USWDS maturity assessment worksheet

This draft worksheet is a work in progress.

It's meant to help you assess and understand your as-is state, what you're doing well, and how you can better use the U.S. Web Design System [USWDS] to improve the public's experience of your websites and digital services.

The worksheet is meant to help your team understand and improve your design system maturity. It's meant to help your team solve problems, not stress you out. Over the next few months, we will be working on the format of the maturity assessment, our user-centered process for updating it, and how we'll release updates to the community.

If something on this worksheet doesn't make sense or feels like it's leading your team in the wrong direction, please let us know. File an issue at github.com/uswds/uswds or send USWDS an email at uswds@support.digitalgov.gov.

GSA **United States Web Design System**
A product of the U.S. General Services Administration

Design principles maturity

Introducing design principles

USWDS design principles give teams and stakeholders a shared point of reference when negotiating next steps. These design principles should help teams evaluate work, generate ideas, and even say "no" to otherwise interesting proposals.

There are five USWDS design principles:

Start with real user needs
Earn trust
Embrace accessibility
Promote continuity
Listen

At first glance, these principles can seem ambiguous and inscrutable. It is true that these design principles are intentionally broad and subject to interpretation. While each has real specificity — as you will learn as you become familiar with them — it is intentional that each principle has enough flexibility to meet teams where they are, and allow teams to develop what each principle means for themselves, their workflow, and their product.

For example, many of the actions that a team at the National Institute of Standards and Technology might do to ensure they're earning trust will differ from a team at Bureau of Indian Affairs. Both agencies have different missions that apply to different audiences, yet when they apply common methods for understanding what an audience needs most, and use that information to make decisions focused on earning trust, both agencies increase the likelihood of improving their audience's experience.

The purpose of the following exercises is to help teams better understand USWDS design principles so they can be a more useful and effective tool. The better all of us can integrate these principles into our process, the more we'll share a common understanding of how we're all working, across government, to improve and support the experience of the people who use our digital products and services.

Design principles are the first and most important stage of design system maturity because they help us understand *why* we're making a decision. They not only provide a framework for making decisions, but also for making the case for each decision, for ourselves and our stakeholders.

One way of looking at maturity

The table at the bottom of the next page is one way of describing different levels of maturity, based on how comprehensively you demonstrate principles. It's a rough way of mapping a quantitative measure onto a qualitative analysis. The actual number has no intrinsic value.

More important are the behaviors and descriptions. The design principles describe dynamic patterns of behavior. The following activities can help you and your team understand these behaviors, how to demonstrate them, and what actions you can take to help them influence your decision making.

Activity 1: Understanding

1. Read over the design principles with your team.

2. Independently, each team member should write down an explanation of each principle in their own words.

3. Anonymously collect the descriptions and read and discuss them as a group. Where are there consistencies? Where are there differences?

Activity 2: Topics and skills

1. Read over the design principles with your team.

2. Look at the **Related topics** associated with each principle and think about which of them might apply to your project.

3. Read the **Key Considerations** and **Practical Actions**. Ask your team how you might answer the questions, and if you perform any of the actions.

4. Brainstorm other topics or skills related to your understanding of the principle.

5. Make a list of the skills you have on your team, and a list of the skills you might need.

	Skills and tools	Operations and workflow	Product
	How do your team's skillsets and resources demonstrate each principle?	How do your process and decision-making demonstrate each principle?	How does your output demonstrate each principle?
	Start with real user needs	**Start with real user needs**	**Start with real user needs**
	Earn trust	**Earn trust**	**Earn trust**
	Embrace accessibility	**Embrace accessibility**	**Embrace accessibility**
	Promote continuity	**Promote continuity**	**Promote continuity**
	Listen	**Listen**	**Listen**

Activity 3: Indicators of maturity

1. As a team, look at each principle's **Key considerations** and **Practical actions**.

2. For each **Key consideration**, ask:
   Do we understand the question?
   Is this relevant to our team?
   Can we answer the question?
   Who would we have to ask to answer it?

3. For each **Practical action**, ask:
   Is this relevant to our team?
   If not, why not?
   Do we perform this action?
   What skills would we need to do this?
   Who could we ask for help?

Activity 4: Decision analysis

1. Read over the design principles with your team.

2. Note which ones resonate most with your team and why.

3. List out the decisions you've recently made and actions you and your team are already doing that fall under one or more of the design principles.

Activity 5: Product analysis

1. List out all of the recent contributions (content and functionality) your team has made to your product in the last 3 months.

2. For each contribution, note the actions you took that directly apply to one or more of the design principles.

3. Make a list of actions you and your team can start doing to incorporate one or more of the design principles into your decision making process.

Activity 6: Assessment

1. Use the results from previous activities and the maturity chart on the following page to assess your principle maturity in three ways:

   How do your team's **skills and tools** (i.e. skillsets and resources) demonstrate each principle?

   How do your **operations and workflow** (i.e. process and decision-making) demonstrate each principle?

   How does your **product** (i.e. output) demonstrate each principle?

Maturity	Level	Behavior	Description
0	**Beginner**	**Rarely** demonstrates or is unsure	**Unpredictable.** Doesn't understand or integrate principle.
1	**Learner**	**Occasionally** demonstrates	**Reactive.** Learning about the principle.
2	**Builder**	**Often** demonstrates	**Proactive.** Understands principle and can identify areas for improvement.
3	**Integrator**	**Always** demonstrates	**Operationalized.** Effectively integrates principle into decision making and outcomes.
4	**Leader**	**Always** demonstrates *and* innovates	**Innovative.** Demonstrates leadership. Able to teach, experiment, and innovate

Start with real user needs

Real user needs should inform product decisions.

Whether our audience includes members of the public or government employees, decision-makers must include real people in our design process from the beginning.

Then, we need to test the assumptions we make and the products and services we build with real people, to keep us focused on what is most useful and important.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/design-principles/

Related topics

Agile

Collaborative design

Direct observation

Minimum viable product

Outreach

Paperwork Reduction Act

Personas

Prototyping

Research

Research methods

Testing

User centered design

User journeys

User stories

Validation

Key considerations (9)

Does your product or service have access to the resources necessary to perform research?

Who is your primary audience?

What user needs will this product or service address?

Do you use personas or other audience segment analysis techniques to connect your solutions to different segments of your audience?

How often are you testing with real people?

Which people will have the most difficulty with the product or service?

Which research methods were used?

What were the key findings?

How and where were the findings documented?

Practical actions (5)

Start early. Early in the project, spend time with current and prospective users to better understand their perspective and the context of the problem.

Use a range of methods. Use a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods (such as 18F Methods) to determine people's goals, needs, and behaviors.

Use prototypes. Use prototypes to test your assumptions and solutions with real people, in the field if possible.

Share your findings. Document and share your research findings with team members, managers, and the public, when practical.

Test regularly. As the product is being built, regularly test it with potential users to ensure it meets people's needs

Earn trust

Trust has to be earned every time. Federal websites and digital services can't assume it.

Trust is about understanding and meeting or exceeding expectations, a process that can be established quickly and maintained over continued interactions, but is easily damaged.

Be reliable, consistent, and honest. Reduce the impact of failure with solid design and engineering.

Be a good steward of your audience's data, resources, and time.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/design-principles/

Related topics

Compliance

Consistency

Continuous integration

Fail safe engineering

Open source code

Plain language

Privacy

Redundancy

Research

Security

Testing

Key considerations (13)

Do users understand that this is a government site or service?

What are the public's expectations of your product?

What private or sensitive data do you ask your users to provide?

What are you doing to keep that data private?

Does your product utilize redundancy to minimize the effect of server failure or traffic spikes?

Does your product use continuous integration testing to prevent unintended regressions?

Can users to edit or undo actions or edit data they've added to the system?

How often do you check that your service works as intended?

What components are made available to the public as open source?

How quickly do you respond to bug reports?

Is your content written in clear, easy-to-follow plain language?

Do you provide meaningful access to people with limited English proficiency?

What components are made available to the public as open source?

Practical actions (12)

Identify yourself. Clearly identify your site as a federal government site.

Build with modern best practices. See the Digital Services Playbook.

Review your content. Review your content at least twice per year to assure information is correct and non-redundant.

Use the proper government domain. Use a .gov top-level domain and https with up-to-date certificates.

Add the USWDS banner component. This shows your site is an official government website and explain the benefits of secure connections.

Identify link rot. Find and fix broken links on your website.

Keep communications simple. Ensure content is easy, personal, and timely.

Write for the web. Expect users to skim and scan.

Properly manage data and records. Reach out to your agency's records officer and privacy official. Consult with them to ensure you are properly managing data and records (see play #11, Manage security and privacy through reusable processes, in the Digital Services Playbook).

Understand expectations. Understand what your audience expects of your service, and validate the success of your service with real users.

Publish open code and data. When appropriate, publish source code and datasets of projects or components online.

Work in the open. When appropriate, share your development process and progress publicly.

Embrace accessibility

Accessibility affects everybody, build it into every decision.

Legal requirements are a critical, necessary starting point, but this is only the beginning.

Accessibility is about real people who use our services — it's usability for people who interact with products differently.

Everyone who works on government websites has a role to play in making federal resources accessible and inclusive.

Design generously and celebrate accessibility requirements as a set of design constraints that help us create a better product for all users.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/design-principles/

Related topics

Compliance

Continuous integration

Diversity

Empathy

Inclusive design

Outreach

Section 508

Testing

Visual design

Key considerations (12)

Can users navigate your site using only the keyboard?

Can users use a screen reader to access the page content?

Can users quickly understand the main points of your content?

Can users easily interpret content associated with graphic elements?

Can users easily understand and complete key tasks?

Are you testing your service with a broad range of users?

Do you know your agency accessibility team?

Is your site organized such that everyone can navigate it easily?

Are you using accessibility testing tools?

Are you using accessibility testing tools?

Did your accessibility testing tools provide accurate results?

Are you providing content in languages other than English, as appropriate for the audience?

Practical actions (12)

Humanize accessibility. Seek out examples of the real life impact of accessible products and services. Try to make accessibility less abstract and more personal.

Use agency resources. Reach out to your agency's accessibility team and build a relationship with them.

Learn about assistive technology. Get familiar with the basic ways people use assistive technology and how people with disabilities use the web.

Follow existing standards. Conform to the Revised 508 Standards and WCAG 2.0.

Work from existing resources. Consult Section508.gov, Accessibility for Teams, and the 18F Accessibility Guide.

Design generously. Adopt an inclusive design mentality.

Develop accessible code. Ensure front-end code is written accessibly and conducts manual and automated testing.

Write accessible content. Ensure content is written in plain language and headings, images, and links are accurately labeled.

Build accessible designs. Ensure that designs are accessible, pages are laid out in a logical order, and content meets color contrast requirements.

Test broadly. Test with a broad range of users and abilities throughout the design and development process, including manual accessibility testing against the Trusted Tester and ICT Testing Baseline.

Be responsive. Remediate accessibility issues when you discover them.

Use contracts. Use the Accessibility Requirements Tool to incorporate accessibility requirements into your contracts.

Promote continuity

Minimize disruption and provide a consistent experience: throughout services, over time, and across agencies, platforms, and devices.

Consistency is not necessarily conformity.

Agencies, sites, and services may have different audiences, missions, and goals — and the way we implement our solutions may differ — but we promote continuity by starting from shared solutions and values. These design principles are one set of shared values, and the design language of the U.S. Web Design System is another.

Strive to build user-centered solutions that address the whole experience, not just a user's specific task, but the context of their journey.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/design-principles/

Related topics

Collaboration

Consistency

Contextual analysis

Design systems

Efficiency

Mobile friendliness

Reusability

Service design

Style guides

User journeys

Key considerations (14)

Do you know if your audience understands that your product is a government site or service?

Do you know if your audience understands the purpose of each page or section?

Is it always clear what users are expected to do next?

Does your agency have established style guidance?

Have you tried and tested shared solutions before developing your own?

Have you considered your service in the context of customer or user journeys?

Have you identified your highest-impact customer or user journeys? Within these journeys, have you identified specific opportunities at which to collect feedback?

Have you considered your service in the broader context of a service ecosystem?

Can you reach across agencies and silos to collaborate and share solutions?

Does your site or service have a consistent experience on any device or browser?

Do users have equivalent access to your information and services on any device?

What factors outside the scope of your product or service affect its success?

What other government products or services are related to the success of your product or service?

Are you able to coordinate solutions with other projects that share a similar audience?

Practical actions (10)

Identify as a government site. Clearly and consistently identify as a government site on every page.

Use a style guide. Use a simple and flexible style guide for content and style throughout a product or service. Know if existing guides already exist in your agency before developing something new.

Connect related services with a similar style. Use the style guide consistently for related digital services.

Support a wide range of devices and platforms. Support a wide range of devices for a mobile-friendly experience.

Test on real devices. Test your site on the actual mobile devices as often as possible.

Move or remove content with care. Provide proper notice and forwarding when content is moved or removed.

Clarify multi-step processes. Give users clear information about where they are in each step of a process.

Support multi-session processes. Provide users with a way to exit and return later to complete a process.

Support re-use of saved data. Assure that repeat website visitors, who have logged in, can auto-populate forms with saved information.

Find a community. Participate in cross-government communities of practice.

Listen

Evaluate and improve your product by listening to your audience and learning from what you hear.

Continuous feedback drives continuous improvement.

Measure customer experience — how well what we've built is working for our audience — at every stage of a project, and as projects grow and mature.

Listen to what people say and observe how they interact with our products or services, whether through direct observation or through analytics data.

If we're not listening, we're not learning.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/design-principles/

Related topics

Agile

Audience engagement

Communication

Continuous improvement

Customer experience

Data

Feedback

Metrics

Outreach

Key considerations (13)

Does your product or service have access to people with design, development, and research skills?

What are the key metrics your service uses to measure success?

How are your success metrics tied to positive customer or user outcomes?

How have these metrics performed over the life of the service?

Do you have system monitoring tools and processes in place to identify and respond to issues?

Which tools are in place to measure user behavior, and how do you use them?

Do you measure customer satisfaction and take steps to improve satisfaction?

Do you assess your customer experience maturity and develop action plans to identify focus areas for improvement?

How are you collecting user feedback for bugs and other product issues?

Do all members of the project team participate in user interviews and research activities?

Do you cultivate direct community participation in your project with activities like hackathons?

How often are you reviewing and addressing feedback and analytics?

Do you contribute feedback to services your project uses?

Practical actions (11)

Humanize accessibility. Seek out examples of the real life impact of accessible products and services. Try to make accessibility less abstract and more personal.

Use agency resources. Reach out to your agency's accessibility team and build a relationship with them.

Learn about assistive technology. Get familiar with the basic ways people use assistive technology and how people with disabilities use the web.

Follow existing standards. Conform to the Revised 508 Standards and WCAG 2.0.

Work from existing resources. Consult Section508.gov, Accessibility for Teams, and the 18F Accessibility Guide.

Design generously. Adopt an inclusive design mentality.

Develop accessible code. Ensure front-end code is written accessibly and conducts manual and automated testing.

Write accessible content. Ensure content is written in plain language and headings, images, and links are accurately labeled.

Build accessible designs. Ensure that designs are accessible, pages are laid out in a logical order, and content meets color contrast requirements.

Test broadly. Test with a broad range of users and abilities throughout the design and development process, including manual accessibility testing against the Trusted Tester and ICT Testing Baseline.

Be responsive. Remediate accessibility issues when you discover them.

Guidance and code assessment

Looking at the source code

It can be relatively straightforward to assess the guidance and code stages of USWDS maturity, as long as your team has some familiarity with your project's source code: its stylesheets and markup.

If nobody on your team has access to the source code, or doesn't know how to read it, try reaching out to others in your organization. It's better to be proactive and understand your present state as well as possible than wait until a data call, or other deadline that's impossible to hit.

How current is this worksheet?

This worksheet includes all the component usability guidance on the USWDS website as of the date on the front of the worksheet (January 22, 2020).

As the design system publishes new guidance, updates old guidance, or adds new components and guidance, we will publish an updated version of the worksheet. It's rare that component guidance changes radically, but changes do happen.

We'll update the changelog at the end of this worksheet as we make these updates, so teams can know what has changed and when. Try to use the most current version of the worksheet available when you start any maturity assessment.

Activity 1: Guidance

This worksheet includes all the component usability guidance on the USWDS website.

1. Use the worksheet to identify components that your product uses.

2. Check to see if each of your components that have USWDS equivalents follows the items in the component's **usability** and **accessibility** guidance sections.

3. Add any instances where the component does not follow the guidance to an action plan.

Occasionally, but infrequently, USWDS guidance may be in conflict with your organization's internal style guide (for instance, sentence-case capitalization). Don't stress. Make a note of it and consider asking both your team and the USWDS team about it. USWDS wants to know when its guidance is in direct conflict with existing prior guidance.

Activity 2: Code

For each component included in this worksheet, you'll want to know if the component is styled using our common language of design tokens and if it uses the USWDS default component markup.

So for each site component that has a USWDS equivalent:

1. Is the source Sass written with USWDS **color tokens** like **color("red-50")**?

2. Is the source Sass written with USWDS **spacing tokens** like **units(2)**?

3. Is the source Sass written with USWDS **type tokens** like **font-size("sans","sm")**?

4. Does the component use the default **usa**-prefixed classes in its markup?

Accordion

An accordion is a list of headers that hide or reveal additional content when selected.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/accordion/

Usability guidance

Make the entire header selectable.

Give interactive elements enough space.

Accessibility guidance

Code header areas in the accordion as buttons.

Use aria-expanded on buttons to express an accordion's default state.

Use unique ids.

The accordion uses javascript to set the aria-hidden value of its content area.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

Address form

Enter a standard U.S. mailing or shipping address.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/form-templates/

Usability guidance

Don't call out required fields.

Avoid dropdowns.

Support both five-and nine-digit ZIP codes.

Accessibility guidance

Follow form controls guidance.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

See also

Form controls

Alert

An alert keeps users informed of important and sometimes time-sensitive changes.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/alert/

Usability guidance

Consider next steps.

Be polite.

Use alerts are as an opportunity to educate the user.

Don't overdo it.

Allow a user to dismiss a notification wherever appropriate.

Understand the user's context.

Accessibility guidance

Use the proper ARIA role.

Don't visually hide alert messages and then make them visible when they are needed.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

Guidance total (6)	Code total (4)

Guidance total (4)	Code total (4)

Guidance total (8)	Code total (4)

Banner

The banner identifies your site as an official website of the United States government and helps visitors understand how to tell that it is official.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/banner/

Usability guidance

Show the banner on every site page.

Don't use more than one.

Keep the text up-to-date.

Use the proper TLD.

Avoid distraction.

Accessibility guidance

Use `aria-label` to give the banner a useful name.

The banner's accordion uses javascript to set the `aria-hidden` value of its content area. Don't set `aria-hidden="true"` on `usa-banner__content`.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

Button

Use buttons to draw attention to important actions.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/button/

Usability guidance

Give an important action a distinctive style.

Make sure buttons look clickable.

Avoid using too many buttons on a page.

Use sentence case for button labels.

Keep button text short.

Lead with a verb.

Use icons when necessary.

Accessibility guidance

Buttons should display a visible focus state when users tab to them.

Use standard markup.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

Button groups

Use button groups to collect similar or related actions

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/button-groups/

Default button group

Usability guidance (Default)

Avoid burden of choice.

Segmented button group

Usability guidance (Default)

Avoid ambiguity of current state.

Accessibility guidance

Use `aria-label` to give the buttons a useful name.

Use the `<button>` element.

All button groups

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

Card

Cards contain content and actions about a single subject.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/card/

Usability guidance

Make cards actionable.

Don't use the card component only for decoration.

Include non-redundant content.

Make sure images are properly sized.

Use simple styling.

Accessibility guidance

Use unordered lists and list items.

Use the appropriate heading level for your page.

Use CSS to order the media element.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

Character count

Character count helps users know how much text they can enter when there is a limit on the number of characters.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/form-controls/

Accessibility guidance

Associate the character count message to the input.

Use the `aria-live` attribute on character count message.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

See also

Form controls
Text input

Checkbox

Checkboxes allow users to select one or more options from a visible list.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/form-controls/

Usability guidance

Make the label selectable.

List options vertically.

Use positive statements.

Use adequate touch targets.

Accessibility guidance

Follow form controls guidance.

Use a `fieldset` and `legend` for a checkbox group.

Use semantic ids.

The `title` attribute can replace `<label>`.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

See also

Form controls

Guidance total (8)   **Code total (4)**   **Guidance total (2)**   **Code total (4)**   **Guidance total (8)**   **Code total (4)**

Combo box

CA combo box helps users select an item from a large list of options.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/form-controls/

Usability guidance

Use option strings familiar to users.

Make sure to test.

Avoid dependent options.

Use a good default.

Avoid auto-submission.

Accessibility guidance

Customize accessibly.

Always use a label.

Avoid auto-submission.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

See also

Form controls
Text input

Date input

Three text fields are the easiest way for users to enter most dates.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/form-controls/

Usability guidance

Label each field.

Avoid dropdowns.

Accessibility guidance

Follow text input guidance.

Don't auto-advance focus.

Use "text" instead of "number" inputs.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

See also

Form controls
Text input

Dropdown

Dropdowns allow users to select one option from a temporary modal menu.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/form-controls/

Usability guidance

Make sure to test.

Avoid dependent options.

Use a good default.

Avoid auto-submission.

Accessibility guidance

Follow form controls guidance.

Always use a label.

Avoid auto-submission.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

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See also

Form controls

Guidance total (8)   **Code total (4)**

Guidance total (5)   **Code total (4)**

Guidance total (7)   **Code total (4)**

Footer

A footer serves site visitors who arrive at the bottom of a page without finding what they want.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/footer/

Usability guidance

Curate your footer.

The footer doesn't need to mirror the header.

Include newsletter signup.

Avoid stale social media accounts.

Limit contact information to email and phone.

Accessibility guidance

Use tab focus.

Use accessible accordions.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

Form controls

Form controls allow users to enter information into a page.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/form-controls/

Accessibility guidance

Customize accessibly.

Don't control element order with CSS.

Align validation with inputs.

Use proper markup.

Use legends.

Embed multiple fieldsets and legends for more complex forms.

Use simple vertical layouts.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

See also

Text input	Radio buttons
Checkbox	Range slider
Date input	Validation
Dropdown	

Header

A header helps users identify where they are and provide a quick, organized way to reach the main sections of a website.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/header/

Usability guidance

List all important website sections as links in the horizontal navigation.

Dropdown menus help preview lower-level content.

Use short, clear link labels.

Left-justify link labels.

Present links in priority order.

Avoid org structure navigation.

Highlight the current section.

Always research your navigation.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

Guidance total (7)   **Code total (4)**

Guidance total (7)   **Code total (4)**

Guidance total (16)   **Code total (4)**

Layout grid

Use a flexible grid system to structure website content.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/utilities/layout-grid/

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

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Built with native component

Links

Links connect users to a different page or further information.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/typography/

Accessibility guidance

Users should be able to tab to navigate between links.

Users should be able to activate a link when pressing 'Enter' on their keyboard.

Users should be able to identify links without relying on color alone.

Users should be able to activate hover and focus states with both a mouse and a keyboard.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

See also

Typography

Accessibility guidance

Include skip navigation links.

Include tab focus for all top-level navigation items.

Ensure your horizontal navigation is keyboard compatible.

Avoid using hover to expand dropdown lists.

Use only one `role="navigation"` for the main nav of a page

Use lists for your nav links.

If you're using a logo that's an image rather than text, make sure you include alternative text for screen readers.

If you're using a logo that's text, use an `em`, not an `h1`, unless it's the homepage.

Guidance total (n/a)   Code total (4)

Guidance total (4)   Code total (4)

Lists

Lists organize information into discrete sequential sections.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/typography/

Usability guidance

Use sentence case and begin lists with a capital letter.

Use punctuation appropriate to the text.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

See also

Typography

Name form

Form controls allow users to enter information into a page.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/form-templates/

Usability guidance

Avoid dropdowns.

Don't restrict characters.

Accessibility guidance

Follow form controls guidance.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

See also

Form controls

Password reset form

Reset a password.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/form-templates/

Usability guidance

Allow users to reset passwords.

Be clear about password requirements.

Accessibility guidance

Follow form controls guidance.

Give adequate advance notice before automatic sign-out.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

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Built with native component

See also

Form controls

Guidance total (2)   **Code total (4)**

Guidance total (3)   **Code total (4)**

Guidance total (4)   **Code total (4)**

Radio buttons

Radio buttons allow users to see all available choices and select exactly one.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/form-controls/

Usability guidance

Use the label as a target.

List items vertically.

Use adequate spacing.

Set default values with caution.

Accessibility guidance

Follow form controls guidance.

Use `fieldset` and `legend`.

Use proper labels and attributes.

The `title` attribute can replace `<label>`.

Project code

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See also

Form controls

Range slider

The range slider allows users to choose an approximate number from a range.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/form-controls/

Usability guidance

Highlight the control when selected.

The control must be draggable.

Label the limits of the range.

Don't be too granular.

Accessibility guidance

Follow form controls guidance.

Project code

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See also

Form controls

Search

Search allows users to search for specific content.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/search/

Usability guidance

Make the input at least 27 characters wide.

The magnifying glass icon is effective.

Search terms should persist into search results.

Use a full search box on the home page.

Don't offer advanced search as the default.

Use a label even if it's visually hidden.

The search button should be a submit button.

Accessibility guidance

Follow form controls guidance.

Include the word "Search" in the button.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

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Built with native component

See also

Form controls

Guidance total (8) **Code total (4)**

Guidance total (5) **Code total (4)**

Guidance total (9) **Code total (4)**

Side navigation

Hierarchical, vertical navigation to place at the side of a page.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/sidenav/

Usability guidance

Show the current page.

Keep the navigation links short.

Always test your navigation.

Accessibility guidance

Ensure the side navigational system is keyboard accessible.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

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Sign-in form

Sign a user in to a website or application.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/form-templates/

Usability guidance

Less is more.

Allow email addresses to sign in.

Consider keeping users signed in.

Make it easy to retrieve forgotten sign-in info.

Toggle password masking.

Accessibility guidance

Follow form controls guidance.

Give adequate advance notice before automatic sign-out.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

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Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

See also

Form controls

Table

A table shows tabular data in columns and rows.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/table/

Usability guidance

Keep it simple. Use minimal visual styling to help surface tabular data more easily.

Accessibility guidance

Simple tables can have two levels of headers.

Complex tables are tables with more than two levels of headers. Each header should be given a unique `id` and each data cell should have a headers attribute with each related header cell's `id` listed.

When adding a title to a table, include it in a `<caption>` tag inside of the `<table>` element.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

Guidance total (4)   **Code total (4)**

Guidance total (7)   **Code total (4)**

Guidance total (4)   **Code total (4)**

Tag

A tag draws attention to new or categorized content elements.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/tag/

Usability guidance

Users frequently confuse tags as buttons. Conduct usability testing to make sure your particular implementation is not causing frustration.

If your tags aren't interactive, disable hover, focus, and active styles.

Don't mix interactive and static tags.

Don't overdo it. If everything on a page is called out as important, nothing commands unique attention.

Accessibility guidance

Use ARIA live regions to highlight dynamically loaded content.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

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Built with native component

Text input

Text inputs allow users to enter any combination of letters, numbers, or symbols. Text input boxes can span single or multiple lines.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/form-controls/

Usability guidance

Use fields appropriate to the length of the input.

Consider the mobile context.

Wait to validate.

Avoid placeholder text.

Accessibility guidance

Avoid splitting numbers.

Project code

Built with USWDS color tokens

Built with USWDS spacing tokens

Built with USWDS type tokens

Built with native component

See also

Form controls

Guidance total (5)   **Code total (4)**   **Guidance total (5)**   **Code total (4)**

Typography

Government websites need clear and consistent headings, highly legible body paragraphs, clear labels, and easy-to-use input fields.

https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/typography/

Size and alignment guidance

Use a comfortable reading size for body text.

Set running text flush left.

Measure (line length) guidance

Most lines of text should be 45-90 characters.

Text with greater line height can have a longer measure.

Short passages can have measure outside the ideal range.

Large text can have a shorter measure.

Measure (line length) guidance

Whitespace guidance

Don't indent paragraphs, use whitespace before.

Use at least 1em of whitespace between paragraphs.

Use at least 0.5em of whitespace between list items.

Headings should be closer to the text they introduce than the text that precedes them.

Text should have sufficient margin on the left and right.

Font style guidance

Serif faces can be a good choice for long texts.

Neutral faces can be a good choice for interfaces.

Avoid long sections of italic or bold text.

Avoid long sections of uppercase text.

Line height guidance

Longer lines usually require more line height.

Readable text has a medium density.

Letterspacing guidance

Very small text can use looser letterspacing.

Very large text can use tighter letterspacing.

Text set in uppercase or small caps should use looser letterspacing.

Project code

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Built with native component

Guidance total (21)   **Code total (4)**

Action plan

	Priority	Due date	Completed

Finding

What this means

What we'll do

How we'll do it

Action plan

	Priority	Due date	Completed

Finding

What this means

What we'll do

How we'll do it

Action plan

	Priority	Due date	Completed

Finding

What this means

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How we'll do it

Action plan

	Priority	Due date	Completed

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What this means

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How we'll do it

Action plan

	Priority	Due date	Completed

Finding

What this means

What we'll do

How we'll do it

Changelog

v0.1   **March 31, 2020**
- First publication

v0.2   **May 18, 2020**
- Added Button groups component
- Added Card component
- Added Character count component
- Added Combo box component
- Updated Date input guidance