University of Manitoba Web Standards Guidelines

Version 4 - August 2012
The web is a powerful communications tool. The experience visitors have when they come to our website can either positively or negatively impact their associations with the university. For that reason, it’s critical that we consider their experience when we’re developing our web materials.

The website plays an integral role in communicating our brand and it should demonstrate our standing as the premier post-secondary institution in the province. A cohesive and coordinated approach to representing our brand increases the university’s effectiveness in attracting and retaining students, faculty, donors and partners. It also instills confidence in the broader community and provides a solid foundation upon which our community-based programs can be built.

The key to a successful website is content. Clear and simple information architecture is possible when content is up-to-date, written for the web, and organized by task and audience. As a communications channel and primary source of information for a variety of key stakeholders, our website should deliver a positive user experience based on consistent visual presentation, an intuitive approach to navigation and web-friendly content.

Our website is based on these foundations and it was enhanced after incorporating feedback from usability testing with a variety of audiences. Specific consideration was given to:

- delivering information and services from a user-based approach
- ensuring the site allows people to easily and intuitively find what they’re looking for and successfully complete their tasks
- updating the templates for the content management system so they more accurately represent the brand and offer new functionalities
- providing navigation and information architecture that is cleaner and more effective in helping users complete their tasks.
This document outlines the standards for the development and maintenance of all information, resources and services accessed with a web browser.

**The objectives of the new website design are:**

- To deliver improved services and information using a customer centric format.
- To ensure the university website supports people’s ability to find what they are looking for and successfully complete their tasks.
- Increase the university’s effectiveness in attracting and retaining students, faculty, donors and partners.
- To assist in managing the contribution of faculties and other content providers.
- To modernize the university’s templates to improve the look and feel of our site.
- To provide a navigation and information architecture that is cleaner, less ‘busy’, and still supporting quick and easy navigation.
- Instill confidence in the broader community and provide a solid foundation upon which future partnerships can be built.
- To achieve a more consistent web presence by adopting the brand and visual identity guidelines and reinforcing the NeoInsight philosophy through applying the web guidelines and standards.

**Governance**

- The university’s web pages are divided into two websites: an internet site providing public services, and an intranet containing web pages pertinent to the operational functions of the university.
• Units will determine what web content is public and what content is intended for an internal audience only (employees).

• The authoritative source of information for the public site is the Web Steering Committee.

• The internet and intranet web pages will follow the same templated standards.

• All web pages will comply with the university’s brand and visual identity.

• All official web pages must establish a visual style within the university visual identity and maintain it consistently throughout the website.

• All umanitoba web pages must provide a coherent and consistent image of the position of the website within the University and reflect important and relevant relationships to other sections of the University.

• All umanitoba web pages must use the templated visual identity elements as supplied by MCO and IST.

• Ownership of unit-level pages will reside with the unit. However, these pages must be in compliance with standards for content writing and presentation.

• Unit pages will link to source web pages rather than duplicating the content.

• All standard templates for the home page, hub pages, and unit-level pages will be developed in RedDot.

• All web pages will integrate, consolidate and reduce content in order to improve information architecture.

• University web pages not complying with the above will not be allowed to link from another University web page. (needs rewording as external links will be allowed)
Information Architecture

- A clear and simple information architecture will only be fully possible when website content is reduced, when out-of-date and redundant material is removed, and when content is organized by tasks and audiences, rather than by unit.

University Landing Page

The University of Manitoba landing page provides the architecture’s source and structure for the site. The landing page is organized by audiences and their top tasks, along with links to hub pages that provide more specific information related to the task identified by the user. Since the U of M site has many different audiences the landing page incorporates a self-identification at the top level of architecture.

Six features transition, fading one into the other to showcase the multi-faceted UofM.
U of M Landing Page Layout and Main Components - About the U of M Mega dropdown

AUDIENCES
This bar only appears on the UofM homepage.

TOP TASKS
MEGA DROP DOWN MENU LINKS

TASK BOXES
4 boxes with a max of 5 links in each and a max characters per line.

NEWS FEED
News items pulled from nTreePoint.

EVENTS FEED
News items pulled from nTreePoint.

LANDING PG SPLASH IMAGE
Photo and color changes based on audience selected.

STANDARD TOP BANNER
Treatment to the elements within the banner are consistent on all pages.

PROMOTIONAL BOX
Fixed space for a graphic ad that will link to a corresponding page.

FOOTER
Contact Info, utility links, and links to social networking sites.
Faculty and Department Landing Pages

- Homepage for Faculty and University Department websites.

- Consistent treatment and placement of elements, have been carried over from the U of M landing page.

**Top banner:**
- Faculty / Admin Unit name is displayed in Minion Roman font, to the right of University logo, seperated by the vertical line. The U of M logo always links to the U of M landing page and the unit name will link to the unit’s homepage.

- The standard search form and global utility links (U of M Home, A-Z Index, Maps, JUMP, Webmail) are the only links that are on every template. Access to information commonly required but not specific to one audience such as maps, faculties & departments.

- The banner cannot be altered in color, style or size. No additional images or graphics can be put in this space.

**Left Navigation:**
- The left navigation does not change in placement, style or size.

- Only the first character in a link should be captialized unless the link is a proper noun.

- It should reflect the faculty / department navigation guidelines:
  > 8 - 10 links ideal, 20 max.
  > No sub bullets allowed
  > Navigation should be audience specific
  > Common Faculty / Department recommended links in this order:
    1. Faculty / Dept. Home
    2. Undergraduate Programs
    3. Graduate Programs
STANDARD TOP BANNER
Treatment to the elements within the banner are consistent on all pages. The department/faculty’s title or page title is in Minion 21 points.

LANDING PAGE CENTRE IMAGE
Fixed space (800x342)

PROMOTIONAL BOX
Fixed space (220x90) for a graphic ad that will link to a corresponding page.

LEFT NAVIGATION
Faculty / Department / Admin Unit, specific related links. Guidelines are provided for consistent placement, treatment and wording of the left navigation.

TASK BOXES
4 boxes (each 220x112) with a max of 5 links in each and a max 40 characters per line. The links chosen are based on your audiences top 20 most popular tasks.

NEWS FEED
1 News items pulled from nTreePoint. Can be accompanied by a 120x90 pixel image.

EVENTS FEED
News items pulled from nTreePoint

FOOTER
Contact Info, utility links, and links to social networking sites.
4. Departments
5. Courses
6. Admissions
7. Research
8. Faculty and Staff (staff listing and contact info)
9. Staff Resources (link to intranet)

**Landing Page Centre Image**
- Images are to promote and market the unit but maintain the overall U of M visual identity guidelines
- Photos should reflect what the unit does. They should tell a story and support ‘branding carewords’

  **Branding Carewords:**
  > Top quality professors/lecturers
  > High-quality education at a reasonable cost
  > Flexible course options and class schedules
  > Prestigious, well-recognized degree
  > Putting students first
  > Small, interactive classes

- Images on the faculty or unit homepage by default should primarily support recruiting of potential students. Images and visual design are more important to potential students than to other audiences — but overall experience is even more important.

- Photos must be of high resolution and professional quality

- Avoid purchased stock photography, use actual students, and/or professors in their related setting. The photos should engage the viewer to “call to action.” When requiring new photography contact MCO office (marketingcommunications@umanitoba.ca). Web Services and MCO will work with the unit.

- Units have the option to display one static photo or upwards of 6 rotating photos.
Task Boxes

- Audience-independent, headings focus on topic.
- Top tasks common to multiple audiences.
- Grouped to aid easy scanning
- Fixed size and treatment to the headings and links
- 6 links maximum and only the first letter of the links can be capitalized unless the link is a proper noun. Avoid using organizational units as top task links eg. Virtual Learning Commons.
- Links in the task boxes must be bulleted list items only
- No more than 4 columns (and no less than 3 columns) of task boxes and a maximum of 12 task boxes in total.

Promotional Space

- Additional seasonal or temporary promotions visually reflects the content and follows the U of M branding.
- Link to corresponding web page
- Fixed pixel dimension 220 x 90 pixels

Footer

- Contact information, ‘utility’ links, and links to social media sites (dependent on the unit, some may need all icons/links to these sites, or none).
**Hub Pages**

Hub pages are functionally-oriented with minimal text and task links are grouped under headings so users can quickly scan the page to find what they are looking for and connect to related content. Hub pages are content specific and they should be a collection of components related to one complex task. Some complex tasks will warrant the use of sub-hubs. Top tasks may also be linked to from hub pages and lower level pages.

- Hub pages are the web pages from which users will reach other related destinations
- Hub pages are not destination pages (no body copy); they are steps to other web services
- Hub pages have many links and very little, if any, text/content
- Hub pages integrate information and parts of a task that cut across multiple organizational entities. It should be intuitive to the users what tasks would be performed there
- Some organizational hubs may not be required if content has been integrated around tasks
- Some complex tasks will warrant sub-hubs (e.g. estimating fees and costs) might have a sub-hub dedicated to estimating cost-of-living for various scenarios
- Top tasks may also be linked to from hub pages and lower level pages
Department / Faculty Unit Hub Page example - Student Affairs Money Matters
- with 3 column hubs and right column photo

HUB BOXES
Boxes are 198x122 pixels and don't change in size. A hub box can hold a maximum 6 links. It is strongly recommended that you keep each link under 30 characters to avoid wrapping. The link colour is from the visual identity secondary colour pallet, hex# #007A7D

HUB BOX HEADER
Heading that describes its contents. Font color style and size cannot be customized.

RIGHT COLUMN
Fixed width (240 pixels) for a graphic / photo that will link to a corresponding page.

FOOTER
Contact Info, utility links, and links to social networking sites.
Department / Faculty Unit Hub Page example - Public Affairs Stats
- with 3 column hubs and left column navigation

LEFT NAVIGATION
Unit specific related links carried over from established landing page navigation.

HUB BOX Header
Heading that describes its contents. Font colour style and size cannot be customized.

HUB BOXES
Boxes are 198x122 pixels and don’t change in size. A hub box can hold a maximum 6 links. It is strongly recommended that you keep each link under 30 characters to avoid wrapping. The link colour is from the visual identity secondary colour palette, hex #007A7D.

FOOTER
Contact Info, utility links, and links to social networking sites.
Informational Pages

Informational templates come in two forms:

• Option 1 - Two column design with an invisible 3rd column to ensure the content in the centre does not exceed 12 words per line.

• Option 2 - Three column design with the third column visible for additional content such as links or graphics and photos.
Department / Faculty Unit Content template example - (3 columns) Marketing Communications Office

LEFT NAVIGATION
Unit specific related links carried over from established landing page navigation.

CENTRE CONTENT
Formatting of font size and colour is predetermined and cannot be changed.
Photos and graphics can also be combined with content in the centre column but must not exceed 465 pixels in width.

RIGHT COLUMN
Fixed width (240 pixels) for a graphic/photo and additional content
Intranet

- An intranet is a private computer network that uses Internet Protocol technologies to securely share any part of an organization's information or operational systems within that organization.

The University of Manitoba will incorporate an intranet in the new website to separate content specific to the U of M community (University of Manitoba faculty and staff)

- Units will determine their content that is intended for an internal audience
- The internet and intranet web pages will follow templates supplied by MCO and IST Policy
- A policy has been set for development of University web pages by central administrative units, faculties and schools and other units in respect to the standards, content, presentation, and technology used in development.

Policy Statement

2.1 All University web pages will comply with the University’s visual identity and branding standards and guidelines and will establish a visual style consistent throughout the web site.
2.2 All University web pages will use the templated visual identity elements as supplied by MCO and IST.
2.3 Ownership and control of the home page and associated drop down menus, including content management and responsibility for link control, will reside with MCO.
2.4 Ownership of all unit level pages will reside with the unit. However, these pages must be in compliance at all levels in the unit web space with University standards for content writing and presentation.
2.5 Management of the University website in respect to content development and standards is the responsibility of the Web Steering Committee, chaired by the Director of MCO and reporting to the Office of the President.
2.6 Unit pages will link to single authoritative web based sources of information intended for students and staff which are the responsibility of central administrative departments rather than duplicating such content on their own site.
2.7 All web pages containing content intended for internal use and not for general public access will be placed on the University intranet website which will be separate from the public website and will follow the same content and presentation standards as public pages.
2.8 Templates for the homepage, hub pages and unit pages will be developed in the approved University content management system.
2.9 Any exceptions to the above policies must be approved by the Web Steering Committee.
2.10 Web pages which do not comply with the above policies will be reviewed by the Web Steering Committee and may be removed from the University of Manitoba web space until they are compliant.

For more information on the university policy for web development please visit: http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/community/1121.htm

**Tips & Advice**

**Steps for Development**

Steps for developing your web page can be found on Lee’s blog - “The Great U of M Webolution” at:
http://ltc.umanitoba.ca/blogs/umsiteredesign/

**Design & Promotional Web Buttons**

To create promotional web buttons for your web page please contact MCO (272-1564) or Web Services (474-7241)

**Writing for the Web**

Web content requires different considerations. Web pages have to employ scannable text, using:

- highlighted keywords (hypertext links serve as one form of highlighting; typeface variations and color are others)
- meaningful sub-headings (not “clever” ones)
- bulleted lists
- one idea per paragraph (users will skip over any additional ideas if they are not caught by the first few words in the paragraph)
- the inverted pyramid style, starting with the conclusion
-half the word count (or less) than conventional writing

Here are a few online resources to assist you with writing for the web:

Jakob Nielsen - Writing for the Web
http://www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/

Jakob Nielsen – Writing Styles for Print vs. Web
http://www.useit.com/alertbox/print-vs-online-content.html

Jakob Nielsen – Reading on the Web
http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9710a.html

Google Analytics
Google Analytics is a free service offered by Google that generates detailed statistics about the visitors to a website. This is an excellence tool to implement in the development of your web page, as it tracks how visitors actually interact with your site and will allow you to make informed design improvements and drive targeted traffic to your site. Sign-up for Google Analytics and get started at: http://www.google.com/analytics/sign.up.html