

University Webmaster

The University Webmaster is part of the Office of University Communications and oversees the UNA homepage and the top-level pages of www.una.edu.

In addition, we are responsible for:

- 1. Web Content Management:** We provide maintenance and development of the 1st and 2nd levels of www.una.edu, as well as provide recommendations on lower-level sites in accordance with the WWW Guidelines.
- 2. Web Look and Feel:** We oversee and provide guidance for all departments and individuals with www.una.edu Web pages, promoting an appropriate University presence on the Internet.
- 3. Web Development:** We serve as a resource, strategic planner and consultant for Web development in the University community.
- 4. Communication and Outreach:** We provide training outreach opportunities and implement communication strategies within the University community in an ongoing effort to maintain a leading presence on the Internet

The University Webmaster may be contacted by email at jrbritten@una.edu.

Guidelines for Web Usage

Introduction

The University Webmaster is responsible for the look and feel of the University of North Alabama's web site and therefore is involved in helping others at UNA develop websites that best represent the University.

The University Webmaster is providing this document to the UNA community for the purpose of enhancing the university's presence on the Internet. The guidelines within this document are intended as a reference for the look and feel, content quality and technical aspects of web pages representing the University of North Alabama.

A great university website leaves a strong, positive first impression with website visitors, including current and future students, their parents, institutional partners, faculty, staff, and the many others seeking information from or about UNA. For many, our website serves as their first introduction to the University of North Alabama. It must communicate in a clear and consistent manner the university's mission, vision, and outstanding characteristics.

The university's website is an official publication of UNA. Our print publications utilize a consistent style – a “family” look and feel – and adhere to well-defined Graphic Standards. Similarly, our websites need to use consistent “family” elements and adhere to similar kinds of guidelines for the web. As the primary means by which the world learns about the university, UNA's website must reflect the university's excellence in a consistent manner.

Standard guidelines governing website design and deployment are a necessary aspect of our concerted web development strategy. These guidelines are based on industry best practices for web navigation and usability, and support UNA's Graphic Standards, which protect and project our unique brand. The University of North Alabama homepage, as well as all sub-level pages housed under the root level of the website, will utilize templates provided by the University Webmaster. All websites and web pages within the www.una.edu domain must adhere to the WWW Style Guidelines.

File Structure and Naming Your Files

Plan the organization of your website so users can quickly and easily find what they're looking for. It is best to group broad categories of information according to user's needs, not according to your department's internal organization or hierarchy. Try to identify what items a user would logically want, even if it means grouping functions from different areas together. A great tool for getting at answers to these questions is the KJ analysis, a method of developing insight into themes and relationships among issues.

When naming your files, DO NOT use spaces or special characters. Instead of spaces, a hyphen (-) is the most acceptable format to separate words in file names.

Breadth Leads to Depth

Create a site hierarchy that starts with broad categories of information, and then provides increasing levels of detail for those who require more information.

Navigation

Prioritize links according to usage patterns and importance. Do not list links alphabetically, as usability studies show that doing so is essentially the same as random organization.

Document Structure

Use headers, paragraphs, and lists to reinforce the purpose and organization of content, and to facilitate scanning of the page. Use headers (<h2> and <h3>) to organize content into logical sections. There should only be one <h2> on each page, acting as the page title. Each subcategory head on a page should use the <h3> tag. (Think of a traditional outline.) Use paragraphs for blocks of text, lists for lists of items, and tables ONLY for tabular data.

Make sure that the order of content on each page (including navigation and other standard page elements) makes sense when read from top to bottom. If you are using stylesheets, you can easily check the order by disabling the stylesheet. For visitors using screen readers you may want to provide hidden links to skip over navigation and other often repeated page elements.

Linking to External Files

The most widely accepted format for linking documents on the web is PDF format. Files in formats such as .docx, .doc, .xls, etcetera are not always viewable on certain computers. Not everyone has Microsoft Word or other Office applications installed. Convert file to PDF first, and then link to the PDF file. All standard computers have come with a PDF reader pre-installed, and this format is generally viewable by anyone at any computer.

Links

Use descriptive link text so that the destination or function of a link is clear when read out of context. Do not use "Click here".

Fonts

The preferred font for departmental navigation and body text is **Verdana**, but sans-serif fonts such as Arial and Helvetica are optional alternates.

The preferred font for page headers (<h2>, <h3>, etc.) is **Georgia**, but serif fonts such as Times are optional alternates.

Verdana and **Georgia** are the default font styles that should be used within the university's website templates.

Font Sizes

Font sizes should be set using relative units such as ems (preferred) or percentages (%), so that users can resize text. Pixels (px) should be avoided since users will not be able to resize text in Internet Explorer. Points (pt) are intended for print media only, and should never be used.

Colors

Please use colors from the University's family color palette, which also is available in the Graphic Standards Guide. Please note that Purple (hex

#46166B) is the university's primary color, so please design your websites accordingly, to ensure consistency with family designs.

Choose colors and images that contrast with page text and don't interfere with the readability of content. Text color and background combinations should be legible in black and white. Never convey meaning with color alone.

Colors from the university's Web color palette are preferred, and should be used with the university's website templates.

HEX CODES:

| | |
|--------------|---------|
| Purple: | #46166B |
| Dark Purple: | #2D0C49 |
| Gold: | #DB9F11 |
| Dark Gold: | #8E6912 |
| Grey: | #5F6062 |

Image Compression

All images for the web should be compressed to a resolution of 72 dots per inch (dpi) to speed download times.

JPEG compression should be used for photographs and continuous tone images. A compression rate of 40% – 60% (or 4 to 6) usually produces the best balance between file size and image quality.

GIF compression should be used for diagrams and line art. Reducing the number of colors may help reduce file size.

Alternative Text

Provide alternate text equivalents for all images using the alt attribute in HTML. Alternate text should convey the purpose or meaning of the image. Including text such as "photo of" or "image of" is not necessary. Alternate text for purely decorative images can be empty or null.

Page Dimensions

A fixed width of no more than 760 pixels (px) is required to avoid horizontal scrolling with a screen resolution of 800x600. For maximum

compatibility with Internet Explorer, create a print stylesheet with a fixed width of no more than 670px so content is not cut off during printing. Images wider than 670px should also be avoided.

Cascading Stylesheets (CSS)

The University website templates make use of two Cascading Stylesheets (global.css, departmental.css) that are stored in a separate folder on our servers. There should be no need for you to access and modify these files. If there is a need for specialized page styles, make use of 'inline' css styles, or link to a third external stylesheet (stored in your departments folder on the server) if there are many additional styles needed.

Browser Support

The University templates are all compatible with, and we recommended that your website support the following browsers:

Windows

- * Internet Explorer 6.x and up
- * Firefox 1.5 and up

Mac OS

- * Firefox 1.5 and up
- * Safari 1.x and up

Markup and Validation

Mark up web pages using valid, structural HTML or XHTML to the greatest extent possible. Use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to control presentation of the page whenever possible. Table based layouts should be avoided. Deprecated (outdated) markup, such as the and elements, and HTML "hacks" such as invisible spacer images, should not be used.

We encourage web developers to validate their code to ensure compliance with the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) recommendations and the university's Web Accessibility policy (PDF). Free validators are available here:

W3C markup validator <http://validator.w3.org/>

W3C CSS validator <http://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator/>

W3C link checker <http://validator.w3.org/checklink/>

WebAIM accessibility validator <http://dev.wave.webaim.org/index.jsp>

Accessibility

Web pages should be accessible to people with disabilities. From a web developer's point of view, this means making technology and design choices that are compatible with the way people with disabilities access information on the web.

The recommendations in this document can help you get started with web accessibility.