

Site Review Guidelines – Last Updated July 27th 2009

The site review guidelines are broken up into the guidelines themselves and a checklist that will be used during the site evaluation process. The site guidelines are detailed descriptions of things that site creators should keep in mind when planning and building a site. The guidelines are grouped into categories that represent the major areas that site reviews focus on. Guidelines are further grouped by their relative impact on a site's accessibility, usability, and compliance with overall ASU Web Policies.

Color Coding:

- Site violates Web Policy
- We strongly recommend fixing this issue before going live
- Best Practices or Personal Preference

The review process will include the following checkpoints:

- Does each page contain all of the Required Information for each page?

Page Title

Recommended structure of the title is - Name of the page - Name of site - Name of University

Contact Information – or link to it

Clear identification of Appalachian State University, preferably the Appalachian Wordmark or Logo

EO Policy - link

University Disclaimer – link / Personal Pages

Copyright information

- Is navigation consistent, easy to use, and employ clear and intuitive labels?
- Is the copy clearly written and without grammatical errors?
- Is the site's organizational structure logical and does it promote a positive user experience?
- Does the content meet the information needs of the intended audiences?
- Are all links clear as to their destination?
- Are all links operable?
- If the page collects personally identifiable information, does the website include a Privacy Statement?
- Does the page include a link to a Privacy Statement?
- If the page collects personally sensitive information, does the website include a Privacy Statement?

- Are there any information collection practices which are either not mentioned in, or in violation of, the posted privacy statement?
- Are there any materials on the website that could reasonably be seen as compromising the privacy of an Appalachian student, faculty or staff member, visitor or website user?
- Do all folder and file names conform to a logical Folder and File Naming Convention set forth for this website?
- Are images used on the website of appropriate sizes for the intended purposes?
- Do the images create usability issues due to file sizes?
- Are 'alt' attributes used with every non background image?
- Do all links to non-webpages contain the linked-to resources' types and sizes?
- Is alternate content provided for all multimedia resources?
- Are there links to plug-ins on those pages that contain or link to multimedia content? – Is this an ADA issue?
- Does each page function adequately with Javascript turned off in the browser?
- Does the site become unusable without client side technologies other than html/xhtml enabled?
- Does each page function adequately in each browser in the supported browser list?
- Do the text only pages provide the same level of information as the rich version?
- Is the page unreadable by Jaws/Fangs?
- Does each page validate with no errors using the W3C Markup Validation Service?
- Does each page, and all associated .css files, validate with no errors using the W3C CSS Validation Service?
- Does each page validate with no errors using the Section 508 / WCAG 1.0 Validator?
- If the page utilizes a campus map, does it link to the official campus map?

Usability

Website Structure

The navigation should be consistent, easy to use, and employ clear and intuitive labels and be consistent in location and style on each page. All copy should be clearly written and without grammatical errors. The website's organizational structure should be logical and promote a positive user experience.

Links

All links must be operable - i.e., no broken links. All links should be identifiable as such to users because of their style, or location on the page. All links should include, within the context of the link or its surrounding text, a clear indication as to what a browser will find when arriving at the

linked resource. Links to non-web pages - such as multimedia resources - should be clearly labeled with the resource's type and size (e.g., PDF 2.5M or WMV 3.5M), which will indicate to the user how long the resource will take to download and what plug-ins will be necessary to use it.

Metatags and Page Titling

Web pages must use clear, concise, and informative titles and header tags. As a general rule, the Meta Description tag should contain no more than 150 characters and the Meta Keywords tag should avoid duplication of words already present in the page content, and should be limited to 10 or less keywords. Page titles and the labels of links to them should match. Keeping these titles consistent with link labels leading to the page reinforces the user's orientation when clicking on a link. To ensure the title is properly displayed in search engine results pages, the maximum recommended length for page titles is 70 characters.

Accessibility

Accessibility

Appalachian is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to provide access to its programs and services to all qualified individuals, including effectively communicating information via the Internet and other electronic mediums. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 established federally recognized standards on web accessibility, and these standards have been adopted by Appalachian. All official University web pages must meet the standards of both Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.0 as published by the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).

Media

Access must be provided in an applicable alternate format such as in the form of captioning, subtitles, or a text transcript. Videos posted online as part of a course syllabus requiring authentication of enrollment must follow university's accessible media policy. Pages with media (e.g. video, audio, non-html content, etc) content should include a link that users may use to download the appropriate required plug-ins.

Images

The generally accepted image formats for the web are JPEG, GIF, and PNG. Images should be optimized for download speed and storage requirements. Use the 'alt' attribute in all tags to improve accessibility. Screen readers for the visually impaired cannot render images, and those users with visual impairments must rely on the information presented in 'alt' attributes. If the image is used purely for decoration, or is used primarily for spacing, an empty 'alt' attribute is preferred. If the image contains pertinent information that is not described in text elsewhere on the page, e.g., a graph or diagram, the 'alt' attribute should describe this textually. If the image is used as a link, the 'alt' attribute should describe the action that will occur if a user clicks on the image.

Identity

Appalachian's Web Presence

Appalachian is known and recognized throughout the United States and the world. Therefore it is critical that the visual elements that represent the institution and its image do so consistently and with integrity. Image consistency and cohesive visual identity standards enhance the value of the institution name and work together to build a foundation for successful branding. Successful branding occurs when an entity presents itself consistently over time, creating an emotional connection with desired audiences. A proliferation of independent, decentralized identities and symbols creates confusion in the minds of audiences whose support we seek: students, prospective students, parents, alumni, and supporters. While logos and symbols are not the sole elements of an institutional brand, they are its visual representation and extension. When that visual representation is disconnected or inconsistent, it follows that the perception of the institution can also become disconnected or inconsistent. A visual identity used consistently over time paves the way to an enhanced image, instant recognition, and higher recall among prospective students. These are all key components of the institution's long-term success.

Website Page Contents

Each Page of a Website Must Contain the Following:

- a. Either a link to a contact page containing detailed contact information or a listing of the specific contact information. Contact information is to include a main contact email address, telephone, mailing address, physical address, and webmaster email.

- b. The website's content should meet the information needs of the intended audiences.
- c. A link to the University disclaimer (<http://www.appstate.edu/disclaimer.php>), which states that the website content reflects the website author's views and not necessarily those of Appalachian State University—e.g., Disclaimer. This information need not be prominent. Putting it in the footer is acceptable
- d. Copyright notification for the department, office, organization or other entity that the website represents or is sponsored by. This information need not be prominent. Putting it in the footer is acceptable

A link to the University's Equal Opportunity Policy labeled "Equal Opportunity Policy" or, where space is limited, "EO Policy". The link must direct users to <http://www.edc.appstate.edu/equity/EOpolicy.html>. This information need not be prominent. Putting it in the footer is acceptable.

Web Templates and Banners

Websites subject to this policy must use either an official web template or a web banner. Web templates and banners are supported by the Office of Web Communications and are developed in conjunction with University Communications to reflect the institution's visual identity standards and brand strategies.

- a. Web templates are comprehensive, full-website templates and include page layout options, logo and nameplates, official font and color styles, footers, accessibility features and other elements as required by this policy. Web templates are available for use only in the university web content management systems: Drupal and phpWebSite.
- b. Web banners are narrow headers which span the top of each page in the website. The banners include the horizontal logo, nameplate (in some cases), and a search box. The remainder of the web page, the area under

the banner, is to be designed and maintained by the website owners; however, the entire website must meet the standards as set forth in this policy. Support for the banner option within Drupal or phpWebSite, both of which employ pre-built page templates, is not available. A number of banner options are available at:

<http://www.uc.appstate.edu/web/templates>.

- c. Requests for custom web templates (for use in Drupal or phpWebSite) or custom banners will be considered and can be directed to the Office of Web Communications (<http://www.uc.appstate.edu/web>).

Fonts

The following font declaration should be used to incorporate the University font style: body {font-face: Lucida Grande, Arial, Bitstream Vera Sans, Verdana, Helvetica, and sans-serif}.

University Maps

All official University maps (i.e., those displaying campus facilities, parking and roads) for publishing on the web are provided by University Communications or Institutional Research and Planning's Space Management & Planning group. Maps provided by these units must not be altered except by the originating office. Campus web developers are encouraged to link to the University maps provided on the top tier. This ensures that websites using these maps always have the most recent version.

Copyright Considerations

Appalachian State University is bound by federal copyright laws regarding the reproduction of all copyright material for use on a website. Web developers and editors should become familiar with copyright and fair-use requirements and obtain written releases for the use of copyrighted material.

Security

Security Considerations

Neither sensitive nor confidential information may be placed on any servers where unauthenticated or unauthorized access can be made. Application Developers must protect such data being passed to or from user agents using common strategies or techniques such as SSL (secure sockets layer) or other encrypted transport for all such data. Contact the Security Officer if you require additional specifics.

Privacy

Respect For Privacy

All official Appalachian State University websites must afford respect to the privacy of the University's students, faculty, staff and visitors as well as to the privacy of Internet users visiting these websites

- a. Web editors must use sound judgment and be cautious about collecting or releasing "directory information". Directory information includes, but is not limited to: name, local (students and visitors) phone number, university office phone number, and Appalachian email address. The release of student information is covered by FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act). Information about FERPA and what constitutes directory information for students can be found at <http://www.registrar.appstate.edu/admin/ferpaweb.html>. Please note that students may choose to restrict all information, including directory information. Students who have restricted all information will be indicated as "Confidential" in Banner.
- b. The release of directory information may require the permission of the individual involved. For example, permissions should be obtained (or the attempt documented) from those individuals who appear in photographs appearing on a website. Again, please note that students may choose to restrict all information, including directory information. Students who have restricted all information will be indicated as "Confidential" in Banner.
- c. Websites collecting directory information should have posted privacy statement, which outlines what types of information are collected from website users, how this information is stored and used, what protections are offered to individuals whose information is obtained, with whom this

information may be shared, and how a user can request to have his/her information removed from the website owners' records .

- d. The collection or release of sensitive personally identifiable information via a university website or web form is prohibited. Sensitive personally identifiable information includes but is not limited to: credit card information, financial information, social security number, passwords and pass phrases.

- e. To process credit card payments, website owners must utilize the secure, off-site credit card transaction services administered by the Division of Business Affairs. Website editors must contact the Division to obtain approval for use and connection information.