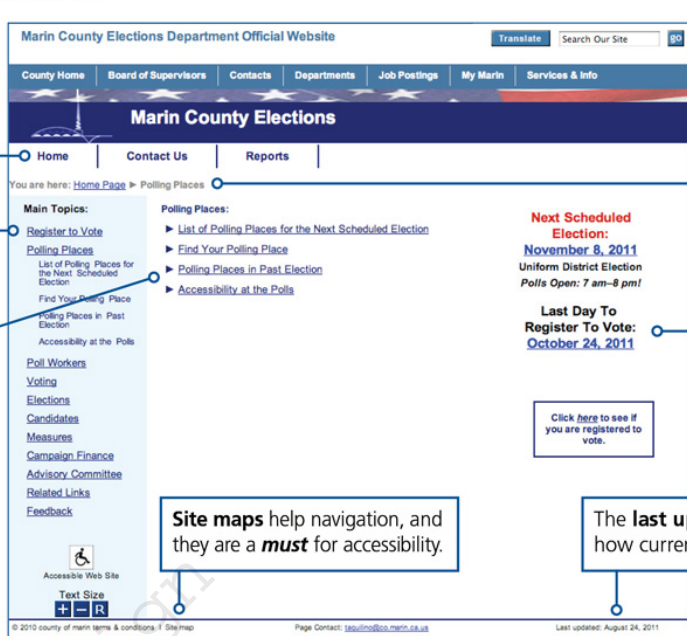


## SEO techniques: Navigation and Layout

Users find this layout intuitive:



The screenshot shows the Marin County Elections Department Official Website. The page features a top navigation bar with links for County Home, Board of Supervisors, Contacts, Departments, Job Postings, My Marin, and Services & Info. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with Home, Contact Us, and Reports. The main content area is divided into sections for Main Topics, Polling Places, and a prominent announcement for the Next Scheduled Election on November 8, 2011. A right-hand navigation area contains a 'Last Day To Register To Vote' link for October 24, 2011. The footer includes a site map, text size controls, and a last updated date of August 24, 2011.

**Top and/or left navigation** provides links to other areas of your site. Sites that use both top and left navigation should put more general links in top navigation.

**A search function** that tolerates spelling mistakes is best.

**Breadcrumbs** at the top of the page show where you are now and how you got there.

**The right navigation** contains important information or links.

**A Table of Contents** at the start of each section lets you easily see if this is the page you need. Links quickly take you to the right spot.

**Site maps** help navigation, and they are a **must** for accessibility.

**The last updated date** tells users how current the information is.

Navigation and Layout: A visitor will leave immediately if they are unable to navigate your website. Studies have shown the typical view time when first visiting a page is two to four seconds, visitors who do not immediately understand how to navigate the site or see what they want will almost immediately leave. Internet users know that if your page does not have what they are trying to find there is plenty of others that will.

Link to all subpages from the main page

Your main page should link to all of your subpages; if this is not possible it should at least link to your main sections. When designing your website, make sure visitors can find what they are looking for within a few clicks. This can be accomplished by making lists of subpages or categories, adding your own search engine, or making a [site map](#).

## Subpages should link back to the main page

All your subpages should link back to your home page or other main sections of your main page. Many of your visitors will not visit your page through the home page, make it easy for visitors to go there from all subpages. For example, a [company logo](#) or name should link to the main page, a navigation bar it should have a link that says “home”, and the bottom of the page should also link to the home page for visitors looking for more information.

## Have a search engine

If your page does not its own search engine, consider using a third-party search engine. These custom search engine scripts can often be implemented into your site in less than a few minutes.

Navigation and Layout

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