



# Best Practices

## in the use of Computer Technology

*Consistency, ease of navigation, and universal access are among the reasons for incorporating some standard procedures such as file naming conventions, Web design guidelines, and accessibility considerations into your use of technology.*

### File Naming

1. Place no spaces in file names.
2. Use all lower case; no caps. *Some older browsers do not locate files that are not exactly specified, and uploading files with capitals into WebCT can create problems.*
3. Use no symbols; only letters, numbers, and under-scores.
4. Use appropriate file extensions such as .doc, .txt, .gif, .jpg, .pdf, .htm, .html, and .css.
5. Choose brief, descriptive file names.
6. Choose a consistent file-naming strategy. For example, *ecs123\_sp03* provides essential information: the course name and semester.
7. A folder named for each year, with folders inside for each semester, and then folders within the semester folders for each course provides a way to readily access all your courses.

### Web sites

#### Accessibility

1. Use alt tags to provide alternative text for images not seen by visually-impaired users. If the image is for design only, use a blank alt tag: alt = "".
2. Use style sheets to control the appearance of text by grouping formatting attributes such as font, size, color, and alignment at the beginning of your Web document or link to an external style sheet.\*
3. Test your Web site using different browsers and browser versions: Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator, from 4.0 through newer versions.
4. Check that your site is navigable through the use of the keyboard only.
5. Test your pages with an accessibility page validator; i.e., <http://validator.w3.org/> or <http://webxact.watchfire.com>

## Best Practices

#### Site organization

6. On paper, draw a map of what will be on your Web site pages: title, body content, graphics, and links to other pages.
7. Keep all your Web site material in one root folder.
8. Within the root folder, place your home page named *index.html* (or *index.stm* or *index.php*). Additionally, within the root folder create a new folder titled *images* and place all images inside it.

#### Usability

9. Use small file sizes for images so that the site downloads quickly.
10. Know who your audience is and write for them.
11. Begin content with the most important material first, then provide additional content to support it.
12. Place hyperlinks on the content to be accessed rather than generic words like *back*, *next*, and *click here*. For example, "Click here to view a [list of courses](#)."
13. Use a full e-mail address rather than a link titled E-mail. *Some browsers do not automatically launch an e-mail program in response or the user may not have a compatible e-mail program.*
14. Limit linking every instance of frequently-occurring references.
15. Include meta tags in your HTML code that describe the contents of your Web page so that search engines find your site quickly.
16. Size Web pages so that users need not scroll horizontally. Choose a width of 100% or a maximum of 650 pixels.
17. Place navigation and content so that it is easy for users to navigate and peruse your site.

#### Visual appearance

18. Aim for a clean, uncluttered visual appearance. Your Web page is your first opportunity to make a good impression.
19. Use templates for a consistent look and feel throughout your site.
20. Incorporate white space so visual presentation is not overwhelming.
21. Avoid using marquees, blinking text, or unnecessary animated gifs that detract from the appearance of your page and cause accessibility problems.

### Copyright

- Provide copyright information for both textual content and all images, audio, and video utilized.
- Refer to the Copyright QuikRef available in ARC 3012 and online at <http://www.csus.edu/uccs/documents/quikrefsite/>.
- Access <http://www.csus.edu/web/copyright.html> for guidelines regarding copyright and fair use.

[www.csus.edu/uccs/documents/quikrefsite](http://www.csus.edu/uccs/documents/quikrefsite)



SACRAMENTO STATE