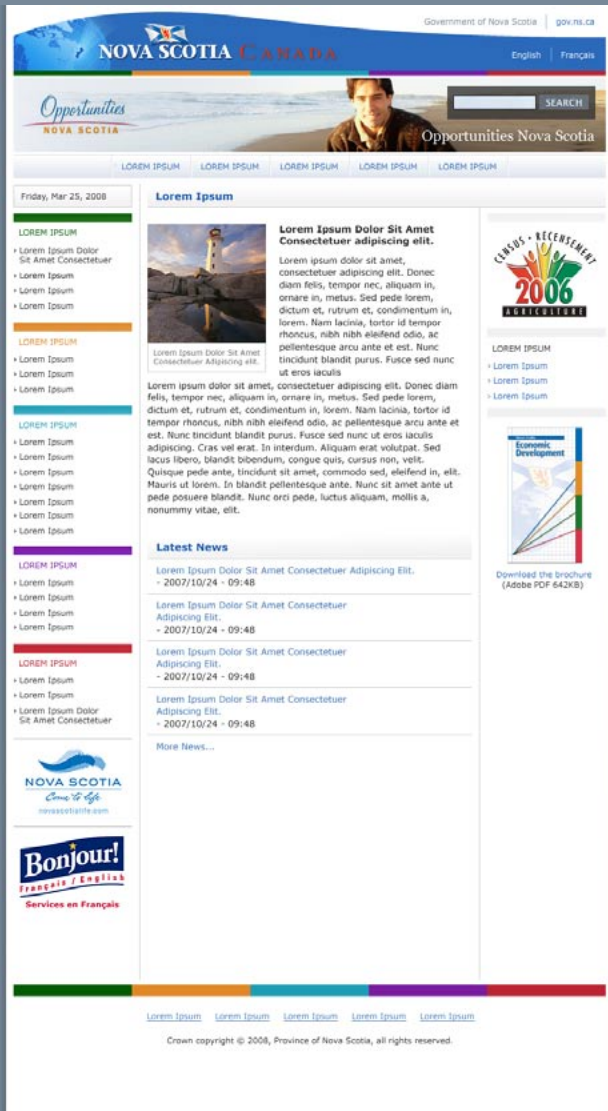




Welcome to The Nova Scotia Government Website Template



Why a new web template?

The new Nova Scotia Government website template is designed to help you maintain or create your government web pages.

If right now you are thinking “Why should I use a template for my site?” the answer is simple – we need to start providing a consistent online experience for Nova Scotians.

Nova Scotians do not think of us as separate offices or departments. To them, we are the Nova Scotia Government and we speak with one voice. As a result, it’s confusing for the average visitor when they go online and find current sites with vastly different looks and navigation. Ultimately we need to deliver a cohesive, unified online experience, and the only way we can do that is through consistency in our visual design.

This is why we created the Nova Scotia Government website template and why we ask you to use it.

In this document, you will find:

- Steps for converting to the new template.
- A detailed description of the different areas of the template.
- Web accessibility information to keep in mind.

Steps for converting to the Nova Scotia Government Web Template

Below are three key steps we encourage you to take before converting your site to the new template:

1. First and foremost, feel free to contact CNS if you have any questions about getting started or using the template.
2. Download the NS Web Template file and the NS CSS files. These files look after your formatting so you can focus on your content. Review your existing site and develop a new site map based on the new template. This helps you organize both your content and approach for creating your new site.
3. Browse through the selected images in the designated image bank and choose appropriate imagery for your site.

What is a Cascading Style Sheet (CSS)?

The new template uses Cascading Style Sheets (CSS).

A CSS file is a separate document containing a definition list of styles for text, images, tables, and other elements.

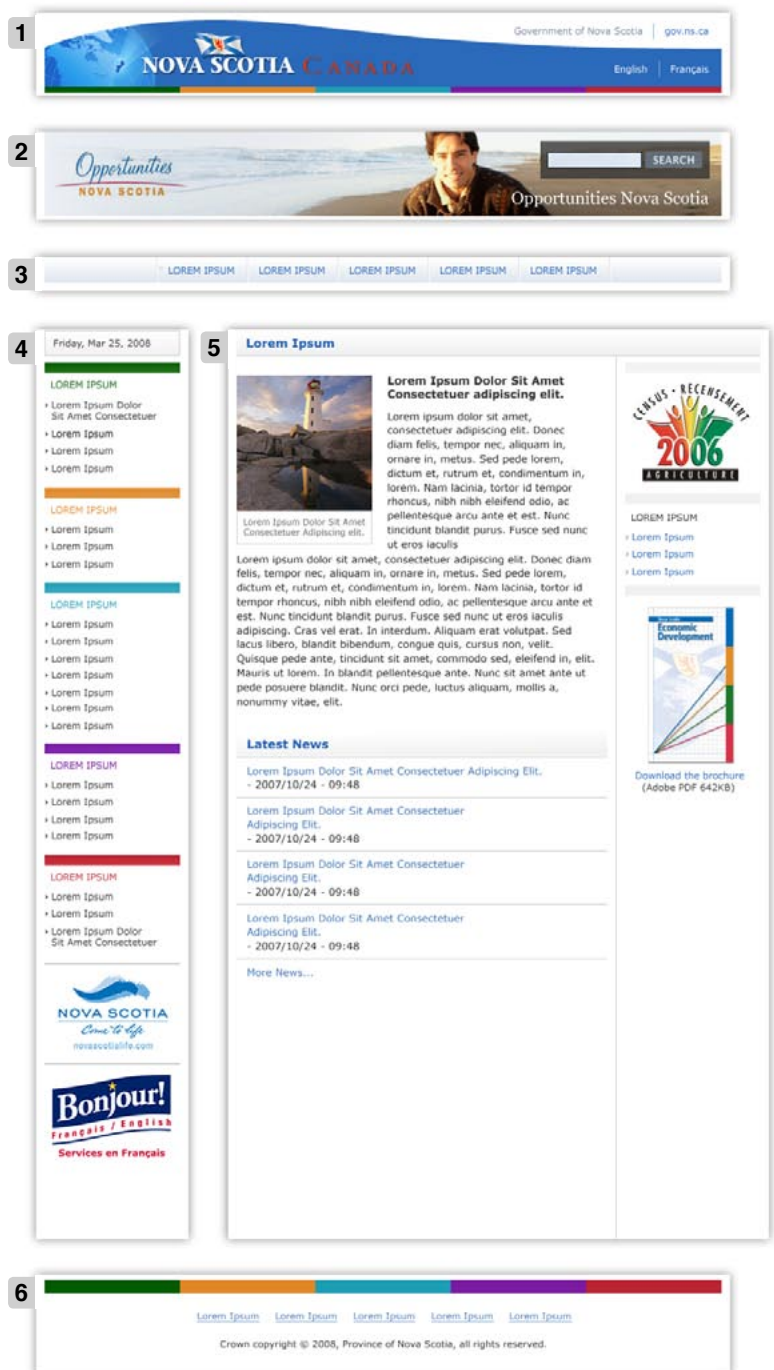
Basically, CSS automatically formats the appearance of text and other elements on the page so you don't have to inside your markup/HTML.

Overview of the Nova Scotia Government Template

The template combines six areas. Some elements, such as logos, disclaimers and navigation structure, remain consistent on every page. Others, such as content, navigation titles and images, can be edited and adapted to best serve your department or office communication needs.

Below is an illustration of the Nova Scotia templates. Each of the six different areas is highlighted. Each area is either Standard (cannot be modified) or Custom (can be altered).

1. Government Identification
2. Department or Agency Identification
3. Top Navigation
4. Left Navigation
5. Main Content Area
6. Bottom Disclaimer



Area 1 Government Identification

(CANNOT BE MODIFIED)

This area is the Standard Provincial brand area; it cannot be modified and must be on every provincial site. It contains:

- the Nova Scotia Canada logo
- “Government of Nova Scotia | gov.ns.ca” identifier.
- English/French options (note: only for pages that exist in identical French and English versions)
- The Come to Life colour swatch



Style Descriptions:

Images:

Wavebanner2.jpg

Colourbars.png with 3px of white space beneath

From the outset, all font values in the body will have the following values:

font-family:

Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif

font-size: 0.8125em

Text:

Verdana – 11px - #555555 - Right Aligned

Link:

Verdana – 11px - #555555 - Right Aligned

Area 2 Department or Agency Identification

This area is the Department or Agency Identification area. You control this area, and it must contain (with indicated standard formatting):

- The Department or Agency name
- An Office or Agency logo if applicable
- Banner imagery from the CNS Photo Library found on the internal network at “http://cns-xsrv.res.gov.ns.ca/Visual_Library/” (Note: Keep in mind the appropriate aspect ratio and space used by text, search boxes and logos)
- The province-wide search function



Style Descriptions:

Department title/image:

Image dimensions: 800 x 100px

Photo(s) should have sufficient contrast behind department title. Image should be darkened/manipulated/cropped as necessary. Photo(s) can be static or rotate using the script available from CNS.

Logo usage:

Logo should sit on top of photo within the background image (no bounding boxes or frames). Photo should be lightened/darkened/manipulated/cropped as necessary to ensure legibility.

Department Title:

Georgia – 20px - #FFFFFFF

If possible the Department title should be written in a single line and aligned to the right.

Area 3 Top Navigation

You control this area. The template offers top and left navigation. You may use both if it improves navigation and usability for your site. While you must use indicated formatting, you control the navigation naming and numbering.

Try to keep your top navigation items to five, with no drop down items.



Style Descriptions:

Text Links:

Verdana – 11px - #1F5DAA

text-transform: uppercase

Navigation should sit 3px below Area 2 and begin with a 1px horizontal line #E2E3E5.

Navigation should be 30px tall and sit on the white/blue gradient background.

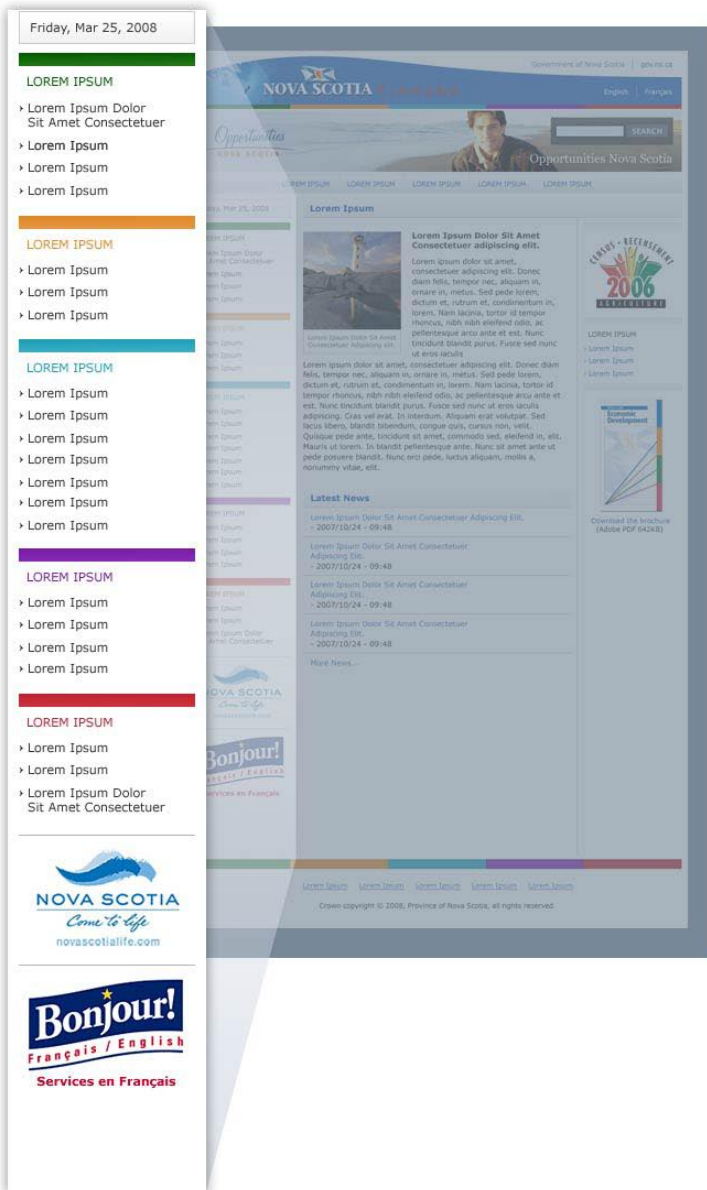
Links should be separated by borders consisting of 1px #E2E3E5 and 1px #FFFFFF

The topnav should have 10px of white space below.

Area 4 Left Navigation

You control the left navigation (using indicated formatting) with a couple of mandatory items. The left navigation must contain:

- The linked Come to Life logo
- *The linked Bonjour logo (Note: only to be used if there is a page on the site listing all of the services and information available in French)



Style Descriptions:

10px white space to left and right

Date:

Verdana – .9em - #333333 Left aligned.

Navigation Items:

Sections consist of a 160x12px colour block (in “Come to Life” colours) followed by:

Category:

Verdana – .9em - Corresponding colour – text-transform: uppercase

Links:

Verdana – .9em - #333333

Each line item in the section is prefaced by an arrow character (> symbol)

Come to Life:

A graphic link 160x125px directing to <http://www.novascotialife.com>

Bonjour:

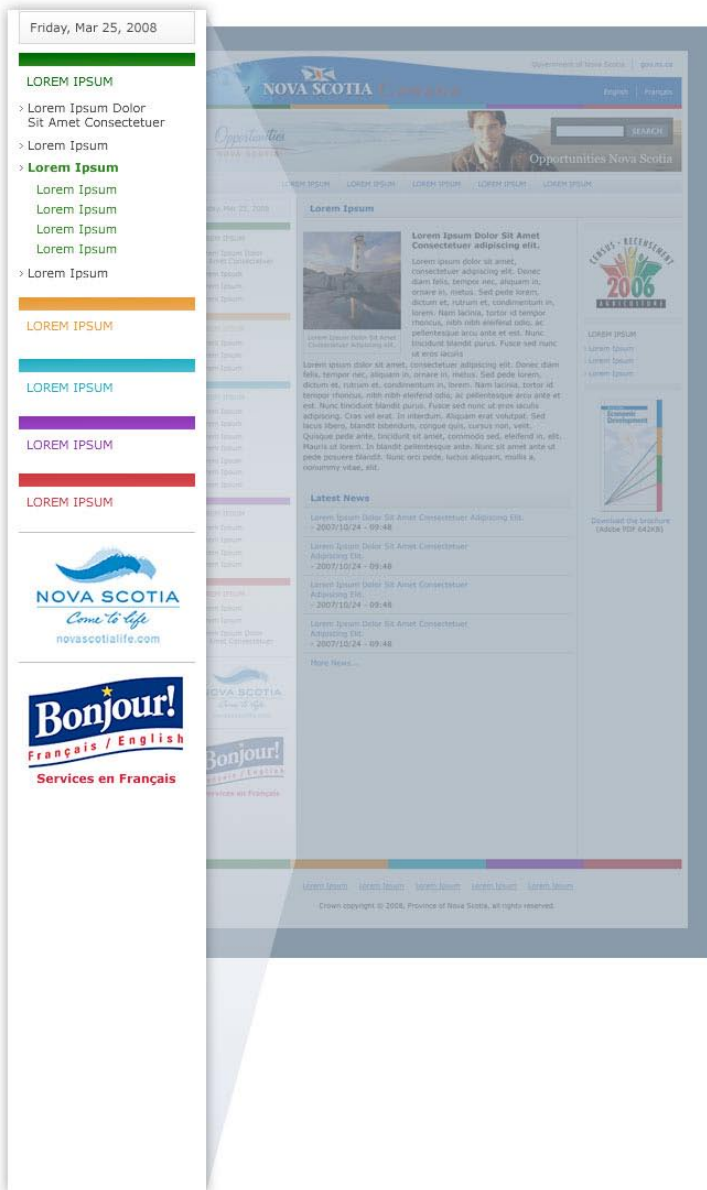
A graphic link 160x125px directing to applicable content

Area 4b Left Navigation - Subpage

A second level of sub navigation may be displayed and should be colour coded to the appropriate section. The navigation of other sections of the site are collapsed.

The left navigation on sub pages must contain:

- The linked Come to Life logo
- *The linked Bonjour logo (Note: only to be used if there is a page on the site listing all of the services and information available in French)



Style Descriptions:

10px white space to left and right

Date:

Verdana – .9em - #333333 Left aligned.

Navigation Items:

Sections consist of a 160x12px colour block (in “Come to Life” colours) followed by:

Category:

Verdana – .9em - Corresponding colour – text-transform: uppercase

Links:

Verdana – .9em - #333333

Each line item in the section is prefaced by an arrow character (> symbol)

Sub Links:

Verdana – .9em - corresponding colour

Each line item in the sub section is prefaced by a 15 pixel indent without the arrow character (> symbol)

Current Page Indication:

Verdana – .9em - font-weight: bolder - in corresponding colour

Come to Life:

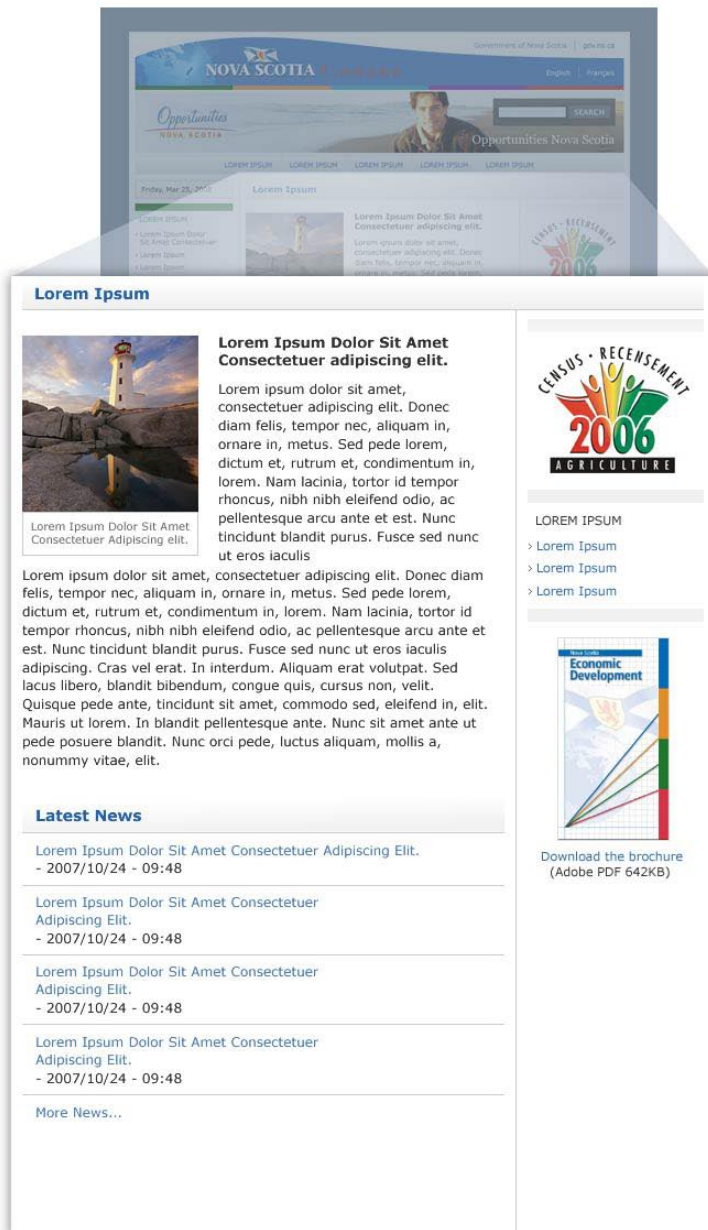
A graphic link 160x125px directing to <http://www.novascotialife.com>

Bonjour:

A graphic link 160x125px directing to applicable content

Area 5 Main Content Area

The Main Content area may be structured in one or two columns, as appropriate for the page. Column one is designed for main copy and column two is designed for call out items, such as special programs, initiatives, announcements and news. You control the Main Content area (using indicated formatting).



Style Descriptions:

1px #CCCCCC vertical line separating Areas 4 and 5
10px white space to left and right

Content can be contained in a 1 Column (619px) or 2 Column (438px & 160px) Structure. If 2 columns are used, regions are separated by 10px white space, 1px #CCCCCC vertical line and another 10 px white space

Page Headline:

Page headlines should be tagged as <h1>. “Lucida Grande”, “Lucida Sans Unicode”, sans-serif

Font-size:

1.5em; font-weight: bolder; color: #1f5099; Page Headline text should sit inside a 30px tall block containing the white/grey background (headergradient.jpg) and span the width of the entire area. A 1px #CCCCCC line should sit below.

For an example, on the CNS home page (<http://www.gov.ns.ca/cmns/>) the page headline is made like this: <h1>Communications Nova Scotia</h1>. This style information is contained in the stylesheet <http://www.gov.ns.ca/styles/site.css>.

Body copy Headline:

Body copy headlines should be tagged as <h2>. “Lucida Grande”, “Lucida Sans Unicode”, sans-serif. Font-size: 1.2em; color: #1f5099;

For an example, on the CNS home page (<http://www.gov.ns.ca/cmns/>), the headline “Office Closure Information Line” is made like this: <h2>Office Closure Information Line</h2>. This style information is contained in the stylesheet <http://www.gov.ns.ca/styles/site.css>.

Body copy:

Verdana – 0.95em - #333333 – line-height 1.1em

Body Links:

Verdana – 0.95em - #1F5DAA – line-height 1.1em

Second Column (if applicable):

Link items should be treated similar to Area 4, but no colours should be used as section breaks. The use of neutrals (#F1F1F1) for promotional regions is encouraged.

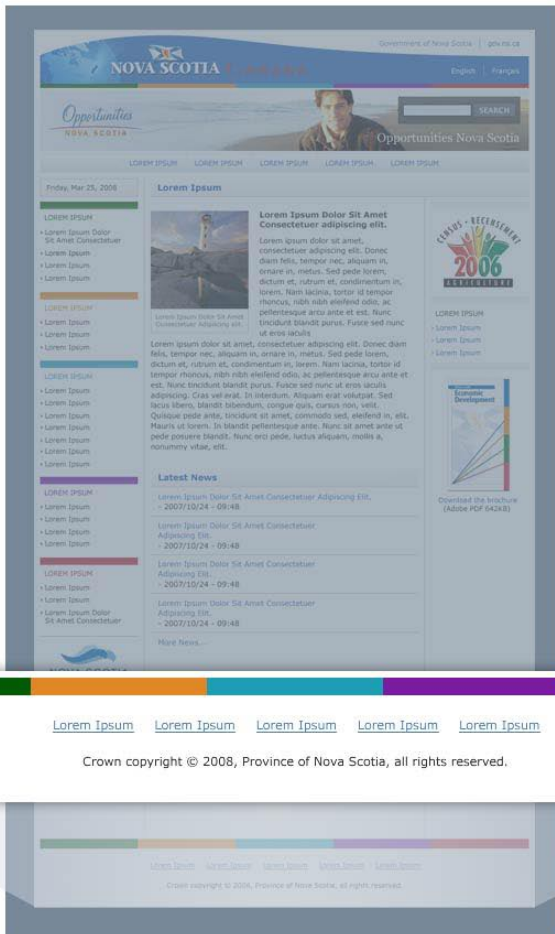
Promotional graphics & banners should be located in this column but not exceed 160px width.

Area 6 Bottom Disclaimer

(CANNOT BE MODIFIED EXCEPT FOR “CONTACT US”)

The Bottom Disclaimer area must appear on every site and cannot be modified. This area contains:

- The Come to Life colour swatch
- Departmental Web Contact (Contact Us), News, Search, Cookie (where applicable) and Privacy Navigation
- Nova Scotia Government Copyright



Style Descriptions:

Links:

Verdana Underlined– 0.9em - #1F5DAA
centered on page

Copyright:

Crown copyright © 2008, Province of Nova Scotia, all rights reserved.

Verdana – 0.9em - #333333
Centered on page

Page Last Updated note in form:

Page last updated YYYY-MM-DD

Accessibility Information

Pages, sites, and applications must all follow the Nova Scotia Government Web Standards (<http://www.gov.ns.ca/cmns/policies/webstandards.asp>), as per the Nova Scotia Government's Internet Policy. These Standards are always being revised. The relevant section for accessibility is section 15. The current standards aimed for are the WCAG 1.0, Priority 1 and 2 checkpoints (<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/full-checklist.html>). This will be augmented soon with the WCAG Samurai (<http://wcagsamurai.org/>).

POUR

To improve usability and accessibility we use the concept of POUR (<http://www.webaim.org/articles/pour/>). Government's information and services must be:

P = Perceivable

Information and user interface components must be perceivable by users.

O = Operable

User interface components must be operable by users.

U = Understandable

Information and operation of user interface must be understandable by users.

R = Robust

Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

Eight Basic Rules

This leads to eight basic rules to follow for pages, sites, and applications:

1. Use standards-compliant, semantic XHTML that validates.

A number of alternative browsers used by people with disabilities have trouble with non-standard code. Use XHTML semantically, that is, if something is in essence a list (like navigation menus) then tag it as a list, and if something is the most important header on the page, tag it as an h1. Then style it with CSS to look like you want. Use the W3C online validator to ensure the code is valid.

Separate content from presentation.

2. Do not improperly (non-semantically) label something because you want it to look a certain way. Tag things properly, and use CSS to control the presentation. This will increase the chances that users will be able to perceive your information as you intend. For example, look at the navigation menu on the Premier's site. The list of pages is just that - a list, so we tagged it as a list, and then used CSS to make it horizontal, and gave it a CSS rollover effect. Because we used standards-complaint code, the site works in all major browsers and on a number of PDAs, without any modification for the PDAs.

Use CSS to lay out your page, not tables.

3. Putting non-tabular information into tables is not only semantically incorrect, but may also result in your information being unintelligible to users with alternative user-agents (browsers). This is because these user agents might render your tables out of order, which might result in your information being out of order, too.

Use a text equivalent for all non-text elements.

4. Graphics are of no use to those with severe visual disabilities. Text descriptions of the elements can help to convey the information to these people. This includes videos, which should, when possible, be augmented for those with visual/auditory disabilities.

5. Never use colour alone to convey information.

For example, do not use colour alone to indicate that text is a hyperlink; use context (e.g. page location), surrounding information or something else such as underlining to indicate hyperlinks. Whenever you do use colours, make sure that there is sufficient contrast between elements so that people with low vision and/or colour blindness can distinguish between your elements.

6. Never use frames.

Frames tend to make navigation and bookmarking more difficult. Inline frames are better but still problematic.

7. Use plain language.

Put your content through a plain language edit whenever possible. This will make your content much more understandable, especially for persons with cognitive disabilities.

8. Allow for differences in user agents (browsers).

Make sure that essential features such as navigation and forms will work should Flash, scripts, or CSS be disabled.

Following these principles and rules will substantially improve usability and accessibility.