

www.ga.gov
Heuristic Review



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Executive Summary

Introduction

Purpose and Scope of this Heuristic Review

The purpose of this document is to:

- **Rate the Current State of www.georgia.gov**
- **Highlight and Assess Significant Experience Differentiators** (Both Positive and Negative)
- **Make Recommendations For Leapfrogging the Competition** such that we enhance the visitor experience of the Georgia.gov website to:
 - **Showcase Georgia.gov and its breadth and depth of offerings**
 - **Create a viral and [possibly] sticky experience** that reflects and builds on the strengths of the state Brand

Summary of Opportunities & Considerations

Analyzing a range of experience offerings from Georgia.gov and other state Web sites helps us identify key opportunities and considerations for advancing Georgia's site as a:

- Valuable online resource to state citizens and visitors
- Best-in-class online destination
- Source of state pride

Based on research-driven best practices and international design standards, we indentify several common areas of Web design components. To support our findings, we've analyzed the following seven categories of site design:

- Navigation
- Organization
- Taxonomy
- Content
- Features and Functionality
- Calls to Action

- Look and Feel

Method of evaluation

To minimize subjectivity of findings, we've subdivided the above categories into unique questions on which we measure criteria for evaluation. Next, we've provided a point-by-point rating system for each sub-category question based on the following 4-point scale (in which an arbitrary baseline of 80% is the norm):

0. **Never**
(typical responses may include: "No," "Less than 20% of the time," "*Only* as an Exception," or "Absolutely Without Regard")
1. **Less Than Consistently**
(typical responses may include: "Probably Not" or "20-to-74% of the time")
2. **Consistently**
(typical responses may include: "More often than not," "Probably," "75-90% of the time" or "Acceptably Average")
3. **Always**
(typical responses may include: "Yes," "More than 90% of the time," "Without [*or Nearly Without*] Exception," or "Above Reproach")

1. Navigation

If a visitor is unable to successfully navigate a website, they may give up before they find what they seek. We evaluate to ensure there are no closed roads or detours to slow a visitor's progress or prevent a visitor from accomplishing important tasks.

In respect to Web navigation, visitors assess a site (both consciously and subconsciously) based on their perception of its hierarchical offerings and values. The navigation tells the visitor whether they're likely to find (and find value in) information that the site promises to present.

The conscious assessments are often derived from desires and expectations:

"I'm specifically looking for X and I **expect** this site to provide that information."

The sub-conscious assessments are often more subjective:

"I'm looking for X and this site *appears* to offer that information."

Assessment Principles

If a visitor can't understand the rationale of a site's navigation, he's more likely to abandon before finding what he's looking for. It's important that each navigational structure offer the visitor – at minimum – the following information:

- 1.1 Navigation as an experiential compass
- 1.2 A specific and unique purpose for each navigational structure
- 1.3 An “apples-to-apples” format to titles within the structure
- 1.4 A logical sequence to the titles within that navigation structure
- 1.5 Enough information to ensure the visitor locates items as he (and the site) wishes to reach – NO MORE, NO LESS
- 1.6 Visitor's On-Site Location
- 1.7 Navigation Benchmarks
- 1.8 Navigation Recommendations

Consider the practices of outlining and card sorting. In a literary outline strategy, the goal is to develop new contexts such that you're arranging them based on similarities of purpose. Next, each route is designed to complete a unique – but similarly structured – thought within the overall story: “apples to apples.”

Literary Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Main Point
 - a. Sub Point
 - b. Sub Point
- III. Main Point
 - a. Sub Point
 - b. Sub Point
- IV. Conclusion

As a reverse exercise, card sorting allows us to take pre-developed contexts and sort them into appropriate “buckets” of similar contexts. Next, the buckets themselves are defined so that the visitor can quickly determine the content of the bucket by its title.

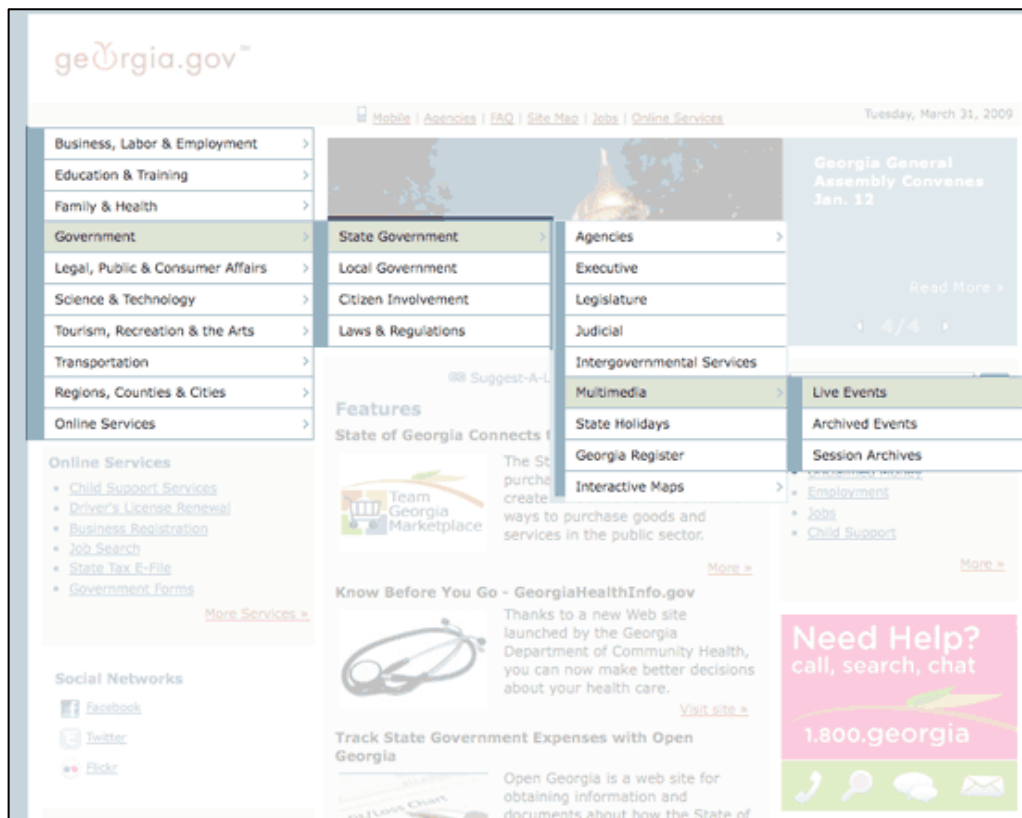
Card Sorting

1. Persons
 - a. Person a
 - b. Person b
 - c. Person c
2. Places
 - a. Place 1
 - b. Place 2
 - c. Place 3
3. Things
 - a. Item red

- b. Item blue
- c. Item orange

1.1 Navigation as an Experiential Compass

(Does the navigation support/enhance the theme and visual design of the site and its Brand?)



The main navigation suggests that the Georgia.gov site is going to require a deep and thought-through dive.

1.2 Navigational Clarity and Sense of Purpose

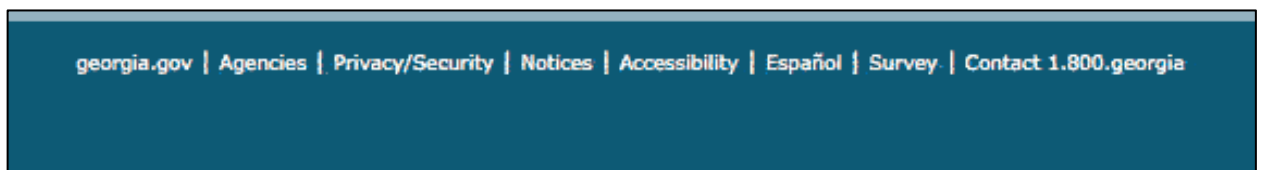
(Does the navigation properly dissect the desired “site story”?)

Business, Labor & Employment	>
Education & Training	>
Family & Health	>
Government	>
Legal, Public & Consumer Affairs	>
Science & Technology	>
Tourism, Recreation & the Arts	>
Transportation	>
Regions, Counties & Cities	>
Online Services	>

Site is organized [primarily] alphabetically using headings similar to those found in a library card catalog. However, this format is not consistently maintained – leading the visitor to mentally trip over items that are not alphabetical or begin with a arbitrary verb (such as “Doing Business with Georgia”).

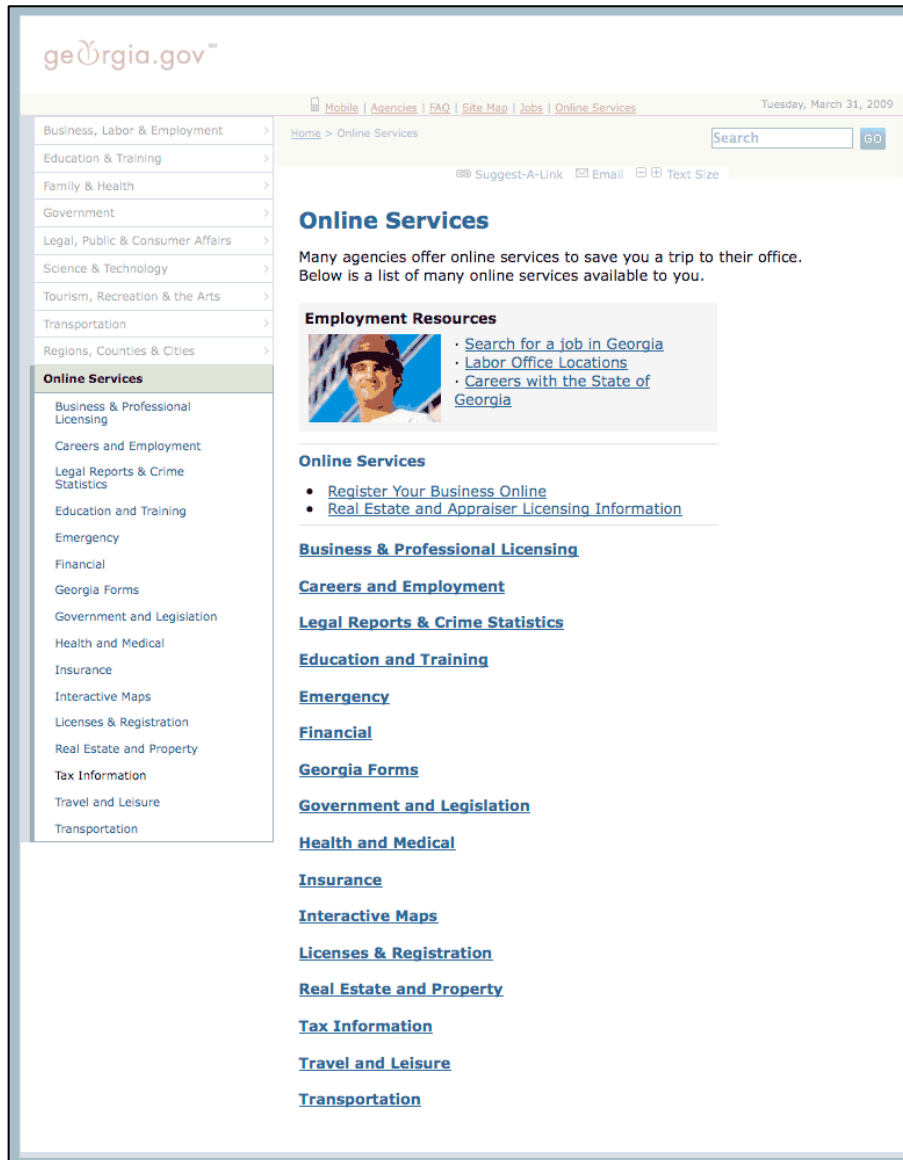


Utility Navigation.



Footer Navigation.

Auxiliary Navigations (utility navigation, footer) are poorly defined and include a mix of unrelated components.



Many pages merely repeat the navigational entries. This diminishes the chance for the visitor to logically locate pages (and in-page sections) that display additional content.

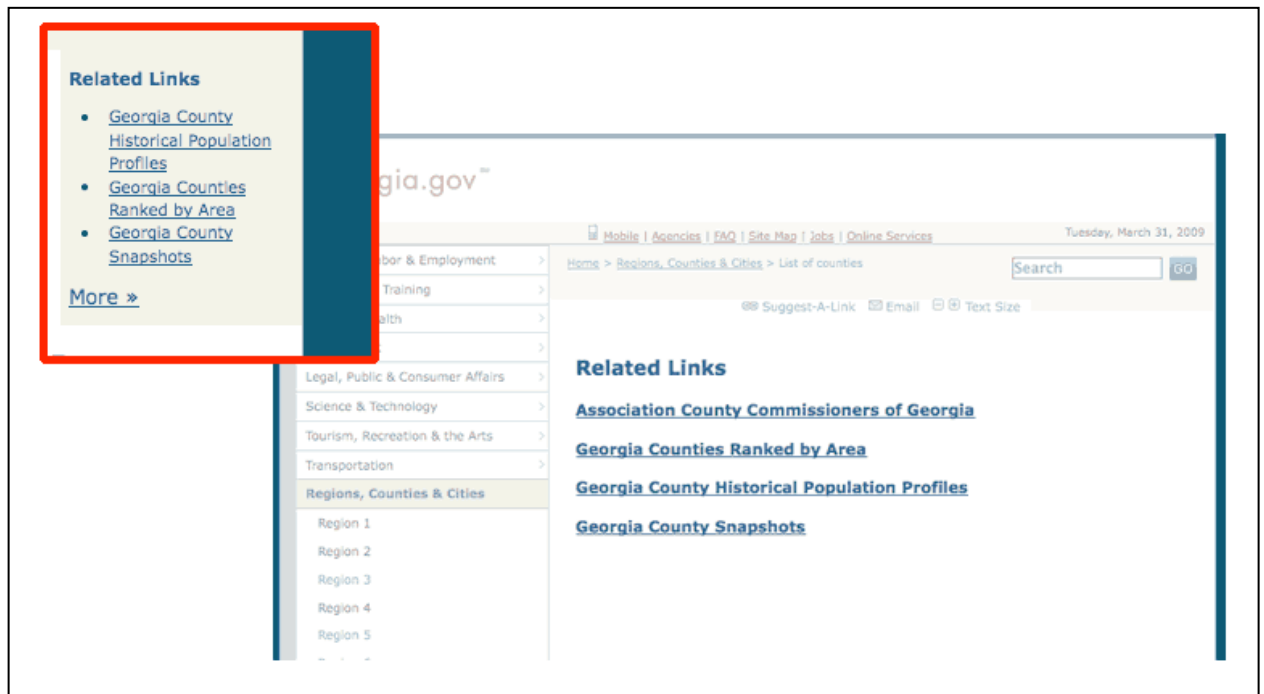
1.3 An “apples-to-apples” comparison among titles within the structure

(Do all items in the navigation match in contextual convention?)

Most site navigation titles lead to and offer similar page types and formats. However, some items seem out of place in their assigned “bucket”. Examples:

- Footer > Survey
- Utility Navigation > Jobs

- *Regions, Counties, Cities > Weather*



Some navigation units don't display all available page options. Others use a "more" link when they don't include another (or include only one additional) selection.

1.4 A Logical Sequence to the Titles on the Navigation Structure

(Is it easy for a typical visitor to locate the right item from among the selections?)

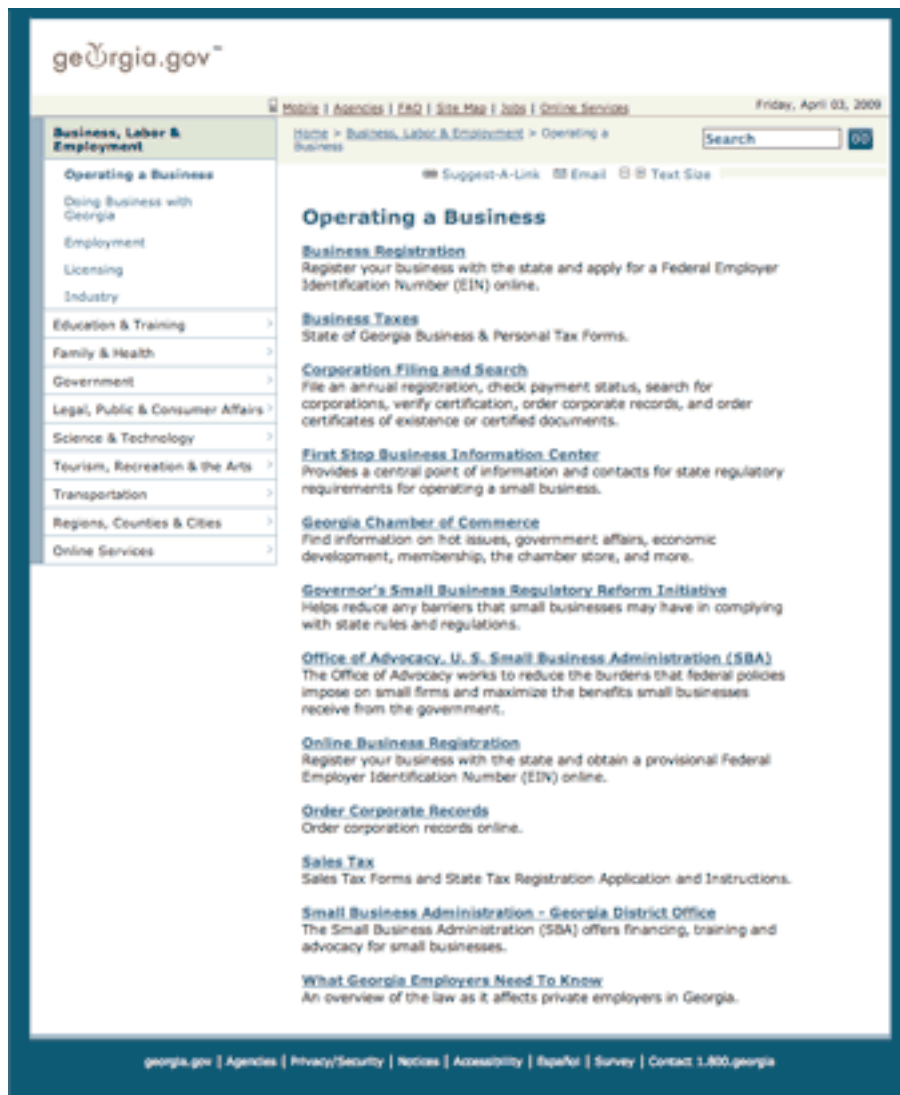
At the sibling levels, most items appear to be easy to locate. At the parent/child level, however, there are areas that may prove problematic for typical users. Examples:

- *Business, Labor & Employment > Industry > Economic Development*
- *Legal, Public & Consumer Affairs > Home & Environment Safety*
- *Regions, Counties & Cities > Weather > Get Smog Alerts*

1.5 Enough Information to Ensure the Visitor Finds Those Items that the Site Wishes Them to Reach – NO MORE, NO LESS.

(Does each page of the site offer the proper level of "scent"?)

Several pages (especially those that contain many annotated links) would benefit from an opening summary statement defining the page contexts.

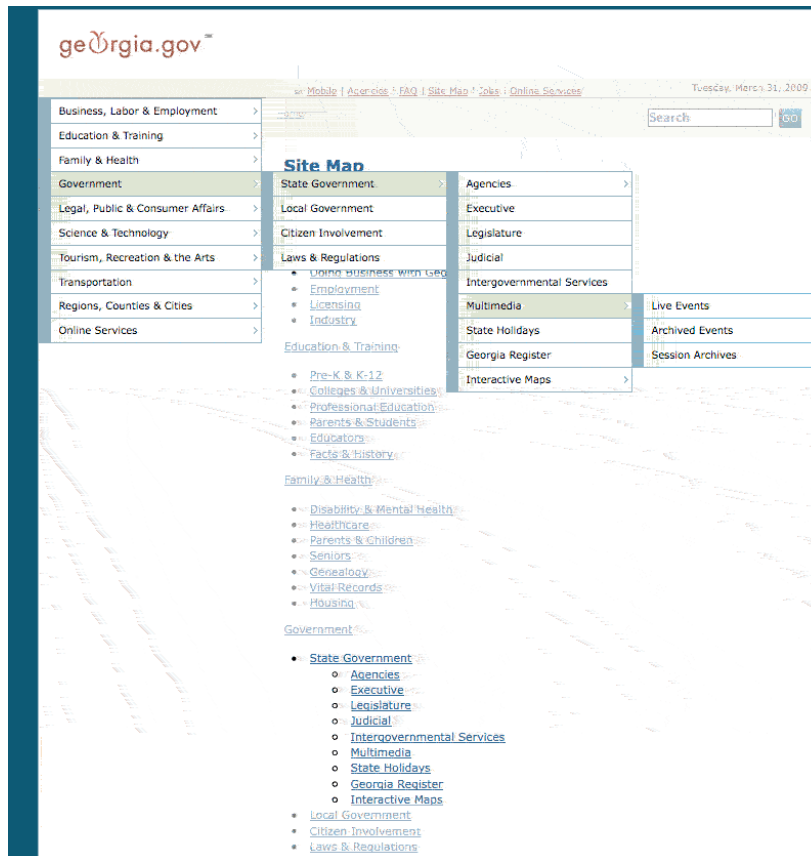


Conversely, the on-page annotations that accompany each link item often contain long paragraphs of information that are not easily scannable.

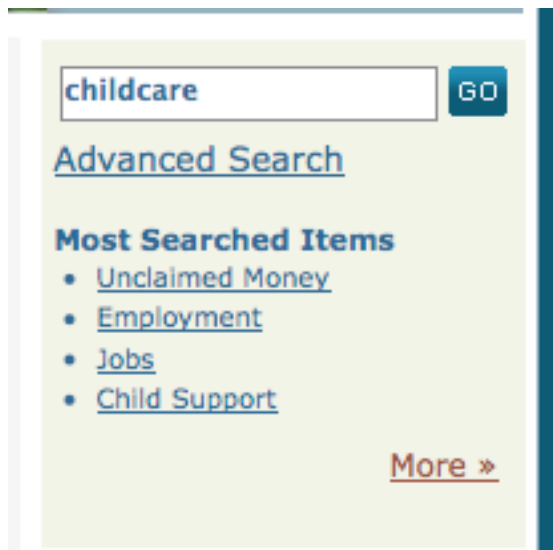


The screenshot shows the Georgia.gov homepage. The header includes the logo and navigation links. The left sidebar lists various government departments, with 'Regions, Counties & Cities' highlighted. The main content area displays 'Related Links' including the Association County Commissioners of Georgia, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Municipal Association, and National Weather Service. A search bar and utility links like 'Suggest-A-Link' and 'Email' are also present.

The annotations on some pages are inconsistent in length.



Site map is incomplete and makes poor use of available space. Example: Multimedia section of site map does not illustrate the 4th level entries.



Search items don't appear in same location on inner page as placement on the home page. "Most Searched Items" appears to be a little presumptuous in its value. A more useful

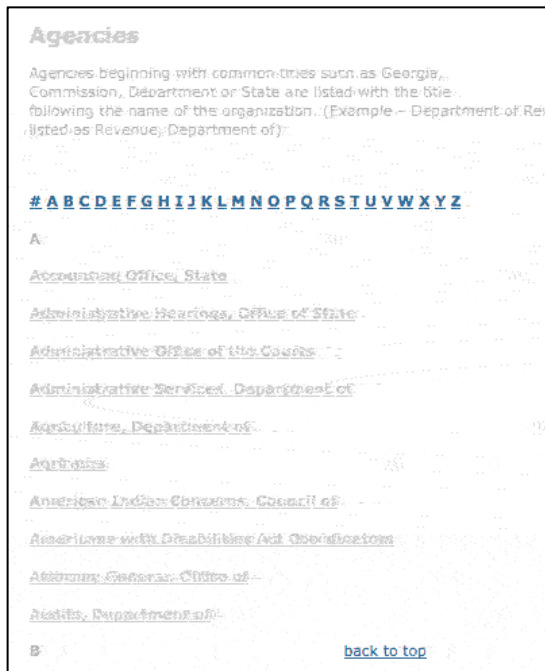
version appears on the *utah.gov* site: auto-completing and filtering possible matches as the visitor types in their desired keywords.

1.6 Visitor's On-Site Location

(Is "Bread crumbing" or similar location-orientation device adequately and appropriately displayed?)



Because it only duplicates the contextual cues provided in the main navigation, the site's breadcrumb navigation adds unnecessary content onto the page and takes precious real estate.



Anchors and "back to top" links are well used where available. Some pages could benefit from adding or revising these features to be more effectively used.

1.7 Navigation Benchmarks

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 -----
Never Sometimes Consistently Always

Site	Benchmark	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	Overall (18)
1	www.georgia.gov	3	1	1	1	2	2	10 avg. 1.66

1.8 Navigation Recommendations

- Make sure that “site utilities” (ie, those items that assist in the visitor’s site experience) such as weather, mobile, “suggest-a-link,” and search are relegated to one, logical auxiliary navigation.
- Only include the “about-this-site” items in the footer (Espanol and Survey should be relocated to the “site utilities” navigation).
- If Georgia.gov wishes to follow an alphabetical format of topics, stick to it 100%. Hint: items that you suspect are of less value and wish to move to the bottom of the navigation are probably in the wrong navigational element/hierarchy altogether.
- Make sure all navigations and pages match in content-type and title.
- Remove the breadcrumb feature. It adds no discernable value.
- Improve the visual differentiation of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th level navigation selections.
- Rethink the underlined link format within home page and other link-heavy pages. Pages that are awash in blue, underlined text cause the visitor to glaze.

2. Organization

A well-organized site:

- Leads the visitor to a desired state, transaction or call to action
- Provides the visitor a clear understating of the steps required to accomplish a desired action
- *Appropriately* arranges additional elements that the site wants to introduce to the visitor
- Excludes unnecessary screen clutter that inhibits the visitor from achieving their (or the company’s) desired interaction

- Follows a contextual and visual consistency such that each like-subjected page is set up and delivered in the same format.

Assessment Principles

Beyond the navigation, does the site (as a whole) have a complete and well-structured purpose that supports or elevates the Brand?

- 2.1 Consistent Use of Templates
- 2.2 Intuitive Order/Sequence of Selections
- 2.3 In-Page Copy
- 2.4 Organizational Labels and Signposts

2.1 Consistent use of Template Principles

(Does the site organize the on-screen elements and stages in a harmonious fashion?)

Even once a visitor “buys in” to the experience of an exciting or challenging story treatment, they make decisions based on rational understandings they’ve learned through the current (or previous) processes of manipulation. The successful site design uses templates that support the purpose of the site, the site’s brand, and the intended mindset of its visitors.



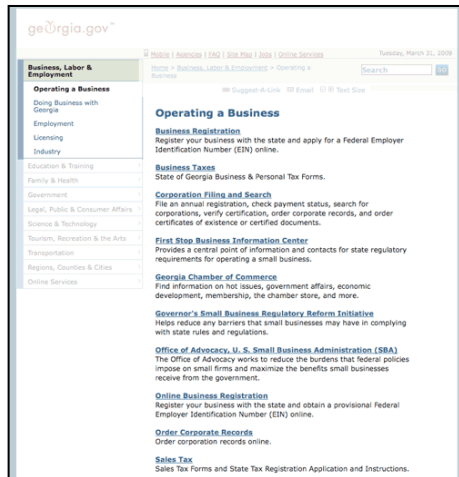
Homepage is overwhelming and cluttered.

There is a jarring difference between the format of the home page and all the interior pages.

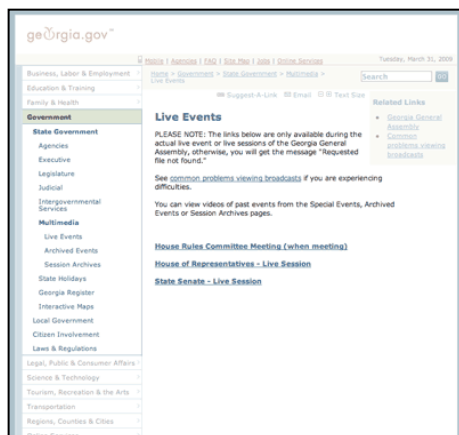
- The home page is overwhelming in the amount of selections (most at the same or too-similar font sizes).
- The interior pages (at all levels) appear bland and too similar in formats. The effect is that the visitor is continuing down a seemingly endless path.



Second level page.



Third level page.

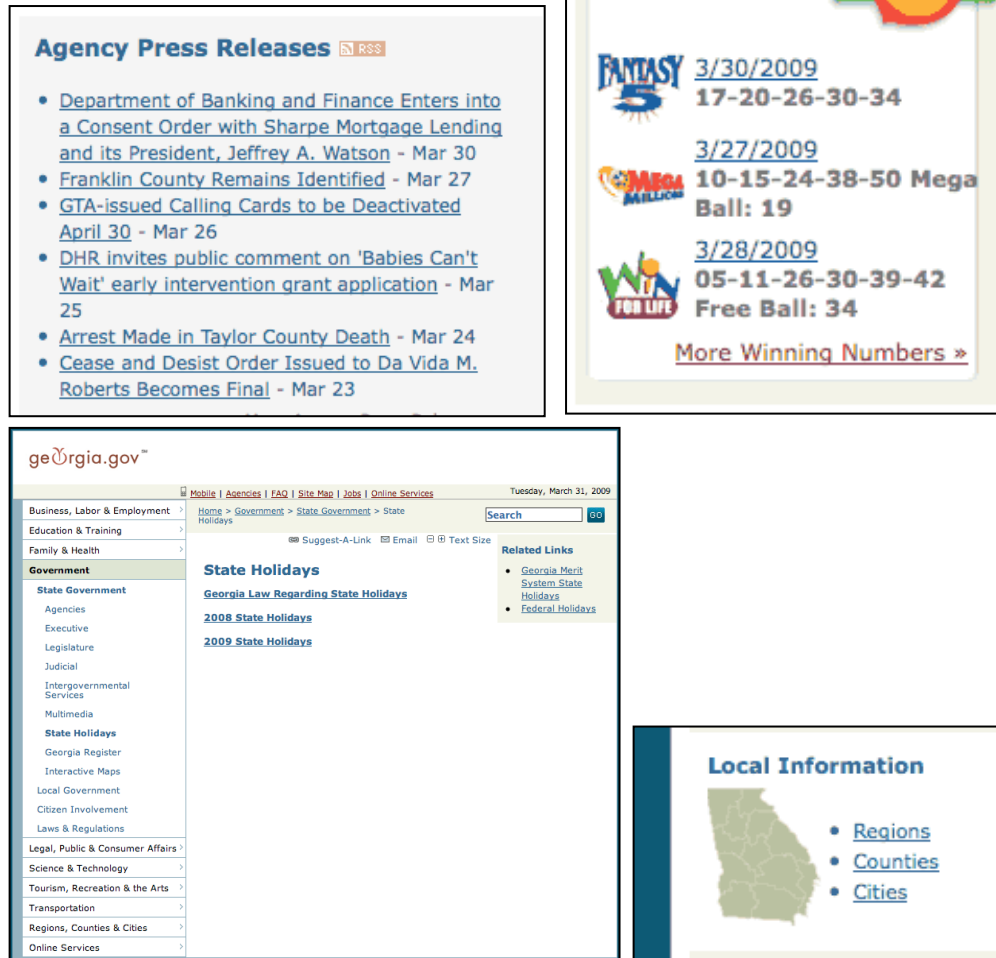


Fourth level page.

2.2 Intuitive Order/Sequence of Selections

(Does the template organization support a desire for consistent treatments and stages?)

The screens and treatments that build the experience should not depart from an established theme unless there's a rational explanation that the visitor supports or understands.



Some elements contain dates or selections that don't appear to be in a logical order.

2.3 In-Page Copy

(Does the body copy support a consistent treatment of headings and content structures?)

Within and among sections, the format of the primary body copy (headings, sentence structures, page lengths, in-copy placement of call outs and call to action) should suggest organizational structure that maps to a cadent appropriate to the subject matter.

 Related Links Weather Alerts Georgia911.org National Weather Services National Hurricane Center Regional Radar Loop Get Smog Alerts Local Information	Agency Press Releases  Department of Banking and Finance Enters into a Consent Order with Sharpe Mortgage Lending and its President, Jeffrey A. Watson - Mar 30 Franklin County Remains Identified - Mar 27 GTA-issued Calling Cards to be Deactivated April 30 - Mar 26 DHR invites public comment on 'Babies Can't Wait' early intervention grant application - Mar 25 Arrest Made in Taylor County Death - Mar 24 Cease and Desist Order Issued to Da Vida M. Roberts Becomes Final - Mar 23
Employment Resources  Search for a job in Georgia Labor Office Locations Careers with the State of Georgia	

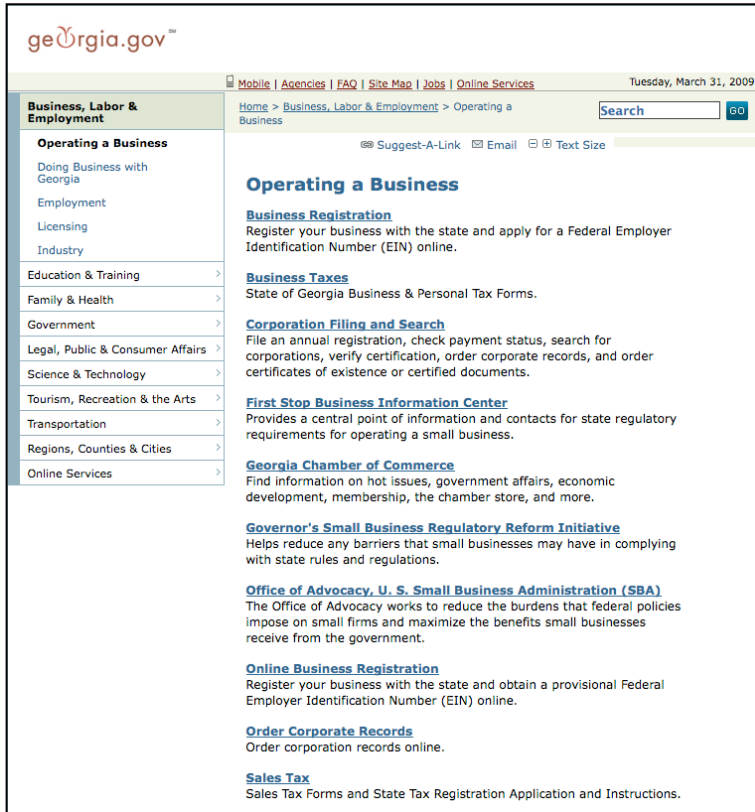
Especially on the home page, there are several elements that seem to have been thrown in as afterthoughts. The result is that these items use "one-off" functional designs that confuse the visitor or introduce unusual link formats and structures.

2.4 Organizational Labels and Signposts

(Are all titles, headings, and copy blocks properly and consistently positioned?)

Business, Labor & Employment	>
Education & Training	>
Family & Health	>
Government	>
Legal, Public & Consumer Affairs	
Consumer Protection	
Courts & Corrections Services	
Emergency Services	
Energy	
Home & Environment Safety	
Law Enforcement	
Military	
Relocate to Georgia	
Georgia Snapshot	
Lifestyle	
Business and Labor	
Education	
Health	
Recreation	
Transportation	
Newcomer Information	
History and Culture	
Press and Media	
Victim's Assistance	
Science & Technology	>
Tourism, Recreation & the Arts	>
Transportation	>
Regions, Counties & Cities	>
Online Services	>

Navigation elements could be more clearly distinguished.



georgia.gov™

Mobile | Agencies | FAQ | Site Map | Jobs | Online Services Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Home > Business, Labor & Employment > Operating a Business

Search GO

Suggest-A-Link Email Text Size

Operating a Business

Business Registration
Register your business with the state and apply for a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) online.

Business Taxes
State of Georgia Business & Personal Tax Forms.

Corporation Filing and Search
File an annual registration, check payment status, search for corporations, verify certification, order corporate records, and order certificates of existence or certified documents.

First Stop Business Information Center
Provides a central point of information and contacts for state regulatory requirements for operating a small business.

Georgia Chamber of Commerce
Find information on hot issues, government affairs, economic development, membership, the chamber store, and more.

Governor's Small Business Regulatory Reform Initiative
Helps reduce any barriers that small businesses may have in complying with state rules and regulations.

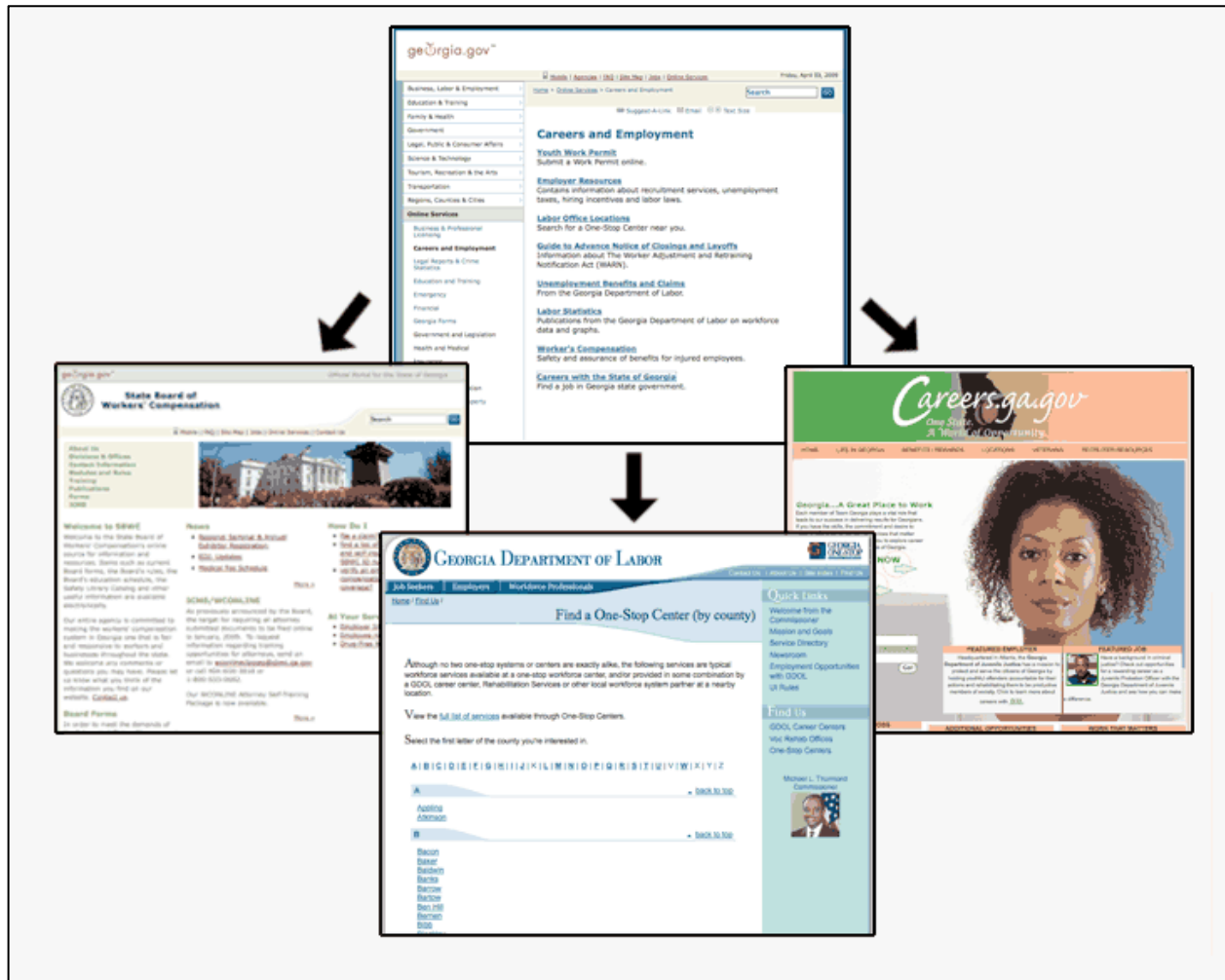
Office of Advocacy, U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
The Office of Advocacy works to reduce the burdens that federal policies impose on small firms and maximize the benefits small businesses receive from the government.

Online Business Registration
Register your business with the state and obtain a provisional Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) online.

Order Corporate Records
Order corporation records online.

Sales Tax
Sales Tax Forms and State Tax Registration Application and Instructions.

Body copy headings and type sizes are clearly regimented throughout the site.



Because so much of the site is a portal to other sites' contents, it would be beneficial if there were a type of visual cue to help alert the visitor.

2.5 Organization Benchmarks

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 -----
Never Sometimes More Consistently Always

Site	Benchmark	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	Overall (12)
1	www.georgia.gov	2	1	3	1	7 avg. 1.75

2.6 Organization Recommendations

- Organize the lists so that they are valuable to the visitors (not solely for ease of administrative management).
- Add visual cues to help the visitors realize when they're about to leave the site.
- Rethink the way lists are displayed to help them be more clearly scannable.
- Be consistent and logical about sequences and hotlinks.

3. Taxonomy

Taxonomy defines the words and icons used to represent and organize the categories of the website into appropriate classifications of information data.

Proper taxonomy includes both contextual and visual (iconic) elements used throughout the site. The contextual components ensure that selections are named and grouped in accord with a visitor's expectations and mindset based on hierarchical classifications.

For example, a government Web site must be careful not to use jargon or terms that only its internal staff would understand:

Good	Bad
Licensing Accountants Alcohol Licenses, Initial Alcohol License Renewal Check Sellers License Renewal	Licensing Form 26-B 30002 Form 27-A 40001-1 Form 27-B 40001-2 Form 28 50001

Also, proper contextual taxonomy requires careful selection and adherence to standard terms and phrases that are within the site visitor’s lexicon. For example, if the site uses “Go” for a button on one screen, it should use “Go” for the same button on all other screens.

Also, the site should try to use terminology that the casual visitor would readily find/understand on any other commonly used site. Example: “site map” is a commonly understood Web link – so don’t create your own name such as “web hierarchy”.

The visual taxonomy is related to the “look and feel” of the site, but must also allow the visitor to easily discern an element’s intended use, priority and value within the overall page design and larger site scope.

For example, a government site that intends to use logical visual instructions (as well as convey a sense of professional authority, purpose and urban pride) would:

Use	Not Use
Straight-forward icons and buttons  Professional quality logos and images  Meaningful visuals that speak to the integrity of the brand 	Comical or whimsical icons and buttons  Poor quality or inappropriately stylized logos and images  Garish or alarmist imagery 

Assessment Principles

We evaluate the following taxonomy classifications, naming conventions, and groupings of site offerings, services and contexts:

- 3.1 Audience-Appropriate Verbiage
- 3.2 Navigational Standards and Naming Conventions
- 3.3 Proper Hierarchies of Classifications
- 3.4 Logical Groupings of Items in Lists and Structures

3.1 Audience-Appropriate Verbiage

(Does the site use words that the audience would use?)

Overall, the site does a commendable job of keeping titles and headings at the proper reading level and free from jargon.

3.2 Navigational Standards and Naming Conventions

(Are navigations sufficiently unique and appropriate in their labels?)



Some navigational titles could be made clearer, but these are relatively few.

3.3 Proper Hierarchies of Classifications

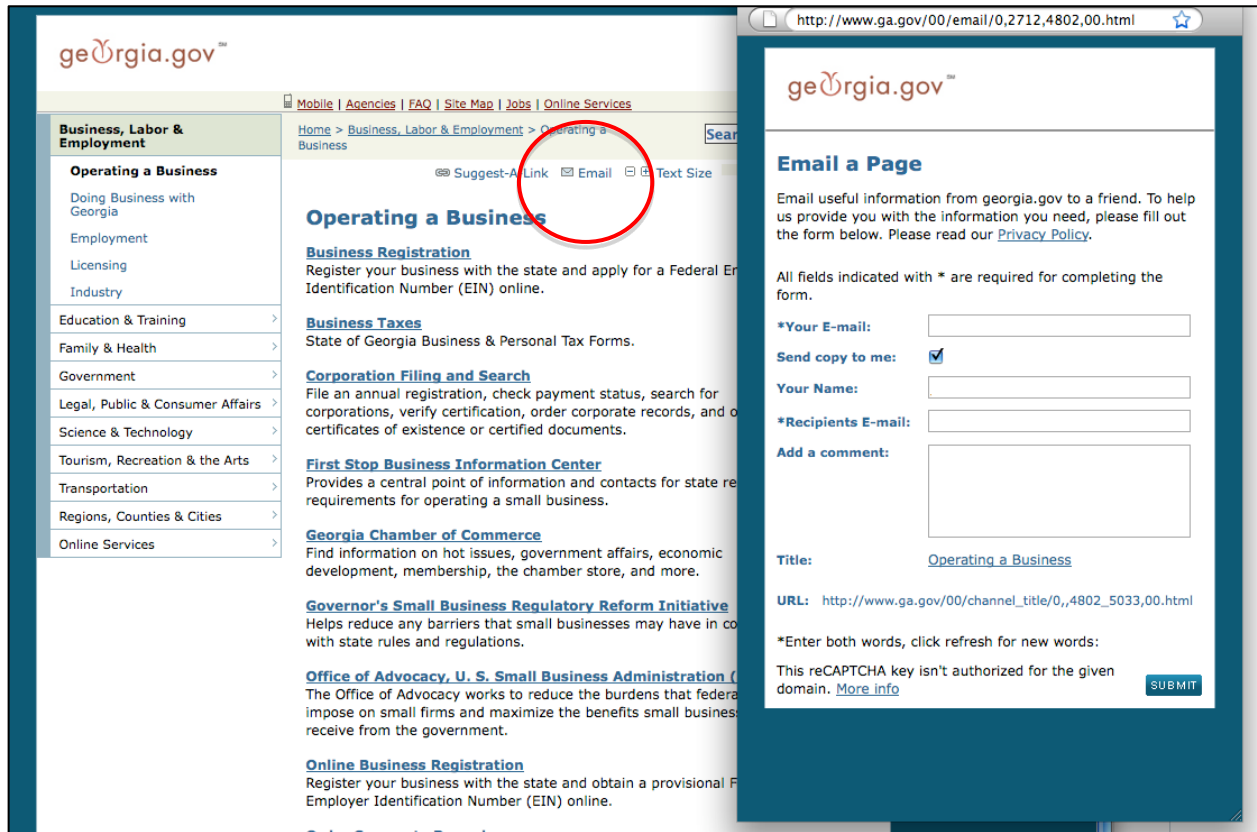
(Do the steps, sequences, and sub-sequences of items and tasks appear in proper order and placement?)

The screenshot shows the 'Advanced Search for:' section of the Georgia.gov website. The header includes the 'georgia.gov' logo and the 'Office of the Child Advocate' with the name 'Tom C. Rawlings, Child Advocate'. The search interface is divided into two main sections: 'Find results' and 'Page-Specific Search'. The 'Find results' section includes a search bar with the text 'Child Advocate, Office of the', a dropdown menu for 'Show results for:', and a search button. Below the search bar are four radio button options: 'with all of the words', 'with the exact phrase', 'with at least one of the words', and 'without the words'. The 'Page-Specific Search' section includes a search bar with the text 'Find pages that link to the page' and a search button. The footer of the page contains links to 'georgia.gov', 'Agencies', 'Privacy/Security', 'Notices', 'Accessibility', 'Español', 'Survey', and 'Contact georgia.gov'.

It would be helpful if "advanced search" was more easily accessible.



There doesn't appear to be any way for visitors to "ask" a question within the FAQs section.

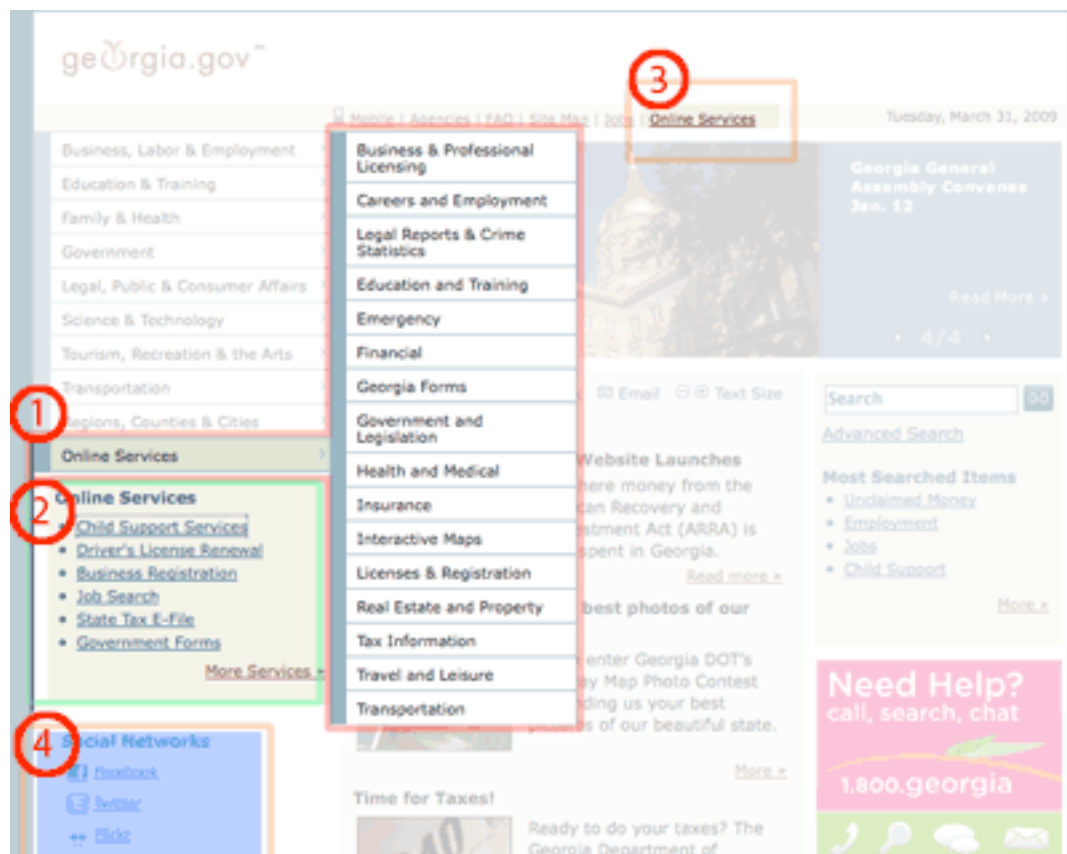


Many users may be misguided by “Email” (thinking that it’s a way to contact Georgia.gov staff). A better classification would be “Email a Friend”.

3.4 Logical Groupings of Items in Lists and Structures

(Are similar items and tasks appropriately grouped or separated according to the needs/desires of the site visitor?)

Most main navigation items are in the right “buckets”. However some random items such as “Weather,” “Relocating to Georgia,” and the displacement of “Online Services” might benefit from re-evaluation.



Four unique instances of “Online Services” and online-accessible services (Social Networking) appear on the home page illustrated above. A fifth grouping of online services also appears near the bottom of the home page (Media). This will be confusing to return visitors who seek to quickly relocate items from earlier visits. It may be more valuable and efficient to combine all such items under one umbrella.

3.5 Taxonomy Benchmarks

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 -----
Never Sometimes More Consistently Always

Site	Benchmark	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	Overall (12)
1	www.georgia.gov	3	3	2	1.5	10 avg. 2.3

3.6 Taxonomy Recommendations

- Make certain that all navigation titles are arranged alphabetically.

- Add “Online Services” as a heading within each second-level navigation pull down. This will help visitors more quickly discover online offerings within their subject listing.
- Relocate “Weather,” “Housing” and other potentially difficult-to-find headings.
- Remove the multiple instances of “Online Services” from the home page.

4. Content

It’s important to clearly organize and present the contextual breadth of the site such that the visitor immediately feels confident that the sought/promised content is present. Once found, it’s even more important that visitors find value in the content they find.

Also, be careful not to over-extend the site *beyond* your Brand promise. Too often, a strong Brand will get lost or “watered down” by attempting to be all things to all people.

Assessment Principles

We evaluate the following context and contextual issues, styles and standards:

- 4.1 Audience-Appropriateness
- 4.2 Channel -Appropriateness
- 4.3 Editing, Proof Reading, and Fact Checking
- 4.4 Discernable Main Focus
- 4.5 Action-Oriented Content
- 4.6 Unique and Necessary Content
- 4.7 Style Guide
- 4.8 Consistent Adherence to the Central Theme

4.1 Audience-Appropriateness

(Is the content written at a reading level and in a format best suited to the intended reader?)

Supporting images.

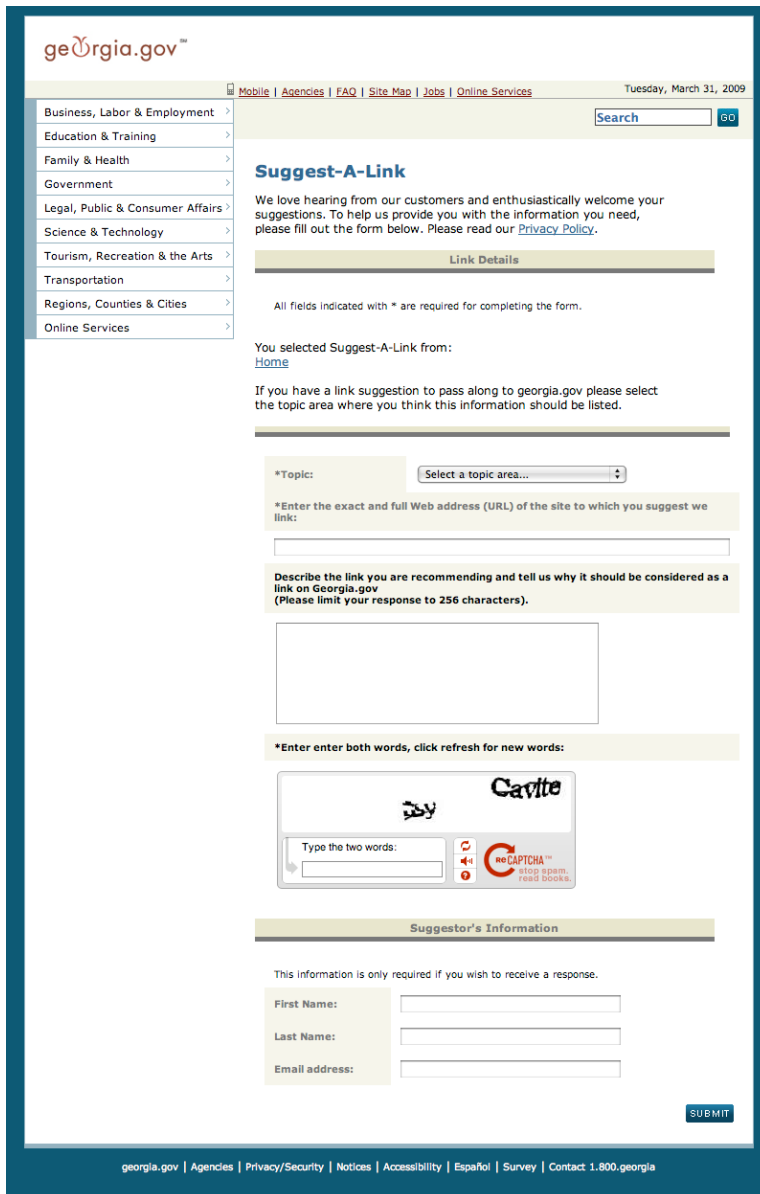


The content on Georgia.gov appears to be written at the proper reading level for its audience. The content is concise and free of jargon or [possibly] inappropriate writing style. There are extremely few exceptions (such as the phrase “gavel-to-gavel”) and these infractions are debatably minor.

4.2 Channel-Appropriateness

(Is the content appropriate for the online channel?)

On the list pages, the site makes excellent use of content.



georgia.gov™

Mobile | Agencies | FAQ | Site Map | Jobs | Online Services Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Business, Labor & Employment >
Education & Training >
Family & Health >
Government >
Legal, Public & Consumer Affairs >
Science & Technology >
Tourism, Recreation & the Arts >
Transportation >
Regions, Counties & Cities >
Online Services >

Search

Suggest-A-Link

We love hearing from our customers and enthusiastically welcome your suggestions. To help us provide you with the information you need, please fill out the form below. Please read our [Privacy Policy](#).

Link Details

All fields indicated with * are required for completing the form.

You selected Suggest-A-Link from:
[Home](#)

If you have a link suggestion to pass along to georgia.gov please select the topic area where you think this information should be listed.

*Topic:

*Enter the exact and full Web address (URL) of the site to which you suggest we link:

Describe the link you are recommending and tell us why it should be considered as a link on Georgia.gov
(Please limit your response to 256 characters).

*Enter enter both words, click refresh for new words:

Suggestor's Information

This information is only required if you wish to receive a response.

First Name:
Last Name:
Email address:

georgia.gov | Agencies | Privacy/Security | Notices | Accessibility | Español | Survey | Contact 1.800.georgia

On some of the instructional pages, however, the content is passive and a little clunky. Shorter, more active content with contractions may make these forms feel more friendly (less daunting and formal).

4.3 Editing, Proof Reading, and Fact Checking

(Is the content grammatically correct?)

Excellent.

4.4 Discernable Main Focus

(Is the “meat” of the context easy to locate and surmise?)

There is not enough differentiation in pages to help establish a sense of focus to each page’s contents. There is an opportunity, here, to use more imagery and context to support the lists that each page provides.

4.5 Action-Oriented Content

(Does the content appropriately entice the visitor?)

Many pages could benefit from a more active approach to introductory paragraphs.

4.6 Unique and Necessary Content

(Is the content free of redundancy and provide/support an actionable value?)

Excellent.

4.7 Style Guide

(Is there evidence that the content follows grammatical style norms and consistencies?)

Excellent.

4.8 Consistent Adherence to the Central Theme

(Does the content support the site “experience?”)

There is a great opportunity to strengthen and promote the Georgia “brand” by creating a more theme-oriented approach to the site’s contexts.

4.9 Content Benchmarks										
0 -----	1 -----	2 -----	3 -----							
Never	Sometimes	More Consistently				Always				
Site	Benchmark	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	Overall (24)
1	www.georgia.gov	3	3	3	1	1	2.5	3	2	18.5 avg. 2.3

4.10 Content Recommendations

- Reverse pyramid, active voice newspaper style content would help set a tone for the lists that each page provides.
- Opening paragraphs and the occasional call-to-action content would help the site seem less like a warehouse of links to other sites.

5. Features and Functionality

In evaluation, we assess existing site features and functionality to determine they compliment the visitor's experience and are in keeping with the Brand Promise and purpose (or central "theme") of the site.

Assessment Principles

We evaluate the following Features and Functions:

- 5.1 Appropriate Features to Support the Brand/Site
- 5.2 Expected Channel Functions
- 5.3 Mechanical Quality of Features and Functions
- 5.4 Architecture of Functions is Appropriate
- 5.5 Unique Implementation and Execution
- 5.6 Visitor Value
- 5.7 Viral Draw
- 5.8 ADA Compliance

5.1 Appropriate Features to Support the Brand/Site

(Does the Brand/Site provide and benefit from features and functions that the typical visitor may expect to find on a site with this particular mission?)

The site purpose is to channel the visitor to other, more robust sites. This site offers several “site manipulation” features including search and email capabilities. It also offers a few “site interaction” features that allow the visitor to communicate with site administrators. However, these features are fairly weak and don’t successfully enhance Georgia’s image as an active and collaborative partner with the visitor.

5.2 Expected Channel Functions

(Do the features contain all the functional characteristics – search, login help, browser plugin support, etc – that a typical visitor would require from any typical Web site of this caliber?)

Yes.

5.3 Mechanical Quality of Features and Functions

The site loads and operates extremely well.



The Flash item on the homepage could use a pause function.

5.4 Architecture of Functions is Appropriate

(Can the visitor intuitively locate and discern fields, controls, and required interactions?)

Some of the functional items could be made more clear and easy to manipulate.

Examples:

The screenshot shows the 'Advanced Search for:' section of the Georgia.gov website, specifically for the Office of the Child Advocate. The interface is dated and has a blue header with the 'georgia.gov' logo. The main content area is white with a blue border. It features a search bar with the text 'Child Advocate, Office of the' and a dropdown menu. Below the search bar are four radio button options: 'with all of the words', 'with the exact phrase', 'with at least one of the words', and 'without the words'. To the right of these options is a text input field containing 'childcare services' and a 'Search' button. Below the search options are several filter sections: 'Language' (Return pages written in), 'File Format' (Only return results of the file format), 'Occurrences' (Return results where my terms occur), 'Domain' (Only return results from the site or domain), and 'Sort' (Sort by relevance). Each filter section has a dropdown menu and a text input field. The footer of the page contains a navigation bar with links to 'georgia.gov', 'Agencies', 'Privacy/Security', 'Notices', 'Accessibility', 'Español', 'Survey', and 'Contact georgia.gov'.

georgia.gov
Office of the Child Advocate
Tom C. Rawlings, Child Advocate

Advanced Search for:

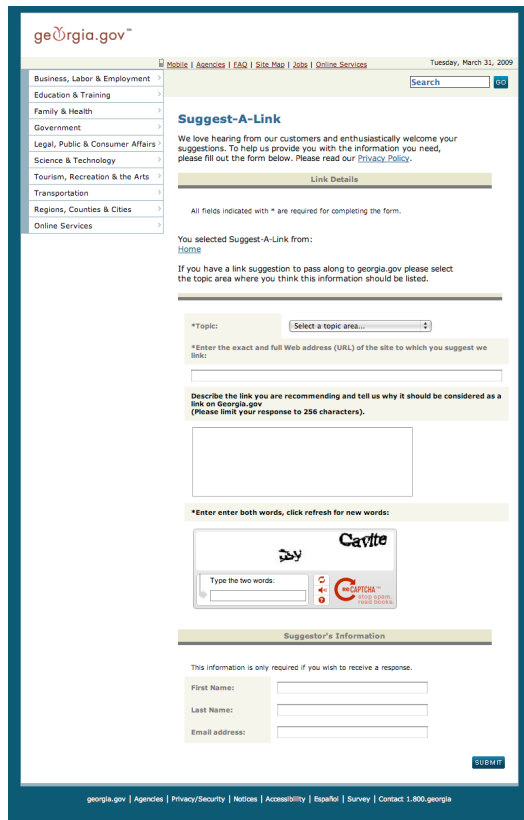
Find results Show results for:
Child Advocate, Office of the
with all of the words childcare services 10 results Search
with the exact phrase
with at least one of the words
without the words

Language Return pages written in any language
File Format Only return results of the file format any format
Occurrences Return results where my terms occur anywhere in the page
Domain Only return results from the site or domain e.g. google.com, .org
Sort Sort by relevance

Page-Specific Search
Links Find pages that link to the page Search

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- Advanced Search is buried (except on the home page) and its functions are not presented in a user-friendly format.



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Business, Labor & Employment >
Education & Training >
Family & Health >
Government >
Legal, Public & Consumer Affairs >
Science & Technology >
Tourism, Recreation & the Arts >
Transportation >
Regions, Counties & Cities >
Online Services >

Search [] GO

Suggest-A-Link

We love hearing from our customers and enthusiastically welcome your suggestions. To help us provide you with the information you need, please fill out the form below. Please read our [Privacy Policy](#).

Link Details

All fields indicated with * are required for completing the form.

You selected Suggest-A-Link from:
[Home](#)

If you have a link suggestion to pass along to georgia.gov please select the topic area where you think this information should be listed.

*Topic:

*Enter the exact and full Web address (URL) of the site to which you suggest we link:

Describe the link you are recommending and tell us why it should be considered as a link on Georgia.gov
(Please limit your response to 255 characters).

*Enter enter both words, click refresh for new words:

Type the two words:

Suggestor's Information

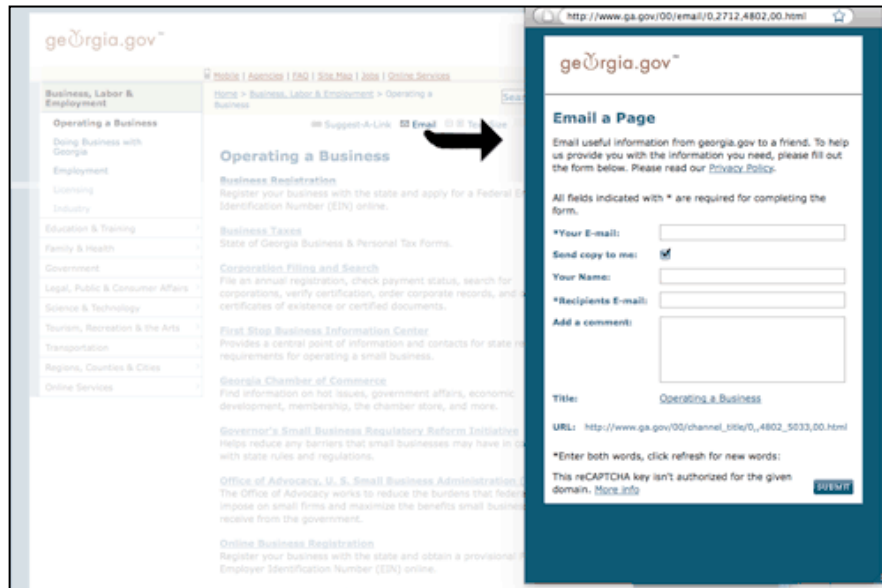
This information is only required if you wish to receive a response.

First Name:
Last Name:
Email address:

SUBMIT

georgia.gov | Agencies | Privacy/Security | Notices | Accessibility | Español | Survey | Contact 1.800.georgia

- Some of the forms (such as “Suggest-A Link”) are displayed in an overly formal and intimidating format.



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Mobile | Agencies | FAQ | Site Map | Jobs | Online Services

Home > Business, Labor & Employment > Operating a Business

Operating a Business

Business Registration
Register your business with the state and apply for a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) online.

Business Taxes
State of Georgia Business & Personal Tax Forms.

Corporation Filing and Search
File an annual registration, check payment status, search for corporations, verify certification, order corporate records, and certificates of existence or certified documents.

First Stop Business Information Center
Provides a central point of information and contacts for state requirements for operating a small business.

Georgia Chamber of Commerce
Find information on hot issues, government affairs, economic development, membership, the chamber store, and more.

Governor's Small Business Regulatory Reform Initiative
Helps reduce any barriers that small businesses may have in dealing with state rules and regulations.

Office of Advocacy, U. S. Small Business Administration
The Office of Advocacy works to reduce the burdens that federal impose on small firms and maximize the benefits small business receive from the government.

Online Business Registration
Register your business with the state and obtain a provisional Employer Identification Number (EIN) online.

Email a Page

Email useful information from georgia.gov to a friend. To help us provide you with the information you need, please fill out the form below. Please read our [Privacy Policy](#).

All fields indicated with * are required for completing the form.

*Your E-mail:

Send copy to me: ☒

Your Name:

*Recipients E-mail:

Add a comment:

Title: [Operating a Business](#)

URL: http://www.ga.gov/00/channel_title/0_4802_5033/00.html

*Enter both words, click refresh for new words:
This reCAPTCHA key isn't authorized for the given domain. [More info](#)

SUBMIT

- *“Email” doesn’t clearly state that it’s a form for sending a page link to a friend. Thus, the “email recipient” field may confuse some visitors who think they’re sending the form to Georgia.gov administrators.*

5.5 Unique Implementation and Execution

(Do the features and functions offer value and innovation that has not been as elegantly and interestingly achieved elsewhere on the Web?)

The site does a good job of offering several appreciated functions. But the execution of those functions could be improved.

5.6 Visitor Value

(Would the value of the visitor’s expected experience be significantly reduced if the features/functions were not available?)

Yes. The visitor experience would suffer if these items were not available.

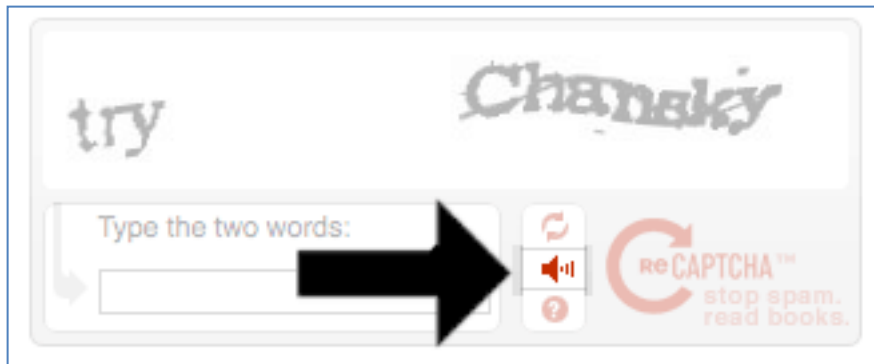
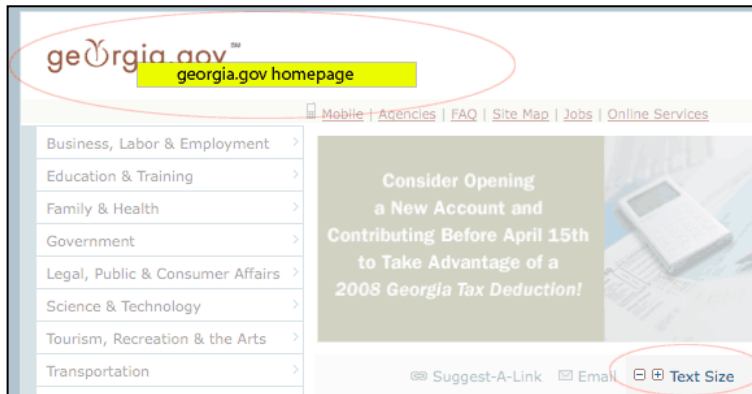
5.7 Viral Draw

(Do the features/functions elicit a level of excitement or utility that would cause the visitor to campaign on the site’s behalf?)

No, not in their current format.

5.8 ADA Compliance

(Do the features/functions adhere to Web accessibility and compliance as set by Americans with Disabilities Act standards?)



Yes. The site makes a commendable effort to adhere to and promote ADA standards.

5.9 Features/Functions Benchmarks

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 -----
Never Sometimes More Consistently Always

Site	Benchmark	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.8	Overall (24)
1	www.georgia.gov	2	3	3	1.5	1.5	3	1	3	18 avg. 2.25

5.10 Features and Functions Recommendations

- Rename “Email” to a more instructional “Email a Friend” name.
- Add a separate “contact us” link in addition to 1.800.georgia (which only directly implies the telephone option).
- Add online chat (if possible) or don’t state “call, search, chat” on pages where online “chat” isn’t present.

6. Calls to Action

“Call to Action” (CTA) refers to how the site **communicates, entices, and successfully completes hand-off** of a visitor to a next (or preferred) stage in the experience. The successful CTA is the ultimate goal of any website.

The CTA doesn’t have to be presented such that the visitor can complete *every* transaction online. Regardless, the site should provide adequate information so that the visitor is allowed [better: *WISHES*] to proceed to the next stage of a desired task – even if that task is delivered via another site or an offline channel.

Example:

Right: For more information, contact Engauge Digital <info@engauge.com>. 1-(800)-555-1234 (Monday –Friday, 8am to 7pm, EST).

Wrong: For more information, call us.

Assessment Principles

We evaluate the following CTA criteria:

- 6.1 State Value. Provide Value. Restate Value. Lead the Visitor to the Next Value.
- 6.2 Motivational Cue
- 6.3 Immediateness of Impact
- 6.4 Instructionally Upfront
- 6.5 Free of Irrelevant or Self-Serving Hoops and Red Tape

6.1 State Value. Provide Value. Restate Value. Lead the Visitor to the Next Value.

(Does the CTA alert and later remind the visitor of its benefits?)

N/A

6.2 Motivational Cue

(Do the CTAs make sense and appear in logical and consistent locations?)

The site could do a much better job of helping entice the visitor to particular selections.

6.3 Immediateness of Impact

(Is there an element of instant gratification? If not, does the CTA at least alert the visitor to required constraints?)

The site is primarily a portal to other sites. It may help minimize a visitor's sense of "what just happened?" if the site more clearly delineated transitions and offsite links.

6.4 Instructionally Upfront

(Are there no surprises in the CTA format?)



Within some areas, it's hard to tell whether the visitor has or hasn't moved to another site.

6.5 Free of Irrelevant or Self-Serving Hoops and Red Tape

(is the visitor's "reward" within appropriate reach without an ever-dangling carrot or unnecessary bottleneck?)

Yes. The site does a good job of keeping focus on the visitor's desired needs (and not its own).

6.6 “Call To Action” Organization Benchmarks

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 -----
Never Sometimes More Consistently Always

Site	Benchmark	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	Overall (12)
1	www.georgia.gov	0	1	2	2	0	5 avg. 1

6.7 “Call To Action” Recommendations

- Using a more active approach to CTA items will help build the brand promise and make the site feel more valuable as a destination (rather than just a launching point) for its visitors.

7. Look and Feel

A visitor’s first impression of a website is often determined by the aesthetic appeal of the site. This sets the tone for instilling confidence in the site and it’s owners. It also implies the site’s scope and the quality of its products and services.

To retain the trust of your target audience and customers, it’s important for a site’s look and feel to align with your Brand promise.

Assessment Principles

We evaluate the following Look and Feel issues:

- 7.1 Visual Attractiveness
- 7.2 Message-Appropriate Execution of Color and Imagery
- 7.3 Branding
- 7.4 Audience-Appropriate Execution of Media
- 7.5 Channel-Appropriate Execution of Media
- 7.6 ADA Compliance

7.1 Visual Attractiveness

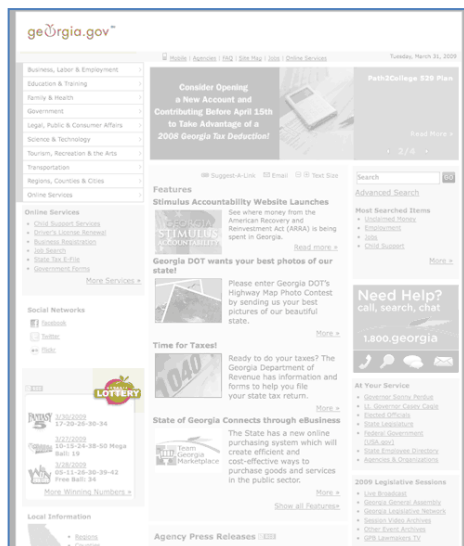
(Does the overall site look pleasing to the visitor?)



Home page is poorly designed and expresses a negative and confusing impression of the state Brand.

7.2 Message-Appropriate Execution of Color and Imagery

(Are colors and images in keeping with the subject matter?)



With the exception of the logo and the peach on the lottery box, the home page presents nothing in the way of setting up a positive visual experience or brand premise.

7.3 Branding

(Does the experience enhance or support a “holistic” Brand experience?)

[such that the site experience can be assumed to be part of a larger Brand experience]

Interior pages show no attempt at creating a sense of branding.

7.4 Audience-Appropriate Execution of Media

(Does the site look like one that the intended visitor would want to visit?)

On several pages, the use of imagery and color is more disruptive than beneficial.

Examples:

The image of the man in a hardhat appeared to look like a baseball player to 2/3rds of reviewers (one reviewer thought Georgia was suggesting that people looking for jobs should come to GA to play for the Braves.)

The text and image of a thumbprint suggests that you should “know your neighbors” because they’re likely to be criminals.



The “Need Help?” image overwhelms all the other images on the home page and draws the visitor’s eye more than it should.

7.5 Channel-Appropriate Execution of Media

(Do the colors, images, sounds, videos, etc. work in this channel?)

The site makes little use of the positive assets of the channel.

7.6 Innovation and Creativity

(Does the site have a uniquely inspiring approach that sets it as a trend setting or memorable experience?)

The flash of the home page is the only attempt at innovation and this is poorly executed.

7.7 ADA Compliances

(Is the site designed such that it does NOT alienate or exclude any of its intended audience due to a person’s disability?)

Excellent use of ADA technologies.

7.7 Look/Feel Benchmarks

Site	Benchmark	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.7	Overall (21)
1	www.georgia.gov	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	5 avg. 0.7

7.8 Look/Feel Recommendations

- This site (and all it's sister sites) would benefit from a marketing and branding makeover so that there was a more cohesive approach to the State Brand.
- Site needs to strengthen its visual message and layout to be more attractive.
- Use color and type size to help build a sense of unity and purpose to the various components.

Overall Benchmarks

Based on the seven categories, our overview analysis suggests the following grades:

Site	Benchmark Category (Max)	1 Nav (18)	2 Org (12)	3 Tax (12)	4 Con (24)	5 F/F (24)	6 C2A (12)	7 L/F (21)	Overall 120 (40 items)
1	www.georgia.gov	10	7	10	18.5	18	5	5	73.5 (avg. 1.8)

Overall Observations

- There are many criteria that the site could improve with minimal effort.
- “Call to Action” and “Look and Feel” of the site are two key areas where improvements must be considered.
- Navigational elements (especially in respect to page/hierarchy designs) should also be improved.

Overall Recommendations

- Establish a mission statement for the site that includes a solution for addressing call to action and visual branding issues.
- Conduct user research using card sorting and taxonomy exercises to discover ways to better meet visitor needs/expectations.
- Investigate cutting edge technologies and other web sites (both within and outside the genre) to find ways to improve the visitor experience, stickiness, and viral opportunities for Georgia.gov.

Several factors and principles should be considered in the development of recommendations for Websites. Consider the following areas.

Design for Decision Making and Information Gathering

While making a decision about augmenting the visitor’s experience on the site, remember the “cobbler’s children” principle and treat your site like a prized client.

Design for Nomadic Behavior

Visitors are not always 100% task focused. They often wander during the experience -- both physically and mentally. Encourage their focus by rewarding them with on-subject data that is positioned to build the excitement. *Don’t encourage* them to wander away from your information

by inserting superfluous information and visuals. And don't *discourage* them by making the right information hard to find or placed out of logical order.

Leverage Positive Reinforcement: Your site is your portfolio.

Web visitors often need motivation to get through an experience. Positive reinforcement is a powerful motivator. With positive reinforcement, humans increase particular behaviors when these behaviors are paired with something they desire. In the case of selecting a vendor, visitors want to believe we're innovative and resourceful – but with a purpose.

Visitor-Centered Communication Best Practices

A key function of the Website is to provide information, so it should follow best practices in information design and writing. Customers need complete, correct, credible, persuasive information available in layers and in an easy-to-scan formats.

Include the Right Information Types

From the customer's perspective, most information serves one of four purposes. Website information pages will use a majority of the purposes listed below.

Property	What is	An explanation of something, such as a fact, concept, or structure
Principle	What should be done	Rules, laws, guidelines
Procedure	What you have to do	A set of steps or tasks to achieve a result
Process	What happens	A series of events occurring over time, usually the "big picture"

Emphasize the Right Information Topics to Support Decision Making

Customers are interested in a variety of information to make a decision to continue, become members, return to the site, etc. Rely on Frequently Asked Question content only as a last resort – when the primer information just gets too detailed to keep the momentum up and the visitor ontrack.

Include the Right Persuasive Appeals to Influence Decision Making

Getting a visitor to do *anything* online involves a level of persuasion. The information and writing should not only be clear and complete, it should also be convincing and credible. One way to add persuasive punch is to include these three appeals:

Logos	Rational appeal	Include quantitative evidence such as statistics, rate comparison, feature comparison, etc.
-------	-----------------	---

Pathos	Emotional appeal	Feature qualitative evidence such as case studies, customer reviews, testimonials, quotes; imbue language and images with the appropriate tone.
Ethos	Credibility appeal	Note years of experience, sources or references, affiliation with other credible brands; ensure copy is error-free; use high-quality images, etc.

Write for the Web

Layer Information from Basics to Details

Thinking of your information as layers will help you avoid overwhelming your audiences with information on a single web page. Layers also allow your customers to choose the amount of information they want.

Organize Text into Short Sections with Labels

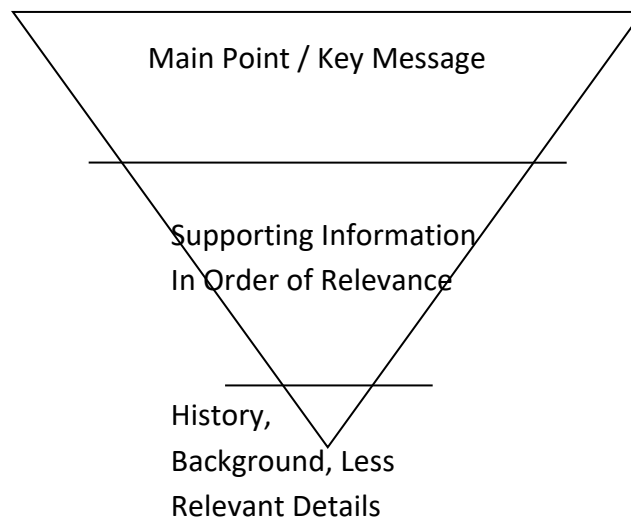
Your customers will not read your web pages like they read a novel. They will scan instead, focusing on headings, summaries, and labels until they find the information they want. Only then will they read the details.

Chunk your writing into small, logical sections.

Label them clearly and descriptively. Think about helping the customers decide whether to read the section.

Organize Text Using the Inverted Pyramid Writing Style

Used in journalism and mass media, the inverted pyramid writing style puts your key message first, then supporting information in the order it is relevant to readers.



Use Short Words and Sentences and Active Voice Sentence Construction

Less is more when it comes to words and the web. Even highly educated audiences understand web writing more quickly when it uses short words and sentences. A few techniques to try: Stick to words with no more than three syllables.

Avoid modifiers that don't add meaning (e.g. really, basically, generally).

- Use active voice.

Passive: The client **was happy with** our team approach. (The subject receives the action.)

Active: Our team **WOWS** our clients. (The subject does the action.)

- **Use Your Visitors' Words**

Use words that your visitors are likely to use, especially for navigation, headings, and key labels. These words make information on your website easier for your audience to

- Find through search engines.
- Find once they're on your site.
- Understand quickly.

Use a Personable, Appropriate Tone

Use a personable tone and words appropriate for your brand's major attributes, the product, and the customer's situation.

Use a Polished Style That Customers Enjoy Reading

Polished writing is more enjoyable to read than basic writing because it's easier to read, it's more clear, and it is more interesting. The more a customer reads, the greater the opportunity to persuade the customer. A few techniques for a polished style include:

Rhythm: For a prose section, use a mix of short and long sentences to keep the pace interesting.

Balance: Use parallel structure for headings, list items, or sentences with a similar relationship.

Parallel structure clarifies ideas, makes text easier to scan, and enhances rhythm.

Simile, Metaphor, Analogy: These techniques involve comparison, a powerful way to explain abstract concepts or services and new or complex information. For instance, Prudential compares its stability to a rock with the metaphor in its tagline "Rock Solid. Market Wise."

Summary of Tactical Recommendations

While recommendations have been woven throughout this document, the list below is a recap/inclusion of some of the most strategic suggestions to consider when building out the Website prototype.

Technical/Structural Recommendations

- Make all microsites open in a separate window.
- Separate microsites from the navigation via banner placement.
- Remove any clever titles from the navigation. These can be used as “kicker titles” on the actual pages, but won’t be as easy to recall or locate out of context.

Call to Action Recommendations

- Increase visual emphasis of Calls to Action – specifically buttons – and place them independently in prominent and consistent locations as opposed to within other graphics.
- Clearly call out the various options for “Learn More”, “Sign Up” and “View...” to avoid any confusion for actions.
- Call the visitor to action by making it clear that said action offers an immediate benefit.

Content/Organizational Recommendations

The main page should include sufficient information to set the stage for the excitement and the experience that we’re trying to sell.

- Reduce the amount of copy in each paragraph so that it becomes one line of text where possible. Text should supplement or compliment the text presented in site imagery and headings.
- If paragraph information cannot be scaled down – perhaps for legal reasons – consider bulleting some of the text to make content more readable and scannable by the user.
- A welcoming statement will help assure the user that they are in the right place and help them understand what they can do next.
- On the main page, bring the Main information presented into the center of the screen so that it excites action and a sense of “being there.”