



NJ Web Presence Guidelines

Branding and Usability Standards for Websites and Applications





The State of New Jersey Web Presence

The New Jersey Office of Information Technology, Digital Services Unit, has developed the NJ Web Presence Guidelines to provide State agencies the ability to create a NJ web presence with a consistent look, feel and function by utilizing clearly defined branding and standards. The guidelines are created keeping in mind usability best practices and website accessibility standards.

These guidelines will assist in the modernization of state government websites as stated in the enacted Chapter Law 392 also known as the <u>21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act</u>.

The goal of these guidelines is to help establish a user interface that is familiar to any person using a State of New Jersey website or application. Overall, this streamlined approach will help aid in a better user experience and build trust for New Jersey residents.

All websites built using these guidelines should be:

Mobile-friendly/Responsive - Responsive web design is an approach which makes web pages render well on a variety of devices and screen sizes. Each web page, site, and service shall be configured in such a way that it can be navigated, viewed, and accessed on a smartphone, tablet computer, or similar mobile device.

Accessible – accessible to individuals with disabilities in accordance with <u>Section 508</u>. The <u>Web</u> <u>Content Accessibility Guidelines</u> (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA, shall be the accessibility standard for the web pages, sites, and services of all State agencies.





Design Principles

Along with using these guidelines, the following design principles should be used to support a better user experience.

Design around user needs and not bureaucratic silos

Use evidence-based data-driven analysis to present the information your audience needs. Perform research to understand your audience using different techniques:

- Analytics
- User testing
- Personas and journey mapping

Voice should be authoritative and in plain English

- Avoid use of acronyms
- Get your message across with the least amount of text
- Writing should be easy to understand

Further Reading Resources

- U.S. Web Design System Design principles
- Nielsen Norman Group 10 Usability Heuristics for User Interface Design
- Nielsen Norman Group Analytics & Metrics Articles & Videos
- Nielsen Norman Group User Testing Articles & Videos
- Nielsen Norman Group Personas Articles & Videos
- Nielsen Norman Group Writing for the Web Articles & Videos
- Nielsen Norman Group Content Strategy Articles & Videos





Other Modernization Efforts

Other modernization efforts should include:

When possible, provide a personalized/customized digital experience.

For example, if a website or application allows the ability for a user to log in and save information, that information can be used to prepopulate any form fields in advance.

Transition from paper to digital transactions between residents and government.

Any paper based form that is related to serving the public should be made available in a digital format.

Transactions should always be provided through a secure connection.

A secure connection safeguards any sensitive data that is being sent between two systems, preventing criminals from reading and modifying any information transferred, including personal identifiable information.





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Header and Footer

Desktop View Port

Global State of NJ Header

- Background color #363636
- State Seal (Link to NJ.gov)
- Official Site of the State of New Jersey (Link to NJ.gov)
- Gov and Lt. Names
- Links to: NJ.gov, Services, Agencies, FAQs, Translate, Search

Header

- Agency/Program name (Link to Homepage)
- Logo (Link to Homepage)

Navigation menu bar

- Color choice optional

Social media icon

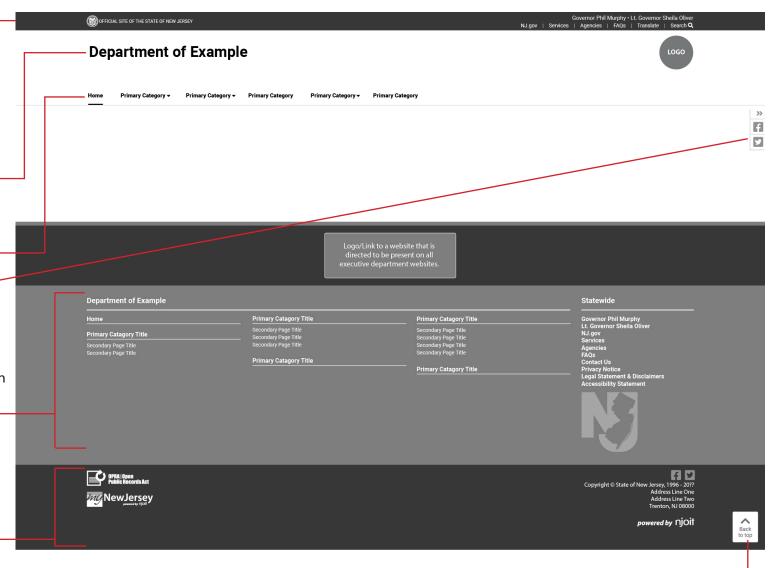
- Placement on right, sticky, vertical alignment
- Rollover will display icons in the branding color of the social media icon

Footer

- Agency/Program name
- Primary and secondary links from navigation menu
- Statewide links
- Digital State of NJ logo

Global State of NJ Footer

- Background color #363636
- OPRA logo and link
- MYNJ logo and link
- Repeat social media icons
- Copyright and dates
- Agency address
- powered by njoit logo if build in content management tool offered by njoit link to: https://tech.nj.gov



Note: Colors should always be high enough contrast to meet AA standards https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

Note: Back to top arrow will appear when the user starts to scroll down.

Header and Footer

Tablet and Phone View Ports

Global State of NJ header

- Color #363636
- State Seal
- Official Site of the State of New Jersey
- Links to: Translate & Search

Navigation menu bar

- Color choice optional
- Agency/Program Name (Link to Homepage)
- Menu button to open navigation

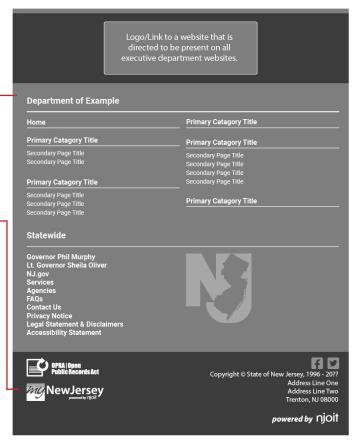
Footer -

- Agency/Program name
- Primary and secondary links from navigation menu
- Statewide links
- Digital State of NJ logo

Global State of NJ Footer

- Background color #363636
- OPRA logo and link
- MYNJ logo and link
- Repeat social media icons
- Copyright and dates
- Agency address
- powered by njoit logo if build in content management tool offered by njoit link to: https://tech.nj.gov





Tablet example mocked up at 768 pixels





Phone example mocked up at 414 pixels

Search

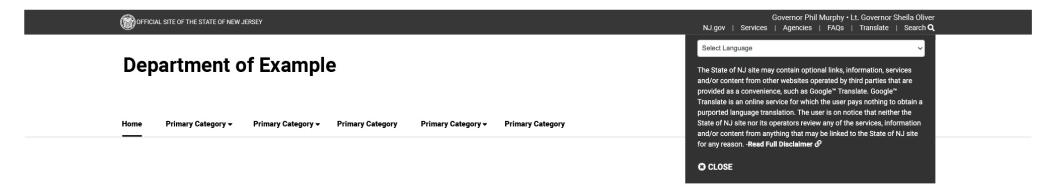
Global State of NJ header with search open



Note: Search will give results from the overall state web presence and can then be refined/filter to the specific site in the advanced search options found on the results page.

Translate

Global State of NJ header with translate open

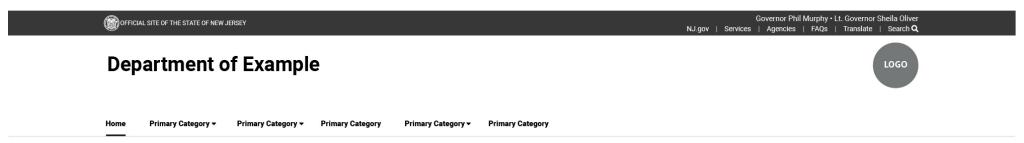


Logo Placement in Header

Primary navigation menu bar with color



Primary navigation menu bar with no color



Note: The logo can be placed to the left of the Header/Department Title or flush right within the header. The left or right placement of the logo can be used with either navigation menu bar style.

Division Header





Note: Text title "Department of Example" in the nav bar will link to that Department's homepage. The text title "Division of Example" will link to that Division's homepage.

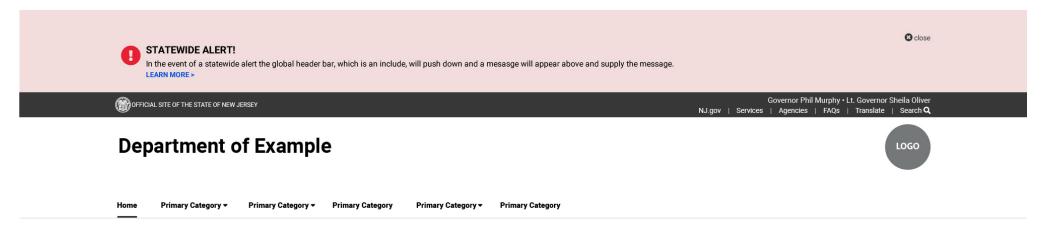
Program Header





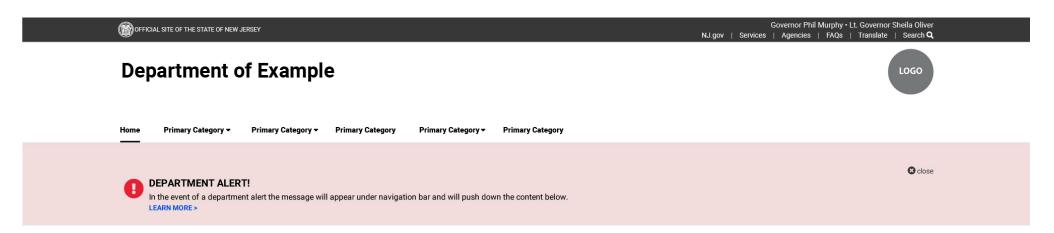
Note: Text title "Department of Example" in the nav bar will link to that Department's homepage. The text title "Program Example" will link to that Program's homepage.

Statewide Alert



Note: The Statewide alert is an include. This alert will be pushed out by NJOIT Digital Services. (Example: Weather-Related Closures) If you are building your own site contact Web.Publishing@tech.nj.gov to request the code.

Department Alert



Note: The alerts will only appear on the website's homepage with the option to close.

If your site has a business need to show the alert on pages other than just the homepage, this option is available.

Color choices for an alert will be available. See color options under the Elements Library section of this document.

Typography

Branding Font - Roboto

If Roboto is not available, the use of Open Sans or Public Sans is acceptable.

Typography is an essential component of brand identity. Consistency makes a brand feel more dependable.

Please use the suggested font sizes along with the standard font to enhance the branding recognition.

If your audience would benefit from a larger font size, enlarging for this reason is okay.

Best practices when using heading tags

Use heading tags to provide structure to your website. Use only one H1 tag which should be the main topic for the page (Website Title/Department Name). H2 tags should be used for the main topics within the site. H3 – H6 should serve as additional sub-headings within each main topic.

Default Link Color - #0056B3

Note: Other link colors are acceptable as long as it meets contrast ratio requirements.

Resource to check contrast:

WebAIM Color Contrast Checker -

https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

Standard Font Sizes and Weights		
Website Header Title	2.5em, Font weight: 700 (40 px)	
Primary Navigation	0.9375em, Font weight: 700 (15px)	
Breadcrumbs	1em, Font weight: 400 (16px)	
Extra Large Heading	3.75em, Font weight: 700 (60px)	
Large Heading	3em, Font weight: 700 (48px)	
Intro Copy	2em, Font weight: 400 (32px)	
Page Title	2.5em, Font weight: 700 (40px)	
Quote Text	2em, Font weight: 500 (32px) Condensed	
Section Heading	2em, Font weight: 700 (32px)	
Subsection Heading	1.375em, Font weight: 700 (22px)	
Big Copy	1.375em, Font weight: 400 (22px)	
Body Copy	1.125em, Font weight: 400 (18px)	
Default Button Text	1.125em, Font weight: 700 (18px)	
Big Button Text	1.375em, Font weight: 700 (22px)	
Footer Title	1.25em, Font weight: 500 (20px)	
Footer Primary Navigation Link	1em, Font weight: 500 (16px)	
Footer Secondary Navigation Link	0.875em, Font weight: 400 (14px)	

See examples on the following page.

Typography

Website Header - Roboto 40px, 700 weight

0.9375em	Home Roboto Black 15px Primary Catagory Primary Catagory Primary Catagory Primary Catagory ——		
1em	Home / Breadcrumbs - Roboto 16px, 400 weight		
3.75em	Extra Large Heading - Roboto 60px, 700 weight		
3em	Large Heading - Roboto 48px, 700 weight		
2em	Intro Copy - Roboto 32px, 400 weight		
2.5em	Page Title - Roboto 40px, 700 weight		
2em	Quote Text - Roboto Condensed 32px, 500 weight		
2em	Section Heading - Roboto 32px, 700 weight		
1.375em	Subsection Heading - Roboto 22px, 700 weight		
1.375em	Big Copy - Roboto 22px, 400 weight		
1.125em	Body Copy - Roboto 18px, 400 weight Default Button		
1.125em	Roboto 18px, 700 weight		
1.375em	Big Button Pixels to Em formula pixels/16 = em 16px is default size = 1 em		
1.25em	Footer Title - Roboto 20px, 500 weight		
1em	Footer Primary Navigation Link - Roboto 16px, 500 weight		
0.875em	Footer Primary Navigation Link - Roboto 16px, 500 weight Footer Secondary Navigation Link - Roboto 14px, 400 weight Footer Secondary Navigation Link - Roboto 14px, 400 weight		

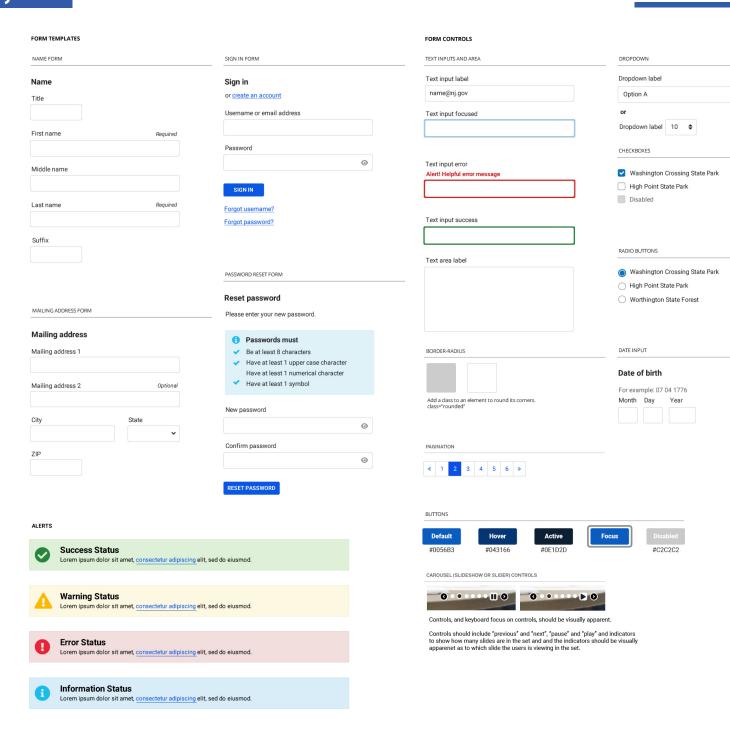
NJ Web Presence Guidelines

\$

Element Library

Buttons
Links
Inputs
Drop-downs
Pagination
In-page Alerts
Carousel Controls

Note: Red text should be reserved to signify an alert.



Cards

Card with Image

Image Here

Title Here

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Title Here
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LEARN MORE >

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lmage Here

Title Here

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LEARN MORE >

Note: A card is a flexible and extensible content container with multiple variants and options.

Cards

Card with out Image

Title Here

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LEARN MORE

Card with Icon



Title Here

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LEARN MORE >



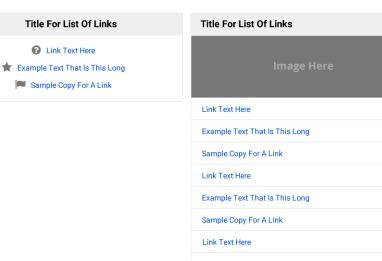
Title Here

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut.

LEARN MORE >

Card with List of Links

Title For List Of Links			
0	Link Text Here		
\star	Example Text That Is This Long		
	Sample Copy For A Link		
0	Link Text Here		
*	Example Text That Is This Long		
	Sample Copy For A Link		
0	Link Text Here		
*	Example Text That Is This Long		
 	Sample Copy For A Link		

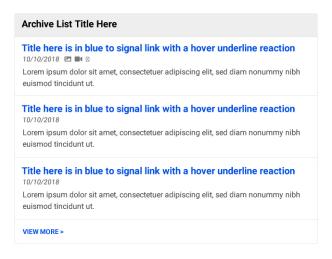


Title For List Of Links Image Here Link Text Here Example Text That Is This Long Sample Copy For A Link Link Text Here Example Text That Is This Long Sample Copy For A Link Link Text Here Example Text That Is This Long Sample Copy For A Link Link Text Here Example Text That Is This Long Sample Copy For A Link Link Text Here Example Text That Is This Long Sample Copy For A Link

Cards

Archive List

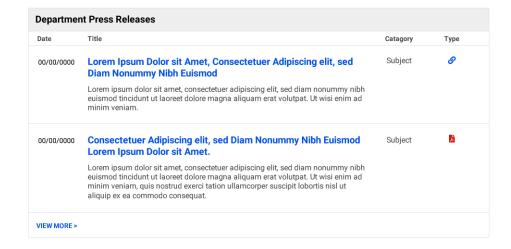
The archive list card can be used for list like press releases, events or announcments. The list usually displays a few items with a link to view more at the bottom which will take the user to a page that has the full list.



Data Tables

A data table is a library and collection of extensions that can provide additional functionality to existing tabular data. This includes search, sort, hidden columns and responsive layouts.

- Main Documentation https://datatables.net/examples/index
- Bootstrap 4 Documentation https://datatables.net/examples/styling/bootstrap4
- Responsive Documentation https://datatables.net/extensions/ responsive/examples/initialisation/ className.html



Note: PDF document links should be identified by the font awesome icon and no longer needs the file size displayed

Cards

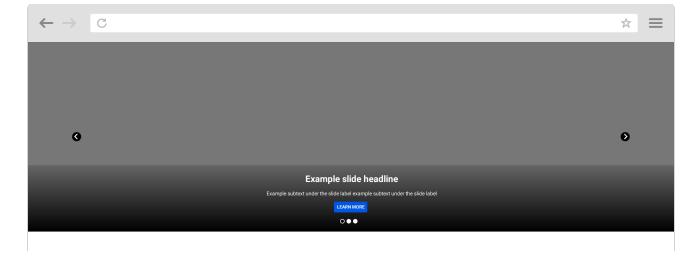
Hero Image

In web design, a hero image is a large web banner image, prominently placed on a web page, generally in the front and center.

The size of the hero image can vary. The hero image can be a static image or a slider.

Image sliders (also known as image carousels or slide shows) can be a convenient way to display multiple images, videos, or graphics on your website.



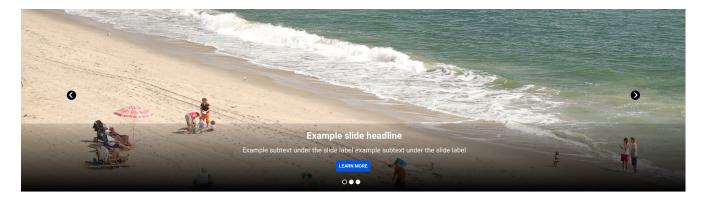


Cards

Examples of Hero Image Sliders

These three full width image sliders shown are using three different options for the positioning of the overlay title, text and link.

Suggested image size for a full width slider is 2560 px wide by 750 px high at 72 dpi.

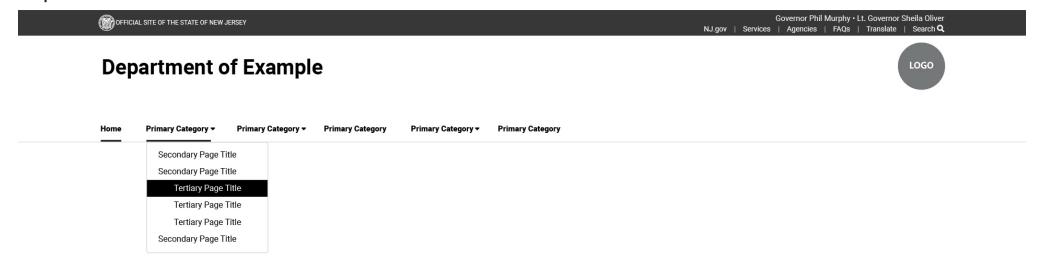




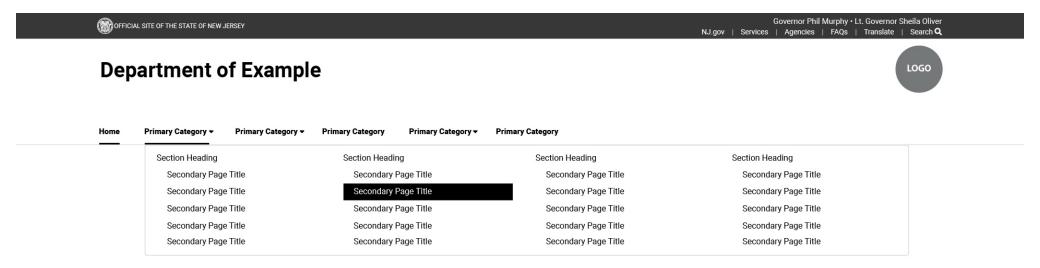


Navigation

Drop-down Menu



Drop-down Mega Menu

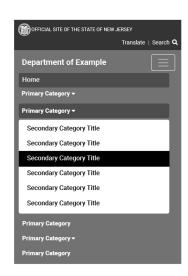


Navigation

Hamburger Menu

Image shown is an example of a hamburger menu open on a phone screen.

Note: When a user opens the hamburger menu from any page within the website, the primary category of the page that the users is on when opening the menu should be highlighted.



Breadcrumbs

Breadcrumbs (or breadcrumb trail) is a secondary navigation system that shows a user's location in a website.



Navigation

Accordion Menu

An accordion is a design element that expands in place to expose some hidden information.

The examples on this page shows accordion menus using vertically stacked list of headers that can be clicked to reveal or hide content below the header.

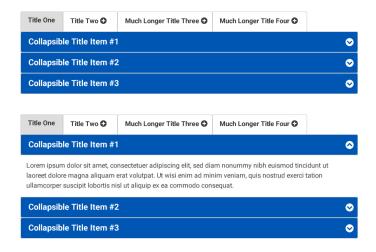
When an accordion is opened it will push the page content down.

One of the biggest advantages of accordions is that they often allow users to get the big picture before focusing on details, and they can effectively mitigate the common problem of overly long pages.

Accordion Menu with Tabs

Accordion menus can be broken up into headings by using tabs across the top. This is used to condense and organize even more information.





Navigation

In-Page Links

In-page links (also referred to as anchor links or jump links) are links that lead users to content on the same web page, rather than to another page of the site. This solution is used when a page has a large amount of content. The two solutions below show the style for bulleted and alphabetical in-page links.

Note: We suggest to use accordion menus over in-page links when possible. If you prefer in-page links instead of accordion menus due to the fact that the content is hidden under headings, a solution would be to have the menus open when a user visits the page. Then the user can close the items if they wish.

BULLETED IN-PAGE LINKS

On this page:

- o In-Page Link Title One
- o In-Page Link Title Two
- In-Page Link Title Third
- o In-Page Link Title Four
- In-Page Link Title Five

In-Page Link Title One

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In-Page Link Title Two

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In-Page Link Title Three

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In-Page Link Title Four

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In-Page Link Title Five

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ALPHABETICAL IN-PAGE LINKS



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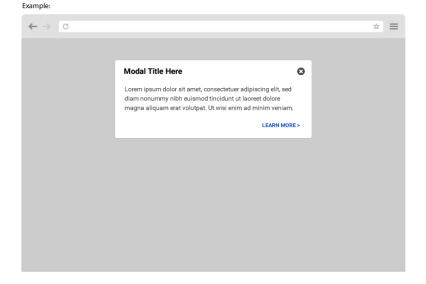
Navigation

Modal

- A modal box is a scripted effect that allows you to overlay a small element (dialog prompt) over a website.
- The primary benefit of a modal box it that they avoid the need of a conventional window pop-up or use of page reload.
- A modal box is positioned over everything else in the document and remove scroll from the <body> so that modal content scrolls instead.
- Clicking on the modal "backdrop" will automatically close the modal.
- Limit use of modal box for additional, nonessential information. (Ex: Welcome to new website, Sign up for our newsletter, See What's New)

Note: Best Practices for Modals / Overlays / Dialog Windows https://uxplanet.org/best-practices-for-modals-overlays-dialog-windows-c00c66cddd8c



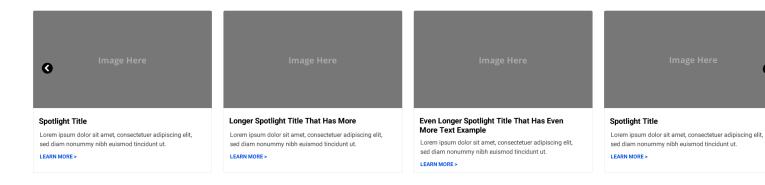


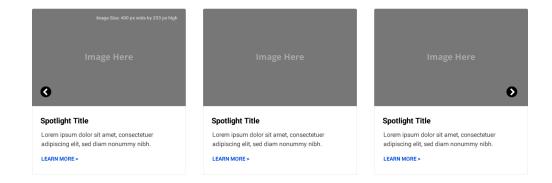
0

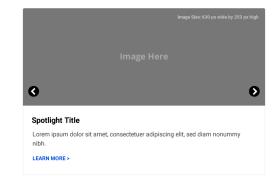
Compositions

Cards with Slider

Note: The following compositions show options for laying out series of cards; defines the whitespace around the components and placements for any title and text grouping them together.







Compositions

Cards with no Slider

Image Here
300 x 180

Spotlight Title

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh.

LEARN MORE >

Image Here

Longer Spotlight Title That Has More

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, ctetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh.

LEARN MORE >

Image Here

Even Longer Spotlight Title That Has Even More Text Example

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh.

LEARN MORE >

Image Here

Spotlight Title

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh.

LEARN MORE >

Image Here

Spotlight Title

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh.

LEARN MORE >

Image Here

Longer Spotlight Title That Has More

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, ctetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh.

LEARN MORE >

Image Here

Even Longer Spotlight Title That Has Even More Text Example

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh.

Feature Group Heading

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam.

Image Here 400 x 254

Feature Heading

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.

LEARN MORE >

Image Here

Feature Heading

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam.

LEARN MORE >

Image Here

Feature Heading

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

Compositions

Cards with no image

Feature Heading

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Large Feature Card

Large Feature Heading

Image Here 500 x 250

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Large Feature Heading With Two Lines

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Compositions

Cards with Icons



Title Here

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LEARN MORE >



Title Here

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LEARN MORE >



Title Here

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LEARN MORE >

Layout of logos only







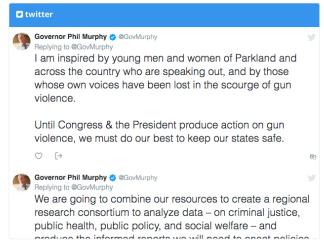






Social Media Feeds





Compositions

Spacing Between Rows of Composition Groups

On large "desktop" homepage layouts please use at least 50px margin spacing above and below grouping rows of compositions.

On a small "tablet or phone" homepage layout please use 30px above and below section titles and 15px between cards.

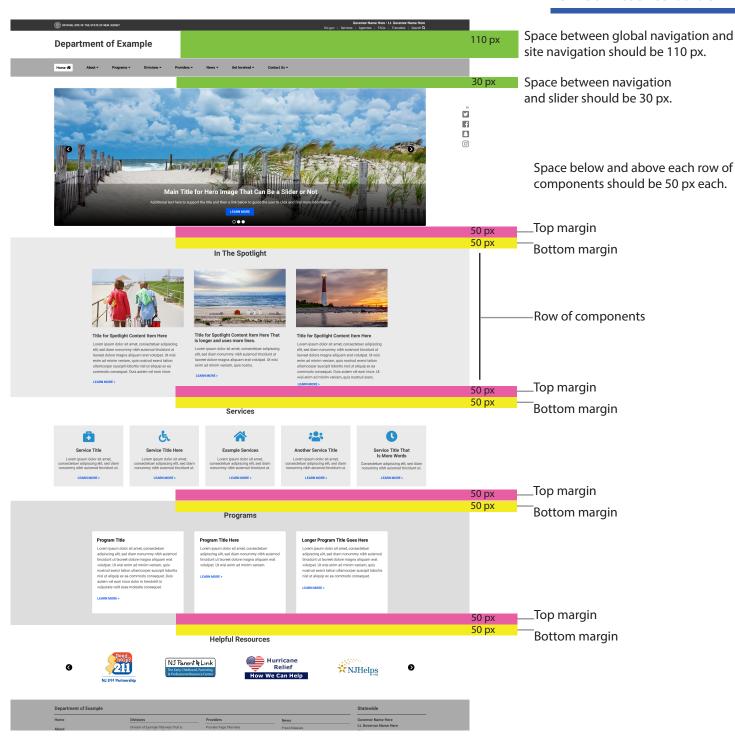
Margin and padding

Use the margin and padding spacing utilities to control how elements and components are spaced and sized. Bootstrap 4 includes a five-level scale for spacing utilities, based on a 1rem value default \$spacer variable. Choose values for all viewports (e.g., .mr-3 for margin-right: 1rem), or pick responsive variants to target specific viewports (e.g., .mr-md-3 for margin-right: 1rem starting at the md breakpoint). Info from getbootstrap.com

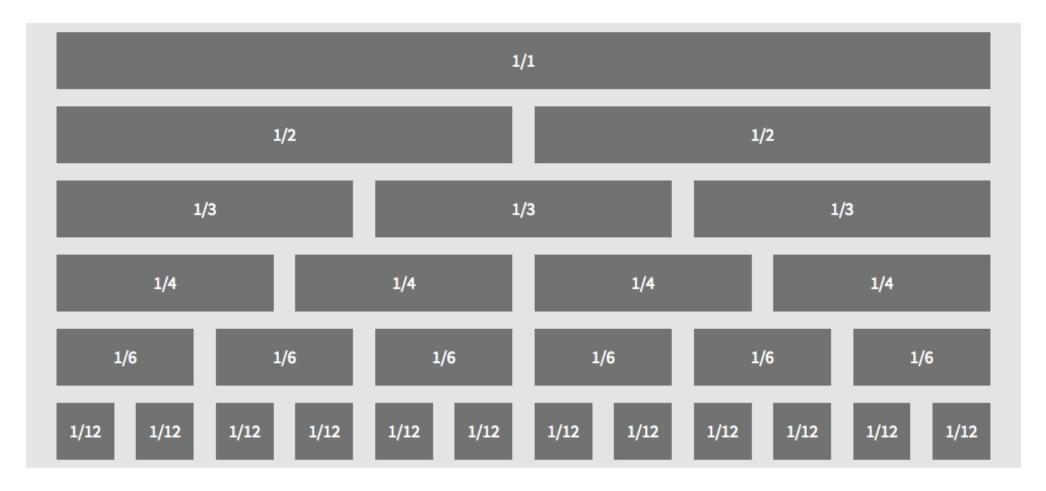
Why Whitespace is so Important in Web Design

Info from www.seguetech.com/ whitespace-web-design/

NJ Web Presence Guidelines

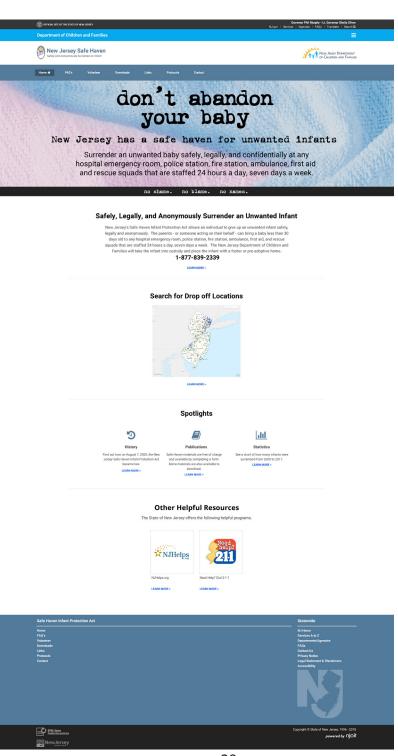


- 12-column, responsive grid provides structure for website content
- Grid will adjust to screen size (Desktop, Tablet and Phone)

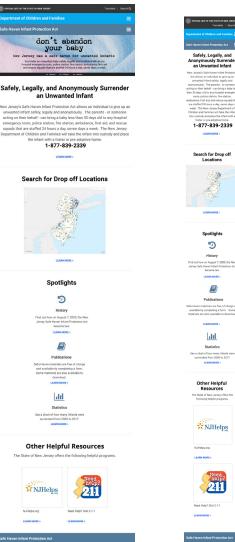


Page Layout Examples

On this page is an example of a home page shown at three different view ports; desktop, tablet and phone.



NJ Web Presence Guidelines

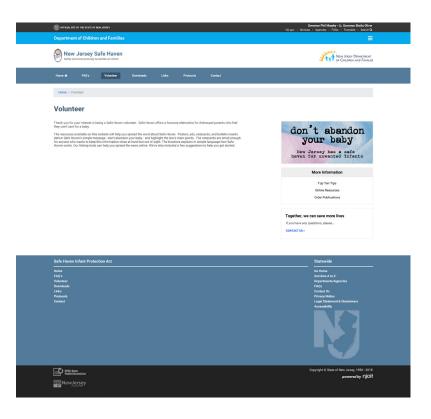


OPERIODO



Page Layout Examples

On this page is an example of a secondary page shown at three different view ports; desktop, tablet and phone.



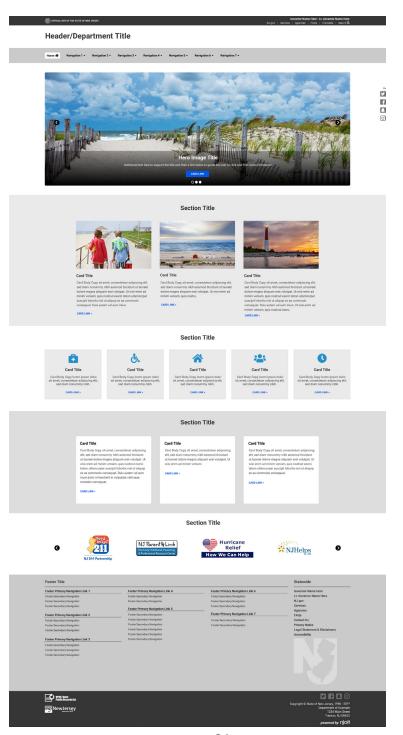


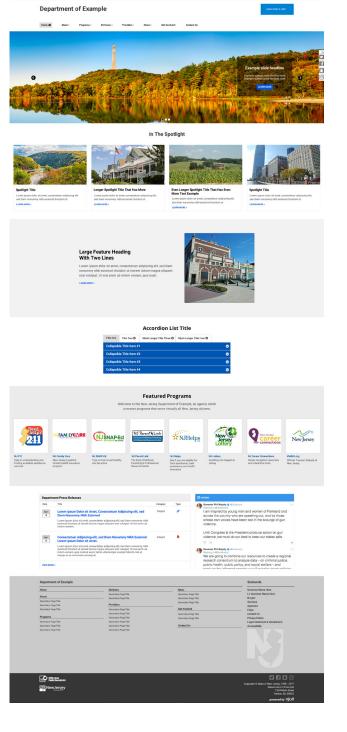


Page Layout Examples

On this page is two examples of a home page shown at a desktop view port screen size. These show examples of how rows or components can be combined.







Terminology, Usage, and Spelling

As much as possible, terms should be used and spelled the same way across the state's Web presence.

Date Format

Avoid expressing dates as three numerals divided by forward slashes (e.g., 6/11/01); internationally, this format can mean November 6, 2001, not June 11, 2001. Use the name of the month wherever possible; for example: July 4, 1998, or Jul-4-98.

download

one word, no hyphen, capitalize only when starting a sentence

email

one word, no hyphen, capitalize only when starting a sentence

e-government

Spelled with a hyphen, lower case "e" and lower case "g." At the beginning of a sentence, spelled "E-government."

e-services, e-commerce, e-voting, e-signature, and like constructions

same conventions as in "e-government"

homepage

one word, no hyphen, capitalize only when starting a sentence

internet

one word, no hyphen, capitalize only when starting a sentence

intranet

one word, no hyphen, capitalize only when starting a sentence

login and logout versus log in and log out

The words login and logout are spelled together if they are used in a sentence as nouns or adjectives. Example: • The information you use to sign into your email is your login (noun), and the page where you sign in is the login (adjective) page.

The words log in, log on, log out, and log off are spelled separately if they are used as verbs. Examples: • You log in (verb) with your login information. • Don't forget to log out (verb).

multimedia

one word, no hyphen, capitalize only when starting a sentence

online, offline

one word, no hyphen, capitalize only when starting a sentence

PDF/pdf

For "portable document file"; use capitals when using the term in a phrase or sentence; use lower case letters when placed at the end of a hyperlink.

Phone number format

Divide with hyphens or periods (international convention); do not use parentheses. Either of the following is correct: 888-555-1010 or 888.555.1010.

site map

two words, no hyphen, capitalize only when starting a sentence

state

the word state is spelled with a lower case "s" - for example, "Trenton is the capital of the state," "state legislators."

URL

The acronym for Uniform Resource Locator (URL) should be written with all uppercase letters.

Example: • The URL for the New Jersey state homepage is https://www.nj.gov.

username

The word username, also known as user ID, is spelled as one word if it is a name that someone uses for identification purposes when logging onto a computer, using chat rooms, or as part of his or her email address. Example: • Log in with your username and password

webpage, website, webcam, webcast, webmaster, the web all one word, no hyphen, capitalize only when starting a sentence

Branding

Header

Include global header with no links on the right. HTML text title: Department/Division name font size: 16px and title of application: 40 px. Place any logo flush right.

Ribbon below header

Place any links here that are needed on all pages of the application. Keep links to a minimum.

Alert Message

Application alert messages convey important and sometimes timesentitive information. This message should appear below the header ribbon and it is reccommended to use the following standard alert colors: Blue - Informative status, Yellow - Warning status, Red - Error status, Green - Success status.

Footer

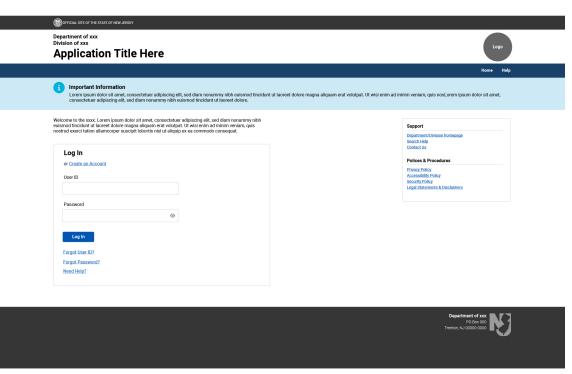
Address bottom right along with digital NJ logo faded 50% white.

Colors

Colors should always reach a high enough contrast to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 level AA Section 508 standards.

Resource for checking color contrast:

https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/



Log In Page Placement and Style

Informative Text

(example: welcome message/instructions)
Place form instructions above the input fields section.

Web Application Form Inputs and Elements Section

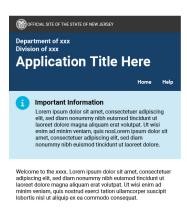
(example: Log In, User ID & Password)

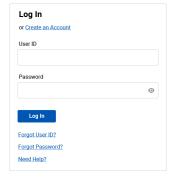
Place input fields inside a card with a 1 px border. Card should appear flush left and all titles, text, input fields, buttons, and links should be flush left.

Important Links

(example: Support, Policies & Procedures)

On a desktop size screen links should be placed in the right column in a card with a 1 px border. On a phone size screen this card should fall under any content on the page.





Support	
Department/Division homepage	
Search Help	
0-4-411-	
Contact Us Polices & Procedures	
Polices & Procedures Privacy Policy	
Polices & Procedures	



NJ Web Presence Guidelines

Application

Branding

Branding Font - Roboto
If Roboto is not available, the use of Open Sans or Public Sans is acceptable.

Typography is an essential component of brand identity. Consistency makes a brand feel more dependable.

Please use the suggested font sizes along with the standard font to enhance the branding recognition.

If your audience would benefit from a larger font size, enlarging for this reason is okay.

Standard Font Sizes and Weights		
Website Header Title	2.5em, Font weight: 700 (40 px)	
Primary Navigation	0.9375em, Font weight: 700 (15px)	
Breadcrumbs	1em, Font weight: 400 (16px)	
Extra Large Heading	3.75em, Font weight: 700 (60px)	
Large Heading	3em, Font weight: 700 (48px)	
Intro Copy	2em, Font weight: 400 (32px)	
Page Title	2.5em, Font weight: 700 (40px)	
Quote Text	2em, Font weight: 500 (32px) Condensed	
Section Heading	2em, Font weight: 700 (32px)	
Subsection Heading	1.375em, Font weight: 700 (22px)	
Big Copy	1.375em, Font weight: 400 (22px)	
Body Copy	1.125em, Font weight: 400 (18px)	
Default Button Text	1.125em, Font weight: 700 (18px)	
Big Button Text	1.375em, Font weight: 700 (22px)	
Footer Title	1.25em, Font weight: 500 (20px)	
Footer Primary Navigation Link	1em, Font weight: 500 (16px)	
Footer Secondary Navigation Link	ink 0.875em, Font weight: 400 (14px)	

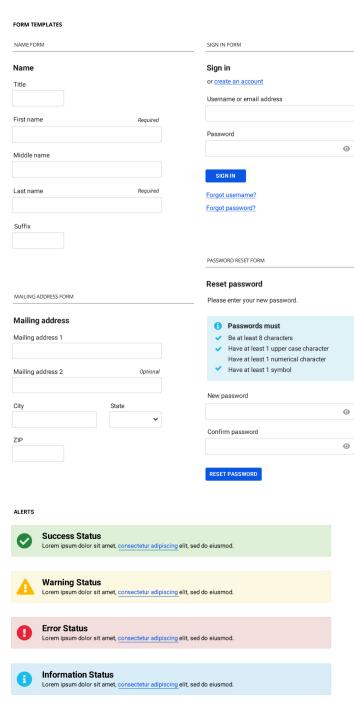
Branding

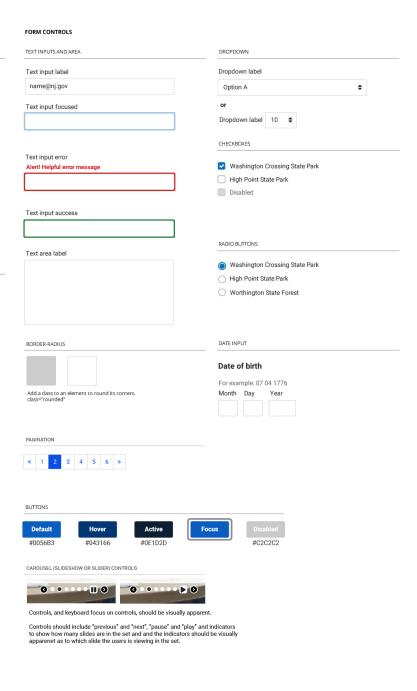
Form Elements

Examples for form templates and controls are shown here. This includes the following:

Buttons
Links
Inputs
Drop-downs
Pagination
In-page Alerts
Carousel Controls

Note: Red text should be reserved to signify an alert.





Usability

Best Practices for Web Form Design

Keep the form short

Every time you cut a field or question from a form, you increase its conversion rate.

Visually group related labels and fields

Labels should be close to the fields they describe.

Present fields in a single column layout

Multiple columns interrupt the vertical momentum of moving down the form.

Use logical sequencing

Help keyboard users by testing the Tab-key navigation to ensure it follows the correct field sequence.

Avoid placeholder text

Some forms replace field labels with in-field placeholder text to reduce clutter on the page, or to shorten the length of the form. While this approach is based on good intentions, our research shows that it has many negative consequences.

Match fields to the type and size of the input

Text fields should be about the same size as the expected input since it's extremely error prone when users can't see their full entry.

Distinguish optional and required fields

Limit the form to only 1 or 2 optional fields, and clearly label them as optional.

Explain any input or formatting requirements

If a field requires a specific format or type of input, state the exact instructions.

Avoid Reset and Clear buttons

The risk of accidental deletion outweighs the unlikely need to 'start over' on a web form.

Provide highly visible and specific error messages

Errors should be signaled through a variety of cues, not solely through color: outline the field AND use red text AND use a heavier font, to ensure users don't overlook this critical information.

Place common elements in predictable areas

Put UI elements where users expect them. Using expected layouts and conventions help the user find the controls they need quicker.

Clear visual hierarchy

Grouping related form controls makes forms more understandable for all users, as related controls are easier to identify. It also makes it easier for people to focus on smaller and more manageable groups rather than try to grasp the entire form at once. Related elements should be placed close to each other and separate from other groups with borders and white space.

Use a step indicator in a multi-page form

If a form has a known number of steps to be completed, a step-by-step indicator can help users orient themselves. Use an ordered list with a list item for every step. Visually indicate the current and completed steps. If possible, provide a link to steps already completed, so the user can review them. In this case, any data already entered in the current step should be saved.

Example:



Usability

Progressive disclosure

If you have little screen space, make visible only those controls that are used often and by most people. The rest can be hidden under accordions, menus, ribbons, and tabs, which all use progressive disclosure to hide some of the complexity of the UI and allow users to focus on fewer options.

Progress indicators

Wait animations, such as percent-done bars and spinners, inform users of the current working state and make the process more tolerable to the user by reducing uncertainty. Users experience higher satisfaction with a site and are willing to wait longer when the site uses a dynamic progress indicator.

Keep a user from leaving a form before they have finished

When a user is on a screen where they are filling out a form it is recommended to avoiding having links available for them to click that will take them away. If links are necessary on the same page as the form, it is recommended to open the link in a new window or have a pop up to alert the user that they are leaving the form that has not been finished. Give the user the option to save before leaving if possible.

Forms need to be accessible

Forms can be visually and cognitively complex and challenging to use. Accessible forms are easier to use for everyone, including people with disabilities. Controls should be labeled and elements should be grouped. Instructions should be provided. Validate input by providing the user options to undo changes and confirm data entry. Notify users when a task is successful and of any errors and provide instructions to help them correct mistakes.

Application Usability Sources

Best Practices for Web Form Design

Source: Nielsen Norman Group

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/web-form-design/

Mask Interaction Delays with Progress Indicators

Source: Nielsen Norman Group

https://www.nngroup.com/videos/progress-indicators/

Top 10 Application-Design Mistakes

Source: Nielsen Norman Group

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/top-10-application-design-mistakes/

3 Strategies for Managing Visual Complexity in Applications and Websites

websites

Source: Nielsen Norman Group

https://www.nngroup.com/videos/managing-visual-complexity/

USWDS Components Step Indicator **Source:** U.S. Web Design system (USWDS)

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/step-indicator/

Accessible Forms Tutorial

Source: World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/forms/

Multi-page Forms, Step-by-step indicator

Source: World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)

https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/forms/multi-page/#using-step-by-step-indicator