After a general discussion of isoscalar and isovector excitations we will concentrate on the more recent developments in the study of the distribution of dipole strength in nuclei. In particular we will pay attention to the low-lying dipole excitations. A connection of the dipole strength to a static moment, so called Schiff moment, will be made. This moment is an essential ingredient in the study of the time reversal violating static dipole moment in atoms. A concentration of isoscalar dipole strength at low energy might enhance the Schiff moment in spherical nuclei. We will also briefly comment on the situation in deformed nuclei. A short discussion about the spin dipole strength will be presented.