

## Idaho.gov – Templates

<http://webmaster.idaho.gov/templates>

### Planning for your site

- ✓ Plan your content
- ✓ Know the best practices
- ✓ Prepare a test area
- ✓ Use recommended software

### Design choices

- ✓ Pick a color palette
- ✓ Choose a header style. Customize with your own background.
- ✓ Choose a background style. Make sure you have permission to use any photographs.
- ✓ Extras can be found under “Additions” on [webmaster.idaho.gov/templates](http://webmaster.idaho.gov/templates)

### Who do I contact?

A list of roles and contact information for your template and web related needs.

## Plan your content

The questions below are designed to aid you in working with your agency's decision-makers towards creating a site that works for your visitors.

### Know your audience

- Who visits your site and what are they looking for? Think about the different types of visitors that make up your audience and what their goals are.
- Talk to your customer-facing employees for a good peek into your audience, their questions and their needs.
- Is there information people currently have a difficult time finding on your site? Address this in your redesign.
- Looking at the keyword/search portion of your web statistics will show you the words people use when looking for your site.
- You may need to direct visitors to content at another agency that they mistakenly look for on your website.

### Keep the good

- What parts of your site are currently working well? Make sure that you keep the aspects of your website that people find helpful.
- Look at your web statistics. The top entry pages have been bookmarked by your users, so be sure to keep this type of information at the same address, create a redirect, or make a 404 page that takes this type of visitor into consideration.

### Do you need new content?

- Take an inventory of your current website content and see what needs to be updated, what should be archived, and any new content that needs to be written.
- Consider re-launching with minor updates and adding new content in a phased way if you need a lot of new information added to your new website.

### Your message, look and communications

- What is the most important work your agency performs? Communicate this concisely on the homepage.
- If you have a style, logo or color that your agency uses in communications, ensure the website continues this.
- Use the background image and header of the templates to convey your agency's work. Make it yours!

### Hosting and search

- Free hosting for state agencies is available from the CIO's office. <http://cio.idaho.gov/>
- Access Idaho offers Google search for your site; it is \$50 a month. <http://idaho.gov/webmaster/google.html>

## Best practices

### Leave the classes and divs with their current names.

From time to time, we will make small improvements to the CSS to ensure that it works properly in new browsers, to enhance the style, or to add new functionality. If you rename the classes and divs, these future enhancements will not work.

### For agency-specific style changes, add your own style sheet.

Create a style sheet named `youragency.css` and link to in the `dohead.inc` file below the IE stylesheets. This will add your style sheet to every page in your website and will give your styles priority.

Add styles or modify existing styles to meet your agency's needs. This way, you can update your templates with any new CSS changes when those are made without the change affecting any personalization you have done.

### You must have copyright to the photos you use

Keep the copyright documents to all photos on your site or obtain written permission from the photographer before using it on your site. Agencies have been sued over photography copyrights.

### Add titles to your pages

The title tag `<title>` on a webpage is used :

- By search engines as the linked results
- By your visitors when they bookmark
- By search engines as key search terms

It is very important that your pages have titles that make sense for that page. The title of a page shows at the top of your Dreamweaver screen to the right of Code | Split | Design. Place the page topic first in your title, followed by your agency name: This Page Topic – Your Agency.

### Do not link "click here"

Make sure your linked words describe where the link goes. Reader software for the blind reads the list of linked words on the page, and the visitor will have no idea where "click here" links to. Search engines also use linked words as search criteria, which has lead accessibility professionals to term Google, "the largest blind user on the web."

### Checklist

Review the checklists posted on the Accessibility page on [webmaster.idaho.gov](http://webmaster.idaho.gov) to ensure you are meeting standards.

At minimum, you will want to be sure your site is still usable with CSS, javascript and images turned off.

## Start your work in a test area

You will want to work in an area that is not visible to the general public, where you can show others your work, and where you can safely save your work.

To view server-side includes (which the default templates download uses), you will want to put your test website on a server.

This could be:

- A development area on your local server
- A development area on the servers at the CIO's office.  
[http://cio.idaho.gov/products\\_and\\_services/website\\_hosting.htm](http://cio.idaho.gov/products_and_services/website_hosting.htm)  
[http://cio.idaho.gov/products\\_and\\_services/website\\_hosting.htm](http://cio.idaho.gov/products_and_services/website_hosting.htm)

In a pinch, you can also use your own workstation to start the new website. You will only be able to see the server-side includes through Dreamweaver, and not using the "preview" function. It may look a little off, as they work best when a server puts all the pieces together.

## Recommended Software

The Office of the CIO and Access Idaho recommend Dreamweaver (or Contribute) as a website editor. Contact the Office of the CIO for information on purchasing within the state's contract.

[http://cio.idaho.gov/customer\\_service/contact\\_us.htm](http://cio.idaho.gov/customer_service/contact_us.htm).

## Domain Names

The Office of the CIO can help state agencies obtain an Idaho.gov, state.id.us or other .gov domain name. Public agencies can request an id.gov domain name. For more information:

[http://cio.idaho.gov/products\\_and\\_services/domain\\_name\\_services/index.htm](http://cio.idaho.gov/products_and_services/domain_name_services/index.htm)

## Alternate Include Options

The Office of the CIO has created alternate include styles to the default download of server-side includes. You will find these at:

<http://cio.idaho.gov/template/>

## Design Choices

See [webmaster.idaho.gov/templates](http://webmaster.idaho.gov/templates) to browse styles and additional information.

<p>» Browse styles</p> <p><b>Palette</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> Sawtooth</li><li><input type="radio"/> Bluebird</li><li><input type="radio"/> Ponderosa</li><li><input type="radio"/> Garnet</li><li><input type="radio"/> Stanley</li></ul>	<p>» Header &amp; Background</p> <p><b>Header</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> One line</li><li><input type="radio"/> Two lines - top bigger</li><li><input type="radio"/> Two lines - bottom bigger</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Default (mtn)</li><li><input type="radio"/> Plain</li><li><input type="radio"/> Custom</li></ul>	<p>» Header &amp; Background</p> <p><b>Background</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> Solid color</li><li><input type="radio"/> Fourth of July Lake</li><li><input type="radio"/> Custom</li></ul>	<p>» Additions</p> <p><b>Navigation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> Left side</li><li><input type="radio"/> Left side with fly-outs</li><li><input type="radio"/> Horizontal</li><li><input type="radio"/> Horizontal with drop-downs</li></ul>
---	---	--	---

## Who Do I Contact?

Content Assistance	<a href="#">Access Idaho</a>	
Design Assistance	<a href="#">Access Idaho</a>	
Best Practices	<a href="#">AI/CIO</a>	
Template Criteria	<a href="#">Office of the CIO</a>	(Bill Farnsworth)
Test Area Server or Hosting	<a href="#">Office of the CIO</a>	<a href="http://cio.idaho.gov/products_and_services/website_hosting.htm">http://cio.idaho.gov/products_and_services/website_hosting.htm</a>
Software Purchasing	<a href="#">Office of the CIO</a>	<a href="http://cio.idaho.gov/products_and_services/purchasing.htm">http://cio.idaho.gov/products_and_services/purchasing.htm</a>
Domain Name	<a href="#">Office of the CIO</a>	<a href="http://cio.idaho.gov/products_and_services/domain_name_services/index.htm">http://cio.idaho.gov/products_and_services/domain_name_services/index.htm</a>
Google Search	<a href="#">Access Idaho</a>	(Rich Steckler)
Payment Engine	<a href="#">Access Idaho</a>	(Rich Steckler)

### Office of the CIO

[Bill Farnsworth](#), Lead (208) 332-1878

[Jon Eckerle](#), Hostmaster (208) 332-1855

[Brigitte Teets](#), Hostmaster (208) 332-1834

### Access Idaho

[creative@accessidaho.org](mailto:creative@accessidaho.org)

Marlene Mussler-Wright, Creative Director (208) 332-0102 x114

Julie Smith, Front End Developer (208) 332-0102 x123

Rich Steckler, Marketing Director (208) 332-0102 x113

## Policies

New State Policies, Standards and Guidelines for Web Publishing were passed by ITRMC in June.

Contact Bill Farnsworth to get a copy of these. All webmasters for State of Idaho web sites should read and understand these.