

## Headings, Titles, and Labels

### **Most users spend a considerable amount of time**

scanning rather than reading information on websites. Well-designed headings help to facilitate both scanning and reading written material. Designers should strive to use unique and descriptive headings, and to use as many headings as necessary to enable users to find what they are looking for—it is usually better to use more rather than fewer headings. Headings should be used in their appropriate HTML order, and it is generally a good idea not to skip heading levels.

Designers should ensure that each page has a unique and descriptive page title. When tables are used, designers should make sure that descriptive row and column headings are included that enable users to clearly understand the information in the table. It is occasionally important to highlight certain critical information.

## 9:1 Use Clear Category Labels

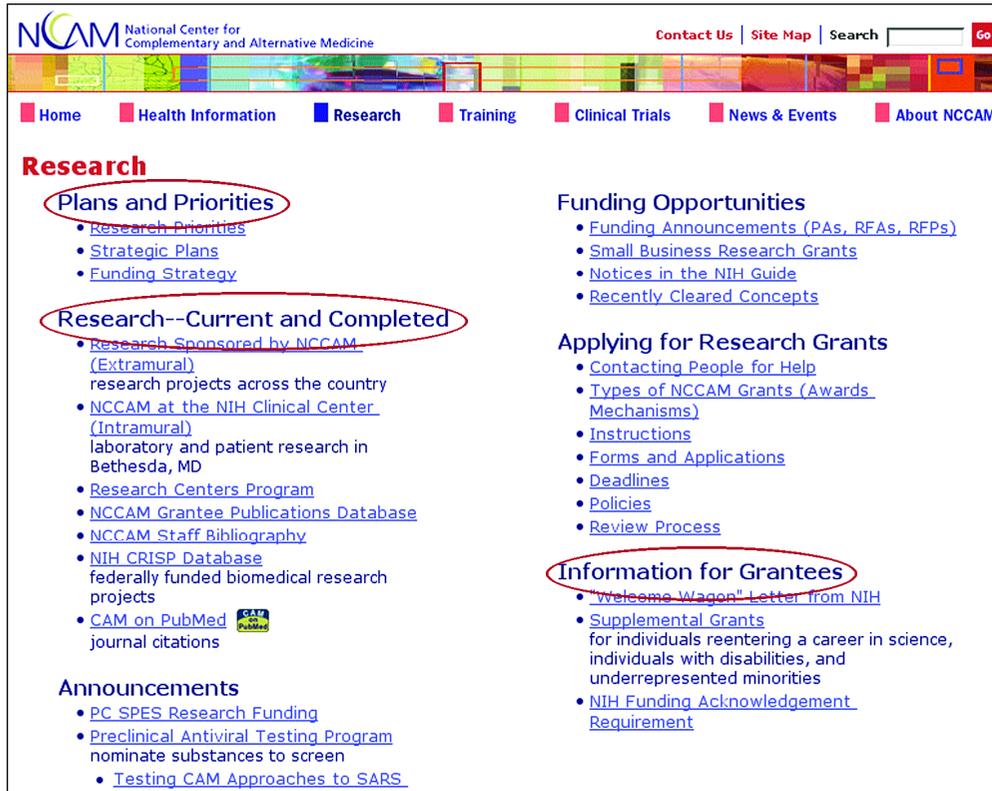
**Guideline:** Ensure that category labels, including links, clearly reflect the information and items contained within the category.

**Comments:** Category titles must be understood by typical users. Users will likely have difficulty understanding vague, generalized link labels, but will find specific, detailed links and descriptors easier to use.

**Sources:** Evans, 1998; Landesman and Schroeder, 2000; Mahajan and Shneiderman, 1997; Marshall, Drapeau and DiSciullo, 2001; Nall, Koyani and Lafond, 2001; Spyridakis, 2000; Zimmerman, et al., 2002.

**Example:** These labels are clear and distinct, allowing users to distinguish paths quickly.

Relative Importance:  
**12345**  
Strength of Evidence:  
**12340**



## 9:2 Use Unique and Descriptive Headings

**Guideline:** Use headings that are unique from one another and conceptually related to the content they describe.

**Comments:** Using poor headings (mismatches between what users were expecting and what they find) is a common problem with websites. Ensure that headings are descriptive and relate to the content they introduce. If headings are too similar to one another, users may have to hesitate and re-read to decipher the difference. Identifying the best headings may require extensive usability testing and other methods.

**Sources:** Bailey, Koyani and Nall, 2000; Gerhardt-Powals, 1996; Morkes and Nielsen, 1998; Williams, 2000.

**Example:** These headings are well-designed—they are unique from one another and descriptive of the information to which they link.

Relative Importance:  
**12345**  
Strength of Evidence:  
**12300**



### 9:3 Use Descriptive Row and Column Headings

**Guideline:** Ensure that data tables have clear, concise, and accurate row and column headings.

**Comments:** Use row and column headings to indicate unique cell contents. Users require clear and concise table headings in order to make efficient and effective use of table information. Row and column headings will indicate to screen readers how data points should be labeled or identified, so the user can understand the significance of the cell in the overall scheme of the table.

**Sources:** Bransford and Johnson, 1972; Chisholm, Vanderheiden and Jacobs, 1999d; Detweiler and Omanson, 1996; Lynch and Horton, 2002; United States Government, 1998; Wright, 1980.

**Example:** An example of good table heading design. The non-expert user will have no problem understanding these descriptive row and column headers.

	Jan-2002	Feb-2002	Mar-2002	Apr-2002	May-2002	Jun-2002	Jul-2002	Aug-2002	Sep-2002	Oct-2002	Nov-2002	Dec-2002
# New Starts	2308	2176	2384	2374	2412	2147	2016	2042	1987	2198	1958	2147
% Change (MM)	12.3	-10.2	8.7	-4.2	1.8	-3	-6.5	1.3	-2.8	9.6	-12.2	11.2
% Change (YY)	10.2	18.7	12.3	12.3	12.7	7.3	10.5	2.7	21.6	31.8	8.8	11.2
Year to Date	2390	4574	6950	9332	11744	13091	15907	17948	19936	22134	24093	26047
Prior Year	2154	3968	6059	8140	10247	12238	14043	16029	17585	19083	20995	23047
% Change	10.2	13.2	12.9	12.0	12.7	11.9	11.7	10.7	11.0	13.0	12.9	11.2

An example of poor table heading design. The non-expert user will have little idea what is meant by "R.", "J.", and "Pt." Unless space constraints dictate otherwise, always use row and column headers that are descriptive enough to be understood by non-expert users.

R.	Date	Docket	Name	J.	Pt.
35	03/26	01-1325	<a href="#">Brown v. Legal Foundation of Wash.</a>	JS	538/1
34	03/25	01-1862	<a href="#">Woodford v. Garceau</a>	T	538/1
33	03/25	01-1269	<a href="#">Cuyahoga Falls v. Buckeye Community Hope Foundation</a>	O	538/1
32	03/10	01-963	<a href="#">Norfolk &amp; Western R. Co. v. Avers</a>	G	538/1
31	03/10	01-1572	<a href="#">Cook County v. United States ex rel. Chandler</a>	DS	538/1
30	03/05	01-729	<a href="#">Smith v. Doe</a>	K	538/1

Relative Importance:



Strength of Evidence:



### 9:4 Use Descriptive Headings Liberally

**Guideline:** Use descriptive headings liberally throughout a website.

**Comments:** Well-written headings are an important tool for helping users scan quickly. Headings should conceptually relate to the information or functions that follow them.

Headings should provide strong cues that orient users and inform them about page organization and structure. Headings also help classify information on a page. Each heading should be helpful in finding the desired target.

The ability to scan quickly is particularly important for older adults because they tend to stop scanning and start reading more frequently. If headings are not descriptive or plentiful enough, the user may start reading in places that do not offer the information they are seeking, thereby slowing them down unnecessarily.

**Sources:** Bailey, Koyani and Nall, 2000; Evans, 1998; Flower, Hayes and Swarts, 1983; Gerhardt-Powals, 1996; Hartley and Trueman, 1983; Ivory and Hearst, 2002; Ivory, Sinha and Hearst, 2000; Lorch and Lorch, 1995; Mayer, Dyck and Cook, 1984; Meyer, 1984; Morkes and Nielsen, 1998; Morrell, et al., 2002; Murphy and Mitchell, 1986; Nielsen, 1999c; Nielsen, 1999d; Schultz and Spyridakis, 2002; Spyridakis, 1989; Spyridakis, 2000; Zimmerman and Prickett, 2000.

**Example:**

Spending time during the design process to ensure that the site contains many carefully written headings and sub-headings will save users time as they rapidly locate the information for which they are searching.

Relative Importance:



Strength of Evidence:



Common Cancers

- [Bladder Cancer](#)
- [Breast Cancer](#)
- [Colon Cancer](#)
- [Endometrial Cancer](#)
- [Head and Neck Cancer](#)
- [Leukemia](#)

Childhood/Pediatric Cancers

- [Childhood Cancers Home Page](#)

Cancers by Body Location/System

- [AIDS-Related](#)
- [Bone](#)
- [Brain](#)
- [Breast](#)
- [Digestive/Gastrointestinal](#)
- [Endocrine](#)
- [Eye](#)
- [Genitourinary](#)
- [Germ Cell](#)
- [Gynecologic](#)
- [Head and Neck](#)

See page xxi for detailed descriptions of the rating scales



## 9:5 Provide Descriptive Page Titles

**Guideline:** Put a descriptive, unique, concise, and meaningfully different title on each Web page.

**Comments:** Title refers to the text that is in the browser title bar (this is the bar found at the very top of the browser screen). Titles are used by search engines to identify pages. If two or more pages have the same title, they cannot be differentiated by users or the Favorites capability of the browser. If users bookmark a page, they should not have to edit the title to meet the characteristics mentioned above.

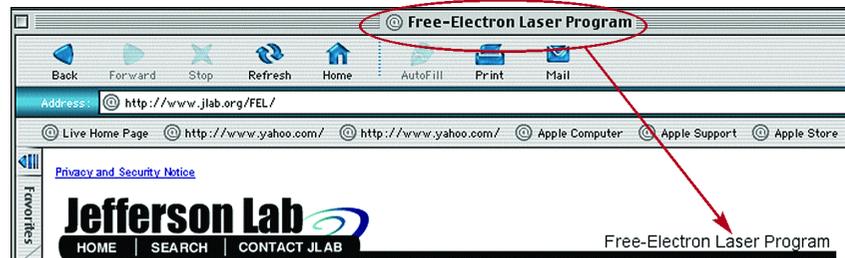
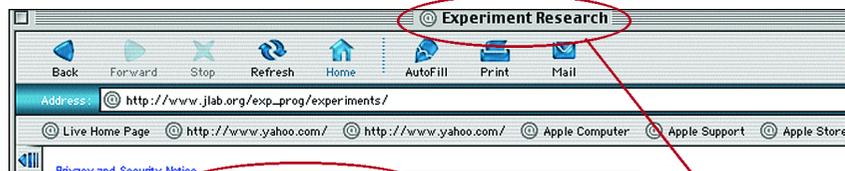
Remember that some search engines only list the titles in their search results page. Using concise and meaningful titles on all pages can help orient users as they browse a page or scan hot lists and history lists for particular URLs. They can also help others as they compile links to your pages.

To avoid confusing users, make the title that appears in the heading of the browser consistent with the title in the content area of the pages.

**Sources:** Evans, 1998; Levine, 1996; Nielsen and Tahir, 2002; Spyridakis, 2000; Williams, 2000.

**Example:** These titles are unique, concise, and consistent with the titles in the content area.

Relative Importance:  
  
 Strength of Evidence:



## 9:6 Highlight Critical Data

**Guideline:** Visually distinguish (i.e., highlight) important page items that require user attention, particularly when those items are displayed infrequently.

**Comments:** Items to highlight might include recently changed data, data exceeding acceptable limits, or data failing to meet some other defined criteria. Highlight is used here in its general sense, meaning to emphasize or make prominent. Highlighting is most effective when used sparingly, i.e. highlighting just a few items on a page that is otherwise relatively uniform in appearance.

**Sources:** Ahlstrom and Longo, 2001; Engel and Granda, 1975; Levine, 1996; Myers, 1985.

**Example:** Formatting this text in underline, bold, and red draws attention to the most pressing deadline and instructions.

Relative Importance:  
  
 Strength of Evidence:

Event Type:	Event Id:	Event Title:	Bidding Opens:	Bids Due:
Internet Auction 269 lots, 1315 items	809	<u>Hawaii &amp; Alaska</u> <b>More Info</b>	03/25/2003	<b>03/27/2003</b>
Sealed Bid 1 lots, 1 items	902	<u>Portable Ctr. Trailers</u> <b>Bid Package &amp; Info</b>	02/28/2003	03/28/2003
Internet Auction 1 lots, 1 items	908	<u>Mattressco@St.Julians</u> <b>More Info</b>	03/31/2003	04/02/2003
Internet Auction 401 lots, 5033 items	810	<u>Newfolk. &amp; Richmond VAs</u> <b>More Info</b>	03/31/2003	04/02/2003
Sealed Bid 224 lots, 804 items	012	<u>Mattress US Home Goods</u> <b>Bid Package &amp; Info</b>	03/28/2003	04/07/2003

**Please confirm that the following information is correct.**

After you have reviewed your information, click "**Edit**" to edit the information you entered or "**Submit**" to send your request.

**YOUR REQUEST WILL NOT BE SENT UNTIL YOU CLICK "SUBMIT".**

See page xxi for detailed descriptions of the rating scales

## 9:7 Provide Users with Good Ways to Reduce Options

**Guideline:** Provide users with good ways to reduce their available options as efficiently as possible.

**Comments:** Users seem willing to reduce their options quickly. Provide all options clearly so that users can focus first on selecting what they consider to be the most important option.

**Sources:** Bailey, Koyani and Nall, 2000.

**Example:** By providing three different options for selecting desired information, users can select the one most important to them.

**Relative Importance:**



**Strength of Evidence:**



**Types of Cancer**

[What You Need To Know About™ Cancer Index](#)  
Information about detection, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of many types of c

- **Common Cancers**
  - [Bladder Cancer](#)
  - [Breast Cancer](#)
  - [Colon Cancer](#)
  - [Endometrial Cancer](#)
  - [Head and Neck Cancer](#)
  - [Leukemia](#)
  - [Lung Cancer](#)
  - [Melanoma](#)
  - [Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma](#)
  - [Ovarian Cancer](#)
  - [Prostate Cancer](#)
  - [Rectal Cancer](#)
- **Childhood/Pediatric Cancers**
  - [Childhood Cancers Home Page](#)
- **Cancers by Body Location/System**
  - [AIDS-Related](#)
  - [Bone](#)
  - [Brain](#)
  - [Breast](#)
  - [Digestive/ Gastrointestinal](#)
  - [Endocrine](#)
  - [Eye](#)
  - [Genitourinary](#)
  - [Germ Cell](#)
  - [Gynecologic](#)
  - [Head and Neck](#)
  - [Hematologic/ Blood](#)
  - [Leukemia](#)
  - [Lung](#)
  - [Lymphoma](#)
  - [Musculoskeletal](#)
  - [Neurologic](#)
  - [Pregnancy and Cancer](#)
  - [Respiratory/Thoracic](#)
  - [Skin](#)
  - [Unknown Primary](#)

## 9:8 Use Headings in the Appropriate HTML Order

**Guideline:** Use headings in the appropriate HTML order.

**Comments:** Using the appropriate HTML heading order helps users get a sense of the hierarchy of information on the page. The appropriate use of H1-H3 heading tags also allows users of assistive technologies to understand the hierarchy of information.

**Sources:** Detweiler and Omanson, 1996; Spool, et al., 1997.

**Example:**

**Relative Importance:**



**Strength of Evidence:**



**NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE**

# Best Practices in Funding Extramural Research

## Receipt and Review of Investigator-Initiated Applications

- **Communicating about Applications Prior to Submission**  
  - [Communication between Program Staff and Applicants](#)
  - [Communication between PDs and CSR \(Use of ARA Form\)](#)
  - [Communication between Applicants and CSR Staff](#)
- **Assigning Applications to Review Groups within NIH**  
  - [Processing Applications in the CSR Division of Receipt and Referral](#)
  - [Notifying Applicants about Assignment to Scientific Review Groups](#)
- **Processing Applications Assigned to NCI**  
  - [Receiving, Recording, and Assigning Applications](#)
  - [Accepting Applications](#)
  - [Changing the Status of Applications](#)

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<td align="top">
<h1><b>Receipt and Review of Investigator-Initia
Applications</b></h1>
<h2>
<a href="#1">Communicating about Applications f
<ul class="tight">
<p><a href="#1a">Communication between Program
<a href="#1b"><br>
Communication between PDs and CSR (Use of ARF
Communication between Applicants and CSR Sta
</ul>
<h2>
<a href="#2">Assigning Applications to Review (
<ul class="tight">
<p><a href="#2a">Processing Applications in the
    
```

See page xxi  
for detailed descriptions  
of the rating scales  
**12340**