Guidance on Producing Web Pages

It is really hard to produce simple recommendations on web pages; it is even harder to implement some of the recommendations.

The notes that follow offer basic guidance, but also refer to approaches that may require quite advanced techniques.

Apply those recommendations that you can, and seek guidance on how to implement those that you can't.

What You See Is Not What They Get

It's important to remember that:

- different browsers display things differently
- users can have different settings on their machines
- users can over-ride some of your web design settings.

Sources of Help

Chris Beggs	Computing Services	C.Beggs	8438
Adam Crawford	Engineering Education Centre	A.R.Crawford	7198
Heather Dalgleish	Co-ordinator, Disability Development Group	H.Y.Dalgleish	3722
Bryan Dawson	Professional Development	B.R.Dawson	3739
John Dickens	Chair, Disability Development Group	J.G.Dickens	2614
Richard Goodman	Computing Services	R.Goodman	2309
Julian Highfield	Computing Services	J.C.Highfield	2334
David Jackson	Disabilities and Additional Needs	D.Jackson	2769
Andy Wilson	Professional Development	D.A.Wilson	2380

Useful Loughborough URLs

Working with Students with Disabilities
A general guide to the topic produced by LTSN Engineering.
www.ltsneng.ac.uk/er/dis/dispguide.asp

Design for Accessibility
Guidance from Julian Highfield, the University's Web Manager
www.lboro.ac.uk/webmaster/providers/guidelines/design.htm

Accessible Web Sites
A detailed an comprehensive set of notes written by Chris Beggs.
internal.lboro.ac.uk/diss/cc/uniwide/Documents/handbooks/p201.html

Web Tutor's Toolkit
Advice from Bryan Dawson of Learning and Teaching Development. It includes a link to A-Prompt, a really useful web page checking and repairing tool.
http://learn.lboro.ac.uk/ltd/wttk2004/accesstools.htm

Recommendations

Alternatives	Provide text alternatives to graphics, movies and sound.
Animations	Avoid animations.
Background colours	Don't define background colours.
Browsers	View your pages with both Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator.
Cascading Style Sheets	Move towards the use of Cascading Style Sheets. (But they are quite hard to use.)
Check your pages	Use A-prompt (freely downloadable).
Colour	Don't depend on colour alone to convey information.
Consistency	Provide consistency in style, layout and navigation
Contents or Site Map	For large sites provide guidance on the site's structure.
Flicker	Don't make the screen flicker.
Font sizes	Specify them relatively not absolutely.
Fonts	Use a sans serif font such as Arial, Comic Sans, Helvetica, etc.
Frames	Avoid frames.
Graphics	Don't depend entirely on graphics. Text and graphics is best.
Graphics	see Alternatives.
Headings	Use Heading 1, Heading 2, etc to show the structure of the document.
If All Else Fails…	If you can't make something accessible in your page, then link to a page where it can be made so.
Italics	Avoid italics.
Justification	Use the normal default of left justified. Leave the right ragged.
Language	Use the simplest possible language.
Links	Make links meaningful, ie not Click here.
Long Articles	If you must use them, then create a topic index at the beginning.
Metadata	Use metadata (but don't worry too much as standards change all the time).
Navigation	Use a consistent approach, such as Breadcrumb Trails.
New windows	Don't open a link as a new window without warning the user.
Quotations	Mark these with BLOCKQUOTE.
Scrolling	Avoid long pages that need lots of scrolling.
Simplicity	Keep it simple.
Site Map or Contents	For large sites provide guidance on the site's structure.
Space	Leave space between text and other page elements.
Tables	If used for layout they should make sense when linearised (check this with a browser such as Opera - freely downloadable).
Tables	Label table headings.
Title	Make sure your pages all have titles.
Underlining	Avoid except for hyperlinks (and think about avoiding it altogether).