

Style Guide

AAA.com

<http://www.aaa.com/>

Table of Contents

1. LAYOUT.....	2
1.1 Page Layout	2
1.2 Form Layout.....	2
2. TEXT APPEARANCE.....	3
2.1 Fonts.....	3
2.2 Graphical text.....	4
3. NAVIGATION.....	4
3.1 Technology	4
4. FORM INTERACTION.....	5
4.1 Technology	5
4.2 Tab Ordering.....	5
4.3 Buttons	5
4.4 Text input Fields	6
4.5 Menus.....	6
4.6 Action Confirmation	6
4.7 Access Keys	6

Dan Shields, Martinho Tenfen

Usability Specialists

November 10, 2004

This style guide contains rules for the design and implementation for all pages and processes in the AAA.com website. This document is intended to serve as reference for the AAA.com website developers. All rules should be followed when implanting any changes or adding additional pages or functionality.

Rules for Interface/Interaction Design

1. Layout

1.1 Page Layout

1.1.1 Header

- **Each page of the website must have the same header, containing the AAA logo on the left side that is 135px wide and 84px in height. Next to the logo there will be an image 452px in width and 84px in height.** The images will be different on every page but must follow these dimensions to keep the layout consistent.

1.1.2 Body

- **The Body on all pages will consist of three columns. The left column containing the local navigation and must be 155px in width. The middle will contain all content and must be 362px in width. The third column will contain any additional forms, cross links, or sponsored ads and will.** There won't always be a left column containing local navigation, this will occur only when there is a form process that need the additional space. There is not a need for local navigation in these processes.

1.1.3 Footer

- **The Footer will be placed after all three columns of the body. This area will include the bottom navigation and copyright information. This must be centered on the page.**

1.2 Form Layout

1.2.1 Chunking

- **Forms will be broken into multiple steps if the process has more then one section to fill out.** This is not necessary if there are (e.g., two sections with only 3 fields to fill out each). The process must be broken into steps if there is scrolling past the fold of the page at 800x600 with multiple sections.

1.2.2 Starting the form

- **Begin the form with 1-3 introductory sentences. The first sentence will explain what the form is. The second will inform any details to user to any specific constraints (e.g., which users should not fill out the form.). The third sentence will contain instructions to specific details of that form. The first sentence will be mandatory, while the second and third sentences are included as necessary.** These sentences will help the user understand exactly what the form is about and what specific details should be known to fill it out correctly.

1.2.3 Alignment

- **All forms will be aligned to the center of the page or box that it is located.** This is done except for where a

form is located in a box that the form fields must be moved farther to the right to allow the labels more room to be able to fit on one line. This also does not apply for forms that appear on a page that contains content such as the 'Savings' page where there is a form then preceding the form the content starts. These page forms will align to the left

- **All form fields must align to the left edge of each other fields.** Text area labels can span across the page, due to being longer than the average labels. Then the Text areas can align with the end of previous field labels. This allows the page to be balanced.

1.2.4 Required Input

2. Text Appearance

2.1 Fonts

- **Font family that is used is Verdana, Geneva, Lucida, Arial and Sans-serif for all HTML text.**
- **The font size of 12px is used for all text.** Footnotes and other secondary text, which are 10px or 11px. These font sizes can be read comfortably by most users.
- **Use 10px font for footnotes size.** These fonts can be distinguishing from the regular task questions giving the users a common sense of notice with italic font.

- **Use 11px red color font for errors notice.** This method will differentiate the notice errors from the regular task question, which uses 12px size and black color.

- **Underline texts that are links.** This applies to the most common hierarchy used in websites.
- **Bold face text is used for important parts of text, which enhances readability and scanning.** Text in bold provide a superior identification among the other text.

Logo	Masthead
Global Navigation	
Register for AAA Online	
Note: Membership is not required to register with AAA Online	

- **Do not use font sizes below 10px.** Text of this size is difficult to read and some users may not be able to read it at all.
- **Do not use underline in text if they are not a link.** Text underline users will confuse with a link.

2.2 Graphical text

- **Page Headers which are images will be 14px and must have alt text that tells what the header is.** This enhances readability and scanning. The alt text allows users who browse with images off or users who are blind, still be able to read page headers.

Logo	Masthead
Global Navigation	
Register for AAA Online	
Note: Membership is not required to register with AAA Online	

3. Navigation

3.1 Technology

- **Use Java Script rollover buttons in global navigation.** The principle is that users click on a button and a further multiple-item menu is revealed. Clicking or hovering over a menu item can reveal a further sub-menu. This type technology will differentiate the navigation from the text and content in the information area of the website.

MEMBERSHIP	TRAVEL	INSURANCE	AUTOS & DRIVING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auto Homeowners Boat owners Life Claims Policy Changes 			

- **Navigation divides into two parts horizontal and vertical.** Horizontal navigation applied to the global navigation it's natural for high-level navigation to sit above content. Vertical navigation applied to the local navigation.
- **Use different colors on the global navigation to differentiate one button from another.** Different colors provide a superior identification between labels in the navigation.
- **Mouse over on the local navigation gives an underline.** This method differentiate what label have been mouse over.
 - **12px Verdana font in the local navigation.** This font is applied to give a clear understanding of the words to users.

- **Capitalization for buttons and labels in the global navigation.** This enhances readability and scanning.
- **Use graphics on the global navigation.** Small graphics are given to present a easy target for users to scan.
- **Navigation uses the “L” style.** Top left to right and top to bottom on the left side of the page.
- **Use breadcrumb trail.** Shows were users are in a hierarchy and lets users click back to any point above.
- **Use tabs on the horizontal navigation bar.** They have some extra advantages over a line of links. Serve to show the active section/selection very clearly. Naturally have a working visual hierarchy, with a real-world connection that makes them extremely clear. As an example, a tab is normally attached to (part of) a folder or sheet in a binder, and physically labels everything in the folder, or on the sheet.

4. Form Interaction

4.1 Technology

- **Forms will be developed using XHTML and use JavaScript for validating.**
- **Databases will be used to process specific process which will return error free results to the user. Any service that is provided through AAA must be entered in the database and**

these databases must be tested to make sure the user will receive optimum results. These forms and databases must be developed to respond accordingly to human error such as common miss spellings and also return sufficient results (e.g., if a user searches for insurance claims, then insurance claims must be the first results)

4.2 Tab Ordering

- **Forms tab ordering will start from the first from element and move down the page in order of which form element is first.** When there is form elements that are side by side then the first element on the left will be tabbed first then the one on the right and will continue to move down the page once all horizontal elements have been tabbed through accordingly.

4.3 Buttons

- **On all multiple step form processes there will be a ‘Next’ button on the first page, then on all the following pages there will be both a ‘Previous’ button on the left and ‘Next’ on the right.** This allows users to navigate back and forth through the process in case any mistakes were made and the user would like to change
- **On all forms the final button that will be pressed will be a button that has the text ‘Submit’.** This is not true for forms in which there is search process being conducted. These forms will all have a button reading ‘Search’ for the ‘Submit’ button. This will provide consistency through out the site and not confuse the user with different text for submitting on every form.
- **There will be a ‘Reset’ button at the end of all forms.** This is appropriate for all but forms that are short in length (e.g., the ‘Login’ form and ‘Branch Locator’ Any form that has less then 5 fields to be inputted will not contain a reset button.

- **Radio buttons that are together will be separated with a line break.**



- **For radio and checkboxes place the field label to the right of the input field. Groups of checkboxes and radio buttons have their group label on the left.**
- **When appropriate include default values for radio buttons and check boxes**

4.4 Text input Fields

- **No input field will have a size greater than 30 characters or max length of 50 characters. For smaller input fields (e.g., city, zip code, and time) can be reduced to a size of 10-20 characters and a max length of 20-30 characters.**
- **When appropriate include default text in text input boxes**

4.5 Menus

- **Drop down menus should have a default value where appropriate or have the default value set to 'Select' for example 'Select Day' for a menu containing a list of days.**

This will indicate to the user that this field is required, while the label clarifies the purpose of the menu.

4.6 Action Confirmation

- **Have a confirmation page at the end of all forms. Before completing a task the user will be able to make sure there were no mistakes made and have a chance to go back and fix any errors.**
- **Along with the confirmation page show the final results of all services that send an email back to the user. This needs to be implanted in case a wrong email address was entered or some other error occurs. The user can print this page to have a copy of what was performed.**

4.7 Access Keys

- **Provide access keys for all input fields corresponding to a specific letter in the field label. These letters will be underlined.** This improves accessibility for users with disabilities.

