

Draft ALA Website Style Guide

Summer 2008

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Scope	1
1.3	Principles.....	1
1.4	How to Use this Guide	1
2	Accessibility.....	3
2.1	W3C WAI Objectives	3
2.2	ALA Accessibility Standards.....	4
3	Navigation.....	5
3.1	Internal Navigation.....	5
3.1.1	Page table of contents	5
3.1.2	“Return to top” links.....	5
3.2	Duplication of Links.....	5
3.2.1	Nonduplication of left navigation menu	5
3.2.2	Lower-level menus for groups of content pages.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.2.3	Duplication of left navigation menu on landing pages	5
3.2.4	Duplication of individual left navigation menu items.....	5
3.3	Labeling Links.....	5
3.3.1	Duplicate links.....	6
3.3.2	Link text indicative of linked content	6
3.3.3	Nondisplay of URLs in link text.....	6
3.3.4	Notice of linking to an external site.....	6
3.3.5	Notice of opening a new window	6
3.3.6	Labeling links to non-HTML content.....	7
3.3.7	Links to viewers and plug-ins.....	7
3.3.8	Links to members-only content	7
3.3.9	Position of link notes	7
3.3.10	Addresses in email links	8
3.3.11	URLs in links.....	8
3.4	New Windows	8
3.5	Directory and File Names	8
3.5.1	Short, meaningful names	8
3.5.2	Recognized ALA abbreviations.....	8
3.5.3	Acceptable characters in names.....	8
3.5.4	Names in lower case	8
3.5.5	Similar names for similar content.....	9
3.5.6	References	9
4	Layout and Graphics.....	10
4.1	Layout.....	10
4.1.1	TBD.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2	Typography	10
4.2.1	Alignment and Spacing.....	10
4.2.2	Text Style.....	11

4.2.3	Textual Emphasis.....	11
4.2.4	Headings	12
4.2.5	Embedded links	12
4.2.6	Tables.....	12
4.2.7	Color	13
4.3	Graphics	14
4.3.1	Use of Images	14
4.3.2	Avoidance of images to display text.....	14
4.3.3	JPEG Format.....	14
4.3.4	GIF Format	14
4.3.5	PNG Format.....	15
4.3.6	Selection of Image Format.....	15
4.3.7	Image sizes	16
4.3.8	Text equivalents (“alt” text).....	16
4.4	Content File Types	16
4.4.2	PDF Format	18
4.4.3	Microsoft Office Formats	18
4.4.4	Audiovisual Formats.....	18
4.4.5	General File Type Considerations	19
4.5	Forms and Scripts.....	19
4.5.1	Form Organization.....	19
4.5.2	Form Navigation and Completion	20
4.5.3	Form Labels.....	20
4.5.4	Input Fields.....	21
4.5.5	Actions.....	22
4.5.6	Approvals.....	22
4.6	ALA Logo	16
5	User Guidance.....	23
5.1.1	Help	23
5.1.2	Error Messages	23
5.1.3	Success Messages.....	24
6	Content.....	25
6.1	Audiences	25
6.1.1	Considerations in the use of members-only content	25
6.1.2	Consultation with other units in the absence of a policy	25
6.2	Structure	25
6.2.1	Position within the ALA Information Structure	25
6.2.2	Uniqueness of Content.....	26
6.2.3	Manageable Chunks.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.3	Language	26
6.3.1	Language Style	26
6.3.2	Controlled Vocabulary.....	27
6.3.3	Readability.....	27
6.3.4	Writing for the Web.....	27
6.4	Content Review, Removal, and Archiving.....	28
6.4.1	Indication of page currency	28
6.4.2	Indication of frequency of update	28
6.4.3	Frequency of review and update	28
6.4.4	Notice of nonupdate of archival page	28

6.4.5	Removal of obsolete pages	28
6.4.6	Archival of pages	28
6.4.7	Correction or removal of broken links	29
6.4.8	Replacement of removed pages [probably need to reword this]	29
6.4.9	Deletion of links to removed pages	29
6.5	Preparing Content for the ALA Search Engine	29
6.5.1	Keywords and description in metadata	29
6.5.2	Use of CMS field for copyright notice	29
6.5.3	Use of CMS field for event date	29
6.5.4	Metadata mandatory	29
7	Subsite Harmonization	30
Appendix A Guidelines Checklist	31
A.1	Navigation	31
A.1.1	Must	31
A.1.2	Should	31
A.1.3	May	31
A.2	Layout and Graphics	31
A.2.1	Must	31
A.2.2	Should	31
A.2.3	May	31
A.3	Content	31
A.3.1	Must	31
A.3.2	Should	31
A.3.3	May	31
Appendix B Accessibility Checklist	32
A.3.4	Must	32
A.3.5	Should	32
A.3.6	May	32
Appendix C Site Design	33
A.1	Common Areas	33
A.3.7	Banner	34
A.3.8	Breadcrumbs	34
A.3.9	Footer	34
A.3.10	Left Navigation Column	34
A.3.11	Right “Features” Column	34
A.4	Content Areas	35
A.4.1	Home Page	35
A.4.2	Landing Page, Type 1	35
A.4.3	Landing Page, Type 2	35
A.4.4	List Page	35
A.4.5	Content Page	35
A.5	Content Area Templates	35

Appendix D..... Named Styles
..... **38**

Appendix E..... Information Structure
..... **39**

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

An attractive, usable website helps to advance the interests of all ALA units and individuals. Studies show that when appropriate design standards are implemented, users linger longer and take full advantage of a site's resources. Because we want our website to be the premier source of authoritative information for people who work in or manage libraries of all types, we must make the site attractive, enticing, and reliable. The site should:

Be easy to search and browse;

Provide consistent, easy to understand ways to do things;

Be aesthetically pleasing, with standardized graphic elements;

Be accessible to users with various disabilities;

Provide reliable links to web pages, files and forms; and

Offer up interesting new material at appropriate intervals.

Consistent graphic design and interface standards make it easier for visitors to use the site and benefit from all we have to offer.

1.2 Scope

This style guide covers the design of content pages on <http://www.ala.org> by ALA staff and member-volunteers who contribute to the site. It addresses the look and feel of the pages, the language of the content, and the insertion of pages into the information structure of the site.

This document does not address the use of a content management system (CMS) for adding, uploading, or managing content on <http://www.ala.org>; that information is maintained separately. This allows for changes in the CMS or the procedures and policies for using it, without requiring changes to this document.

1.3 Principles

The new site design is based on web best practices. It incorporates developments derived from observations of people using sites and utilizes research findings from human factors studies. The principles can be summed up by two statements:

- Make frequent tasks easy and infrequent tasks possible;
- Don't make users think about how to use the site.

1.4 How to Use this Guide

Items in this guide are marked "must," "should," or "may." These have the following meanings:

- **Must** – required, deriving from ALA policy or widely accepted norms of usage;

- **Should** – highly recommended where feasible; not required under all conditions; and
- **May** – exceptions to “must” and “should” items; or other suggestions based on the recommendations of experts in the field of website usability.

2 Accessibility

Accessibility to users with disabilities is one of our key goals for the website. Accessibility is part of ALA Policy 54.3.2, which calls for Level 2 Success Criteria as defined by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).

2.1 W3C WAI Objectives

The Web Accessibility Initiative, in producing the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), has as its overall goal “to create Web content that is perceivable, operable and understandable by the broadest possible range of users and compatible with their wide range of assistive technologies, now and in the future.” (<http://www.w3.org/WAI/GL/2003/11/18-f2f-review-draft.html>)

The WAI guidelines state that Level 2 Success Criteria have three main attributes:

- Possibility of requiring content to be presented in particular ways;
- Reasonable applicability to all websites; and
- Machine testability in some cases.

Conformance to the guidelines includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Providing textual content that, when presented to the user, conveys essentially the same function or purpose as auditory or visual content;
- Ensuring that text and graphics are understandable when viewed without color;
- Preparing HTML documents with the proper structural elements; controlling presentation with style sheets rather than with presentation elements and attributes;
- Using markup that facilitates pronunciation or interpretation of abbreviated or foreign text;
- Ensuring that tables have necessary markup to be transformed by accessible browsers and other user agents;
- Ensuring that pages are accessible even when newer technologies are not supported or are turned off;
- Ensuring that moving, blinking, scrolling, or auto-updating objects or pages may be paused or stopped;
- Ensuring that the user interface follows principles of accessible design: device-independent access to functionality, keyboard operability, self-voicing, etc.;
- Using features that enable activation of page elements through a variety of input devices;
- Using interim accessibility solutions so that assistive technologies and older browsers will operate correctly;
- Using W3C technologies (according to specification) and following accessibility guidelines. Where it is not possible to use a W3C technology, or doing so results in

material that does not transform gracefully, provide an alternative version of the content that is accessible;

- Providing context and orientation information to help users understand complex pages or elements, and
- Providing clear and consistent navigation mechanisms — orientation information, navigation bars, a site map, etc. — to increase the likelihood that people will find what they are looking for on the site.

The WC3 offers a Markup Validation Service (<http://validator.w3.org/>) to help verify that code complies with its recommendations and other standards. Test pages using the validator to check for compliance and to pinpoint problems.

2.2 ALA Accessibility Standards

ALA requires all content on <http://www.ala.org> to meet level 2 accessibility guidelines as specified by the W3C. The following are particularly important:

- Web content **must** conform to the Level 2 Success Criteria for coding presented in the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative's (WAI's) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, version 2.0 (<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>).
- The use of JavaScript **must** be restricted to enhancing the user experience, and **must not** be used as the only way of providing information or interaction. For example, JavaScript **may** be used to perform client-side validation of a form to be submitted, **only if** server-side validation is also performed. This is in case the user's browser does not support JavaScript and therefore does not allow client-side validation.
- Each link **must** clearly indicate its target, either in the link text or in a <title> attribute attached to the link. For example, "Click here" is inappropriate when used by itself.
- A text equivalent **must** be provided for every non-text element such as a script, image, or audiovisual content.
- All text equivalents **must** be kept up to date with their non-text correlates.

A number of the WAI guidelines are reflected in this style guide, for ease of reference by content providers. Consult the W3C website (above) for the complete list of specific information on preparing accessible web content.

3 Navigation

3.1 *Internal Navigation*

3.1.1 Page table of contents

Long pages that consist of sections **should** include at the top a list of internal links to the top-level section headings, to provide a table of contents that helps users navigate within the page.

3.1.2 “Return to top” links

Pages with an internal table of contents **may** include a "return to top" link at the bottom of each section, or on shorter pages, at the bottom of the page.

3.2 *Duplication of Links*

The left-hand navigation menu (see Section A.4.4) is the primary user tool for finding subsections of <http://www.ala.org>.

3.2.1 Non-duplication of left navigation menu

Content pages (see Section A.5.5) **should not** contain, within the content area, lists of links that duplicate all or part of the left navigation menu.

3.2.2 Duplication of left navigation menu on landing pages

Landing pages (see Sections A.5.2 and A.5.3) **may** duplicate portions of the left navigation menu, because they provide additional information in the form of images, and in some cases, descriptions.

3.2.3 Duplication of individual left navigation menu items

3.2.3.1 *Acceptable duplication of left navigation menu items*

Where appropriate to the content, an individual item that appears in the left navigation menu **may** also appear as a link in the body of a content or list page.

3.2.3.2 *Additional information about menu items duplicated in content*

When an item from the left navigation menu also appears in the body of a content or list page, it **must** be accompanied by additional information about its content.

3.3 *Labeling Links*

Link labels encompass not only the link text but also the <title> tag (if any) and any other text adjacent to a link that conveys to users what to expect when they click on the link.

3.3.1 Duplicate links

3.3.1.1 *Multiple links to the same page*

When a page contains multiple links to the same page, their link text **should** be identical and **must** be similar enough to be recognizable as leading to the same place

3.3.1.2 *Multiple links with the same text*

When a page contains multiple links that use the same link text, they **must** all lead to the same page.

Exception: If all such links have a <title> attribute that distinguishes them, they **may** have the same link text.

Example: Placing a “Read more...” link at the end of each of several summary items of the same type is acceptable if and only if each such link has a unique <title> attribute that clearly indicates what the user will be reading more of.

3.3.2 Link text indicative of linked content

Link text **should** be identical to, and **must** be indicative of, the title of the content to which the link leads.

Exception: Link text **may** be an abbreviated form of the title of the linked content.

3.3.3 Non-display of URLs in link text


Link text **should not** display the location’s URL.

Exception: Link text **may** display the URL in a list of links that are expected to be printed or used off line for reference.

Exception: News items, such as press releases, that are posted online in a printable format should include the URL below the linked text.

3.3.4 Notice of linking to an external site

For any link that leads to a page on a site external to ALA, the page **must** provide a notice of the external link, both next to the link text and within a <title> attribute for the link. This is often accomplished with an image, as shown in the example:

Example: “Committee Roster ”

Consideration: If the notice uses an image, the image **should** have an empty <alt> tag because the link’s <title> tag performs that function.

Note: If a link both leads to an external site and opens a new window, both 3.3.4 and 3.3.5 apply.

3.3.5 Notice of opening a new window

For any link that opens a new window, the page **must** provide a notice of the new window, both next to the link text and within a <title> attribute for the link.

Example: “[Committee Roster](#) (will open in a new window)”

Note: If a link both leads to an external site and also opens a new window, both 3.3.4 and 3.3.5 apply.

3.3.6 Labeling links to non-HTML content

Every link to non-HTML content (e.g., PDF files, MS Office documents) **must** be labeled as such, except for JPEG, GIF, or PNG images. For example, “[Minutes of May 2008 Meeting](#) (PDF, 1.2 MB)”. More information on file types is available in Section 4.4.

3.3.6.1 Use of standard name for non-HTML file type

Links to non-HTML content **must not** use the file extension (e.g., “.pdf” or “.doc”) to indicate the file type but **must** use the standard name for that file type (e.g., “PDF” or “MS Word”). (Note that “PDF” is all caps.)

3.3.6.2 Indication of file size for non-HTML links

Links to non-HTML content **should** include an approximate file size (e.g., 2.5 MB). (This will give users some idea of how long the file is likely to take to download.)

3.3.7 Links to viewers and plug-ins

Every page that contains a link to content that requires software other than a web browser to view it (e.g., Adobe Reader or Microsoft PowerPoint Viewer) **must** provide a link (one per page) to a place where the user can download the required software (usually on the software vendor’s website).

Example: A page includes one or more links to PDF files and provides one link to the page on <http://www.adobe.com> that allows for downloading the Adobe Reader.

Note: The Adobe Reader plug-in to a web browser does not qualify as a web browser for the purposes of this guideline.

3.3.8 Links to members-only content

3.3.8.1 Labeling members-only content

Links to content that is restricted to members only **must** be conspicuously labeled as such, so that users will know whether or not they can access that content.

3.3.8.2 Indicating type(s) of members eligible for access

The advisory regarding restricted content **must** include the type(s) of members who are eligible for access, e.g., “[Member Referendum on New Policy](#) (ACRL members only).”

3.3.9 Position of link notes

Link text **should** include only the name of the link and **should not** include any notes or advisory messages within the link itself.

Note: Notes and advisory messages will be in the link’s <title> tag, as specified by 3.3.4 and 3.3.5.

3.3.10 Addresses in email links

An e-mail link **may** display the recipient's email address. It **should not**, however, display the "mailto:" portion of the URL.

3.3.11 URLs in links

If a page contains a long list of recommended web pages for general user reference, the elements of that list **may** be displayed as URLs below descriptive titles.

3.4 *New Windows*

Be judicious in the use of "new" windows. You **may** use a new window when sending users to offsite resources or when providing forms requiring online submittal.

3.5 *Directory and File Names*

File names are an important factor in helping users navigate a website. The following guidelines apply to both directory names and file names, except as noted

3.5.1 Short, meaningful names

Names **should** be as short as possible and still convey a recognizable meaning.

3.5.2 Recognized ALA abbreviations

Names **must** use recognized ALA abbreviations wherever appropriate. See <http://wikis.ala.org/professionaltips/index.php/> for the list of acronyms currently in use.

Example: The directory title "libinfotechassoevents" is easily shortened to the preferable "litaevents" and is recognizable by anyone familiar with ALA.

Example: The file name "anconfprog.htm" might better be formed as "annualprog.cfm," since ALA's vernacular includes the usage "Annual" for Annual Conference.

3.5.3 Acceptable characters in file names

Directory and file names **must not** include spaces or special characters, with the following exceptions:

Exception: File names for XML and other file types **may** contain underscores and hyphens.

Exception: Directory names for @your library promotions may include the at symbol, as special programming was done to make this possible.

3.5.4 Folder and file names in lower case

Folder and file names **must** use all lower-case letters. Although Collage will allow upper-case letters in file names, lower-case characters in URLs are more usable as they are cross-platform compatible.

Example: Instead of "LibraryWorkersDay.cfm", use "libraryworkersday.cfm".

3.5.5 Similar names for similar content

New content that is similar to existing content in another part of <http://www.ala.org> **should** have similar names for its directories and files.

Note: If you are developing new content and are not sure whether similar content already exists, you can post a message to collage_info@ala.org. Ask if anyone has similar content and can help you with ideas for naming conventions.

3.5.6 Recurring events & publication years

Directory and/or file names for recurring events and periodicals **must** include the year or year and month in either the directory or file name using a consistent format. **(TBD)**

3.5.7 References

Determining a good, usable URL is as much an art as it is a science. Here are a couple of useful articles:

- *Towards Next Generation URLs*, Joe Lima & Thomas Powell, http://www.evolt.org/article/Towards_Next_Generation_URLs/20/60159
- *URL as UI*, Jakob Nielsen, <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/990321.html>

3.5.8 Asset names and metadata titles for navigation and breadcrumb links

Navigation should be created in title case.

4 Layout and Graphics

4.1 Layout

Page layout is dictated by use of the tools available in the CMS editor; the document type used for the page is also a factor. ALA provides a variety of document types from which content providers can choose. This section provides guidelines for designing the content area and choosing a document type for its layout. See Appendix B for a description of the overall design and common components of the page in the ALA website.

4.1.1 Common Page Elements

All pages on the ALA site **must** contain a top banner.

In addition, most XML pages within the ALA site will display the following:

- Left-hand navigation to the other pages within the page's section;
- A breadcrumb path of links at the top of the page depicting the position of the page within the site's information hierarchy;
- Content;
- Send, Print, Cite or Share buttons, and
- A footer that provides copyright, privacy policy information,
- Optional: The use of right rail pods as *See* and *See also* references to other pages on the site.
- These sophisticated design and navigation elements are automatically generated for each content page, which leaves you free to focus on developing content that is attractive, readable, consistently styled, and accessible.

4.2 Typography

4.2.1 Alignment and Spacing

4.2.1.1 Left alignment of headings

Headings **must** be left aligned. See 4.2.3.5, below for another important restriction related to underlining.

4.2.1.2 Left alignment of paragraphs

Paragraphs **should** be left aligned.

Exceptions: Quotations, photo captions, and call out text **may** use other alignments, as appropriate.

4.2.1.3 Avoidance of traditional typesetting practices

Traditional typesetting practices for print, such as indenting paragraphs and inserting double spaces after each sentence, **must not** be used on the ALA site.

4.2.1.4 *Avoidance of blank paragraphs*

Blank paragraphs **should not** be used to add vertical spacing. The ALA web style sheet ensures that paragraphs and headings are automatically separated by appropriate vertical space, thus breaking up large blocks of text into easy-to-read sections.

4.2.2 **Text Style**

Text size and type face are controlled by the site's cascading style sheet(s) and are relative to the user's browser settings, in accordance with the accessibility standards developed by W3C.

4.2.2.1 *Use of named styles*

Pages **must**, for all content, use named styles as defined in the style sheet (see Appendix D).

4.2.2.2 *Restrictions on specification of text characteristics*

Pages **must not** assign any text characteristics such as font size and font family to content. (If you want to use text features that are not provided by the style sheet, contact the ALA web team to discuss your needs and explore having such features added to the style sheet.)

4.2.3 **Textual Emphasis**

Textual emphasis **may** be added to content via boldface, italics, or upper case.

4.2.3.1 *Coding textual emphasis*

Textual emphasis **must** be accomplished via current XHTML coding methods (i.e., for boldface and for italics). All font coding using , , <i> and <I> **must** be replaced.

4.2.3.2 *Appropriate use of textual emphasis*

Textual emphasis **should** be used sparingly and **should** serve only to highlight specific information, to direct the reader's attention to it.

4.2.3.3 *Restrictions on italics and boldface*

To ensure further readability, large blocks of text (more than two or three sentences) **must not** be set in italics or boldface.

4.2.3.4 *Restrictions on upper case*

Blocks of text of more than a few words **must not** be set in upper case.

4.2.3.5 *Avoidance of underlined text*

Underlined text **must not** be used at all, because underlining leads the reader to assume that the text is a hyperlink.

4.2.3.6 *Avoidance of headings for textual appearance*

Headings **must not** be used for textual appearance only, but should be used to convey information about the content aggregated beneath them. Headings are structural elements and

are an inappropriate method of achieving a look. (Accessibility is one of the main reasons why this is so.)

4.2.4 Headings

The website design provides five distinct levels of headings (h1 through h5) to break up large blocks of information and help users locate information quickly.

4.2.4.1 Use of default style for level of heading

Headings **must** use the default heading style for their level of the information structure on the page (e.g., h1, h3).

4.2.4.2 Avoidance of text attributes for headings

Pages **must not** specify any text attributes for headings, including color, font weight, and font size.

Exception: Book titles referenced in a heading must be in italicized text.

4.2.4.3 Sentence case for most headings

Headings **should** use sentence case (capitalization of the initial letter of the first word, and the following text in lower case, except for proper names).

4.2.4.4 Title case for headings with proper names

The heading of any content whose title is a proper name (e.g., Caldecott Medal or 2008 Salary Survey Report) **should** use title case (capitalize the initial letter of every word except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions).

4.2.4.5 Avoidance of all upper case for headings

Headings **must not** appear in all upper case.

4.2.5 Embedded links

The cascading style sheets in place across all ALA and division sites assign a look (color, font family, font size, font weight, text decoration, etc.) to all links in the various sections (e.g., main content area, left navigation column, breadcrumbs, banner).

4.2.5.1 Default link style for embedded links

Links **must** use the default style (which sets the color, font family, text decoration, etc.) as specified in the style sheet; i.e., links **must not** contain any specification of appearance that would override the style sheet.

4.2.6 Tables

Tables have the purpose of displaying tabular data in rows and columns. Using tables for layout creates accessibility problems.

4.2.6.1 Restriction of tables for display of tabular data

The use of tables **should** be restricted to tabular data, such as a table of mean salary by type of position, and **should not** be used for layout of non-tabular data.

4.2.6.2 *Specification of table and cell widths*

Table and cell widths **should** be specified in percentages rather than pixels. (This will help ensure that the table will display as consistently as possible across a wide variety of browser types, monitor settings, and user-defined font sizes.)

4.2.6.3 *Table accessibility features*

Tables should include a concise summary of the table data, and row and column tags to aid users accessing the data with assistive devices.

4.2.7 **Color**

Color, when used appropriately and judiciously, can enhance a web page and give it appeal. However, color presents challenges, mainly for accessibility. The ALA website has been designed to use color appropriately, and the style sheet provides for the colors of headings, text, etc., in the various areas of the pages. It is not anticipated that content pages will need to use custom colors often, if at all.

4.2.7.1 *Appropriate use of colored text*

Paragraphs of text **may** apply color to a few words or an entire, short paragraph.

4.2.7.2 *Color coordination with <http://www.ala.org> color scheme*

Any custom color, whether for text or background, **must** coordinate with the <http://www.ala.org> color scheme, which consists of white backgrounds, gray, grayed-blues, navy and red. (I will pull the specific info out of the style sheet.) (If you are not experienced in color management, you should either consult with someone who is, or refrain from using custom colors.)

4.2.7.3 *Restriction on number of text colors*

Any page or group of related pages **must not** use more than two custom colors for paragraphic text.

4.2.7.4 *Avoidance of colored backgrounds*

Pages **should not** use colored backgrounds.

4.2.7.5 *Text-background contrast*

A colored background **must** be of a lighter color than the text of the page, and the text-background contrast **must** be sufficient to provide adequate legibility of the text. Test the contrast in a dimly lit room, or with the monitor set at dim.

4.2.7.6 *Avoidance of textured backgrounds*

Pages **must not** use a textured background for any part of the page.

4.2.7.7 *Avoidance of background images behind paragraphs of text*

Pages **must not** use background images for areas in which paragraphs of text will be displayed, **unless** the image is a solid color or subtle gradient.

4.2.7.8 *Color as redundant coding only*

Color **must not** be used as the only way to convey information — i.e., if color is used to distinguish between two types of information, some other means **must** also be used for this purpose, in addition to color (e.g., label, pattern, shape, border thickness).

4.3 *Graphics*

4.3.1 **Use of Images**

Image and media files **should** serve to illustrate the web page content, add visual interest to it, or enhance the user's understanding of it.

4.3.2 **Avoidance of images to display text**

Images **must not** be used to display text.

Exception: Text may be included in a logo that has a substantial graphical component, but only if it is an integral part of the logo.

4.3.3 **JPEG Format**

The Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG) format is an image file format that uses a compression algorithm aimed at achieving a balance between file size and image quality of photographic images. According to the [Wikipedia article on JPEG](#), this file format “is at its best on photographs and paintings of realistic scenes with smooth variations of tone and color” and “is not as well suited for line drawings and other textual or iconic graphics, where the sharp contrasts between adjacent pixels cause noticeable artifacts.”

4.3.3.1 *JPEG for photographs*

JPEG format **must** be used for photographs.

4.3.3.2 *JPEG for images with complex or continuous tones*

JPEG format **should** be used for other images that contain complex or continuously variable tones.

4.3.3.3 *Avoidance of JPEG for logos and simple images*

JPEG **must not** be used for line drawings or other images that consist entirely of large blocks of solid color (e.g., most logos).

4.3.4 **GIF Format**

The Graphics Interchange Format (GIF) is a lossless image file format that preserves sharp edges, allows for transparency, and restricts any one image to a maximum of 256 colors (see [Wikipedia article on GIF](#)).

4.3.4.1 *GIF for logos and buttons*

GIF **must** be used for logos and buttons where the detail is simple, the color transitions are sharp, and the number of colors is small. (See the exception for PNG, below.)

4.3.4.2 GIF for animations

GIF animations should be used infrequently and with great care; it must be possible for users to stop the movement.

4.3.4.3 GIF for charts

GIF **must** be used for charts. (See the exception for PNG, below.)

4.3.4.4 GIF for transparency

GIF **must** be used for images that contain areas intended to be transparent against the background of the page. (**Note:** No such exception exists for PNG in this case, because not all browsers render PNG transparency correctly.)

4.3.5 PNG Format

The Portable Network Graphics (PNG) file format is similar to GIF but optionally (PNG-24) allows an image to contain millions of colors (see [Wikipedia article on PNG](#)). Note: Although PNG officially supports transparency, some browsers (notably some versions of Internet Explorer for Windows) do not display PNG transparency correctly.

4.3.5.1 PNG as a substitute for GIF

PNG **may** be used for any image that meets the criteria for GIF use, **unless** it contains transparent areas.

4.3.5.2 PNG for images with more than 256 colors

PNG-24 **should** be used for any image of a type that would otherwise call for GIF and needs more colors than GIF supports.

4.3.6 Selection of Image Format

Table 1 shows a summary, for each image file format, of when to use it and when to avoid it.

Table 1 – Appropriate Uses of Image File Formats

•	• JPEG	• PNG	• GIF
• Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photographs• In-game screenshots• Movie stills• Book covers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Text, line art, comic strips• Logos• Desktop application screenshots	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animation• Transparency• Logos

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logos • Desktop application screenshots • Line art and text • Comic strips • Fine lines and sharp color contrast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs • In-game screenshots • Images with transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs • More than 256 colors needed
---	--	--	--

•

4.3.7 Image sizes

Images **must** be displayed at their actual size.

Note: Images downsized by the browser will take longer to download than will images saved at the small size intended for the page, because their file size is actually that of the larger image.

Note: Image manipulation software is better at resizing images than browsers are, and will produce images of higher visual quality.

4.3.8 Text equivalents (“alt” text)

4.3.8.1 “alt” text mandatory

All objects (images, scripts, applets, audiovisual elements) that contain non-text content **must** have an associated “alt” text attribute.

4.3.8.2 Purpose of “alt” text

ALT tags **should** address the function and meaning of the non-text elements.

Example: ``

4.3.8.3 Size of “alt” text

ALT text **must** use between 7 and 100 characters.

4.3.8.4 Use of “longdesc” in addition to “alt” text

For complex content that depends on visual organization to illustrate information (such as a chart or video clip) that is not fully described on the page and whose ALT text does not provide a complete text equivalent, a “longdesc” tag or a link to a separate HTML document that gives a full-text description of the graphic or media object **must** be supplied.

4.4 ALA Logo

The ALA logo appears in the banner of all ALA site document type pages.

4.4.1.1 *Avoidance of ALA logo in content area*

The ALA logo **should not** be repeated in the content area of individual pages. The ALA logo may be used on pages in division or other subsite areas.

4.4.1.2 *Appropriate use of ALA logo*

The ALA logo, book symbol, or other ALA identifying graphics **should** be displayed in keeping with standard ALA usage.

4.4.1.3 *GIF for ALA logo*

All uses of the ALA logo **should** employ GIF instead of JPEG, as the logo will be displayed in crisp, smooth lines and without “bubbly” visual artifacts.

4.4.1.4 *ALA logo colors*

The combined ALA logo and (#000000 and #ffffff) or in



text can be rendered in black and white red and blue (#ff3333 and #333399).



4.5 *Content File Types*

The predominant content on <http://www.ala.org> will be web pages produced by content providers who select a content document type (see A.6) into which they enter or upload text and upload images. In certain situations, it is advantageous to add content in a downloadable file type such as Adobe’s Portable Document Format (PDF) or one of the Microsoft Office formats (Word, PowerPoint, Excel). This section outlines the appropriate use of these formats.

4.5.1.1 *TBD*

Web pages in the Association site **must** be in XHTML or XML. These are open, industry-standard web formats that all browsers recognize and that do not impose an unnecessary burden on the site’s audience. The <http://www.ala.org> CMS will turn your free-text entries into XML for display on the site.

4.5.1.2 *New pages in XHTML*

All new web pages on <http://www.ala.org> (i.e., pages not migrated from the old site) **must** be in XML.

4.5.1.3 *New content as web pages*

Content on <http://www.ala.org> **must** be created as web pages unless there is a valid reason to provide it in another format.

4.5.1.4 *Avoidance of non-XHTML formats*

Formats other than XHTML or XML (i.e., PDF, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.) **should** be used as redundant formats — i.e., to the extent feasible and appropriate for the content, materials **should** be provided both as web pages and in the alternative format(s).

4.5.2 PDF Format

PDF documents have several drawbacks:

- **Inaccessibility:** Screen readers cannot read many PDF files unless accessibility features have been incorporated into the file. If using PDF format, use the accessibility features available in Adobe Acrobat. Review the accessibility information for Adobe Acrobat on [Adobe's Accessibility website](#) to learn how to make your PDF files accessible.
- **Legibility:** PDF was designed for print and can be difficult to read online. Text resizing and search functions also perform differently in PDF documents, which can confuse users, especially if they are using a plug-in that displays the PDF within the browser window.
- **Navigation:** PDF documents lack the global navigation options used in web browsing; this prevents users from seeing related or alternative options.
- **Viewer Requirements:** PDF viewers are not embedded in all browsers and will require some users to download a separate viewer. When PDF documents are used, the author **must** provide a link to download the free PDF reader, [Download the free Adobe Reader program](#). Only include one such link per page.
- **Efficiency:** PDF files tend to be substantially larger than web pages that provide the same content, and load times are correspondingly longer.

PDF files can be appropriate under certain conditions:

4.5.2.1 *Use of PDF to preserve precise layout*

PDF **may** be used if the document's layout must be preserved precisely (e.g., official forms, brochures)

4.5.2.2 *Use of PDF for documents likely to be printed*

PDF **may** be used if the user will most likely print the document rather than read it online (forms, flyers, brochures)

4.5.3 Microsoft Office Formats

4.5.3.1 *Use of MS Office formats for documents likely to be edited by end users*

Documents that users are likely to edit in order to adapt them to their own purposes should be provided in appropriate MS Office formats.

Example: A document of suggested policies for public libraries, intended to be easily edited by a specific library to customize it for their organization's use.

4.5.4 Audiovisual Formats

TBD, but will include something on multiple formats for A/V content

4.5.5 General File Type Considerations

It is best to avoid using proprietary formats that require purchase or licensing of commercial software. However, sometimes such formats are necessary. (See Section 3.3 for guidelines on indicating the file type to which a link leads.)

4.5.5.1 *Provision of proprietary formats obtained from outside ALA*

Proprietary formats **may** be used if the information is archival or comes from outside ALA, and is available only in that format.

4.5.5.2 *Use of proprietary formats for offline manipulation*

Proprietary formats **may** be used if the intended use is downloading the content for data analysis or manipulation.

4.5.5.3 *Link to download file viewer or plug-in*

If a viewer or plug-in is available for a proprietary file type, the page **must** contain a link to download it.

4.5.5.4 *Uniqueness of viewer/plug-in link*

The link to any one viewer or plug-in **must** appear no more than once on any one page.

4.6 Forms and Scripts

Some of ALA's activities require interaction with its website visitors. These include, for example, membership renewal, conference registration, donations to ALA, and a variety of "Contact Us" topics. Such activities are generally supported by forms.

4.6.1 Form Organization

4.6.1.1 *Content of forms*

Forms **should not** contain anything other than data collection that is necessary for the purpose for which the form is provided.

4.6.1.2 *Form content organized into logical groups*

Content in forms **should** be organized into logical groups to aid scanning and completion.

4.6.1.3 *Optional questions at end*

Optional questions **should** be asked only after a form is completed.

Exception: Optional questions that are logically related to required questions **must** be displayed next to the related required question.

Example: Line 2 of a mailing address is displayed immediately after line 1.

4.6.1.4 *Restriction of visual information*

Forms **should** use the minimum amount of visual information necessary to distinguish content groups.

4.6.1.5 *Content group headings*

Headings of form content groups **must** use the appropriate level of heading (h1 through h5) for the group.

4.6.2 **Form Navigation and Completion**

4.6.2.1 *Form title*

A form's title **must** match people's expectations and succinctly convey the purpose of the form.

4.6.2.2 *Start page for complex or time-consuming forms*

A start page that sets people's expectations **should** be used for any form that requires substantial time or requests information that users will need to look up.

4.6.2.3 *Avoidance of distractions in mission-critical forms*

Distractions and any links or content that may lead to form abandonment **must** be removed for mission-critical forms such as checkout or registration.

Example: Remove the left and top navigation from the form itself, returning it on the success message that the user receives upon form submittal.

4.6.2.4 *Use of progress indicators*

Progress indicators that communicate scope, status, and position **should** be used for forms with a known sequence of multiple Web pages.

4.6.2.5 *Logical tab index*

The tab index **must** be set to support a logical sequence of tabbing through a form.

4.6.3 **Form Labels**

4.6.3.1 *Language of form item labels*

Form labels **should** use succinct, natural language.

4.6.3.2 *Capitalization of form labels*

Form labels **must** use sentence-case capitalization.

4.6.3.3 *Language of action labels*

Action labels **should** employ language relevant to the users' goals and **should** clearly indicate the actions they initiate (e.g., "Purchase" instead of "Submit").

Note: "Submit" is computer centered and almost never reflects a user's goals.

4.6.3.4 *Use of buttons for actions*

Actions **should** use buttons instead of links.

4.6.3.5 *Use of top-aligned labels*

Top-aligned labels **may** be used when it is important to reduce completion times or if flexible label lengths are needed for localization.

4.6.3.6 Use of right-aligned labels

Right-aligned labels **should** be used when the form has vertical screen real estate constraints.

4.6.3.7 Selection of label alignment

Form labels **should** be either right aligned or top aligned and **should not** be left aligned.

Exception: Left-aligned labels **may** be used when the form requires people to scan a list of labels to learn what's required or to answer a few specific questions out of many.

4.6.3.8 Uniformity of label alignment

A uniform label alignment **should** be used throughout a single form.

4.6.4 Input Fields

4.6.4.1 Use of checkboxes

A single yes/no choice, or a set of independent yes/no choices, **should** use a checkbox or a group of checkboxes.

4.6.4.2 Use of radio button groups

A set of two to six mutually exclusive choices **should** use a radio button group.

Exception: When the two alternatives are a yes/no set, a checkbox **should** be used instead.

4.6.4.3 Use of drop-down lists

A set of seven or more mutually exclusive choices **should** use a drop-down list.

4.6.4.4 Text field size indicative of amount of text expected

Text input fields **must** be of a size that indicates the amount of text that is expected to be entered.

4.6.4.5 Variation in sizes of text fields

A form **must not** use the same size for all text fields in a group **unless** the same amount of text is expected in all of them.

4.6.4.6 Indication of required fields

Forms **must** indicate the fields that are required, by displaying an asterisk (*) along with each field. If the labels are top aligned, the asterisks **should** be to the left of the labels. If the labels are right aligned, the asterisks **should** be to the right of the labels (to assist in associating the asterisk with the field).

Note: The presence of asterisks **must not** alter the alignment of the labels themselves.

4.6.4.7 Indication that all fields are required

If all fields on a form are required, the form **should** include a single statement to that effect, rather than flagging each field with an asterisk.

4.6.4.8 Legend to explain “required” indicator

A form that has required fields **must** include a legend that explains what the asterisk indicates.

4.6.5 Actions

Actions can be described as Primary and Secondary. Primary actions have the purpose of directly assisting users in completing the form; they include actions such as *Purchase*, *Next*, *Go*, and *Continue*. Secondary actions provide auxiliary support, and do not assist in completion of the form. Secondary actions include, for example, *Cancel*, *Reset*, and *Go Back*.

4.6.5.1 Avoidance of secondary actions

Where feasible, secondary actions **should** be avoided on forms.

4.6.5.2 Clear distinction between primary and secondary actions

If secondary actions are required for completing a form, a clear visual distinction between the primary and secondary actions **should** be provided.

4.6.5.3 Alignment of input fields with primary actions

Input fields **should** align with primary actions to create a clear path to the completion of the form.

4.6.5.4 Avoidance of destructive secondary actions

If potentially destructive secondary actions such as *Reset* or *Clear* are included in a form, a dialog box **should** appear, requesting user confirmation of the action.

4.6.5.5 Communication of form processing status

While a form is being processed, it **should** clearly communicate its status, to avoid duplicate submissions.

4.6.5.6 References

For more specific information on good web form design, see: Wroblewski, L. (2008). *Web Form Design: Filling in the Blanks*, Rosenfield Media, 2008; version 1.0

4.6.6 Approvals

4.6.6.1 Approval of form, script, or software program

Any form, script, or software program **must** have received the approval of the unit Webmaster (or ALA Help Desk in lieu of a unit Webmaster) before being placed on <http://www.ala.org>.

4.6.6.2 Approval of email address for automated relay forms

Because of security issues, the e-mail address of anyone to whom automated relay forms will be addressed **must** be submitted to the ALA Help Desk before the form is activated on <http://www.ala.org>, or the form will not function properly.

5 User Guidance

Most of the help and feedback on a site pertain to the interactive aspects. This guide addresses most of its help and feedback guidelines to forms. The term “help text” refers to (usually short) text that appears on a page, usually close to the item (e.g., form element) for which it provides guidance.

5.1.1 Help

5.1.1.1 *Help text to explain unfamiliar data requests*

Help text **should** be used for explaining unfamiliar data requests, such as why certain questions are being asked, security and privacy concerns, recommended ways of providing answers, and indicating optional answers.

5.1.1.2 *Use of help text within input fields*

Help text within input fields **should** be used only to provide recommended ways of answering questions.

5.1.1.3 *Specificity of help text*

Help **should** be as specific as possible.

5.1.1.4 *Position of triggers for user-activated help*

Triggers for user-activated help, such as icons, links, or buttons, **should** appear next to labels rather than to input fields.

5.1.1.5 *Use of help in requests for sensitive information*

Actionable help that allows people to confirm that their information is safe **should** be used when a form is asking for sensitive information.

5.1.2 Error Messages

5.1.2.1 *Indication of error blocking completion*

When an error is blocking the user from completing a form, the error message **must** clearly communicate that.

5.1.2.2 *Display of error messages in context*

Error messages **should** be displayed in context.

Example: If the user omitted the ZIP code, the error message requesting the ZIP code appears next to the ZIP code field.

5.1.2.3 *Indication of action necessary to correct error*

Error messages **should** indicate what must be done to correct the errors, rather than what is wrong.

Example: “Please enter your ZIP code.”

5.1.2.4 Display of multiple error messages together

If multiple errors exist in form data, their messages **should** be listed together.

5.1.2.5 Indication of data elements containing errors

Form data elements that contain errors **should** be marked clearly.

5.1.2.6 Use of inline validation

Inline validation **may** be used to confirm or suggest valid input.

5.1.2.7 Use of inline confirmation

In forms, questions with potentially high error rates or specific formatting requirements **may** use inline confirmation. [Perhaps we need to explain the difference between inline validation and inline confirmation.]

5.1.3 Success Messages

5.1.3.1 Success message to indicate successful completion of a form

When a form has been completed successfully, the site **must** clearly communicate that.

5.1.3.2 Success message in context

Success messages **should** be provided in context, so as not to block any further progress. [I think we need to be a little more specific about what this means.]

6 Content

6.1 Audiences

Visitors to <http://www.ala.org> will perceive all of the site's content as authoritative and official, as it bears the brand of the American Library Association. Be aware that your content can have multiple audiences: ALA members, potential members, interested library professionals and support staff, professors of library and information science, school teachers, journalists, and the general public. Each should come away with a satisfactory experience.

Official ALA policies that pertain to the printed versions of content also apply to the electronic dissemination of that content.

6.1.1 Considerations in the use of members-only content

The use of members-only content **should** consider the extent of past availability of that content, any privacy issues, and any issues of open access to publications.

6.1.2 Consultation with other units in the absence of a policy

Various units of ALA have differing policies on members-only content; if your unit has no precedent, you **may** consult with other units to factor their processes into your decisions.

6.2 Structure

6.2.1 Position within the ALA Information Structure

ALA has created a detailed information structure for <http://www.ala.org> content (Appendix E), as part of the information architecture (IA) developed for the site. The IA was developed to support the users' view of the information content and to promote the "scent of information" that would lead users most effectively in finding what they seek.

6.2.1.1 Location of content within the <http://www.ala.org> information structure

Content **must** reside in the area of the information structure to which it relates, as defined in the <http://www.ala.org> IA.

6.2.1.2 Placement of new content within the information structure

When new content is defined, it **must** be placed within the existing information structure, if a relevant category exists.

6.2.1.3 Creation of new categories when needed for new content

If no relevant category exists to house new content, a new category **must** be created and named to harmonize with the existing structure and maintain the principle of "scent of information" on which the developed IA was based.

6.2.1.4 *Process for requesting a new category*

Send information about the desired category, synonyms (to aid with the creation of direct matches in the Google Search Appliance), and your ideas for where the new term should fit in the information structure to ia_implementation@ala.org. In most cases, a decision will be reached within two business days, and then ITTS will implement the changes in the CMS within another two days.

6.2.2 **Uniqueness of Content**

6.2.2.1 *Content unique across site*

Content **must** be unique across the site. This helps avoid duplicating information or risking the existence of multiple versions of similar content, one or more of which may be obsolete.

6.2.2.2 *Citation rather than duplication*

If the same item of information is needed in multiple places within the site, extra mentions of that item **must** cite the original and link to it, rather than duplicating it.

6.2.2.3 *Linking to content*

Content **may** be linked from anywhere, regardless of where it resides.

6.2.3 **Enhancing Readability**

People are less inclined to read long, unbroken paragraphs on the web than they are to read them in print.

6.2.3.1 *Use of headings*

Headings make it possible to scan for a specific topic of interest.

6.2.3.2 *Use of similar-level headings for similar levels of hierarchy*

Similar levels in the hierarchy **should** use headings of the same levels.

6.2.3.3 *Use of lists*

Bullet points and ordered lists **may** be used to break up blocks of text.

6.3 **Language**

6.3.1 **Language Style**

ALA units **should** use the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) for most web content. Units that generate press releases may also use Associated Press (AP) style for news. To create consistent use of terms and handling of text, ALA has also adopted a manual of style that has been developed by ALA Production Services, guided by CMOS, and agreed upon by the various editors of journals published by the divisions of ALA and by ALA Editions.

6.3.1.1 *AP format for news releases*

News releases **should** follow Associated Press (AP) format.

6.3.1.2 *Chicago Manual of Style format for general content*

General content **should** follow the University of Chicago *Manual of Style* (CMOS).

6.3.1.3 *Language appropriate for audience*

Language **should** be appropriate for the primary audience(s) to whom the content is aimed (e.g., members, nonmember librarians, the press, the general public).

6.3.2 **Controlled Vocabulary**

TBD; need input from ALA on this

6.3.3 **Readability**

ALA is committed to making all content on <http://www.ala.org> readable by the largest number of people in the relevant audience group. For this purpose, we have selected the Gunning Fog Index as a measure of readability. This index aims to indicate the years of full-time education required to understand a text easily on the first reading. (See [Wikipedia article on the Fog Index](#).) When deciding on the most appropriate readability level for your audience, it is important to consider who the audience is and what their presumed reading level would be.

6.3.3.1 *Use of Fog Index to assess content readability*

Content **may** be submitted to an online Fog Index calculator (e.g., <http://simbon.madpage.com/Fog/fog.cgi>) before it is uploaded to the site.

6.3.3.2 *Reading level for children*

For children, content **should** score at an educational level appropriate for the children to whom the content is aimed.

6.3.3.3 *Reading level for general public*

For the general public, content **should** score 12 or lower (10 is even better).

6.3.3.4 *Reading level for professional librarians*

For professional librarians, content **may** score 12 or higher and **should** in most cases score 16 or lower.

6.3.3.5 *Maximum reading level for all audiences*

Content **should not** score higher than 18 for any audience.

6.3.4 **Writing for the Web**

Here are some guidelines to aid you in writing content for <http://www.ala.org>. These are not specifics of what you must, should, or may do, in the same sense as the rest of this guide; instead, they are intended to provide guidance to help you write for the site. To ensure that content is fresh and current:

- Construct and develop content according to the needs of your audience(s);
- State the key point first;

- Keep written content short and concise—
 - Users typically skim the page instead of reading word for word;
 - Reading from computer screens tends to be 25-30% slower; so
 - Web content should have about half the word count of its paper equivalent.
- Writing for the web reference link: <http://www.sun.com/980713/webwriting/>
- Janice C. Redish, [*Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content that Works*](#)

6.4 Content Review, Removal, and Archiving

Each page will have its own period of peak currency, with some pages (such as bylaws) being relatively static.

6.4.1 Indication of page currency

As an aid to user evaluation of the content presented, each web page **should** include an indication of its currency (“last updated” or “last reviewed” date).

6.4.2 Indication of frequency of update

Each page **may** also offer some indication of the frequency with which the page is updated.

6.4.3 Frequency of review and update

Each page **should** be reviewed (and updated as appropriate) at least once per year.

6.4.4 Notice of non-update of archival page

If a web page is archival in nature and will not be updated, it **must** include a statement indicating this.

6.4.5 Removal of obsolete pages

When a page is determined to be obsolete, it **should** be removed from the site.

Exception: A page **may** be maintained as archival if it is clearly marked as such (see 6.4.4).

Note: If such a page is replaced with new content (for example, a calendar of workshop offerings for the current year, replacing the same for the old year), nothing more need be done.

6.4.6 Archival of pages

Pages **shall** be considered current according to the following criteria:

- The current year of press releases, events, board actions, and meeting minutes, are available, with links to the two previous years.
- Pages **may** include a message directing anyone interested in resources older than three years to contact the ALA Library.
- We need to decide whether we want to follow the same three year rule for publications.

6.4.7 Correction or removal of broken links

When a link is found to be broken, it **must** be corrected, either by its removal or by correction of its URL.

6.4.8 Page not found process for removed pages

If a removed page is likely to have been bookmarked or linked to, it **should** be replaced with an information page explaining how to retrieve that information in the future.

Example: The URL for that page has been printed in a book, magazine, or flyer, or has been used by a major site external to ALA, so a custom page not found message is provided.

6.4.9 Deletion of links to removed pages

When a page is removed from the site without being replaced by content that has the same URL, all pages that linked to it **must** be updated to remove that link.

6.5 Preparing Content for the ALA Search Engine

The ALA search engine continually indexes all content on the site. The CMS allows content creators to add keywords and descriptive text for each page, which factor into the search index.

6.5.1 Metadata mandatory

Every page **must** include metadata. Every page **must** include a metadata title; and **should** include keywords and descriptive text.

6.5.2 Use of CMS field for copyright notice

Copyrighted pages — content that has a publication date, such as a press release, periodical article, or published manuscript — **must** use the CMS's field for copyright date, which is filled out automatically upon page edit, but can be overridden by the user.

6.5.3 Use of CMS field for event date

Events pages — pages that concern activities taking place on a specific date or time period— **must** use the CMS's field for event date.

6.5.4 Available free text, user editable metadata fields

- Title (metadata title, SEO title): Should match the title on the page; will be the title pulled to display on listing pages.
- Description: An abstract of the content
- Author: Individual or group
- Editor: Individual or group
- Keywords: Terms and phrases representing key concepts discussed in the resource.

7 Subsite Harmonization

[TBD content regarding Divisions, Round Tables, etc. I am really interested in having a brainstorming session with the division content managers.]

Appendix A. Guidelines Checklist

A.1 Navigation

A.1.1 Must

A.1.2 Should

A.1.3 May

A.2 Layout and Graphics

A.2.1 Must

A.2.2 Should

A.2.3 May

A.3 Content

A.3.1 Must

A.3.2 Should

A.3.3 May

Appendix B. Accessibility Checklist

A.3.4 Must

A.3.5 Should

A.3.6 May

Appendix C. Site Design

The new ALA website design provides document types for the home page and four types of other pages:

- landing page, type 1
- landing page, type 2
- list page
- content page

Some areas of the design are common to all types of pages; others are found on some pages and not all of them.

A.4 Common Areas

The new <http://www.ala.org> design provides for five areas:

- banner (all pages)
- breadcrumbs (all pages except Home page)
- footer (all pages)
- left navigation column (all pages)
- right “features” column (home page, optional for content pages)

This design includes several areas that are common to the various page types, as shown below, in Figure 1.

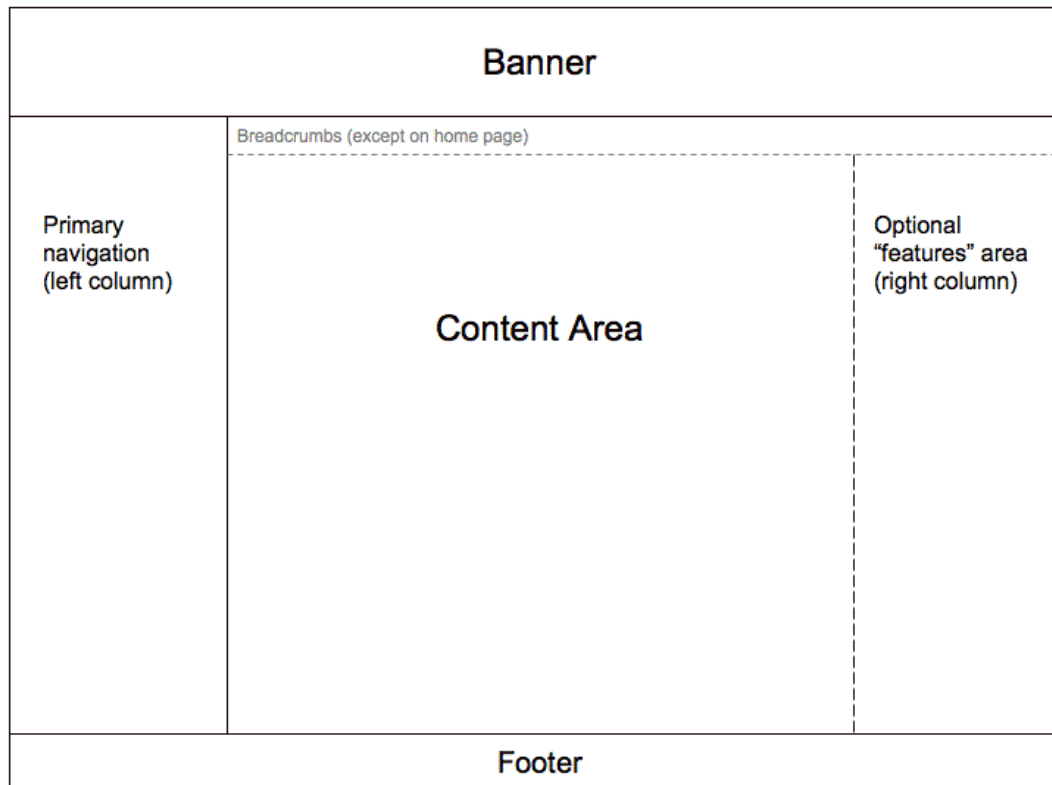


Figure 1. ALA Website Banner (all pages)

A.4.1 Banner

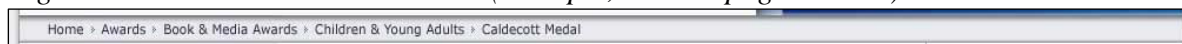


Every page on <http://www.ala.org> has a banner at the top to brand it as part of ALA, and to provide some important navigation and searching (see **Figure 1**). At the upper left are the ALA log and seal. At the upper right is the “utility navigation” area. Below the ALA logo is a “quick-links bar” that provides drop-down menus with “quick links” into content that is frequently accessed but whose position in the information hierarchy is below the top level. At the bottom right of the banner is the Search box.

A.4.2 Breadcrumbs

On all pages except the home page, a breadcrumb “trail” appears above the content area (**Figure 2**) to indicate the position of the content within the <http://www.ala.org> information hierarchy. (Note that this does not necessarily reflect the path that the user took to reach this content from the home page.)

Figure 2. ALA Website Breadcrumbs (example, content page version)



A.4.3 Footer

The footer (**Figure 3**) provides basic contact information for ALA, a copyright notice, and links to legal-type information.

Figure 3. ALA Website Footer (all pages)



A.4.4 Left Navigation Column

The left column on every page (**Figure 4**) provides the primary navigation for the site, based on the <http://www.ala.org> information hierarchy. The menu structure goes three levels deep and shows the currently displayed item and (for the top two levels) the items in the next level down. (In **Figure 4**, the currently displayed item is the “Awards” page.)

Figure 4. Left Navigation Column (example, landing page level 1 version)



A.4.5 Right “Rail” Pods Column

The new design provides a right “Features” column on two page

types, the home page and (optionally) any content page.

On a content page, this column can be used to provide access to related content that “lives” in other areas of <http://www.ala.org> or on other ALA-sponsored sites.



A.5 Content Areas

A.5.1 Home Page

The content area of the home page provides a series of special highlights and (below it) three lists of news. The highlights are presented as a slideshow that the site visitor can either play as a running show or view one at a time by clicking on the sequence numbers. The latest news section is tabbed into three subsections (ALA news, Legislative news, and US & World Views) with several clickable current news item bullet points under each tab. Each tab contains a button that allows the site visitor to subscribe to its content via RSS feed.

A.5.2 Landing Page, Type 1

Landing pages provide links to the next two levels down. Each of the subtopics has a medium-blue "topic strip" in the main content area. Within the strips, the topic names are links to the next level down, and the bulleted keywords are links to the level below that.

A.5.3 Landing Page, Type 2

The main section of a Type 2 landing page looks very similar to that of a Type 1 landing page; it differs mainly in only being capable of pulling listing page children in by automatic query. However, it will only work if all pages below it are of the listing page type.

A.5.4 List Page

A list page provides links to the detailed content-level pages in the section. Listing page links are created when content editors click a check box during the content editing process.

A.5.5 Content Page

Content pages have a large text field that can contain text, images and links.

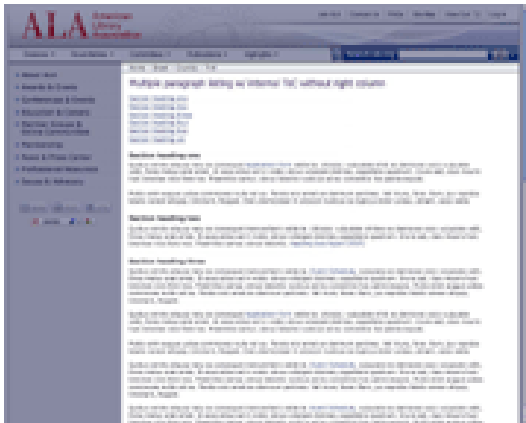
A.6 Content Area Document types

The new ALA Website design provides several document types for various types of content pages, and many of the document types can be laid out in different ways according to whether the right rail is allowed to show or not, whether internal page directories are used, and whether images are added.

- Text with no images or pods, shown to the right.



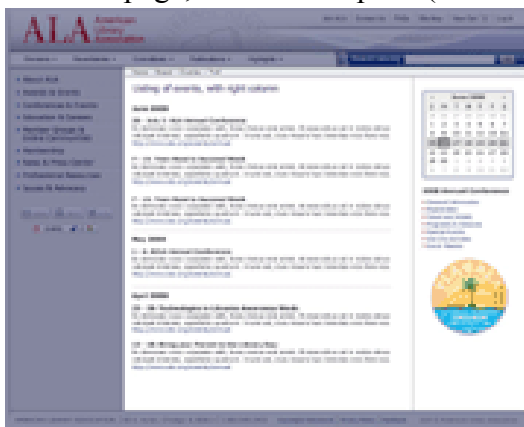
- Text with right rail images is under development; however, you can use pods to achieve a similar effect.
- Text with multiple paragraphs, subheadings, and an internal page of contents, as shown below.



- List of downloadable files page



- List of images (this is under development), intended to be used to display multiple images with text descriptions; could be used for an About Us page
- Events page, shown with pods (under development)



- Text with one image, shown below.



- Unit landing page (I don't have an image, but this page is available for any group to use. See the ALA Office pages to get an idea of how this page can be used.

Appendix D. Named Styles

There really aren't any additional ones available, aside from the site style.

Appendix E. Information Structure

Will eventually include the *IA, as Implemented*, a document that is currently a work in progress.