

HTML Coding Requirements for Email Broadcasts

All client-submitted HTML files for email projects must conform to these rules.

1. Do not submit HTML files created with FrontPage, Microsoft Word, Publisher, etc. These programs bloat the code with useless tags. Use a true HTML editor.
2. ***The use of CSS in HTML emails is a risk – different email programs handle CSS differently and it's impossible to control or predict how your email will actually look to each recipient. If you choose to use CSS, we will not remove it but you run the risk of having your design garbled for a significant number of recipients.***

If you choose to employ CSS, use it inline; **do not** place a style sheet in the <head> section nor link to an outside style sheet. For a full guide to CSS support in email, download this [CSS guide](#).

3. Use HTML 4.01 Transitional as your doctype with UTF-8 encoding.
4. Do not place background color codes in the <body> tag. Instead, place background color codes in the <td> tag.
5. Do not close single tags with “ />” as you would for an XHTML document.
6. ***It is strongly recommended to avoid the use of background images.*** Background images often do not display properly. If you must use a dark background image behind a light-colored font, you must also use a dark background color in case the image does not display.
7. Place “alt” text in all image tags, *especially* if the image is a link. ***Use text relevant to the image being used.*** If the image is merely a spacer, use alt=””.
8. Do not include attachments (PDF's and others). Place these on your website instead and include a link in the email.
9. Do not include an unsubscribe link. MTD will set the unsubscribe information and forward the opt-outs/opt-ins (if any) to you at the end of the campaign.
10. **MOST IMPORTANTLY** – before submitting your finished file, validate the code using W3.org's free online validator found here: <http://validator.w3.org>. (You might want to validate the code a few times during the coding process as well.)

Alternatively, your HTML editor may include a tool for checking the code.

11. Finally, do not send in your code within the body of an email. Attach it as a text file.

If you have any questions, please write to Kitty at kitty@artsedresearch.org.