

Technical annex (second edition)

The following points should be read in conjunction with the ground rules for content providers and with the core service requirements for public libraries, set out in 'Building the Public Libraries Network'. They are intended to ensure that NGfL content can be reached by the maximum possible number of NGfL users, and that they can easily distinguish NGfL content from other material on the Internet.

The latest NGfL ground rules and code of conduct are available on line at http://challenge.ngfl.gov.uk/gridreg/app_a20010301.pdf

1 End-user equipment

Content providers should assume that users will be accessing content from the wide range of equipment currently in use in education.

Content should be viewable from equipment that, at a minimum, employs:

- a display system that supports 800x600 pixel resolution and 8-bit/256 colour. Content may be built to a higher specification but it must be viewable, without serious loss of quality, on equipment of the minimum specification.
- a pointing device, such as a mouse or trackpad.

2 Browsers

Content providers should assume that users will be using a Level Four browser or later; for example a minimum of Netscape Navigator/Communicator 4.0 or Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.01. Any plugins required for additional graphical or multimedia functionality should be compatible with this minimum level of browser. Where possible the default plugins which are included with the browser should be used.

3 Platforms

Providers should design sites to be viewable by the maximum number of NGfL users.

Content should be designed to be browser and platform independent and should not include code or plugins that are particular to the browser, platform or the content. To this end content:

- should be viewable from browsers running on Windows (95, 98, 2000, NT), MacOS (7.5 and later), RISCOS and current mainstream UNIX platforms, for example Linux, Solaris

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- should be saved in common, cross-platform file formats which are capable of being parsed by baseline browsers, for example gif, jpeg, mpeg, wav, avi
- that is intended to be download should be saved in generic cross-platform formats, for example rtf, csv, tif, pdf. (You may provide downloadable files in proprietary formats in addition to a cross-platform non-proprietary format.)

4 Connection

Content providers should be aware that many users will access NGfL content via dial-up connection using equipment containing or attached to modems operating at a baseline of the international V34 standard (28.8Kbps). Content providers should design their sites accordingly to ensure that content loads without long delays. To this end, graphics, audio, video, scripts, tables and downloadable items should not be unduly large or include excessive quantities of data.

5 Accessibility

In addition we suggest that content providers consider complying with at least Priority One of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (W3C Recommendation, 5 May 1999). See <http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/>

6 Specification for NGfL Home Page return buttons

Logos, images and buttons for use by approved NGfL content providers will be supplied directly to the content providers via e-mail on successful conclusion of the Grid registration process.

7 Updates to the technical annex

The Technical Annex will be updated from time to time to take account of developments in the technology. The latest version can be viewed at:

<http://challenge.ngfl.gov.uk/techannex.html>

This will give details of the latest browser and platform specifications that should be supported.