Web Site (Contest 4 Details)

The first deadline for Web sites is April 15, 2004. By that date, the teams must submit a URL of their Web site to the Organizers (see Timeliness section below). The Web sites will not be judged at that time. A team of Web development professionals at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) will evaluate the Web sites and provide feedback regarding content, design and architecture, and coding to the Solar Decathlon teams. Feedback will include suggestions for improving content, design, and architecture, as well as guidance for complying with coding requirements.

From April 15, 2004 until June 1, 2004, the NREL Web development team will review the Solar Decathlon teams' sites and provide suggestions to help the teams improve content, and design and architecture. What the teams do with those suggestions is up to them.

The NREL Web development team will also review Web site coding. Teams must implement the Web development team's suggestions to meet minimum coding standards on their Web sites. The Organizers will not link to any team's site from the main Solar Decathlon site if that team's site does not meet minimum coding requirements. The process of receiving approval for minimum coding requirements must be complete by June 1, 2004. At the final deadline in fall 2005 (exact date to be provided in 2005), the Solar Decathlon Communications judges will not judge any team's site that has not been linked from the main Solar Decathlon site.

The following details supplement and are organized according to the explanation of Contest 4: Communications—Web Site. Team Web sites also must comply with Solar Decathlon Regulation 3, Communications Materials.

Timeliness

- April 15, 2004 deadline: Submit URL of team Web site via email to ruby_nahan@nrel.gov by 5:00 p.m. MST on April 15, 2004.
- Fall 2005 deadline: The exact deadline for completion of Web sites for judging is dependent on the schedule for the Event, which will not be finalized until summer 2005. However, teams should plan on having their Web sites finalized before arriving at the Mall. They may continue to make changes and updates to their sites throughout the Event. All team Web sites linked from the Solar Decathlon site will be judged "as is" on the date that Web site judging begins. The date will be provided in 2005.

Content

April 15, 2004 Deadline

- All Web sites will be reviewed and feedback provided based on the criteria listed in Contest 4: Communications—Web Site, as well as on the additional criteria listed below.
- Web site content must identify the Project as the Solar Decathlon and recognize all Event Sponsors according to Regulation 3.2, Event-Sponsor Recognition.
- Web sites do not have to contain content that would compromise a team's competitive edge in the final competition.
- The site must consist of a minimum of five pages.
- For the purposes of this review, average consumers make up the target audience for the site.
- The Web site should discuss the team's Solar Decathlon project and the team's progress and accomplishments to date, including (but not limited to:
  - Team mission statement, goals, and values
  - Design philosophy
  - Team organization
  - Project timeline and accomplishments to date
  - Overall Project budget and Project costs to date
  - Systems, materials, product selection, and retail costs (all donations and in-kind contributions must have an associated retail cost).
  - Teams may easily look to information gathered for their first Project Summary to develop the required content for their Web sites.

Fall 2005 Deadline

- All sites will be judged based on the criteria listed in Contest 4: Communications—Web Site, as well as the additional criteria listed below.
- Web site content must identify the Project as being a Solar Decathlon Project and recognize all Event Sponsors according to Regulation 3.2, Event-Sponsor Recognition.
- Web site content should be complete and comprehensive. There will be no allowances made for exclusion of content to preserve a team's competitive edge in the Competition.
- The site must contain considerably more content at the final deadline than it did at the April 15, 2004 deadline, and that content should reflect the current state of the Project. There will be no minimum or maximum page requirements.

- For the purposes of the competition, average consumers make up the target audience for the site.
- The Web site should discuss the team's Solar Decathlon Project, the team's progress and accomplishments to date, and the team's plans for the Event and Competition, including, but not limited to:
    - Project history, including, but not limited to, Project mission statement, original design philosophy, original team organization, original Project timeline and budget
    - Current team organization (if the team organization has changed over time, indicate the changes, including team organization for the Event and Competition)
    - Project timeline and accomplishments to date (if the timeline has changed from its original, indicate those changes and their rationale)
    - Overall Project budget and Project costs to date (if the budget has changed over time, indicate those changes and why they have changed)
    - Explanation of the house's design, including the solar energy and energy efficiency design strategies and technologies used in the house and the rationale for the use of those strategies and technologies. Also include the influence of transport, Assembly, and Disassembly on the design
    - Systems, materials, product selection, and retail costs (all donations and in-kind contributions must have an associated retail cost); indicate any changes in materials and product selection over time, and the rationale for those changes)
    - House transportation, Assembly, and Disassembly plan
    - Planned competitive strategies for the Competition and their rationale
    - The Web site's audience (average consumers) must be able to find the answers to the following questions:
        - What is the cost of the entire Project?
        - What is the cost of constructing the house?
        - What is the retail value of all contributions and in-kind contributions?
        - Who made those contributions?
        - What is the retail value of the house?
    - Teams may easily look to information gathered for each Project Summary to assist in developing the required content for their Web sites.

Design and Architecture

- All sites will be reviewed and feedback provided based on the criteria listed in Contest 4: Communications—Web Site.
- Web site design must include use of the Solar Decathlon logo to properly identify the Project according to Regulation 3.2, Event-Sponsor Recognition.

Coding

- April 15, 2004 and fall 2005 deadlines: All sites are required to meet minimum coding standards, listed below. Web development experts at NREL will review and provide feedback on the teams' Web sites from April 15, 2004 to June 1, 2004 to ensure compliance with these standards. Team Web sites that do not meet the coding requirements will not be linked from the Solar Decathlon Web site. Team Web sites that are not linked from the Solar Decathlon Web site will not be judged in fall 2005. No further feedback will be offered after June 1, 2004. Team Web sites will be judged on their compliance with the coding standards in fall 2005.
- The minimum coding standards were selected from standards that apply to all new Web sites developed after summer 2003 for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's (EERE), as well as from Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Where applicable, links to relevant sections of the EERE Communications Standards Web site are provided for further information ℹ️. Where applicable, those standards that are part of section 508 have also been noted 508; for more information about section 508: http://www.section508.gov/.

Common Elements

- Provide a text or graphical link to Solar Decathlon's home page on your home page in either the header or the footer.
- At a minimum, provide an e-mail contact to your Webmaster as a graphical or text link on the home page of your site. ℹ️
- Footers on both home and second-level pages link properly
- Left navigation, if used, links correctly; on and off states work correctly and can be skipped by screen readers ℹ️
- Each page has a meaningful and unique <title> tag and uses EERE style. ℹ️

Page Layout

- Pages displays correctly (e.g. no horizontal scrolling required to view full width of page) in a standard browser set (i.e. Internet Explorer version 5 and higher for PC and Macintosh, Netscape version 7 and higher for PC) at an 800 x 600 resolution.
- Page information conveyed with color is also available without color, and foreground and background colors provide sufficient contrast. 508 ℹ️
- Every page contains a header consistent with its related pages and standards within a site.

Directories and Files

- File names do not contain upper-case letters, spaces, or special characters (e.g., & or $)
- HTML file names end in .html or .shtml, but not .htm
- All extraneous, non-linked files have been deleted

HTML Syntax

- HTML syntax follows HTML 4.01 transitional standards and has been validated by the W3C Validator.
- All non-empty elements are nested and closed properly.
- Provide row and column headings for all data tables. 508
- Images do not flicker with a frequency of greater than 2 Hz or lower than 55 Hz. 508

Links

- All links work throughout the site.
- Colors for hypertext links are consistent throughout the site.
- Links are coded relatively within the site.
- Anchor links are used to skip repetitive navigation links on all secondary header, footer, and other navigation. 508

Scripts/Applets/Dynamic Pages (CGI, JavaScript, Java etc.)

- Every script works correctly in the standard browser set (i.e. Internet Explorer version 5 and higher for PC and Macintosh, Netscape version 7 and higher for the PC).
- Content produced by scripting languages is accessible or has an accessible alternative. 508
- Pages requiring applets or plug-ins must provide a link to an accessible page where they can be downloaded. 508
- If a timed response is required, the user can request more time to complete an operation. 508
- Back button functionality is not impaired.

Forms

- Forms include text labels that correspond with form controls and markup to associate the two. 508

Graphics

- All images are stored in a subdirectory named 'images"
- Graphics have meaningful "alt" tags (use empty alt tags for spacer gifs and other unimportant graphics) 508
- Only client-side (rather than server-side) image maps are used 508
- Alt descriptions are used with all client side image maps. 508

Multimedia

- All
  - All multimedia files are stored in and referenced from a separate subdirectory
  - Equivalent alternatives are provided for all multimedia **508**
  - Pages requiring an applet or plug-in must provide a link to an accessible page where they the applet or plug-in can be downloaded. **508**
- QuickTime VR
  - All QuickTime VR's will scroll correctly
  - All QuickTime hotspots will work and go to the correct location.
- Flash
  - Animation has been tested on a browser without a plug-in downloaded (ensure download process flows smoothly, and that the animation works when loaded)
  - Check all links within Flash animation. If the user exits Flash animation early, ensure that they will goes to an appropriate page.
  - Sound works correctly
  - If Flash is on home page, there is an option provided to skip it
  - Non-home page animations use an interim page to determine if a visitor has a Flash plug-in. If not, they are directed to a download plug-in page or a non-Flash alternative
  - Provide an accessible equivalent to the flash animation. **508**

Documents for Downloading and Printing

- PDFs
  - All PDFs are stored and referenced from a sub-directory labeled "pdfs"
  - References to PDFs within the HTML document use a consistent format and link scheme throughout the site (e.g. [Title PDF 54 KB])
  - Every page with a PDF link must also include a link to Adobe's accessible download page: http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/alternate.html **508**

- Native file formats
  - Approved native file formats:
    - Microsoft Word (.doc), Excel (.xls), and PowerPoint (.ppt)
    - Corel WordPerfect (.wpd)
    - PC executable files (.exe) and archived files (.zip)
    - Macintosh archived files (.hqx, .bin, .sit, .sea)
  - Native file format documents are placed in a separate subdirectory such as a "docs" subdirectory
  - References to native files within the HTML document will use the following format and link scheme throughout the site: Title of Document (Software 54 KB). Examples:
    - The Value of Renewables (MSWord 54 KB)
    - The Value of Renewables (Excel 54 KB)
    - The Value of Renewables (PowerPoint 54 KB)

Testing

- For Quality-Control Testing, test the site in the standard browser set (i.e. Internet Explorer version 5 and higher for PC and Macintosh, Netscape version 7 and higher for the PC).