

HEURISTIC EVALUATION



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1. VISIBILITY OF SYSTEM STATUS

The site uses standard system status techniques including a breadcrumb trail in navigation, progress indicators and preloaders on the videos and highlighted slideshow buttons on the homepage to show which slide is currently active. [FIG. 1](#)



Fig. 1

<http://www.whitehouse.gov>

2. MATCH BETWEEN SYSTEM AND REAL WORLD

Some terms in the main navigation must be clicked to understand the meaning. For example: what does Briefing Room mean? According to the page description it's a place for information, videos, photos and blogs. If that is the case then what are the categories "Blog" and "Photos & Video" for? [FIG. 2](#)

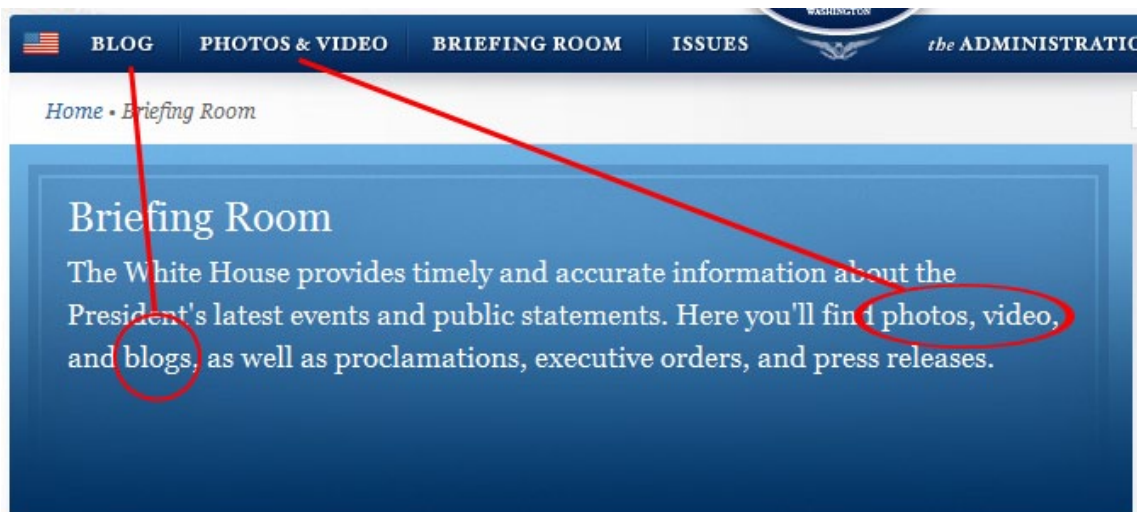


Fig. 2

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room>

Phone:

Type: U.S. Military International

Street:

The Contact form has a confusing label for a set of radio buttons. What is “Type” referring to? Is it asking what type of phone number you have or what type of address you have? Do people think about what type either one is? [FIG. 3](#)

Fig. 3 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>

The footer contains a link called En Español. Does this translate the page or link to a Spanish version of the site? It actually links to a quasi-Spanish version of the Briefing Room page. However, all but the content links return the user to English pages and the article dates are still in English.

[FIG. 4](#)

EL BLOG

September 9, 2010 at 7:55 AM EDT

Jueves a las 2:30 PM ET (11:30 AM PT) - Listos Para Sus Preguntas: Los Latinos y el Cuidado de Salud

Un chat por internet con el Departamento de Servicios Humanos de Estados Unidos y Casa Blanca.

DE LA OFICINA DE PRENSA

September 11, 2010 2:12 PM EDT

Declaraciones del Presidente ante Monumento Conmemorativo del Pentágono

WWW.WHITEHOUSE.GOV

En español | Accessibility | Copyright Information | Privacy Policy | Contact

USA.gov | Subscribe to RSS Feeds | Apply for a Job

Fig. 4

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/espanol>

3. USER CONTROL AND FREEDOM

Home • The White House Blog

The White House Blog

Encouraging Business Investment

Posted by Valerie Jarrett on September 14, 2010 at 6:21 PM EDT

The American private sector is the engine of job creation in our economy. From the beginning of his Administration, the President has made it a top priority to take steps to encourage business investment in the U.S. and give all businesses the tools they need to prosper.

A [new report \(pdf\)](#) from Business Roundtable highlights the principles for the President's new ideas to accelerate business investment in firms. The report acknowledges the critical linkages between small and large firms. The report argued that "government policies should be aiming to promote investment in businesses."

A .pdf link in a blog post causes the user to exit the site. There is a warning before leaving, but it would be more useful to have the document open in a new window. [FIG. 5](#)

Fig. 5 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/>

4. CONSISTENCY AND STANDARDS



Fig. 6 <http://www.whitehouse.com.blog/>

Page title inconsistent with category name. The Main navigation refers to the “Blog” but elsewhere the page is called “The White House Blog”. This could potentially cause problems because there are eleven other blogs on the site. [FIG. 6](#)

The most prominent section on the Briefing Room home page is “Latest News”, but that is not a category in the “Briefing Room” drop down menu. However, there is a banner on the same page for “Latest News”. Instead of linking back to this page, the banner is linked to “The White House Blog” page and the content is not the same as on “Latest News”. [FIG. 7](#)

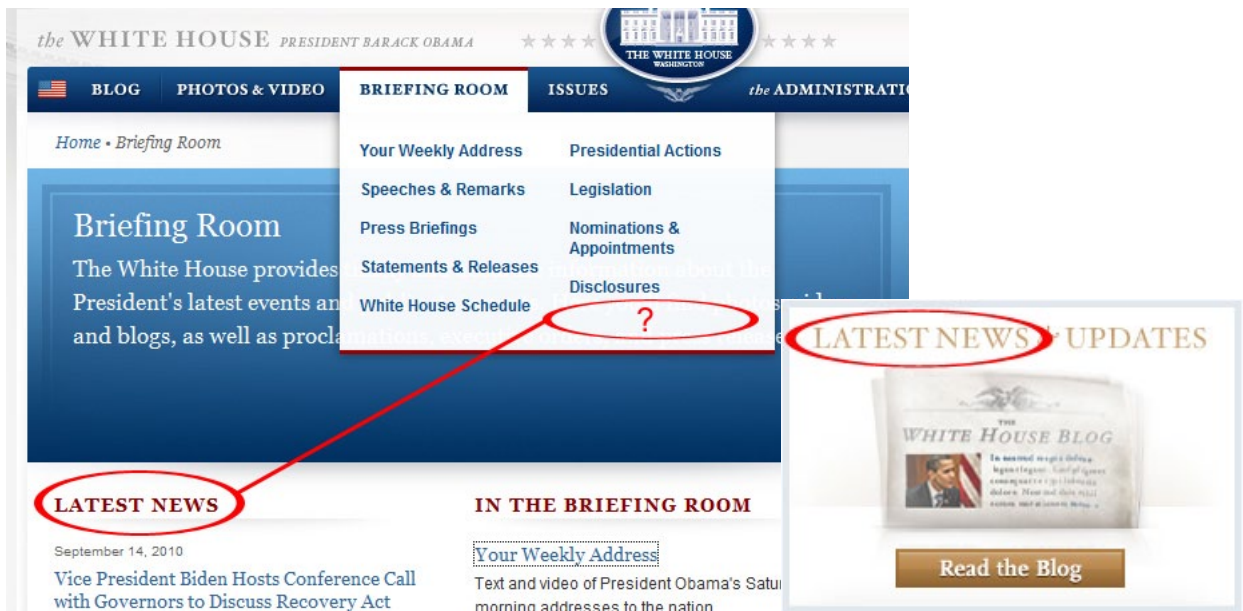


Fig. 7 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room>

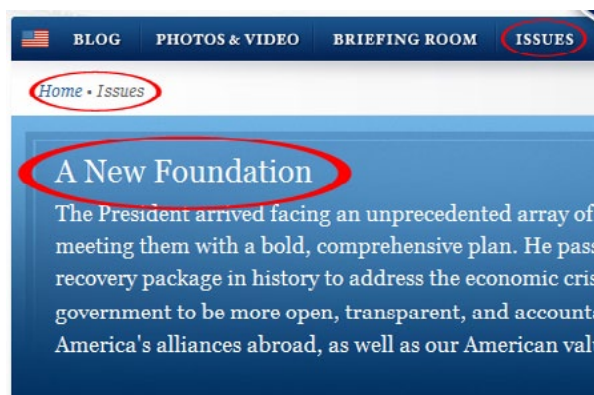


Fig. 8 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues>

The “Issues” page name is called “A New Foundation” instead of “Issues”. The page name does not match the category name or bread crumb trail like the other pages. [FIG. 8](#)

Headings in the “Issues” content pages are used inconsistently. The heading will have a line break after it in one case and it won’t have any space in another. Some paragraphs are titled and some are not. [FIGS. 9 & 10](#)

Fiscal Responsibility

Progress

- The President [signed an Executive Order](#) on government contracting to fight waste and abuse.
- The President launched [Recovery.gov](#) to track spending from the Recovery Act, an unprecedented step to provide transparency and accountability through technology.
- The President wrote to the congressional leadership calling on them to pass statutory [Pay-As-You-Go rules](#) so that any new non-emergency tax cut or entitlement expansion offset in the budget.
- The President [signed the Weapons Systems Acquisition Reform Act](#) to stop fraud and wasteful spending in the defense procurement and contracting system.

Guiding Principles

Changing the way Washington does business

Just as important as changing what Washington does is to change how it does it. We cannot begin to tackle the challenges we face in the short term to revive our economy and in the long term to put us on the path to growth without restoring fiscal responsibility and accountability to Government.

Restoring Fiscal Discipline

The Administration in its first weeks has taken the initial steps to restore fiscal discipline by requesting and signing into law an economic recovery bill that is free of all earmarks and by launching [Recovery.gov](#) – an unprecedented effort

Energy & Environment

“Each of us has a part to play in a new future that will benefit all of us. As we recover from this recession, the transition to clean energy has the potential to grow our economy and create millions of jobs — but only if we accelerate that transition. Only if we seize the moment. And only if we rally together and act as one nation — workers and entrepreneurs; scientists and citizens; the public and private sectors.”

— PRESIDENT OBAMA, JUNE 18, 2010

For decades it has been clear that the way Americans produce and consume energy is not sustainable. Our addiction to foreign oil and fossil fuels puts our economy, our national security and our environment at risk. To take this country in a new direction, the President is working with Congress to pass comprehensive energy and climate legislation to protect our nation from the serious economic and strategic risks associated with our reliance on foreign oil, to create jobs, and to cut down on the carbon pollution that contributes to the destabilizing effects of climate change.

The President has already made great strides toward changing our energy future. The Recovery Act constituted an unprecedented and historic investment in the clean energy economy. Investments in the development of renewable energy and clean technologies will lead to the energy sources of the future. Investments in high speed rail and advanced car batteries will lead to the transportation systems of the future. Investments in a smart electric grid and energy efficient homes, offices, and appliances will reduce our overall energy consumption as a nation. And all of these investments will lead to the industries of the future, help put America back in the lead of the global clean energy economy, and create millions of jobs over time. As the President said, “Now is the moment for this generation to embark on a national mission to unleash American innovation and seize control of our own destiny.”

Clean Energy Economy

The nation that harnesses the power of clean, renewable energy will be the

Fig. 9 & 10

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/>

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/energy-and-environt>

Inconsistent page title may make the user wonder if the “About the White House” page is the same as the main category page “the White House”. [FIG. 11](#)

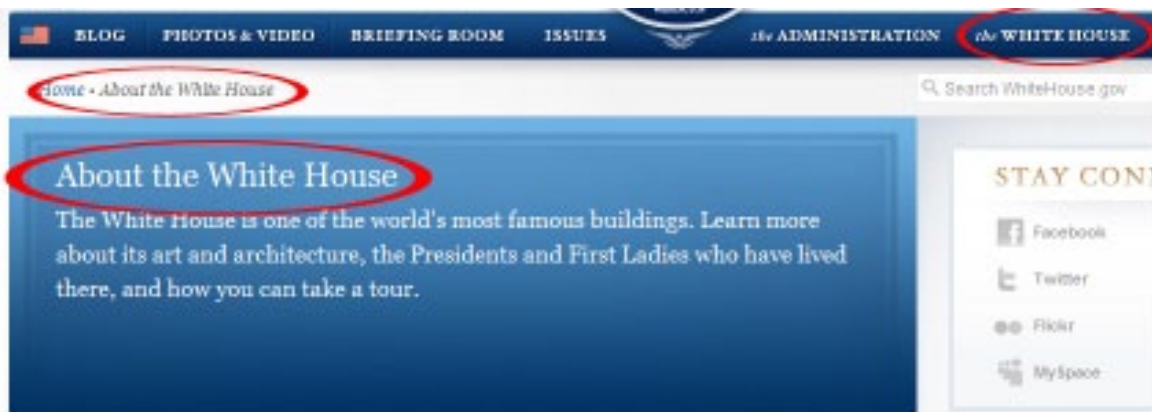


Fig. 11

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/about>

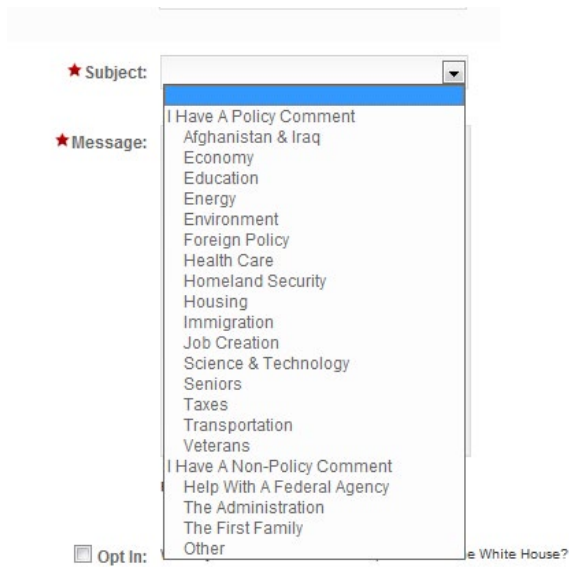


Fig. 12 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>

In the contact form there is a list of topics to choose from. The topics are similar but not identical to the list of topics in the “Issues” category. All the topics are related to “Policy”, but why isn’t there a category called “Policies”? [FIG. 12](#)



Fig. 13 <https://app2.whitehouse.gov/ppo/>

There is a jarring switch in font and button style when the link “apply for a job” is clicked on the footer. It appears to be a different site, but no exit warning is given. [FIG. 13](#)

The 404 Page has a “contact” link goes to the main contact page for President Obama. Is the president answering these emails too? In fact, there is no email subject line for Tech Support. Fig. 14

404 Page Not Found

The page you're looking for is currently unavailable to view

We've been upgrading our site. It is possible that this page has been moved or renamed. You can use your browser's Back button to return to the previous page, [go to the homepage](#), or you can browse or search for the information you're looking for.

If you think that you have reached this page due to an error on our part, please [let us know](#).

Fig. 15

There are multiple blogs on the site, but most of them are not accessible in the “Blog” category. Most of them must be accessed through the “Briefing Room” category or in side banners. [HTTP://WWW.WHITEHOUSE.GOV/ADMINISTRATION/EOP/CWG/BLOG](http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cwg/blog)

All the blogs are part of whitehouse.gov except the US Trade Representative Blog. [FIG. 15](#)

The same navigation appears twice on the same page. [FIG. 15](#)

There is inconsistent naming of the various blogs. Most have Blog in the title, but one doesn't, and most include the full name of the department/council, but one is abbreviated. [FIG. 16](#)



OMB Blog



Office of Public Engagement Blog



Council on Environmental Quality

Fig. 16

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/blog>

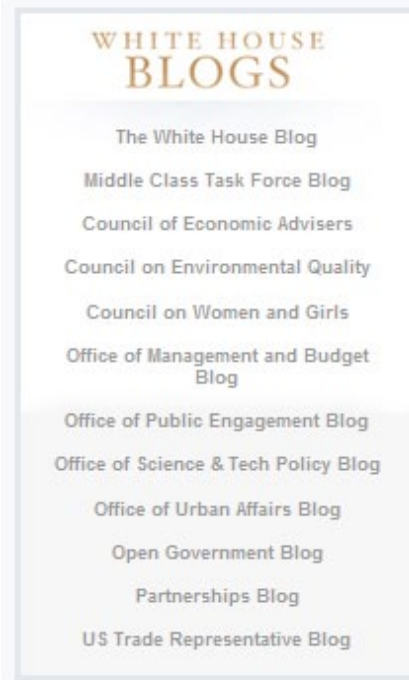
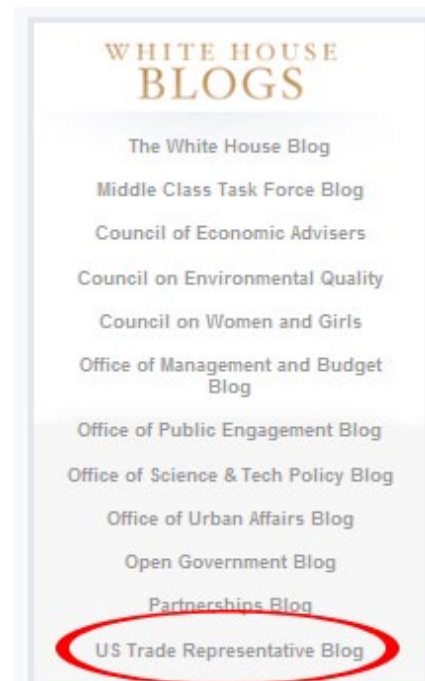


Fig. 15 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

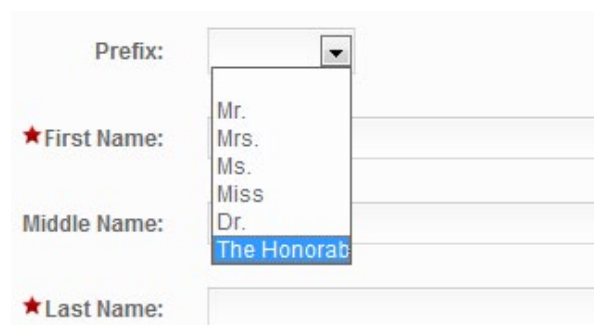
5. ERROR PREVENTION

The site is relatively simple and shows no problems in the category except for the well-known problem with the domain. While whitehouse.com is no longer an adult site, it would be better if the site redirected to whitehouse.gov.

6. RECOGNITION RATHER THAN RECALL

No evident problems in this category.

7. FLEXIBILITY AND EFFICIENCY OF USE



Prefix:

★ First Name:

Middle Name:

★ Last Name:

Mr.
Mrs.
Ms.
Miss
Dr.
The Honorab

Fig. 17 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>

There appear to be no accelerators or user features on the site except perhaps the RSS system for the various blogs.

The “Prefix” box in the “Contact Us” form is too small for one of the terms. Although minor, the user may stumble over the term “The Honorab”. [FIG. 17](#)

8. AESTHETIC AND MINIMALIST DESIGN



Fig. 18 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

There is a page banner on the home page asking the user to Send a Salute to the Troops. This page takes a brief moment to load and has a main area showing how other people have offered a Salute. This section fills the entire area above the fold, has its own footer and even its own scroll bar. If the user hasn't already forgotten the purpose of the page there is no indication that below there fold there is more on the page including the area to send a salute of your own. [FIGS. 18 & 19](#)

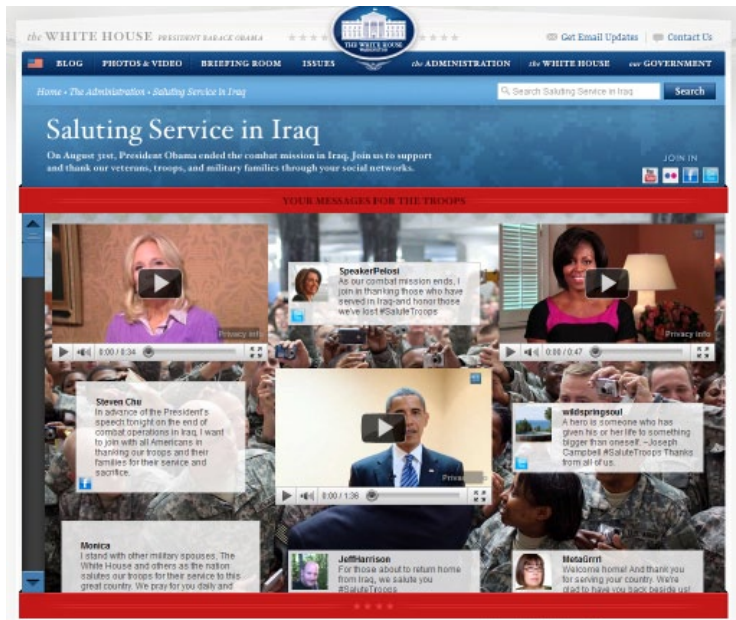


Fig. 19 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/salute>

9. HELP USERS, RECOGNIZE, DIAGNOSE, AND RECOVER FROM ERRORS

If a word is misspelled, no alternate suggestions are given. However, the user is given the option to quickly search for that exact term again. [FIG. 20](#)



Fig. 20 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/search/site/oobama>

There is a broken link on the main navigation bar. Clicking on “Photos & Videos” returns a 404 error with an explanation that an error has occurred. [FIG. 21](#)



Fig. 21 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/node/20798>

10. HELP AND DOCUMENTATION

There is no documentation or help page for the site.

SUMMARY

The site is well designed and free of major usability problems. It is simple in scope, made up primarily of blogs, articles, videos, and photos. Its main deficiencies are in the formatting consistency of its content and some illogically placed content.