

10 Easy Rules for Making Accessible and Usable Websites

1. Create Web pages that are *straight-forward and clear*, so they are more easily understood.
2. Provide *obvious and consistent navigation*.
3. Provide “fair-access” alternatives to audio/visual content. This includes images, graphics, video clips and audio clips. (Use *descriptive ALT text always*, and provide text descriptions for any multimedia content, where you are able.)

Bad ALT example: “This is a pie chart of our budget.”

Good ALT example: “A pie chart showing the 2003 to 2004 budget breakdown with an emphasis on technology expenditures, since they account for more than 44% of the budget.”

4. *Use color and background images judiciously*. And absolutely anything emphasized through color, must also be emphasized through an additional means (bolding or oblique text).
5. Create tables that work properly. (Consistency in headings and rows is critical.)
6. *Do not use moving, blinking, scrolling or automatically-updating objects* (or, at least, ensure that these effects may be paused, stopped or circumvented *easily*)
7. *Warn your audience members before sending them off-site* via links or redirects.
8. Consider using PDF files in lieu of DOC formatting, *but provide clear links to download any necessary software* (Adobe Acrobat Reader, etc.).
9. *Be consistent with your writing style and language choices*, and also *be mindful of your data*. If you change a date or time on one page, and reference it on another, make sure both references are in accord. It is easy to confuse the little details when working with multiple content editors.
10. ***Do not use Microsoft Word as your HTML editor!!*** (Simply stated, Microsoft Word produces HTML using proprietary code. This isn’t a problem if your entire audience is using Internet Explorer 6.0, but many people are *not*.)

Consider the following example, produced in MS Word, in both MSIE and Netscape (or Firefox):

<http://www.rmc.edu/directory/offices/counseling/Sep%202002-Jun%202003.htm>