

# **Northwestern University Information Technology (NUIT) Style Guide**

*As supported by University Relations Style Guide*

*Prepared by*  
**NUIT Communications**  
**Northwestern University Information Technology (NUIT)**  
**Northwestern University**

*Updated February 3, 2014*

The following style guidelines have been developed to promote consistency in text presentation for publications, press releases, advertisements, and other print or online material produced by NUIT. The same style guidelines should be followed for NUIT web pages.

This guide supplements the University Relations Style Guide, available online at <http://www.northwestern.edu/univ-relations/publications/resources/styleguide/>. Additional writing tips can also be found in the NUIT Communications Writing Guide.

### **Abbreviations**

- Acceptable if part of formal name (Morgan Stanley & Co.).
- Avoid in running text (Professor Smith, not Prof. Smith).

### **Acronyms**

- Acceptable on second and subsequent references if given in parentheses after a first spelled-out use. **Ex.** “The Faculty and Staff Information System (FASIS) provides an accessible, secure environment. You must log in to access FASIS.”
- Acceptable without first spelling out if initials are widely recognized (e.g., CEO, SAT, NCAA, AIDS, HMO, NASA, FBI).
- Do not put in parentheses after a first spelled-out use if the organization is never mentioned again.
- See also *University System Names* and *NUIT Departments and Units*

### **Ampersand**

- Use only when it is part of a company or organization’s formal name. **Ex.** Academic & Research Technologies, AT&T
- Do not use in text to replace *and*.

### **Capitalization**

- As a rule, official names are capitalized (Department of Chemistry) and unofficial names are not (chemistry department).
- See also *Titles (people)*.

### **Comma (serial)**

- Use a comma before *and* or *or* in a series (red, white, and blue—not red, white and blue), except in Medill publications.

### **Constituents**

- When referring to groups within the Northwestern community, use “students, faculty, and staff,” in that order.

## Contact information

- To avoid dating a publication, use a job title rather than a name in contact information (PAS department assistant, not John Doe) unless there's a compelling reason for using a name.

## Course Management System (CMS) versus Web Content Management System (WCMS)

- To avoid confusion, the acronym for NUIT's or the University's Web Content Management System should be written as WCMS, following the guidelines for acronyms above, and should not be shortened to CMS.

## Email

- Do not hyphenate *email*; lowercase it except at the start of a sentence.
- Use the phrase *junk email* or *junk mail* to refer to unwanted email. Do not use spam, which is a registered trademark of Hormel Foods Corporation.

## IT Support Center Contact (1-HELP)

- In print and online, always bold **the final five digits of the phone number** for the IT Support Center phone number:
- **In print:** 847-491-**HELP** (4357)
- **Online:** 847-491-**4357** (HELP) Writing the number this way online makes the phone number dial-able from a mobile device by clicking the number.

## Login versus log in

- *Login* is a noun referring to a web page or part of a web page where a user would go to enter information to access a system.
- *Log in* or *log in to* refers to the act of entering information to access system or account.
- *Log-in* is not a preferred usage.
- **Ex.** "Go to the login page to log in to the system."

## Logos

- Do not use the Northwestern University logo for NUIT print publications (e.g. Annual Report, Strategic Plan) without accompanying NUIT branding.
- See [northwestern.edu/logo/](http://northwestern.edu/logo/) for guidelines regarding use of the Northwestern University logo.

## NU Network

- *NU Network* is a proper noun referring to the University wired or wireless network connection used by the University community and its guests

## NUIT

- Northwestern University Information Technology (NUIT) is an *organization* with several *departments*; these departments are composed of *units*.
- For print materials, including posters, flyers, *Daily Northwestern* advertisements, etc., always include NUIT branding. Spell out *Northwestern University Information Technology* and include the web address: [it.northwestern.edu](http://it.northwestern.edu).
- When referring to the NUIT organization in articles for publication **outside** NUIT or the University, use *Northwestern University Information Technology (NUIT)* on first reference and *NUIT* thereafter.
- When referring to the organization in articles for publication **within** NUIT or **published by** NUIT, *NUIT* is acceptable on first mention, *Northwestern University Information Technology* does not need to be written out.
- It is not necessary to spell out NUIT on NUIT web pages (i.e., pages that fall under the NUIT template).
- Do not identify the organization as *NU Information Technology*.

## NUIT Departments and Units

- For articles and publications intended for University audiences, always refer to NUIT first, then the individual NUIT department. **Ex.** *NUIT Technology Support Services*, not *Technology Support Services*.
- Departments and their approved acronyms or abbreviations include:
- **Academic & Research Technologies (A&RT)**
  - The ampersand is part of the NUIT department's title whether it is spelled out (Academic & Research Technologies) or when the acronym is used (A&RT).
  - The department name should not be shortened to ART.
- **Administration and Finance**
  - May be shortened to *Admin & Finance* in some instances
  - A&F is not a preferred acronym
- **Business Intelligence Solutions (BI)**
  - *Business Intelligence Solutions* is the proper noun of the NUIT department, *business intelligence* is a regular noun referring to the service it provides
- **Cyberinfrastructure (CI)**
  - The Cyberinfrastructure department contains four additional departments. These sub-departments should always be noted with a (CI) following their name.
  - **Monitoring and Management Systems (CI)**
    - Monitoring and Management Systems should not be abbreviated.
  - **Processing and Information Management (CI)**
    - Processing and Information Management should not be abbreviated
  - **Service Operations (CI)**
    - *Service Operations (CI)* is distinct from the *Service Operations Center* (no abbreviation)
  - **Telecommunications and Network Services (CI)**
    - *TNS (CI)* is an approved acronym for the department
- **Distributed Support Services (DSS)**

- For the sake of simplicity, write *NUIT Distributed Support Services (DSS)*.
- **iCAIR**
  - When writing about iCAIR, use “Northwestern University's International Center for Advanced Internet Research (iCAIR).” Follow up with “iCAIR is a division of Northwestern University Information Technology (NUIT).”
- **Management Systems (ITMS)**
- **Information and Systems Security/Compliance (ISS/C)**
  - Some ISS/C communications may include “You’re the Key” branding and logos.
- **NUIT Communications**
  - For the sake of simplicity, write *NUIT Communications*.
- **NUIT Support Center**
  - References to the NUIT Support Center should not be abbreviated.
- **Office of the Vice President (OVP)**

**NUIT Support Center** *See IT Support Center*

## Numbers

- *One* through *nine* spelled out; *10* and above in numerals, except that numbers of the same category should be treated alike within the same context.
- Numbers beginning a sentence are always spelled out.
- *First* through *ninth* spelled out; thereafter, *10th*, *11th*, etc.
- Use two letters with *22nd*, *23rd*, etc.
- Use numerals with percent (7 percent), dollar sign (\$3), temperature (8 degrees), scores (7-3), page (page 2), room (room 9), and chapter (chapter 6).
- For figures greater than 999,999, use *million* or *billion* (2.3 million, 4 billion).
- Use a comma in a figure greater than 1,000, unless it’s a date.
- For inclusive numbers, the second number should be represented by only its final two digits if its beginning digit(s) are the same as the first number’s (pages 343–47).
- A dash should not be used as a substitute for *to* in a range (from 1967 to 1983, not from 1967–83).

## Offices

- Capitalize when formal name (Office of the Provost); otherwise, lowercase (provost’s office).

## Signoff

- The standard closing for University-wide emails, internal or external press releases, etc. is “For additional information, please contact your departmental/school technical support person, call the IT Support Center at 847-491-4357 (HELP), or email [consultant@northwestern.edu](mailto:consultant@northwestern.edu).”

## University System Names

- University systems should always be identified by their University brand name, not by the vendor name. **Ex.** “The Course Management System will be upgraded this fall.” **not** “The Blackboard Course Management System will be...” or “Blackboard will be...”
- If the vendor of a system must be identified, use some variation of the phrase “system name, powered by vendor name.” **Ex.** “NU Desktop Videoconferencing, powered by Vidyo, will be undergoing maintenance.” or “Turning Technologies, the University’s Student Response System vendor, will be offering training on campus.”
- **Course Management System (CMS)**
  - Northwestern’s Course Management System may be written as CMS following the guidelines for acronyms. It should not be referred to as “Blackboard” or “Blackboard CMS”
  - See also *Course Management System (CMS) versus Web Content Management System (WCMS)*
- Some examples of University system names include:
  - NU Desktop Videoconferencing (powered by Vidyo)
  - Web conferencing (powered by Adobe Connect)
  - Northwestern Collaboration Services (powered by Microsoft Exchange)
  - IT Service Manager
  - Course Management System (powered by Blackboard)

## Times

- Do not use :00 with a time unless it’s a very formal publication in which it would be appropriate—for instance, invitations.
- Lowercase *a.m.* and *p.m.*
- It is sometimes permissible to remove the periods in a.m. and p.m. in tables and lists if space is tight, but use the periods in text.
- *Noon*, not *12 p.m.* or *12 noon*.
- Do not use a dash in place of *to* in a range of times introduced by *from* (from 5 to 7 p.m., not from 5–7 p.m.).
- Do not use *o’clock* unless it’s in quoted material or formal contexts such as invitations.

## Titles (people)

- Generally uppercase preceding a name if it’s a title by which the individual is called (Professor Smith, Dean Peterson, Provost Linzer), but lowercase for functional titles (program director Jane Johnson). It’s *Dean Barbara J. O’Keefe* of the School of Communication but *School of Communication dean Barbara J. O’Keefe*. Plurals are lowercased (music professors Walfrid Kujala and Almita Vamos). Some title capitalization is at the discretion of the individual and NUIT Communications—when it doubt, capitalize.
- Capitalize endowed professorships whether before or after a name. Do not use *the* before endowed professorships, because in some cases (i.e., Walter P. Murphy Professor, Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence) there is more than one person with the same title.

## University (referring to Northwestern)

- Capitalize the *University* in reference to Northwestern. Do not capitalize the *school* or the *college* in second references to the individual schools.

## URLs

- *http://* is not needed at the start of a web address unless the address doesn't start with *www.* or there might be some confusion about whether it is a web address.
- *www.* is not required in contexts where it is clear that it is a web address, but be consistent in using it or not within a publication.
- *< >* is not needed around a web address.
- If an address does not fit on one line, do not introduce hyphenation when breaking it. For instance, do not hyphenate *northwestern* in a web or an email address; readers might think the hyphen is part of the address. An unavoidable line break should come before a punctuation mark within a URL.
- Retain a trailing slash / in a Web address if it indicates a directory. Ex. **it.northwestern.edu/learning/**
- Do not use **index.html** at the end of a Web address in print publications; instead retain the trailing slash for the directory.

## Videoconference

- Use *videoconference* (or *videoconferencing*) as one word.

## Voice mail

- Use *voice mail* as two words.

## Web

- Do not hyphenate *online*.
- *World Wide Web* is not needed; *web* is sufficient.
- Capitalize *Internet* but lowercase *web*.
- Use *home page* and *web page* as two words but *website* as one word.
- Use *database* as one word.
- Italicize the titles of online publications (*HotWired*) and blogs.
- Close up *webcast*, *webcasting*, *webmail*, and *webcam*, but leave a space in *web camera*.

## Web Content Management System (WCMS) versus Course Management System (CMS)

- To avoid confusion, the acronym for NUIT's or the University's Web Content Management System should be written as WCMS, following the guidelines for acronyms above, and should not be shortened to CMS.