

# Top 10: Content Tips for Compliance and Usability

## What you need to know

Content is key on a website, but with so many users making updates, it's easy for best practices to get lost. Don't worry – we can help get your content back on track. Below are the top 10 content tips to help you address compliance and usability.

### Tip Number 1: Users need to know where they are going

When using items (pages, documents, categories, etc.) on your website, remember that naming is essential to understanding. You should name items in a way that describes their topic or purpose. Aim for specific instead of broad naming conventions.

#### IDEAL EXAMPLES:

About Content Development ([Specific Header](#))

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 ([Ideal Label](#))

#### POOR EXAMPLES:

Purpose ([Purpose of what?](#))

Guidelines ([Too vague](#))

### Tip Number 2: Break up page sections/topics with headings

When a user arrives on a page, they scan for the information they need. Use Subhead1 and Subhead2 class headings to break up your content and show hierarchy so it is easily scannable.

### Tip Number 3: The purpose of links can be determined in context

Links are how users get from place to place on your site. It is important that they be able to determine where a link goes without reading all of the text near the link. This concept applies to both the average user and users with assistive technologies.

#### EXAMPLE:

Within paragraphs, we often bury links to lead users to supporting information. Many web writers are tempted to use the term [click here](#) as the label for their link. However, “click here” links are not compliant. When a user with an assistive technology tries to determine what links are on the page, the links will be listed as “click here” instead of what the link actually leads to.

Instead of using words like “click here” or “the links on the right,” try using a sentence lead in and include the exact location that the link is going to. For example, you could say: to learn more information about website usability, [visit the Usability.gov website](#).

#### Tip Number 4:

**Only use tables when the information fits under the header cells appropriately (do not use for layout purposes).**

Screen readers are particular about tables. In order to provide your users with screen readers the correct information, you must make sure that the contents of every cell is directly related to the heading for that cell and that each column does have a heading.

#### Tip Number 5:

**Do not depend on only color to relay information**

Color should never be the sole indicator for a user as to what text is important. Color is problematic for both screen readers and users with color blindness.

Throughout text, it is difficult for screen readers to pick up either highlighted text and colors. For this reason, it is important to use other methods of conveying the importance of your content. For example, content editors could use **bulleted lists**, **bold text**, or **additional subheads** in order to convey what is the most important.

#### Tip Number 6:

**Do not use symbols or abbreviations as they will not translate well (symbols such as “ for inches)**

Screen readers have limitations regarding what they can read or how the symbols or abbreviations are translated.

Symbol	Should Say
-	minus
≤	less than or equal to
≥	greater than or equal to
=	approximately equals
≠	not equals

#### Tip Number 7:

**Know your audience.**

**Do not use jargon, and think of the average reading level of the user.**

The internet is the ultimate source of information. Users from all backgrounds and levels of education need to be able to find information on your site.

To make sure your average citizen can understand the most important information on your site, pay special attention to the readability level on the following pieces of information:

- How to submit payments
- Who to contact
- Important announcements or alerts
- Emergency response information
- Etc.

### Tip Number 8:

#### Use descriptive alt text for images or provide a link to a text description adjacent to an image or other non-text content

Screen readers rely on alternative text in order to give your visually impaired users the same experience as your users that do not require assistive technology.

##### IDEAL EXAMPLE:



Family walking a dog through a park

##### POOR EXAMPLE:



Park

All images on your website need to have alt text in order to be compliant.  
This includes:

- Icons
- Buttons
- Background Images
- Banners
- Logos

### Tip Number 9:

#### Use consistent navigation techniques and placement of other important items, such as contact information.

When users find a piece of information in an area of your site, they are going to look in that same location the next time they need to find similar information. Using consistent navigation and placement of important information will help your users find what they need faster.

### Tip Number 10:

#### Do not use flashing elements, such as images, text, or banners.

Flashing lights can be a huge medical problem for those with seizure disorders and can inhibit the ability of light-sensitive individuals to see other page content. Flashing elements should always be completely avoided.

.....

If you have trouble accessing any of our webpages or documents, please contact David Chavez at (909) 381-1250 or [david.chavez@sbcusd.com](mailto:david.chavez@sbcusd.com). Please help us respond to you in the most beneficial way by indicating the nature of your accessibility problem, the preferred format(s) in which you want to receive the material, and your contact information.

#### Contact Information

David Chavez  
Multimedia Manager  
Communications/Community Relations Department  
(909) 381-1250  
[david.chavez@sbcusd.com](mailto:david.chavez@sbcusd.com)