

Menu Link Standards and Checklist

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Standard	Details	Citations
<input type="checkbox"/> Link is truly necessary in menu	Too many links in the menu can cause clutter, make things harder to find, and ultimately do more harm than good.	Rather than cramming everything into the menu, “Instead, make each top-level menu choice clickable, leading to a regular Web page where you present all dropdown options in plain, fully accessible HTML.” https://www.nngroup.com/articles/mega-menus-work-well/
<input type="checkbox"/> Link goes to content that is important to end users	The menu should reflect content most desired by end-users rather than company internal initiatives. Exceptions may occur but should be rare.	“To engage users, website copy must speak to readers and not at them. ...Users want to know what the product or service will do for them. ...On the web, users are task oriented. They are often looking to answer a question, solve a problem, or find information.” https://www.nngroup.com/articles/user-centric-language/
<input type="checkbox"/> Link is at highest logical place in information architecture	A flat shallow menu hierarchy is preferable to deep and narrow one.	“Content is more discoverable when it's not buried under multiple intervening layers. All other things being equal, deep hierarchies are more difficult to use.” https://www.nngroup.com/articles/flat-vs-deep-hierarchy/
<input type="checkbox"/> Link is placed where users are most likely to look for it	Think like an end user hunting for information. Where would they look first, second, and so forth?	“Information scent refers to the extent to which users can predict what they will find if they pursue a certain path through a website.” https://www.nngroup.com/articles/wrong-information-scent-costs-sales/
<input type="checkbox"/> Link text uses words familiar to our audience	Avoid using company-specific jargon. Titles of menu links should be short, descriptive, and intuitive for the average users.	“Ideally, jargon and branded terms that aren't universally understood should be used only within the content pages, where users have context clues to help them understand what the unfamiliar terms mean. Findability is maximized by old, well-known words instead of new, made-up words.” https://www.nngroup.com/articles/fixing-bad-intranet-navigation/
<input type="checkbox"/> Link text incorporates high-value SEO keywords.	Menu links are among the most crawled by search engines, and their SEO value is high. Do keyword research to find effective terms.	“There are many elements to search engine optimization, but SEO guideline #1 is our old friend, ‘speak the user's language.’ Or, more precisely, when you write, use keywords that match users' search queries.” https://www.nngroup.com/articles/web-writing-use-search-keywords/
<input type="checkbox"/> Link text leads with high-value keywords	The highest value keywords should be front-loaded in the menu's hyperlinked text.	“Start subheads, paragraphs, and bullet points with information-carrying words that users will notice. ...They'll read the third word on a line much less often than the first two words.” https://www.nngroup.com/articles/f-shaped-pattern-reading-web-content/
<input type="checkbox"/> Link text accurately describes the destination page	Users should easily understand what every link leads to and not be disappointed when they get there.	“Any broken promise, large or small, chips away at trust and credibility. The words in a link label make a strong suggestion about the page that is being linked to. The destination page should fulfill what the anchor text promises.” https://www.nngroup.com/articles/link-promise/
<input type="checkbox"/> Link text and	Each link in menu	“Unclear naming is one of the biggest and most important

URL is unique on menu

should be unique, both in URL destination and the link text should clearly differentiate itself from other options.

projects to tackle when it comes to [information architecture]. Each navigation category must be descriptive, specific, and mutually exclusive so that users can pick where to navigate without hesitation.”
<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/intranet-information-architecture-ia/>

Order of links is as meaningful as possible

Menu items should only be in alphabetical order if there is no better way to organize.

“Consider: Is there another organizing principle that would be more meaningful? ...Usually, there’s another way to organize content that is better than alphabetical organization.”
<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ia-questions-navigation-menus/>