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Responsibilities of Web Publishers

Content Validity

As a web publisher at Northwestern University, you are responsible for the content of your pages. You must ensure that your content is up to date and does not violate University policies and codes or federal, state, and local laws. Creators of web pages at Northwestern are also expected to follow the University's principles of academic integrity. Links to sites beyond Northwestern must adhere to the Links to Commercial Sites policy at http://www.northwestern.edu/univ-relations/web_comm/policy/linking.html. Follow all applicable copyright laws.

Content Maintenance

Pages must be accurate and up-to-date. Establish an updating system and identify specific individuals to help maintain content validity.

Accessibility

Northwestern strives to adhere to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Compliance with these acts helps ensure that Northwestern web pages will be readable by users with disabilities. Northwestern also follows most of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/

HTML and Editorial Standards

Northwestern is committed to maintaining a high level of consistency across web pages in different areas of the University's web site. Consistency simplifies navigation of pages for end-users of Northwestern's web pages. In order to be indexed or linked on Northwestern University's main page, all pages must adhere to Northwestern University's standards as outlined in the Page Component Overview.
Page Component Overview

Specifications

Page Dimensions: Pages should be no larger than 740 pixels wide x 440 pixels high to fit on an 800 x 600 screen without scrolling. Columns of text should be narrower than 500 pixels wide.

Fonts: Verdana is used for text and captions; Arial is used for titles and headings; Frutiger is used for the Search button.

Colors: Web-safe colors are not required.

Browsers: We support Internet Explorer version 5.0 and newer, and Netscape version 6.0 and newer.

<Title> Tag: A page's HTML title should be unique, clear, and concise, with an indication of the page's contents. It is helpful to think of (and create) the title as a "reverse breadcrumb," with specific page information first, then broader site context. For example, the Web Communications home page title is: "Web Communications, University Relations, Northwestern University."

Required Elements
See next page for item descriptions.
The numerical references on this page refer to the image on the previous page.

**Official Banner**
Official Northwestern University departmental home pages must have a banner (1) containing the University's logo (2) and Search box (3). The banner must be flush against the top and sides of the page. On the main NU site, the banner is 120 pixels high by 740 pixels wide.

**Logo and link to Northwestern University home page**
The University's logo (2) is comprised of the official University seal and the words "Northwestern University" shown as a single unit in a specific font. The logo's color can be white or Official Purple (RGB: 82, 0, 99; Hex: 520063) although different background colors can be used. The logo must appear inside the banner on departmental home pages. On interior pages the logo can appear at the top or bottom of the page. The logo should always link back to the Northwestern University home page.

**Search**
The Search box (3) is part of the official banner. Searches can be configured to search the site the page is located on (University Relations in the example above) in addition to searching the top-level Northwestern University site (required).

**Breadcrumb Navigation**
Visitors must be able see how they reached a particular point so that they can a) understand a site's architecture, and b) get back to where they came from if they make a "wrong turn."

**Content**
Group broad categories of information on a site according to users' needs.

**Textual Footer**
The footer (6) consists of 1) text links to main sections of a departmental site; 2) links to the main areas of Northwestern University's site; 3) contact information for the sponsoring department; and 4) date of last update, the University's Web and Policy statements, and copyright notice. A textual footer facilitates accessibility by providing a means of navigation for visually impaired visitors who use text readers.
Banner and Search Box

Official Northwestern University home pages must use the official banner.

Banner size and positioning

The banner must be flush against the top and sides of the page. The banner's size on the main Northwestern University web pages is 740(w) x 120(h).

Search Box

The Search box is part of the official Northwestern University banner. Search options should include the site the page is located on and the top-level Northwestern University pages.

Full instructions and HTML code for implementing the Northwestern University Banner will be available soon. If you would like to receive instructions via e-mail when they are ready, send a request to webmaster@northwestern.edu.

If you are re-designing an existing page and are not comfortable working with HTML code, or there are multiple URLs in your department, please consult the Office of Web Communications at webmaster@northwestern.edu or 847-467-4747 for assistance.

Alternative Banner Placement

Below are acceptable alternatives to the standard placement. Where possible, however, the above guidelines should be followed.
Banner without Logo

In rare instances it may be necessary to create a banner without the Official University Logo. This may occur when an outside vendor's interface is customized for use by the University, as with Blackboard (Course Management System), below. This banner is only to be used when it is impossible to incorporate the standard logo.
Logo

Download a high-quality version of the logo at: http://www.northwestern.edu/logo/downloads.html

The logo is available in two colors: one for a purple background, one for a white background.
If you are using a different background color, please contact the Office of Web Communications (847-467-4747) to have the logo custom designed.
Do not alter the logos provided; the logo must not be overlapped, cropped, or distorted.
It must have at least 20 pixels of "breathing room" on each side and 10 pixels at the top.
The downloadable versions are already set with the appropriate boundaries and should be set flush to the left and top.

View the University's Logo Guidelines at: http://www.northwestern.edu/logo/guidelines.html

Alternative Logo Placement
Footer

All official Northwestern University web pages must have a footer containing the following four elements:

1. Internal links to main sections of the web site. These links allow the user to navigate "laterally" within the site. Broad areas of a site should be linked rather than minor subpages.

2. Four links to the main areas of Northwestern's web site.

   HTML Code:
   `<a HREF="http://www.northwestern.edu/">Northwestern Home</a> | `  
   `<a href="http://planitpurple.northwestern.edu"> Calendar: Plan-It Purple</a> | `  
   `<a href="http://www.northwestern.edu/webindex/"> Sites A-Z</a> | `  
   `<a href="http://www.northwestern.edu/search/"> Search</a>`;

3. Contact information for the sponsoring department.

4. The last section of the site's footer must contain the following Information in this order:
   a. Date of the last update to the page. (This can be done with a Server-Side Include (SSI). Your server must support SSIs.)
   c. A copyright notice that makes use of the "&copy;" escape character. This produces the symbol ©. The word "copyright" is insufficient for international copyright law.

   HTML Code:
   Last updated <!--#config timefmt="%m/%d/%Y" -->
   <!--#echo var="LAST_MODIFIED" -->&nbsp;  
Writing for the Web

Users want to find what they are looking for as quickly and easily as possible. Web-savvy writing and editing are essential for optimal content delivery.

Key Concepts
1. Omit non-essential words. Users don't read--they scan.
2. Use "inverted pyramid" writing style: start with the point, then support it, using links for more in-depth details.
3. One idea per paragraph is ideal.
4. Keep the most important elements "above the fold," that is, visible upon initial page view without scrolling.
5. Categorize according to users' needs, not necessarily by departmental organization or hierarchy.
6. When creating a link, highlight only the one-to-three most important words.

Do
1. Facilitate scanning with subheads, bullet points, lists, and captions.
2. Provide links to related and additional detail.
3. Use an active voice: "The company published the book."
4. Use lists or tables when possible.

Don't
1. Expect your visitors to read everything.
2. Put everything on one page.
3. Use a passive voice: "The book was published by the company."
4. List items in a paragraph to save room.

Organization: User Focus vs. Internal Focus
Try to organize sections and content according to users' needs, not necessarily by departmental organization or hierarchy. Try to identify what items a user would logically want, even if it means grouping functions from different areas together.

Consistency of Style
The only web constant is change. Stylistic debates continue ("Is it E-mail, e-mail, or email?"). Style manuals will help, but the most important style and usage point, one that cannot be emphasized enough, is consistency. You must adhere to the style you choose.

A to Z Style Guide
Northwestern University University Relations' Publications Group has produced a guide (link provided in the references section) that addresses many stylistic issues one is likely to encounter in Northwestern University-related communications. Standard University terminology is found here. If you have any questions regarding reference to a specific University entity, confirm information directly with that entity, in the University's printed faculty/staff/student directory, or through the University Relations Publications Group at 847-491-4880 or publications@northwestern.edu.
Site Structure

Awareness of conventions in web design will help you to plan your site's structure, navigational elements, and page design so that your site visitors can quickly and accurately find what they're looking for.

Make the site's structure obvious on the home page with a visual hierarchy to "clearly and accurately portray the relationships between the things on the page: which things are related, and which things are part of other things" (Krug).

Breadth Leads to Depth
Page levels should be organized to provide increasing degrees of detail for those who require more information.

Departmental Home page
Overview of main sections of site

Prominence: "The most important headings are larger, bolder, in a distinctive color, set off by more white space, or nearer the top of the page--or some combination of the above." (Krug)
Grouping: "Things that are related logically are also related visually" under a heading, displayed in a similar visual style, or "in a clearly defined area." (Krug)
Level Two Page (Content): A single "section" of the site's material

Broad links at top (breadcrumbs serve similar purpose)
Internal (subsection) links at left, below broad links, in center, or in footer, depending upon page type
**Nesting:** "Things are 'nested' visually to show what's part of what." (Krug) Similar to "grouping" in that headings help define subrelationships.
Navigation Elements

"Web pages need to give the user explicit cues to the context and organization of information, because only a small portion of your site (less than a page) is visible at one time" (Lynch and Horton).

"Where am I?"
Visitors may come directly to a page that is deep in your site. Make sure all of your pages pass author Steve Krug's "Blindfolded in the Trunk test" (Krug) by consistently using (and consistently positioning) navigation elements, as shown in the figure above.

1. What site is this? 1. site ID
2. What page am I on? 2. page name
3. What are the major sections of this site? 3. main sections
4. What are my options at this level? 4. local navigation
5. Where am I in the scheme of things? 5. "You are here" indicators
6. How can I search? 6. search form
7. How do I get home? 7. link to main page
Accessibility Information

Many visually impaired users rely on text reading devices to make content available to them via audio.

Accessibility Recommendations

A. Use language that is as simple and clear as possible.

B. Provide text equivalents to all nontext content.
   1. Provide a description of all images, sound files, applets, etc. in an ALT TEXT tag. The ALT tag allows you to convey to all users the content and meaning of your page. For example:
      `<IMG SRC="picture.jpg" alt="Northwestern University Library">`
   2. If your nontext content is dynamic, make sure that equivalents change with the nontext elements.
   3. If your page cannot contain text equivalents within it, consider creating a parallel text-only version of the page as a last resort.

C. Make sure that text and graphics make sense without color.
   People who cannot differentiate between colors or who are using devices with noncolor or nonvisual displays will not receive or understand information that relies on color for its meaning. Choose backgrounds that contrast with page text and don't interfere with readability of content. Within the content of a page it is customary to underline links. In the navigation area of a page, it is acceptable to use a clear, consistent, non-underlined link format such as a specific and distinct font, style, and size.

D. Don’t use frames.
   Frames are not universally accessible.
   The content of frames may not be searchable by search engines.

E. Avoid using server-side image maps.
   1. Navigation of pages using server-side image maps requires a mouse, which renders the page inaccessible to most visually impaired users.
   2. If used, consider providing a link to an alternate text version or summary.
   3. Client-side image maps are accessible because the information is stored locally and can be linked to using a text reader.

F. Use descriptive links.
   1. Instead of denoting a link with the words "Click here" or similar phrase, be descriptive when providing links; for example: "further information from the W3C on Web accessibility."
   2. Consider allowing such links to stand on their own line or provide an ordered or unordered list of links in HTML.
G. **Use headings and lists to organize your page and reinforce consistent page structure.**
   1. When possible, use mark-up language (<H1>, e.g.) rather than images or visual cues to emphasize the structure of your page.
   2. Organize documents so they may be read without style sheets.

H. **Test pages in multiple browsers, operating systems, and connection speeds.**
   1. Test your pages on older Windows and Macintosh systems in both Netscape and Internet Explorer.
   2. Pages intended for modem users should be tested for load times on slower connections (56K). A large image that downloads immediately on University computers may take 30 seconds to load on a modem connection.

I. **Provide alternate routes to information when using interactive technologies.**
   1. Provide captioning and transcripts of audio and descriptions of video.
   2. Pages that use *Flash, Shockwave,* or other interactive elements may not be accessible with older browsers. Provide a link to a text-only or non-interactive version of the information. Use special effects with caution and only with good reason. Potential difficulties include:
      a. May not work (or will work unpredictably) on different systems
      b. Harder to implement and maintain
      c. Take longer to download
      d. Require users to install plug-ins
      e. Text readers and search functions don't support JavaScript--not ADA compliant

**Accessibility @ northwestern.edu**

**What We Do**
   1. Have descriptive ALT attributes on images that carry content
   2. Have empty ALT attributes on images that do not carry content
   3. Design table structure to keep columnar information together instead of reading in rows left to right
   4. Allow navigation independent of JavaScript
   5. Keep navigational elements in the same location on every page

**What We Would Like To Do**
   1. Have "Next Page," "Previous Page," and "Up A Level" navigational meta tags
   2. Have "Skip to Main Content" links
   3. Enable keyboard shortcuts or hotkeys for link selection
   4. Use the "label" tag on forms whenever the field label is not obvious
Accessibility Tips For Designers

Recommended
1. Use high contrast text/background combinations with little or no pattern in background.
2. Use proper heading styles to structure a page <H1>, <H2>, etc.
3. Use CSS when possible.
4. In text, use relative font sizes, e.g. "big," "bigger," "small," "smallest."
5. Use "ALT" attributes to describe images

Strongly Discouraged
1. Use of red/green combinations
2. Designation of headings by using "Bold" formatting
3. Use of absolute font sizes in running text, e.g. "10pt."
4. Making navigation or other essential information depend solely on images

Accessibility Tips For Users
Having trouble with a site? Here are some recommendations to help you find the content you need.

Browser Settings
1. Many browsers allow you to override aspects of a web site's display
2. Set a default font size you can easily read
3. Set a minimum font size so you can read the smallest text
4. Set a default font color that is easily visible to you
5. Set a default background color that provides good contrast with the text
6. Look in your browser's help menu for shortcut keys to increase text sizes

Screen Magnifiers
Programs are available for most platforms that allow you to magnify an area of the screen

For Windows XP: Built in screen magnifier available at Start > Programs > Accessories > Accessibility > Screen Magnifier

For Macintosh OSX: Built in screen magnifier available at System Preferences > Universal Access > Turn Zoom On, then use Apple Option + or Apple Option - to change the screen magnification

Text will also appear larger if you decrease the resolution of your monitor
Search Engines and Meta Tags

Search engines regularly catalog page content and other relevant information into an index for easy retrieval when a user initiates a search. Meta tags show information about the content. You, the content owner, can make it easier for users to find what you have by using both of these methods to help define and describe the content of your pages.

**Search Engine Indexing:** In the picture below, you will notice the "<!--startindex -->" tag below the head tag and a "<!--stopindex -->" tag below the META information. This is for the search engine’s indexing feature.

The startindex and stopindex tags are used to indicate a section of the page that should be searched, such as the title, meta tags, or page content. At the end of the indexed section, the tag "<!--stopindex -->" tells the search engine to exclude content such as menu bars and footers that will be the same on many pages. This "universal" content should never be indexed.

```
<html>
<head>
<!--startindex -->
<title>Northwestern University : Web Communications</title>
<meta name="dc.title" content="Web Communications">
<meta name="dc.subject.name.corporate" content="Northwestern University">
<meta name="dc.subject.content" content="Administrative">
<meta name="dc.publisher" content="University Relations, Web Communications">
<!--stopindex -->
</head>
```

**Below:** Correct use of `startindex` and `stopindex` tags ensures that only the relevant content of a page is indexed. All menu and title bar graphics that appear on multiple pages should be excluded. The `<title>` tag and META information should also be included in an indexed section.
Meta tags help search engines find and index your web pages. Meta tags provide:
1. A brief description of the content
2. The name of the author or authoring department
3. Keyword search terms for indexing.

Northwestern’s search engine generates search results by comparing search terms against a pre-made index of the content of every page in the www.northwestern.edu domain, except personal home pages on pubweb.northwestern.edu. Using meta tags increases the likelihood that people searching for your information will find it. Please note that meta tags are optional, although strongly encouraged.
Technical Information

Northwestern University community members should use the Northwestern University Dublin Core Meta Tag Generator http://digital.library.northwestern.edu/mtg/ instead of using a program like Dreamweaver to generate meta tags.

Write a unique description for each page. The meta tag generator will produce HTML code based on the information you submit. Paste this code into your documents within the <head> tag. Below is an example of meta tag placement. **Dreamweaver template users** should note that the meta tags are pasted inside the "doctitle" section of the page, directly underneath the title. **If you paste the meta information anywhere else in the document, Dreamweaver templates will erase it.**
Colors

Standard colors used on Northwestern University top-level pages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Usage</th>
<th>RGB</th>
<th>Hexadecimal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purple*</td>
<td>Official purple; top, bottom bars</td>
<td>82,0,99</td>
<td>520063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Purple</td>
<td>Main content area</td>
<td>122,40,139</td>
<td>7A288B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Purple</td>
<td>Content area highlights</td>
<td>144,76,158</td>
<td>904C9E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Background accent color</td>
<td>255,178,77</td>
<td>FFB24D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reddish brown</td>
<td>Current page in breadcrumb</td>
<td>117,0,0</td>
<td>750000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Background for content pages</td>
<td>255,255,255</td>
<td>FFFFFF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Text 0,0,0 000000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Official Purple is the only "required" color for University pages and must be used for the banner.

Web-safe Colors

Web-safe colors are not required for two reasons: 1) fewer than 10% of users still use 8-bit monitors; and 2) a simple workaround exists: Use transparent backgrounds for images. See "Web-safe Color Workaround" for details.

Web-safe History

Web-safe colors were advocated in the past because older monitors ("8-bit") were only capable of displaying 256 colors. This number was based upon three root colors, red, green, and blue (RGB). When a browser encountered unsupported colors in images, it would attempt to approximate them by mixing the colors it did have, resulting in a fuzzy effect known as "dithering." When an unsupported color was encountered in a background, the browser would choose the closest single color it had available. A transparent background allows the browser to use that color without dithering.

Web-Safe Color Workaround

"When you export your GIF, select the color that's going to be in the code next to it and make that transparent. Then set the BGColor of both the cell in which you've placed the GIF and the adjacent cell to the same value. That color will now bleed through the GIF, and regardless of which color the browser shifts it to, it will be the same for both the GIF and the code-generated color, since really it's not in the GIF at all" (Lehn and Stern).
Graphics and Photography

GIF and JPEG are the most common formats for web graphics. Their size should be small enough to load quickly (~25K).

**GIF**
1. Better for solid colors
2. Render with a transparent background to avoid dithering.

**JPEG**
1. Better for images with subtle variations of color (photographs, for example)
2. Higher compression tends to degrade quality: adjust compressions to avoid large file size and bad image quality.

Photography helps support one of Northwestern's distinctive qualities: "Locations on two beautiful campuses on Lake Michigan in Evanston and Chicago, and the Chicago metropolitan area itself, provide students and faculty a wealth of outstanding intellectual, professional, social, and cultural opportunities."
Fonts, CSS, and SSI

Font sizes and accessibility: To facilitate accessibility, experts recommend relative font sizes ("small," "big," "bigger," for example) instead of absolute point sizes. Use of HTML heading tags such as <H1> and <H2> also helps text reading devices to interpret the structure of the page.

CSS: We strongly recommend the use of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). To increase accessibility, however, you should organize documents so they may be read without style sheets.

SSI: Server-Side Includes (SSI) act as the "style sheets of content," helping facilitate consistency and integrity of content and making wide-scale updates of common elements easier.

Printing Web Pages

Different versions of browsers print Web pages differently. The newest versions of Internet Explorer (5.0 and up) and Netscape (6.0 and up) will fit a printed image to the size of the page, but older browsers will allow images to be cropped to fit page width (532 pixels in A4 letter size).

PDF: If you want to make certain pages consistent for printing across all browsers, you can convert them to Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF). A PDF helps maintain a page's design and content integrity by making the page into an inalterable image. It is useful for documents specifically intended to be printed, such as forms.

Contact Academic Technologies (847-467-4357) for more information about the PDF format.
Training

Become familiar with Dreamweaver, Macromedia's web page editing program. Northwestern University Training and Development (http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/training/) offers Dreamweaver classes. Call 847-467-5081 or e-mail training@northwestern.edu. There are also Dreamweaver instruction books available.

Copyright Issues

Copyright protects expression -- your expression and that of others. All original expression is eligible for copyright protection as soon as it is fixed in a tangible form: In fact, almost all original expression is protected as soon as it is expressed. Virtually everything you can upload and download on the web is protected by copyright.

Items NOT eligible for copyright protection include:

1. Ideas
2. Facts
3. Titles
4. Names
5. Short phrases
6. Blank forms

While it’s easy to download and copy files (text, photographs, graphics, sound, movies, etc.) from the web, you must have permission from the copyright holder to use them on your own Web pages (or anywhere else). Under the terms of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, the University is obligated to take appropriate action if it receives a complaint that copyrighted material is being published over our network without permission from the copyright holder.

Copyright notice on your pages
The standard Northwestern University footer contains a copyright notice. If you wish to use copyrighted material, send the attached Copyright Request Form to the content owner.

Further Reading
www.copyright.gov
References and Suggested Readings

The Northwestern University Office of Web Communications created this guide with contributions from the Web Standards Group of Northwestern University's Web Steering Committee.

The Office of Web Communications provides standards and technical assistance to help the Northwestern community develop Web pages that are designed for optimum usability and accessibility. Creating a consistent Web presence at Northwestern University is one of the group's primary goals.

References and Suggested Readings

From Northwestern University

A to Z Style Guide
http://www.northwestern.edu/univ-relations/publications/editorial/styleguide.html

Northwestern University Logo Guidelines
http://www.northwestern.edu/logo/guidelines.html

Information about the PDF format
Academic Technologies: 847-467-4357

Web Publishing classes
Human Resources Training & Development: 847-491-7459
http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/training/computer.html

Outside Sources


http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/00/37/index2a.html

http://www.med.yale.edu/caim/manual/


**Accessibility Resources**

Resources from the Web Accessibility Initiative of the W3C:
http://www.w3.org/WAI/Resources/
http://www.w3.org/WAI/ER/existingtools.html#Evaluation

Accessibility evaluation service on the web:
http://www.cast.org/bobby/

**Copyright Resources**

http://staffweb.library.northwestern.edu/staff/cdougherty/islma98/urlshandout.html
Northwestern University
Web Site Use Request for Copyrighted Material

Below are the specific pages for which we are requesting copyright permission to convert to electronic format for use on Northwestern University’s Web site.

Name of requesting department:

URL of page where material will appear:

Title:  
Editor:  
Copyright Date:  
Page Numbers:  

Title:  
Editor:  
Copyright Date:  
Page Numbers:  

Publisher's Response

Please fax back at your earliest convenience to:

Permission for use of selections is

_____ Granted without exception

_____ Granted with exception(s) listed below:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Credit line desired: ___________________________________________________

If the rights for this material are not entirely controlled by you, please indicated where we should write to obtain copyright permission:

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Name: ___________________________________
Title: ____________________________________
Signature: ________________________________

Phone: 
E-mail: