



AU GUIDELINES FOR THE WORLD WIDE WEB

American University's World Wide Web presence promotes university activities and educational opportunities by providing current and effective interactive communication and on-line services to a wide audience with the goals of assisting and building broad based support for the university's mission of teaching, research, and service.

The decentralized nature of the World Wide Web and the diverse purposes and constituencies served by university Web sites require that as much freedom as possible be granted to those creating and maintaining Web sites. However, contents of all Web pages under university jurisdiction (i.e., provided by university servers or by other servers funded by university budgets) must comply with local, state, and federal laws and with AU's policies, rules, and regulations. Further, the reputation and image of American University is determined, in part, by the quality of information published electronically by its students, faculty and staff.

Therefore, the purpose of AU's Guidelines for the World Wide Web is to ensure accuracy, consistency, integrity, and protection of the identity and image of the University by providing a set of minimum standards and guidelines for Web sites of AU's departments, schools, facilities, organizations, and affiliates.

If you have any suggestions or questions pertaining to the guidelines, send a detailed e-mail to webops@american.edu.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Web pages should be developed within the context of the audience they serve. The most crucial element of an effective presence on the Internet is good content. Schools, colleges, departments and programs should develop sites which are rich in authoritative and up to date content which is well written, caters for the needs of a wide range of audiences and is easily accessible. Information made available on the Internet should generally be available simultaneous with publication in other media. Information is useful only if the needs of the viewer are understood. It should be our core aim to provide the potential audiences with accurate, timely and comprehensive information, and, over time, a growing range of online services. An unfortunate user experience regarding misinformation or poor content is not just an impediment for the particular website. The misgivings and distrust can carry through to potentially damage American University's reputation.

Potential audiences for AU Web pages include prospective students, enrolled students, alumni, faculty, staff, researchers, and a broad-spectrum of university administrators, journalists/media, legislators, parents, and casual visitors. These potential audiences can be divided into two groups: external users and internal users. It is very likely that the audience for different parts of the site or for different sites within a single department's web presence will vary considerably. Web page

development should include the consideration of security, copyrights and trademarks, content of information, and purpose of development in light of these user groups. It is essential for the success of the website that it is seen to exist as an integral part of American University, rather than outside it. All units should consider how they can best use the Internet to communicate with user groups. A high level of awareness on the part of staff of the use American University makes of the Internet should be fostered and the ability to use the Internet for giving and receiving information should be valued as a core information and communication venue.

Web pages offer a creative, interactive means of publicizing the strengths of the university and offering services to others. As an interactive "publication," AU Web pages should reinforce the university's visual images and messages. Please note, all web publications are subject to the same University policies and standards as print publications.

AU WEB PAGES

Although the World Wide Web is not generally a regulated form of communication and any individual group with authorized access to a server and the Internet may create Web pages, American University reserves the right to regulate (through our guidelines) access and development of pages through the university's computer systems or by the use of the university's name. Guidelines for Web page development associated with American University fall into three categories: university pages, other AU-related pages, and portal pages.

University pages

University Web pages are designated with a common AU masthead graphic. These pages are all linked to the AU home page and include information and sites at the university and departmental levels. The AU mark appears on all school, college, and departmental pages, as well as all major administrative office pages. Deans, directors, and department chairs are responsible for approving and monitoring pages that are developed for their unit. All major university units are encouraged to develop and maintain pages. Below the department home page, graphics other than the university mark or mascot are permitted. Requests to designate a Web page as a university page are handled through Web Operations, x2277.

Other AU-related pages

Other AU-related Web pages include student, staff, and faculty personal pages. These pages may not contain the AU masthead graphic. All pages must meet the requirements of the Acceptable Use Policy of American University URL: <<http://american.edu/technology/sites/helpdesk/content.cfm?ID=112>>. These policies apply to use of computers and networks at American University, and of computers and networks elsewhere if you use American University resources to gain access to those computers or networks.

Portal pages

Portal Web pages are designed to provide the AU community, as well as the community at large, with the best of American University's personalized on-line applications and services in one easy-to-find place. To serve up content via the portal requires internal coordination and integration. Requests to include a Web page or application as part of the portal are handled through Web Operations, x2277 or e-administration, x3988.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Office of Information Technology

Technical maintenance of the AU web site servers and operating system shall be the responsibility of the Office of Information Technology. All university, department, organization and staff web material should reside on AU's official web site servers managed by OIT. No other servers should be operated on the university's network.

Creation and maintenance of the Web server software and files shall be the responsibility of the Director of Web Operations in the Office of Information Technology.

All Academic & Administrative Departments and Offices

Academic and administrative departments are encouraged to create their own pages on AU's web server by appointing an individual who will take responsibility for the content. The department may have more than one individual creating and changing content, provided the primary individual responsible for the content approves of the changes. The primary individual who is responsible for overall content and maintenance will supply their name, email, and office contact number to the Office of Information Technology. Additionally, information on how to contact the primary content gatekeeper is to be displayed on each page of their web site.

Individuals responsible for the content of an academic or administrative department web page must remove all outdated materials and delete all files on the server that are no longer in use. OIT will assist any departments or offices which wish to archive materials for potential future use.

TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Web development and maintenance at American University are handled at the local (departmental or individual) level. However, training and documentation for Web site developers are available through the OIT, x2270, and The Center for Teaching Excellence. These offices offer design and technical assistance to authors on a best-effort basis. Software is also available on a limited basis. Adobe *Dreamweaver*™ is American University's chosen web development tool.

Security is a concern for all machines attached to the Internet. OIT will maintain security where appropriate and wherever possible, will offer advice to staff, faculty, or students who are maintaining their own servers.

The Web Operations unit of the OIT offers Architectural Analysis & Design and Graphical Design & Programming services to all major university units. Also, assistance may be obtained by hiring students with knowledge of web development/publishing. University employees may contract with external agencies or vendors for assistance with Web development. If you would like to use an external agency to develop a site, however, permission must be obtained from the office of Business Management, x2720. Then, Purchasing can offer assistance with contracting with an external developer.

Access to AU web server directories is administered through OIT. Access is granted to students, staff, and faculty and follows the Acceptable Use Policy.

GRAPHIC & NAVIGATION GUIDELINES

Graphic and navigation guidelines have been established for the AU home page, navigational tools, and the AU masthead graphic.

AU homepage

The AU homepage consists of images of American University, navigational images, as well as AU-related news stories. Any changes to the homepage require approval from the Web Advisory Committee.

There are nineteen informational/navigational links on the AU homepage. The corresponding departments with development responsibility are:

About the University:	Admissions & Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
Academics:	Provost
Admissions:	Admissions
Athletics:	Athletics Dept. & University Relations
Career Opportunities:	Human Resources
Events & Calendars:	OIT & Media Relations
International Affairs:	Office of International Affairs
Library:	University Library
Life @ AU:	Admissions & Office of Campus Life
Offices & Services:	OIT
Strategic Plan:	Office of the President
Technology:	OIT
WAMU:	Office of the President
Washington, DC:	OIT
President's Welcome:	Office of the President
Give to AU:	University Relations
Directory & Maps:	OIT
Search:	OIT
Contact:	OIT

There also are six user areas. The areas and departments with development responsibility are:

Current Students	Provost
Faculty	Provost
Parents	OCL
Alumni & Friends	University Relations
Media	Media Relations
Prospective Students	Admissions

To accommodate non-graphic users, a text-based version of the website will need to be made available (to ensure ADA compliance). The masthead graphic is replaced with the words *American University* and the navigational graphics are replaced with text.

Navigation

American University sites should have clear navigation which is easy to use. Navigation has often been overlooked by designers in favour of the look of the site. Information and services on websites are only useful if visitors can find them. Our aim is to ensure that the user can navigate the website using whatever technology

is available to them. School, college, departmental, and program web teams will ensure that:

- the URL that is used as the homepage is standard (ie: <www.american.edu/ocl/index.html> **NOT** <www.american.edu/ocl/namehome.html>).
- there is a link to the site's homepage from every page
- a main navigation menu is available from the homepage
- the main sections of the website should be accessible within one click from the homepage
- a link to the AU homepage and the AU mark is included on the homepage

AU masthead graphic

The AU masthead graphic is located at the top of each official department page. The AU mark is located on the right of the banner; the words American University are located on the left. All mastheads are created and stored in a common file, which can be accessed by developers. Each department page must also provide an alternative to the masthead for non-graphic users. The alternative consists of the words *American University* followed by the name of the department page. All other department graphics and type appear below the masthead.

Date stamp and Contact Information

The bottom of every university page should contain a date stamp, a full postal address, as well as a contact e-mail address. Personal email addresses should not be used; for example <webops@american.edu> should be used instead of <webguru@hotmail.com>. If your school, college, department, or office requires a 'speciality' e-mail account, please contact the HelpDesk <helpdesk@american.edu>. Where appropriate, a second e-mail address for HELP or the person who maintains the webpage may be given. The format of the date stamp is

Updated: xx/xx/xx

Contact Us: xx@american.edu

If you require technical assistance please contact the AU Helpdesk – helpdesk@american.edu

Identity/Branding

Successful branding of a website is a balancing act. The designer must juggle many elements and combine them into a smooth design, which brings recognition. Although the University templates contain required elements to ensure a consistent identity and user interface, they serve primarily as a structure for each unit to customize with content that will express its unique qualities and strengths. A strong visual identity is the most important element of site differentiation. Localized branding and use of identity marks is permitted.

Requests to create web versions of existing print identity graphics/marks should be made to University Publication, x5948.

TYPOGRAPHY RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure consistency with the logotype and help unify the AU image, the typeface (font) Garamond should be used in all official masthead renderings. Two secondary typefaces have been chosen as alternatives for web development: Verdana and Arial.

WEB-ENABLED FORMS

E-mail

FormMail is a universal Web-enabled form to an e-mail gateway (written in Cold Fusion). There is only one required form input tag, which must be specified in order for this script to work with your existing forms. Other hidden configuration fields can also be used to enhance the operation of FormMail on your site. The code & a sample form are located at <<http://american.edu/guidelines/formhandler.html>>.

Database

A variety of database development services are available to the AU administrative community, using ColdFusion (Access or Oracle backend) or Lotus Notes. To schedule an appointment for a development consultation, please contact the HelpDesk at x2550.

META TAGS

Meta Tags provide **keywords** for search engines such as Google or Yahoo. These are added to the keywords found in the document itself. <META NAME="keywords" CONTENT="keyword keyword keyword">

Search engines which support the **description tag** will display the text you specify here, rather than the first few lines of text from the actual document when the document shows up in a search result. You have about 1,000 characters for your description, but not all these will be used. <META NAME="description" CONTENT="This is a site">

Other uses of the META tag:

- excluding a page from search engine spiders' attention:
<META name="robots" content="noindex">
- sending a user to a new location:
<META HTTP-EQUIV "Refresh"
CONTENT="3;URL=http://www.american.edu/index.html">

WEB ACCESSIBILITY

AU is committed to ensuring accessibility of its Web site for people with disabilities. New and updated Web content produced by our university should conform to W3C/WAI's standards:

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 <<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/>>
- Conformance Level A <<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/#Conformance>>

Existing Web content produced by our university, and new, updated, and existing Web content provided for our site by third-party developers, should conform to Conformance Level Double A. It is very important to ensure that any web page which

is produced is as easy to use and meaningful to users with disabilities as to any other.

The University has made available the following commercial accessibility product:

LIFT Text Transcoder

LIFT creates a dynamically generated, text-only view of web content and services that is optimized to improve web accessibility and support for people with disabilities and users of assistive technology. The philosophy behind LIFT Transcoder is that while clients devote finite resources to making web content as accessible as they can as the content is created, LIFT Transcoder immediately - at no impact to client IT or web development resources - creates an accessible (compliant) view of all web content.

The following is the snippet of code to be used to implement LIFT in an AU website:

```
<http://lift.american.edu:8080/tt/http://american.edu/INSERT DIRECTORY  
STRUCTURE HERE/>
```

W3C Information

The W3C states that there are basically ten quick tips that should be used to produce web pages that can be seen as truly accessible. They are listed as:

Images and animations - Use the 'alt' attribute to describe the function of each visual

Imagemaps - Use client-side imagemaps and text for hotspots

Multimedia - Provide captioning and transcripts of audio and descriptions of video

Hypertext links - Use some text that makes sense when read out of context. For example, avoid 'click here'

Page organization - Use headings, lists and consistent structure. Use CSS for layout and style where possible

Graphs and charts - Summarize or use the 'longdesc' attribute

Scripts, applets and plug-ins - Provide alternative content in case active features are inaccessible or unsupported

Frames - Use <noframes> and meaningful titles

Tables - Make line-by-line reading sensible. Summarize

Check your work, validate - Use tools, checklist and guidelines at:

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/Resources>

Tips listed at <http://www.w3.org/WAI/References/QuickTips/>

WEB ADDRESSES: DOMAIN NAMES & URLS

The main AU Websites for colleges shall have this naming structure: <www.xxxx.american.edu>. All other Web sites hosted on the main American University server (147.9.1.100) shall be listed in a secondary position in the URL, after the slash, which denotes the end of the DNS name (i.e., <www.american.edu/technology>). In general, no entity other than a college or special program shall be given a DNS entry. Any requests for new domain names or web server aliases should be submitted in writing to Web Operations.

ONLINE PAYMENTS

Online e-pay provides the ideal payment transaction platform for academic departments, programs, offices, and administrative units who want to conduct business on the Internet. AU currently accepts and processes credit card, debit card, and purchase card payments. (These methods are used only for non-tuition/board-based applications) To schedule an appointment for an online e-pay solution consultation, please contact the HelpDesk at x2550.

WEBSITE REVIEW

It is highly recommended that all Web pages be reviewed by their respective owners and updated whenever possible or at least four times a year.

Web Operations' and University Publications' staff members will review all Official American University webpages on a regular basis.

Concerns shall include, but are not limited to:

- Accurate and current information
- Functional links
- Appropriate Visual Identity Program presentation
- Accessibility and Usability issues

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

It is recommended not to use links to "under construction" pages. If a page is under construction, this fact should be plainly displayed on the referring page so that users should not have to go to another page at all. As an alternative, simply remove the reference to the "under construction" page completely from the referring page to avoid any confusion.

GENERAL RESOURCES

1. **IBM Ease of Use Group's guidelines:**
http://www-3.ibm.com/ibm/easy/eou_ext.nsf/Publish/572
2. **Sun Microsystems' Writing for the Web:**
<http://www.sun.com/980713/webwriting/>

3. **How Users Read on the Web:**
<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9710a.html>
4. **BOBBY Online Accessibility Tool:**
<http://bobby.watchfire.com/bobby/html/en/index.jsp>
5. **Section 508 Standards:**
<http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=11#web>
6. **Office of the Envoy's Accessibility Guidelines:**
<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/Resources/WebGuidelines/fs/en>
7. **How To Use HTML Meta Tags:**
<http://searchenginewatch.com/webmasters/article.php/2167931>
8. **W3C Cascading Style Sheets:**
<http://www.w3.org/Style/CSS/>

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY ADVERTISING POLICY

Definition

Advertising is defined as any transaction between American University and another entity which results in the promotion of the other entities' business, organization or products in exchange for goods, services or cash. This includes sponsorships, donations made in exchange for promotion, and traditional forms of advertising.

Examples of advertising media include newsprint, publications, buses, transport media, arena scoreboards, ticket stubs, electronic signage boards, World Wide Web sites, Internet fist servers, flyers, pamphlets, the Talon, The Eagle, ATV, WVAU, posted materials, emblematic gifts/clothing, banners, imprinted items, solicitations, and promotion materials.

Principles and Practices in Accepting External Advertising

The domain name assigned to a web page serves a variety of purposes, including alerting the viewer as to the general source of the page. Thus, a page with an ".edu" domain name is related to an educational source, while a page ending in ".com" is of a commercial nature. American University is dedicated to freedom of expression limited only by the university's responsibility to its good name, its educational mission and to its students, faculty, staff and alumni. Consequently, any advertising on a university-related web page may only occur on those pages which have a ".com" domain name. The Office of Information Technology can provide assistance to anyone wishing to apply for a ".com" domain name."

A. Responsibility

The university has a special responsibility to consider the good name of the university and of its students, faculty, staff, and alumni. In accepting advertising, the university will take into account the type of business, manner of advertisement, and methods of operation of the organization purchasing advertising space.

B. Taste

Taste must remain a matter of subjective judgment. However, the use of words, illustrations, or other matter known to be offensive to some persons should be avoided unless the use of such matter is necessary to the integrity of the material presented.

C. Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action

The university is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. No advertisements will be accepted that discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, political affiliations, source of income, veteran status, or physical handicap.

D. National Association for College Admission Counseling

In accordance with the Statement of Principles and Good Practices of the National Association for College Admission Counseling, the university does not accept advertising from other colleges or universities where that advertising states opportunities for study in an undergraduate regular degree program.

E. University Policies and Procedures

The university does not accept advertising that violates any university policy or procedure.

F. Use of AU images, trademarks, logos or properties

Advertisers may not use the university's image, logos, trademarks, name or property without the express written consent of the university. Permission must be obtained by application to the Licensing Management Office (Campus Store). In cases where photography of the campus is used, photo releases must be obtained from all individuals in the photograph. A photo release statement can be obtained from University Publications.

G. Posting Policy

Advertisers must conform with the university's posting policy and listed in the Student Handbook.

H. Advertisements featuring Alcohol & Tobacco

The university does not accept advertising that promotes liquor, beer, malt beverages, wine, cigarettes, cigars, or any other form of tobacco when the advertisement is directed primarily at students.

I. Illegal Activities

The university does not accept advertising that involves or promotes any illegal activities.

J. NCAA Advertising Restrictions

NCAA regulations do not permit advertising in conjunction with NCAA championships that involve alcohol, cigarettes and other tobacco products, or professional sports organizations or personnel.

K. Credit Card Advertising

The university has a contract with MBNA America Bank, which restricts the university from endorsing any financial products or services offered by any other organization other than MBNA for the duration of the contract. The university also is restricted from accepting advertising from other organizations if they utilize AU's trademark as an endorsement for their financial services or products.

L. Non-Profit Postal Rates

The United States Postal Service does not allow materials to be mailed at third class nonprofit rates if the publication contains advertisements for any goods or services that are not directly related to the core business of the university.

M. Unauthorized Solicitations

The Rights, Responsibilities, and Code of Conduct at American University bans unauthorized soliciting or canvassing by any individual or group on university premises or in the university residence halls.

N. Tax Status of Advertising Revenue

Income derived from advertisements, corporate sponsorship payments or other promotions are potentially taxable income to the university, which may affect the university's tax-exempt status. Prior to accepting any advertisements for publications, the department or organization is required to determine the proper reporting requirements for the advertising income that is generated. Inquiries about reporting requirements should be directed to the Office of Finance and Treasurer.

Information on and Enforcement of Advertising Policy

The Provost and Vice Presidents enforce this policy and approve any exceptions for any advertising venues falling under their purview. Advertising that occurs in venues under the direction of the Student Media Board of the Student Confederation are enforced by the Board through the Vice President of Campus Life. Advertising connected with alumni groups is the responsibility of the Vice President of University Relations. If any advertisement is believed to conflict with this policy, the appropriate division executive will take corrective measures. In the case of advertising in electronic formats, including the World Wide Web, the advertisement will be removed immediately while the matter is investigated. Advertisers should be made aware of this policy prior to the placement of ads.

COPYRIGHTS, TRADEMARKS, DISCLAIMERS, AND PERMISSIONS POLICY

COPYRIGHT

ALL American University websites are expected to comply with copyright laws regarding content.

Any non-AU audio files, images, text or video footage may only be made available on American University's servers after confirmation of "permission-to-use" consent has been obtained from the appropriate copyright holder. A permission statement must include specific credits on the same page as the content is being used.