

DRAFT Common Look and Feel 4

DRAFT – CLF4

Government Information Center

[Version 1.1 \(comments from DNREC are included\)](#)

ABSTRACT

Delaware's DRAFT policy on statewide online branding, web policy, and user-centered design



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Introduction

Mission of Common Look and Feel

The Delaware Website Common Look and Feel (CLF) version 4.0 is designed to:

- 1) Create and reinforce a consistent Delaware brand
- 2) Understand real users’ needs and expectations, then meet or exceed them
- 3) Establish consistent elements on Delaware sites, but allow for greater flexibility in design and site organization to highlight uniqueness in agencies
- 4) Guide application developers on user interface features
- 5) Reinforce the importance of accessibility

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Through this document we aim to set the branding standard for state websites in order to maintain a consistent and cohesive web presence.

A primary goal of CLF is to ensure that users know when they are on an official Delaware State Government website.

Included in these guidelines is information on **design principles** (i.e. mobile, common headers, typography defaults, colors, and more) and **content guidelines** (i.e. organization, tone, language and more), **user centered design**, and overarching **web policies**.

The needs of people – not constraints of government structures or silos – should inform technical and design decisions.

Design Principles

Mobile responsive/mobile first

Within this Common Look and Feel (CLF) we are stressing the importance of designing mobile responsive websites. In the age of smartphones, and a digitally connected world users expect to interact with us using mobile devices. It is our aim to ensure those citizens can access information with clarity, ease, and that those with limited data plans are not negatively impacted.

User centered design

Understand what people need. From the very start of a web design or technology project, [user needs, expectations, and experience](#) are at the center of all decisions. The best design is *intuitive* and the best content is *understandable*. Aim to meet or exceed users' expectations.

Accessible for widest possible audience

Delaware websites should be accessible for the broadest possible audience. This means designing for those with visual impairments or other disabilities.

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Webmasters have an ongoing responsibility to maintain the accessibility of their websites (see Web Policy at the end of this document). All users, regardless of impairment or disability, should have the same access to information.

Functional Principles

The following are a set of guiding principles for CLF 4.0 designs:

- **Analytics:** We use data and metrics to inform content and design decisions.
- **Audience:** We aim to meet the rising expectations of citizens, businesses, visitors, job seekers, and the general public to easily connect with government services and information online.
- **Unique:** We custom design for each agency's unique services, while still using common and standard elements.
- **Content fuels design:** We design using content to drive our decisions.
- **Sustainability:** We aim to ensure that websites have a feasible, practical strategy in place for sustainable content management.
- **Websites first, social media second:** We use websites as a primary method of engagement, with social media as secondary. Information that is shared on social media should also be found on the website.

Staff from communications, web, data, and leadership all must collaborate on the public presentation of information from an agency.

Commented [MBM1]: Can we make a stronger connection/integration between analytics and sustainability? If the people monitoring the analytics aren't the same ones physically updating the content, communication must be required. (Fitzgerald)

Commented [RD(2R1)]: I've added detail about staff collaboration from various backgrounds/frames.

Commented [MBM3]: This may be more of an issue for content guidelines (at the agency level), but the design and imagery should also be looked at in connection with the mission and goals of the agency. Does it also support those? (Fitzgerald)

Commented [RD(4R3)]: Imagery is mentioned further down the guideline document, that might be the place to add your suggestion.

Commented [MBM5]: Needs some clarification. There may be subjects/items that should be only SM? (Polo)

Commented [RD(6R5)]: Items might be better shared on social media, but the information should still be available on the website.

Analytics for Delaware.gov

Visitors to the Delaware.gov portal are evolving in underlying technology choices. Most notably, Chrome has surpassed Internet Explorer as the number one browser. Below are selections of data from visitors to Delaware.gov.

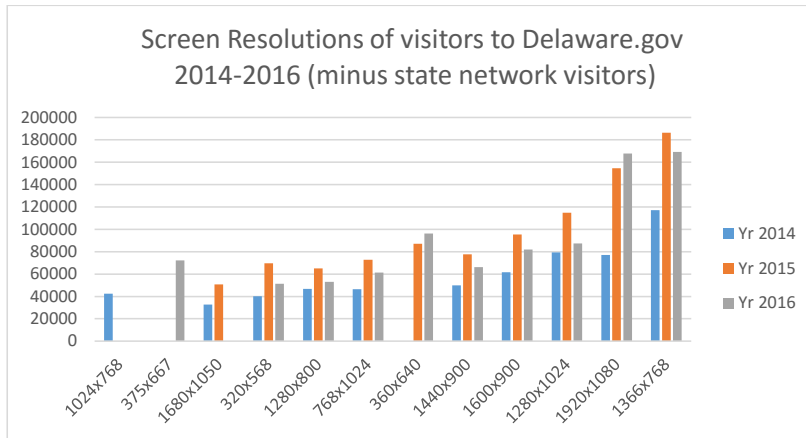
Over the last three years, screen resolutions have shifted, reflecting the increasing sizes of desktops, and mobile/tablets have been retiring some older mobile resolutions, and creating new resolutions. (See Chart 1 below).

Commented [MBM7]: Question for clarification: Are these data from all sites under delaware.gov?

Commented [RD(8R7)]: This is information from the pages of Delaware.gov, so not all of the other sites (not *.delaware.gov)

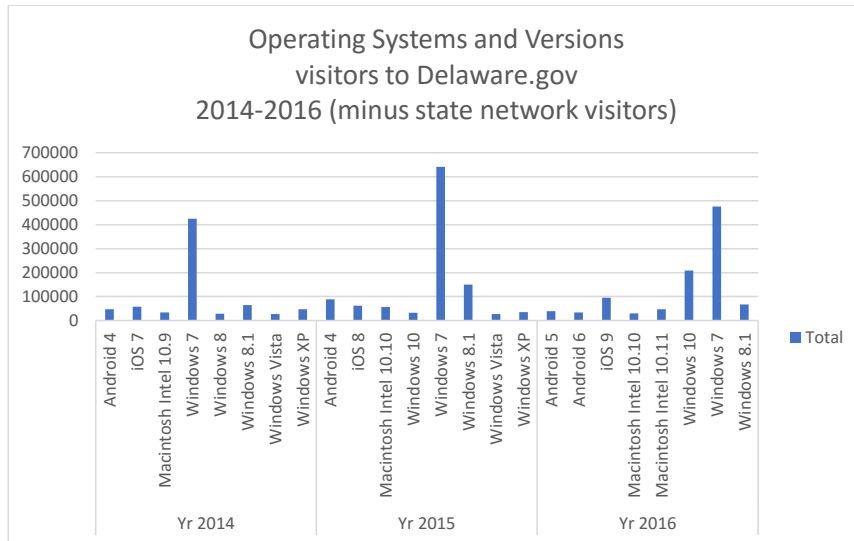
Chart 1. Screen Resolutions.

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Operating systems and versions have also shifted in the same period of time. Windows 7 is still a dominant operating system for public visitors, although Windows 10 is gaining traction in 2016. Mac is slightly higher than in recent years when you combine version 10.10 and 10.11 together. (See Chart 2 below).

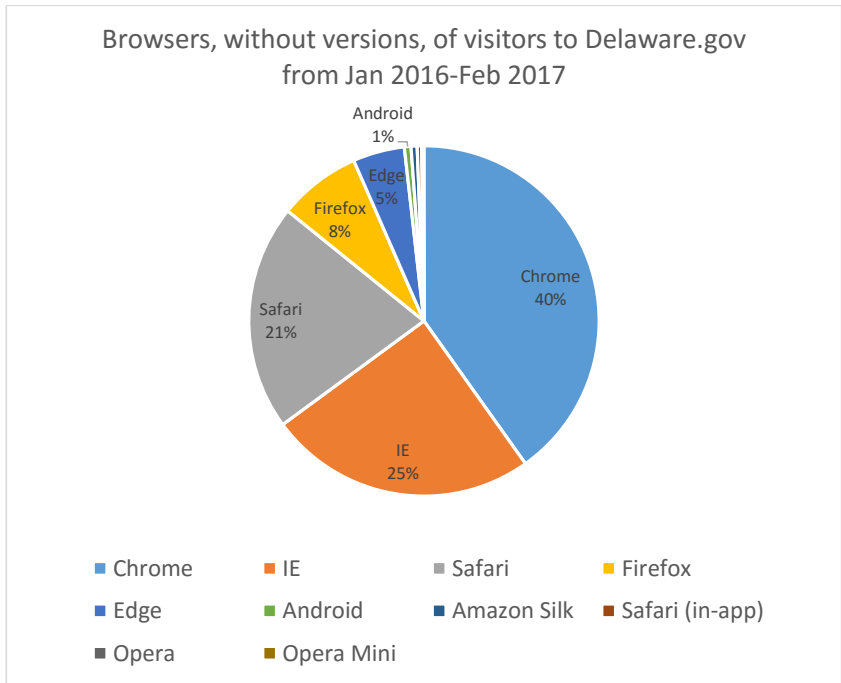
Chart 2. Operating Systems and Versions.



Visitors to Delaware.gov are now using Chrome in higher numbers than Internet Explorer (IE). All versions of Chrome represent 40% of the visitors to Delaware.gov in 2016, IE is 25%, and Safari is a close third at 21%. (See Chart 3 below).

Chart 3. Browsers, without version numbers.

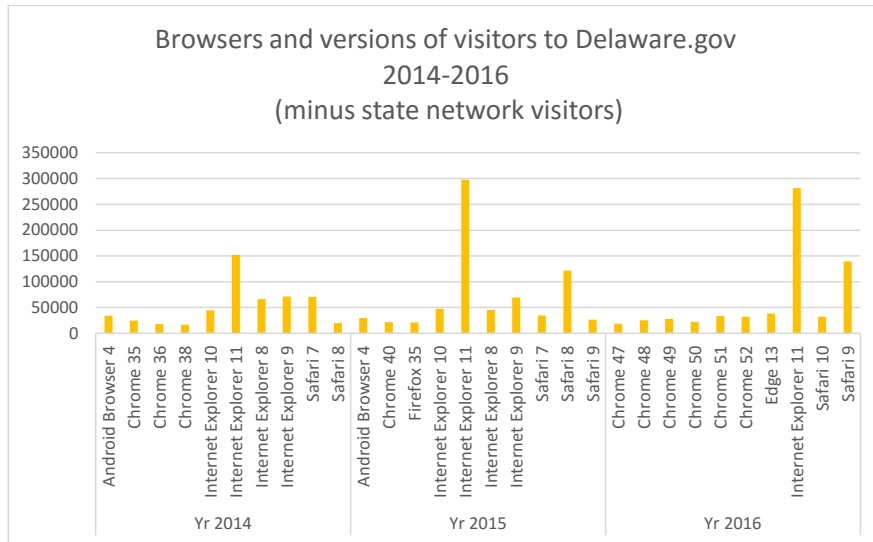
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When taking browser versions into account, IE 11 is the most popular browser. However, adding all Chrome versions together and adding all Safari versions easily show that IE second in popularity. (See Chart 3 above, and Chart 4 below).

Chart 4. Browsers, with version numbers.

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Inspiration for CLF 4.0

Usability.Gov: User-centered research and design

<https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/user-research.html>

The Federal Digital Agency, 18F: <https://18f.gsa.gov/how-we-work/>

The Federal Digital Services Playbook: <https://playbook.cio.gov/>

Boston.gov Brand Guidelines: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/innovation-and-technology/brand-guidelines>

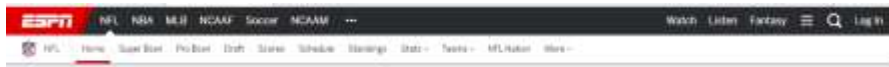
Commented [MBM9]: Note for consistency. URLs include http/https in some instances and not in others. Recommend removing the "http" throughout. Documents (and news releases and web pages) with live URL's shown without "http" look more professional.

Commented [RD(10R9): Thanks

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We were inspired by the multilevel navigation bar on espn.com. We see parallels between the ESPN example (complex, multi-level navigation) and the navigation needs within state agencies.



Who This Policy Applies To

To provide a consistent user experience for the public and citizens, this Common Look and Feel (CLF) 4.0 standard applies to Delaware agencies, divisions, boards, commissions, and offices.

However, there are a limited amount of waivers available to state boards and commissions, agencies, and offices who need to work outside the CLF. Waivers are granted to those who demonstrate a need to develop a unique agency brand in order to gain a competitive advantage in the economic marketplace (for example: Delaware State Lottery, the Tourism Office, Delaware State Parks, Global Delaware

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and similar agencies). Waivers can also be granted for specific legacy applications (i.e. Delaware iPayOnline for the Division of Child Support Services, ePayment Delaware Criminal Justice Information System, and other pre-existing applications) and new web applications that cannot be accommodated in the CLF.

Nonetheless, we ask that all agencies, even those under the waiver provision, accommodate the web policies listed at the end of this document – as those web policies are federal law or regulation or international standards, and are broader than the scope of the Delaware CLF.

Content

Content is king, as the saying goes. People have growing expectations for predictive, personalized, and easy to navigate transactions and information, and they expect government to offer streamlined interactions, on par with the private sector.

~~Function~~Functional Principles

Using the Functional Principles outlined in the beginning of this document, we ask that you consider the following questions when developing all text content:

What Do Your Analytics Say?

It is important to consider what your users ~~are expecting~~expect from your site, and whether you are meeting those expectations. Perhaps you need to create ~~more content~~ to fill a growing demand for information. Or, maybe you need prune content; so as not to overwhelm users with too much information. Use analytics to better understand your audience.

Commented [MBM11]: Or create less-- pick information more carefully to avoid putting too much and overwhelming people. (Fitzgerald)

Commented [RD(12R11)]: Added

Who is Your Audience (Users)?

In order to know what content your site should include you need to know who the audience of your site is today and who you wish your audience ~~will to~~ include in the future. What information are users looking for and how can you make it easier for them to find or complete an action? Both the audience you *want* and the audience you *already have* must be considered in all aspects of your site.

What Makes Your Site Unique?

Users are coming to your site for a **purpose** – applying for benefits, filling out a form, applying for a license, reserving a campsite, filing a complaint, [accessing information, finding data](#), etc. Think about the unique transactions of your agency or division and how users can more easily access and complete those transactions. Can users fill out forms online, or do they need to print them out? What “action oriented” content do you have today? Do you have a defined tone of voice and style in your text content? What makes your agency unique?

Commented [MBM13]: Accessing information, education, data? (Fitzgerald)

Commented [RD(14R13)]: Added

Does Content Drive Design?

Text content is the basis for all other website decisions, like the choices made about your site’s design and architecture. If you have a design desire (for example, adding a calendar feature, or a specific design feature) what content needs to be in place before that feature can be enabled?

Is Your Site Sustainable?

Sustainability in this context means that content is refreshed, updated, [accurate](#) and relevant to users. Your agency should consider sustainability when making decisions about content and design.

Part of your sustainability strategy can include leading a [Content Inventory](#) and [Content Audit](#) within your organization. Make a content review schedule, to take a regular inventory and purge, reorganize, or revise content according to the calendar. Engage with PIOs, policy and program staff, technical staff, and senior executives to get agency buy-in on regular content review and updates.

Have you Included Delaware.gov Integration?

Agencies should ensure integration of their pages with the delaware.gov portal, in particular:

- Centralized FOIA form, [foia.delaware.gov](#)
- Centralized Public Meeting Calendar, [publicmeetings.delaware.gov](#)
- The News Server, [news.delaware.gov](#)
- Phone Directory
- Locations Directory
- The Open Data Portal, [data.delaware.gov](#)

Website First, and Social Media Second.

We feel that website content is primary, and social media content serves in a supportive role. When websites are cumbersome to update, agency PIO's may prefer to interact with social media first, rather than your website. We believe that making websites easier to update, such as via a Content Management System (CMS) like Wordpress, agency PIO's will be better equipped to leverage websites first, and social media second. What content exists on your social media accounts today, but is not yet reflected on your website, and would it be better suited for your website?

Language and Tone

The goal is simplified and clear language that is understandable for the widest possible audience. Here is great resource for a consistent tone and voice from 18F, the Federal Digital Agency's website: <https://pages.18f.gov/content-guide/>

For the widest accessibility, we suggest aiming for 8th-10th grade reading level. You can analyze your existing content using free tools (such as: like the Hemingway App, <http://www.hemingwayapp.com/>, [Readability score](#), [Readability Calculator](#), [The Readability Test Tool](#), [Readability Test](#), etc.) to evaluate writing level. In addition, GIC is using the Yoast plug in for Wordpress sites, a search engine optimization feature. Yoast will analyze readability on each page of your website.

Develop and maintain a consistent tone. With numerous content contributors on a website, you may find yourself with a multitude of voices and opinions that will distract from the information that you are attempting to relay. Work with PIOs, webmasters, and leadership of your agency to develop a tone of voice that is consistent across your whole organization. [For example, DNREC is considering a consistent lead paragraph to introduce each webpage.](#)

[Many agencies post technical, scientific, or legal information that can be difficult to put into plain language. We also do not want to alienate technical users who are looking for very specific information. Agencies are encouraged to think about their audiences, and think about what works best for their audience and content.](#)

Commented [MBM15]: This is true, but we also don't want to confuse/alienate technical users. We have to consider that not every piece of information is or should be designed for a general audience. We don't want to throw technical users off by removing the language they're used to in an effort to reach people who have no use for this specific information. That said, pages with technical information should have a general-reader statement at the top to introduce the page. Then readers can self-select whether or not they should be there. (Fitzgerald)

Commented [RD(16R15)]: Added

Commented [MBM17]: Hemingway App seems to have gone behind a (admittedly low) paywall. Possible alternatives: [Readability score](#), [Readability Calculator](#), [The Readability Test Tool](#), [Readability Test](#)

Commented [RD(18R17)]: Added

Commented [MBM19]: In DNREC we are considering options such as consistent lead paragraphs.

Commented [RD(20R19)]: Good suggestion

Organization

Most people are not experts in how state government is organized, or where certain programs are located in the bureaucracy. Therefore, we suggest organizing your content into different pages ("topic pages") based on common subject matter and/or themes that are easily identifiable by your audience. Below are some examples of already existing topic pages.

- delaware.gov/topics: On Delaware.gov's site, we organize high-level information on topics that cut across state government



- Delaware Natural Resources and Environmental Control Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control: DNREC's new "alpha" site features topics pages on the home page and from the top navigation.



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- [Delaware Health and Social Services](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss) Department of Health and Social Services: DHSS's topic pages can be found right on the homepage. Through this the user is only a few clicks from finding exactly what they were looking for. This page can be found at: dhss.delaware.gov/dhss



- The ~~draft of the~~ Attorney General's site is using audience portals on their home page, including info for the public, law enforcement, media, victims and witnesses, and consumers.



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Below is a draft of the Consumer page:



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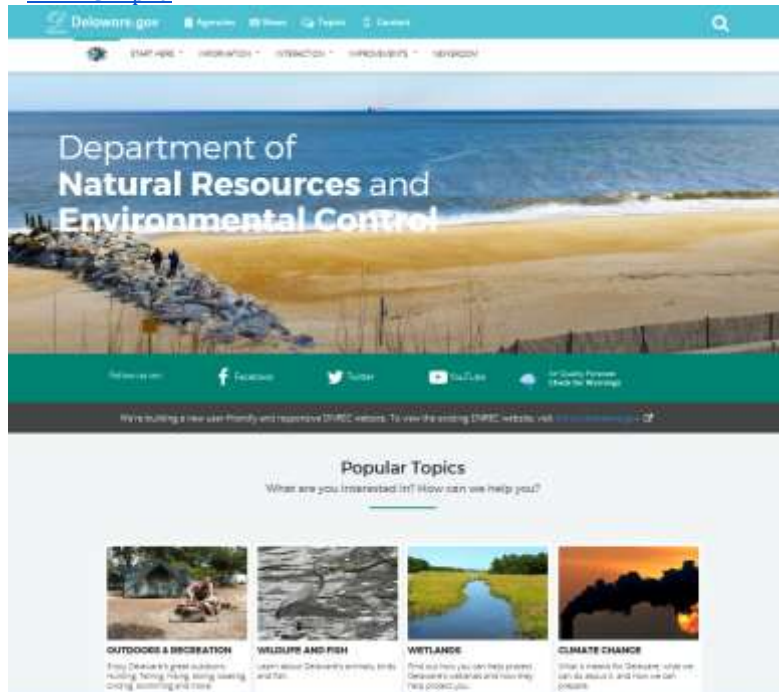
The Alpha Approach

If your agency has a large site, or a site with numerous layers of navigation, consider the "**alpha**" approach. "**Alpha**" involves creating an entirely new site from scratch, building it in public with public feedback, and retiring the current site over time. If your agency is interested in this method of building a site, please contact the GIC.

DNREC is currently in the process with an Alpha site.

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- [DNREC Alpha:](#)



Above is a screenshot of DNREC's Alpha site, dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov

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- [DNREC Current](#)



Above is a screenshot of DNREC's current site, dnrec.delaware.gov

Other Alpha, Beta, and Completed Examples:

- beta.phila.gov
- alpha.nyc.gov
- boston.gov

Social Media

Social media continues to change the way organizations interact with their constituencies – enabling content-specific interaction. As stated previously, website content should be prioritized first, and social media content should be supportive (or secondary).

The Department of Technology and Information publishes a social media policy about requesting access to social media sites. However, today there is not a social media content policy or guideline document.

Commented [MBM21]: This will need to expand and/or link to an updated social media policy, or a statewide guideline set?

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Tools for Agencies:

- **Google Analytics:** Through Google Analytics you can receive crucial information that will help you judge your audience and how best to tailor your content to their needs.
- **Content Strategy:** Developing a content strategy can be as easy as creating an inventory and schedule. Here are some basics from Usability.gov <https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/content-strategy.html> and 18F, the Federal Digital Agency: <https://methods.18f.gov/decide/content-audit/>
- **Hemingway App:** This app analyzes the reading level of text. Agencies should aim for a 8th-10th grade reading level within your site, to appeal to a broad audience. You can find this tool at <http://www.hemingwayapp.com/>.
- **Yoast Readability Rating:** This is a feature that available via the Yoast Wordpress plugin. It will flag pages that could use improvement on readability and it provides helpful tips.

Images

Images can be a powerful way to connect with your audience. By using photos that represent actions you make your whole site more compelling for your users. Reflect the diversity of the state in your imagery and photography. Please be aware that images subject to licensing or copyright cannot be used with expressed permission.

Use real photos showcasing Delawareans and the State of Delaware.

Photography should be candid, not posed, as possible. Sometimes, you have to use stock photos because you do not have an image that fits the situation. But, try to reduce the amount of stock photos you use on your site.

We encourage you to showcase beautiful images of Delaware - for example, parks, coastlines, historical buildings (exterior and interior), gardens, architecture details, historical sites, arts of all kinds (dance, theatre, sculpture, etc), boardwalks, riverwalks, wildlife areas, farms and rural areas, skylines, downtowns, and important areas to the State. Agencies are encouraged to build a repository for agency photography. You can tell your agency's story ~~thru~~ through imagery.

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Commented [MBM22]: This might be a good place for an index of scores. See the version at <http://juicystudio.com/services/readability.php#interpret>

Commented [RD(23R22)]: This tool doesn't seem to work for me

Commented [MBM24]: Suggestion (C. Wirtz) for more caution here about not using images subject to copyright without permission. There is a brief note further down in this section, but an early warning may be in order.

Commented [RD(25R24)]: Thanks, added

Commented [MBM26]: DNREC has an unofficial standard to try to use photos of people in the environment. Worth further discussion? Cautions?

Commented [RD(27R26)]: Depending on the context, if you use photos of people, you may need them to sign a release form in order for their image to be used online.

For use on the web, please use high quality images. ~~(for example, images should be taken with a real camera, not a cell phone camera)~~. High quality images do not need to be large files though, as large files will impact load times, and will impact users on strict data plans.

Start with a high quality image, and reduce the file size using image resizer programs. This will reduce page load times.

Acceptable file formats are: JPG, PNG, and SVG. Image files should not be in GIF format. Agencies should also take care to follow photo licensing restrictions, and follow sharing/usage policy. See below for more information on photo licensing.

~~Function~~Functional Principles for Imagery (photos, graphics, illustrations)s

Referencing back to the Functional Principles outlined in the beginning of this document, we ask that you consider the following questions when considering all images:

~~What Do Your Analytics Say?~~

~~What images and photography are the most engaging in the site metrics, and why? By knowing this information you can replicate those qualities on other images in your site.~~

Who is Your Audience?

Consider your audience, look into what imagery and photos could improve audience-engagement with your organization. When users visit your site, are they planning a long weekend at the beach, or are they seeking information on divorce, unemployment, or cancer programs? Try to use imagery as a tool that helps users find what they need and minimize stress or confusion.

What imagery and photography do you want to represent your agency, and do you have consistent imagery across your online platforms (web and social)?

Commented [MBM28]: Subject to debate? Current DNREC hero image is from a pixel cell camera. (Fitzgerald: Some iPhone cameras are better than digital cameras. We have a camera for the division and my phone takes better pics)

Commented [MBM29]: Does this include graphics, illustrations, and icons, or just photo images? Could be different rules for each. (Fitzgerald)

Commented [RD(30R29): Our intention was that this would cover photos and other images. Different rules for each is interesting- what do you suggest?

Commented [MBM31]: Fitzgerald: What kind of analytics do we have on image usage? Just seeing which pages/postings get the most traffic and replicating design?

Commented [RD(32R31): This is a good line of thinking, we might need to take this out as it is too specific

Consider mobile users – many users have data plans with limits, so reducing image sizes will help them access your site with limited data.

What Makes Your Site Unique?

Explore what makes your agency unique, and incorporate imagery and photography that represents those qualities in order to make your organization stand out. If imagery showcasing that uniqueness does not exist, consider creating it.

Is Your Site Sustainable?

Imagery and photography can quickly become out-of-date as fashion in clothing changes, image quality improves, and landscapes evolve. Make a point to update imagery on a regular basis. Of course, historical photos of Delaware are engaging – consider where is the best place for older photos on your site, and how these images can tell the story of your agency, division, or program.

Website First, and Social Media Second.

~~What imagery and photography do you want to represent your agency, and do you have consistent imagery across your online platforms (web and social)?~~

Image Licensing Information

Photo Licensing Information from 18F (pages.18f.gov/content-guide/images/):

Good places to search for public domain Creative Commons ([CC0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)) images:

- [USA.gov](https://www.usa.gov/)
- [Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/usagov/) (select “U.S. Government works” or “No known copyright restrictions” from the top left drop down)
- [Wikimedia commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/)

If you do use copyrighted images:

- Try to find use one with few restrictions on reuse like a [Creative Commons Attribution license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

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Commented [MBM33]: This is not the subhead you are looking for?

Commented [RD(34R33)]: Thanks

- Get permission from the copyright holder.
- Attribute the photo to the source (especially if required or requested).
- Where possible, link to the source online.

Image Accessibility

Images must have alternative text in order to comply with accessibility standards. Here is a sample:

```

```

'Alt' = alternate text for an image. This alternate text will display if the image cannot be displayed.

The **alt attribute** provides alternative information for an image if a user for some reason cannot view it (because of slow connection, an error in the src attribute, or if the user uses a screen reader).

Alt tags help users with disabilities understand the content on your website. Screen readers will speak the words included in your alt text, so it's best to describe the image in your alt text like "Photo of a red sunset at Cape Henlopen State Park" rather than "Beach".

Commented [MBM35]: Fitzgerald: Awesome. We should be really clear about this, because I don't think people always know what the alt text is really for.

Commented [RD(36R35): Agreed, this is also a training issue

Image Sizes

To keep page load times fast, please compress image files using a compression tool. If you do not have photoshop or other image editing software, there are free online tools that you can use like [Compressor.IO](#), [ImageResize](#), or [picresize.com](#). Compressing images will ensure that page load times are not impacted, and that mobile users on metered data plans will be protected against unnecessary overages.

Bootstrap provides the following examples for mobile responsive images.

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From Bootstrap <http://getbootstrap.com/css/#images> :

Responsive images

Images in Bootstrap 3 can be made responsive-friendly via the addition of the `.img-responsive` class. This applies `max-width: 100%; height: auto; and display: block;` to the image so that it scales nicely to the parent element.

To center images which use the `.img-responsive` class, use `.center-block` instead of `.text-center`. See the [helper classes](#) section for more details about `.center-block` usage.

SVG images and IE 8-10

In Internet Explorer 8-10, SVG images with `.img-responsive` are disproportionately sized. To fix this, add `width: 100%;` where necessary. Bootstrap doesn't apply this automatically as it causes complications to other image formats.

```

```

Copy

Image shapes

Add classes to an `` element to easily style images in any project.

Cross-browser compatibility

Keep in mind that Internet Explorer 8 lacks support for rounded corners.

EXAMPLE



```
  

```

Copy

bootstrap.com/css/#images-responsive

Within Wordpress, GIC is building theme customizer functions that will give agencies parameters for proper image height and width in features like carousels, hero header images, and other sections. Please remember to compress images before uploading using the customizer feature.

Tools for Agencies:

- **Delaware.gov's Flickr Account:** We encourage agencies to join the "State Agency" group to share photos among state government. This is invite-only, so please send us an email to gic@state.de.us in order to join the group.
- **Creative Commons:** This site gives more information on licensing and sharing you can visit it at creativecommons.org.
 - **Creative Commons beta Search Tool:** <https://ccsearch.creativecommons.org/>
- **Picture Resizing Sites:** Through sites like <https://compressor.io/>, imageresize.org and pikresize.com you can crop and resize images.

Commented [MBM37]: Creative Commons beta Search Tool: <https://ccsearch.creativecommons.org/>

User Design and Feedback

Agencies are strongly encouraged to seek non-technical and public input for state websites. In order to ~~insure~~**ensure** that the site remains the most widely accessible we suggest the following guidelines:

- Develop a ~~feedback loop~~**method for feedback** ~~from a for design from a~~ diverse group of individuals that represents your users.
- Agencies should test their sites from **public user perspectives**, not just internal users.
- Focus groups, interviews, and surveys are great methods for receiving user feedback. A combination of all three methods is even better.

Commented [MBM38]: We could use more detail on this.



Above is a screenshot from Usability.gov on the process of User Center Design. This outlines a process and feedback loop for user centered design.

Functional Principles for User Design and Feedback

Keep the following questions in mind:

- What Do Your Analytics Say?
- Who is Your Audience?
- What Makes Your Site Unique?
- Does Content Drive Design?
- Is Your Site Sustainable?
- Have you put your Website First, and your Social Media Second?

By encouraging feedback from a wide diverse audience during the entire design process you can ensure that your site is not only functional, but that it also best represents your division/agency and the work that you do for the community.

Tools for Agencies:

- **Usability.gov** <https://www.usability.gov/>
- **18F Methods** <https://methods.18f.gov/discover>
- **Contact Us:** If your agency needs assistance with user feedback (focus groups, interviews, and surveys), please email us GIC@state.de.us to work on ideas collaboratively.

Search

When designing and maintaining a website it is important to understand your audience and their purpose on your site. Some of the questions you may ask yourself in order to more fully understand your audience include:

- When users search on your site, what are they searching for?
- Are they getting adequate results?
- What do results look like (are they described properly)?

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search Engine Optimization is an important priority. When you are considering how to ~~insure~~^{ensure} that your site is seen by the people who will use it the most frequently you must look at your metadata and descriptions. Many sites across the state do not use adequate descriptions today, and are missing out on views as a result.

Meta Tags

Each web page for a state agency should include basic metadata contained in “meta tags” in the head element of the page. Among other functions, basic meta tag elements allow search engines to properly locate and identify pages.

- **Meta Description** - The description element should provide a succinct description of the contents of that particular page. It is important that each page has a unique description. See more on Yoast.com <https://yoast.com/meta-descriptions/>
- **Title** – Please see the Title Naming Conventions in the section below.
- **"Viewport"** - This tag is essential to responsive design. This tag sets the viewport size. Please see more on the W3C site: http://www.w3schools.com/css/css_rwd_viewport.asp
- **"Author"** tag – We are using this on all sites, and setting the author to “State of Delaware”.

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- If the site is an application, then "**application-name**" and "**generator**" are required meta tags to use.

A note about keywords:

Search engine algorithms are constantly evolving. Keywords used to be a long list of words that describe a page, but now the search engines are only recognizing **one** keyword (rather than a long list).

Example of a search listing with a Page Title and Meta Description:



In the example above, the keyword is "**Delaware**", and it is bolded in the URL and in the description.

Meta Tag: Page Title Naming Conventions

Meta Tag Titles should use title case and follow one of the below structures:

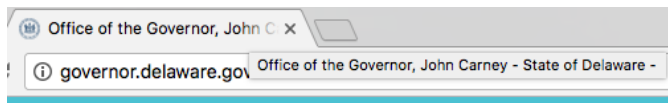
1. "Page Name - Website Name - State of Delaware"
Or, if a page is part of a parent element than it would be
2. "Page Name – Parent Name – Website Name – State of Delaware"

Meta Tag: Site Title – Tagline in Wordpress

If using Wordpress, another place to reinforce that users are on a State of Delaware official website, is to add "State of Delaware" to the "Tagline". In the Wordpress backend under "Settings > Tagline", you will see how to edit the Tagline. Usually, the tagline is the mission of the website but we also suggest adding "State of Delaware" or "Official State of Delaware Website" here if you don't already reference this. Below is a screenshot of the Tagline area.



Page Display in Browser Tab



Above is a screenshot of the Governor's home page URL and how it displays in a browser tab.

The Governor's Office logo is used in the left side of the tab (as a favicon), and the title of the site is displayed (and a mouse hover will show the full title).

Favicons are simplified logos recognizable at a small size for mobile devices. We are using favicons in browser tabs, and repeating the same logo in the top navigation. Below is a screenshot of the Governor's home page, using the logo in the top navigation as the home button:



Analytics Data

Google Analytics is encouraged on all sites to better drive decisions about content, behavior, and how sites can better serve the public. Agencies are encouraged to periodically analyze data to drive decisions on content, presentation, SEO, internal search, and other strategic decisions.

If you are not using Google Analytics on your website today, and you plan to add it, you may want to update your site's privacy policy (or point to [Delaware.gov's privacy policy](#)).

Tools for Agencies:





- **Favicon Generator:** this website takes care of all sizes and treatments of a favicon. You can visit it at <http://www.favicon-generator.org/>

PDFs, Word Documents, Powerpoint, Excel, etc.

Files like PDFs, Word Documents, Powerpoints, and Excel, can help you bring your audience more in depth information and can be invaluable resources. With documents, please keep the size of these files compressed so that load times and data plans are not impacted. We also ask that you ensure that your links to these files open up in a new tab with (target="blank").

Documents can be large files. Compress these files before posting to the web so users do not experience lagging load times or mobile data overages.

We suggest accompanying any downloadable document with a **Font Awesome Icon**, as shown down below. This helps indicate to the user what file they should expect to open up when they click on the link that you provide. Here is an example of PDF icons used on gic.delaware.gov:

- Website Common Look & Feel (CLF) Standard 
- Common Look & Feel (CLF) Documentation
- Domain Naming Standards 
- Social Media Policy 
- Statewide e-Payment Standard 

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As possible, we encourage you to turn PDF forms that citizens, businesses, or other people into fillable forms using Adobe tools. Often, agencies find that forms use physical signatures – but it's worth looking into if a physical signature is in fact is required (by statute or regulation) or if signatures could be re-considered (electronic, typed, or eliminated).

Tools for agencies:

- **smallpdf.com:** This is a tool that will compress PDFs for you, and you can visit this site at smallpdf.com
- **Adobe Reader Extensions:** To make PDFs fillable and submit-able, GIC offers Adobe Reader Extensions licenses for the enterprise– contact us GIC@state.de.us to get access and training.

Data

Delaware's Open Data Portal (data.delaware.gov) is a centralized portal offering public access to datasets from agencies across government. If your agency publishes data today, consider putting these datasets into machine-readable formats (rather than PDF) and submit your data sets for prioritization to the Open Data Council.

Tools for agencies:

- **The Delaware Open Data Portal:** [Data.Delaware.gov](https://data.delaware.gov) is managed by the Delaware Open Data Council, and to submit suggestions for inclusion for the portal, please visit opendatacouncil.delaware.gov

URLs – A Form of Communication

By sticking to naming conventions you can help the user become accustomed to the organization of the site as well as making the task of naming pages easier for yourself.

The modern web gives two preferences for URL naming conventions:

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- 1) Keep URLs **short** and clear so they are easy to type into browsers, easy to remember, and can be used on marketing materials,
AND
- 2) Make URLs **long** and specific in order to get ranked higher in search engines.

This is not a trick; these two principles clash with each other!

So, we are choosing sides and suggest creating shorter URLs. However, **please steer clear of acronyms that people do not understand in your website URLs.** For example if a page is called "The Governor's Awards for Excellence in Technology" the URL should not be "gafet.shtml" or "/gafet/". Instead, the URL could be "/awards/" or "/techawards/".

You are strongly encouraged to develop naming conventions within your organization for your site URLs. This becomes even more important in the Wordpress environment.

We also discourage use of underscores in URLs. Instead, we ask that you use **dashes for example: this-is-a-dash.**

Tools for agencies:

- **Yoast:** For agencies using Wordpress, there is an SEO plugin named Yoast that is very helpful for URL editing. Here is a great article about SEO friendly URLs: <https://yoast.com/seo-friendly-urls/>

Statewide Branding

Common Look and Feel is the consistent unification of the state's websites with statewide branding. Standardized branding builds trust with users. With consistency of statewide branding, users will know they are on a trusted Delaware.gov website or application, and therefore the site can be counted on to give accurate information.

Commented [MBM39]: Fitzgerald: highlight! Bold! Underline!

Formatted: Font: Bold

Headers

Navigation Levels – Top

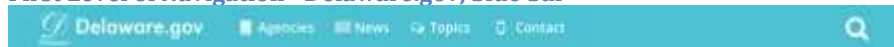


In CLF 4.0, state websites have two levels of top navigation. In previous CLF versions, we used **left** navigation – but in 4.0 we are using **top** navigation.

The **first** level is the blue Delaware.gov header and includes ~~has~~ standard elements (Agencies, News, Topics, Contact, and a Search Icon).

The **second** level navigation is the white agency navigation bar. The agency navigation uses drop down menus. Agencies have more freedom with this menu than in previous versions of the CLF, but there are some parameters, outlined below, to ensure that this menu will not degrade in a mobile environment.

First Level of Navigation - Delaware.gov, blue bar



The Delaware.gov header is the *first* level of navigation and will have standard elements (Agencies, News, Topics, Contact, and a Search Icon).

The Delaware.gov header uses the official state color, the Delaware Blue, for the statewide navigation bar.

The hex number for the Delaware Blue is #4bc1d2.

Second Level Navigation – Agency navigation, white bar



Agency top navigation is displayed ~~on~~ against a white background. The agency menus use drop downs, and use either one or two-word names. Agencies should use no more than 6 or 7 items in the top navigation – otherwise the space gets crowded,

and will degrade on a tablet or smaller screen desktop. We discourage use of acronyms in the agency navigation.

In the previous version of the Common Look and Feel, there were strict rules on categories for second level navigation - only allowing "Home", "Services", and "Information" as the names for categories. We are loosening these quite a bit in CLF 4.0.

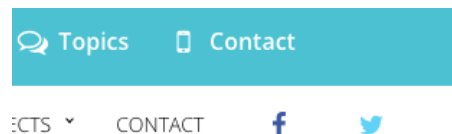
In CLF 4.0, "Home" is no longer going to be a navigation category - instead, the home button is the icon that represents the site (as mentioned above). We are suggesting that categories currently labeled "**Home**" are renamed to "**About**".

Navigation will include a branding logo or image for the site that will take the user "home". Logos must be mobile friendly (logos must be able scale down to a small size). GIC will work with agencies on transforming logos into mobile friendly logos.

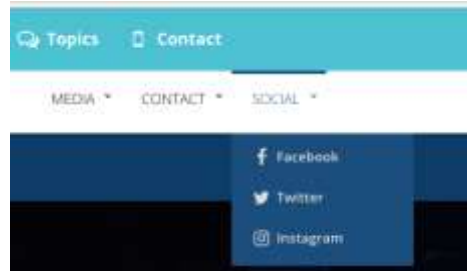
Contact pages in the previous version of CLF, included "Contact Information" and "Office Locations" as two separate pages. In CLF 4.0 we are merging these two pages to become "Contact". Contact pages should include maps to office locations.

If there are social media accounts related to the site, agency, or division, then we encourage listing the social icons in the navigation. This can be under "**Social**" as a navigation category, or could be the social media icons themselves in the top navigation.

Below shows an example of using social media icons in the agency navigation:



Below is an example using a menu item, "Social", in the agency navigation and drop down:



No other icons (other than social media) should be used in the agency navigation menu.

Footers

Statewide Footer – Delaware.gov, gray background



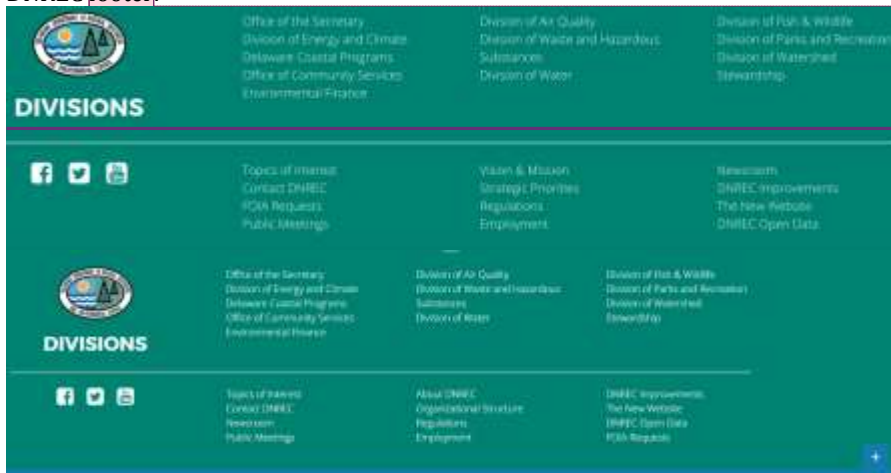
Agency Footer – colors can be agency specific

Government Information Center footer:

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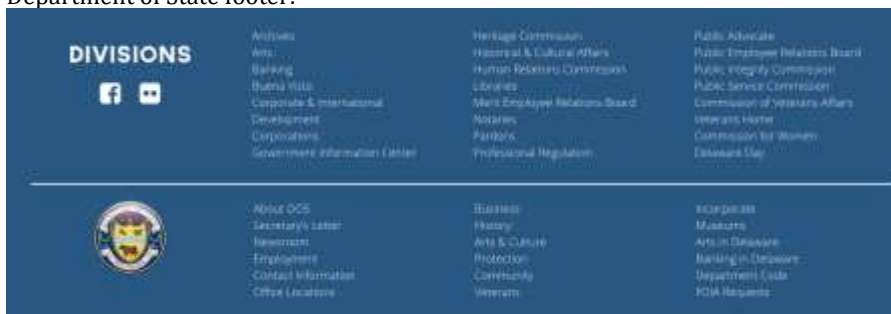
DNREC footer:



Commented [MBM40]: This footer has been updated, based on the CLF4 requirements here.

Commented [RD(41R40)]: New image of the footer is added

Department of State footer:



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The agency footer can be personalized to your website. The agency footer includes links to the important pages across your site. **Some links are required:**

- “About” – Links to your “About” page.
- “Contact”- Links to your “Contact” page.
- “FOIA Request Form”- The Freedom of Information Act requires state agencies offer a centralized place to request information. This link must either link to the agency FOIA page (if one exists), or to the statewide FOIA form (with agency pre-selected). This should be the last link in the agency footer across all state sites, in order to maintain consistency and make it easier for users to find.

The size of the footer should appropriately reflect the size of the site. For large sites we ask that the footer be contained to three columns and no more than thirty links. Departments can use the “Division” separator as shown in screenshots above.

The agency footer also must ~~includes~~include a blue “+” button that brings up the statewide Delaware.gov footer.

Tools for agencies:

- **Location Directory:** GIC can add your office location to the State Locations Directory.
- **ESRI Mapping Functions:** Delaware is using ESRI for mapping functions. Please see firstmap.delaware.gov for more information and contact DTI to set up mapping functions on your agency site.
- **Open Data Mapping:** For showing data on maps, you can utilize the Delaware Open Data portal and embed data visualizations into your site.
- **Logo Designs:** GIC will provide up to 5 logo designs for agencies or divisions that would like redesigned, modern, and mobile responsive logos, and 1 round of revisions. We design logos that are flat, modern, and simple yet elegant. If you are interested in logo design, please contact us with the following:
 - Overall mission of the organization
 - Colors and symbols, if any are preferred
 - Timeline

Accessibility

Must be Section 508 compliant

All Delaware.gov sites need to meet the accessibility criteria set by the United States Access Board via Section 508 (see <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it/about-the-section-508-standards/section-508-standards>).

- Top Considerations for Accessibility:
 - Alt text for images must always be included
 - Webmasters must regularly check for accessibility issues
 - Consider users who access your site with a screen reader
 - GIC offers Read Speaker for Agencies

See more under “Web Policy” in this document about the federal rules that apply for government websites.

Testing and Browser Compatibility

Sites and applications should be built for the broadest possible compatibility so that they can work on multiple browsers and operating systems to ensure public access. Before sites and applications are built, agencies must consider the oldest possible browsers and systems that can/should be compatible, and agencies must also consider compatibility for the newest/latest browsers and systems. Agencies need to have maintenance plans for compatibility for applications - for example, many older applications today do not work in later versions of IE and Edge.

A list of the most utilized browsers and versions is included in the beginning of this document. The public uses a mix of browsers, operating systems, and versions – and all websites should be tested for broad compatibility. GIC uses BrowserStack.com and devices to test. Public facing applications must also be compatible for the widest possible audience.

Commented [MBM42]: Fitzgerald: Should we add something about readable fonts? Like, large, sans serif familiar fonts.

Commented [RD(43R42): Font is referenced in the style defaults, we can add more detail if needed.

Technology Requirements and Recommendations Preferences

Commented [MBM44]: This is a mix of requirements and recommendations, so "preferences" may be conflicting

Commented [RD(45R44)]: Thanks, edited

Standards for Design Related Technology Tools

In CLF 4.0 the following technology tools are required:

- Bootstrap for mobile responsive design in all websites
- HTML 5 and CSS 3, the latest internet standards

In CLF 4.0 the following tools are recommended:

- Font Awesome for our icon library
- Wordpress is the Content Management System (CMS) that GIC offers. Agencies can use other CMS's.

Please note the new HTML5 tags:

<header>
<section>
<article>
<aside>
<footer>

Application CLF 4.0

Applications vs Websites

In the new version of Common Look and Feel, for the first time, we are making a distinction between *applications* and *websites*. "*Applications*" separate from "*websites*" will have looser rules for CLF 4.0, with **some default style choices**.

Generally, **websites** are informational, and **applications** are transactional.

In applications, we are simplifying elements.

- **Header** – the statewide header is required for applications. The optional element is the **menu float** that happens when scrolling.

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- **Search** - the search icon and bar in the header is **optional** in applications (because many applications have their own search, and two searches could be confusing).
- **Navigation** – in an application, use the **horizontal** (top) navigation bar first. If a tertiary navigation is needed, use left navigation. In considering navigation, we strongly suggest the “mobile first” approach – to consider the mobile menus first, then to expand to larger screen sizes.
- **Footer** – include the application footer with important navigation links for the application. A simplified statewide footer is encouraged.

Standard Design Principles Apply to Applications:

- **Mobile Responsive or Mobile First Design**
- **Bootstrap** for responsive applications is preferred in CLF 4.0
If Bootstrap is not possible, then elements should mimic the Bootstrap look. Visit <http://getbootstrap.com/> for the entire catalog of Bootstrap elements.

Tools for Agencies: GIC will work with your agency on a front end design for your application. Please reach out to us, gic@state.de.us to get started.

Style Defaults for Websites and Applications

Agencies and state offices can customize certain elements of typography within their websites. Transactional applications should follow the defaults as much as possible. **In the absence of a separate stylesheet, we encourage the following defaults.**

Open Sans is the default font choice for web and applications. There is some room for uniqueness with the H1 style on each CLF 4.0 website. But, other headings will be Open Sans.

Heading 1	font-family: 'Open Sans'
	font-weight: 700
	font-size: 44px
	line-height: 1.3em/57px

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Heading 2

font-family: 'Open Sans'
font-weight: 700
font-size: 34px
line-height: 1.3em/44px

Heading 3

font-family: 'Open Sans'
font-weight: 700
font-size: 24px
line-height: 1.3em/31px

Heading 4

font-family: 'Open Sans'
font-weight: 700
font-size: 19px
line-height: 1.3em/25px

Heading 5

font-family: 'Open Sans'
font-weight: 700
font-size: 16px
line-height: 1.3em/21px

HEADING 6

font-family: 'Open Sans'
font-weight: 400
font-size: 13px
line-height: 1.3em/17px
text-transform: uppercase

Lead Paragraph

font-family: 'Open Sans'
font-weight: 400
font-size: 22px
line-height: 1.5em/33px

Body Copy. A series of sentences together which make a paragraph.

font-family: 'Open Sans'
font-weight: 400
font-size: 15px
line-height: 1.7em/26px

Links

If no custom stylesheet exists, use the U.S. Design Standard for links:

<https://standards.usa.gov/typography/#links>

Colors

If no custom stylesheet exists, use the U.S. Design Standard:

<https://standards.usa.gov/colors/>

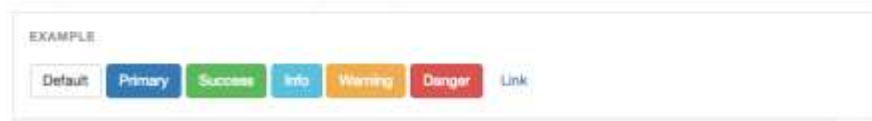
Buttons

Use Bootstrap button styles: <http://getbootstrap.com/css/#buttons>

Bootstrap button options are included at the above link, and screenshots are below.

Options

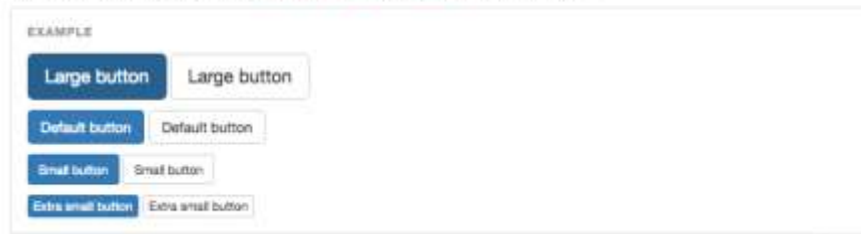
Use any of the available button classes to quickly create a styled button.



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Sizes

Fancy larger or smaller buttons? Add `.btn-lg`, `.btn-sm`, or `.btn-xs` for additional sizes.



If no custom stylesheet exists, then use the button styles from the U.S. Design Standards: <https://standards.usa.gov/buttons/>

Dropdown

Bootstrap dropdown: <http://getbootstrap.com/components/#dropdowns>

(Please see the dropdown options in the link above).

Form Controls

Bootstrap form styles: <http://getbootstrap.com/css/#forms>

(Please see the form options in the link above).

If no custom stylesheet exists, then use the form controls from the U.S. Design Standards: <https://standards.usa.gov/form-controls/>

Form Templates

If no custom stylesheet exists, then use the form template styles from the U.S. Design Standards <https://standards.usa.gov/form-templates/>

Checkboxes and Radios

Bootstrap forms: <http://getbootstrap.com/css/#forms>

(Please see the link above for checkboxes and radio options in Bootstrap).

Checkboxes and radios

Checkboxes are for selecting one or several options in a list, while radios are for selecting one option from many.

Disabled checkboxes and radios are supported, but to provide a "not-allowed" cursor on hover of the parent `<label>`, you'll need to add the `.disabled` class to the parent `.radio`, `.radio-inline`, `.checkbox`, or `.checkbox-inline`.

Default (stacked)

The screenshot shows a Bootstrap form example with two groups of controls. The first group, under the heading "EXAMPLE", contains two checkboxes: "Option one is this and that—be sure to include why it's great." (which is checked) and "Option two is disabled" (which is disabled). The second group contains three radios: "Option one is this and that—be sure to include why it's great." (which is selected), "Option two can be something else and selecting it will deselect option one" (which is unselected), and "Option three is disabled" (which is disabled).

If no custom stylesheet exists, use the U.S. Design Standard for checkboxes:

<https://standards.usa.gov/form-controls/#checkboxes>

Icons

Font Awesome Library: <http://fontawesome.io/>

Alerts

Bootstrap alerts: <http://getbootstrap.com/components/#alerts>

Examples

Wrap any text and an optional dismiss button in `.alert`, and one of the four contextual classes (e.g., `.alert-success`) for basic alert messages.

No default class

Alerts don't have default classes, only base and modifier classes. A default gray alert doesn't make too much sense, so you're required to specify a type via contextual class. Choose from success, info, warning, or danger.

EXAMPLE

Well done! You successfully read this important alert message.

Heads up! This alert needs your attention, but it's not super important.

Warning! Better check yourself, you're not looking too good.

Oh snap! Change a few things up and try submitting again.

```
<div class="alert alert-success" role="alert">...</div>
<div class="alert alert-info" role="alert">...</div>
<div class="alert alert-warning" role="alert">...</div>
<div class="alert alert-danger" role="alert">...</div>
```

Copy

If no custom stylesheet exists, use the U.S. Design Standard for alerts

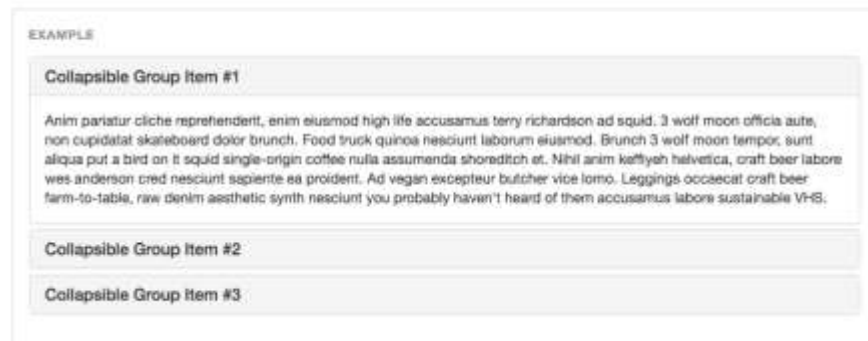
<https://standards.usa.gov/alerts/>

Accordions

Bootstrap Accordion: <http://getbootstrap.com/javascript/#collapse-example-accordion>

Accordion example

Extend the default collapse behavior to create an accordion with the panel component:



If no custom stylesheet exists, use the U.S. Design Standard for accordions
<https://standards.usa.gov/accordions/>

Tables

Bootstrap Tables: <http://getbootstrap.com/css/#tables>

(Please see link above for table options).

If no custom stylesheet exists, use the U.S. Design Standard for tables
<https://standards.usa.gov/tables/>

Lists

Bootstrap Lists: <http://getbootstrap.com/css/#type-lists>

(Please see link above for list options).

If no custom stylesheet exists, use the U.S. Design Standard for lists
<https://standards.usa.gov/>

Web Policy

Federal Policy

Section 508 – Accessibility for those with Visual Impairments

Sites must be section 508 compliant. Agencies are encouraged to check accessibility compliance a regular basis, and fix errors as soon as possible.

For more information on Section 508 Standards, please visit: <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it/about-the-section-508-standards/section-508-standards>

Tools for agencies:

- **Accessibility Requirements:** There are free open source tools available to check for accessibility requirements, for a list, please see <http://gic.delaware.gov/accessibility-central/>
- **Wave:** There is a free tool to test accessibility, WAVE by WebAim, <http://wave.webaim.org/>. You can run each page through the WAVE tool and it will flag accessibility issues. We recommend fixing the *red flag* errors immediately. If you use Google Chrome you can download and install the WAVE extension which will let you test websites behind a firewall or on a local server.
- **Read Speaker:** Screen reader software (Read Speaker) is available from GIC for the enterprise, and agencies are encouraged to use this software on their sites. Please contact us at gic@state.de.us for more information.

Dotgov – Rules for Websites with “.gov” Addresses

The Federal Government sets rules and guidelines for sites with “.gov” addresses. Delaware.gov sites must follow these rules, including no non-government advertising and no political or campaign information.

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Agencies are encouraged to read the policy and program guidelines:
<https://www.dotgov.gov/portal/web/dotgov/policy>, and
<https://www.dotgov.gov/portal/web/dotgov/program-guidelines>

Federal OMB

Please visit the White House/OMB's site on digital government policies:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/egov/digital-government/digital-government.html>

State Policy

Delaware Public Archives

In 2013, the Delaware Public Archives issued "Guidelines for Maintaining and Preserving Records of Web Based Activities" (see:
<http://archives.delaware.gov/govsvcs/pdfs/Records%20Policies/Guidelines%20for%20Maintaining%20and%20Preserving%20Records%20of%20Web%20Based%20Activities%2020130411.pdf>)

Tools for agencies:

- **ArchiveIt:** GIC, in partnership with the Delaware Archives, makes the ArchiveIt tool <https://archive.org/web/> available for Delaware.gov URLs. The ArchiveIt tool is provided for the public to access older versions of websites for information purposes. The ArchiveIt tool takes a regular snapshot of websites and makes those snapshots available online. If you would like to add your URL or change the frequency of snapshots, please email us gic@state.de.us

Delaware Technology and Information

Please visit the DTI's site for more information on statewide technology standards and enterprise tools: <https://dti.delaware.gov/information/standards-policies.shtml>

Glossary

Alt text/Alt tag for images 'Alt' = alternate text for an image. This alternate text will display if the image cannot be displayed. The alt attribute provides alternative information for an image if a user for some reason cannot view it (because of slow connection, an error in the src attribute, or if the user uses a screen reader).

CSS3 is the current standard for Cascading Style Sheets, a language used to specify look and feel of digital content, and used separately from the markup language (e.g., HTML) so as to separate content from presentation.

HTML5 is the fifth revision of the Hypertext Markup Language standard used to code content for the Web. HTML5 makes it possible to embed video, audio, animations and other features without the use of third-party plugins and can be used to build cross-platform mobile applications.

Font Awesome is the icon library that GIC uses and gives you scalable vector icons that can be customized (size, color, drop shadow and more. Font Awesome supplies a CDN which you can grab on the website:
<http://fontawesome.io/get-started/>

Metadata are information used to describe certain attributes of a piece of digital information, such as page title, author, date updated, and other classifications. Consistent quality metadata tagging can improve search results and also be used to structure content so that it can be more widely disseminated.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) involves understanding how search engines work and designing content around those standards to boost content's ranking in search results.

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Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires that federal employees and members of the public with disabilities have access to the government's digital information and services comparable to individuals without disabilities, unless an undue burden would be imposed on the agency. See <http://www.access-board.gov/508.htm> for more information.

Web APIs are a system of machine-to-machine interaction over a network. Web APIs involve the transfer of data, but not a user interface.