

Web Style Guide

Columbia College

Technology Services

11/2014

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Layout

1.1 Required Elements

Logo banner

- **White background and traditional logo**
- **Logo must link back to the ccis.edu home page** <http://www.ccis.edu>

Vendors who wish to duplicate the look of our site on a hosted website need to link to the stylesheets on our server rather than copying our styles to your hosted site. Contact cchelpdesk@ccis.edu for help.



Upper Navigation (above banner)



DIRECTORY CALENDAR CONTACT or call 800-231-2391

Links in order:

- <http://www.ccis.edu>
- <http://www.columbiacollegealumni.org/>
- <http://www.ccis.edu/CougarTrack>
- <http://mail.cougars.ccis.edu/>
- <http://www.ccis.edu/apply/>
- <http://www.ccis.edu/directory>
- <http://www.ccis.edu/cougarlink>
- <http://www.ccis.edu/contact>

Footer

Main campus: 1001 Rogers Street Columbia MO 65216 (573) 875-8700 or (800) 231-2391
Consumer Information Disability Services Campus Safety Employment Newsroom Help



Request info

Apply

1.2 Page guidelines

1.2.1 Navigation

- High level navigation for prospective students should be horizontal

Academics ▾ Admissions ▾ Tuition & financial aid ▾ Locations ▾ Athletics ▾ About CC ▾

- The section navigation of a page should be vertical

Academics ▾ Admissions ▾ T

Evening Campus

Admissions

Admission Requirements

Apply

Request More Information

Apply Online

Schedule a Visit

Open house

Application Process

Freshmen

Transfer Students

Non-Degree Seeking Students

Graduate Students

Readmission

International Students

Financial

Tuition & Fees

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- There must be a hidden link so that a screen reader can skip the navigation of a page to make the pages accessible for the visually impaired.
- If navigation needs to be expandable, it should be in a click-collapse fashion

Example 1: www.ccis.edu/military/



Example 2:

www.ccis.edu/international/



1.2.2 Data Tables

- Keep it simple. The more complex a data table is, the less usable it is.
- Tables should not be used to form the layout of a page, only for presenting data.
- Introduce the table – Explain the data.
- Order the information either:
 - alphabetically or
 - in order of importance
- Distinguish header cells from data cells.

- Alternate rows may have a different background color, but it's not necessary.

The chart below outlines the total cost of attendance for the 2013-2014 academic year.

Estimated Expenses* for the 2013-2014 Academic Year	
Tuition (fixed for 5 years)	\$ 19,386.00
Room	\$ 3,892.00
Meal Plan	\$ 2,362.00
Books**	\$ 936.00
Insurance**	\$ 1,200.00
Personal Expenses**	\$ 3,000.00
Total expenses required for the I-20	\$ 30,776.00

1.3 Accessibility

Must do's:

- All non-text content must have alternate text (often referred to as "alt text"), including:
 - Images
 - Controls, Inputs
- Audio and video files must have captions.
- Ensure color isn't the only way to receive a message. Text and graphics must be discernible if it were printed in black & white.
- Ensure content is usable if JavaScript is turned off.
- Ensure content is usable in older browsers (Technology Services supports back to Internet Explorer 7).
- Do not use moving, blinking or scrolling text.

Should do's:

In order to maintain the browser "back" button functionality, pages should not open in a new browser window, except in these specific circumstances:

- The link provides assistance or help. For example, a user fills out a form and clicks on a "help" link. In this case, users don't want to navigate away from the cart page, so a new browser window is acceptable.
- A Tips is a small pop-up window that appears when a user pauses the mouse pointer over an element. Tool Tips work best for short bits of information that can be displayed without navigating away from the page.

- Pop-up windows provide a way to display content in a separate window that floats over the current application window relative to a designated element, which may be a better alternative to opening new windows.
- The link may interrupt an ongoing form process. For instance, if a user fills out a Web form and the form provides the link to terms of service or privacy policy, it is reasonable to force this link to open in a new window to prevent interrupting the ongoing process. This is important for sign-up forms and crucial for checkout-forms. Otherwise, users may lose the information they've already typed in and close the browser window in response.
- The link leads to a non-HTML document. Examples: A PDF, Word document, Excel document, PowerPoint file, etc.
- The link leads to a large image that takes time to load. Opening a large image in a new window allows a user to focus on content while the image is being loaded in the background. Warn users in advance that a new window will appear with an icon immediately following the link.

For a new HTML window or image:

 Icon located here: http://www.ccis.edu/img/filetypes/new_window.png

If it is a PDF or other type of file, instead use the relevant icon after the link:

 PDF icon located here: <http://www.ccis.edu/img/filetypes/pdf.gif>

 Fillable PDF icon located here: http://www.ccis.edu/img/filetypes/fillable_pdf.png

 Word document icon located here: http://www.ccis.edu/img/filetypes/word_doc.gif

 Excel document icon located here: <http://www.ccis.edu/img/filetypes/excel.png>

 PowerPoint document icon located here:

<http://www.ccis.edu/img/filetypes/powerpoint.png>

- Use fillable PDFs over Microsoft Word forms when possible. Keep in mind that not everyone has Microsoft Word, while Adobe Reader is a free program. Also, Microsoft Word forms may be changed by the user, so it is important to use fillable PDF files.
- Fillable PDF forms should have tool tips for form fields. See *section 1.3.2 Should do's* for information about Tips.
- Video/audio files should have a full text version of the information.
- Each link should indicate clearly its target. **Do not use the phrase "Click here"**. See *section 3.1.3 Links: Avoiding "clicking here"* for more information.

Style

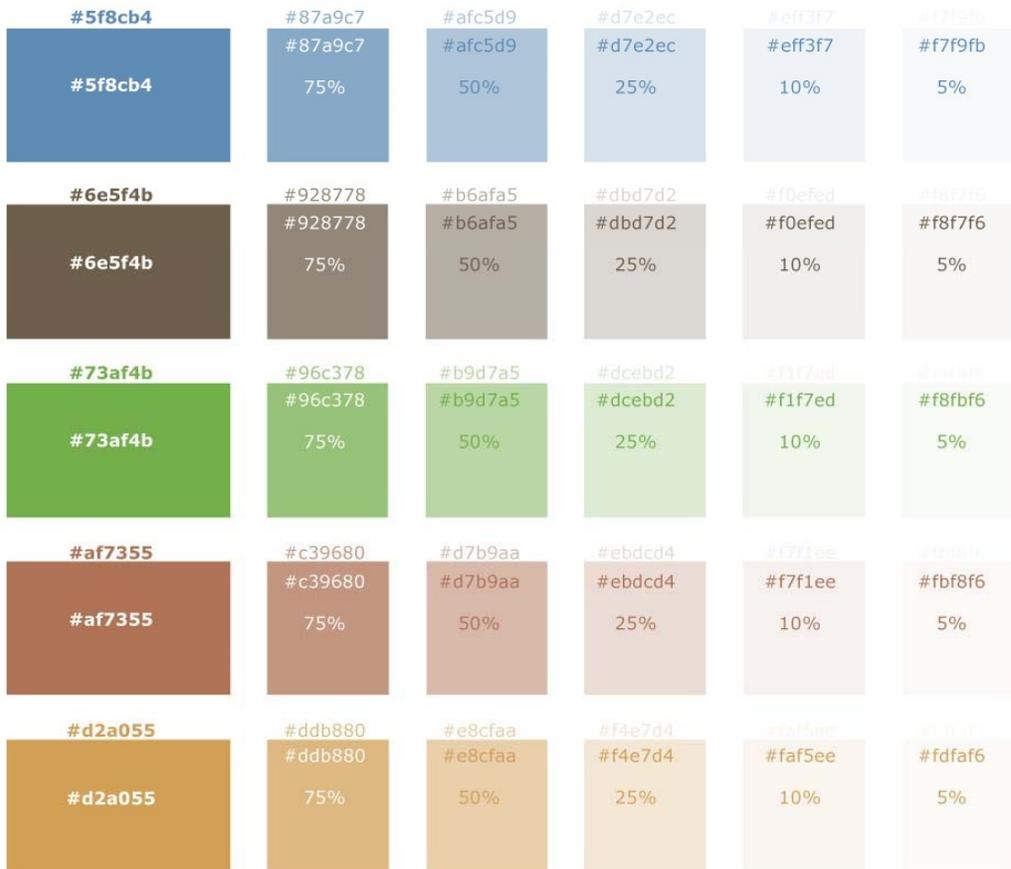
2.1 Consistency & visual Identity

2.1.1 Web Colors

Main palette



Secondary palette



Text and background colors should have a high amount of contrast in order to be legible as possible.

- Dark text on light background and vice versa
- Medium tone text should not be on a medium background



Tips for color use

- Less is always more in web design. Bear in mind, it is very easy to get carried away and distract from the content.
- Using shades of a single color often works well for variation without distraction.
- If multiple colors will be used, try to keep them at the same saturation to keep the color scheme looking cohesive.
- Don't overuse red or bolded text to stress importance. If too many things are important, then nothing is. It's best to have a clear hierarchy in the organization of your content instead. See "Header styles" below and the "Writing for Web" in section 3.1.2 for more detail.

2.1.2 Text/Fonts

Main content text (see the screenshot below for text and link color reference)

- **Headers:** should be #03487c and in the Cambria, "Times New Roman", serif family
- **Paragraph:** text should be color #3F3F3F and in the Segoe UI san-serif family
- **Links:** should be color #BC653A
- see the screenshot below for text and link color reference

Admission Requirements

Columbia College wants to make the admission process possible. If you have a high school diploma, GED or p complete the [online application](#) for undergraduate ac transcripts from high school and all colleges and univ

The Evening Campus admission requirements are considered "moderately selective." The Admissions

2.1.3 Preset Styles

Button Styles

- Buttons should be a call to action. The text on the button should be short. Never use a button for a whole sentence.
- Buttons should have some kind of rollover function.
- Here's a list of available presets we have for buttons:

Button Class	
.btn .blue	
.btn .rust	

Pullquote

- Pullquotes should be use to highlight a small amount of text.
- Do not use it for large paragraphs of text.
- Do not use pullquotes to create floating "navigation" elements.
- Pullquote Left alignsthe text box to the left
- Pullquote Right aligns the text box to the right

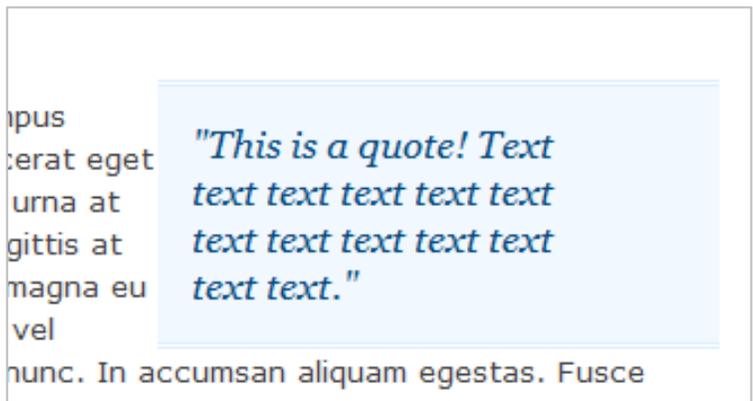


Table Styles

Found in

<http://web.ccis.edu/Offices/International/I20.aspx>

The chart below outlines the total cost of attendance for the 2

Estimated Expenses* for the 2013-2014 Academic Year	
Tuition (fixed for 5 years)	\$ 19,386.00
Room	\$ 3,892.00
Meal Plan	\$ 2,362.00
Books**	\$ 936.00
Insurance**	\$ 1,200.00
Personal Expenses**	\$ 3,000.00
Total expenses required for the I-20	\$ 30,776.00

* Student's receiving scholarships will have the amount needed for their I-2

Table Style 1

- Distinguished header cells
- Puts a solid border on the bottom of every cell

Child's Name	Person child support was paid to	Name of person who paid support	Child Support Paid in 2011
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$

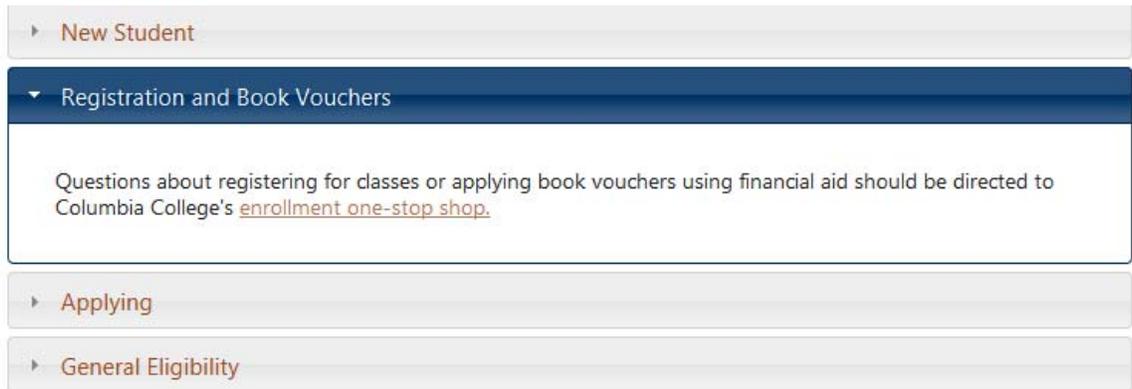
Accordion

The accordion block hides text under a button until you click on it, when it expands to show text. This is useful for pages that are very long and have many subheads and prevents scrolling. Use sparingly.

- Collapsed:

▶ New Student
▶ Registration and Book Vouchers
▶ Applying
▶ General Eligibility
▶ Loans

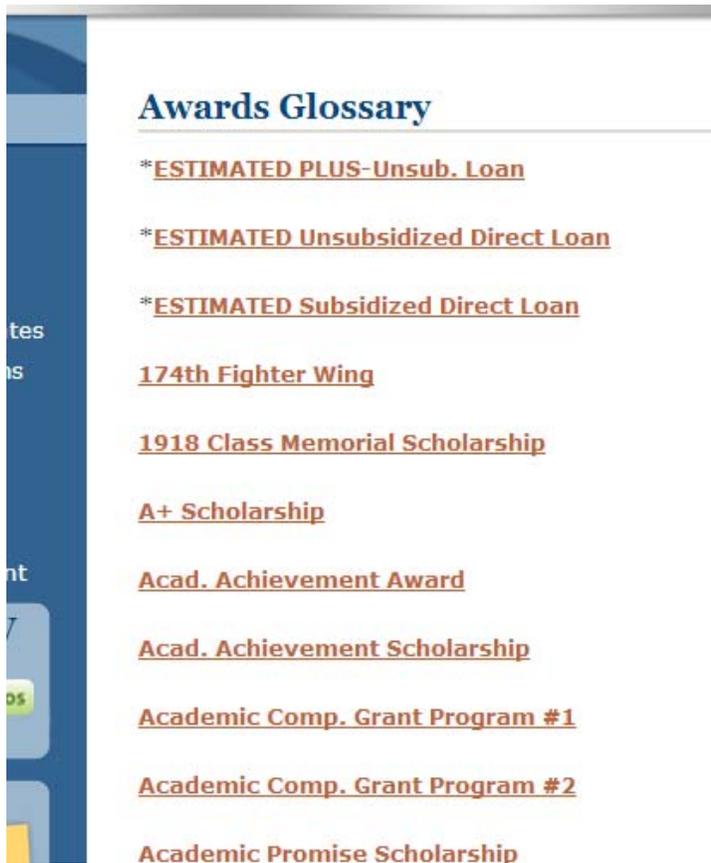
- Expanded:



Collapsible Blocks

The collapsible block hides text under a link until you click on it, when it expands to show text. Use sparingly.

- Collapsed:



- Expanded

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***ESTIMATED Subsidized Direct Loan**

174th Fighter Wing

1918 Class Memorial Scholarship

A+ Scholarship

This one-third tuition scholarship is awarded to students who transfer from a Missouri public two-year college with a minimum 3.0 GPA and an Associate in Arts or associate in Science degree or 60 transferable hours. In addition, the student must have attended the community college on an A+ grant. The scholarship is renewable for one year with 27 semester hours earned per academic year and a 3.0 cumulative grade point average in Columbia College coursework.

Acad. Achievement Award

Acad. Achievement Scholarship

Caption

Captions should be used under photos and graphics if the graphic isn't otherwise described. The preset makes small gray text that should be placed under the graphic



Ed Collings with mace, 2008

2.2 Best practices for Web Design

Basic guidelines to follow:

- Design and content should be relevant to the target audience.

- Pages should be useable in all major browsers (especially Internet Explorer 7 and newer, and Firefox 4 and newer).
- Navigation should be clear and consistent.
- Graphics and photos should complement the content, not detract from it.
- Graphics and photos should be optimized and sized for Web use so as not to slow the page load. See *section 3.2 Photos* for more information.
- Each graphic, photo or multimedia element should serve a purpose. Less is more when it comes to visual elements, especially when considering mobile device friendliness.
- Captions/alternate text should be provided for every graphic/media file (to increase accessibility).
- New webpages or pages with major edits should be run through a validator and checked for errors.

An example of such a validator: <http://validator.w3.org>

3.0 Content (Textual & Photographic)

3.1 Textual Content – Writing for Web

3.1.1 Organization

- Place the point or main idea of the content at the top of the page.
- Prioritize the organization of content according to the user/audience.
- Use charts, graphics and captions when applicable.
- Label sections of text (headings, subheads, etc.):
 - Heading styles:

Heading Goes Here 2

Here's a Subheading 3

Here's a Subheading 4

Here's a Subheading 5

- The headings should serve as a hierarchy of information. Every page should have a "heading 2" (H2) heading. H4 headings should not exist without preceding H3 headings, and H5 headings should not exist without preceding H4 headings.

3.1.1 Audience Consideration

- Make sure written content is geared toward the site's primary audience.
- Many prospective Columbia College students are teenagers and young people who are accustomed to finding the information they need on the Web quickly. Writing for this audience should be ultra-concise and easily navigable. See Nielsen Norman Group's *Writing for the Web* at www.useit.com/papers/webwriting for helpful information on Web writing.
- Users whose first language is not English are likely to require text that is easily translated.

3.1.2 Writing Clearly for Web

- Readers come to the site for a specific purpose. Often they scan the page rather than reading it in its entirety, and if they don't find what they're looking for quickly, they'll move on.
- Writing should be clear and concise. Keep it short and straightforward by using short paragraphs, sentences and words. Be sure to use an active voice:
- Active: John brought his laptop to class.
- Passive: The laptop was brought to class by John.
- Use bulleted lists when possible.
- Avoid jargon, slang, and regional- or college-specific language.
- Add images that help users understand the content.
- Except when at the beginning of a sentence, write numbers above nine as numerals rather than spelling out them out.

3.1.3 Links – avoiding “click here”

- When linking, make the linked text describe where the user will go
 - Examples:
 - **Bad** - If you want to learn more about this, [click here](#) to read this article about CC
 - **Good** - Learn more topic about this by reading the CC Connected [article on the Columbia Cougars](#)
- Reasons to avoid “click here”:
 - **It is not action-oriented.** You should use action words that are more descriptive of the end result, such as “read,” “subscribe” or “learn,” as opposed to “click.” A link basically is highlighted text. The link itself should indicate where it will take the user.
 - **Users already know how to identify links.** It is not necessary to show them where to click or how they work. Instead, users want to know the end result of clicking on a particular link.
 - **SEO (search engine optimization).** Search engines use the verbiage of the content's links to determine their placement in search results.

3.2 Photos

3.2.1 Photographic Style

As one of the most visible graphical elements, professional photography with a consistent style is an extremely important part of the Columbia College brand. Overall, the style is sophisticated with heavy use of shallow depth of field, unique perspectives and angles, and a heavy use of a “real” contextual setting. Colors are rich and saturated (see the *Columbia College Brand Manual*:

<http://web.ccis.edu/~media/Files/Public%20Relations/Resources/BrandManualStyleGuide.pdf>)

3.2.2 Photos for Web

- **Page with a left menu:**
 - Vertical & square images:
 - 250 px is a good width, and no wider than 275 px.
 - Horizontal images: Maximum width 425px.
 - For a horizontal image spanning the width of the main text area (so that no text wraps around the image), maximum width should be 624px; height: 225px. This is so it doesn't cause a lot of scrolling to get to the page content.
 - Image rotators should be 625 pixels maximum width. Ideally with horizontal photos and captions.
 - Note: Never use a vertical image to span the width of the main text area. This is because the image will take up too much of the screen, resulting in a lot of scrolling to get to the real page content.
- **Page with no side menus**
 - Vertical image maximum width: 375 pixels wide
 - Horizontal maximum width: 525 pixels
 - For a horizontal image spanning the width of the main text area (so that no text wraps around the image), maximum width should be maximum width 1000px; and maximum height: 250 px
- If you need a file resized or cropped, you can go here: <http://picresize.com>
 - Instructions:
 - Upload your file as directed.
 - Step 2: Crop if needed.
 - Choose "Custom Size" from the drop down, and set the width. No need to set the height.
 - Step 3: Skip it. We don't suggest using special effects.
 - Step 4: Save as jpg, generally as the "better" quality.
 - Save your file.
- Do not skew the dimensions of the original photo when resizing
- Do not compress photos to the point of pixilation or graininess
- Photos and graphics should be relevant to the content and complement, not distract from, the text.
- **Avoid clip art stock graphics.** They don't look professional, and people may have seen them elsewhere – associating the college with other things. Please consult EIS or PR for images you need for your site.
- The larger the image, the less mobile friendly it is.
 - Mobile browsing is constantly increasing

3.2.3 Image Types

- Photographs should be kept in JPG format.
- It is better to use PNGs for graphics such as logos, buttons and illustrations, or you can also use JPGs
- Do not use BMP or other image formats.

3.3 Quality Assurance

3.3.1 Maintenance

Content owners/maintainers should set a **consistent schedule** (at least semi-annually) for reviewing their content.

Content updates should include:

- Clicking on every link to ensure there are no broken ones
- Removing outdated content from the web server
- Updating dates
- Removing test versions of pages from the web server
- Removing duplicate content
- Simplifying text as much as possible

3.3.2 Assuring Quality

- Pages should be checked for functionality across browsers.
- All pages should be checked for spelling, grammar, style and adhesion to the brand manual.

HTML Emails

Building an email is not like building a webpage. It is important to note that email clients unfamiliar with building webpages may render less advanced HTML.

4.1 Best Practices:

4.1.1 Dimensions

- **Width**

Code no more than 600 pixels wide (around 8 inches). Some mail preview windows are much smaller than this. Alternately, use percentages for a fluid width.

- **Height**

Do not make emails too long. The most important information should in the top 235px (3.25 inches) of the email since a large percentage of users view their email in the preview window only. Ideally, you should place your main information and/or call to action within that space.

- **Preview windows**

Some email clients use a vertical preview window while others use a horizontal preview window. Consider placing a secondary call to action on the left side to ensure it is visible in both horizontal and vertical preview panes.

4.1.2 Layout for HTML emails

- **Use HTML tables for layout**

Cascading style sheets (CSS) positioning doesn't work in many email clients. However, for simple layouts, align images to the left, right or center, and add padding and margins.

- **Use of CSS in html emails**

Support for even simple CSS varies widely and often is rudimentary.

- Use it to control elements such as background colors and fonts.
- Use `` tags and `<div>` tags sparingly.
- Do not use CSS floats.

- **Put all the CSS inline.** Many webmail services will strip out the DOCTYPE, BODY, and HEAD tags.

- **Do not use shorthand CSS:** Instead of using the abbreviated style rule font (12 pixel/16 pixel Arial or Helvetica), break this shorthand into its individual properties: font family, font size and line height. A useful tool can be found at premailer.dialect.ca. Code as usual, and it will be converted to an email-friendly version code once it is pasted in.

4.1.3 Images

- Consider your **images blocked by default**. For security purposes, many email readers will not load images - the reader must opt-in on each email to display the images. Therefore:
 - Make sure your email design still gets the point across even when images are not displayed. Do not make paragraphs into images
 - Use descriptive "alt text" for EVERY image. The alt attribute specifies alternate text that is displayed when the image cannot be displayed. It is possible to style the alt text to make it more attractive.
- **Image load time**
Don't overuse images. It takes time to load images in email, especially for mobile users. Any images that are used should be optimized for the Web in a small file size. See *section 3.2 Photos* for more information.
- **Image location**
Images should be posted in a publicly accessible Web server. Use absolute paths in the code to distinguish images.

4.1.4 Attachments, JavaScript and video

Please do not use attachments, JavaScript or video in HTML email designs.

- Most email software will disable JavaScript.
- Attachments take time to download, take up server space and often go unnoticed. It also adds another step for the user to receive the message.
- Videos should be placed on the Web server and linked to from email.

4.1.5 Email fields

- **Subject: field.** Include a brief descriptive phrase about the email's contents. Refrain from using "Help," "Hi", or "Please respond" comments in the *Subject:* field.
- **To: field.** Don't expose a contact's email addresses to outside parties. The *To:* field should include the sender's email or company email address, and the *BCC:* field should include the rest of the recipients. Besides privacy reasons, a long list of email addresses in the *To:* or *CC:* fields means less of the message will appear in the preview window.

4.1.6 Testing

Test emails in the predicted mail clients. However, note that many users will be using mail forwarding to alternate email clients.

4.1.7 Reference: Excellent resource for making successful html emails: 24ways.org/2009/rock-solid-html-emails/