

Website Standards – *Guidelines*



Seattle Community Colleges

I. The Seattle Community Colleges Website

Definition:

A collection of websites and web applications that accurately represent the mission, the programs and the services of our collective college system.

Responsibilities:

Webmasters: The webmasters are responsible for assuring the continuity, the navigation, and the design standards of the colleges are adhered to by every web page which in any way represents the colleges on the internet.

PIOs: The Public Information Offices have the ultimate responsibility and authority regarding the appropriateness of all content on the web.

Departments: The individual departments, whose programs and services are represented on the web, have the ultimate responsibility for the accuracy of information specific to that department.

Goal:

To maintain our college presence on the web community in order to attract new students to our colleges and to provide services to our students, the community, our faculty and our staff, our web site should demonstrate our high tech capabilities and academic excellence while taking care to accommodate users with lower-end equipment and persons with disabilities.

II. Minimum Design Guidelines

Minimum design guidelines should be developed to address users with lower-end equipment. These guidelines should be reviewed and updated every six months by the webmasters in the context of national statistics (and if possible, our own statistics) regarding modem speeds, screen resolution and browser use.

If websites can detect for various levels of client browser capabilities, designers may provide sites with enhanced presentation, provided a version is provided for users with low-end equipment and persons with disabilities.

Browser standards

Web sites need to work correctly in Netscape, version 4.7 and above, and Microsoft Internet Explorer, version 5 and above, on both PC and Mac platforms. As such, the sites should be tested during development with various operating platforms and browsers.

Screen size

Web sites should be designed to work at a 800 x 600 resolution, using either a relative or static layout. Keep in mind some viewers to your site might have another resolution chosen. Make sure any navigation, links, or essential content is not lost or unreachable for those viewers. Further information on how to design your site with this in mind may be found at WebStyleGuide.Com.

Aggregate file size

Recommended 100K (or less, including images), to ensure reasonable load time for average modem speed. The following formula can be used to determine the viewers download time of your page and associated content.

Download Time (in seconds) = Total web page (in bits) / connection speed (in bits).

Example - download a 25 MB file over a T1 connection:

25 MB in bits = 25 * 1024 * 8 = 209715200 bits

1.544 Mbps in bits = 1544000 bits per second.

Download Time = 209715200 / 1544000 = 135.83 seconds.

Typical Connection Speeds:

28.8K - 28.8 Kbps

56K - 56 Kbps

DSL - 128Kbps, 144Kbps, 192Kbps, 384Kbps, 768Kbps, 1.1Mbps, 1.5Mbps

Cable - Typical down speed - 500kbps, Typical up speed - 128-256kbps

Terms used in speed specifications:

Kbps - kilobits per second

Mbps - Megabits per second

KB/sec - kilobytes per second.

An online calculator to help determine different download times, using different connection speeds may be found at Martindalecenter.Com.

Use of Plug-ins

All critical content should be accessible to users without the need for plug-ins. Sound or video components, if used, should be an option a site visitor can choose, and appropriate links to free downloads of plug-ins should be provided.

Contact Information

Contact information should be easily accessible from every page on the web site. At a minimum it should include a phone number and office location. Ultimately, email addresses should be provided with the expectation a response will be made in a timely fashion.

Privacy Policy

District Web Space will be accessed by the community, and as such, the viewer needs to have available information related to the District's privacy policy, and how to access it. Please provide a link on your webpages to the District privacy policy.

Your privacy policy link should point to:

http://www.seattlecolleges.com/Common_files/privacy/privacyCIS.html

The text link should state: **Privacy Notice**

Color Scheme, Backgrounds, and Fonts Used

When choosing colors or backgrounds during the design process of your site, take into account contrast and legibility. Try choosing a color scheme, or background with contrast between the page and the font in mind. Make sure your page content with your chosen color scheme or background is legible and easy to read.

Also, bear in mind some users may be color blind. If your design relies heavily on color, make sure the message or information also gets across in a black and white version of your design. More information about designing for color blindness may be found at [WebTechniques](#). Additional information about other color design considerations may be found at [WebStyleGuide.Com](#).

In specifying typefaces you should choose from the resident default fonts for most operating systems. If you specify a font that is not installed on the user's machine, the browser will display your pages using the user-specified default font. Bear in mind, too, that users can set their browser preferences to ignore font tags and display all pages using their designated default font. Many computers have only the default operating system fonts installed.

If the typeface you specify is not available on the user's computer, the browser will switch to the default font (generally "**Times New Roman**" or "**Times**"). To increase the chances that the reader will see a typeface you are happy with, you can specify multiple fonts. The browser will check for the presence of each font (in the order given), so you can specify three or four alternates before the browser applies the default font, for example, "*Verdana, Geneva, Arial, Helvetica*"

You should end your font declaration with a generic font designation such as "**sans serif**". That way, if the browser cannot find any of the listed fonts, it will display the text in any available sans serif font. The resident default fonts that ship with the **Apple**

Macintosh and **Microsoft Windows** operating systems are **Times New Roman, Georgia, Verdana, Arial, and Trebuchet.**

A resource for further information on design recommendations may also be found at WebSiteTips.Com.

Issues With Images Used

The file size of the images you choose to use in the design of your webpages will directly relate to the download times experienced by visitors to your website. The two main image formats used on webpages currently are **GIF** and **JPEG/JPG**.

Generally, **GIF** files should be used for logos, line drawings and icons. Avoid using it for photographic images, and graphics which have long stretches of continuous-tone in them. When you're designing with **GIF** files, avoid using gradients and turn off anti-aliasing where possible to minimize the file size. The **GIF** format limits you to images with 256 discrete colors.

The **JPEG/JPG** format should be used on photographic images, and images which do not look as good with only 256 colors.

Images may be optimized for the web using Photoshop. Photoshop has a selection under the File menu, "Save For The Web". There are also other image utilities that will allow you to properly optimize your image for the web.

Some viewers of your site may be using text readers, or have images turned off to speed browsing. To accommodate these viewers your site should be designed with the use of the image tag's **ALT** attribute.

ALT is the "alternate text" attribute. The text is used by some search engines, and will appear while the image is loading. This text will also be present to give visitors to your site an idea of what they're missing if they have images turned off in their browser settings, or if for some reason the image fails to load. This text is also read by screen reader programs used by the visually disabled. **ALT** text shows up as a "tool tip" when a user mouses over an image, so choose your **ALT** text carefully. It should be meaningful, especially if images are being used as links.

Designing for People with Disabilities

The sites hosted via Web Space are intended for a public audience, and as such need to take into account people with disabilities. This is a very large topic, the following links are a few resources to inform and educate on the subject. The links shown are by no means exhaustive, or complete, just a selection.

 [TPG Whitepaper on Designing for People with Disabilities.](#)

 [University Of Toronto Suggestions](#)

 [Rutgers University](#)

 [Lighthouse.Org](#)

 [Bobby Checks If Your Website is Disability Friendly.](#)

 [See What Users With Older Browsers See At Your Site](#)

III. Web Page Classifications

Core Pages

- Usually created and maintained by the College Webmaster
- Official college pages for a department, division, program or service, which should match the look and feel of college marketing pieces and be consistent with the look and feel of other core pages
- Implement the college navigation structure
- Look, feel and content reviewed by the College PIO; and if necessary, brought to the attention of the college presidents or executive cabinet of college.
- Design guidelines vary by campus

External Core Pages

- Official college pages for a department, division, program or service
- Do not have the same look and feel as the core pages
- Do not implement the college navigation structure (although there MUST be a prominent link to the college home page)
- Require approval by the College PIO to create
- Look, feel and content reviewed by the College PIO; and if necessary, brought to the attention of the college presidents or Executive Cabinet of college.
- Usually created and maintained by a member of the department, division or program (or is outsourced by that member)
- The College Webmaster must be informed of the person who is responsible for maintaining the page(s).
- Must be approved by the College Webmaster to ensure the page meets technical and accessibility guidelines

Supplemental Pages

- Provide more in-depth and detailed information about a program, subject or department
- Must not duplicate information that can be found on a core page
- Do not have the same look and feel as the core pages
- Do not implement the college navigation structure (although there MUST be a prominent link to the college home page and in the case of an academic program/subject – must also have a prominent link to the Division)
- Usually created and maintained by someone other than the College Webmaster
- The College Webmaster must be informed of the person who is responsible for maintaining the page
- The College PIO reserves the right to review and approve content before it is posted

Faculty Pages

- Content, design, maintenance and functionality of faculty pages are the responsibility of the faculty member who is creating the page
- Faculty pages must comply with the Electronic Information Resource Policy.

IV. Corporate and Business Sponsorships Policy

We recommend exploring recognition of corporate and business partnerships on the public and non-public pages or closed forums (*such as the Intranet, clubs, departments, blogs, social networks*) subject to approval by Executive Cabinet.

DEFINITIONS:

Advertising: Selling web real estate (space) for money.

Sponsor: A party that has made an investment in the college in the form of time, goods or money.

Partner: A party who has made an investment in the college in the form of time, goods or money with input into curriculum.

Restatement of Electronic Information Resource Policy

The use of electronic mail and web page space is governed by the district Electronic Information Resource Policy. For clarification, the servers that run our e-mail and web servers are to be used for educational purposes and are not for personal use, promotion or financial gain for you, a friend, partner, or sponsor.

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