



**NORTHWESTERN  
UNIVERSITY**

**Northwestern University Information Technology  
(NUIT) Web Business Process for Using the NUIT  
WCMS**

**as supported by Northwestern University Web Guidelines**

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## Introduction

Northwestern University Information Technology (NUIT) Communications created the following Web guidelines to assist NUIT staff and departments in making informed decisions when creating Web pages and publications under the NUIT branding.

NUIT's Web standards exist to facilitate consistency and usability and to promote standardized NUIT branding across the University Web sites. Any Web document that represents Northwestern University and/or its official units, programs, departments, or schools is expected to follow University Web standards.

### The Purpose of NUIT's Web Standards:

- **Identity:** Branding allows visitors to recognize immediately a Web page's affiliation with Northwestern University and NUIT.
- **Usability:** NUIT Web sites must be intuitive and functional for the NU Community.
- **Consistency:** Web standards promote consistency. Consistency simplifies navigation of pages for end-users of the NUIT Web site. NUIT is committed to maintaining a high level of consistency across all Web pages in the NUIT Web site.
- **Accuracy:** Pages must be accurate and up-to-date.

## Compliance

NUIT abides by the official University Web Standards. For more information, please visit <http://www.northwestern.edu/univ-relations/webcomm/styleguide/>.

All pages must adhere to NUIT Standards. Staff should focus on creating accurate, regularly updated content that supports the mission of NUIT.

## Policy

All NUIT departments are to adhere to the policy standards outlined in this document as well as to Northwestern University Web standards. Any Web pages created by NUIT departments, or by subgroups within the departments, should link directly from the main NUIT Web site (or from the home page of the respective NUIT department, as appropriate) to assure ease of navigation and to minimize the amount of searching required to find information.

With the exception of iCAIR, which has unique branding and different site location appropriate to their function externally from the University, NUIT departments should not create "stand-alone" Web sites that are not linked from the NUIT Web site or otherwise lack official NUIT branding, including look and feel.

In addition, any new Web pages or major changes to existing Web pages within and/or affiliated with the NUIT Web site are subject to review by NUIT Communications. This process is not intended to dictate what each NUIT department can or cannot put on the Web, but is meant to help assure consistency of content and a unified image of the NUIT organization.

Content on the NUIT Web site must conform to NUIT Web guidelines including appropriate placement within the NUIT Web structure. NUIT Communications is charged with ensuring that all Web pages and their content adhere to these guidelines.

## NUIT Requirements

Required elements that **must** be on all NUIT Web pages within and/or affiliated with the NUIT Web site are as follows:

- Northwestern University Logo
- NUIT Logo and CSS
- Standard NUIT Footer (within the CSS)
- Title tag
- University Search box
- Meta Tags
- Breadcrumb Navigation

All of the above requirements have been incorporated into templates available through NUIT's Web Content Management System (WCMS). These templates must be used when creating and updating Web content.

## University Requirements -Accessibility

Accessibility should be a priority for all Northwestern University Web publishers. Northwestern University is committed to providing equal access to Web-based information in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the NUIT Web site will operate in agreement with this Act. These acts help ensure that Web pages will be readable by users with disabilities.

Northwestern also observes the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). A list of accessibility-enhancing recommendations is detailed in the Northwestern University Web Standards Guide available at <http://www.northwestern.edu/univrelations/webcomm/styleguide/>.

*Note that the ADA stipulates that federal funding may be withheld from institutions that fail to adhere to its rules.*

# NUIT Web Site Policies

## Access

Only authorized NUIT staff can have access to the file server for updates to the NUIT Web site.

## Editing Pages

Web pages are edited by the authorized staff acting as Web contributors. Contributors are considered content experts and are responsible for ensuring that their content is approved by their departments before it is deployed by NUIT Communications. Pages are NOT to be edited outside of the NUIT Web Content Management System (WCMS).

## Standards

All pages must adhere to the NUIT standards set forth in this document. Contributors will focus on creating accurate, regularly updated content that supports the mission of NUIT.

## Responsibilities of Contributors

- All NUIT Web pages must be reviewed and approved by department stakeholders and NUIT Communications before uploading.
- All NUIT Web Contributors and NUIT Departments are responsible for the content of their pages.
- All content should be monitored to ensure that it is updated as necessary. Contributors are expected to review all content in a timely manner to ensure that the information presented to NUIT users is current.
- All NUIT Web Contributors must ensure that their content is up-to-date and does not violate University policies and codes or federal, state, and local laws.
- All NUIT Web Contributors are expected to follow the University's principles of academic integrity.
- Any NUIT pages found to be in violation of the standards and policies set forth in this document or any amendments to it will be removed from the NUIT Web site until corrections are made.
- Vendor links: Official University pages may not link to commercial sites that advertise/sell products or services and may not accept sponsorship from commercial entities in exchange for advertising and /or links to commercial sites. \*\*Specific exceptions may be allowed if the commercial links support the University's mission and/or provide an essential service to the Northwestern community (for example, software vendors). All links on NUIT Web pages are subject to review by NUIT and/or the Office of Web Communications.

## Process for Updating NUIT Web Pages

The process for updating the NUIT Web site is detailed in the WCMS Contributor Manual at [http://www.it.northwestern.edu/bin/docs/WCMS\\_Manual\\_Contributor.pdf](http://www.it.northwestern.edu/bin/docs/WCMS_Manual_Contributor.pdf). Because Contributors have access to different assets, a process will be specifically created within the WCMS for each Contributor in order to best meet departmental needs. The approval process will be automated within the system.

## Content Recommendations

### Organization: User Focus vs. Internal Focus

Organize sections and content according to users' needs, not necessarily by departmental organization or hierarchy. Identify items your users would logically want, even if it means grouping functions from different areas. For example, the service that NUIT offers is more important to the user than the NUIT group that is responsible for that service.

## Editorial Guidelines

### 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. Templates are provided within the WCMS, and all content entered must fit within these templates, ensuring that the look of the page is consistent with the NUIT site as a whole.

### Key Concepts

- Omit needless words. Users don't read — they scan.
- Define and clarify technical terms and jargon.
- Be succinct, informative, and use the grammatical second or third person, never first person.
- Use “inverted pyramid” writing style: start with the point, then support it, using links for in-depth details.
- One idea per paragraph is ideal.
- Keep the most important elements “above the fold,” that is, visible on initial page view without scrolling.
- Categorize according to users' needs, not necessarily by departmental organization or hierarchy.
- When creating a link, highlight only the one, two, or three most important words.

## Consistency of Style

Style guidelines have been established by University Relations and NUIT and should be followed.

### NUIT Editorial Style Guide

For NUIT-specific style elements such as usage, punctuation, and capitalization, please refer to the NUIT Editorial Style Guide. This can be found on the NUIT Intranet at <http://www.it.northwestern.edu/bin/docs/secure/intranet/nuiteditorialguidelines.pdf> .

### A to Z Style Guide

Northwestern University University Relations' Publications Group has produced a guide <http://www.northwestern.edu/univ-relations/publications/resources/styleguide.html> that addresses many stylistic issues you are 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.

## Content Maintenance

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

## 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. 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:**
  - Ideas
  - Facts
  - Titles
  - Names
  - Short phrases
  - Blank forms
  
- **You must have permission from the copyright holder.** While it is easy to download and copy files (text, photographs, graphics, sound, movies, etc.) from the Web, this is not tolerated on the NUIT Web site.
  
- **The University is obligated to take appropriate action** if it receives a complaint that copyrighted material is being published over its network without permission under the terms of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act.
  
- **NUIT pages must contain copyright notice.** The standard Northwestern University footer contains a copyright notice. If you wish to use copyrighted material, send a Copyright Request Form to the content owner. This form is available through University Web Communications.



## Media and Image Files

All media must be approved by the director of the requesting department.

- NU University Relations provides the following subject and talent release forms for photography and video and audio recording. This University standard release form must be used for any media in which people are identifiable. You can find the form at <http://www.northwestern.edu/univ-relations/publications/resources/photo.html>.
- GIF and JPG are the most common formats for Web graphics. Their size should be small enough to load quickly (~50K).
  - GIF
    - Better for solid colors
    - Render with a transparent background to avoid dithering
    - Smaller file size
    - Smaller color palette
  - JPG
    - Better for images with subtle variations of color (example, photographs)
    - Higher compression tends to degrade quality; adjust compressions to avoid larger file size and bad image quality

## Video, Digital Media, and Interactive Elements

- All require the approval of the NUIT server administrators.
- If your Web page includes Flash, JavaScript, animations, or other elements that are not universally accessible, be sure to include text descriptions of these elements in accordance with the ADA Guidelines for the Web.

## NUIT Business Process for NUIT Web Pages Outside the

## Web Content Management System (WCMS)

There may be incidences in which a Web page or Web site needs to be developed and maintained outside of the NUIT WCMS. In these cases, all NUIT Web branding and style guidelines must be followed to ensure a consistent and seamless look with existing NUIT pages and sites.

If a project or service is developed using NUIT resources for faculty or research efforts, and is funded by a “customer,” then it needs to clearly display NUIT Web template branding.

For Web pages that include dynamic content or system access outside of NUINFO or the WCMS, NUIT Communications will provide the NUIT Web template which can then be applied to those pages. For projects that may require special circumstances, please contact NUIT Communications for a consultation meeting to discuss how to best proceed in maintaining a connection to the NUIT Web site and brand appropriately.

In an effort to move all NUIT supported Web pages to the NUIT WCMS, this business process applies to all existing and new NUIT Web pages created and maintained by NUIT resources.

### Contact Information

If you have questions regarding the NUIT Web Guidelines, general NUIT Web queries, or support questions, please contact [it-communications@northwestern.edu](mailto:it-communications@northwestern.edu). A member of the NUIT Communications team will respond.