



SOUTHEASTERN

LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY

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Web Content and Style Guidelines

Introduction

In line with the goals outlined in the web policy, these content and style guidelines have been developed to help insure that Southeastern's website is more effectively utilized in the recruitment and retention of students, that continuity and cohesiveness exists across the entire website, and that Southeastern's website promotes a positive image of the University. These guidelines outline some basic content requirements for academic and administrative unit webpages, along with information on web writing style, editorial style, and design style. The guide also identifies suggested content guidelines for student organization and faculty webpages, along with University logo requirements for these pages.

Since the focus is on improving the website to make it a more effective tool for marketing and recruitment, Southeastern's primary audience for the website is future students (and their parents). With this thought, the new home page is geared towards future students, and additional audience-based pages are designed to address the needs of current students, faculty and staff, alumni, and other community visitors. Navigation is designed so that users can find needed information easily, and webpage templates provide for consistency and continuity in look and feel as well as navigation throughout the site. User audiences should never have to question whether they are still on Southeastern's website or if they have been directed elsewhere. In addition, the webpage templates insure that Southeastern's website meets Priority 1 ADA Web Accessibility Standards.

All University units should regularly review and update their webpages, and any outdated information should be removed promptly.

Writing for the Web

Keeping Content Web-friendly

Studies show that web audiences do not read text on a webpage word-for-word, but instead scan the page to find what they are looking for. Reading on a display monitor is quite a different experience than reading a paper or a book, and it is important to break up the page to allow the reader's eye an opportunity to rest. Long blocks of text should not be used on webpages. Instead it is best to:

- Divide the text into logical pieces that will make the text easy to scan.
- Keep your most important facts to the top of the page.
- Use headings and sub-headings as appropriate.
- Keep the language short and to the point.
- Make sure grammar and spelling are correct.
- Keep the language easy to understand – do not use terminology that people outside of Southeastern's community might not understand.
- Keep the tone and style of writing less formal and more casual and intimate.
- Use links to supplement information, not replace it. Give a brief summary of needed information and provide a link for more detailed information on the subject.

Keeping Content Current

Not only should the content on a webpage be concise and easy to scan, the information must be current and correct. Nothing is more frustrating to a user than to find out that the information they are relying on is incorrect. It will affect the audience's perception on the reliability and credibility of Southeastern. This is why reviewing and updating content on the website must be completed at least once each semester.

News and Events and other Time-Sensitive Content

Time-sensitive content may need to be reviewed even more often. Units with News and Events boxes should review their webpages on a daily or weekly basis to ensure that only the most current information is being displayed. Events that have already occurred should be removed from the webpage immediately after the event has taken place.

Highlight Areas

Highlight areas should be updated, at a minimum, once each semester. While academic and administrative units are encouraged to select a topic to highlight on their webpage, they should work with University Marketing and Communications to obtain photos and assist with writing the text for the highlight box to ensure continuity of highlight areas throughout the site.

Editorial Style

The following is a list of some of the more common questions asked when writing for university audiences. As always, have a good dictionary handy for spelling, hyphenation, and basic usage questions. For a more comprehensive guide, please refer to the *AP Stylebook*. (A copy of the *AP Stylebook* is available in the Reference Department of the Library.)

a/an – use of “a” or “an” should be determined by the beginning sound of the word following it rather than the spelling, for example, *an honor, a historical fact*.

abbreviations/acronyms – Always spell out the term on first reference and place the acronym in parentheses following the first reference. Acronyms should be in capital letters with no periods: *ID card, IT, OSCAR*. Never use the acronym SLU or SELU for Southeastern Louisiana University. *Southeastern* may be used as a shortened form of Southeastern Louisiana University.

academic and administrative titles – capitalize titles when used before the name, but lowercase after the name: *Professor John Smith; John Smith, professor*. Occupational titles are always lowercase except in the case where the title includes a proper name: *lecturer, instructor, history professor, English professor*.

academic degrees – use an apostrophe when referring to a “bachelor’s degree” or “master’s degree.” Use “doctoral degree” or “doctorate.” Use the acronyms BA, BS, MA, or PhD (without periods) only when spelling out the name of the degrees is cumbersome.

adviser/advisor – use the “or” ending (rather than the “er” ending)

a.m./p.m. – do not capitalize time and include periods: 7:45 *a.m.*; 6:00 *p.m.*

campus building names – refer to building names as listed in Southeastern’s General Catalogue. Names can be shortened on second reference, for instance Charles Emery Cate Teacher Education Center on second reference can be shortened to Cate Teacher Education Center, or Lucius McGehee Hall on second reference would be shortened to McGehee Hall. Buildings should never be referenced using the four-letter abbreviation system used by Class Schedules, for instance, R. Noval Garrett College of Business Building should never be referred to as CBUS.

Also please note the following common mistakes that should be avoided:

- Music Annex and the Music Recital Hall are separate buildings from the Ralph R. Pottle Music Building and should never be referred to as Pottle Annex or Pottle Recital Hall.
- D Vickers Hall does not include a period (“.”) after the D.
- North Campus Financial Aid Building should not be referred to as North Campus Building A; the same applies to North Campus Main Building – it should not be referred to as North Campus Building B.

capitalization – Words such as “department,” “office,” “college,” “committee,” or “university” should be capitalized when used with the name of the department, office, college, or committee. These words may be capitalized when used in place of the name, however when referring to a department, office, college, or committee in general, do not capitalize:

- *The College of Business consists of several departments, including the Department of Accounting and Finance, the Department of Management and Business Administration, and the Department of Marketing and Supply Chain Management.*
- *Southeastern Louisiana University offers student support services as well as academic support services. Southeastern also offers students a variety of other opportunities, such as hands-on experience working at the University’s radio station or television station.*

catalog/catalogue – use the spelling “catalogue” when referring to Southeastern’s General Catalogue.

comma usage – use a comma before “and” and “or” in a series.

dates – dates should include a comma if the day is cited, otherwise do not use a comma: July 11, 2015; July 2015. Use four digits for the year, however it is permissible to use a two-digit abbreviation when referring to time that spans over two years: *throughout 2015; during the 2015-16 academic year.*

e-mail – use the lower case “e” with a hyphen (unless the word starts a sentence).

GPA – GPA is the acronym for grade point average, thus, should always be capitalized.

gender neutrality – avoid gender-specific pronouns by using plural pronouns. Instead of “Each student must submit his application,” use “Students must submit their applications” or “Each student must submit an application.” Also use gender-neutral alternatives such as *chairperson* instead of *chairman* or *police officer* instead of *policeman*.

grades – use capital letters and italics, with no quotation marks for letter grades. Plurals are made by adding “s,” except in the case of *A*, which an apostrophe is use to avoid confusion with the word “as”: *A’s, Bs, Cs, Ds.*

hyphens – refer to an up-to-date dictionary for correct hyphenation of words. Commonly used hyphenated words include: *part-time, full-time; on-campus, off-campus; three-hour course, work-study.* Online should not include a hyphen.

i.e./e.g. – *i.e.* means “that is,” and should not be confused with *e.g.*, which means “for example.”

numbers – for easy scanning on the web, it is permissible to use digits for numbers, except at the start of a sentence. Try to reword the sentence:

- o Instead of: *923 beginning freshmen registered for classes in the Fall 2004 semester.*
Reword the sentence to read: *In the Fall 2004 semester, 923 beginning freshmen registered for classes.*

- It is permissible to begin a sentence with a calendar year in numeric format:
- o *2005-2006 enrollment numbers exceeded all expectations.*

online – one word, no hyphen.

SELU – never use the acronym SELU. Use *Southeastern* as the short form when referring to Southeastern Louisiana University. SLU is reserved for Athletic Department use.

theater/theatre – use the “re” spelling when referring to theatre courses offered in the Department of Music and Performing Arts, or the Columbia *Theatre*

web – lowercase unless at the beginning of a sentence or part of a title.

webpage – one word; lowercase unless at the beginning of a sentence or part of a title.

website – one word; lowercase unless at the beginning of a sentence or part of a title.

Southeastern's Content Management System

What is a Content Management System?

Managing a website as large as Southeastern's is quite a huge undertaking. In order to meet the guidelines of Southeastern's website Policy in the most efficient manner possible, Southeastern has chosen to use a web content management system. A web content management system (CMS) is software that manages content on a website. Utilizing a CMS will allow the University's site to be updated more easily, give it a more consistent look and feel, and provide greater security to the site. The benefits of using a CMS include the following:

- Content information can be easily updated across the site. Content is shared, allowing files to be updated in one place instead of having to find the information on every page of the website in order to update it.
- Links and navigation are automatically updated when changes are made to the site. The CMS stores the relationship of pages in the database and automatically updates all pages on the site when a link is changed.
- Content contributors (web publishers) do not need technical expertise in web development in order to create or update webpages. Content contributors login to the CMS, choose from a variety of templates, enter in text, images, etc., and the CMS creates the webpage. This means content contributors can spend more time on creating quality content and less time on trying to figure out how to publish it on the web.
- Because the CMS creates the webpages through the use of templates, all webpages will not only meet Southeastern's graphic standards, but web accessibility standards as well. The templates will insure that Southeastern's website will be consistent in look and feel throughout.
- Access to Southeastern's website through the CMS is based upon University identification numbers (W#), and users can only access content they have been given permission to access. The elimination of generic web user accounts provides Southeastern's website with better security.
- Scheduling capabilities help insure that the content is always up-to-date. Time sensitive information can be assigned expire or release times when created to insure that out-dated information is removed immediately. For example, information on a special departmental scholarship program can be posted with an expiration date that coincides with the final date applications are accepted. The CMS will automatically remove the page and the link to the page from public view on that date, keeping the department's website content current and up-to-date.
- The CMS only publishes current webpages to the web server, which ensures that Search engines only have access to current pages and information.

The CMS will help Southeastern create a more dynamic presence on the web and will be a more effective marketing tool for recruiting and retaining students. All University colleges, departments, administrative and service units, research centers, institutes and programs and other official units of the University are required to be a part of the CMS. Exceptions to this include Athletics (which must be

hosted on a separate site from the University in adherence to federal guidelines), University units with a significant community outreach mission as approved by the Provost, student organizations, faculty webpages, and student webpages.

Use of Templates and Graphic Elements

In adherence to Southeastern's web policy, the following standards should be followed with regard to the use of templates, typography, and images on Southeastern's website.

Templates

Templates have been designed to insure Southeastern's website meets Priority 1 ADA web Accessibility Standards as well as provide a consistent look across Southeastern's website. All University colleges, departments, administrative and service units, research centers, institutes and programs and other official units of the University are required to use one of the designed template sets. University units may choose from a variety of available template styles.

Athletics, student organizations, faculty pages, and student pages will not be required to use official University templates. University units with a significant community outreach mission as approved by the Provost are also not required to use University templates; however, they are encouraged to take advantage of the CMS and to work with the University website Coordinator to develop templates specifically for their use. University templates may only be used by University units and organizations that are supported by the University. University affiliated organizations that are hosted by Southeastern may not use Southeastern's University templates.

Typography

The templates provide choices in typefaces, sizes, styles and colors that are consistent with the look and feel of the website and the template group. Graphical text must be avoided, as this presents problems with meeting web accessibility standards. Units desiring to use graphical text should contact the University website Coordinator for consultation.

Images

An image repository provides a variety photos and has been developed for use by content contributors. Clip art should never be used as this can create copyright issues. In addition, clip art is not consistent with the design of the new Southeastern website. If a special photo is needed, arrangements for a photo shoot should be made with University Marketing and Communications. If special graphics are needed, you may contact the University website Coordinator for help.

URLs and Naming Conventions

As the World Wide Web has developed, certain standards and protocols have been established concerning URLs and the naming of webpage files. In line with these widely-accepted protocols, Southeastern's website will adhere to the following standards:

- All webpage file names must be lowercase and not contain any spaces.
- While the underscore (_) symbol may be used, other symbols such as dash (-), ampersand (&) or percent (%) must not be used.

- File names must be short and descriptive. Use an abbreviated version of the name and make sure it is understandable, for example: *Office of Admissions: admissions; Office of Financial Aid: fin_aid.*
- Sub-domains (for example, *www.math.selu.edu*) will not be used with pages that are part of Southeastern's CMS; however redirects can be created upon request (for example, *www.southeastern.edu/math* will redirect to *www.southeastern.edu/academics/math.*)

Links

The following guidelines should be adhered to when creating links:

- Links should not be used to replace information. Instead, a brief summary of the information should be provided with a link. The link allows the user access to more details on the subject.
- Link names should be concise, informational, and easy to understand (for example use *Math Curriculum Sheet* instead of *Math Requirements* or *Get Your Math Degree*).
- Do not use "Click Here" for links. For example, "*See the Math Curriculum Sheet for a listing of course requirements for a degree in Math*" instead of "*Click here for a Math Curriculum Sheet.*"
- Links should always open in the same browser window, in adherence to web accessibility standards.
- Relative links should be used whenever linking to documents that are a part of your directory on Southeastern's website.
- Absolute links must always be used when linking to pages that are not a part of Southeastern's website (for example, an absolute link must be used when linking to Southeastern's Athletics webpages: *http://www.lionsports.net*).
- Links to commercial organizations are prohibited unless there is a valid University business relationship with the entity. E.g. the Bookstore, Campus Dining, etc. As a public institution, Southeastern cannot appear to be endorsing a particular product or service. The Provost must first approve any link to a commercial organization before it can be placed on any official University webpage within the *www.southeastern.edu/* domain.

Metadata

Metadata is a set of terms used to classify and identify content. Metadata is the core of the CMS and is what the CMS uses in order to create workflow, to create dynamic webpages, and to track content and its use in multiple locations within a website. An example of the metadata descriptors that would be attached to a math curriculum page would include the title of the page, keywords associated with the content on the page, and the college and department owning the page. Metadata requirements will be attached to all web content and must be completed in order to publish the webpage.

Other Extranet Pages

Other pages that will be allowed space on Southeastern's website within the *www.southeastern.edu* domain (but will not be a part of the CMS) include student organizations, faculty, and units with a significant community outreach mission as approved by the Provost. As a part of the Southeastern website, the owners of these pages must adhere to the standards outlined in this policy -- the

appearance and content on these pages must be professional in character and should promote the mission of the University. The maintenance of these pages is the sole responsibility of the owner.

Student Organization webpages

Student organizations will be free to design their own websites subject to the approval of the Vice President of Student Affairs. Student organization web pages will not be included in Southeastern's CMS. However, Southeastern will provide an index page on its website linking to student organization websites. Student organizations may, in lieu of creating their own webpages, link to their national organization's website. Student organizations may apply for space on Southeastern's website by sending an email request to webmaster@southeastern.edu.

Student organization webpages must be in compliance with the policies and guidelines set forth in this document as well as other applicable University policies and guidelines, including the Responsible Computing at Southeastern Louisiana University Policy and Southeastern's Copyright Policy. Student organization webpages that are a part of Southeastern's extranet must include Southeastern's full name on the home page. Student organization webpages may also include Southeastern's logo, but use of the logo is not required. The Southeastern name and logo must adhere to the standards set forth in the University's Graphic Standards Manual published by University Marketing and Communications.

Student organizations are asked to keep their webpages current and should update at least once each semester. Student organizations are also required to provide Southeastern's Office of Student Organizations with current information about their organization each semester in order to be included on Southeastern's index page of student organizations. While it is not required, it is suggested that student organizations provide the following basic information about their organizations on their webpages, when applicable:

- Mission statement
- History of the organization
- Requirements for joining the organization
- Benefits of membership
- Officers, with contact information
- Meeting time and place
- Events calendar

However, student organization pages that are a part of the www.southeastern.edu website must include the following disclaimer:

The views and opinions expressed on this page are solely those of the page author and comments on these pages should be directed to the page author.

Student organization pages must also provide the following:

- Link back to the Student Organizations index page
- Webpage author contact information, including e-mail link
- Page last updated information

Faculty webpages

The purpose of Faculty webpages is to advance the academic and research mission of the University and with this purpose in mind, Southeastern's faculty may publish webpages on Southeastern's website. Faculty members may apply for space on the University's site by sending an email request to webmaster@southeastern.edu. Only faculty webpages residing on Southeastern's extranet will be linked to from the department's webpages; such webpages are considered to be a part of the department's website.

Faculty may choose to use their webpages to provide pertinent information to their students; however, faculty are encouraged to use Southeastern's Learning Management System to provide course syllabi and class assignments. Faculty should remember that faculty webpages are viewed publicly and should be professional in appearance and represent a positive image of Southeastern. Page content should be essential to and support the teaching, research, and community outreach missions of the University.

Content on faculty webpages may include items such as personal information, information on research and/or studies being conducted, and other areas of special interests related to the faculty member's academic and other University activities. While faculty members may list books, research, and/or other items they have written/developed, faculty members should be aware that faculty webpages on the Southeastern website (www.southeastern.edu) must adhere to the same restrictions on commercial endorsement required for all .edu domains, and cannot endorse, or appear to endorse, any products or services. *Links to commercial organizations to buy items (including books authored by the faculty member) are strictly prohibited on University webpages.*

Faculty webpages must be in compliance with the policies and guidelines set forth in this document as well as other applicable University policies and guidelines, including the Responsible Computing at Southeastern Louisiana University Policy and Southeastern's Copyright Policy. Faculty are required to include Southeastern's full name on the home page. Faculty webpages may also include Southeastern's logo, but use of the logo is not required. The Southeastern name and logo must adhere to the standards set forth in the University's Graphic Standards Manual published by University Marketing and Communications.

Faculty webpages that are a part of the University's extranet must include the following disclaimer:

The views and opinions expressed on this page are solely those of the page author and comments on these pages should be directed to the page author.

Faculty webpages must also provide the following:

- Link back to the department's webpage
- Webpage author contact information, including e-mail link
- Page last updated information

Units with a Significant Community Outreach Mission

University units with a significant community outreach mission, upon approval of the Provost, may publish webpages on Southeastern's website outside of the CMS. To obtain web space after the Provost has approved the request, the unit should send an email request to webmaster@southeastern.edu.

Webpages published by University units with a significant community outreach mission must adhere to the principles and guidelines contained in this document as well as any other relevant policies, including the Responsible Computing at Southeastern Louisiana University policy and Southeastern's Copyright policy. Southeastern's full name must be included on the home page. Southeastern's logo may also be included, but it is not required. The Southeastern name and logo must adhere to the standards set forth in the University's Graphic Standards Manual published by University Marketing and Communications.

University units with a significant community outreach mission must include the following information on their webpages:

- Mission statement
- Director and staff information
- Contact information, including phone, physical address, and e-mail address
- Program/Services information
- A link back to Southeastern's home page

Intranet webpages

Student webpages

Students may have webpages on Southeastern's intranet as a part of a course assignment or as part of a requirement for the completion of their degree programs, e.g., a comprehensive student portfolio. Student webpages will not be included in Southeastern's CMS and will not be linked to from Southeastern's official website.

Faculty should provide students with directions on how to access space on Southeastern's intranet as a part of the course assignment.

Student webpages must be in compliance with the policies and guidelines set forth in this document as well as other applicable University policies and guidelines, including the Responsible Computing at Southeastern Louisiana University Policy and Southeastern's Copyright Policy. Students are not required to use Southeastern's logo or name on their webpages. However, students choosing to use Southeastern's logo or name must adhere to the standards set forth in the University's Graphic Standards Manual published by University Marketing and Communications.

Sites Virtually Hosted by Southeastern

All sites virtually hosted by Southeastern are free to design their own webpages, and will not be included on Southeastern's CMS. Only University affiliated non-profit organizations may apply to the Provost for permission to be virtually hosted by Southeastern. Virtually hosted websites must also obtain permission from the University in order to include Southeastern's logo or name on the website.

Appendix

Definitions

The following is a list of definitions for terms referenced within this policy.

absolute links

Absolute links provide the complete URL location of a document, including the protocol to use to get the document, the server to get it from, the directory it is located in, and the name of the document itself (for example, *http://www.southeastern.edu/academics/math/curriculum.htm*). Absolute links should always be used when linking to webpages that are not a part of Southeastern's website.

content

Within the context of a webpage, content can be text, images, documents (such as .pdf files), code (programming such as .asp, or .php) and audio, video, or flash files.

content approver

The content approver, generally the unit head, approves new and revised content. Once content has been approved, it is deployed (published) to the web server.

content contributor

The content contributor, appointed by the unit head, is essentially the web publisher for the unit. The content contributor is responsible for creating and updating content on the unit's webpages.

content management system (CMS)

A content management system is software designed to manage web content on a website.

extranet

Southeastern's extranet consists of web files that are for general public and campus consumption and are visible to anyone on the Internet. These pages must be visually appealing and promote a positive image of Southeastern.

intranet

Southeastern's intranet consists of web files that generally pertain to the operation of Southeastern and have restricted access. Generally these pages require a login and password in order to access the files. Southeastern's intranet includes, for instance, PeopleSoft, Moodle, NetStorage, and the VMS system. Even though these pages have restricted access, they still should present a professional and positive image of the University to the people who use them.

navigation

Navigation refers to the way content is organized and presented on a website. The primary goal of webpage navigation is to provide clear direction to the content a user is seeking. Southeastern's website provides for four sets of navigation: topical navigation, where information is categorized into broad topics such as academics, administration, etc.; audience navigation, where information is categorized so that specific audiences can find information that applies to them quickly and easily; tools navigation, which provides easy access to primary website tools, such as Search, Web Mail, Moodle, etc.; and breadcrumb navigation, which displays the path taken to reach the webpage the user is currently viewing.

publish

Publishing is the process within a content management system where a completed, approved webpage is uploaded to the web server and becomes available for viewing on the Internet.

relative links

Relative links are used when linking to documents that are in the same directory. Relative links do not include the entire URL of the document that is being linked. For example, the relative link to a document located at <http://www.southeastern.edu/academics/math/mypage.html> would be </math/mypage.htm>.

template

Webpage templates consist of pre-defined formats for text, graphics, and webpage layout. Southeastern's webpage templates not only provide for continuity and consistency on Southeastern's website, but are also designed to meet accepted web standards and protocols, including Priority 1 ADA Web Accessibility standards.

top-level pages

Top-level pages include Southeastern's home page and the pages that directly link from the home page. Top-level pages also refer to the home page for each unit and the pages that directly link from the unit's home page.

Web server

A web server is a computer that manages and shares web based applications and files, accessible anytime from any computer connected to the Internet.

website

Southeastern's website includes its extranet, those files that can be accessed by anyone and are for general public consumption, and its intranet, those files that are restricted and generally require a login and password in order to access them.

workflow

Workflow is the process within the content management system that allows for the tracking of work that is needed to create and maintain webpages on the website. Content contributors are notified when they need to complete a task, and once the task is completed, the content approver is notified that the content is ready for approval and deployment.