

# Promote Accessibility to Promote E-Government

## Promoting Accessibility Is Providing Alternatives

Web sites are steadily becoming one of today's fastest growing communication tools. Now more than ever, designing good web sites requires not only paying attention to content, design and layout. Web designers need to create web sites that are as user friendly as possible. One of the most important steps in effectively communicating your message to web site visitors is to provide accessibility for everyone.

### Why should you make Your web site accessible?

1. Accessibility to persons with disabilities increases your potential audience.
2. Navigation is easier for everyone.
3. Site Maps promote well structured consistent design.
4. Alternative presentation of structural elements of a web page promotes understanding and mediates different learning styles.
5. Accessible web site designs promote communication for devices such as palmtops, Internet-enabled pagers and web telephones. With the new cascading style sheet (CSS) standard ([www.w3.org/Style/CSS](http://www.w3.org/Style/CSS)) encoding style sheets for different devices will make accessible Web page design easier.

### Principles to Promote Accessibility

1. Use HTML and CSS compliant code to insure the pages are useful for many brands and versions of browsers. Do not use shortcuts or minimal HTML. Validate you HTML for compliance (<http://validator.W3.org/>)

2. For structural elements (Lists, Titles, Tags) of a Web page, provide alternative presentational elements (Bold, Fonts, Emphasis, Color).
3. Use tags or "screen tips" for focused items.
4. Test keyboards and voice navigation as well as mouse navigation. Test your Web pages with several different brands and versions of browsers and several generations and types of hardware.

### Access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

1. For audio clips, provide a text alternative.
2. For real-time live sound or view-cam sites, use captioning and text narration of actions.

### Access for Cognitive Impairments

1. Provide a name, e-mail address and phone number as close as possible to the upper left corner of the page.
2. Clearly identify text versus captions versus navigation link lists.
3. Provide clear, easy-to-navigate graphic links that are intuitive to use. A picture is worth a thousand words. For those with cognitive impairments, a picture is priceless.

### Access for Visual Impairments

1. Offer a text only version of the Web page and a link in the top left corner of the page.
2. If you use color to convey content, use alternative text or tags that provides equivalent content.

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The following Web sites will provide a wealth of information, on accessibility self tests, and web design interest groups and meetings. Website addresses are current as of September 2000.

### Access for Visual Impairments (continued)

3. Be sure that blinking text has a non-blinking text tag.
4. Match images with links to equivalent text with links.
5. Avoid use of frames to accommodate older browsers and screen readers. Instead, develop content that looks like a frame.
6. Use tags and Web form tags in addition to labels for text boxes.
7. If you render text in columns, provide equivalent text without columns.
8. Express the content of charts and graphs in a text tag. Conversely, improve comprehension of tabular or statistical data with charts and graphs.
9. Either avoid content-rich backgrounds (wallpaper) or provide a tag with a text description of the background.

### Access for Motor Impairments

1. Avoid small icons, links or response options such as radio buttons as they are hard to focus with a mouse and require fine motor skills. As a rule, be sure that links are .5" by .5" minimum in size.
2. Double-space lists of links to make it easy to focus on them.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE SECTION  
508 HOME PAGE:  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/508/508home.html>

CENTER FOR APPLIED SPECIAL  
TECHNOLOGY (CAST)  
<http://www.cast.org/bobby/>

PRESIDENT'S INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
(PITAC) REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT:  
<http://www.hpcc.gov/ac/report/>

WEB ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVE (WAI)  
<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>

CENTER FOR IT ACCOMMODATION  
(CITA)  
<http://www.itpolicy.gsa.gov/cita>

DESIGNING UNIVERSAL/ACCESSIBLE  
WEB SITES  
<http://traace.wisc.edu/world/web/index.html>

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS – THE  
NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE  
BLIND AND PHYSICALLY  
HANDICAPPED  
<http://cweb.loc.gov/nls/nls.html>

IBM WEB ACCESSIBILITY  
<http://www-3.ibm.com/ABLE/accessweb.html>

MICROSOFT ACCESSIBILITY HOME  
<http://www.microsoft.com/enable/>

ADOBE ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE  
<http://access.adobe.com>

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT  
ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLISTS  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/508/508docs.html>



<http://state.vipnet.org/cts/>

**Virginia Department  
for the  
Blind and Vision Impaired**

<http://www.vdvbi.org/>



<http://www.vddhh.org>



<http://vadrs.org>

  
VIRGINIA BOARD FOR  
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
<http://www.vaboard.org>

**Ernest F. Steidle, Ph.D.**  
**Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation  
Center**  
**Fishersville, VA 22939**  
**Voice Toll Free 800-345-9972**  
**TTY Toll-Free 800-464-9950**  
**Fax: 540-332-7917**  
**E-mail: [steidlef@wwrc.state.va.us](mailto:steidlef@wwrc.state.va.us)**

**Accessible soft versions of this  
brochure are available at**  
<http://vadrs.org/formscabinet/documents/Pro-moting%20Accessibility.pdf>

**Accessible hardcopy versions are  
available upon request.**