

# Web Site Check List

## General

- Purpose of organization is clearly conveyed.
- Full contact information of organization is easy to find from home page.
- External links are few in number, relevant to the purpose of site, annotated, regularly checked.
- Site contains no spelling or grammatical errors.
- Pages within site look similar: they may have the same background color, or there will be the same logo on every page.
- Site has a privacy policy. If reader data is gathered, the site says exactly what it will and will not do with that data. Organization does not sell or give away its user list.

## Content

- Content is written for the web; i.e., uses headers and bold, text breaks, short sentences; easily scannable.
- For web sites adding content on a regular basis, site includes a "What's New" section, or otherwise highlights new content on home page.
- If the page is focused on timely matters, put the most current item at the top, not the bottom.
- Print materials are made available in PDF.
- Any long documents (including PDFs) are accompanied by a 1-page executive summary.
- All web pages have a "last updated" date.

## Audience

- If organization has distinct target audiences, web site clearly demonstrates how those audiences can navigate the site. (I.e., there are sections for each target audience.)
- For those organizations that seek media attention, site includes an online press room that itself includes name & contact info of a media contact person within the organization.
- About Page or section includes information about key staff and board, with links to bios and contact information.
- Organization recognizes / acknowledges contributors and funders.

## File Size and Load Speed

- The site responds instantly to a request at 56kb dialup speeds.
- Each page is no larger than 15k. If you're relying on MS Word or Excel to create web pages, use the "filtered" function to filter out unnecessary coding; filter even further by using such tools as Antimony Software's Mizer and VSE's HTML Turbo.

## Marketability and Search Engine Status

- Title tag of each page is descriptive.
- Primary pages within the site use META tags that include keywords to help searchers and search engines find the site.
- The site is "crawlable" by search engine spiders.
- Site appears in the first ten hits of major search engines, for name and primary keywords.

## Navigation

- The site is arranged in a logical manner; it's easy to understand the structure and to know where to go to find content.
- Pages within the site link back to the home page, and to elsewhere in the site.
- Navigation is clear with menu bars on top or to one side or the other.
- Common links are at the bottom of each page (About Us, Contact Us, Site Map, etc.).
- Site offers a search engine *for the site*.
- All directories have an index.html page (i.e., you don't ever see a list of all files within a directory when entering a URL that ends with "/").
- Site requires little to any scrolling in order to find content. Visitors should be able to see what they want/need within the first screen.
- If site must contain longer pages (more than one screen), page includes navigational elements to help users move about the page.
- Site includes a site map that is updated regularly.
- Site requires no more than three clicks to reach desired content.
- Site contains no dead pages. If you change your site structure (and we recommend you don't especially if your site is well-visited), include links to new page locations.

## Graphics and other design tricks

- Graphics are used sparingly.
- Graphics are not used for text.
- In-text graphics should be no larger than 20k.
- All graphics include alternative text (ALT tags).
- Fancy background colors are avoided. Text is easy to read.
- Site is not dependent on java or other scripting language, flash, etc.

## Interactivity

- Site offers ways for readers to donate to the organization.
- Site offers an email sign-up list to a) collect email addresses of visitors, b) build a dissemination list for future contact with those readers; c) send periodic updates to remind people about what's on the site.

## Assessing Impact

- Web site includes opportunities to solicit feedback from users are made available. (Guest books, SHORT surveys, letters to editor, etc.)
- Site traffic is regularly assessed to understand what is and is not working about the web site, who's pointing to you, what pages are and are not being read, etc. What keywords are being used in search engines to find you.
- Articles contain trackable "email a friend" options.
- Articles offer opportunities for readers to respond; e.g., "Comment on this article?"