

Telephone (859) 261-5908 to immediately reach [Raymond Sonoff](#), President of [Sonoff Consulting Services, Inc.](#), 271 Saxony Drive, Crestview Hills, KY 41017 USA.



[.. Home Page](#)

Productivity: Web Usability Page of Sonoff Consulting Services, Inc.'s Productivity and Knowledge Transfer Web Site

To help you get to any particular topic discussed here, the four major headings for this Web page are provided below:

- [Scsi's Perspective as to what constitutes Web Usability](#)
- [Why do nearly all Web sites still 'miss the mark' in actually achieving high levels of Web Usability?](#)
- [Validation Testing to W3C Standards is Essential!](#)
- [Some Relevant Web Usability-focused Sites](#)

NOTE: Relevant hyperlinks are included within the associated paragraphs to make your browsing session productive and all the more enjoyable.

Scsi's Perspective as to what constitutes Web Usability

For many years now the matter of Web usability has attracted the attention and focus of innumerable Web site developers, book authors, seminar lecturers, commercial and non-profit corporations, and so on. Having accessed this Web site's pages, you are encouraged to pore over their contents to discern what Scsi's perspective is regarding both Web usability and [Web accessibility](#), and how [Scsi's ten Best Practices for Usability and Accessibility](#) -- that every World Class Level Web Site should provide its visitors - are applied throughout this Web site for everyone's benefit.

"Always Keep In Mind -- Web site visitors will only become and remain customers at Web sites that serve their best interests quickly, effectively, and seamlessly!" -- Raymond Sonoff

It would seem that everyone would agree with a similar statement by Scott Pamatat of [Designmore.com](#) that every Web site must satisfy three visitor-focused conditions if it is to be profitable: "look great, [download fast](#) (for example, display each Web page on the site without undue delay, say within six to 15 seconds even for a 'slow' 28.8 Kbps dialup modem access connection), and be simple-to-use and [easy-to-navigate](#)."

Web Sites must always strive to implement best practices that provide visitor-focused benefits

Getting to this ideal state, however, requires Web site source code programmers, system designers, and content developers to fully embrace what is meant by the term "Web usability" as defined here by Scsi:

- More than just matters relating specifically to human-computer interface (HCI) factors and an acceptable overall user interface design must be addressed.
- Web site usability encompasses [all aspects](#) of making a site 'rock solid' on behalf of the site visitor.

To see the overall picture of what is stated above, select [Scsi's World Class Level Best Practices](#) hyperlink -- or the thumbnail graphic located immediately below if present -- to view or download a full-page Adobe PDF diagram that includes for your convenience hyperlinks to each of Scsi's "Perfect 10" Web Site Best Practices.



Achievement of "Ubiquitous Web access" entails attention to detail in every aspect of Web site design

What are some of the missing elements from most Web site's designs?

Quite obviously, the audience which must be convincingly addressed is every single visitor across all types of browsers, operating systems, screen resolutions, and so on. So, Scsi's intent here is to convince you that most Web site designers have not "done their homework" on your behalf. Simply stated, they have failed to [focus on satisfying any number of fundamental service-oriented deliverables](#), such as:

- [Providing easy-to-use navigation methods](#)
- [Providing substantive content](#) that tells you what you want to know
- [Displaying the information quickly](#)
- [Providing a useful searching facility](#) that allows you to find what you are looking for both easily and quickly
- [Doing all of the above \(and more\) without requiring you to use any specific browser](#), plug-ins, etc. to accomplish any of these tasks.

How are these missing elements and more addressed by Scsi's TOTAL ACCESS design solution?

In a hurry for the quick answer to this question? No problem. Just access Scsi's WebKISS™ Guide [#11: TOTAL ACCESS ... So What?](#) to get all the details.

Why do nearly all Web sites still 'miss the mark' in actually achieving high levels of Web Usability?

Unfortunately, most Web site personnel apparently either choose to neglect, are not comfortable with, or perhaps are wholly unaware about many of the essential elements that comprise 'true Web Usability' and focus principally on appearance -- emphasizing graphics, animation, and the like -- which addresses the "look great" condition cited above. However, if graphics that are either large in individual or overall file size are used to accomplish this great look, the Web page's download fast condition will be adversely impacted. So, there must be more to the matter, especially since the third condition of "be simple-to-use and easy-to-navigate" must also be met.

Scsi firmly believes that a fundamental reason for the occurrence of these and other oversights relating to Web usability and Web accessibility is because the underlying source code has not been designed from the ground up to specifically address -- both individually and collectively -- these and other conditions.

Scsi has concluded that one of the reasons for why Web sites are widely 'missing the mark' is due to failures by Web developers and their management personnel to not only comprehensively design but also to thoroughly test their Web site's pages -- for [adherence to World Wide Web Consortium \(W3C\) standards](#) for markup code and accessibility-related issues, for fully-debugged Javascript routines (when and where used), for addressing of error handling (e.g., providing a [Contingency Page](#) whenever an Error 404 Page Not Found condition is encountered), and so on.

How might these critical testing areas best be addressed? First of all, a problem must become recognized before it is possible to solve it, and that usually requires instituting a series of tests of the quality of the underlying source code. To reveal such problems necessitates more than viewing the resulting Web pages within a browser window or proofreading and correcting displayed text, repositioning graphics, and other outer-level activities. Diving below the surface to test the source code is best handled by performing Web Site Validation (WSV) testing -- a task that Scsi feels is essential if Web site integrity and credibility are to be achieved both reliably and effectively. Makes sense, doesn't it?

Validation Testing to W3C Standards is Essential!

We all want to get things right and not have to reinvent the wheel. We also know that fixing a problem when it is now somewhere 'down the line' toward -- or even worse already released as production code -- is far more costly than 'getting it right' the first time. Many books have been written that support a 'do it right the first time' approach, but it seems that each of us has to learn such things for ourselves many times over throughout our professional careers.

To progress reliably toward achieving a 'getting it right the first time' goal necessitates both the asking and the proper answering of three relevant questions at this time.

- What kinds of validation testing are required?
- What demands must be met in order to achieve reliable WSVs?
- What will be the likely outcome?

What Kinds of Validation Testing are required?

To "take a diamond-in-the-rough and use the necessary tools to come up with a priceless gem of a Web site" -- one that is 'rock solid' on all three counts stated above -- demands the conducting of detail-oriented professional Web site validations (WSVs) that must take into account many levels and types of testing, including [markup code/syntax validation of each Web page](#) for compliance with World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) specifications, adherence to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), performance (e.g., page loading times and other metrics), and countless other facets of Web page-related testing activities.

What demands must be met in order to achieve reliable WSVs?

- First and foremost, performing each of these testing facets requires one's unswerving attention to detail -- all while avoiding any attempts to come up with shortcuts that will compromise the integrity of the source code itself.
- Second, combining a proper interpretation of the WSV report's results with an appropriate implementation of the various findings to correct detected error conditions is absolutely essential for polishing each facet of your "diamond-in-the-making" Web site -- one Web page at a time!

What will be the likely outcome?

When all is said and done, taking these deliberate actions will prove vital to maximizing your Web site's usability. In particular, more of your Web site visitors will stay around longer and some of them most likely will choose to become customers who will return again and again to your Web site!

Getting to this point may require your seeking some professional assistance, of course, so don't hesitate to check with Scsi on [how to obtain an independent WSV of your Web site](#). Taking this action will certainly prove to be your best [return on investment](#) (ROI) - both near-term and long-term -- for your Web site.

Some Relevant Web Usability-focused Sites


To assist you in learning more about what is out there amongst the Web-centric sites that Scsi has found to be particularly useful, you are encouraged to visit any or all of the alphabetically-arranged hyperlinks provided below:

- Developing with Web Standards at [456beregastreet.com](#)
- [Academyinternet.com](#)
- [Accessible Web Page Design: Resources Web Page](#)
- [alistapart.com](#)
- [boxesandarrows.com](#)
- [bunnyfoot.com](#)
- [christopherschmitt.com](#)
- [Defensive Design for the Web](#)
- [digital-web.com](#)
- [dreamweavermx-templates.com](#)
- [GAWDS - The Guild of Accessible Web Designers](#) (UK)
- [Government Web Standards](#) (New Zealand) ... Scsi's most recent addition and well worth visiting.
- [hesketh.com](#)
- [htmlcenter.com](#)
- [Human Factors International](#)
- [IBM Accessibility Center](#)
- [Independent Testers](#) (UK)
- [inSimplicity](#)
- [International Association of Webmasters](#)
- [jimthatcher.com](#)
- [juicystudio.com](#)
- [littlespringsdesign.com](#)
- [mcu.org.uk](#) (UK)
- [meyerweb.com](#)

- molly.com
- netmechanic.com
- nngroup.com
- nomensa.com (UK)
- Programmer in Black (Au)
- scotconnect.com (UK)
- SAP Design Guild
- searchengineguide.com
- sensible.com
- simplebits.com
- sitetechician.com
- siteworkz.com
- Tec-Ed, Inc.
- thesitedoctor.com
- thesitewizard.com
- TotalValidator (UK)
- TRACE's Designing More Usable Web Sites page
- uie.com
- uiweb.com
- usability.gov
- usabilityfirst.com
- usableinterface.com
- useit.com
- veen.com
- w3csites.com ... a collection of claimed-to-be-W3C-compliant Web sites
- w3schools.com
- University of Minnesota Duluth's Web Design References
- [Web Standards Project \(wasp\)](http://Web Standards Project (wasp))
- [Web Accessibility and Testing Services \(WATS\)](http://Web Accessibility and Testing Services (WATS) (CA)) (CA)
- [WAT-C Web Accessibility Tools Consortium \[WAT-C\]](http://WAT-C Web Accessibility Tools Consortium [WAT-C])
- webcredible (UK)
- webreference.com
- webnauts.net
- websiteoptimization.com
- webword.com
- World Organization of Webmasters
- [World Wide Web Consortium \(W3C\)](http://World Wide Web Consortium (W3C))
- zeldman.com

Web Page Validation and Contact Information

This Productivity: Web Page Usability page was last updated, validated -- to assure full conformance to W3C's XHTML 1.0 Strict, CSS, and WCAG Accessibility (Priorities 1, 2, and 3, inclusive) recommendations -- and uploaded on Monday, July 28, 2008 6:25 p.m. EDT by Raymond Sonoff, President of Sonoff Consulting Services, Inc., 271 Saxony Drive, Crestview Hills, KY 41017 USA: Telephone: (859) 261-5908.

Remember: If you have some questions to ask, wish to request additional information about specific topics, or want to send a request for proposal, Scsi will always welcome your inquiries and respond promptly -- often the very same day -- to your [e-mail](mailto:) communications. -- 

Sonoff Consulting Services, Inc. (Scsi) -- Productivity and Knowledge Transfer Specialists

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Shortcut Text	Internet Address
Raymond Sonoff	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/scsi_corp/rsonoff_scsi_profile.html
Sonoff Consulting Services, Inc.	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/scsi_corp/scsi_corp.html
NAVIGATION	http://sonoffconsulting.com/scsi_pkt_navigation.html
MAIN HEADING	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/web_usability/web_usability.html#SkipToHeading1
view or download	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/web_usability/web_usability_with_hyperlinks.pdf
BOTTOM	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/web_usability/web_usability.html#bottompage
Home	http://sonoffconsulting.com/
Expanded Home	http://sonoffconsulting.com/index_expanded.html
Graphics-based Home	http://sonoffconsulting.com/index_graphics_mapped_version_3.html
Site Map	http://sonoffconsulting.com/site_map/site_map.html
Productivity	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/productivity.html
Scsi's WebKISS™ Guides	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_pkt_webkiss_guides_page.html
Other Web Sites	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/url_links/url_links.html
Contact Us	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/contact_us/contact_us.html
Scsi's Access Keys	http://sonoffconsulting.com/access_keys.html
need professional assistance	http://sonoffconsulting.com/need_professional_assistance.html
e-mail	mailto:info@sonoffconsulting.com
	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_11_total_access_so_what.html
Home Page	http://sonoffconsulting.com/index.html
#8: Want to Increase Your Search Engine Rankings?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_8_increase_search_engine_rankings.html
#9: How Productivity-focused is your Web Site?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_9_how_productivity-focused_is_your_web_site.html
#10: Want a Free STCEW Tool-based Evaluation of Your Web Site's Pages?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_10_want_a_free_stcew_tool-based_evaluation_of_your_web_site_pages.html
#12: What Does Your Company Web Site Convey About Customer-Centric Focus?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_12_what_does_your_company_web_site_convey_about_customer-centric_focus.html
What does Sonoff Consulting Services, Inc. do -- exactly?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/what_scsi_pkt_does.html
Focusing on Productivity	http://sonoffconsulting.com/scsi_focus_on_productivity.html
"Your WebKISS™ Guide Resource" Page	http://sonoffconsulting.com/your_webkiss_guide_resource_tagline.html
Proof that this is a "World Class level" Web site	http://sonoffconsulting.com/scsi_proof_of_world_class_level.html
Scsi's "Perfect 10" Web Site Standard	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features.html
Part 1	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_part1.html
Part 2	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_part2.html
Part 3	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_part3.html
Scsi's Best Practices	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_part2.html#h3_3
#1	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_1_of_10.html
#2	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_2_of_10.html
#3	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_3_of_10.html
#4	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_4_of_10.html
#5	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_5_of_10.html
#6	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_6_of_10.html
#7	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_7_of_10.html
#8	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_8_of_10.html
#9	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_9_of_10.html
#10	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_10_of_10.html
Use Any Browser -- by Design!	http://sonoffconsulting.com/any_browser.html

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Scsi's Privacy Policy	http://sonoffconsulting.com/w3c/scsi_pkt_p3p.html
Clients	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/scsi_corp/clients/client_list.html
Desktop	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/desktop_tools/desktop_tools.html
Editors and Viewers	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/editors_and_viewers/editors_and_viewers.html
eLearning and Web-based Collaboration	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/elearning_and_collaboration/elearning_and_collaboration.html
High-end Technology	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/high-end_technology/high-end_technology.html
Mail Programs	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/mail_programs/mail_programs.html
System Utilities	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/system_utilities/system_utilities.html
Miscellaneous	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/miscellaneous/miscellaneous.html
Recommended Reading	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/gotm_resources/gotm_books.html
#1: Why Validate a Web Site's Pages?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_pkt_why_val_web_site.html
#2: Why 100% Accessibility?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_pkt_why_100_accessibility.html
#3: Why use more than one Web browser?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_pkt_why_use_more_than_one_browser.html
#4: What could Management learn?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_pkt_what_could_management_learn.html
#5: How does Adherence to Web Standards Save Both Time and Money?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_5_how_web_stds_save_time_and_money.html
#6: What's the Return-On-Investment Rationale for adopting Scsi's World Class Level Best Practices?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_6_what_is_roi_rationale_for_adopting_scsi_best_practices.html
#7: What are the strengths and weaknesses of search tools and engines?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_7_search_tools_and_engines.html
Scsi's Perspective as to what constitutes Web Usability	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/web_usability/web_usability.html#h2_1
Why do nearly all Web sites still 'miss the mark' in actually achieving high levels of Web Usability?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/web_usability/web_usability.html#h2_2
Validation Testing to W3C Standards is Essential!	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/web_usability/web_usability.html#h2_3
Some Relevant Web Usability-focused Sites	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/web_usability/web_usability.html#h2_4
Designmore.com	http://www.designmore.com/?e2
Scsi's World Class Level Best Practices	http://sonoffconsulting.com/scsi_pkt_perfect_10_web_best_practices_diagram_with_hyperlinks.pdf
focus on satisfying any number of fundamental service-oriented deliverables	http://sonoffconsulting.com/productivity_focus_with_hyperlinks.pdf
Contingency Page	http://sonoffconsulting.com/errordocs/404.html
456bereastreet.com	http://www.456bereastreet.com/lab/developing_with_web_standards/full/
Academyinternet.com	http://www.academyinternet.com/index.php
Accessible Web Page Design: Resources Web Page	http://library.uwsp.edu/aschmetz/Accessible/pub_resources_p.htm
alistapart.com	http://www.alistapart.com/
boxesandarrows.com	http://www.boxesandarrows.com/
bunnyfoot.com	http://www.bunnyfoot.com/
christopherschmitt.com	http://www.christopherschmitt.com/
Defensive Design for the Web	http://www.37signals.com/
digital-web.com	http://www.digital-web.com/
dreamweavermx-templates.com	http://dreamweavermx-templates.com/

Shortcut Text	Internet Address
GAWDS - The Guild of Accessible Web Designers	http://www.gawds.org/
Government Web Standards	http://webstandards.govt.nz/index.php/Home_page
hesketh.com	http://www.hesketh.com/
htmlcenter.com	http://htmlcenter.com/
Human Factors International	http://www.humanfactors.com/home/usability.asp
IBM Accessibility Center	http://www-03.ibm.com/able/
Independent Testers	http://www.independent-testers.org/
inSimplicity	http://www.insimplicity.com/
International Association of Webmasters	http://www.iwanet.org/
jimthatcher.com	http://www.jimthatcher.com/
juicystudio.com	http://juicystudio.com/
littlespringsdesign.com	http://www.littlespringsdesign.com/
mcu.org.uk	http://www.mcu.org.uk/
meyerweb.com	http://meyerweb.com/
molly.com	http://www.molly.com/
netmechanic.com	http://www.netmechanic.com/
nngroup.com	http://www.nngroup.com/
nomensa.com	http://www.nomensa.com/
Programmer in Black	http://www.pibweb.com/index.html
scotconnect.com	http://www.scotconnect.com/
SAP Design Guild	http://www.sapdesignguild.org/index.asp
searchengineguide.com	http://www.searchengineguide.com/gd/
sensible.com	http://www.sensible.com/
simplebits.com	http://www.simplebits.com/
sitetechician.com	http://www.sitetechician.com/
siteworkz.com	http://www.siteworkz.com/
Tec-Ed, Inc.	http://www.teced.com/
thesitedoctor.com	http://www.thesitedoctor.com/
thesitewizard.com	http://www.thesitewizard.com/
TotalValidator	http://www.totalvalidator.com/index.html
TRACE's Designing More Usable Web Sites page	http://trace.wisc.edu/world/web/
uie.com	http://www.uie.com/
uiweb.com	http://www.uiweb.com/
usability.gov	http://www.usability.gov/
usabilityfirst.com	http://www.usabilityfirst.com/
usableinterface.com	http://www.usableinterface.com/
useit.com	http://www.useit.com/
veen.com	http://www.veen.com/jeff/index.html
w3csites.com	http://w3csites.com/
w3schools.com	http://www.w3schools.com/
Web Design References	http://www.d.umn.edu/itss/support/Training/Online/webdesign/
Web Standards Project (wasp)	http://www.webstandards.org/
Web Accessibility and Testing Services (WATS)	http://www.wats.ca/
WAT-C Web Accessibility Tools Consortium	http://www.wat-c.org/index.html
webcredible	http://www.webcredible.co.uk/
webreference.com	http://www.webreference.com/
webnauts.net	http://www.webnauts.net/
websiteoptimization.com	http://www.websiteoptimization.com/

Shortcut Text	Internet Address
webword.com	http://www.webword.com/
World Organization of Webmasters	http://www.joinwow.org/
World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)	http://www.w3.org/
zeldman.com	http://www.zeldman.com/
XHTML 1.0 Strict	http://validator.w3.org/check?uri=http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/web_usability/web_usability.html
CSS	http://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator/validator?uri=http://sonoffconsulting.com/code/scsi_style2005a_scrn.css
WCAG Accessibility	http://www.contentquality.com/Default.asp
TOP	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/web_usability/web_usability.html#toppage