

UsableNet  
LIFT Evaluation Report of

**<http://www.ub.uio.no/english>**

generated on **2004-10-13**  
for **annabr@bredband.net**

## Table of Contents











<a href="#"><u>LIFT Evaluation Report of <a href="http://www.ub.uio.no/english">http://www.ub.uio.no/english</a></u></a> .....	1
<a href="#"><u>Summary report</u></a> .....	1
<a href="#"><u>Page issues</u></a> .....	1
<a href="#"><u>Test: Non spacer IMG with valid ALT</u></a> .....	1
<a href="#"><u>Test: Non spacer IMG needs LONGDESC</u></a> .....	3
<a href="#"><u>Test: Non spacer IMG with equivalent ALT</u></a> .....	4
<a href="#"><u>Test: Data table should have headers</u></a> .....	6
<a href="#"><u>Test: Clarify natural language usage</u></a> .....	8
<a href="#"><u>Test: Use clear language for site's content</u></a> .....	9
<a href="#"><u>Test: Colors are visible</u></a> .....	10
<a href="#"><u>Test: Color is not essential</u></a> .....	11
<a href="#"><u>Test: Form is accessible</u></a> .....	11
<a href="#"><u>Test: Style sheets should not be necessary</u></a> .....	13

# LIFT Evaluation Report of <http://www.ub.uio.no/english>

## Summary report

Total issues: <b>16</b>	Manual issues:	<b>15</b>
-------------------------	----------------	-----------

## Page issues

status	test name	priority	guideline	issues
	Non spacer IMG with valid ALT	1	508(a) WCAG(1.1)	1
	Non spacer IMG needs LONGDESC	1	508(a) WCAG(1.1)	4
	Non spacer IMG with equivalent ALT	1	508(a) WCAG(1.1)	3
	Data table should have headers	1	508(g) WCAG(5.1)	2
	Clarify natural language usage	1	WCAG(4.1)	1
	Use clear language for site's content	1	WCAG(14.1)	1
	Colors are visible	1	508(c) WCAG(2.2)	1
	Color is not essential	1	508(c) WCAG(2.1)	1
	Form is accessible	1	508(n)	1
	Style sheets should not be necessary	1	508(d) WCAG(6.1)	1

## Test: Non spacer IMG with valid ALT

 Failed issue	Priority: <b>1</b>	Guideline: <b>508(a) WCAG(1.1)</b>
--	--------------------	--

### Description:

Images included in this document don't have corresponding *valid* textual descriptions. A *valid description* is a string value of the ALT attribute that:

- is not the empty string ("");
- is not a string with 1 or more spaces (" ");
- is not the name of the file containing the image;
- does not say only which is the size of the image file;
- is not longer than 150 characters (this is actually only a suggestion: it is not required by WCAG 1.0 nor 508 standard).

The image appears to have more than a decorative role (i.e. it is not a *spacer*).

### List of issues:

- (*line: 139*) ALT of image is the blank string " ".  
index-filer/[hvit.gif](#)

### How to fix:

Add the ALT attribute to the IMG tag. Remember that:

- the description should explain the role of the image in the page. Imagine to listen over the phone the page content and the image description;
- you can also check the text-only version of a page by using the **LIFT Online** service at [www.usablenet.com/products\\_services](http://www.usablenet.com/products_services) service that presents a page as would be displayed by the lynx textual browser;
- if the image is used as the content of a link and you provide link text too, use a space as the ALT attribute value of the IMG element. In such a case link text should be the alternative description for the image;
- Be brief. Consider that images like logos are repeated on every page of the site, and people would have to listen to the same description over and over;
- As a rough guideline, for buttons use the same text that is shown by the image;
- ALT descriptions are not interpreted by browsers and should not include HTML tags. Embedded tags can only confuse users and maybe search engines as well;
- Too long ALT descriptions may be truncated by browsers and increase the time required to download the page (J. Nielsen in his book [www.useit.com/jakob/webusability](http://www.useit.com/jakob/webusability) suggests to use less than 10 words and 64 characters).;
- Images used solely for decorative purposes (called spacers) should include an empty ALT string ("") so that they are not considered by screen-readers. Similarly for images like bullets;
- **BEWARE**: the ALT attribute should be the empty string ("") in cases where the image is already described by surrounding text;
- **BEWARE**: all images included in A links (including transparent GIFs) need to have valid ALTs describing the link destination.

### Explanation:

The ALT attribute describes the associated image so that users without graphics-enabled browsers can still effectively navigate the page. The advent of hand-held, text-only browsers makes the use of the ALT descriptions more important now than ever.

For **hidden links**, that is normal A tags whose label is a spacer, it is important that the ALT attribute of the image exists and describes the destination of the link. (Hidden links is a technique that can be used to fulfill the 508 rule 1194.22(o) "A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links" and WAI checkpoint 13.6.)

ALT descriptions are displayed before the associated image, which is helpful when image download and display takes several seconds.

Adding keywords to the ALT attribute can also improve the page listing in some search engine.

Beware that for images that play only a decorative role in the page (like *spacers* and *bullets*) it is recommended to define an empty ALT (i.e. ALT=" ") so that reading browsers would not bother users by

uttering things like "\*" or ">".

You can check the text-only version of a page by using the [LIFT Online](#) service that presents a page as would be displayed by the [lynx textual browser](#).

### Learn More:

- the W3C on [how to include objects and images](#);
- the HTML 4.0 standard on the [IMG tag](#);
- the W3C Accessibility guidelines on [ALT descriptions](#);
- the W3C on [how to define the ALT attribute](#);
- a tutorial on the [use of ALT text in IMGs](#);
- another tutorial on [alternative content for graphics](#) rich of examples;
- a discussion on [empty vs blank](#) ALT descriptions;
- the [508 standard](#);
- J. Nielsen's Alert Box on [ALT descriptions](#).

## Test: Non spacer IMG needs LONGDESC

 Pending issue: it needs to be manually checked	Priority: 1	Guideline: <b>508(a)</b> WCAG(1.1)
--	-------------	---------------------------------------

### Description:

Image does not have a *longdesc* attribute, linking it to an HTML file providing a detailed description that would not fit in the ALT attribute.

### List of issues (Manual inspection required):

- (*line: 19*) Non spacer image may need a LONGDESC attribute.  
[index-filer/logo\\_sortbg.gif](#)
- (*line: 23*) Non spacer image may need a LONGDESC attribute.  
[index-filer/uio\\_eng.gif](#)
- (*line: 53*) Non spacer image may need a LONGDESC attribute.  
[index-filer/university\\_library.gif](#)
- (*line: 139*) Non spacer image may need a LONGDESC attribute.  
[index-filer/hvit.gif](#)

### How to check:

Please check if the image presents information that is *not included* in the page or in the *text equivalent* (i.e. the ALT attribute) for the image.

If describing the image will add information not present in the text of the page, then you need to provide a description of the image. The amount of information in the image and the context in which it will be used will determine how detailed the description should be.

However, since not many browsers at the moment support the `longdesc` attribute, you may also want to place, near the image, a so called D-link, a normal textual link with label "D" pointing to an HTML page providing a full image description. Example:

```
<IMG src="chart.gif" alt="chart of beverages distribution"
longdesc="chart.html"><A href="chart.html">D</A>
```

Alternatively, placing a rich textual description close to the image (like a caption) is a viable solution. In such a case you don't need the `longdesc` attribute nor the D-link.

### Explanation:

The ALT attribute cannot be used to provide a full length description of the content of an image. Think of a diagram, a histogram or a chart. Or even a product picture in an online catalog. To describe its content you need more flexibility.

The *longdesc* attribute can be used to provide a long description of the associated image that would not fit in the ALT attribute. By including `longdesc="any_HTML_file"` in your IMG tag you can link the image to the HTML file containing a formatted description of the image. The long description (unlike the ALT attribute) can contain HTML code, with links to other resources, formatting instructions, etc.

However, since not many browsers at the moment support the `longdesc` attribute, you may also want to place, near the image, a so called D-link, a normal textual link with label "D" pointing to an HTML page providing a full image description. Example:

```
<IMG src="chart.gif" alt="chart of beverages distribution"
longdesc="chart.html"><A href="chart.html">D</A>
```


Alternatively, placing a rich textual description close to the image (like a caption) is a viable solution. In such a case you don't need the `longdesc` attribute or the D-link.

Notice that adding a good alternative description to images is very important nowadays as many users, for one reason or the other, are not able to take advantage of graphics (not the least, users of cellular phones, PDAs, browsers installed in cars, etc.)

### Learn More:

- the HTML 4.0 standard on the [IMG tag](#);
- the HTML 4.0 standard on the [longdesc attribute](#);
- the W3C on [how to define the longdesc attribute](#);
- some examples about [LONGDESC and D-links](#);
- the W3C on [how to define the ALT attribute](#).

## Test: Non spacer IMG with equivalent ALT

 Pending issue: it needs to be manually checked	Priority: 1	Guideline: 508(a) WCAG(1.1)
--	-------------	--------------------------------

## Description:

The image appears to have more than a decorative role (i.e. it is not a *spacer*). It should have an equivalent textual description.

## List of issues (Manual inspection required):

- (line: 19) *ALT*="UiOs logo"  
index-filer/[logo\\_sortbg.gif](#)
- (line: 23) *ALT*="Universitetet i Oslo"  
index-filer/[uio\\_eng.gif](#)
- (line: 53) *ALT*="University library"  
index-filer/[university\\_library.gif](#)

## How to check:

Please check if the current ALT description conveys the same meaning of the image.

It should explain the role the image plays in the page: why it's there, what does it represent, how does it present the information. (Imagine hearing the description over the phone.)

If the image is used as the content of a link and you provide link text too, use a space as the ALT attribute value of the IMG element. In such a case link text should be the alternative description for the image.

If the image is used as a *hidden link*, then its ALT should describe the link destination.

However if the image has only decorative purposes (like bullets), its ALT string should be the *empty string* ("") or the *blank* one (" ").

## Explanation:

The ALT attribute describes the associated image so that users without graphics-enabled browsers can still effectively navigate the page.

Therefore the description should convey the same information as the image and it should explain the role the image plays in the page: why it's there, what does it represent, how does it present the information.

If the image is used within a *hidden link* (i.e. a normal A tag with a spacer as label), then its ALT should describe the link destination. The ALT content is all that non-graphical browsers show for a hidden link. (Hidden links is a technique that can be used to fulfill the 508 rule 1194.22(o) "A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links" and WAI checkpoint 13.6.)

Notice that adding a good alternative description to images is very important nowadays as many users, for one reason or the other, are not able to take advantage of graphics (not least, users of cellular phones, PDAs, browsers installed in cars, etc.).

## Learn More:

- the W3C on [how to include objects and images](#);
- the HTML 4.0 standard on the [IMG tag](#);
- the W3C Accessibility guidelines on [ALT descriptions](#);
- the W3C on [how to define the ALT attribute](#);

- a tutorial on the [use of ALT text in IMGs](#);
- another tutorial on [alternative content for graphics](#) rich of examples;
- J. Nielsen's Alert Box on [ALT descriptions](#);
- the [508 standard](#).

## Test: Data table should have headers



Pending issue: it needs to be manually checked

Priority: 1

Guideline: **508(g)**  
**WCAG(5.1)**

### Description:

The page includes a table that does not have specific cells marked as headers (i.e. TH elements). Please check if the table is used to present data and in such a case provide header information.

### List of issues (Manual inspection required):

- (**line: 15**) The page contains a table that might be used to present data. If this is the case, then the table has to have headers for rows and columns (i.e. TH elements).

```
<TABLE BORDER="0" CELLPADDING="0" CELLSPACING="0" WIDTH="100%">
<TBODY>
<TR>
<TD ALIGN="right
```

- (**line: 58**) The page contains a table that might be used to present data. If this is the case, then the table has to have headers for rows and columns (i.e. TH elements).

```
<TABLE BORDER="0" CELLPADDING="0" CELLSPACING="0" WIDTH="100%">
<TBODY>
<TR>
<TD ROWSPAN="2"
```

### How to check:

Please verify if the table is used to arrange and present data. If not, skip this problem.

Otherwise, make sure that each row and column has appropriate headers.

This is accomplished (in the simplest way) by defining a table row of cells marked with TH tag and having the first cell of each other row marked with TH again.

In addition:

- TH elements should set the ID attribute for identification;
- TD elements should set the HEADERS attribute to refer to the appropriate TH elements.

Alternatively the TH element may specify a SCOPE='col' or SCOPE='row' attribute meaning that the header refers to the entire column or row, respectively.

It might be a good idea to use the attribute **ABBR** for TH in order to provide a more concise description of the header that can be repeated over and over by specialized browsers.

### **Explanation:**

There are two flavors of tables that can be used in an HTML page:

**Data tables** are used to present data such as a bus schedule, a comparison of regional sales figures, or a listing of employee contact information. Cells in data tables are related to each other and usually must be perceived as a group. **Layout tables** on the other hand are used to arrange images and text on a page according to set grid. Each cell in a layout table is normally independent and can be viewed on its own.

Data tables are used to convey information in a bidirectional medium, which often is not available. Consider for example:

- a textual browser that may not align correctly rows and columns (for example because the content of a cell wraps);
- a reading browser, that has to sequentially read the content of the table;
- a braille reader, that also sequentially scans the table;
- a browser with a very small display (like a PDA or a cellular phone) that shows only a limited portion of the table.

In all these cases the user has to mentally remember the context of the cell (which row and which column does it refer to?). This requirement may be too strong, for example, when the table is large, when the user is under stress, or is impatient to find the needed information.

Consider also that in these situations users might not be able to move directly from one cell of the table to any other. They are constrained to move sequentially, from one cell to its neighbors only (for example within the same row).

Layout table, on the other hand, are not used to convey information and therefore they don't need to be accessible. Notice however that W3C suggests to use styles to layout the content of a page: [positioning things with styles](#).

Notice also that layout tables are **linearized** by non-graphical browsers, that is the content of their cells are shown in the sequence they appear in the HTML file. This means that if they are buttons, they may be shown in a sequence that is far from being usable. See a [detailed discussion](#).

### **Learn More:**

- the HTML 4.0 standard on [tables in general](#);
- the HTML 4.0 standard on the [TH and TD elements](#);
- the HTML 4.0 standard on [table rendering](#) by various types of browsers;
- the W3C/WAI on [how to make accessible data tables](#);
- a [detailed discussion](#) on linearizing layout tables;
- you can also check how tables are linearized by using the [LIFT Online](#) service that presents a page as would be displayed by the [lynx textual browser](#).

## Test: Clarify natural language usage



Pending issue: it needs to be manually checked

Priority: 1 Guideline: WCAG(4.1)

### Description:

Please check if the page contains chunks of text written using different natural languages (i.e. English, French, Spanish, etc.). If so, then every chunk should be contained in a tag with a *lang* attribute.

### How to check:

Clearly identify changes in the natural language of a document's text and any text equivalents:

- identify chunks of text written using different natural languages;
- add a *lang* attribute to the innermost element containing the text for each chunk identified previously.

### Explanation:

If you use a number of different languages on a page, make sure that any changes in language are clearly identified by using the *lang* attribute.

Identifying changes in language is important for a number of reasons:

- users who are reading the document in braille will be able to substitute the appropriate control codes (markup) where language changes occur to ensure that the braille translation software will generate the correct characters (accented characters, for instance);
- similarly, speech synthesizers that *speak* multiple languages will be able to generate the text in the appropriate accent with proper pronunciation. If changes are not marked, the synthesizer will pronounce the words in the language it works in, usually producing sounds that cannot be understood;
- users who are unable to translate between languages themselves, will be able to have unfamiliar languages translated by machine translators.

Consider that more and more sites will be accessed through audio only devices (for example by telephone).

The *lang* attribute may be helpful in many other situations:

- assisting search engines;
- helping a browser select glyph variants for high quality typography;
- helping a browser choose a set of quotation marks;
- helping a browser make decisions about hyphenation, ligatures, and spacing;
- assisting spell checkers and grammar checkers.

### Learn More:

- the HTML 4.0 standard on the [lang](#) attribute;
- the W3C Accessibility [Guideline 4](#);
- the W3C HTML techniques on [identifying changes in language](#).

## Test: Use clear language for site's content



Pending issue: it needs to be manually checked

Priority: 1

Guideline:  
WCAG(14.1)

### Description:

Consistent page layout, recognizable graphics, and easy to understand language benefit all users. In particular, they help people with cognitive disabilities or who have difficulty reading.

Using clear and simple language promotes effective communication. Access to written information can be difficult for people who have cognitive or learning disabilities. Using clear and simple language also benefits people whose first language differs from your own, including those people who communicate primarily in sign language.

### How to check:

The page contains text: please check if it is easy to read by everyone, especially by people with reading and/or cognitive disabilities.

### Explanation:

The following are some of the writing style suggestions that should help make the content of your site easier to read.

- Strive for clear and accurate headings and link descriptions (some users browse by jumping from link to link and listening only to link text).
- State the topic of the sentence or paragraph at the beginning of the sentence or paragraph (this is called "front-loading"). This will help both people who are skimming visually, but also people who use speech synthesizers.
- Limit each paragraph to one main idea.
- Avoid slang, jargon, and specialized meanings of familiar words, unless defined within your document.
- Favor words that are commonly used. For example, use "begin" rather than "commence" or use "try" rather than "endeavor".

To help determine whether your document is easy to read, consider using the [Gunning-Fog](#) reading measure. This algorithm, when run on a text, generally produces a lower score when content is easier to read. If you find your Index soaring into the [teens](#) (or higher!), beware: you've lost most of your audience in the dense fog!

### Learn More:

- the W3C Accessibility [Guideline 14](#);
- the W3C on [Writing style](#);
- the [Gunning-Fog](#) reading measure, an example on [how it works](#).

## Test: Colors are visible



Pending issue: it needs to be manually checked

Priority: 1

Guideline: **508(c)**  
**WCAG(2.2)**

### Description:

The page uses some colors and there might be cases where the contrast between foreground and background colors is not sufficient to differentiate them.

### How to check:

Please check that colors and colored items in the page can be clearly differentiated in all the possible contexts in which users may be using the page. Make sure that the contrast between foreground and background items is conveyed by other means in addition to colors, like different font styles, font sizes, font faces.

Easy ways to test the page are:

- view the page on a black and white screen and go through each of its elements;
- print the page on a black and white printer;
- take the printout and copy it two or three times to see how it degrades. This will show you where you need to add redundant cues (like underlying links) or whether the cues are too small or indistinct to hold up well.

### Explanation:

There are many situations where a bad choice of colors hinders perception and comprehension of some information item or image in a page.

The bad choice may depend on many factors including:

- bad choice of background/foreground colors;
- the user uses a screen incapable of rendering colors with the same quality as the one used by the page designer;
- the user is accessing the page via a black and white PDA or cell phone;
- the user needs to print the page on a black and white printer;
- the user is color-blind.

### Learn More:

- the HTML 4.0 standard on [color names and color usage](#);
- the HTML 4.0 (deprecated) [attribute to specify background color](#);
- the [WAI guideline](#) on accessible color usage;
- specific [techniques](#) suggested by WAI to handle colors in accessible pages;

## Test: Color is not essential



Pending issue: it needs to be manually checked

Priority: 1

Guideline: **508(c)**  
**WCAG(2.1)**

### Description:

The page contains colors so checks must be made that the information conveyed with the page does not relies on those colors.

### How to check:

Please check that the page can be understood and navigated even if users do not have the ability to identify specific colors or differentiate between colors.

Easy ways to test the page are:

- view the page on a black and white screen and go through each of its elements;
- print the page on a black and white printer;
- scan the page and find sentences like *press the red button*.

### Explanation:

There are many situations where a person cannot make use of any or some colors. These include:

- bad choice of background/foreground colors;
- people using a textual browser;
- people listening to a reading browser;
- people using a black and white display, like a PDA or cell phone;
- color-blind people;
- poorly sighted or blind people.

Colors on a page should be used only as decorative, or graphically enhancing devices. Not for encoding information.

### Learn More:

- the HTML 4.0 standard on [color names and color usage](#);
- the HTML 4.0 (deprecated) [attribute to specify background color](#);
- the [WAI guideline](#) on accessible color usage;
- specific [techniques](#) suggested by WAI to handle colors in accessible pages.

## Test: Form is accessible



Pending issue: it needs to be manually checked

Priority: 1

Guideline: **508(n)**

## Description:

The page contains a FORM element whose components appears to be laid out by a table. It may be the case that the table, when linearized, makes the form not usable any more (for example because a field is displaced from its prompt).

## List of issues (Manual inspection required):

- (**line: 14**) Check if the linearized version of the form is still usable.

Elements of FORM inside a table:

- ◆ (**line: 26**): <INPUT CLASS="Topsoek" NAME="text" SIZE="20">
- ◆ (**line: 39**): <INPUT ALIGN="bottom" ALT="SÃ,k" CLASS="ImgSoekBorderNull" NAME="soek" TYPE="submit" VALUE="SÃ,k">
- ◆ (**line: 28**): <SELECT CLASS="Topsoek" NAME="engine" SIZE="1">

```
<FORM ACTION="http://sok.uio.no/perl/velgsok.pl">
<TABLE BORDER="0" CELLPADDING="0" CELLSPACING="0
```

## How to check:

Please check that the form components (prompts and controls) are properly rendered also by non graphically enabled browsers. In particular check that the table used to layout the form can be properly *linearized*. A simple way to do it is simply to strip the table markup from the table. Another quick test is to run a piece of paper down the page and read your table line by line.

You can check how tables and forms are linearized by using the *LIFT Online* service at [www.usablenet.com/products\\_services](http://www.usablenet.com/products_services) that presents a page as would be displayed by the lynx textual browser.

## Explanation:

Using a TABLE element to layout FORM components may lead to forms that are not usable. This may happen if the *prompt* of a field, check-box, radio-button (i.e. the description of the meaning of the input control) is laid out far away from the input control it refers to. Such forms will be not usable at all by any users of browsers unable to lay out the table as the web designer would expect. Consider that this may happen when the user is accessing the page via a reading browser or via a device with a small screen (a PDA, a cell phone).

See a [detailed discussion](#) on the effect of layout tables on navigation.

You can check how forms are linearized by using the [LIFT Online](#) service that presents a page as would be displayed by the [lynx textual browser](#).

Another thing to consider when making a form accessible is the *tabbing order* of its elements. Usually by pressing the TAB key on the keyboard the user is able to move sequentially from one component to the next one according to the order in which they are defined in the HTML page. Sometimes, however, a designer might want to specify a different ordering, and this can be achieved via the `tabindex` attribute set for INPUT, A, BUTTON, AREA, OBJECT, SELECT, TEXTAREA elements inside a FORM.

Finally, for the same kinds of elements inside a FORM, the designer may associate *keyboard accelerators* to activate those elements via the `accesskey` attribute.

### Learn More:

- the HTML 4.0 standard on [forms in general](#) ;
- the HTML 4.0 standard on the [FORM tag](#);
- the HTML 4.0 standard on the [LABEL tag](#) that can be used to associate a prompt to an input control;
- the HTML 4.0 standard on the [TABINDEX attribute](#);
- the HTML 4.0 standard on the [ACCESSKEY attribute](#);
- a [detailed discussion](#) on linearizing tables.

## Test: Style sheets should not be necessary



Pending issue: it needs to be manually checked

Priority: 1

Guideline: **508(d)**  
**WCAG(6.1)**

### Description:

The page requires the use of Cascade Style Sheets (CSS). Please verify if the page can be understood and navigated without applying style specifications.

### List of issues (Manual inspection required):

- (*line: 7*) The page uses style sheets to present its content. There might be browsers unable to understand style sheets or provided style sheets may conflict with user-specified style information.

```
<LINK HREF="index-filer/portal.css" REL="styleshe
```

### How to check:

Please check that this document can be read without style sheets.

### Explanation:

Cascade Style Sheets (CSS) is a great technology for separating content and its structure from presentation. Usually, when content is organized logically, it will be rendered in a meaningful order when style sheets are turned off or not supported. However there may be situations where CSS gets in the way, limiting accessibility to a web page.

- old browsers do not support CSS, and thus page authors should not rely on styles to convey information or enable navigation;
- user-defined style information (like font size, font color) should be unaffected by styles specified in the page.

### Learn More:

- the HTML 4.0 standard on [adding styles to documents](#);
- the HTML 4.0 standard on [the STYLE element](#);
- the HTML 4.0 standard on [the style attribute](#);
- what the W3C says about [browsers default styles](#);
- the W3C/WAI [Guideline 6](#) and Checkpoint 6.1;
- W3C/WAI suggested techniques for [appropriate use of content with CSS styles](#);
- W3C/WAI suggested techniques for [specifying horizontal rules](#).