *Policies and Links*². Please reference section 2.5 for more details on how to implement this requirement. The remainder of the first line is reserved for application or agency specific links. An option could be “*Agency*” *Home*. The second line must include the following links: *Accessibility Statement*, *Privacy Policy*, and *Non-Discrimination Statement*.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Bill Water	506566985	s				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Daniel G Huber	504588182	s	15 Galeon Way	Hot Springs Village	AR	huber1234@aol.com

< Previous 1 2 3 Next >

Footer eLDP Home | USDA.gov | Farm Service Agency (FSA) | USDA Intranet
 Accessibility Statement | Privacy Policy | Non-Discrimination Statement

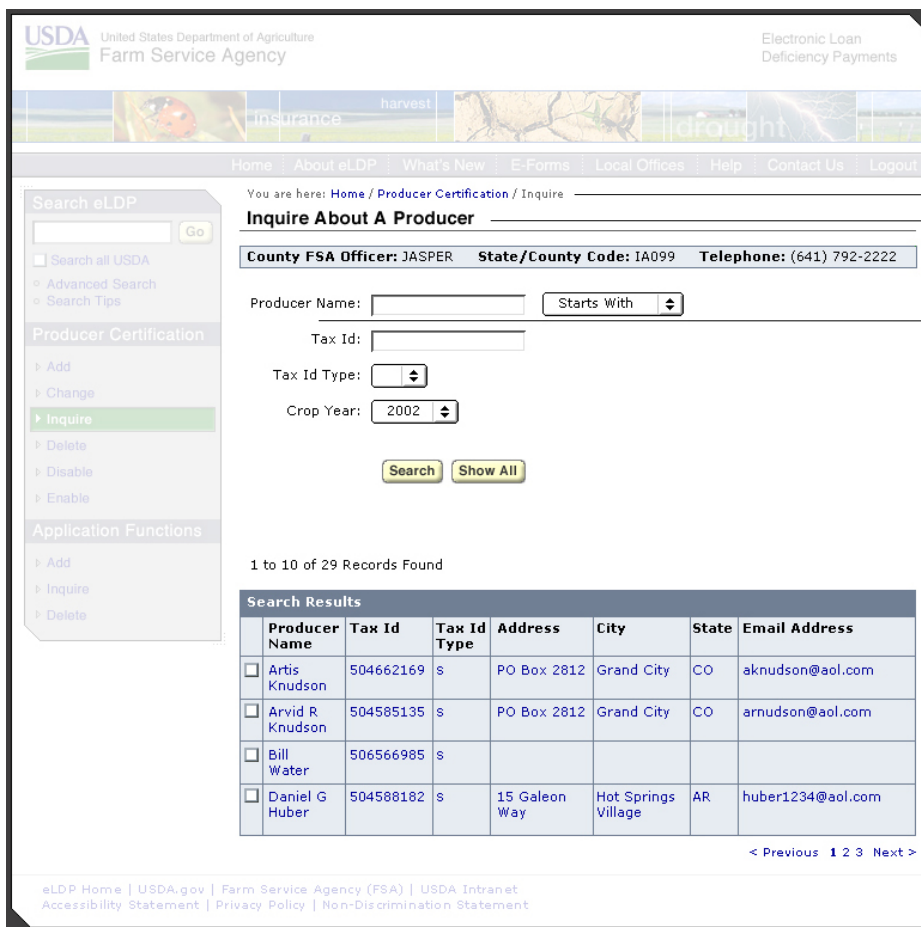
Footer Components

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 10px / Color: #000099 / Text-Decoration: None /
 Hover: Underline

² Office of Management and Budget, Policies for Federal Agency Public Websites

3.5 Content Area

The center portion of the page is devoted to content. Elements that may appear within the Content Area are: *Bread Crumb Trail*, *Headline Bars*, *Headlines*, *Body Text*, *Divided Lines* and *Imagery*. The Content Area may extend across the page if no Right Navigation Column is needed.



1. **Bread Crumb Trail (optional)**

2. **Headline Bar (optional)**

3. **Body Text**

Content Area Components

This section focuses on the components of the content area; however, it does not go into detail about specific types of content that should be included. This decision will be left to the discretion of the agency or application and will vary.

1. Bread Crumb Trail (optional)

The Bread Crumb Trail is a navigation tool that allows users to see where the current page is in relation to the Web site or application's hierarchy. Pages visited (other than the current page) will be

3.5 Content Area continued

displayed as HTML links. The Bread Crumb Trail allows users to know where are and they have been within the Web site or application at any given time. This is an optional component for your application.

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 10px / Color: #666666 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: Underline

2. **Headline Bars (optional)**

Headline Bars designate a section of content and have been created as graphic elements. The Headline Bar may vary in width. It may measure half of the Content Area column; full length of the Content Area column; or extend to the right margin of the page if a Right Navigation Column is not required.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 368px / Height: 23px

Headings: Text: "Inquire About A Producer" / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 15px / Color: #000000 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Width: 368px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

3. **Body Text**

Body text is HTML text that represents descriptive copy. Body Text may contain HTML links, which must appear in blue type.

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 11px / Color: #000000 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: None / Link Color: #000099

4 Overall Style Guidelines

Stylistic standards related to the formatting of font, forms, tables, and other common Web page components are identified in this section. These elements apply to both informational Web sites and interactive Web application pages. As such, these standards must be followed when creating any type of Web page.

This section provides instructions on how to format the information presented on your pages, how to select a color palette, how to handle exceptions, and more. Technical considerations for designing and developing informational and interactive Web application pages are also provided.

4.1 Font

These are the guidelines set for all font usage.

Font Size

Absolute font sizes, usually defined by Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), allow developers to control the font size that will be displayed to users in a Web browser. When using absolute font sizes, all HTML text in the center Content Area of the page must be set at 11px. HTML text in the Right Navigation Column and Footer must be set at 10px. The Bread Crumb HTML text must be set at 9px. Absolute font sizing is the default method to be followed for defining font sizes.

Relative font sizes allow the user to increase or decrease font sizes by changing the settings on a Web browser. Agencies can choose to provide this flexibility to users in the center content area, right navigation column, and footer of the page. If using relative font sizing, HTML text must be set at a minimum of xx-small (minimum, equivalent to 10px) and cannot exceed x-small (maximum, equivalent to 12px).

Font Type

The designated font is Verdana for all HTML text. The order of font type that should be employed for all HTML text is: {Verdana, Arial, Helvetica}. Based on best practices, this font family, Sans-Serif, was selected for its ease of readability.

The designated font for all graphical text is Helvetica.

The maximum number of unique font types that can be used on a page is two. The only exception to this rule applies to the Masthead area. A bolded version of the same font type is not considered a unique font.

Font Style

Never use ALL CAPS. The only exception to this rule occurs when denoting special instructions, acronyms, or headlines for news stories.

Limit the use of italics. Italics can be used for providing specific emphasis, scientific names, or denoting various available versions of a document such as printer friendly version or a Spanish version.

Avoid the use of acronyms. If acronyms are used, they must be capitalized and spelled out the first instance. Any acronyms used should be industry standard, and widely-known. No acronyms should exist in navigational components.

No static text will be underlined. Users may confuse underlined static text with a hyperlink.

Numeric and Grammatical Formatting

The following standards should be applied consistently throughout all Web sites and applications.

- Web site is two words, with the word Web capitalized in all instances.
- 'Homepage' is one word.
- The word 'e-mail' is always hyphenated.

4.1 Font continued

- All U.S. states should be either spelled out in its entirety or abbreviated to two letters.
Example: Maryland, DC, VA
- Dates should be in this format: (Sep 4, 2003) when used in a listing of any sort.
Example: **Farmer's Market Show** (Sep 4, 2003) – Virginia's local farmers display and sell their season's best
- Time values are displayed in this standard format: 01:30:45 p.m. EST. Seconds may not always be necessary. If the time is not 24 hour time, then "a.m." or "p.m." is included. Time zone must be specified.
Example: This Web page was last updated on Sep 30, 2003 04:00 p.m. EST
- All U.S. phone numbers will be listed in a standard format.
Example: 202-720-0000
- All numbers between zero and nine should be spelled out in their entirety. Any number 10 and above should be displayed numerically.
Example: eight, 15
- All numeric data contain the appropriate formatting (e.g. commas, dollar sign, negative sign, DB, CR, Long, Short, etc).
Example: \$2,000

Typography

The following is a list of default font color, family, sizes, and formatting styles as defined in the cascading style sheet (CSS). These styles reflect default (absolute) font sizing.

Text Area	CSS Class	Font Attributes
Center Content Body Text	.BodyTextBlack	Verdana, 11px, black (#000000)
Center Content Body Text	.BodyTextBlue	Verdana, 11px, blue (#000099)
Center Content Body Text	.BodyTextBlackBold	Verdana, 11px, black (#000000), bold
Center Content Body Text	.BodyTextBlueBold	Verdana, 11px, blue (#000099), bold
Center Content Body Text	.HdrBlack	Verdana, 13px, black (#000000)
Center Content Body Text	.HdrBlackBold	Verdana, 13px, black (#000000), bold
Right Navigation Text	.BodyTextBlueSmallBold	Verdana, 10px, blue (#000099), bold

4.1 Font continued

Text Area	CSS Class	Font Attributes
Center Content Body Text	.HdrBlue	Verdana, 13px, blue (#000099)
Center Content Body Text	.HdrBlueBold	Verdana, 13px, blue (#000099), bold
Right Navigation Text	.BodyTextBlackSmall	Verdana, 10px, black (#000000)
Right Navigation Text	.BodyTextBlueSmall	Verdana, 10px, blue (#000099)
Bread crumb Text	.Breadcrumbs	Verdana, 9px, black (#000000)
Footer Text	.Footer	Verdana, 10px, blue (#000099), border-bottom: 1px, solid, (#000000)
Form Field Text	.searchform	Verdana, 11px, black (#000000), width: 115px, height: 14px
Form Field Text	.checkbox	Verdana, width: 12px, height: 12px
Form Field Text	.audiencebox	Verdana, 11px, black (#000000), height: 12px
Link Text	A:link	blue (#000099)
Link Text	A:hover	blue (#000099), underline
Link Text	A:visited	purple (#660099)

4.2 Body Text

These are the guidelines set for all text styles within the Content Area.

Lists

All listings of events, news stories, or announcements must appear consistently (Sep 20, 2003). The headline or title must use bold font. If a date applies to the headline, the date must appear in this format, (Sep 22, 2003) after the headline. All news stories must display a date.

Example: **Veneman Announces New Farm Bill** (Sep 22, 2003)

Example: **Crop Planting Convention** (Jan 1-5, 2004), Washington, DC

Justification of Text

All text in your Web site or application should be top and left-justified at a table-cell level (container). Only numeric data within a table can be right-justified. No other elements, images or text should have alignment attributes applied to them.

Bullets

All bullets on the site should be consistent in appearance. Bullets used in the center content area must be HTML bullets. The bullet and text should be “baseline” aligned if the text following the bullet extends to more than one line.

Heading Levels

The following table shows the header styles defined for the site.

Header Type	CSS class	Example	Description/Use
Headline Bars (image) Helvetica Bold, 15px	N/A	Level 2 Titles	Headers to divide the page into areas such as In the News, Spotlights (2 nd Level Titles)
Section Header (HTML) Verdana, 13px, bold	.HdrBlackBold	Level 3 Titles	Section headers within the above sections (3 rd Level Titles)
Content Header (HTML) Verdana, 11px, bold	.BodyTextBlackBold	Level 4 Titles	Headers to distinguish between topic areas or paragraphs sections within the content (4 th Level Titles)

4.3 Color Palettes

Below are several sample color palettes to choose from to build your agency Web site or application. All colors are represented as hexadecimal values.

Color Option 1

Shown below are the colors for Color Palette One. This is the 'USDA.gov' color palette.

- 1. Left Navigation Dark Grey: #838594
- 2. Button Yellow: #FFED00
- 3. Left Navigation Medium Grey: #C5C5C5
- 4. Blue Link Color: #000099
- 5. Purple Visited Link Color: #660099
- 6. Black Rule: #000000
- 7. Right Navigation Grey: #D5D5D5
- 8. Right Navigation Light Grey: #F2F2F2
- 9. Right navigation Grey Rule: #B8B8B8

10. Background Dark Grey: #3F3D3E



4.3 Color Palettes continued

The following section bars can be used on all second and third level pages. These colors correlate to the different Top and Left Navigation items.

	Section Bars
11. Services and Programs Green: #228622	Services and Programs
12. About "Agency" Navy: #35106E	About "Agency"
13. Newsroom Blue: #536CA5	Newsroom
14. Opportunities Maroon: #7F1C1C	Opportunities
15. Online Forms Rust: #A1420F	Online Forms
16. Help Orange: #7F1C1C	Help
17. Contact Us Red: #B32F01	Contact Us
18. En Español Purple: #73305F	En Español

Section Bar Components

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 573px / Height: 37px

Headings: Text: "Section Name" / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 24px / Color: #FFFFFF /
Image: section_head_newsroom.gif / Width: 573px / Height: 37px /
Cutsheet Name: section_heads.psd

4.3 Color Palettes continued

Color Option 2

Shown below are the colors for Color Palette Two.

- 1. Left Navigation Dark Blue: #707F94
- 2. Button Yellow: #FFFED0
- 3. Left Navigation Medium Blue: #BDC5D0
- 4. Blue Link Color: #000099
- 5. Purple Visited Link Color: #660099



Left Navigation Column

- 6. Black Rule: #000000

- 7. Right Navigation Blue: #CBD3DE
- 8. Right Navigation Light Blue: #E7ECF2
- 9. Right navigation Grey Rule: #B8B8B8



Right Navigation Column

- 10. Background Dark Grey: #3F3D3E

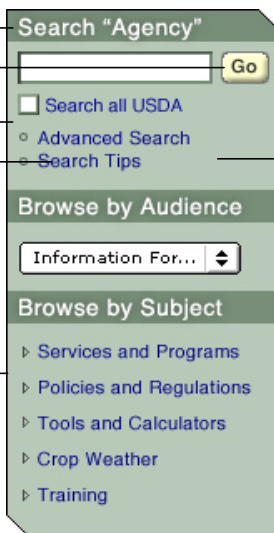


4.3 Color Palettes continued

Color Option 3

Shown below are the colors for Color Palette Three.

- 1. Left Navigation Dark Green: #788E79
- 2. Button Yellow: #FFFED0
- 3. Left Navigation Medium Green: #B8C9B9
- 4. Blue Link Color: #000099
- 5. Purple Visited Link Color: #660099



Left Navigation Column

- 6. Black Rule: #000000

- 7. Right Navigation Green: #C6D4C5
- 8. Right Navigation Light Green: #E7EEE6
- 9. Right Navigation Grey Rule: #B8B8B8



Right Navigation Column

- 10. Background Dark Grey: # 3F3D3E



4.3 Color Palettes continued

Color Option 4

Shown below are the colors for Color Palette Four.

1. Left Navigation Dark Blue: #333367
2. Button Yellow: #FFFED0
3. Left Navigation Medium Blue: #ABBACF
4. Blue Link Color: #000099
5. Purple Visited Link Color: #660099

Left Navigation Column

7. Right Navigation Blue: #ABBACF
8. Right Navigation Light Blue: #DBE4ED
9. Right Navigation Grey Rule: #B8B8B8

Right Navigation Column

10. Background Medium Blue: # A8ACB7

4.3 Color Palettes continued

Color Option 5

Shown below are the colors for Color Palette Five.

- 1. Left Navigation Dark Green: #01541C
- 2. Button Yellow: #FFFED0
- 3. Left Navigation Medium Green: #B8C9B9
- 4. Blue Link Color: #000099
- 5. Purple Visited Link Color: #660099

Left Navigation Column

- 6. Black Rule: #000000
- 7. Right Navigation Green: #C6D4C5
- 8. Right Navigation Light Green: #E7EEE6
- 9. Right Navigation Grey Rule: #B8B8B8

Right Navigation Column

- 10. Background Warm Grey: #B2B19D

4.4 Links

These are the guidelines set for all HTML links in the Content Area and Right Navigation Column.

Links

HTML text links is always blue (#000099). The hover state of all HTML text links on the site is always underlined. Visited text links is always purple (#660099).

Links to resources or Web sites outside of the .gov domain must explicitly indicate that the link goes to a non-federal site/resource by one of the following:

- Identifying the full URL of the destination link and open in a new browser window.
Example: "...as reported here (<http://www.pbs.com>)",
- Inserting an exit page that displays after the user selects the link, or
- By some other clear means.

All links to non-Web information that are application-dependent must display the file format name and size. These links must open in a new browser window. The files launched must be in industry standard format so as not to impose a burden on the intended audience. Base your choice of file format on both the needs of your intended audience and the business needs of your agency.

Example: [Link text](#) (PDF; 1.3Mb)

The only exception to this rule applies to live streaming media (e.g. video and audio clips).

4.5 Tables and Forms

These are the guidelines set for tables and forms in the Content area and Right Navigation Column.

Table Formatting

Tabular information should be displayed in a table with the following general attributes:

- Border Color: #838594
- Cell Padding: 0
- Cell Spacing: 0
- Border: 1px
- Table Header Color: #838594
- All table cells are left-justified and vertically aligned to the “Top” by default. Numerical values may be right-justified if it enhances the legibility of the page.

Tables should be labeled with a descriptive term to help screen readers (Section 508) identify content. Additionally, a summary and caption attribute (HTML) may be used to further describe the content of the table displaying complex information. In order for those using screen readers to more easily associate cell data with its respective headers, the id and headers attributes are used. Every <th> tag should contain an id attribute that associates a name with each table header. Then, each <td> tag should contain a header attribute that references the assigned id of any headers it is associated with. If the header is for a column (vertical axis), assign the scope attribute of the <th> tag the value "col". If the header is for a row (horizontal axis), assign the scope attribute of the <th> tag the value "row". This enables assistive devices to read the contents of the header cells before their associated data cells.

Forms Formatting

Forms are used anytime when input from users are necessary. For text input, a simple text field may be used. Anytime a text field is required, it must be clearly noted using an asterisk "*" at the end, to avoid form submission errors. Form fields and labels should be left-aligned on the page and a colon ":" must follow the field label (e.g. "First Name*:"). Some general guidelines related to using forms are as follows:

- Use radio buttons when user inputs must be one choice between two or more options.
- Use a check box when user input may be none, one or more choices among one or more options.
- Drop-down boxes in forms must have a default value. If a default value can't be determined, "<Select XXX >" should be used.

Note: Radio buttons and check boxes are always initialized to their most commonly used setting.

4.5 Tables and Forms continued

Form fields must be organized in the order in which they should be filled out. When this is not possible, tab indexing (HTML) is required to ensure proper flow of the process. Cursor focus is on the very first field in a form page. Tab order should follow a top-down and left-right pattern for all input fields, drop-down boxes, and buttons. Forms should provide as much information as possible to aid users in populating the form. For example, text hints, context-sensitive help or alternating light and dark color rows should be displayed where appropriate. Please refer to the *User Registration Template* on page 61.

4.6 Imagery

These are the guidelines set for all imagery used within the Web site or application.

Imagery

There are two types of imagery displayed on Web sites and applications: photographic images and non-photographical images such as charts, graphs, buttons, etc.

For photographic images, the file format is JPEG. Image quality compression should be at medium level. The minimum dots per inch (dpi) requirement is 72. All colors should be in RGB, not CMYK.

A one pixel border is required around all photographic images. Non-photographical images should have a one pixel border where appropriate. Round or irregular-shaped images (i.e. the Farm Bill icon) are not required to have a one pixel border.

Note: Images used within Web sites and Web-based applications must be copyrighted.

Thumbnail Images (photographical images)

Only images that also appear in the Photo Gallery are required to have the “Click on to Enlarge” feature associated with it.

Attributes: Not required / Portrait Orientation: Width 70px, Height 80px /
Landscape Orientation: Width 80px, Height 70px

Large Images (photographical images)

Only images that also appear in the Photo Gallery are required to have the “Click on to Enlarge” feature associated with it.

Attributes: Not required / Portrait Orientation: Width 135px, Height 90px /
Landscape Orientation: Width 90px, Height 135px

Enlarged Images (photographical images)

This option is reserved only for enlarged photographs inside the Photo Gallery.

Attributes: Not required / Portrait Orientation: Width 230px, Height 315px /
Landscape Orientation: Width 315px, Height 230px

Charts, Graphs, Tables (non-photographical images)

For charts, graphs, and other types of non-photographical images, the file format is GIF when possible. The width of these elements cannot be greater than 396px for those items placed within the center Content Area when a Right Navigation Column is present. Otherwise, the width of these elements cannot exceed 584px. Special types of images, such as large data charts, maps, and scientific pictures, may require larger dimensions to display. These images must open in a separate window. Please refer to the *Large Image Template* on page 69.

Alternative Text Tags (all images)

All imagery must have a descriptive alternative text tag associated with it.

4.6 Imagery continued

Buttons

All buttons on your site should be consistent in appearance. Placement of all buttons on the page must be right-aligned with the form fields on the page. If forms and/or results list require scrolling, it is recommended that buttons are placed above the form/list as well. The text on all buttons should be succinct and descriptive of the action of the buttons. The text on all buttons should be center-aligned on the button and have six pixels of spacing between the text and right and left edges of the button.

Buttons should be ordered by frequency of use from left to right. It is recommended that the most frequently used button is made the default action, i.e., that which is activated when users press the 'Enter' key.

Multi-page data collection forms should always contain a 'Continue' button to allow users to advance to the next page or step. 'Cancel' buttons are reserved for instances to allow users to quit the form without saving. 'Reset' buttons allow users to clear the fields of a form. 'Submit' buttons should be reserved for the final step of a process, though the wording of this final step button does not have to display 'Submit' (e.g. 'I'm Finished', 'Create My Page', 'Filter My Results').

Attributes: Text: "*Sample Text*" / Type: Helvetica Bold / Size: 11px / Color: #333333 / Height: 20px / Variable Width / Cutsheet Name: buttons.psd

4.7 Exception Pages

Exception pages do not follow the typical application navigation described above. The following pages are examples of exception pages.

Login

The Login page allows users access to the application. On Logout, users simply return to the Login page.

Note: Agency Web sites and Web-based applications that must authenticate users should follow the eAuthentication application's Login page and accompanying procedures.

The Login page contains:

- USDA branding area
- Masthead
- Welcome message (exit message if Logout)
- Username field
- Password field
- Link to Forgot Password page
- Login button
- Cancel button (optional)

The screenshot displays the USDA eAuthentication Login page. At the top left is the USDA logo and the text "United States Department of Agriculture" and "USDA eAuthentication". Below this is a banner image with "login:" and "password:" labels. A navigation bar contains links for "Home", "About eAuthentication", "Help", "Contact Us", and "Service Centers". The main content area features a green header "eAuthentication Login". On the left, there are "Quick Links" (What is an account?, Create an account, Update your account) and "Employee Links" (LRA Login). The central form includes "User ID:" and "Password:" labels, each followed by a text input field, and a "Login" button. On the right, an "I Want To..." section offers "Change My Password" and "Reset My Forgotten Password" links. The footer contains links for "eAuthentication Home", "USDA.gov", "Accessibility Statement", "Privacy Policy", and "Non-Discrimination Statement".

4.7 Exception Pages continued

Child Windows

Child Windows, used to display images or context-sensitive help, are launched in a separate browser window containing no browser or global navigational elements other than the Masthead. When launched, these types of windows will display at the upper left-hand corner of the screen. Child Windows can not spawn additional Child Windows and will always have a “Close” button at the bottom-right of the window. When closed, the window that spawned the Child Window will refresh to its position prior to spawning the window. Please refer to the *Photo Gallery Template* on page 66.

4.8 Error Handling

Errors are defined as any action that impedes forward progress of the application.

Error Handling

There are two different error types that will be discussed: General Errors (low severity) and System Errors (high severity).

Examples of error types are:

- General Error – This type of error occurs when users leave a required field in a form blank, or when users attempt to submit invalid information to the application.
- System Error – This type of error occurs when there is a hardware or software disruption.

Error messages must be informative and explicit. Regardless of error type, every error must produce a description of what went wrong and what users can do to correct the error. Error message content should avoid exclamation points, violent or hostile words, technical jargon, system-generated error codes, and contains a description of the problem, steps to correct the problem, and support information. When appropriate, a link should be provided allowing users to access the applicable section of the help document. Error codes and system-generated messages should be displayed in manner users can understand.

General Errors

An informative error message should be displayed if a general error occurs. When a user submits a form, for example, a specific JavaScript function will check to see that all required fields have been filled with valid information. If there are any errors, an informative error message will appear in red text above the form fields warning the user of the problem. The cursor focus will be set to the missing or incorrectly formatted field on the form only if the error occurs above the page fold.

You are here: [Home](#) / [Registration](#) / [Registration Error](#)

New User Registration

Registration Error

Please review the information submitted in your registration form. Not all required fields have been completed.

Problem with form field: Email Address

Username*: Create a username that you will remember. For example, your first initial and last name: jdoe.

Password*: For help, please view the [password specifications](#).

Confirm Password*:

First Name*:

Middle Initial:

Last Name*:

Email Address*: *Please enter a valid Email Address*

Confirm Email Address*:

Country*: ▾

Zip Code*: By providing your geographic location of where you reside, we can supply information that is best suited to you.

4.8 Error Handling continued

System Errors

An error page will be displayed when a high-severity system error occurs. System errors occur when users can no longer continue through the application. This type of error usually happens if the application server or database server goes down, the server is hanging on an operation, or when users attempt to perform an illegal operation. If any of these errors occur, the application should fail gracefully and redirect users to a formatted error page.

The following error information will be provided for users on the System Error page:

- Error description
- Possible side effects
- Fix or solution
- Whom to contact for support and how
- Link to Home page
- Link to Help

4.9 Technical Considerations

The following guidelines will define best practices regarding general implementation of the HTML pages.

Domains

Informational Web pages and applications must be hosted on domains exclusive to the US government. Within USDA, sites should use the .gov or .fed.us domain. When there is a change to your domain and your Web site or application URL changes, communicate this change to your users and notify FirstGov so they can update the link to your site. When you change a second-level domain name or an individual page URL, insert a "redirect" notice that will automatically take visitors to the new URL³

Frames

Informational Web pages and applications should avoid the use of frames. These pages should not be loaded into frames of other Web sites. A script should be provided to detect when and if this happens. The script will be responsible for breaking the page in question out of the confines of the frame.

Platforms

Operating Systems

At minimum, all Web pages must be accessible on the following Operating Systems:

- Microsoft Windows (95/98, NT, 2000, XP)
- Macintosh (OS 8.5+, OS 9.x, OS X)
- UNIX/Linux

Note: Each operating system must provide the ability to use assistive technologies for those individuals with disabilities.

Web Browsers

At minimum, the following common Web browsers must be supported:

- Netscape Version 6.x+
- Internet Explorer Version 5.x+
- Safari Version 1.0+ (Macintosh)
- Mozilla Firefox 1.0.x+

Note: The XHTML 1.0 Transitional W3C standards should be adhered to when designing templates. Users who are not using common browsers (AOL, Opera, Mozilla, etc.) may experience minor differences in look and feel, since all browsers do not follow the W3C guidelines to exact specifications for HTML, XML, etc.

³ Office of Management and Budget, Policies for Federal Agency Public Websites

4.9 Technical Considerations continued

Accessibility Considerations

Web pages that require an applet, plug-in, or other application to be present on the users' machine to interpret page content must provide a link to the necessary application. If users choose not to install the applet or plug-in, the Web page should still be able to viewable without an error message appearing.

Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)

All Web pages will use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). With CSS, designers and users can create style sheets that define how fonts, colors, and layouts of different elements, such as headers and links, appear.

These style sheets can then be applied to any Web page. A CSS has been developed for 'USDA.gov' that other agencies can use if desired to adhere to the USDA Web Style guidelines. In order to adhere to accessibility requirements, all pages must be viewable without the use of style sheets. CSS classes are defined in Section 4.1 for Fonts of this document.

Pages in printer-friendly format should not include any global navigation elements nor the footer. Additionally, printer-friendly formats should have a one inch margin all around.

Screen Size and Bit Depth

All pages should be designed for a minimum of 800 x 600px screen resolution with consideration of the navigational bars that each Web browser contains (i.e., top header icons, status bar, and right side scrollbars). The minimum page height is 410px. Homepages and major points of entry should have a maximum of 2 pages of vertical scrolling. All pages should be centered in the browser window.

The minimum color bit depth for your site should be 16-bit (65,536 colors). All Color Palettes described in this Style Guide adhere to a 16-bit color depth.

4.9 Technical Considerations continued

Search

Agency Web sites are required to include a search function. OMB requires that this function search all files on the Web site that are intended for public use, display results in order of relevancy, and provide a timely response. To meet this requirement, integrate with the Google search engine, and follow the USDA guidelines as depicted below in USDA.gov to display search results.

The screenshot shows the USDA.gov website with a search bar and navigation menu. The search results are powered by Google and show 10 results for the query 'regulations'. The results include links to various USDA pages such as 'The USDA Ethics Web Site', 'New Juice Regulations Underway', 'FAIRS Country Reports Selector', 'FSIS Strengthens Regulations to Reduce Listeria monocytogenes', and 'APHIS | News | Press Releases'.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
 President Abraham Lincoln formed the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1862 to help develop and promote agriculture in the United States

Home About USDA Newsroom Agencies & Offices Help Contact Us En Español

You are here: Home / Search

Search Results

regulations [Advanced Search](#) [Search Tips](#) powered by **Google™**

Results 1 - 10 of about 76700 (0.05 seconds).

The USDA Ethics Web Site
 The USDA Ethics Web Site □ Rules of the Road. This browser does not support frames. Please visit the text-only version of this site. ...
www.usda-ethics.net/rules/ - 2k - [Cached](#)

New Juice Regulations Underway [PDF]
 ... because of its high acidity. Over time, bacteria can develop New Juice **Regulations** Underway Jean C. Buzby and Stephen R. Crutchfield (202) 694-5370 (202) 694 ...
www.ers.usda.gov/publications/foodreview/may1999/frmay99f.pdf - [Text Version](#)

FAIRS Country Reports Selector
 Return to the FAS Online Home Page. Food and Agricultural Import **Regulations** and Standards (FAIRS) Country Reports Selector. ...
www.fas.usda.gov/tp/ofsts/fairs_by_country.asp - 4k - [Cached](#)

FSIS Strengthens Regulations to Reduce Listeria monocytogenes ...
 ... FSIS Strengthens **Regulations** to Reduce Listeria monocytogenes In Ready-To-Eat Meat and Poultry Products. ...
www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/news/2003/lmfinal.htm - 10k - [Cached](#)

APHIS | News
 ... Press Release. Daniel Parry, (301) 734-3255. Jerry Redding, (202) 720-6959. USDA PROPOSES TO AMEND GYPSY MOTH **REGULATIONS**. ...
www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/news/2003/05/gmreport_ppq.html - 11k - [Cached](#)

APHIS | News | Press Releases
 ... Press Release. Meghan Thomas. (301) 734-3266. Jerry Redding, (202) 720-6959. USDA AMENDS MEXICAN FRUIT FLY **REGULATIONS**. ...
www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/news/2003/02/mextreat_ppq.html - 10k - [Cached](#)

APHIS | News | Press Releases
 ... Press Releases. Meghan Thomas (301) 734-3266 Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959. USDA AMENDS KARNAL BUNT **REGULATIONS**. ...
www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/news/2002/10/kbamend_ppq.html - 11k - [Cached](#)

APHIS | News | Press Releases
 ... Sue McAuley (301) 734-3255 susan.s.mcauley@usda.gov Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959 jerry.redding@usda.gov. USDA AMENDS IMPORTED FIRE ANT **REGULATIONS**. ...
www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/news/2000/05/FAREGS.HTM - 11k - [Cached](#)

APHIS | News
 ... Press Releases. Larry Hawkins (916) 857-6243 Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959 USDA SEEKS COMMENTS ON EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE **REGULATIONS**. ...
www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/news/2002/11/exnewcas_vs.html - 11k - [Cached](#)

FSIS Regulations & Policies
 ... Food Safety Education, Science, FSIS Recalls, Food Security & Emergency Preparedness. You are here: Home / **Regulations** & Policies. ... **Regulations**, Directives & Notices. ...
www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/index.asp - 43k - [Cached](#)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Next >

FOIA | Accessibility Statement | Privacy Policy | Non-Discrimination Statement | Information Quality | FirstGov | White House

5 Templates for Informational Web Pages and Sites

The following design templates were chosen to provide you with examples of virtually every component you might need in building your own informational Web pages. These design templates include graphical examples of various levels of pages as well as all the specifications required to help you design and develop Web pages or applications in compliance with USDA standards. While each agencies' content components will vary, you should adhere to the structure of the layout presented in these templates. All templates are based on the standards set forth in this guide.

5.1 Agency 1 Template

The Agency Homepage contains the following areas of information: *Introduction*, *In the News* and *Spotlights*. This page also includes the date it was last modified. This is required⁴.

The screenshot shows the USDA Agency 1 Template homepage. The page layout includes a header with the USDA logo and "Agency Name", a navigation bar with links like Home, About "Agency", Newsroom, Opportunities, Online Forms, Help, Contact Us, and En Español. A search box is located on the left side. The main content area is divided into several sections: "Introduction Text" (a paragraph about serving agricultural producers), "In the News" (a section with two news items, including a statement by the FCIC Chairman and an announcement about risk management tools), "Spotlights" (a section with four program announcements: Livestock Assistance Program, Crop Disaster Program, Grassland Reserve Program, and County Committee Election), "I Want To..." (a list of links for services like Direct Loans and Certified Lenders), "Announcements and Events" (links for committee elections and program information), "Your Local Office" (a dropdown menu for selecting a state), and "Media Help" (a link to download a PDF reader). At the bottom, there is a "Last Modified" date (08/31/2005) and a footer with various links.

1. Introduction Text

2. In the news

3. Spotlights

4. Last Modified

Agency 1 Template Components

1. Introduction Text

The Introduction text is slightly larger than other body text on the Web site. It can be used as an introduction to your agency or a mission statement. The Introduction can be two to four lines in length.

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 13px / Color: #333333 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: None

⁴ Office of Management and Budget, Policies for Federal Agency Public Websites

5.1 Agency 1 Template continued

2. In the News

This section highlights the top four or five current news releases and should be updated frequently. News release headlines are bold text and are HTML links. Use of imagery or summary is optional. When a summary is shown, it will always begin with the news release date.

A. Headline Bars

Overall Size: Width: 368px / Height: 23px

Headings: Text: “In the News” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 15px / Color: #000000 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: content_head_inthenews.gif / Width: 368px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

B. Headlines

Attributes: Font: Verdana Bold / Size: 11px / Color: #000099 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: Underline

C. Body text

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 11px / Color: #000000 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: None

D. Images

Attributes: not required / Portrait Orientation: Width 70px, Height 80px / Landscape Orientation: Width 80px, Height 70px

3. Spotlights

Spotlights contain important programs that will appear on the homepage for a longer period of time than News Releases. Each program headline is a bolded HTML link. Use of imagery or summary is optional.

A. Headline Bars

Overall Size: Width: 368px / Height: 23px

Headings: Text: “Spotlights” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 15px / Color: #000000 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: content_head_spotlights.gif / Width: 368px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

B. Headlines

Attributes: Font: Verdana Bold / Size: 11px / Color: #000099 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: Underline

5.1 Agency 1 Template continued

C. Body text

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 11px / Color: #000000 / Text-Decoration: None /
Hover: None

D. Images

Attributes: Not required / Portrait Orientation: Width 70px, Height 80px /
Landscape Orientation: Width 80px, Height 70px

4. Last Modified

The Last Modified date lets your users know when the content of this page was last modified. This is required so users can tell that they are accessing current information.

Attributes: Required / Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 11px / Color: #000000 / Text-Decoration: None /
Hover: None

5.2 Local Navigation Template

Some agencies may prefer not to incorporate a Right Navigation Column into their Web sites or applications. This template shows how you can modify the Left Navigation Column to include sub-levels of information in order to eliminate the need for the Right Navigation Column.

The screenshot shows a web page for the USDA. The header includes the USDA logo and the text "United States Department of Agriculture" and "Agency Name". Below the header is a navigation bar with links: Home, About "Agency", Newsroom, Opportunities, Online Forms, Help, Contact Us, and En Español. The main content area is titled "Services and Programs" and contains text about the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000. Below this text is a section titled "Pilot Programs" with a table of policy information. A left sidebar contains a search box and a "Browse by Subject" menu with "Services and Programs" selected. Annotations 1-4 point to the green section bar, the body text, the "Pilot Programs" heading, and the selected menu item in the sidebar, respectively.

Policy Name	Policy #
Adjusted Gross Revenue Insurance Policy	2001-AGR
Coverage Enhancement Option (CEO)	00-026A 08/06/99
Producer Premium Percentage Tables for Coverage Enhancement Option (CEO) in Lotus spreadsheet format	

Local Navigation Template Components

1. Section Bar

The Section Bar appears on all second and third-level pages. The Section Bar color is Services and Programs Green (#228622).

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 575px / Height: 37px

Headings: Text: "Services and Programs" / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 24px / Color: #FFFFFF / Image: topics_head_services.gif / Width: 575px / Height: 37px / Cutsheet Name: section_heads.psd

5.2 Local Navigation Template continued

2. **Body Text**

Attributes: Font: Verdana Bold / Size: 11px / Color: #000000 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: None

3. **Pilot Programs**

This section contains tabular information that allows users to navigate directly to descriptions of the pilot programs.

A. Headline Bars

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 368px / Height: 23px

Headings: Text: “Pilot Programs” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 15px / Color: #000000 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: content_head_pilotprogram.gif / Width: 368px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

B. Body text

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 11px / Color: #000000 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: None

C. Content Table

This section shows how to format information in data tables.

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 11px / Color: #000000 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: None

Table Attributes: Table border: 1px / Color #838594 / Background Color: #EDF2ED

4. **Menu Selected State**

This is an expanded view of the Left Navigation. If users choose Services and Programs from the Left Navigation Column, the Subject will expand on the next screen as shown in the example.

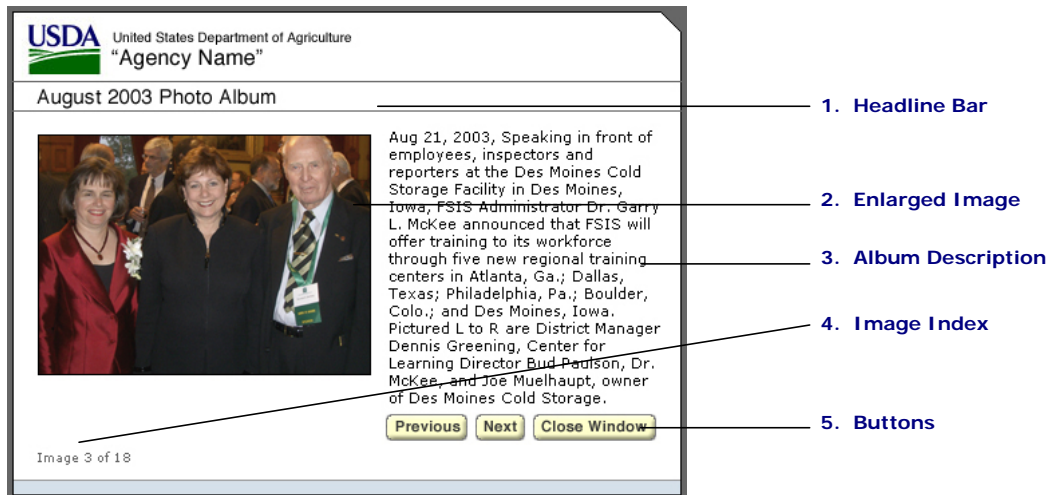
Overall Size: Width: 171px / Variable Height / Content: “Browse by Subject” image and bulleted list of various subjects

Navigation Headings: Text: “Services and Programs” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 11px / Color: #000099 / Rollover: Underline / Rollover Color: None / Image: r_c_nav_services.gif / Width: 171px / Height: 22px / Cutsheet Name: nav_columns.psd

Sub Topics: Text: “Dairy Options Pilot Program (DOPP)” / Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 10px / Color: #000099 / Rollover: Underline / Rollover Color: None / Image: r_c_subtopic_dairy.gif / Width: 171px / Height: 22px / Cutsheet Name: nav_columns.psd

5.3 Child Window Template

This example illustrates how a child window should appear.



Child Window Template Components

1. Headline Bar

This Headline Bar is unique to the Child Window Template. It extends the length of the window. In this example, the Headline Bar represents a photo album from August 2003.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 500px / Height: 23px

Headings: Text: "August 2003 Photo Album" / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 15px / Color: #000000 / Image: content_head_child.gif / Width: 500px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: section_heads.psd

2. Enlarged Image

An Enlarged Image is a photo or graphic used to visually support content. An Enlarged Image may be horizontal or vertical in format but must be scaled and cropped to the pixel dimensions provided below. All images must have a one pixel black border.

Attributes: Required / Landscape Orientation: Width 315px, Height 230px

3. Album Description (Body Text)

The Album Description provides information on the image, including identification of all persons pictured, date, place and event.

5.3 Child Window Template continued

A. Body Text

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 11px / Color: #000000 / Text-Decoration: None /
Hover: None

4. Image Index

The Image Index indicates the position of the image in the series contained in the Photo Album.

A. Body Text

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 10px / Color: #000000 / Text-Decoration: None /
Hover: None

5. Buttons

These buttons help users navigate the Photo Album.

Attributes: Text: “Previous, Next and Close Window” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 11px /
Color: #333333 / Height: 20px / Variable Width / Cutsheet Name: buttons.psd

5.4 Data Table Template

This template shows an example of how a page with data tables can be formatted and displayed.

The screenshot displays a USDA web page for a 'Customer Statement'. The page features a navigation bar at the top with links like 'Home', 'About "Agency"', 'Newsroom', 'Opportunities', 'Online Forms', 'Help', 'Contact Us', and 'En Español'. A search box is on the left. The main content area is titled 'Customer Statement' and includes a 'Contact Summary' section with fields for Customer Name, ID, Address, City, State, Zip, Statement Date, Email, and Telephone. Below this is a 'Program Summary' table and a 'Summary of New Activity' table. At the bottom right of the content area, there are 'Edit' and 'Save' buttons. Callouts on the right side of the image point to these elements: '1. Headline Bar' points to the 'Customer Statement' title; '2. Body Text' points to the contact and program summary sections; and '3. Buttons' points to the 'Edit' and 'Save' buttons.

Program	Data Source	Contract Amount	Payments	Balance
Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)	FSA, NRCS	75,000	25,000	50,000
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	FSA	35,000	12,750	22,250

Date	Description	Data Source	Amount
6/1/03	CRP Payment for Buffers	FSA, NRCS	8,500

Data Table Template Components

1. Headline Bar

Headline Bars designate a section of content and have been created as graphic elements. The Headline Bar may vary in width. It may measure half of the Content Area column; full length of the Content Area column; or extend to the right margin of the page if no Right Navigation is required. Sometimes a More button will appear in the right margin of the bar.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 561px / Height: 23px

Headings: Text: "Customer Statement" / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 15px / Color: #000000 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: content_head_customer.gif / Width: 561px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

5.4 Data Table Template continued

2. Content Tables

The Content Table can be formatted as needed to allow display of the information desired.

A. Table Header

Attributes: Border: 1px / Color: #838594

Text : Font: Verdana Bold / Size: 11px / Color: #000000

B. Table Text

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 11px / Color: #000000

3. Buttons

Buttons allows users to edit or save the information in their statements.

Navigations Headings: Text: “Save and Edit” / Size: Helvetica Bold / Size: 11px / Color: #333333 / Height 20px / Variable Width / Cutsheet Name: buttons.psd

5.5 User Registration (Form) Template

The User Registration Template is a utility page that does not include a Right Navigation Column, thereby allowing content to extend across the page.

The screenshot shows the 'New User Registration' form on the USDA website. The form is titled 'New User Registration' and includes a search bar on the left and a navigation menu at the top. The form fields are as follows:

- 1. Headline Bar:** The title 'New User Registration' is located at the top of the form area.
- 2. Body Text:** The instructions 'Please complete the information below to register as a new user. All required fields are denoted by an asterisk (*). Select **Continue** once you are finished.' are located below the title.
- 3. Form Fields:** The form includes the following fields:
 - Username* (text input)
 - Password* (text input)
 - Confirm Password* (text input)
 - First Name* (text input)
 - Middle Initial (text input)
 - Last Name* (text input)
 - Email Address* (text input)
 - Confirm Email Address* (text input)
 - Country* (dropdown menu)
 - Zip Code* (text input)
- 4. Buttons:** The form includes 'Reset', 'Cancel', and 'Continue' buttons at the bottom.

Additional elements include a search bar on the left, a navigation menu at the top, and a footer with links and a 'Last Modified' date.

User Registration (Form) Template Components

1. Headline Bar

Headline Bars designate a section of content and have been created as graphic elements. The Headline Bar may vary in width. The width of the Headline Bar may measure half of the Content Area column; full length of the Content Area column; or extend to the right margin of the page if no Right Navigation is required. Sometimes a More button will appear in the right margin of the bar.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 573px / Height: 37px

5.5 User Registration (Form) Template continued

Headings: Text: “New User Registration” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 24px / Color: #FFFFFF / Image: content_head_newuser.jpg / Width: 364px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

2. **Body text**

Body text is HTML text that represents descriptive copy. Body Text may contain HTML links, which must appear in blue type.

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 11px / Color: #000000 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: None / Link Color: #000099

3. **Form fields**

This is a standard HTML form field.

Attributes: Required fields are indicated by an “*” / Size: 23 characters

4. **Buttons**

Buttons allow users to edit or save the information in their statements.

Attributes: Text: “Reset, Continue, Cancel” / Type: Helvetica Bold / Size: 11px / Color: #333333 / Height: 20px / Variable Width / Cutsheet Name: buttons.psd

5.6 Newsroom Template

This is an example of a second-level page that is accessed by selecting Newsroom from the Top Navigation Bar. Agencies have control over the types of information displayed. This is one example of how you may display newsroom information.



1. Section Bar
2. News Releases
3. Featured Stories
4. Events
5. Agency Promotions

Newsroom Template Component Parts

1. Section Bar

Section Bars appear on all the second and third-level pages. This section bar color is Newsroom blue (#536CA5).

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 573px / Height: 37px

Headings: Text: "Newsroom" / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 24px / Color: #FFFFFF /

Image: section_head_newsroom.gif / Width: 573px / Height: 37px / Cutsheet Name: section_heads.psd

5.6 Newsroom Template continued

2. News Releases

This section displays a maximum of three to four news releases and should be updated frequently. News Release headlines are specified as bold HTML links. Use of imagery or a summary is optional. When a summary is shown, it will always begin with the news release date.

A. Headline Bars

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 368px / Height: 23px

Headings: Text: “News Releases” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 15px / Color: #000000 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: content_head_newsreleases.gif / Width: 368px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

B. Headlines

Attributes: Font: Verdana Bold / Size: 11px / Color: #000099 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: Underline

C. Images

Attributes: not required / Portrait Orientation: Width 70px, Height 80px / Landscape Orientation: Width 80px, Height 70px

3. Featured Stories

Featured Stories is an HTML listing with a maximum of three important news items.

A. Headline Bars

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 368px / Height: 23px

Headings: Text: “Featured Stories” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 15px / Color: #000000 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: content_head_features.gif / Width: 368px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

B. Headlines

Attributes: Font: Verdana Bold / Size: 11px / Color: #000099 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: Underline

4. Events

Events is an HTML listing with a maximum of three important upcoming events.

A. Headline Bars

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 368px / Height: 23px

Headings: Text: “Events” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 15px / Color: #000000 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: content_head_features.gif / Width: 368px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

B. Headlines

Attributes: Font: Verdana Bold / Size: 11px / Color: #000099 / Text-Decoration: None /
Hover: Underline

5. **Agency Promotions**

An agency promotion may be included in the right navigation column as necessary to promote agency activity. The number of Agency Promotions should be limited to one.

5.7 Photo Gallery Template

This Photo Gallery Template is usually part of the Newsroom section. This page shows how photo albums are displayed.

The screenshot shows the USDA Newsroom Photo Gallery Template. It features a blue navigation bar at the top with the following items: Home, About "Agency", **Newsroom**, Opportunities, Online Forms, Help, Contact Us, and En Español. Below the navigation bar is a search bar and a sidebar with navigation options. The main content area is titled "Newsroom" and includes an "Image Library" section, a "Featured Photo Album", and a "Photo Albums" section. A right sidebar contains a "Newsroom" menu, an "Email Subscription" form, and a "Public Meeting on Pre-Harvest Food Safety Issues" announcement. Numbered callouts point to the following components:

1. Section Bar
2. Image Library
3. Featured Album
4. Photo Albums

Photo Gallery Template Components

1. Section Bar

Section Bars appear on all the second and third-level pages. This Section Bar color is Newsroom blue.

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 575px / Height: 37px

Headings: Text: "Newsroom" / Font: Helvetica Medium / Size: 24px / Color: #FFFFFF /

Image: section_head_newsroom.gif / Width: 575px / Height: 37px / Cutsheet Name: section_heads.psd

5.7 Photo Gallery Template continued

2. Image Library

This section contains instructions and forms to help users to navigate the Image Library section.

A. Headline Bars

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 368px / Height: 23px

Headings: Text: “Image Library” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 15px / Color: #000000 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: content_head_library.gif / Width: 368px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

B. Year Drop-Down Menu

The Year Drop-Down Menu allows users to view past photo albums.

Menu: “Year”

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 10px / Color: #000000

Default: Current Year

3. Featured Photo Album

You may wish to feature one of the photo albums in the Image Library. The featured photo album displays a sample photo at a larger thumbnail size than the other photo albums. Like the other photo albums, users can click on the photo to get a child window to display the complete album. See *Child Window Template* on page 52 for more information.

A. Headline Bars

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 368px / Height: 23px

Headings: Text: “Featured Photo Album” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 15px / Color: #000000 / Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: content_head_featuredphotoalbum.gif / Width: 368px / Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

B. Image

Attributes: Required / Portrait Orientation: Width 105px, Height 155px / Landscape Orientation: Width 155px, Height 105px

C. Body Text

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 11px / Color: #000000 / Text-Decoration: None / Hover: None

5.7 Photo Gallery Template continued

4. Photo Albums

A photo album is a series of photos related to an event, press release, etc. that you may wish to display. Once users click on the image, a child window will pop-up to display the images individually with captions. See *Child Window Template* on page 57 for more information.

A. Headline Bars

Attributes: Overall Size: Width: 368px / Height: 23px

Headings: Text: “Photo Albums” / Font: Helvetica Bold / Size: 15px / Color: #000000 /
Rollover: None / Rollover Color: None / Image: content_head_photoalbums.gif / Width: 368px /
Height: 23px / Cutsheet Name: subheads.psd

B. Image

Attributes: Required / Portrait Orientation: Width 70px, Height 80px /
Landscape Orientation: Width 80px, Height 70px

C. Body Text

Attributes: Font: Verdana Regular / Size: 11px / Color: #000000 / Text-Decoration: None /
Hover: None

5.9 Data Display Template

This template shows an example of how a data map display would be formatted within an informational Web site.

The screenshot shows the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) website interface for the 'Rural Indicators Map Machine'. The page is titled 'Data' and 'Rural Indicators Map Machine'. It features a search bar on the left, a navigation menu at the top, and a main content area with a map of Georgia. The map displays population change from 1990 to 2000 by county, with a legend on the right side. The legend categories are: Decline (Less than -3%), Low decline or growth (-3% to 3%), Modest growth (3% to 13.1%), Above average growth (13.1% to 28%), and High growth (Greater than 28%). Below the map, there are links for 'Georgia Graphs' and 'How to Read the Graphs'. The footer contains various links and the text 'Last Modified: 08/31/2005'.

6 Templates for Interactive Web Application Pages

The following design templates were chosen to provide you with examples of how to construct your own interactive Web application pages. These templates include examples of pages as well as all the specifications required to help you design and develop Web applications in compliance with USDA standards. While each application's content components will vary, you should adhere to the structure of the layout presented in these templates.

6.1 Interactive Application 1 Template

The following template is an example of an interactive USDA application that follows USDA Web standards. Since this particular example is an enterprise (Department-wide) application, the application name appears directly to the right of the USDA logo. Please refer to the *Agency 1 Template* on page 52 for component attributes.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
"Application Name"

Home | Help | Contact Us | Logout

You are here: Home

Welcome to the eLearning Application, Cindy Kauffman!
Learning is more than lectures, reading, and test-taking – it is a process with the potential to enrich and empower – and it takes place throughout an organization and across the value chain.

What's New?

September is IT Security Awareness Month!
All employees must complete Introduction to IT Security course no later than September 30, 2003.

Now Available: Workplace Harassment Training
This training is only required for employees with supervisory duties, however, all are encouraged to register!

My Current Courses

Course Name 1
Course description or details on when the user is scheduled to attend training.

Course Name 2
Course description or details on when the user is scheduled to attend training.

My Learning History

Completed Course
Details on when the user officially completed this program.

Completed Course
Details on when the user officially completed this program.

Last Modified: 08/31/2005

"Agency" Home | USDA.gov | Site Map | Policies and Links
FOIA | Accessibility Statement | Privacy Policy | Non-Discrimination Statement | Information Quality | FirstGov | White House

6.2 Interactive Application 2 Template

The following template is an example of an interactive agency application that follows the USDA Web standards. Because this is an agency application, the Agency Name will appear to the right of the USDA logo and the Application Name will appear in the top right quadrant of the Masthead area. Please refer to the *Agency 1 Template* on page 52 for component attributes.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency

Electronic Loan
Deficiency Payments

Insurance harvest drought

Home About eLDP What's New E-Forms Local Offices Help Contact Us Logout

You are here: Home / Producer Certification / Inquire

Inquire About A Producer

County FSA Officer: JASPER State/County Code: IA099 Telephone: (641) 792-2222

Producer Name: Starts With

Tax Id:

Tax Id Type:

Crop Year:

1 to 10 of 29 Records Found

Search Results							
	Producer Name	Tax Id	Tax Id Type	Address	City	State	Email Address
<input type="checkbox"/>	Artis Knudson	504662169	s	PO Box 2812	Grand City	CO	aknudson@aol.com
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arvid R Knudson	504585135	s	PO Box 2812	Grand City	CO	arnudson@aol.com
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bill Water	506566985	s				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Daniel G Huber	504588182	s	15 Galeon Way	Hot Springs Village	AR	huber1234@aol.com

< Previous 1 2 3 Next >

eLDP Home | USDA.gov | Farm Service Agency (FSA) | USDA Intranet
Accessibility Statement | Privacy Policy | Non-Discrimination Statement

7 Targeting USDA Audiences

This chapter provides users of the Style Guide, such as Web designers, developers, content providers, and content presenters, with an overview of USDA's target user audiences.

Audience and Purpose

The USDA Web audience comprises a diverse group of internal and external audiences. Because the audience interacts with multiple USDA agencies, a cohesive on-line visual presence will greatly aid users in finding the information they need quickly and efficiently. The Style Guide will help USDA on-line content providers with a vehicle to ensure that important information is effectively communicated on-line to the audiences that need it most.

Context

USDA's Web standards strive to be consistent with the goals of the President's Management Agenda, the eGovernment Act of 2002, and the USDA eGovernment Strategic Plan. As a result, these standards incorporate consistent site architecture and clear navigational tools, both of which greatly enhance overall site usability. After all, USDA's Web audiences want to find the content they need and move on to using it offline. This overview will help focus content to specific user groups. It provides a brief synopsis of the knowledge gained by USDA's [Web Presence Audience Analysis](#) (completed in 2003) and examples of content that will be helpful to the target audiences.

Targeting USDA User Groups

USDA Web users can be viewed as two distinct groups: an internal audience and an external audience. This section introduces you to each, and identifies a sample site where you can see how one USDA agency has focused its audiences.

Internal User Groups

Internal User Groups include employees and policy makers.

Employees

USDA has over 100,000 employees. This group includes Washington-based employees, state and regional offices, field offices and some foreign locations. Approximately 50% of the USDA workforce is comprised of Service Center employees and about 25% are Forest Service employees. Most USDA employees have a computer at work and/or at home. Headquarters and Service Center personnel have high-quality Internet connections. A marked disparity exists with Field, Inspection and Foreign-based personnel, who are less like to have any access.

Effective Web content for this group may include the following:

- Clear links to USDA departments/divisions,
- E-Mail alerts, e.g., "Issues of the Day,"

7 Targeting USDA Audiences continued

- Clear links to research on-line, e.g., AgWeb.com, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Economic Research Service, National Agricultural Library, Agricultural Research Service, etc.,
- On-line calendars of important agency events, and
- Links to staff training opportunities through Human Resources and the USDA Graduate School.

While sites may need to include some information for employees, the main focus of your site should be on information for the public⁵. Public facing sites should not promote information that public-facing users may not be able to access, such as internal employee information. In the long run, employee information should be housed on an intranet, or an employee only site. The long term vision for USDA.gov, for example, is for all employee specific information to be housed within USDA.gov.

Policy Makers & Influencers

This group includes 541 members of Congress, 7,382 State legislators and USDA's own policy staff. Additional users in this group include the 295,000 employees of more than 147,000 associations and interest groups.

Some 10,000 Washington, DC-based lobbyists are also included in this highly educated, Internet savvy user group. Members of this group are overwhelmingly male, possess advanced degrees and serve professions like law, communications, public relations and journalism.

Effective Web content for this group includes the following:

- Clear links to research on-line, e.g., AgWeb.com, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Economic Research Service, National Agricultural Library, Agricultural Research Service, etc.,
- E-Mail alerts, e.g., "Issues of the Day", and
- Links to related government research tools they are already familiar with, such as Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute, the Library of Congress's THOMAS system, the Congressional Research Service and the Mann Library at Cornell University.

External User Groups

USDA has a variety of external user groups. As you consider the groups for your site, keep in mind the following:

Producers

It is estimated that the potential USDA audience includes some 2.2 million ranchers, agricultural, aqua-cultural and specialty crop producers, among others. The majority of this audience is male; over age 50; has completed at least high school, and fluently speaks and reads English.

A significant sub-set of this group is Spanish-speaking. This group primarily goes to USDA (usually in person) to determine program eligibility and complete application processes. They are highly motivated, don't want to waste time on paperwork and thus, rely heavily on USDA staff and/or intermediaries for support.

⁵ Office of Management and Budget, Policies for Federal Agency Public Websites

7 Targeting USDA Audiences continued

54% of producers own or lease a computer and 43% of all U.S. farms have Internet access, predominantly dial-up. Producers with sales in excess of \$100,000 had the highest prevalence of computer ownership (73%); however, small sale producers (sales less than \$10,000) still had 50% computer access rates.

- Effective Web content for this group includes:
- Clear summaries of eligibility requirements for benefits,
- On-line form submission capability and/or easily down-loadable forms,
- Links to farm policy documents, e.g., the Farm Bill, and
- Links to topical information such as farm loans, marketing assistance, crop insurance, risk management, etc.

Agribusiness & Cooperatives

There are approximately 100,000 members of this audience group, including non-farm, agricultural-related businesses (processors, packers and cooperatives). This is highly educated group, as most hold a four-year degree and many hold graduate degrees.

The members of this audience typically support farm businesses and help them process their applications to USDA programs. The target audience is interested in agricultural research, public meeting announcements, enforcement reports and hazard analysis, among other topics. This group is on-line an average of two hours a day; these are savvy users of USDA and other on-line sources of information.

To craft clear content for this group, include the following:

- Clear summaries of eligibility requirements for benefits, grants, and partnerships,
- On-line form submission capability and/or easily down-loadable forms,
- Links to topical information like Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Plans, and
- Links to appropriate FDA sites to obtain temporary food licenses.

Low-Income Families & Individuals

USDA provides assistance to approximately 20 million low-income families and individuals. This group has low literacy rates and other language barriers. They appreciate straightforward text with content aimed at basic comprehension.

Only 12.7% of low-income families have Internet access. Over the last year, this represented a 78% increase among low-income populations, demonstrating that more and more low-income users are availing themselves of on-line capabilities at public libraries, community centers and schools. Due to shared computer usage, this group hesitates to use on-line forms requesting personal information; however, eligibility requirements for benefits and programmatic news are of interest.

Effective Web content for this group includes the following:

- Clear summaries of eligibility requirements for benefits,

7 Targeting USDA Audiences continued

- Information clearly segmented with descriptive titles like “seniors,” “families with kids,” and “rural families,” and
- Bilingual information, as known Spanish-speaking populations are included in this target audience group.

More than any other group, USDA’s electronic resources for this audience should be marketed and supported with additional resources available in libraries and community centers, so that users are aware that they can read about topics of interest off-line.

Children & Caregivers

There are approximately 55,000 child nutrition professionals, including food service employees and managers; nutrition services coordinators, principals and superintendents.

This target group is located in almost 15,000 school districts and serves the 30 million children receiving USDA benefits (school meals, the Child and Adult Care Food Program and other Food and Nutrition Service sponsored programs). It should be noted that 99% of all U.S. schools have Web access and 85% of these schools use broadband technology.

Effective Web content for this group includes the following:

- Clear links to state education agencies administering school food service programs,
- Curriculum, lesson plans, recipes and other educational materials for in-school use,
- Links to children’s pages,
- Downloadable posters with good nutrition messages to hang in classrooms studies have shown educators use these posters and children aged 4-18 connect more readily with USDA through these messages than on-line, and
- Links to food safety educational materials and alerts.

Rural Communities & Businesses

This is a significant target group, as some two million rural families directly and indirectly receive USDA loan aid. This group also includes almost 5,000 rural businesses and cooperatives (with four million members) and 3,000 rural utility cooperatives. Forty-two percent of rural families are using the Internet, as are 48% of rural businesses. Educational levels vary widely, similar to those in urban areas.

Effective Web content for this group includes the following:

- Information clearly segmented with descriptive titles like “rural business” “rural power/utilities” and “rural families,”

7 Targeting USDA Audiences continued

- Links to USDA agencies such as Rural Housing Service, Farm Service Agency and the Rural Business-Cooperative Service, and
- Information on empowerment zones, credit guarantees and export assistance.

Researchers & Academic Community

Another significant group, the researcher and academic community, encompasses professionals at more than 3,300 colleges and universities. This group has some overlap with K-12 educators (already discussed in “Children & Caregivers”).

Researchers and the academic community often work in scientific fields such as food science, biology, horticulture and veterinary medicine. This is a well-educated group, as many teachers and researchers at the university level hold a Ph.D.s. On-line use is very high, with many having access to a computer at both home and office. Corporate-based researchers share these same demographics.

Effective Web content for this group includes the following:

- Links to data from the Economic Research Service, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Agricultural Research Service, and the National Agricultural Library,
- Ability to choose, compare and contrast among different data elements to determine usefulness of data for their audiences,
- Ability to use on-line tools to gather and analyze data,
- Downloadable publications,
- Clear explanations of grant program eligibility, on-line submission and/or downloadable applications from the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, and
- Links to trade data and industry regulations.

Landowners & Conservationists

There are approximately 10 million members of environmental groups, private forest and other landowners. This target user group includes recreation users, ranchers, forest producers and mining industries.

Landowners are overwhelmingly middle-aged and male. While most of their children no longer live at home, they will one day inherit their land. Members of environmental groups account for 4.2 million of the 10 million users; this sub-group includes the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and many smaller groups.

Some 33% of ranchers have Internet access as compared to 87% of forest product and mining worksites. Environmental groups are also Web savvy, using on-line information for both research and advocacy.

7 Targeting USDA Audiences continued

Educational levels vary among this group, but Internet access rates suggest a high level of users with some college if not a four-year degree or higher.

Effective Web content for this group includes the following:

- Topical information on fire protection, managing public lands, and managing natural resources such as coal and timber,
- Secure watershed information (one example of sensitive data),
- More E-forms, i.e., standardized unified Forest Permits, modeled after eReservations for forests and parks through Recreation.gov and/or Rural Development's on-line form system, and
- Educational curriculum on parks and land conservation, targeted to K-12 audience.

National & Local Media

This group includes all reporters and freelance journalists for newswires, radio, TV and related news publications. This user group is well educated (most hold at least a four-year journalism degree). Many in this group interact with USDA on-line (via the Web) and in person, conducting interviews with key players at USDA as needed. This group is always "on deadline" and wants credible information fast.

Effective Web presentation for this group includes the following:

- Clear links to summaries of topic information,
- Contact information,
- Tools that assist in sorting data,
- E-Alerts of Breaking News/Topics of the Day @ USDA, and agency press release pages, and
- Relevant financial information pertaining to USDA's producer groups and agricultural products. (This is especially important to financial reporters.)

General Public

This is the most diverse user group by far. The Pew Charitable Trusts, through its focused site Pewinternet.org, reports that 58% of American Internet users—68 million adults—have visited at least one government Web site. The general public turns to USDA to learn about fun topics, such as nutrition and recreation, as well as areas of concern, such as food safety and natural disasters.

Only 13% of all Americans are connected via broadband; most Americans still use dial-up services.

7 Targeting USDA Audiences continued

Effective Web content for this group includes:

- Clear links to summaries of topic information,
- Clear summaries of eligibility requirements for benefits,
- Information clearly segmented with descriptive titles like “seniors,” “families with kids,” and “rural families,”
- Information on national parks and other recreational activities,
- Increasing bilingual information, particularly on disasters, as Spanish-speaking populations are more heavily concentrated in Florida, Texas and California, where hurricanes, earthquakes and wildfires are prevalent, and
- Nutritional information and downloadable meals plans.

Getting to Know Your Audiences

The more you know about your Web audiences and what they do, the more you can create content that will help them get their jobs done. To better understand your audiences, develop user personas to help you envision real people going into your site to complete their tasks. To assist you, USDA already developed personas for the above-mentioned audiences in the Web Presence Audience Analysis document. These personas can be referenced online at

http://www.egov.usda.gov/Intranet/Program_Projects/Web_Standards_Team_Resources/index.html.

Economic Research Service provides another example of personas in action. As part of a Web strategy document, they identified specific personas for their site and products. You can find links to the personas samples (in PDF format) on-line at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AboutERS/OurSite/>.

8 Editorial Content

Although the basics of good writing are universal, writing copy for the Web differs from preparing text for a printed publication. Just as the Style Guide serves to help USDA and agency Web developers create user-friendly, consistent, informative and effective Web pages, this section on editorial content will ensure that the text throughout your Web site or application meets those same standards.

8.1 Crafting Text

This chapter provides specific information on how users read Web text, strategies for structuring text, and guidelines for ensuring clarity.

Overview: How people read Web content

Users of information enter sites with specific goals in mind. When visitors to your site need specific information, they look for structure to guide them through your site. As a creator of visual information, you must work to develop a structured site – one that enables users to quickly find the information they require.

This first section explains how people read Web text and presents the most common challenges users face.

What do people demand from Web text?

The Web is a “performance-based” medium. Users turn to Web sites for information, and as the amount of information increases, the demand for attention increases. Readers will remain in your Web site as long as they can find the information they require, but it must be presented clearly.

People want to complete tasks.

Some users browse the Web for recreational purposes or for entertainment, but when your users look for information, they do so because they have a task they want to complete.

Think about the users of information on USDA sites. When they enter “information space,” they are looking for specific information. They want to make their way through a Web site quickly and efficiently, absorbing as much information as possible.

Think in terms of tasks and actions. Give users what they are looking for in a structure they don’t have to “work” through, so they can achieve their goals and come away satisfied.

People want text that matters to them.

Users attempting to complete tasks are looking only for the information that pertains to them. Their first question will always be, “What’s in it for me?”

Present this information clearly and succinctly so they can complete their tasks. A successful user experience delivers the value proposition in a way users can understand it. Poorly constructed text does not allow your audience to engage fully, and in a broader sense, it diminishes the Web site’s usefulness in the users’ mind.

People want an intuitive hierarchy of information.

Users are accustomed to receiving information in a particular way. Begin with the most pertinent and/or general information and from here, users can decide whether or not to delve deeper into content. Every element on the screen can draw attention to another element. As a Web developer, your job is to place text and graphics in an order that mirrors users’ expectations. If your site undergoes a considerable change, such as a redesign, it is your responsibility to communicate these changes to your users. Include a “Spotlight” on your homepage providing a summary of the site’s new features⁶.

⁶ Office of Management and Budget, Policies for Federal Agency Public Websites

8.1 Crafting Text continued

People want their expectations fulfilled.

When people read, they want to have a good understanding of how they might move through content. You have the opportunity to structure information that “predicts” what’s coming up.

Good Web writing supports the users’ expectations and facilitates relationships between sections and chunks of information.

People want a good experience.

Research tells us that Web users want to successfully complete their tasks. Do not offer them fluffy marketing prose or pedantic academic ramblings. Respect your readers’ intelligence. You have the opportunity and the obligation to craft information that supports users’ needs.

Challenges with reading Web text

Research shows that reading from a computer screen tires the eyes. Some statistics even indicate that reading from a Web site is approximately 25% slower than reading print. Web users generally do not read word for word; they scan.

Given the nature of the Web, the sophistication of today’s search engine and users’ short attention span, users will commonly visit more than one site in search of what they need. Be mindful of this and remember that burying information will cause you to lose your users’ interest.

In the following section, you will see how content must enable people to see the structure in documents, find relationships and act.

8.2 Strategies for Crafting Text

As Web writers, you have the opportunity to focus content, chunk it into digestible units, and use expectation structures, such as headers and graphics, to help readers anticipate the content for any given page.

The GPO Style Manual ([Government Printing Office Style Manual](#)) can help you do that. This Style Manual is the product of many years of public printing experience, and its rules are based on principles of good usage and custom in the printing trade.

The Style Manual has served Federal printers since 1894, and with this 29th edition, the traditions of printing and graphic arts are carried forward into new technologies. The Manual, supported by an act of Congress, is considered the Public Printer of the U.S. Government Printing Office. It is authorized to determine the form and style of Government printing except in the cases of press releases, media advisories, or program announcements. For these press related items, Associated Press (AP) Style Guide should be used except for exceptions noted in the Office of Communications Guidelines – [Style Guidelines for Media Materials](#).

On some matters of Grammar and Usage, the *GPO Manual* suggests you refer to the [Chicago Manual of Style](#). Many writers and editors consider the *Chicago Manual of Style* the essential reference in publishing.

8.3 Guidelines for Ensuring Clarity

Web writing should be concise. It uses headings, lists, and subheadings to convey information. Don't worry about transitions. Web readers don't look for a smooth, essay-like structure. They do want to see how sentences and sections fit together.

Help readers envision the text.

You can help users see the sentences you are writing if you help them visualize who is doing what in a sentence. To help users see the structure in a sentence, you need to help them see characters and actions.

In much of today's writing, there is a tendency to downplay the question of who is doing what. Sometimes you want to hide the character. Other times, you are following traditional conventions or modeling the ways your supervisors learned to write.

In Web writing, however, your goal is to structure information with users in mind. You know from experience that Web readers want text that is clear, concise, and engaging.

Make text concise.

Joseph Williams⁷ offers the following tips for writing concise text:

- Remove confusing “characters.”
 - Do you read a sentence and wonder, “Who’s doing what?”
 - Look at your writing and identify any TO BE verbs (is, are, was, were, etc.) Can you change your sentence so your reader can more easily visualize your content?
- Delete words that mean little or nothing.
 - Avoid extra words. They will not impress others. As a builder of information, you do not have long to impress your audience. When they come to your site they have a goal in mind. Excess words will wear your readers out before they feel satisfied with the information they have gathered from you.
 - Work against the urge to fill space by adding unnecessary text. Remember, “less is more.” The shorter the amount of time it takes your audience to achieve their goals, the higher their satisfaction levels.
- Delete the words that repeat the meaning of other words.
 - Do you need all the words you use? For example, would you write, “sprint quickly” or “yell loudly?” Reduce the words to “sprint” or “yell.”
- Remove redundant pairs.
 - Do you have a tendency to say something is “true and accurate” when you could you simple say “true?”
 - Look at your writing for the word “and.” Do you need all your redundant pairs?

⁷ Joseph Williams, [Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace](#) (New York: Addison Wesley, 2002).

8.3 Guidelines for Ensuring Clarity continued

- Change negatives to affirmatives.
 - If you write in negatives, people generally turn the sentence around in their heads to process it.

Examples:

 - Not different = same
 - Not many = few
 - Not often = rarely
 - Not include = omit
- Avoid creating duplicative content.
 - If pertinent information is published elsewhere on your site or another federal public Web site, provide a link to this information as opposed to recreating it.⁸
- Replace complicated words with shorter ones.
 - This does not reduce wordiness, but it can make your writing easier to understand.

Examples:

 - Transmit = send
 - Prior to = before
 - Endeavor = try
 - Utilize = use
 - Ascertain = find out

Help readers read the text.

Seventy-nine percent of people scan Web pages instead of reading them word for word. This poses a challenge for you to develop your pages to place emphasis on key points and concepts. Here are a few ways to improve the readability of your pages for Web users.

- Bulleted and numbered lists slow down the scanning eye and help draw attention to important points.
 - You can include a greater number of lists on a Web page than on a printed paper page.
 - Use numbered lists when the order of entries is important.
 - Use unnumbered lists whenever the sequence of the entries is not important.
 - Limit the number of items in a single list to no more than nine.
 - Generally, limit lists to no more than two levels: primary and secondary.
- Each paragraph should contain one main topic. A second paragraph should be used to highlight a second idea, since users tend to skip over the second point while scanning the paragraph.
- Start your pages with a conclusion and a short summary to help users know what to expect further down the page.

⁸ Office of Management and Budget, Policies for Federal Agency Public Websites

9 Accessibility Guidelines

This section introduces Federal Section 508 Accessibility Guidelines and provides direction for incorporating accessibility and usability research that is available on-line.

Section 508 Accessibility Guidelines

Section 508 (amendments to the Federal Rehabilitation Act), implemented in June 2001, and requires Federal agencies to make their Web sites accessible to people with disabilities. Section 508 contains 16 specific technical requirements for Web sites. These are outlined below with links to additional learning materials.

Alternative (“Alt”) Text

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(a\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(a))

Provide a descriptive text equivalent for every non-text element (like images, audio clips, buttons, etc.).

Example: HTML Source Code: ``

Spacer images should include only quotation marks, not text.

Example: HTML Source Code: ``

Multimedia Presentations:

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(b\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(b))

Provide captions for audio/video presentations that are synchronized with the presentation so that the caption reader can associate body language with the speech.

Color and Meaning

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(c\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(c))

Color should not be the only way that page elements and controls (for example, buttons that activate new windows) are identified. Provide “alt” text or other context-sensitive information along with the color cue.

Readability and Style Sheets

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(d\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(d))

Organize documents so that they are readable without an associated style sheet.

Server-Side Image Maps

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(e\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(e))

Server-side image maps are not accessible. For each active region of a server-side image map, provide redundant text links elsewhere on the page. If possible, replace any server-side maps with client-side ones (see next item).

9 Accessibility Guidelines continued

Client-Side Image Maps

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(f\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(f))

Use client-side instead of server-side maps, because they are accessible if you provide “alt” text for each link describes links within each active region of the map.

Example:

```
<map id="homemap"><area shape="rect" coords="65,10,10,48" href="http://www.usda.gov" alt="USDA Logo link to usda.gov" title="USDA Logo link to usda.gov"/></map>
```

Data Tables

Row and Column Headers:

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(g\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(g))

Identify all row and column headers in data tables.

Date Cells:

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(h\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(h))

Add extra attributes (summary, scope, caption) to your source code that associate the data within each cell to its corresponding row and column headers.

Example:

```
<table summary="Summary of data being displayed">
<caption>Description of Data table</caption>
<tr>
<th>&nbsp;</th>
<th scope="col" >Spring</th> <th scope="col" >Summer</th>
<tr> <td scope="row" >Betty</td> <td>9-5</td> <td>10-6</td> <td>8-4</td><td>7-3</td>
</tr>
<tr> <td scope="row" >Fred</td> <td>10-6</td> <td>10-6</td> <td>10-6</td> <td>10-6</td>
</tr>
</table>
```

This table would be displayed as follows:

“Description of data table”

	Spring	Summer
Betty	9-5	10-6
Fred	10-6	10-6

9 Accessibility Guidelines continued

Frames

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(i\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(i))

Provide titles for frames to facilitate frame identification and navigation.

Screen Flicker

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(j\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(j))

Pages should not flicker, blink or flash within certain high intensity frequencies. Screen flicker can trigger seizures for some people with photosensitive epilepsy.

Text-Only Pages

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(k\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(k)) e a text-only page, with equivalent information and/or functions, **only** if there is no other way to comply with the Web accessibility requirements.

Example: HTML source code: `<div ID="textonly"> <p>Text Only </p></div>`

Readability and Scripts

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(l\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(l))

<http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/software-tutorial.htm>

Developers who create scripts or programs – like JavaScript, Java, etc. -- to display Web page content or create an interface must include functional text within those scripts or programs that is accessible to assistive technology devices.

Example:

```
<a href="javascript:myFunction();"></a>
```

Note: To ensure a site functions with scripting turned off or not supported, provide a text equivalent with the `<NOSCRIPT></NOSCRIPT>` element, or use a server-side script instead of a client-side.

Link to Plug-Ins

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(m\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(m))

For every page that contains downloadable content which can only be read using a plug-in (like a PDF that requires the Adobe Reader), include a link to the location of the plug-in. Additionally, confirm that the plug-in itself is accessible to people with disabilities before using it.

9 Accessibility Guidelines continued

Electronic, Online Forms

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(n\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(n))

Add extra attributes to your source code that let people using assistive technology access all form information, fill in all fields, trigger all functions, and otherwise follow all directions and cues needed to complete and submit the form.

Use the <LABEL> Tag and Associated "FOR" Attribute to Tag Labels. Identify the exact words that you want to use as the label for the form element and enclose those words in a <LABEL> tag. Use the "FOR" attribute to uniquely identify that element. Use the "ID" Attribute in the Associated Form Element. Every form element supports the "ID" attribute. By setting this attribute to the identifier used in the "FOR" attribute of the associated <LABEL> tag, you "tie" that form element to its associated label.

Example:

```
<form>
  <table>
    <tr>
      <td><b><label for="first">First Name:</label> </b></td>
      <td><input type="text" name="FirstName" id="first" ></TD>
    </tr>
    <tr>
      <td><b><label for="last">Last Name:</label> </b></td>
      <td><input type="text" name="Lastname" id="last" ></td>
    </tr>
  </table>
  <p>
    <input type="submit" value="submit">
  </form>
```

Navigation Links

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(o\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(o))

Add extra attributes to your source code that provide a way for people using assistive technology to skip repetitive navigation links (for example, a navigation bar that is used on every page) and jump directly to the main content areas of the page.

Timed Responses

[http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#\(p\)](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm#(p))

Sometimes, for security, pages that solicit information from customers are designed to expire within a certain timeframe if a response is not received. Add extra attributes to your source code that alert customers about the timed response and give them sufficient opportunity to indicate if they need more time to complete and submit their information.

9 Accessibility Guidelines continued

Categories of Disabilities

There are four main categories of disabilities:

- Mobility (difficulty operating mouse or keyboard)
- Hearing
- Vision (partial/total blindness and color-blindness)
- Cognition/Learning (reading comprehension, focusing)

The breadth of the challenge is significant. The number of people with a disability in the U.S. is estimated to be between 43 and 54 million. Of these, it is estimated that 535,000 Americans are blind and 4 million Americans are vision-challenged.

Weighing Costs and Benefits

Making sites accessible has spillover effects for all users, especially those using low-end modems and wireless Internet devices, and the aging population. Additionally, costs are not significant if you follow user-focused processes for planning. Kynn Bartlett, Director of the HTML Writer's Guild Accessible Web Authoring Resources and Education Center, states that, "Making a site accessible adds about one or two percent to the cost." Removing barriers on Web sites is simply a matter of good design.

Recommended Tools

- Self-voicing browsers: Home Page Reader
- Screen reader: JAWS, Window Eyes
- Diagnostic: WebXACT

Accessibility Resources

- Official Section 508 site -- <http://www.section508.gov/>
- USDA Section 508 site -- <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/508/index.html>
- Free Online Training -- <http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=5>
- Access Board Section 508 site -- <http://www.access-board.gov/508.htm>

10 Usability Guidelines

This section touches on usability issues to consider when designing your Web site or application.

Usability

Usability is the overall measurement of the satisfaction of interactions a user has with a product or system such as a Web site or software application. A high level of satisfaction occurs when users find a Web site or application useful and usable. Users want an engaging experience.

Usability Heuristics

Quality of the user's experience on a Web site can be measured using the following usability principles, or heuristics:

- Use a simple page design.
- Know your users and speak their language.
- Ensure consistency throughout the site.
- Design your site for efficiency and ease of use.
- Provide an engaging experience.
- Support the user and provide feedback.
- Use a clear navigation structure.

Weighing Costs and Benefits

An engaging user experience on a particular Web site or application results in increased usage of that site, improved user productivity, and reduced training, support, and development costs. Research shows that users cannot find information they seek on Web sites 60% of the time, leading to wasted time, reduced productivity, increased frustration and loss of repeat visits and money.⁹ The value of creating a user-focused Web site or application far outweighs its investment.

Usability Guidance

A federal site, www.usability.gov, provides broad information on usability and accessibility. The site comprises original content, links to external Web sites, resources, and articles.

This site provides current and accurate information on how to make health-related information Web sites and other user interfaces more accessible and useful. The site also links to a variety of quality Web sites and resources on usability, accessibility and related topics that exist in the field.

⁹ Mauro New Media, Charles Mauro

10 Usability Guidelines continued

Among the specific topics addressed are:

- What is usability?
- Why is usability important?
- What is the difference between usability engineering and usability testing?
- What steps are involved in usability?
- What is a usability test like?
- Do I need a lab to do usability testing?
- How many participants are needed for a usability test?
- How much does it cost to do usability testing?
- Why do iterative usability testing?
- How can you show that usability engineering saves money?
- How can I encourage people in my organization to conduct usability engineering and testing?

11 OMB Guidelines

This section provides guidance on updating USDA agency and staff office Web sites where necessary to implement the Policies for Federal Agency Public Websites issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on December 17, 2004. Some of these requirements are addressed in previous sections and are there denoted by footnotes. It is important that you review the OMB policy itself and the implementation guidance offered by the Web Content Management Working Group to understand fully how these requirements impact your Web sites.

- OMB Policies for Federal Agency Public Web Sites:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/fy2005/m05-04.pdf>
- Implementation Guidance: <http://www.firstgov.gov/webcontent/shouldmenu.shtml>

Content Updates

OMB's Policies for Federal Agency Public Web Sites require that certain content elements be included on all Web sites. This section provides guidance on how to update your Web sites in order to achieve compliance with OMB standards.

Provide Dates and Ensure Content is Current.

Provide a date stamp on your homepage, major entry points, and individual documents to show visitors that the content is current, that it's been reviewed within the past 12 months, or that it's a historical document. Remove or archive content that is obsolete, as long as it is not required to be made available by law or regulation. The date stamp appears in the bottom right-hand corner of the center content area and displays the date the content was last modified. For example, "Last Modified: 08/31/2005."

The screenshot shows a USDA agency website homepage. At the top, it displays the USDA logo and the text "United States Department of Agriculture" and "Agency Name". Below this is a navigation bar with links for Home, About "Agency", Newsroom, Opportunities, Online Forms, Help, Contact Us, and En Español. A search box is located on the left side, and a sidebar contains navigation options like "Browse by Audience" and "Browse by Subject". The main content area features several news items, including "Statement by FCIC Chairman of the Board on Cost of Production" and "USDA Announces Partnership Agreements for Risk Management Tools and Education". A "Spotlights" section lists programs like "Livestock Assistance Program" and "Crop Disaster Program". On the right side, there are sections for "I Want To..." (with links like "Apply for a Direct Loan"), "Announcements and Events", and "Your Local Office" (with a "Select a State" dropdown). At the bottom right, there is a "Media Help" section with a "Click to Download" button. A date stamp "Last Modified: 08/31/2005" is visible at the bottom of the main content area.

Date Stamp

11 OMB Guidelines continued

Organizational Information (“About Agency”) Page

The “About Agency” page, which is accessible from the Top Navigation Bar, must contain the following elements.

- Agency Mission Statement, including statutory authority
- Agency Strategic Plan
- Agency Organizational Structure
- Basic information about parent and subsidiary organizations and regional and field offices, as appropriate
- Name of agency head and other key staff, as appropriate

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

About 60 million young Americans have enrolled in 4-H programs since its beginning 100 years ago

Home **About USA** Newsroom Agencies & Offices Help Contact Us En Español

You are here: Home / About USA

About USA

Welcome From the Secretary

 In 1862, when President Abraham Lincoln founded the U.S. Department of Agriculture, he called it the “people’s Department.” In Lincoln’s day, 58 percent of the people were farmers who needed good seeds and information to grow their crops. Today, USDA continues Lincoln’s legacy by serving all Americans. USDA remains committed to helping America’s farmers and ranchers. But we also do much more....

- USDA leads the Federal anti-hunger effort with the Food Stamp, School Lunch, School Breakfast, and the WIC Programs.
- USDA is the steward of our nation’s 192 million acres of national forests and rangelands.
- USDA is the country’s largest conservation agency, encouraging voluntary efforts to protect soil, water, and wildlife on the 70 percent of America’s lands that are in private hands.
- USDA brings housing, modern telecommunications, and safe drinking water to rural America.
- USDA is responsible for the safety of meat, poultry, and egg products.
- USDA is a research leader in everything from human nutrition to new crop technologies that allow us to grow more food and fiber using less water and pesticides.
- USDA helps ensure open markets for U.S. agricultural products and provides food aid to needy people overseas.

Last Modified: 02/02/2005

About USA

- Secretary Mike Johanns
 - Secretary’s Page
 - Secretary’s Photo Gallery
- USDA Biographies
 - Secretary Mike Johanns
 - Deputy Secretary Chuck Conner
 - USDA Biographies
- Agencies and Offices
 - Agencies and Offices
 - USDA Mission Areas
 - USDA Advisory Committees
- Structure and Organization
 - Budget
 - USDA Organization Chart
 - USDA Performance and Accountability Report
 - Strategic Plan
- History and Mission
 - Former Secretaries
 - Mission Statement

See Also

- Agriculture Fact Book
- Equal Employment Opportunity Data Posted Pursuant to the No Fear Act
- The USDA Symbol
- Visitors Information Center

FOIA | Accessibility Statement | Privacy Policy | Non-Discrimination Statement | Information Quality | FirstGov | White House

11 OMB Guidelines continued

Site Map Page

Include a page entitled “Site Map,” which provides an overview of the major content categories of the Web site. The following is an example of a Site Map. Provide a link to this page in the footer of your Web site. See Section 2.5 for details.



11 OMB Guidelines continued

Common Questions

Include a page entitled “Common Questions,” which provides answers to commonly asked questions. This page should, at minimum, be accessible from the “Help” page. USDA.gov currently includes a page titled “FAQs.” This page will be updated to reflect the title recommended by the Web Content Management Working Group.

Forms and Publications

Offer easy access to forms and publications as appropriate to your users. Forms reside on the “Online Forms” page, which is an optional element of the Top Navigation bar (Section 2.2), and on additional pages as necessary.

Jobs

If appropriate, provide information about jobs and what it is like to work at your agency. At minimum, provide a link to the employee information on USDA.gov. Also provide a link to USA Jobs (<http://www.usajobs.gov/>) on your Web site. This information should be provided in the “About Us” section of your Web site.

11 OMB Guidelines continued

Regulations

If your agency issues regulations, provide information about those regulations on your Web site and link to the Regulations.gov portal (<http://www.regulations.gov/>). Below is an example of how USDA.gov meets this requirement.

The screenshot shows the USDA website's 'Laws and Regulations' page. The header includes the USDA logo and the text 'United States Department of Agriculture'. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, About USDA, Newsroom, Agencies & Offices, Help, Contact Us, and En Español. The main content area is titled 'Laws and Regulations' and includes a search bar, a 'You are here' breadcrumb, and several sections: 'Spotlights' with links to Farm Bill Forums, Food Distribution Regulations and Rulemaking, Forest Service Environmental Appeals and Litigation, Importing/Exporting Animals, Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Proposed Rule Published, Regulations.Gov, Today's Federal Register, and Agricultural Marketing Service Rulemaking; 'Related Topics' with a list of links including Biotechnology, Commodity Standards and Grades, Farm Bill Forums, Food Distribution, Food Labeling and Packaging, Homeland Security, Organic Certification, Patents and Licensing, Quality Assurance, Regulations and Directives, Safety Inspections, Trade Policy and Procedures, and Transportation and Distribution; and 'See Also' with links to Administrative Law Judges, EPA.gov, Federal Register, OMB Circulars, and Regulations.gov. A blue line points from the word 'Regulations' on the right to the 'Laws and Regulations' header. Another blue line points from 'Regulations.gov' on the right to the 'Regulations.gov' link in the 'See Also' section.

Grants and Agreements

If your agency provides grants or has contracting opportunities, including partnership agreements, provide information about these opportunities on your Web sites and link to the appropriate cross-agency portals. Also provide a link to Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov/>).

11 OMB Guidelines continued

Required Web Site Policies and Links

All USDA agencies are required to provide a link to Web site policies and required links. USDA.gov will develop one page for all agencies and office Web sites to reference. This link should be added to the first line of your footer. Please reference Section 2.5 Footer for further information. If you have additional internal agency or office policies to consider, you may do so by creating your own Web Policies and Links page, from which you include a link to USDA.gov's corresponding page.

Metadata

Standard metadata must be included on your homepage and all major entry points in order to help users locate government information. Major entry points are defined as those pages in the top two levels of your navigation. That is, subject area pages and those included in the top navigation bar. At a minimum include the following six metadata elements in the header of these Web pages: title, description, creator, date created, date reviewed, and language. Follow the Dublin Core Metadata Standards and the [USDA Metadata Model](#) when incorporating these elements.

Example:

```
<meta name="title" value="United States Department of Agriculture - Home"/>
<meta name="description" value="U.S. Department of Agriculture Home Page . Home Page"/>
<meta name="creator" value="U.S. Department of Agriculture"/>
<meta name="Create-date" value="2005-08-25"/>
<meta name="Approve-date" value="2005-08-25"/>
<meta name="language" value="en"/>
```

Access to Data

When including large data tables, be sure to provide data in a format that will allow users to manipulate and analyze data to meet their needs. When selecting data format, take into account the intended use of the data; the frequency of use; the accessibility of the format to users; and the level of effort and time required by the organization to convert the data to the file format. Use a proprietary format only if that format allows functionality not otherwise available. If this is the case, ensure that the intended audience has access to the appropriate software, or provide a link to the appropriate downloads. Please reference Section 6.2 Interactive Application 2 Template.

12 Appendix

Revision History

This Style Guide is a living document that will be updated and maintained by the USDA eGovernment Team. All information on past revisions is described below.

Version	Updated By	Date Last Updated	Reason for Revision
Draft	Theresa Phan	02/09/04	Initial Document
Version 1.0	Ita Li	02/19/04	Incorporated comments and suggestions from Chris Niedermayer (OCIO eGovernment Executive) and agency Webmasters
Version 1.1	Ita Li	05/19/04	Reference the USDA Web Style Guide Change Tracker for details
Version 2.0	Sarah Witmer	08/31/05	Incorporated section 11 - OMB Guidelines to provide guidance on complying with OMB's Policies for Federal Agency Public Web Sites. Updated Section 2.0 – Informational Web Pages and Sites, Section 2.5 – Footer, Section 4.4 – Links, Section 4.9- Technical Considerations, Section 7.0 – Targeting USDA Audiences, and Section 8.1 – Crafting Text, and 12 – Appendix accordingly. Updated templates throughout.

Contact Information

If you have any further comments or suggestions about the USDA Web Style Guide, or if you would like to request exceptions, please contact Kim Taylor, the Director of Web Services.

Name	Role	Email
Kim Taylor	Director of Web Services	kim.j.taylor@usda.gov

Resource Sites

Technical Resources

<http://www.internet.com/>

<http://www.webmonkey.com>

<http://www.webreference.com>

Usability Resources

<http://www.usability.gov/>

<http://www.useit.com>

OMB Resources

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/fy2005/m05-04.pdf>

<http://www.firstgov.gov/webcontent/shouldmenu.shtml>

Accessibility Resources

<http://www.section508.gov/>

<http://www.usability.gov/accessibility/index.html>

<http://www.access-board.gov>

<http://www.usda.gov/oo/target/>

<http://www.ocio.usda.gov/508/index.html>

Recommended Software

The following software and fonts are necessary to create and edit the text and imagery on your Web site or application.

- Preferred: Adobe Photoshop Version 6+
- Alternatives: Fireworks MX 2004, Microsoft Photo Editor*
- Fonts Required: Helvetica, Verdana

Note: For simple operations such as cropping, color adjustments, or resizing, agencies may use the image editor of their choice.