

# Is 'Click Here' the Best Choice?

The words 'click here' have grown to cover the web. The phrase is used to indicate links as calls to action. Unfortunately using 'click here' and its siblings 'Read More' and 'Continue' can **create accessibility and usability issues**. Here are my four reasons why not to 'click here'.

1. **Poor Usability**
2. **Search Engine Optimization**
3. **Decreased Accessibility**
4. **Users understand the web**

## **Poor usability**

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Usability experts report that users LOVE scanning websites. As they scan, they're constantly searching for **keywords** related to what they desire to find. Why not highlight your keywords by making them links, instead of highlighting the relatively meaningless words 'click here' or 'read now'? This makes scanning your website easier and leaves visitors more satisfied, since they don't have to **dig through regular text** to find out where the good links are.

## **Search Engine Optimization**

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The number one results for 'click here' in the Google search engine is Adobe Acrobat Reader. Yet the words 'click here' do not appear a single time on the Acrobat Reader page. Why is this?

Every time you link to a page, Search Engines take note what words were used in that link. And apparently people have linked to Adobe Acrobat Reader millions of times using the 'click here' text. The result, **Adobe misses out** on organic SEO every time someone uses 'click here' for the link instead of a more useful 'Download Adobe Reader'. Now, maybe Adobe doesn't lose sleep over the missed opportunity, but SEO is something we're constantly trying to build in to our websites. Why waste the opportunity by using 'click here' text?

## Decreased Accessibility

While visual users scan the page with their eyes for links, visually impaired visitors use a screen reader to list out the links on the current page. This list of links **doesn't reference the surrounding text**, so the paragraph:

To download a copy of this document, click here. To download harmful spyware, click here.

will have the following result:

2 Links:  
 click here  
 click here

This leaves the user with no hint about what each website contains and, in this rare case, could harm their computer if they choose the wrong link. Here's a better example of the previous paragraph:

Download a copy of "Is 'Click Here' the Best Choice?". Make sure not to download harmful spyware though.

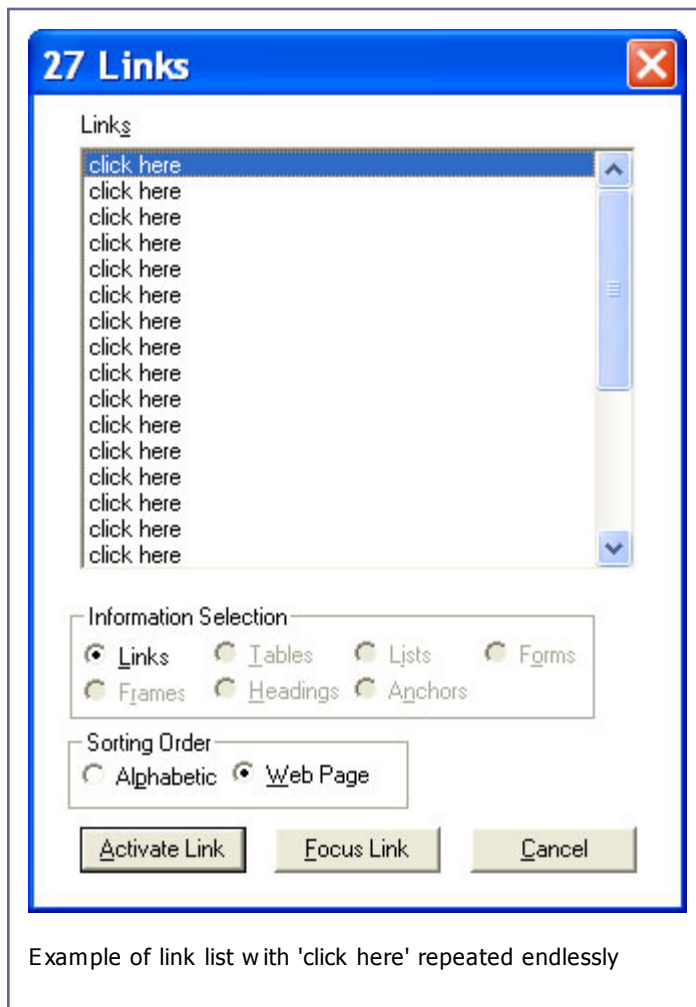
These links are much more meaningful:

2 Links:  
 Download a copy of "Is 'Click Here' the Best Choice?"  
 harmful spyware

Now the user is able to make an informed decision, although they'll have a harder time explaining their actions to the IT guy.

## Users understand the web

Do you have to be told to push the gas pedal down everytime you want to go somewhere in your car? Not since you were 15, no. **Why tell users what they already know?** If something looks like a link, it will most likely act like a link. As long as you create clickable links, you don't need to tell someone where to click.



## Now that I've dismissed the use of 'click here', I better offer some alternatives.

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**Bad:**

[Click here](#) for information about the computer mouse.

**Good:**

[Read all about the computer mouse](#)

**Bad:**

[Click here](#) to view full image.

**Good:**

[View large image of a Computer Mouse](#)

**Bad:**

To continue reading, [click here](#)

**Good:**

[Continue reading "How to use a computer mouse"](#)

Notice how the good links still have **action items**, yet they **tell you more** than just 'click here'. They give the user real information that is **easily scannable**, because **the links tell you what's important**, instead of just being placeholders for the words "Click here".

Be sure not to replace 'click here' with an equally poor substitute. 'Read more' and 'continue' pose the same problems as 'click here'. The key is to **create a link that is descriptive** of where it's going.

## "That's great, but I don't make these decisions at my work."

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Stuck in a company or with a client that won't put "Click here" to rest? The article "[Click here? No thanks!](#)" offers a solution for developers to keep the links accessible even if visually "Click here" are the only words linked.

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This article written by [Kevin Lamping](#). Feel free to [contact Kevin](#) with any questions or comments.



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