



Broward County Web Site Guidelines

July 22, 2003

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Preface

The Broward County Web Site Guidelines were created by the Public Communications Office in order to provide County agencies with policy and production guidelines for the www.broward.org web site.

First launched in December 1995, the County's web site is comprised of thousands of "static" web pages representing approximately 100 County agencies. In addition, there are numerous interactive applications that visitors to the Site can use to conduct business with the County.

The Public Communications Office is responsible for content development and management of the static information on the County's Internet and Intranet web sites and for providing web site design services to County agencies. The Office of Information Technology is responsible for programming interactive applications, including those required for transactions, and for the management of the infrastructure (servers and communication lines).

The County's Internet web site address is www.broward.org. All County agencies must coordinate their static web site activities through the Public Communications Office.

In addition to the Internet web site, Broward County has an Intranet web site, known as the bc-net that is available to County employees through the County's internal network. These guidelines apply to both the Internet and Intranet web sites.

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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide standards for the Broward County Internet site (www.broward.org) and the Broward County Employee Intranet site (<http://bc-net>). This guide includes policy guidelines and production guidelines, as well as other useful information about the Broward County web site.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all County agencies unless an exception has been approved. For purposes of these web standard guidelines a "*County Agency*" refers to any County agency under the Broward County Board of County Commissioners including advisory boards and committees.

The term *County agency web site* refers to an Internet or Intranet web site operated by or for a County agency, including those web sites operated on behalf of a County agency by other public or private entities.

Relation to Existing Accessibility Standards

The Broward County Web Site standards build upon the following existing standards: web accessibility guidelines set forth by the Federal Government Section 508 for Americans with Disabilities Act of 1993 and the guidelines provided by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

Policy Guidelines

The Broward County web site adheres to high Internet standards by complying with the State of Florida's Public Records statutes and laws, by observing and championing Internet etiquette, linking externally without endorsements, and by aiming for factual information throughout the site. By accessing or using the information, materials and data contained in the site (www.broward.org), the users hereby agree to accept the following terms and conditions contained below. A document titled "Terms of Use and Legal Information" is posted as a link from the County's homepage to provide this information to users of our site.

Linkages

The Official Site of Broward County, Florida, provides links to many web sites that are not controlled, maintained, or regulated by us. As such,

Broward County is not responsible for the content of outside web sites or those sites' hyperlinks.

Use of information from those web sites by the user is voluntary. Users should rely on the information from non-County agency sites only after undertaking an independent review of its accuracy. References at those web sites to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, or otherwise, does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the Official Site of Broward County, Florida. When you link to a non-County agency site you are subject to the privacy policy of the new site and the information collected or used on those non-County agency sites.

Broward County provides links to the following types of organizations:

- * *Links to Other Governmental Units & Educational Institutions* - Broward County provides links to other federal, state and local governmental units that provide additional services and information that users of Broward County's Official Site may find of interest. Links are also provided to educational institutions, which include Grades K through 12, school districts, intermediate school districts, community colleges and universities.
- * *Links to Private Organizations/Commercial Sites* - Broward County does not provide links to private organizations or commercial sites unless the sites offers services or educational information that complements the information or services offered by Broward County. Broward County will not link to any site that contains any nudity, profane or obscene language. The determination of whether to establish a link to a private organization's web site is made by Broward County's Public Communications Office on a case-by-case basis.
- * *Links to Non-profit Organizations* - Broward County provides links to non-profit organizations that users of Broward County's Site may find of interest. The determination of whether to establish links to non-profit organizations is made by Broward County's Public Communications Office on a case-by-case basis.

Broward County encourages and permits links to content on the Broward County Official Site. Under no circumstances should the linking (a) suggest that Broward County promotes or endorses any third party's causes, ideas, Web sites, products or services; (b) use Broward County content for inappropriate and/or commercial purposes; (c) contain any hyper-link to any other sites without the prior written consent of such sites(s); or (d) violate any patent or copyright rights of any third parties. In addition, links to the Broward County Site should be executed in such a way so that the linked page does not appear

within a frame that prevents book marking the linked page or prevents the acknowledgment of Broward County as the owner of the content. Broward County's Public Communications Office reserves the right to withdraw permission for any link at any time with or without prior written notice.

Terms of Use

By visiting the Official Site of Broward County, Florida, users agree that they will not use the Site for any unlawful activity or use it in any way that would violate any of the terms and conditions stated in the "Terms of Use and Legal Information" posted on the Web Site.

Use of Communication Forums

The Official Site of Broward County, Florida, has, will, or may contain threaded discussions, chat rooms, list serves and other communication forums. By participating in any of these, users agree to send and receive messages that are both proper and related to the forum topic. The following actions are unacceptable practices:

- * Defaming, harassing, threatening, or otherwise violating the legal rights of others, including their privacy (see below);
- * Misrepresenting one's person, background, or character;
- * Posting any defamatory, infringing, profane, obscene, false or unlawful material; or frontal nudity
- * Selling, advertising, or exchanging any goods or services unless expressly allowed and authorized by prior written approval of Broward County's Public Communications Office;
- * Posting any copyrighted or patented material owned by a third party.

Also, users agree to use any Official Site of Broward County, Florida, forum at their own risk. While championing proper use of such forums, Broward County cannot and does not guarantee the users that violations of the above code for use of the Communications Forums will not occur.

Privacy Policy

It is the policy of the State of Florida that all records of the state or political subdivisions of the state are open for public inspection and copying, subject to certain exemptions. This policy is embodied in the Florida Constitution, together with the right of an individual to be free from unauthorized governmental intrusion into their private life, as provided in [Article 1, Section 23](#) of the Florida Constitution. In recognition of these policies, the County has established this Internet Privacy Policy. When you use the Broward County Site, you are acknowledging that any

personal information you provide is subject to Florida's Public Records Policy as stated in Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, and [Article I, Section 24](#) of the Florida Constitution.

You do not have to give us personal information to visit our web site, download our publications, use Broward County e-mail communications, or any other feature. We collect no personal information about you when you visit www.broward.org unless you choose to provide this information to us or unless required by a specific County agency in order to transact business with that agency. We will use the information that you voluntarily provide to us to notify you of selected Site changes or new publications. We may also use it to conduct statistical analyses of user activities in order to measure user interest in the information we provide and how we provide it. However, we do collect and store some non-personal information automatically as stated below.

What We Collect and Store Automatically

- * Name of the domain from which you access the Internet (for example, xcompany.com, if you use a private Internet access account, or yourschool.edu if you connect from an educational institution's domain);
- * The page from which you came and the pages that you access.
- * Date and time you access our Site;
- * Internet address of the web site from which you linked directly to our Site;
- * Your system's IP (Internet Protocol) address; and
- * The type of browser and operating system you used to access our Site.

We use the information we collect in aggregate to count the number of, and types of, visitors to the different pages on our Site and to help us make our Site more useful to visitors like you.

How We Use Cookies

In order to process some transactions (or in the future to customize content specific to your geographic area or interests), we use cookie technology. A cookie is data that is stored on your computer's hard drive or is stored temporarily by our system. This data allows your browser to communicate with our Web servers. We use the cookie to track your progress during a transactional process such as paying your real estate taxes online. When your transaction is completed, the cookie is saved on your PC. The only time we create a cookie is when you conduct a multi-part transaction.

You may choose to reject all cookies by modifying your browser preferences. However, if you do not accept cookies, you will not be able to use some of our functions that require their use.

Disclaimer Regarding Accuracy of Information

Visitors to and users of the Official Site of Broward County, Florida, are advised that information contained within the pages of the Site is believed to be accurate. However, errors can occur even with computer-generated information. The County makes no representation regarding the completeness, accuracy, or timeliness of such information and data or that such information and data will be error-free. In the event that the information on the County's official printed documents differ from the information contained on this Web site, the information on the County's official printed documents will control and take precedence. Please be aware that in the event an error or omission occurs, Broward County will use all of its resources to recover fees and taxes due to it.

Visitors are encouraged to review the official version of all documents upon which they plan to rely. Any special notices related to how accurate or how current specific elements of data presented in our Site will be defined on those specific pages.

Site Security

When you use your credit card, debit card, or on-line checks to do business on the Official Site of Broward County, Florida, we protect the integrity and privacy of your account information with advanced technologies. Our systems use Internet data encryption technology, known as the Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol, Secure Hypertext Transfer Protocol (SHTTP), and Secure Electronic Transactions (SET).

However, even with advanced technologies, it is not always possible to prevent unauthorized access or unauthorized disclosure. The County makes no representation and assumes no responsibility or liability concerning the accuracy of the information or for any loss which might result to the user by the use of this Web site. Please be aware that in the event unauthorized access, unauthorized disclosure, third party intervention, or any loss occurs due to error, omission, or inaccurate information being displayed on this Web site, Broward County reserves the right to recover any unpaid fees and taxes owed to it.

Intrusion Detection

For security purposes and to help ensure this service remains available to you, we use special software programs for monitoring network traffic to

identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information, or otherwise to cause damage to this government computer system or Site. These programs collect no information that would directly identify individuals, but they do collect information that could help us identify someone attempting to tamper with this Web site .

If you use this system or Site, you should understand that all activities may be monitored and recorded. Anyone using this system or Site expressly consents to such monitoring. WARNING -- If such monitoring reveals possible evidence or information of criminal or suspicious activity, monitoring records may be provided to law enforcement officials without any prior oral or written notice to you.

Except for authorized law enforcement investigations, we make no other attempts to identify individual users or their usage habits. We only use raw monitoring data logs for determining trends in usage patterns and in diagnosing system or site problems.

Indemnity

As a condition of use of Broward County's web site, the user any/or anyone linking to the Site agree to indemnify Broward County, its Commissioners, officers, employees, and agents against any and all liability, expenses (including attorney's fees and court costs) and damages arising out of claims resulting from user's use of this Web site and/or anyone linking to the Site, including, without limitation, any claims alleging facts that if true would constitute a breach of these terms and conditions stated in this Terms or Use and Legal Information.

Jurisdiction

The Terms of Use and Legal Information are governed by the laws of the State of Florida, United States of America (USA). User and/or anyone linking to this Site consents to exclusive jurisdiction and venue of the courts in Broward County, Florida, USA in all disputes arising out of or relating to the use of this Web site . The users of the Web site and/or anyone linking to this Site in jurisdictions outside of Broward County, Florida, consent to jurisdiction in Broward County, Florida.

Domain Names and Marketing

Domain Names

All domain name requests should come through the Public Communications Office which will, in turn, coordinate the implementation of the domain name with the Office of Information Technology. The Office of Information Technology will purchase the domain name and maintain the renewal of such domain names for the time period determined by the agency.

Marketing

All Broward County web sites should be marketed using the www.broward.org address. For instance, Port Everglades' web site is marketed as www.broward.org/port. It is not necessary to list <http://> before the www.broward.org address or any Internet address that starts with www. Agencies should never use the old Broward County web address: www.co.broward.fl.us. However, that web address is still a functioning address, and users will still be connected to www.broward.org using the old Broward County web address.

In addition, capital letters should never be used when referring to www.broward.org. It is important to use all lower-case letters, as all Internet pages for the Broward County web site are designed using lower-case letters. If a visitor to the site were to type in capital letters, an error message may occur.

If planning to market a specific agency web site, it is important to contact the Public Communications Office before you begin marketing the address.

Minimum Web Requirements

Internet browser and system requirements

Windows

Netscape 4.0 or greater, or Internet Explorer 5.0 or greater, or AOL 4.0 or greater

- * 166 MHz Intel Pentium processor or greater
- * Windows 95, 98, NT4 or 2000
- * Resolution: 800 x 600, 256-color display
- * 32 MB or more of installed RAM

- * Windows-compatible sound card

Macintosh

- * Netscape 4.0 or greater, or Internet Explorer 5.0 or greater, or AOL 4.0 or greater
- * 120 MHz PowerPC
- * Mac OS System 8.1 or later
- * Resolution: 800 x 600, 256-color display
- * 32 MB or more of installed RAM

Other browser requirements

It is suggested that users also have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is needed to view files saved in Portable Document Format (.pdf). This is an international standard format for the web, and many files on the Broward County web site are created in (.pdf) format. Some (.pdf) documents may be created so that users can type directly on the form.

The most current version of Adobe Acrobat Reader is available for free download online at www.adobe.com.

[Note: Saving editable (.pdf) documents requires the entire Acrobat Suite. Users will not be able to save documents with the free Acrobat Reader]

How to Request Web Site Work

Work Orders

In order to place any information on the Broward County web site, a work order must be submitted to the Public Communications Office. Broward County agencies can access the work order through the Employee Intranet site, the bc-net (<http://bc-net>). From the bc-net home page, click on forms, scroll to Public Communications Office and select Work Order. The work order is also accessible through the Public Communication Office home page on the Internet Web Site.

Once completed by the agency, the work order is submitted electronically to the Public Communications Office. Along with providing a description of the work to be performed, agencies can also attach electronic documents to the work order, such as, but not limited to, Word files (.doc), image files (.jpg, .gif), or (.pdf) files, which contain information to be posted to the site.

The Public Communications Office provides web site design services to all County agencies. Internet services include content development, design of web site pages and management (including quality control) of the static

information for the County's web sites. The Office of Information Technology is responsible for programming interactive applications, including those required for transactions, and for the management of the infrastructure (servers and communication lines).

All requests for interactive, transactional type applications that involve databases should be directed to the Office of Information Technology.

Authorized Approvers

In order to submit a work order, agencies must appoint an authorized approver for Internet work. The approver will receive an e-mail and must approve the work order via that e-mail in order for the Public Communications Office to begin work on the order. Designers will not begin work until the work order has been approved by the designated approver. To select an authorized approver, please fill out the appropriate form located on the bc-net "forms" page under Public Communications Office. Once the authorizer has approved the work order then a designer who is assigned to the order will notify the contact person listed on the order.

Rush Jobs

If the request is urgent, please contact the Public Communications Office as well as submitting a work order.

Production Guidelines

Templates

Broward County is in the process of transitioning to a content management system that uses a template system for the entire web site. The template will allow the Broward County web site to have a uniform appearance throughout all pages of the site. The template will be designed to the Internet browser settings of the average user, which is 800 x 600 pixels, 256-colors. The template will contain standard navigation and design elements that will allow the site to be easily identified as the official web site of Broward County regardless of what page on the site a user is visiting.

All Broward County agency web sites will follow the standard template, which is determined by the Public Communications Office in cooperation with the agency. As part of the template, each page within the Broward County web site will have a set navigation that will incorporate information specific to each agency. Among the items that will be included in the standard navigation and the template are Broward County logo and a link to the County home page.

Web pages should not be created in Microsoft FrontPage, as the Broward County network infrastructure does not support this application.

Quality Assurance

Each agency will be responsible for managing the content of their site within the parameters of the template through an authorized approver. Agencies are also responsible for ensuring the quality of their web pages in cooperation with the Public Communications Office. The Public Communications Office will aid in quality assurance by making final recommendations to agencies.

**Note:* Some pages will not be required to be sent through Public Communications for quality assurance. Such pages include administrative documents like agendas, meetings minutes, etc. These pages will be determined on an individual case-by-case basis.

Cascading Style Sheets

Templates are designed utilizing Cascading Style Sheets (.css). Cascading Style Sheets are a simple mechanism for adding style elements, such as type fonts, colors or spacing, to Web pages. Style Sheets provide a consistent look and feel throughout all web pages for the Broward County web site.

Cascading style sheets are a recommended standard design practice according to the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), an international organization created to lead the Web to its full potential by developing common protocols that ensure vendor-neutral operability.

Directory Structure and File Naming Conventions

Directory Structure

Each County agency will have its own directory that will contain all (.htm) and (.pdf) files associated with that agency. A directory for the Internet is similar to the types of computer folders created in Windows Explorer where you can store electronic documents.

All images will be saved in an “images” directory and each agency will have its own directory within that folder. Each authorized approver will have access to the images within the agency’s images directory, as well as access to that agency’s main directory.

The agency will have the option of having an authorized approver who will be responsible for updating files contained within that agency directory, or the agency may have the Public Communications Office maintain the agency's site. Regardless of which agency manages the site, all agencies are responsible for ensuring that the information contained on their site is accurate and up-to-date. The default name for each agency directory's home page will be "welcome.htm".

Naming Conventions

Until such time as a Content Management System is launched, the Public Communications Office uses an eight-character naming convention. No special characters, such as spaces, hyphens, dashes, commas, etc., or capital letters should be used in any file names.

Names for web pages consist of three letters and five numbers unique to each county agency. The first two letters represent the agency name, and the third letter is always "i" for Internet.

The next three digits in the file names are all numbers that correspond to the page. The last two digits of the file name are numbers for files or images associated with that unique page.

For example:

avi00100.htm is an acceptable file name for the Airport

"av" stands for "Aviation"

"i" stands for "Internet"

"001" is the unique page

"00" indicates that there are no additional files associated with that page. Files associated with that page would receive "01," "02," "03," etc.

However, the default page for all agency home pages is always "welcome.htm." All agencies' static agency pages should also have the extension (.htm) [(NOT (.html))]

If a text/word processing document is a format other than (.pdf), Public Communications Office can convert the file to a (.pdf). All text documents should be provided as an electronic document [for instance, in a Word file, with the extension (.doc)] and not as a scanned document.

If you are creating a new site, please contact Public Communications Office before you begin. If you are having an outside agency design your web page, please have that agency contact the Public Communications Office for information on proper naming conventions before beginning work on your site. Public Communications serves as the resource manager for all outside agency work.

Only sites that adhere to the existing web site template and follow Public Communications Office naming conventions will be posted.

Page Content and Organizing Text

Content

The Public Communications Office is available to assist agencies in developing content for their web site; however, the agency's authorized approver is ultimately responsible for making sure the content on their web site is accurate and up-to-date. Content on web sites should be clear, concise and follow proper grammar rules and writing styles.

The contact person for the Public Communications work order will assist with the responsibility of quality assurance. As a further step to quality assurance, the Public Communications Office will provide a final review before the information is posted. The Public Communications Office reserves the right to exclude any web content deemed not appropriate to post.

Organizing Text

Text can be organized in an (.htm) page in much the same way it can be formatted in a word processing program such as Microsoft Word. Text on (.htm) pages can be organized according to paragraphs, headings, bulleted lists, numbered lists, definition lists, block quotes, and tables.

It is important to use all of these elements correctly. For example, the "blockquote" element should not be used just to indent text that is not a quotation. If you are uncertain how to format text or use these elements, the web designer will assist you and can also provide some other helpful tips.

Headings are also helpful for document organization. Use them in the correct hierarchical order. You should be able to extract just the headings and create a sort of outline of the document. In fact, some screen readers allow the user to do just this. Reading just the headings can be a quick way to scan a document, whether the user does so visually or by means of a screen reader.

Lists are another effective way to organize information. Users often scan documents, looking for lists of items because they know that the lists are likely to contain important information.

HTML Code

Only standard hypertext markup language (HTML) code is permitted. This will ensure compatibility with Internet browser and system requirements. No static web page scripts should be used that require the statement “*keep the following lines . . . , created by . . . , etc.*,” in the source code. If unsure about whether coding for static pages is acceptable, please contact Public Communications Office in advance.

Keywords and Search Engines

Keywords

Keywords are what Internet search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, or Altavista, use to find Internet pages for their search results. Keywords are listed in “META CONTENT” tags located within the source code.

Keywords and agency descriptions will be defined by the agency. Agencies should work with Public Communications to help select approximately 10 key words to describe their page.

Search Engines

Broward County’s web site is submitted to multiple search engines including Google, MSN and AOL. The web site www.broward.org is indexed on a weekly basis. This means that when a user types keywords in a search engine, the results will be better and more accurate dependent upon the most recent index date. The index updates the search engine with all the week’s updates. Broward County has plans set in place to enhance the search effectiveness of the web site .

File Sizes

Keeping file sizes to a minimum is a key factor for users visiting a site. Public Communications designs web sites with the understanding that most users will have a 56K modem internet connection with AOL 7.0, Internet Explorer 5.0 or Netscape 4.0.

Here are a few examples of some file sizes and their respective download times in minutes for our standard users.

28.8KB Modem		56KB Modem	
File Size	Download Time	File Size	Download Time
2100KB	10 minutes	2100KB	5 minutes
1600KB	7.5 minutes	1600KB	4 minutes
730KB	3.5 minutes	730KB	2 minutes
410KB	2 minutes	410KB	1 minute
215KB	1 minute	215KB	30 seconds
100KB	30seconds	100KB	14 seconds

The average time it should take to download an (.htm) file is between 5 and 10 seconds. Download time is affected by traffic to the Broward County web site and the speed at which Internet users are connected.

Scanning Documents

Electronic documents should be provided to the Public Communications Office whenever possible. However, if a hard copy is the only copy available, please contact Public Communications Office *before* you begin scanning for information on scan settings and other tips to keep file sizes small. It is important to keep file sizes small so that the average user is able to download it quickly from the web.

Scanners come with different software depending on the make and model, so default settings are often unique to the scanner. A web designer will be able to provide detailed information to ensure the files are web ready.

Images and Banners

Images should be created to minimize download time. Images should be saved in .gif or .jpg format and should be scanned or saved at a resolution of 72 dots per inch (dpi). Images should not be larger than 45K. It is not necessary for photographs to exceed 200 pixels or approximately 2 inches wide.

Don't use clip art or photos from other web sites without permission: this is illegal and unprofessional. If you take digital photos with your own camera, be sure to touch them up using photo editing software to brighten the image, crop it, and save it in the appropriate resolution size and format.

As we transition to a content management system, all images will be saved in a main "images" folder, and each agency will have its own images directory within that folder.

A “sharedimages” folder will contain images that are used by more than one agency. For example, the County logo will reside in the “sharedimages” folder, as it will be used by all agencies. The Public Communications Office is responsible for maintaining this directory. No agency should have a County logo, or any other image shared by two or more agencies, within its images directory.

In order to be compliant with ADA guidelines, all images should have an alternative text (“ALT” tag descriptions). See the *Alternate Accessible Versions/ADA Compliance* section for more information.

Colors and Text Formatting

Text colors should be used sparingly and only to indicate special meaning or emphasis. Colors or background images should be used sparingly. They are often distracting to readers and can increase download time for pages.

Moreover, users who are blind, color blind, or have limited vision may miss information presented with color. Any message conveyed with color, such as a required field on a form, should also be accompanied by another indicator, such as an asterisk (*).

In most cases, text should remain black. To ensure text is easy to read, there should be sufficient contrast between the text on a page and the background color, e.g. dark text on light backgrounds. Avoid combinations of red and green and busy background images. No text should be blue or underlined, as it could be construed as a web link.

If you are using a background image, make sure there is enough contrast between the text and the background image. Keep background images small and uncluttered, so they don’t compete with the text for the viewer’s attention.

Most people viewing your site are on a 28.8K or 56.6K modem. Large background images increase the download time for the user.

Flashing text is hard to read and is discouraged. Flickering text is annoying and, in extreme cases, can even cause seizures in some individuals who are susceptible to photo-epileptic episodes, and can cause nausea in others.

These guidelines are part of the standard web practices according to World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Contact Public Communications Office for more information regarding W3C standards or visit www.w3c.org.

Forms

There are different types of forms that may be published on the web site. The types of forms include a programmed form for an e-mail or a database, or a (.pdf) file, which is not programmed. Public Communications can assist the agency in determining what type of form would be most beneficial.

Programmed Forms

Any programmed forms must be sent to the Office of Information Technology (OIT) to be programmed. The Public Communications Office will create the form and send the form to the Office of Information Technology for programming.

Information collected from forms and sent to an e-mail address must be sent to an e-mail address created for the agency (e.g. publicinfo@broward.org), where more than one employee will have access to the information. This will ensure that the information is still sent to the proper agency despite employee turnover or absence. No forms will be uploaded before they have been programmed by OIT.

PDF Forms

Public Communications Office has the capability to create (.pdf) forms so that they can be filled out electronically by typing directly within the document. For more information, please contact Public Communications Office. Anyone who has Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available for free download from Adobe's web site at www.adobe.com, has the ability to type on editable (.pdf) forms. However, in order to save a form and return to it later, the entire Adobe Acrobat Suite is required. For more information, see "PDF Files," below.

PDF Files

All links going to (.pdf) files must indicate the extension (.pdf) next to the link. Any (.pdf) files greater than 250 KB should state the exact file size.

Whenever possible, (.pdf) documents should be broken down by a table of contents. The table of contents should be listed as an (.htm) page with links to the appropriate section within the (.pdf) documents. This allows the document to be broken down into individual (.pdf) files by section, thus limiting file size and download time.

Audio/Video/Multimedia

RealPlayer is the standard media player for audio and video on the Broward County web site. Users can download a free version of RealPlayer online at www.realplayer.com. File sizes for all multimedia should be as small as possible to ensure proper streaming. Two versions of all audio/video files should be created, one for high bandwidth and one for low bandwidth.

No audio or video files will be placed on a web site without prior approval from Public Communications Office. Public Communications Office has the capability to transform videotapes and other digital videos into RealPlayer format. For more information, call Public Communications Office.

All audio and video files must also have an equivalent text version in order to comply with Federal Government Section 508, ADA compliance standards. For more information, see Alternate Accessible Versions/ADA Compliance.

Frames

Frames should be avoided whenever possible. A frame allows a collection of at least two other separate web pages to be combined in the same visual space. Visual users usually experience framesets as a cohesive entity. They can scan the contents of multiple pages all at once.

Frames should only be used when a PowerPoint presentation is converted for web posting and should be viewed in Internet Explorer. The reason frames should not be used is that those users with screen readers cannot quickly scan the contents of multiple pages. All of the content is experienced in a linear fashion, one frame at a time. Frames are not *inaccessible* to modern screen readers, but they can be disorienting.

Applets and Plug-Ins

No applets will be used on a web page and plug-ins will be minimized. Applets are scripts that achieve a special effect on a web page but require certain text or phrases to also be included in the code (see the section on "HTML code," for more examples.) An example of a plug-in is that which is required to operate Flash objects on a web page. The Flash objects do not function without plug-ins, and the plug-ins are not supported by all web browsers versions or screen readers.

Broward County web pages will be in a standard viewing format focusing on text and images. Applets and plug-ins are difficult for screen readers that are used by people with impaired vision and therefore do not comply

with ADA guidelines. Older browsers may not support plug-ins or applets, so users with older browsers will not be able to view the site properly.

Window Control

Pop-up windows should be used sparingly. To ensure proper navigability, no web pages will open in a separate browser. A link going to an outside (non-county) site, will open a pop-up window that will alert users that they are leaving the County's site.

Alternate Accessible Versions/ADA Compliance

In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act to require Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. Inaccessible technology interferes with an individual's ability to obtain and use information quickly and easily. Section 508 was enacted to eliminate barriers in information technology, to make available new opportunities for people with disabilities, and to encourage development of technologies that will help achieve these goals.

Although the Federal Government has not mandated the use of Federal Government Section 508 (www.section508.gov) for state and local governments, many governments have already adopted the standards. It is Broward County's policy to adhere to Section 508 as follows:

Section 508

1194.22 Web-based Intranet and Internet information and applications.

- (a) A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content).
- (b) Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation.
- (c) Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.
- (d) Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.
- (e) Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.

(f) Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.

(g) Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.

(h) Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.

(i) Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.

(j) Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.

(k) A text-only page, with equivalent information or functionality, shall be provided to make a web site comply with the provisions of this part, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes.

(l) When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.

(m) When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with §1194.21(a) through (l).

(n) When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.

(o) A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.

(p) When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.

Testing

All Broward County web pages will be reviewed by Public Communications Office to ensure quality control for both content and functionality using standards for Internet Explorer 5.0, Netscape 4.0, AOL 7.0 for web browsers and Adobe Acrobat for (.pdf) files.

Statistics

Every agency may be provided with detailed statistics regarding traffic to their web site and should contact Public Communications Office for details. No visible site counters will be located on individual agency web pages.

Contact Information

General contact information about individual agencies will be posted on each agency site. No employee names should be listed on agency sites. Whenever possible, office e-mail addresses should be posted on the web site in lieu of individual e-mail addresses. This will eliminate difficulties that may be experienced with staff turnover and will ensure that someone always has access to the e-mail box.

Agencies wishing to post detailed information regarding phone numbers may link to the appropriate portion on the main phone numbers listing on the Broward County web site.

To help eliminate SPAM e-mail, no employee names will be posted in the phone numbers section of the Broward County web site. It is thought that many companies that send SPAM e-mail use lists of employee names to guess e-mail addresses and send unsolicited e-mail. To combat this problem, only job titles and phone numbers will be listed.

Broward County agencies may still use the "Call An Employee" search function on the bc-net (<http://bc-net>) to look up employee phone numbers.

Contact the Public Communications Office

General questions, including inquiries about copyrighted or patented material as it relates to the web site, can be sent via e-mail to Public Communications Office at publicinfo@broward.org, or call 954-357-6990. Public Communications Office is located in the Broward County Governmental Center, 115 South Andrews Avenue, Room 506, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301.