2015 Oakland University Website Layout Governance

General Layout of Pages

There are several locations within a web page to strategically communicate information.

- **Main content area:** This should be used for the main messages, and calls to action. Ask, “what do you want the user to know or accomplish by visiting your page?” Always create content with an end goal in mind. This content section should be written following google’s guidelines for SEO. The main content area should contain no more than 4 buttons. See the UCM web section for options on organizing home page graphics.
- **Additional content area 1:** This is located on the upper right hand side of the page. This space should be used for additional contact information, calls to action, and buttons. This area should not be used for extensive information, and the length should not exceed the total length of the main content area.
- **Additional content area 2:** This is located on the mid-right hand side of the page. This space should be used for calls to action, buttons, or additional resources such as links to sites or pdfs/docs. This area should not be used for extensive information, and the length should not exceed the total length of the main content area.

In addition to the 3 content areas mentioned above, pages on the left hand navigation can also be organized using collapsible boxes and tabs.

- **Collapsible boxes:** This tool should be used when there is an extensive amount of information that all belongs on the same page. When pages become too long, they can become hard to read for a user. Use collapsible boxes to split up the information so that the user can easily locate the information they need and read more. This is a great organizational tool.
- **Tabs:** Most of the time, tabs should have explanatory content above them, called positioning copy. This space should be used to introduce the tabs and encourage the user to read further. The tabs themselves should be laid out in a sequence that makes sense, whether it be in order of steps to take, chronological order, etc. The maximum number of tabs a page can hold is generally 7-10 (without content in the additional content areas) depending on the title of tabs; which can take up more or less space, thus altering the number of tabs that fit. If there is content in the additional content areas only 5-6 tabs should be used. Tabs should never be stacked on top of each other, forming two or more lines. This will happen if there are too many tabs.
Basic Rich Text Content

- **Headers:**
  - **H1 Header Option 1** (14px, black, bold, sans-serif)
  - **H1 Header Option 2** (42px, gold (#b69a57), bold, serif)
  - **Header General** (14px, black, bold, sans-serif)
  - **Header Small** (13px, black, bold, sans-serif)
  - **Header Large** (15px, black, bold, sans-serif)

**Example:**
Additional details, including information on how to RSVP to the Ceremony and other events, will be added as they become available. Please check back periodically for updates.

**Schedule of Events**

**April 20, 2015**
**Student Celebration**
Noon
Pioneer Food Court

- **Pre-selected headers:** In Percussion, the rich text editor has an option for pre-selected headers. (see image below) Headers 1-4 appear much larger on the live pages than they appear on the edit screen. Always use the code above, or header 5 when using the pre-selected options.
• **Fonts:** All content should be 12px, Helvetica, Arial, or the operating system default san-serif font.

• **Bullets:** Unorganized lists should use closed bullets for the root items, and open bullets for the child items. Organized (numbered) lists, should use standard integers (0-9) for the root, and children list items. These settings are enabled by default in the rich text editor, no special code is required to attain these specifications.

• **Tables:**
  - **General:** Tables should span the full width of the parent container (100% width), static widths should be avoided. If a border is desired, the color #cccccc should be used.
  - **Header:** Column headers should use a bold font, and standard font size (12px). The background of the header row may be of a different color (#ededed).
  - **Cells:** Table cells should have 5px cell-padding, and 0px cell-spacing.
  - **Sample:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column Header 1</th>
<th>Column Header 2</th>
<th>Column Header 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content 1</td>
<td>Content 2</td>
<td>Content 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content 1.2</td>
<td>Content 2.2</td>
<td>Content 3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• **Links:**
  - **Default link style** (#840831)
  - **Optional link style** (#595959)
  - **Optional link style 2** (#b59a57)
  (All links should be bold, and underlined when the mouse is hovered)

**Images and Videos**

All designed elements (graphics, buttons, banners) must be designed by UCM, as noted in policy 488.

• **General image guidelines:**
  - RGB Color space
  - Resolution: 72 pixels per inch (PPI)
  - Photos should never be stretched. Instead, crop images to the desired pixel dimension based on the content area prior to uploading into the CMS.
  - Utilize Oakland’s photography archive when possible, and limit the use of stock photography.

• **Video guidelines:**
  - Videos should be uploaded to YouTube at either 1920p or 720p HD video. MP4 and MOV formats are required in an H.264 codec.
- A video title and description should be prepared for each video. The title should be short, enticing and descriptive of the content. The description should be 2-3 sentences, explaining the video’s content and link to the section of the website where applicable.
- All videos need a custom thumbnail to interest the viewer. YouTube allows custom thumbnails to be uploaded, so take advantage of this feature.
- Videos may be embedded in the main content area within a YouTube <iframe> width of 450px and height of 253 px OR linked via buttons or text.
- Videos created for marketing purposes should be “Public” on YouTube so the general public can find and share the content. Videos whose primary use is informational (ex: commencement requirements, advising session details) should be “Unlisted” on YouTube and linked/embedded within the section’s page content.

News & Events:

- Images: 480 px wide by 320 px high
- Meta data: Select categories that are appropriate for the particular news story or event, keeping in mind that each category may represent a news or event feed meant to display those categories. Do not abuse. If it is an event that’s “open to the public,” do not select “for faculty/staff,” otherwise the faculty/staff feeds will show generic news/event content as opposed to targeted content.
- Titles: Titles are your headlines.
  - contain keywords that people would use to search for the news or event item,
  - be enticing
  - in active voice
  - clear and as concise as possible.
  - avoid using “OU did this” or “OU person did that”
  But before considering posting as OU News, answer the question “Who Cares?”

Managing SEO

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is the process of affecting the visibility of a website or a web page in a search engine's "natural" or un-paid ("organic") search results.

Guidelines for Meta Content

- Page Title
  - A page title (or title tag) is the main text that describes an online document. It appears in three key places: browsers, search engine results pages, and external websites
  - Utilize page titles containing fewer than 70 characters; the limit Google displays in search results.
  - Page titles longer than 70 characters will be truncated in the results.
• **Keywords**
  - If there is a keyword to be targeted, best practice suggest to repeat the keyword in the page title and meta-description. Having targeted keywords in these strategic areas will help raise the page’s Google indexing value. Avoid keyword over saturation, re-mentioning the keyword too many times in the meta content and on the page itself will result in over-optimization penalties, which will have a negative effect on the indexing value. **Target 1 keyword in page title - repeat it in the meta-description - repeat no more than 3-4 time in the body of the page.**
  - When choosing keywords, focus on what an individual would search to find that section. Don’t just target “Michigan”…that may be a highly competitive keyword that the page will never rank for. Instead think of long tail keywords, for example…”Undergraduate programs in Michigan” (as one keyword).

• **Page Description**
  - Page descriptions (or meta description) are extremely important in gaining visits from search results. These short paragraphs are a content managers opportunity to advertise to visitors and to let them know exactly whether the given page contains the information they’re looking for.
  - Use the page description to create a compelling description that a searcher will want to click. The description should optimally be between 150-160 characters.

• **Content**
  - **Content is king** – search engines reward pages / sites with fresh and compelling content. Page content should be updated at least every 3 months (4 times a year). These changes must be large changes to the main body text, minor changes will have no effect.

• **Linked Content and Link Sharing**
  - Link sharing determines the popularity of a page. Think of a link as a vote, and the more votes from other popular pages or sites the page has, the more popular the page is to search engines.
    - Utilize existing relationships with:
      - Organizations/Companies
      - Media Outlets
      - Alumni
  - Linked content – linking content or keywords within the content is a great way to streamline traffic to different pages in order to insure visitors are viewing what they **want or what they need**…think supply and demand. Search engines find and index pages from internal/external links, so content that is void of links runs the risk of never being indexed by search engines.