

Idaho Technology Authority (ITA)

ENTERPRISE GUIDELINES G300 – INFORMATION AND DATA

Category: G310 – WEB PUBLISHING

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I. DEFINITION

Web publishing is the process of creating a website and making it globally available. Dissemination on World Wide Web services using the Internet is an effective means of communicating to the public.

II. RATIONALE

These guidelines are intended to assist Agencies in the preparation and development of web pages by providing common criteria for State websites. For citizen ease-of-use and navigation, a logical and consistent presentation of web-based materials and services is important. The user, whether a citizen or employee, expects to find information and services quickly.

III. BRANDING

The name “Idaho.gov” and the web address of Idaho.gov are the official names of the State of Idaho web portal and the State of Idaho’s presence on the Internet. The vision is to establish a single-entry portal that will improve free access to public information while building value-added services for the business community. The Information

Technology Resource Management Council (ITRMC) created AccessIdaho.org (now Idaho.gov) in December of 1999 to serve as a comprehensive portal to public information for the citizens of Idaho. The promotion and branding of “Idaho.gov” and its web address as the State’s official home page is a top priority of ITA.

IV. ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

- A. Compliance with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) is required of all web pages developed for or by the State [see ITA Policy [P5010](#) (Web Publishing)]. In general:
1. Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element (for example, using the “alt” attribute). Non-text elements include images, graphical representations of text (including symbols), image map regions, animations (for example animated GIFs), applets and programmatic objects, ASCII art, scripts, images used as list bullets, spacers, graphical buttons, sounds (played with or without user interaction), stand-alone audio files, audio tracks of video, and video.
 2. Ensure that text equivalents for dynamic content are updated when the dynamic content changes.
 3. Ensure that all information conveyed with color is also available without color (for example, from context or markup).
 4. Clearly identify changes in the natural language of a web page’s text and any text equivalents (for example captions).
 5. Organize web pages so that they can be read without style sheets. For example, when an HTML page is rendered without the associated style sheets, it must still be possible to read the page.
 6. Do not use the “Blink” tag or any other method to control the flicker of an end-user’s screen.
 7. Use the clearest and simplest language appropriate for a website's content.
 8. If you use images and image maps:
 - a. Provide redundant text links for each active region of a server-side image map; or
 - b. Provide client-side image maps instead of server-side image maps, except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.

9. If you use tables:
 - a. For data tables, identify row and column headers; or
 - b. For data tables that have two (2) or more logical levels of row or column headers, use markup to associate data cells and header cells.
 10. If you use applets and scripts, ensure that pages are usable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or not supported. If this is not possible, provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page.
 11. If you use multimedia:
 - a. Until user agents can automatically read aloud the text equivalent of a visual track, provide an auditory description of the important information of the visual track of a multimedia presentation; or
 - b. For any time-based multimedia presentation (for example, a movie or animation), synchronize equivalent alternatives (for example, captions or auditory descriptions of the visual track) with the presentation.
 12. If, after best efforts, you cannot create an accessible page, provide a link to an alternative page that uses World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) technologies, is accessible, has equivalent information (or functionality), and is updated as often as the inaccessible (original) page.
- B. Listed below are links to developer resources and information about accessibility. (These are examples of links and are not exclusive.)
1. [Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\)](http://www.w3.org/WAI/) – WAI is an initiative by the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) committed to lead the web to its full potential and includes promoting a high degree of usability for people with disabilities. <http://www.w3.org/WAI/>
 2. [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Checklist](http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/full-checklist.html) – The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) was created in October 1994 to lead the World Wide Web to its full potential by developing common protocols that promote its evolution and ensure its interoperability. <http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/full-checklist.html>
 - 3.. [Idaho Blind and Visually Impaired Lab](#) – The Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ICBVI) promotes choices and empowerment for people who are legally blind, functionally blind, or

in danger of legal blindness, and assists them in achieving gainful employment, independence, personal growth, and integration into the community. <https://icbvi.idaho.gov/>

4. AccessIT – The National Center on Accessible Information Technology in Education at the University of Washington serves to increase the access of individuals with disabilities to information technology in educational institutions at all academic levels nationwide. <http://www.washington.edu/accessit/>

V. HTML GUIDELINES

- A. The page design should be fluid so that it grows or shrinks to fit the width of the user's screen resolution.
- B. Pages should allow the user to increase or decrease the default font size without impairing legibility.
- C. Splash pages should not be used.
- D. File and directory names should be all lower case and contain no blank spaces. If mixed case is used, ensure that the linking code identically matches the pathing.
- E. Sitewide menu location should be consistent throughout the site. Horizontal menuing is preferred for large-screen devices, and collapsible menuing is preferred for small-screen devices. Avoid using both (or some combination of) horizontal and collapsible menuing on the same screen size to prevent user confusion.
- F. For metatag standards, see ITA Standard [S4221](#) (Metatags).
- G. For links to external websites, see ITA Policy [P5010](#) (Web Publishing).

VI. STATE WEB DESIGN TEMPLATE

See ITA Policy [P5010](#) (Web Publishing).

VII. IDAHO PRIVACY POLICY

See ITA Policy [P1020](#) (Idaho.gov Portal Privacy Notice).

VIII. WEBSITE HOSTING

- A. State agencies may choose from any of the following options for the physical placement of standard (non-electronic, commerce-related) Internet pages and websites. An agency may:
1. Use the centralized web hosting services that the Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) provides.
 2. Contract with another State of Idaho agency for the hosting of its Internet pages and websites;
 3. Setup, install, and maintain its own Internet web server(s); or,
 4. Contract with an outsource vendor to provide Internet web hosting services.
- B. State agencies may choose from any of the following options for physical placement of electronic, commerce-specific web applications. Electronic, commerce-specific web applications are those that involve the collection of credit card types of information and/or the actual electronic transfer of monies and/or funds. An agency may:
1. Contract, at no cost to the agency, with Access Idaho for the hosting of its electronic commerce web applications;
 2. Setup, install, and maintain its own Internet web server(s) for the hosting of its electronic commerce web applications; or,
 3. Contract with an outsource vendor for the hosting of its electronic commerce web applications.
- C. ITS centralized Internet services provides for and allows the hosting of "virtual" websites on its Internet Web Servers. This would include hosting "www.myagencytopic.com" if the domain is owned by the agency, as well as "www.idaho.gov/myagencytopic" or "myagencytopic.idaho.gov".
- D. Web Hosting Restrictions – If an agency contracts with Access Idaho or uses the centralized services of ITS for the hosting of its Internet pages and websites, email hosting would not be included or available. For example, if an agency had the name www.myagencytopic.com and also wanted to have email addresses with the same extension (for example, john.smith@myagencytopic.com), Access Idaho and ITS cannot accommodate this request from a support or technical standpoint.

The State of Idaho centralized Internet and intranet servers used by agencies must comply with ITA Policy [P5010](#) (Web Publishing).

- E. Domain Name Services (DNS) – ITS offers DNS (Domain Name System) services at no cost to any State of Idaho agency, bureau, commission, council, department, division, office, or official program. DNS is what bridges the gap between the number and the name and makes it easier for a user to find a website using domain names.

- F. Web Page, Website, and Web Application Development – State of Idaho agencies have the following options for the development of Internet web pages, websites, and/or web application development. An agency may:
 - 1. Contact the ITS Webmaster, at no cost to the agency, for help or consultation in web page, website, and/or web application development;
 - 2. Contract with Access Idaho, through the Access Idaho Steering Committee at no cost to the agency, for help or consultation in web page, website, and/or web application development;
 - 3. Use its own in-house personnel for web page, website, and/or web application development;
 - 4. Contract with another State of Idaho agency for web page, website, and/or web application development; or
 - 5. Contract with an outsource vendor to provide web page, website, web application, web development, and/or web maintenance.

IX. OTHER CENTRALIZED SERVICES

ITS operates and maintains a clustered database server. This server is for use by State of Idaho entities for the purpose of making database information accessible to web applications targeting the public.

X. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

In addition to this guideline, the following documents apply:

- A. ITA Policy [P1020](#) (Idaho.gov Portal Privacy Notice)
- B. ITA Policy [P5010](#) (Web Publishing)
- C. ITA Standard [S4221](#) (Metatags)
- D. ITA Standard [S5120](#) (Web Publishing)

XI. CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, contact the ITA Staff at (208) 605-4064.

XII. REVIEW CYCLE

Twelve (12) months

XIII. TIMELINE

Date Established:	April 24, 2002
Last Reviewed:	April 22, 2009
Last Revised:	April 22, 2009
Last ITRMC Approval:	June 16, 2009

XIV. REVISION HISTORY

- 02/18/2020 Revised to update Section V. HTML Guidelines, paragraph E.
- 08/21/2018 Remove reference to specific costs and changed Department of Administration references to the Office of Information Technology Services (ITS)
- 12/18/2014 Adjusted costs for hosting of agencies' websites by the Department of Administration.
- 07/01/2013 Changed "ITRMC" to "ITA".
- 04/22/2009 Revised the State Web Design Template section to direct users to the Policy. Changed "AccessIdaho.org" to "Idaho.gov" to reflect the new name for the State of Idaho website. Reorganized the accessibility content. Provided a list of cross-referenced documents. Added a Contact section and a Review Cycle section. Adjusted the language so that it would be consistent with the Web Publishing Policy (P5010) and Web Publishing Standard (S5120).
- 10/24/2005 Revised the section "Other Centralized Service" to update the services that the Department of Administration operates and maintains for use by State of Idaho entities.