

INTERNET/INTRANET SERVICES

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This handbook establishes Department-wide procedures for managing, maintaining, establishing, and presenting VA Internet/Intranet Service Sites or related services (hereafter referred to as "Internet"). This handbook implements the policies contained in VA Directive 6102, Internet/Intranet Services. This includes but is not limited to File Transfer Protocol (FTP), Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP), Web pages, Active Server Pages (ASP), e-mail forums, and list servers.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook provides procedures relating to establishing, operating, and maintaining a VA Internet Service Site or related service. This handbook also contains instructions for publishing information on the World Wide Web (www).
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Office of Information and Technology (005) and the Office of Policy and Program Assistance (045A) are responsible for the material contained in this handbook.
- 4. RELATED DIRECTIVES:** VA Directive 6102, Internet/Intranet Services and VA Directive 6001, Limited Personal Use of Government Office Equipment Including Information Technology.

CERTIFIED BY:

BY DIRECTION OF THE ACTING
SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:



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INTERNET/INTRANET SERVICES

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER 1. OVERVIEW	
1. Purpose	5
2. Responsibilities	5
CHAPTER 2. INTERNET SERVICE SITE DEVELOPMENT	
1. General	11
2. Establishing a VA Internet Service Site	11
3. Maintaining a VA Internet Service Site	16
CHAPTER 3. BEST PRACTICES AND DESIGN PRESENTATION	
1. World Wide Web Consortium Compliance	19
2. Accessibility for Disabled Users	19
3. Common Look and Feel (Web Design)	20
4. Identification of Points of Contact	22
CHAPTER 4. WORST PRACTICES	
1. Non-Standard or Proprietary Web Site Elements	23
2. Links to Commercial Servers	23
3. Donated Web Space	23
4. Information Links Not Cleared for Public Access/Release	23
5. Broken Links	23
6. Failure to Identify Points of Contact	23
7. Frames	23
8. Browser Compatibility and Use	23
9. Extensive Use of Graphics	24

	PAGE
APPENDICES	
A. Definitions, Acronyms and Abbreviations	A-1
B. Approved Warning Notices	B-1
C. Content and Quality of Data/Information and Transactions	C-1
D. Using Background Colors	D-1
E. Quality Design Tips	E-1
F. Reference Guidance	F-1

Chapter 1. Overview

1. Purpose

a. This document outlines general guidelines, which have been adopted by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with regard to planning, design, maintenance support, and any other functions related to the administration of VA Internet/Intranet Service Sites.

b. Internet based technologies hold great potential for providing information to the public in an efficient, effective, and attractive manner. VA managers responsible for their organization's Internet presence should apply industry's best practices to Web site design, security, and maintenance.

c. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and the Government Paperwork Elimination Act of 1998 require government agencies to identify and implement electronic methods of collecting data from the public in order to reduce the paperwork burden. VA is making a major commitment to electronic networking as a significant means of providing information and services to public customers as well as its employees. The Web is a key enabling technology for the vision of "one-stop shopping." If Federal agencies, including VA, recognize a reasonable set of Web guidelines for organizing and presenting information, customers will be able to enter the Web at any point. From there, they may tap not only the specific server they first contact but also the full resources of the entire Federal presence on the Internet.

d. The intent of this handbook is to ensure a consistently high quality product recognizable as coming from within VA, with a VA "look and feel" while ensuring a maximum level of flexibility for VA organizations to aggressively and inventively attend to the needs of their individual customers and clients.

2. Responsibilities

a. **Secretary of Veterans Affairs.** The Secretary has designated the Department's Chief Information Officer as the senior Agency official responsible for the Department's information and technology programs.

b. **Chief Information Officer Council.** The Chief Information Officer (CIO) Council is responsible for the effective use of VA's Internet and other information technology (IT) resources, and directives and policies governing the use and implementation of Internet and other IT resources.

c. **Electronic VA (EVA) Committee.** The EVA Committee will include representation from all Administrations and staff offices. The EVA Committee shall:

- (1) Periodically review external links for compliance with link exchange criteria outlined in VA Handbook 6102, Internet/Intranet Services. (See Ch. 2. par. 3 c. Establishment of External Links);
- (2) Establish a common set of thumbnail icons to be used for disclaimers, privacy notice, customer service, and mandated links; and
- (3) Identify templates to be used in developing and designing VA Web pages.

d. **Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries and Other Key Officials.** These officials will ensure the implementation of VA Internet policy within their respective administrations and staff offices. These officials will also ensure that VA information and information resources are protected from inappropriate use, access, tampering, destruction, and unauthorized release of sensitive information. These officials shall:

- (1) Identify which Program Offices and facilities have VA Internet Service Site responsibility;
- (2) Provide for penalties for abuses of VA Internet policy;
- (3) Allocate the resources necessary to effectively implement VA Internet policy;
- (4) Exercise ultimate control over the content of the organization's Web site;
- (5) Define the core functions, products, and information that will be made available;
- (6) Define the purpose of each Internet Service, its intended audience, and how it supports the mission of the organization;
- (7) Review and analyze usage reports and comments received from users to better understand the level and type of outside interest in accessing the organizational information. Make modifications, if necessary, based on this analysis;
- (8) Periodically reevaluate each Internet service or Web site under their control to ensure performance of these responsibilities;
- (9) Ensure the integrity of each site;
- (10) Ensure that suitable POCs provide timely and accurate responses via electronic mail and other media;

(11) Ensure that adequately trained personnel are available to perform these duties;

(12) Ensure that VA offices proactively take steps to provide services to veterans via the Internet wherever feasible; and

(13) Ensure that the records retention and disposition requirements of the Federal Records Act [44 U.S.C. Ch. 33] and VA Directives 6300 and 6301 and their associated Handbooks are met.

e. **Program Office.** The head of each Program Office with an official VA Internet Service shall:

(1) Ensure that adequately trained personnel are available to perform these duties;

(2) Ensure that suitable points of contact provide timely (normally within one day) and accurate responses to correspondence initiated through electronic mail links on their Web site(s) via electronic mail and other media; and

(3) Own and be responsible for the content of the documents presented on their Web site, e.g., papers, studies, forms, pictures and graphics.

(4) Ensure that one or more POCs are designated to provide editorial support. The editorial support POCs shall:

(a) Be responsible for VA Web content, and for ensuring timeliness, accuracy, and currency of information posted to a VA Internet Service Site, on an on-going basis;

(b) Notify appropriate individuals of content deficiencies under their responsibility and make a reasonable effort to notify non-participating offices of queries concerning their programs;

(c) Review compliance with operational policies and practices concerning the content and presentation of information on the VA Web server and internal and external servers associated with VA Internet Services;

(d) Prepare templates and style sheets to be used by the participants in the Internet service;

(e) Correct deficiencies in information content and customer service under their responsibility; and

(f) Identify possible business uses for Internet services and present these suggestions/recommendations to their Administrative heads for review by the EVA Committee.

(5) Ensure that one or more POCs are designated to provide technical support who shall:

(a) Review VA Internet services for conformance to §508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended;

(b) Notify Program Offices of technical deficiencies under their responsibility and make a reasonable effort to notify non-participating offices on queries concerning their program;

(c) Implement editorial content decisions;

(d) Operate the Internet Service Site server environment;

(e) Secure the Internet Service Site server environment as outlined in VA Handbook 6210, Automated Information Security Procedures;

(f) Perform virus scans on all directories within the Internet Service Site server environment;

(g) Scan VA sites for broken links and reporting these links to the sponsor;

(h) Install appropriate operating system patches and software upgrades;

(i) Provide an emergency contact to perform site maintenance; and

(j) Maintain liaison with appropriate technical support to facilitate installation of system software for the benefit of the entire Internet server.

f. **Webmasters.** Each Program Office with an official Internet Service Site will appoint a Webmaster to maintain the site. The Webmaster shall:

(1) Notify Program Offices of content deficiencies under their responsibility and make a reasonable effort to notify non-participating offices of queries concerning their programs;

(2) Only accept changes and additions to existing Web pages from identified personnel authorized to submit them;

(3) Confirm that changes or additions to existing Web pages are posted in a timely manner;

(4) Submit and/or register a domain name within VA's domain name service; and

(5) Scan VA sites for broken links and report to sponsor.

(6) Ensure that the Web servers and/or Web sites are properly managed, e.g., regular backups, available and online, and virus checked.

(7) Ensure that resources are sufficient to support documents on the server. Remove or refuse any documents that unduly burden the server, its customers, or otherwise reflect poorly on the VA.

(8) Ensure file integrity and accuracy of the Web site.

(9) Be responsible for monitoring Web presentation, responding to customer inquiries, maintaining documents, and implement changes to directories and documents when required.

Chapter 2. Internet Service Site Development

1. **General.** Each VA Program Office with an Internet/Intranet presence will have a primary and secondary POC for matters related to its Internet Service Site. An organizational list of POCs will be maintained by the CIO Office, and be accessible from the CIO Web page. VA Administrations and Staff Offices may establish and maintain Web servers and services on the Internet, including Web sites with hyperlinks to other pages, providing they support legitimate, mission-related activities of the VA and are consistent with prudent operational and security considerations. VA Web sites should be designed to support the widest range of potential users and computing platforms and should be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In some cases, Program Offices require developers to fill out a Web site request form. Developers should check with the appropriate Program Office Webmaster for any additional requirements.

2 Establishing A VA Internet Service Site

a. Required Technical Elements.

(1) Each directory/Web site will have an owner with appropriate access rights, who is responsible for its contents, and a back-up POC. The office that is responsible for maintaining the page should be identified on the page and the full name of the person who wrote the content for the page and the date it was written. For any revisions, the full name of the person who last revised the information and the date when it occurred and a comment line to provide details of the information changed or validated.

(2) The Web site may employ non-standard (e.g. browser specific) HTML tags and browser extensions (plug-in) but may not require or encourage the use of any particular browser product or "plug-in" technologies.

(3) Each directory/Web site shall have a default homepage that points to all active files served from that directory. Directory browsing is prohibited on production servers, unless approved by the technical support staff. All directories for public viewing will contain a file named according to the server's default file setting: e.g.; index.htm/default.asp.

(4) All secondary documents shall have owner identification, a date, date of update, subject and keyword META tags, and a link to a POC (for example, this could be an e-mail or a feedback database mechanism). Generic addresses are recommended to facilitate coverage of the mailbox by multiple employees.

(5) Hyperlink references should be relative, not absolute (except for secure servers). This means a link should reference a specific directory on the server without naming the server (/your_site/), not the entire URL (e.g.; www.va.gov). This will also ensure that it is legible to screen readers. When absolute Hyperlink references are required, they shall use domain names and not IP addresses.

(6) Content existing on the Production Internet Server is the authoritative version of pages and documents.

(a) In the interest of version control and good management, those with broad authority to update directories and files (such as the Technical Support Staff) shall notify the owners of a directory or file when they make changes to it.

(b) Normally, non-owners with authority will make such changes upon request by the owner of the directory. In an urgent situation, and if time permits, the owner will be notified in advance of changes to be made; otherwise, notice will be sent immediately after the change is made.

b. **Web Site Domain Name Registration.** All VA Internet Services shall be in the domain va.gov, and shall notify the EVA Committee of the site URL. The site should register a domain name within VA's Domain Name Service (va.gov) by sending an e-mail request, including the IP Address and requested name, to g.domreg@forum.va.gov.

c. **Automated Information Systems Security.** All VA Internet Services shall be in compliance with VA Directive 6210, Automated Information Systems Security.

d. **Standards.** The following standards will be adhered to when creating an "official" VA Web site:

(1) For HTML-based documents or files, pages must conform to the HTML 4.01 Reference Specification or newer;

(2) Web pages may not be designed to support any proprietary browser product or "plug-in" technology to the exclusion or detriment of another browser; and

(3) For interactive, Web-based programming and scripting, VA Internet Services shall employ nonproprietary, platform independent, programming or scripting languages or environments; e.g., Common Gateway Interface (CGI), Java, JavaScript, and Perl. Use of proprietary programming or scripting languages shall be approved by the Webmaster Board prior to use.

e. **Privacy**

(1) Visitors to VA Internet Service Sites shall not be required to give personal information to visit the site.

(2) VA Internet Services may collect personally identifiable information (name, email address, Social Security number, or other unique identifier) only if specifically and knowingly provided by the visitor and in a manner permitted under OMB Circular A-130. Personally identifying information thus provided will be used only in connection with VA programs and services or for such other purposes as are described at the point of collection. Information is collected for statistical purposes and VA sometimes performs analyses of user behavior in order to measure customer interest in the various areas of VA sites.

(3) If a Web site collects personal information, it shall only do so using a secure data transfer method such as Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) and Public Key Infrastructure (PKI). Any replies to inquiries should not include personal identifying information, even if included in the incoming inquiry. Note: using the e-mail reply button will normally include the text of the incoming inquiry as an indented follow-on to the response.

(4) VA shall not give, sell, or transfer any personal information to a third party except as provided by the Privacy Act and other legislation. The Privacy Act of 1974 applies to all Federal agencies. For information on the Federal government's Web site Privacy Policy, see OMB Memorandum 99-18 "Privacy Policies on Federal Web Sites" dated June 2, 1999. See also VA Handbook 6300.4, Procedures for Processing Requests for Records Subject to the Privacy Act and VA Handbook 6300.5, Procedures for Establishing and Managing Privacy Act Systems of Records.

(5) Links to VA Privacy Notice. VA Internet Services shall include a link to VA's privacy notice on each Program Office's gateway Web page, and on other pages as appropriate. Static pages with information such as VA reports, testimony, and regulations, may not require a privacy policy link. A VA Internet Service Site should use a distinctive icon to be determined by the EVA Committee. The circumstances under which a privacy policy posting are mandated are outlined in OMB M99-18. VA's Web site privacy notice is found at: <http://www.va.gov/privacy>.

(6) Privacy Act Systems of Records. In systems of records where traditional paper collections of information are supplemented or replaced by electronic forms offered through a Web site, the rules of the Privacy Act continue to apply. For situations where a Privacy Act notice would be required in the paper-based world, VA Internet Services shall give equivalent notice in the on-line world. VA Internet Services shall post the relevant Privacy Act notice on the Web page or Web form via a well-marked hyperlink. Via that link, the public shall be directed to the appropriate point of contact and description of the particular Privacy Act Systems of Records.

(7) Electronic Mail. VA Internet Services shall offer the public the option to contact VA by postal mail, telephone, or electronically, via an on-line form. With respect to online forms and electronic mail, the public shall be advised that:

(a) Material thus submitted may be seen by various people, and may be entered into an electronic database;

(b) Material thus submitted may be shared with government attorneys and investigators involved in law enforcement or public policy development;

(c) Material thus submitted may be shared with other government agencies enforcing consumer protection, competition, and other laws;

(d) Individuals may be contacted by the Government employees, government attorneys or government agencies who have received the information;

(e) In limited circumstances, including requests from Congress or private individuals, VA may be required by law to disclose information submitted; and

(f) Electronic mail is not necessarily secure against interception. Sensitive communications or personal information like a bank account, charge card, or social security numbers may be encrypted or sent by more secure means.

(8) Use of cookie technology on VA Web sites is restricted by OMB M-00-13, "Privacy Policies and Data Collection on Federal Web Sites" and clarification memorandum dated September 5, 2000 by the Administrator, OMB Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. Additional requirements can be found in OMB M-99-18, "Privacy Policies on Federal Web Sites."

(a) Any use of cookies on any VA Web site, including a Web site operated by a contractor on behalf of VA, requires:

(1) a clear and conspicuous notice (either on the page itself or via a link to a central page) including what information the cookie collects and how that information is used;

(2) appropriate and publicly-disclosed privacy safeguards for handling of information derived from cookies (again, either on the page itself or via a link to a central page); and

(3) a record of approval by Secretary.

b. The Secretary's approval must also include:

(1) a statement of the compelling need to gather the data on the site using cookies;

(2) whether the cookies are temporary (i.e. set to expire in two hours or less) or persistent (i.e., set to expire in more than two hours);

(3) why persistent cookies must be used (if applicable); and

(4) whether the cookie information must be incorporated into a Privacy Act System of Records (and which one, if applicable). Web sites directed to children must also comply with the standards set forth in the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 with respect to the collection of personal information online.

(c) On all public Web sites, a notice must be placed (or linked to a central page) that advises visitors that if they encounter a cookie at their site and there is no explanation for the cookie (or the explanation is unclear or unreasonable), that they can notify the FOIA/Privacy Act Officer at <mailto:foia@mail.va.gov>.

(9) VA Internet Services shall provide or link to an example of the information collected based on a standard request for a World Wide Web document: See <http://www.va.gov/privacy/Stats.asp>.

(10) VA Internet Services shall include Department of Justice approved warning notices as shown in Appendix B.

f. Accessibility Requirements for Disabled Users. All VA Internet Services must comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 USC §794d) which covers Federal procurements of Electronic Information Technology Equipment. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended), requires that electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained and used by the Federal government be accessible to people with disabilities.

(1) Web pages shall meet accessibility regulations established by the United States Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board).

(2) References can be found at <http://vaww.va.gov/server/AccessiblePages.htm>.

g. Disclaimers. For the following disclaimers, VA Internet Service Sites shall:

(1) Ensure that external links include a statement that releases VA from responsibility for the material included on the external site. It is important to avoid giving the impression that VA is endorsing or sanctioning external information, products or services;

(2) Include disclaimers on copyright, endorsement, liability, and medical information, as appropriate, for individual VA Web sites;

(3) Display a disclaimer for the authority of the data and information on the server. For example: "We endeavor to the best of our ability to provide timely and accurate information. However, the material on the Web site is provided for the convenience of the public and employees and is not necessarily an official record. The Department's records program is paper-based; legal, financial, and policy actions shall be based on the official records of the Department, which are not necessarily identical to the electronic documents provided on this Internet service;

(4) Disclaimer references can be found at <http://www.va.gov/disclaim.htm>; and

(5) Link to the Department's policy on providing accessible Internet services, <http://vaww.va.gov/server/AccessiblePages.htm>, or comparable policy

appropriate to the particular Internet Service. The target of the link should provide the disabled the opportunity to bring their concerns to the Webmaster's attention. For example: If this information is not accessible due to a disability please contact the electronic mail address accessible@mail.va.gov.

3. Maintaining A VA Internet Service Site

a. **Content Review.** The Content Owner/Program Office placing information on-line is responsible for ensuring that the content has been reviewed by the appropriate Program Office, that it is continuously reviewed, and that links are kept current. Recommendations on content and quality of data/information and transactions provided on the Internet and Intranet are included in Appendix C. Established operational policies and practices concerning the content and presentation of information on the Internet service require that:

(1) All information to be posted must be relevant to the organization's mission;

(2) All posted documents and pages must be releasable to the public unless access controls or encryption prevent those without authorization to access the documents or information within. Posted documents and pages that are not releasable to the public under FOIA or the Privacy Act must be secured by access controls or encryption. This does not explicitly require all content to be reviewed and cleared by an associated FOIA/PA office, but does require content owners and Program Offices to identify potential FOIA/PA issues in content for referral to their FOIA office for clearance to release publicly. Approval for release by VA Office of General Counsel would also meet these public-release requirements;

(3) All information to be placed on-line must be validated for accuracy, currency, consistency, and appropriateness;

(4) The office responsible for the initial and on-going validation of accuracy, currency, consistency, and appropriateness in posted information must be identified on-screen and a means of contact designated;

(5) Document translation, changes, and additions are the responsibility of the office that owns the directory in which the file resides;

(6) All pages, which collect personal information from the user, must be in compliance with OMB M99-18, Privacy Policies on Federal Web Sites, June 2, 1999, OMB M-00-13, "Privacy Policies and Data Collection on Federal Web Sites" and clarification memorandum dated September 5, 2000 by the Administrator, OMB Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs;

(7) All posted documents must include appropriate disclaimers and notices;

(8) All posted documents must be free of malicious code;

(9) All posted documents must be free of inappropriate and offensive content; and

(10) Posted information found to be deficient in any of these categories, and remaining deficient 5 working days after the owner is so notified by the Program Office, will be deleted.

b. Technical Support

(1) Support content developers by placing requested files on external Internet server under the appropriate security procedures;

(2) Administer the systems of the Internet Service;

(3) Establish a directory structure and assign directories to each participating office;

(4) Determine whether server resources are sufficient to support files on the server, and removing or refusing files that unduly burden the server, its customers, or technically reflects poorly on VA;

(5) Ensure file integrity and accuracy, monitoring Web presentation, responding to customer maintained documents, and implementing changes to their directories and documents;

(6) Implement content decisions of the Program Office;

(7) Provide an emergency contact to pull a page or post Home Page bulletins;

(8) Check links for appropriateness and submit questionable ones to the editorial support POC for review. Links must be checked no less than once a year; and

(9) Install system software for the benefit of the entire Internet Server. Rules and procedures may be established to facilitate the effective use of this software. Exceptions must be coordinated with a technical support POC to ensure compatibility with the software.

c. Establishment of External Links

(1) VA Program Offices must establish objective and supportable criteria or guidelines for the selection and maintenance of links to external Web pages. The ability to hyperlink to external sources is a fundamental part of the World Wide Web, and can add significant value to the functionality of VA Internet Services.

(2) External links must be reviewed periodically to ensure their continued suitability. If the content of a linked external site becomes questionable, objectionable, or nonexistent, remove the link.

(3) No product endorsements or preferential treatment shall be given on official VA Internet Services. Links to non-government Internet services (i.e., sites with other than .gov and .mil top level domains) should support the organization's mission. When external links to non-government Web sites are included, the head

of the Program Office, or the subordinate organization, is responsible for ensuring that a disclaimer is made that neither the VA nor the organization endorses the product or organization at the destination, nor does the VA exercise any responsibility over the content at the destination. This includes credits given to contractors who produce VA Internet Services.

(4) When a VA Internet Service is intended to serve a public purpose, organizations must realize that once the decision is made to include a link to one non-VA site, the organization may have to link to all similar sites.

(5) No consideration of any kind shall be accepted in exchange for a link placed on an organization's official VA Internet Service Site. Any exception must be approved by the VA Office of General Counsel. Said links must still comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

(6) VA Internet Services should not require or encourage users to choose any specific browser or viewer software. Only text or hyperlinked text shall be used to direct visitors to software download sites. Graphics or logos depicting companies/products shall not appear on VA Internet Services.

(7) Organizations considering the use of "frames" technology to connect to external sites should consult VA legal counsel concerning trademark and copyright issues before establishing such links.

(8) Organizations may link to authorized activities in support of the organization's mission, such as chartered Veterans Services Organizations, affiliated medical centers, and commercial partners under contract or agreement with VA. As the Department has nearly 180,000 commercial suppliers, such links must clearly and completely explain why a particular commercial partner merits this consideration. If these sites contain commercial advertisements or sponsorships, an appropriate disclaimer should be displayed. Questions should be addressed to the VA Office of General Counsel.

d. Disclaimer for External Links.

(1) A disclaimer shall be displayed when linking to external sites. This disclaimer may appear on the page listing external links, as a link to a central disclaimer page, or through an intermediate "exit notice" page generated by the server machine whenever a request is made for any site other than an official VA Web site.

(2) At a minimum, every disclaimer must clearly state that the VA does not endorse the linked-to Web site nor is responsible for any content on the linked-to Web site. An example of a suitable disclaimer:

"The appearance of hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Veterans Affairs of this Web site or the information, products or services contained therein. VA does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations. Such links are provided and are consistent with the stated purpose of this VA Internet Service."

Chapter 3. Best Practices and Design Presentation

1. **World Wide Web Consortium Compliance.** Web pages shall be designed to support the widest range of potential users and computing platforms, therefore, use of non-standard or proprietary Web site elements will not be allowed. All Web pages created in hypertext markup language (HTML) shall conform to the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Specifications and Standards.

2. **Accessibility for Disabled Users.** VA Webmasters should consider how design elements may enhance or defeat easy access to Web content for the disabled. Primarily, this is intended to apply to the blind, visually impaired, and seniors. The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) is developing "Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards." These standards are required by Section 508 of the 1998 Rehabilitation Act Amendments. This document will provide a definition of electronic and information technology, as well as the technical and functional performance criteria necessary for accessibility to such technology by persons with disabilities. Component specific requirements contain information specific to Web-based data or applications, including:

a. A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided by using "alt" (alternative text attribute), or in element content;

b. Web pages shall be designed so that all information required for navigation or meaning is not dependent on the ability to identify specific colors;

c. Changes in the natural language (e.g., English to French) of a document's text and any text equivalents shall be clearly identified;

d. Web pages shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet;

e. Web pages shall update accessible equivalents for inaccessible text whenever the latter changes;

f. Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map;

g. Client-side image maps shall be used whenever possible in place of server-side image maps;

h. Data tables shall provide identification of row and column headers;

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

j. Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation;

k. Pages shall be useable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or are not supported, or shall provide equivalent information on an alternative accessible page;

l. Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation;

m. An appropriate method shall be used to facilitate the easy tracking of page content that provides users of assistive technology the option to skip repetitive navigation links; and

n. In the event that compliance with accessibility rules is impracticable, a Text Only link at the top left-hand corner of the page shall provide the same information in a compliant format. This link would be the first link the visually impaired would encounter in using current assistive technology.

3. **Common Look and Feel (Web Design).** To promote a common look and feel, VA Internet Services should use page layout and graphics determined by the Veteran-Focused Internet Redesign Project Management Steering Committee and endorsed by the EVA Committee. See the document "Using Templates" available at <http://vaww.webdev.med.va.gov/facelift/Resources>, for instructions on how to utilize the templates. Contact your technical support POC or Web Operations in the Silver Spring Office of Information Field Office for guidance and assistance.

a. **Banner.** Generally this is a graphic image which acts as a header for the Web page. Ideally, the banner should be uniform for all Web pages nested within the Program Office home page. Banners should be used with caution because they may lockup a screen reader.

b. **Background.** The use of a common Web page contributes to the continuity of a Web site. Sharing common backgrounds across the Department reinforces the visitor's impression of institutional coherence and unity. A background should be light with dark type; avoid busy backgrounds, such as animated gifs. The preferred page style is addressed in <http://vaww.webdev.med.va.gov/facelift/resources>. Lower level pages should utilize a left hand stripe, using the color assignments that can also be found at the same URL. The background color for all pages is white. (See Appendix D – Background and <http://hubel.sfasu.edu/research/survreslts.html>).

c. **VA Seal.** The official VA Seal will appear on the bottom of the left hand stripe on each Web page and when the seal is selected the user will return to the VA home page to ensure clear identification that this is a VA Internet Service. The official VA Seal is included in the resources available at <http://vaww.webdev.med.va.gov/facelift/Resources>.

d. **Graphics.** Limit use of graphics, and the size of graphics displayed. Consider the use of thumbnails on dedicated image gallery pages. The larger the graphic, the greater use of bandwidth, and the longer it takes to download a Web page. A graphics-heavy page may cause a screen reader to time-out.

e. **Navigation Tools.** Links to help users navigate VA Web sites should be at the bottom for short pages; and at both the top and bottom of longer pages. These links may be in a variety of forms, including buttons, bars, a mapped graphic, or a static frame. Minimum links should include the following sites, linked to the Internet or Intranet as appropriate, using relative links (external links are provided for purposes of illustration):

(1) VA Home Page (<http://www.va.gov>);

(2) Organizational home page (i.e.; VBA home page (<http://www.vba.va.gov/>) or OCA home page (<http://www.va.gov/oca/meg.htm>)).

(3) Providing a link to the Program Office responsible for the initial and on-going validation of posted information for public inquiries is highly recommended;

(4) Link to the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Consumer Service Site for public comments, complaints, and requests for assistance:
<http://www.va.gov/customer/consumer.htm>

(5) Privacy Statement for top level pages or pages that are a point of entry from the Internet Service (<http://www.va.gov/privacy/> or Intranet).

(6) Accessibility Notice. This disclaimer links to <http://www.va.gov/accessible/> or comparable policies appropriate to the particular Internet Service;

(7) Disclaimer of endorsement/liability, where applicable; and

(8) Identify Webmaster point of contact for technical inquiries.

f. **Templates.** To ensure a consistent look and feel for VA's Internet, use templates for the creation of Web pages. Templates are available on <http://vaww.webdev.med.va.gov/facelift/resources/Templates/>.

g. **Style Sheets.** Cascading style sheets must be compatible with HTML Version 4 browsers. Care should be taken to create pages legible with HTML version 3 browsers, which do not recognize style sheets.

h. **Meta Tags.** The use of Meta tags improves the ability of customers and search engines to locate requested information. Recommend minimum use of Meta Tags for subject, description and multiple keywords. Meta tag use for the benefit of visually impaired user population is also addressed at <http://vaww.webdev.med.va.gov/facelift/resources>. Webmasters are encouraged to review this material when setting up Web pages.

i. **Version-Control.** One of the major challenges of a large-scale Web site is managing the content. Multiple persons need access to the same pages and images. Unless tools or other controls are adopted, one person's changes may be overwritten by

another's. Fortunately, new tools are constantly being implemented to meet this challenge. In the absence of appropriate tools, those with broad authority to update directories and files shall notify the owners of a directory or file when changes are made. Normally, non-owners with authority will make such changes upon request by the owner of the directory. In an urgent situation, and if time permits, the owner will be notified in advance of changes to be made; otherwise, notice will be sent immediately after the change is made. Changes should be documented with date, author, and reason for the change.

j. **Scanning Documents.** Scanned documents published on the Web must include the text in the document saved as text data in such a way that screen readers can identify and recite the scanned text. Visual legibility of scanned text does not ensure that scanned text has been captured in the file in a recitative text format, and the addition of this text information requires additional work beyond the optical scanning of the document. This requirement is intended to improve the accessibility of scanned documents to the disabled and to ensure the compliance of these documents with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

k. **Signature Block.** When a document with a signature is saved to .PDF, often the signature block is not accessible to screen readers because the signature block may be incorporated with the handwritten signature as an image. One solution to this problem is to retype the certifying official's name and title at the bottom of the document so it will be accessible to screen readers.

4. **Identification of Points of Contact.** Separate mail-to links for both a technical POC and a subject matter expert is recommended. This allows for full coverage of external and internal inquiries.

Chapter 4. Worst Practices

1. **Non-standard or proprietary Web site elements.** Use of non-standard or proprietary Web site elements will not benefit the widest range of potential users. If such elements are deemed essential, some alternative page or attribute shall provide any needed information using a standards-compliant method.
2. **Links to commercial servers.** Links to commercial servers can appear as an endorsement of a firm's products and services. Such endorsements are generally not appropriate. Any such links will conform to the External Links requirements in VA Handbook 6102, Ch. 2, paragraphs 3c and 3d.
3. **Donated Web space.** Contact VA General Counsel to determine if the organization's enabling legislation allows the acceptance of donations or free services.
4. **Information Links Not Cleared for Public Access/Release.** Do not link to Intranet sites from Internet Web pages. Doing so invites inquiries regarding data or processes that are internal, and/or not cleared for public consumption.
5. **Broken links.** Broken links damage the Department's credibility. Web pages should be checked periodically to verify that links are unbroken. Reports of broken links should be investigated immediately and repaired promptly.
6. **Failure to Identify Points of Contact.** Failure to provide a POC reflects badly on VA, as well as the Program Office posting the page.
7. **Frames.** Incorporation of other organization's Web pages into a frame, may give the erroneous impression that the other Web pages are part of that site. This can lead to misunderstandings and lawsuits. Although intended as navigational aids, frames can also make larger Web sites difficult to navigate and thus more confusing. With some older browsers and/or smaller screens, frames can cut off a portion of the content. Frames may prevent users from moving back to a previous page. Finally, the use of frames may hinder Internet access by the disabled.
8. **Browser Compatibility and Use.** Internet services designed to "operate best" or exclusively on a single browser and display logos attesting to this design element should be avoided. Web pages and software must support at a minimum both Netscape and Microsoft browsers in common usage versions. This ensures the interoperability of applications within the rest of the Department. Development tools should comply with the relevant Internet and World Wide Web Consortium standards, rather than using a single vendor's suite of commercial products. Failure to do so could require the redesign and re-implementation of the entire Web site to permit users of excluded products to visit.

9. Extensive Use of Graphics. Using graphic heavy pages requires heavy bandwidth and is a practice that users should not adopt. Users are increasingly impatient and expect pages to load quickly. Optimize large graphics to reduce their file sizes. Resize graphics manually rather than forcing visitors to download the same large graphic into a space reduced by height and width attributes. Consider a thumbnail gallery to promote image-heavy pages. Bandwidth is precious; do not waste it with large graphics with little content.

Definitions, Acronyms and Abbreviations

1. **Browser.** An application program that provides a means to view and access information on the Internet. Technically, a browser is a client program that uses the medium of Hypertext Transfer Protocol to submit tasks to Web servers connected to the Internet to retrieve requested information.
2. **Cookies.** The information passed between an http server and a browser, and which is stored by the browser.
3. **Broken Link.** A hyperlink to a non-existent or non-operational page or server; also known as a "dead link."
4. **Domain Name Service (DNS).** A meaningful and easy-to-remember "handle" for an Internet address. The DNS is the way that Internet domain names are located and translated into IP (Internet Protocol) addresses.
5. **Firewall.** Dedicated device (hardware and software) placed between the internal and external networks to control access and prevent misuse or abuse.
6. **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).** Title 5 of the United States Code, section 552, was enacted in 1966 and provides that any person has the right to request access to Federal agency records or information.
7. **File Transfer Protocol (FTP).** A protocol which allows a user on one host to access and transfer files to and from another host over a network. FTP is usually the name of the program the user invokes to execute the protocol.
8. **Graphical User Interface (GUI).** A computer program or environment that displays options on the screen as icons, i.e., picture symbols, by which users enter commands by selecting an icon.
9. **Home.** Primary page or starting point reached through the URL. The home page is described as a single document but can contain multiple screens. An organizational home page contains information about a definable organization such as the Department, an agency, or a division of an agency. A personal home page contains information related to an individual employee, such as a scientist who is of interest to the public because of his or her special expertise.
10. **Hyperlink.** A HTML tag which identifies and will direct a browser to another HTML page or another Internet site.

11. **Hypertext Markup Language (HTML).** The language used to create hypertext documents. It is a subset of Standard Generalized Markup Language and includes the mechanisms to establish hyperlinks to other documents. HTML is the standard language used to produce home page documents and links to other documents. Because this is a rapidly evolving technology, some variation exists in the version of HTML available.

12. **Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP).** The protocol used to transfer HTML. See Request for Comment (RFC) 2068, Hypertext Transfer Protocol HTTP/1.1 at: <http://www.isoc.org/ftp/rfc/2000/rfc2068.txt>.

13. **Internet.** A network of information resources which relies on three mechanisms to make these resources readily available to the public: 1) A uniform naming convention for services located on the Web, e.g.; URLs (Uniform Resource Locators); 2) Protocols to access named resources on-line, include but are not limited to File Transfer Protocol (FTP), Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP); and Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP); and 3) Hypertext, which is used to facilitate navigation among available resources, e.g. HTML (HyperText Markup Language).

14. **Intranet.** A network of information resources fully comparable to and interoperable with the Internet, but which is not readily available to the public. Intranet access may be limited to an entire Organization or an Administration/Program Office. Intranet access may be available to individuals or classes of users, across security firewalls.

15. **Internet Service.** A network-based information/service resources operated by a VA entity for the use of internal and/or external users. This includes but is not limited to FTP, HTML, SMTP, Web pages, active server pages, e-mail forums, chat rooms, and list servers.

16. **Official VA Internet Service Web site.** An information resource established and/or maintained by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the purpose of supporting its mission of service to Veterans and their families, for which the Department is solely responsible for the content of the site, and which must comply with VA internal directives.

17. **Page.** A page, in reference to the Web, is an individual computer file that can be addressed by a hypertext link. Documents and collections are constructed of pages. Web pages can also refer to an entire Web site, including all files, graphics, etc.

18. **Point of Contact (POC).** The primary individual or group to whom reports of errors or requests for technical assistance related to an Internet service can be made.

19. **Privacy Act.** Legislation that prohibits (with some exceptions) the release of personal information maintained by the government without the consent of the subject of the material.

20. **Program Office.** Any component instrumentality of the VA organization for which a station number and/or routing symbol exists.

21. **Public Document.** Any document or information not subject to access limitations due to national security classification, the Privacy Act, or the Freedom of Information Act.

22. **Request for Comments (RFC).** A document series, begun in 1969, which describes the Internet suite of protocols and related experiments. Not all (in fact very few) RFCs describe Internet standards, but all Internet standards are written up as RFCs. The RFC series of documents is unusual in that the proposed protocols are forwarded by the Internet research and development community, acting on their own behalf, as opposed to the formally reviewed and standardized protocols that are promoted by international standards organizations (<http://www.rfc-editor.org/>).

23. **Secondary Document.** Additional pages containing the next level of detail and linked to the home page.

24. **Server.** A Web server is a computer program that serves HTML files requested by a browser. The Server provides access to one or more collections of documents using Web formats and protocols. Each Web server has a main entry point or home page, although numerous files or pages are usually directly addressable. VA uses three types of Internet servers:

a. Development servers are used as platforms to develop and review Web pages before releasing them to the public;

b. Staging servers are used by the Technical Support Office to house files for review and scanning before moving them to the production server; and

c. Production servers contain the current files accessed by VA's Web sites.

25. **Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP).** A protocol used to transfer electronic mail between computers. It is specified in RFC 821, with extensions specified in many other RFCs. It is a server-to-server protocol, so other protocols are used to access the messages.

26. **Technical Support.** Individuals who are responsible for providing technical support to VA Program Offices.

27. **Thumbnail.** This is a miniature version of a larger graphic. The typical size of these pictures is often in the range of 40 by 60 pixels. These pictures are placed

within documents to provide the user with a small version of the image, and to reduce the load time of a Web page. Usually the picture is also an anchor to another page that has the expanded graphic.

28. **Unofficial VA Internet Service Web Site.** An information resource which may have been initially posted by a VA employee/entity, but which is not located on the va.gov domain.

29. **Web (or The Web).** A term used to apply indiscriminately to the Internet/Intranet environment of services.

30. **Web Author.** A person responsible for developing and maintaining the content of one or more Web pages. This person may also share Webmaster functions.

31. **Web Clients.** Software applications, typically browsers, that access information that is distributed over the Internet.

32. **Web Page.** An individual computer file developed in accordance with HTML Web format standard, which can be addressed by a hypertext link. Documents and collections are constructed of linked pages. Web page can also refer to an entire Web site, including all files, graphics, etc.

33. **Webmaster.** An Internet Service administrator who possesses the skills, knowledge and ability to work alone, or with a consortium of IT professionals, to design, publish, and maintain Web sites that provide a variety of information services to the public. May also have primary responsibility for the server. By convention, each Web server maintains a Webmaster e-mail address (e.g., webmaster@domain.name.va.gov) to which suggestions and inquiries about the site may be directed.

34. **Web site.** A collection of HTML-compliant electronic files designed to provide information, services or goods to users through a TCP/IP network.

35. **World Wide Web (WWW).** A hypertext-based client/server application that guides the user to the linked collection of information that is accessible through common browsing software. Pages may be either publicly accessible (Internet) or have a limited audience unavailable to the general public (Intranet). Often referred to simply as the Web.

Approved Warning Notices

Warning notices are required for all VA Internet and Intranet Services and systems to help protect those systems and to aid in investigating/prosecuting misuse or unauthorized use of those systems. These warning notices are in addition to any privacy or other notices on your Web site. The boxes/bordering around the warning notices in this Appendix are not required and are only used here to block off each warning notice.

The following warning notices are required for all VA Internet/Intranet Services as applicable. The content of these notices has been approved by the U.S. Department of Justice, Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section (CCIPS). Thus, the warning notices will satisfy the requirements of NIST Special Publication 800-18, sections 6.MA.2 (p. 42) and 6.GSS.2 (p. 63). You may use your own warning notice only if your warning notice has been approved by USDoJ-CCIPS (approval by VA legal counsel is not sufficient).

1. Warning Notice for public Internet presence. Must appear either somewhere on each major entry point Web page or on a single Web page that is linked to. At a minimum, the warning notice must be linked to from every Web page that is not an online publication (for example, an electronic version of a printed published report).

[warning notice pending approval by DoJ-CCIPS]

2. Warning Notice for Intranet or Extranet (non-public) presence. Must appear either somewhere on each major entry point Web page or on a single Web page that is linked to. At a minimum, the notice must be linked to from every Web page that is not an online publication (an electronic version of a printed published report).

[Notice pending approval by DoJ-CCIPS]

3. Application Warning Notice – a Web page restricted to those authorized/allowed to conduct e-commerce with VA. This would include a Web page for online benefit applications, online job applications, or online contract proposal bidding. This notice must appear either at the top of the Web page or immediately next to (below) the application, form, entry field, or other submittal part within the Web page.

[Notice pending approval by DoJ-CCIPS]

4. Access control Warning Notice - access to a site/directory restricted to certain authorized VA staff (or other authorized individuals). This would include a Web page for online portals to VA computer resources (such as HRLINK\$ or other VA systems), online benefit applications, online job applications, or online contract proposal bidding. This notice must appear either at the top of the Web page or immediately next to (below) the application, form, entry field, or other submittal part within the Web page.

[Notice pending approval by DoJ-CCIPS]

**INFORMATION MANAGEMENT POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT CONTENT AND QUALITY OF
DATA/INFORMATION AND TRANSACTIONS PROVIDED ON THE INTERNET
AND INTRANET OR VIA ANY OTHER ELECTRONIC MEANS**

Content

- Information should be veteran-centered, understandable, accurate and consistent.
- Basic background information (e.g., aggregate program/benefit cost, outcomes, population, programs/facilities) on agencies and programs should be on the Internet and updated frequently.
- Information needed by and provided to Congress and not otherwise protected should be posted on the Internet and/or an Extranet portal if an Extranet site is established. If the information is protected and to be provided only to a specific committee or member of Congress, the information should be available through means (e.g. compact or floppy disk) other than the Internet.
- Information needed by and provided to VSOs should be posted on the Internet so long as it does not identify an individual.
- Frequently requested information by the public should be posted on the Internet and updated frequently. FOIA information required to be available for public inspection (final opinions made in the adjudication of cases; statements of policy that have been adopted by the agency; administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that affect a member of the public; and records that have been frequently requested under FOIA) should be on the Internet.
- Public documents, including regulations (proposed for public comment and final) and approved policies for the public should be posted on the Internet.
- Critical information for the agency or audience should be highlighted as such for as long as the information is critical.
- Information on accessing programs and facilities/offices should be listed, including Web addresses, toll-free phone numbers, postal addresses, and e-mail addresses.
- Web pages should be organized to maximize user value and ease of navigation.
- Search functions should be provided through www.FirstGov.gov, however, additional search capability will be required.

Transactions:

- Public comment for regulations should be allowed through electronic transactions.
- Online applications for programs, unless not feasible or valuable for the veteran or key stakeholder, should be encouraged.
- Requests for information or forms should be allowed through electronic transactions.
- Freedom of information requests should be allowed through electronic requests.
- Surveys should be allowed through electronic submission when appropriate.
- Electronic input to program development efforts by the relevant organizations or individuals should be encouraged.
- Electronic access by the veteran to their records should be allowed and encouraged when appropriate and subject to privacy and security considerations.
- A change of address from a veteran/beneficiary/patient should be allowed through an electronic transaction to the extent appropriate and as long as there is verification that the veteran is making the change.

- Education and prevention programs should be encouraged through electronic transactions.
- Support services provided electronically to veterans in homes/workplaces should be encouraged.
- Electronic commerce between VA and its customers and suppliers should be encouraged.

Using Background Colors

1. Ensure that foreground and background color combinations provide sufficient contrast when viewed by someone having color deficits or when viewed on a black and white screen. Use these Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) properties to specify colors:

(a) 'color', for foreground text color;

(b) 'background-color', for background colors;

(c) 'border-color', 'outline-color' for border colors; and

(d) for link colors, refer to the: link: visited, and: active pseudo-classes.

2. Ensure that information is not conveyed through color alone. For example, when asking for input from users, do not write, "Please select an item from those listed in green." Instead, ensure that information is available through other style effects (e.g., a font effect) and through context (e.g., comprehensive text links).

3. To test whether a document still works without colors, examine it with a monochrome monitor or browser colors turned off. Also, try setting up a color scheme in a browser that only uses black, white, and the four browser-safe greys.

4. To test whether color contrast is sufficient to be read by people with color deficiencies or by those with low-resolution monitors, print pages on a black and white printer (with backgrounds and colors appearing in grayscale). Also try taking the printout and copying it for two or three generations to see how it degrades. This will show where to add redundant cues (example: hyperlinks are usually underlined on Web pages), or whether the cues are too small or indistinct to hold up well.

5. Resources: Lighthouse at <http://www.lighthouse.org/>

**Quality Design Tips
(Jakob Nielsen's Alertbox).**

The following design tips are taken from Jakob Nielsen's Alertbox at <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/991003.html>:

a. Place the Program Office name and logo on every page and make the logo a link to the home page (except on the home page itself, where the logo should not be a link). Never have links that point right back to the current page;

b. Provide search if the site has more than 100 pages;

c. Write straightforward and simple headlines and page titles that clearly explain what the page is about and will make sense when read out-of-context in a search engine results listing;

d. Structure the page to facilitate scanning and help users ignore large chunks of the page in a single glance: for example, use grouping and subheadings to break a long list into several smaller units;

e. Instead of including everything about a product or topic into a single, infinite page, use hypertext to structure the content space into a starting page that provides an overview and several secondary pages that each focus on a specific topic. The goal is to allow users to avoid wasting time on those subtopics that do not concern them;

f. Use photos, but avoid cluttering pages with lots of photos. Instead have a small photo on each of the individual pages and link the photo to one or more bigger ones that show as much detail as users need. The primary page must be fast and should be limited to thumbnail shots;

g. Use relevance-enhanced image reduction when preparing small photos and images. Instead of simply resizing the original image to a tiny and unreadable thumbnail, zoom in on the most relevant detail and use a combination of cropping and resizing.

h. Use a link title to provide users with a preview of where each link will take them, before they have clicked on it;

i. Ensure that all pages are accessible for users with disabilities and the visually-impaired users;

j. Do the same as everybody else: if the most widely used Web sites do something in a certain way, then follow along since users will expect things to work the same on the site. Remember Jakob's Law of the Web User Experience: users spend most of their time on other sites, so that is where they form their expectations for how the Web works; and

k. Finally, always test the design with real users as a reality check. People do things in odd and unexpected ways, so even the most carefully planned project will learn from usability testing.

Reference Guidance

1. **Legislative References.** These are public laws, U.S.C. citations, internal VA memoranda, and external memoranda, circulars, and information resources commonly referenced by the IT community with regard to the Internet. Hyperlinks to these materials are provided for informational use only. Please consult with the Office of General Counsel for an interpretation of the original documents.

a. Section 508 of the revised Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires electronic and IT developed, procured, maintained and used by the Federal government be accessible to people with disabilities: <http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/508index.htm>.

b. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). 42 U.S.C. 12101.

(1) Public Law 101-336: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d101:SN00933;|TOM:/bss/d101query.html>; and

(2) §504 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): <http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/508index.htm>.

c. Computer Security Act of 1987, PL100-235. <http://cio.doe.gov/ucsp/CSA.HTM>. Other VA security references: VA Directive 6210 and accompanying handbook; VA Directive 6001, and VA Security Instructions on Account and Password Management.

d. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which can be found in Title 5 of the U. S. C., section 552, was enacted in 1966 and provides that any person has the right to request access to federal agency records or information.

(1) DOJ: <http://www.usdoj.gov/04foia/>; and

(2) DOJ Reference Guide:
<http://www.usdoj.gov/04foia/referenceguidemay99.htm>.

e. Government Information Locator Service (GILS).

(1) VA Directive 6360. Dissemination of Government-Held Information. July 3, 1996. <http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/irm/6360dir.htm>; and

(2) Information Resource Management (IRM) Directives:
<http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/irm.htm>.

f. OMB Bulletin 95-01. Office of Management and Budget Bulletin 95-01, Establishment of Government Information Locator Service. December 7, 1994.

(1) OMB: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/bulletins/95-01.html>; and

(2) GILS: http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/gils/gils.html.

g. Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. PL 103-62.

Related OMB Site: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/mgmt-gpra/index.html>.

h. Internet Access. Memo from the Assistant Secretary for Management - June 20, 1995: <http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/irm/inetmemo.htm>.

i. OMB Memorandum 99-18, Privacy Policies on Federal Web Sites - June 2, 1999.

(1) OMB: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/memoranda/m99-18.html>;

(2) OMB Guidance: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/memoranda/m99-18attach.html>; and

(3) CIO: <http://www.cio.gov/docs/webprivl.htm>.

j. Paperwork Reduction Act. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. 5 USC Chapter 35. PL 104-13.

(1) PL 104-13. http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=104_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ13.104;

(2) OMB Memorandum on Implementation the Information Dissemination Provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. September 29, 1995. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg/>; and

(3) OMB Circular A-130. Management of Federal Information Resources. February 8, 1996. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a130/a130.html>.

k. Privacy Act. The Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, 5 USC §552a.

(1) DOJ: <http://www.usdoj.gov/04foia/privstat.htm>;

(2) Also, see VA Privacy Policy: <http://www.va.gov/privacy/>;

(3) VA Handbook 6300.4, Procedures for Processing Requests for Records Subject to the Privacy Act, January 12, 1998, <http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/irm/63004hb.html>; and

(4) VA Handbook 6300.5, Procedures for Establishing and Managing Privacy Act Systems of Records, January 12, 1998,
<http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/irm/63005hb.html>.

11. Technical References. These are Webmaster resources, such as on-line tutorials, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), dictionaries, primers for beginner and experienced Webmasters to obtain information, quick tips, and instruction on technical matters, e.g.; HTML, Java/script, design tips, and other external resources. Hyperlinks to these materials are provided on the recommendation of VA IT professionals who have found them useful. Their presence does not indicate VA endorsement of these sites or services.

a. References on Accessibility Issues -
<http://vaww.va.gov/server/AccessiblePages.htm>.

b. Miscellaneous references for developers -
http://vaww.va.gov/med/computer/web_author_assist/index.cfm.