

Fordham University Web Policy

Version 1.1, October, 2006

"The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor." --Vince Lombardi

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Fordham website (www.fordham.edu) and its sanctioned online domains exist to advance the mission of the University by communicating with and serving the needs of the institution's various audiences and stakeholders. As one of Fordham's primary means of external communication, the internet website is a vehicle for student and faculty recruitment and a vital resource for alumni, parents, donors, and other members of the general public interested in learning more about the University and its academic community. Fordham's intranet website serves as a communication tool and academic resource for internal University audiences including students, faculty, and staff. As President of Fordham University, Joseph McShane, S.J. has requested that the institutional website share certain elements of communality that are easily recognized. The Web Policy Committee was charged to develop guidelines for such implementation.

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I. Requirements for Fordham University web sites/pages:

All top level pages of the University must conform to the approved format which includes the top and bottom banner as listed below. All department, school, and organization homepages fit into this category and except for the top banner, and University address bar at the bottom, exactly as here, everything in between is left up to the discretion of the individual unit:

A. Top Banner:



---- content determined by webmaster ----

B. Bottom Address bar:

© 2008 Fordham University
Rose Hill Campus Bronx, NY 10458 (718) 817-1000
Lincoln Center Campus New York, NY 10023 (212) 636-6000
Marymount Campus Tarrytown, NY 10591 (914) 631-3200

The dimensions of the top banner are 771 pixels X 77 pixels. The Maroon is hex #900028

A template for the above banners may be downloaded from the Online Academic Services web site at: <http://www.fordhamfrc.org/manuals.shtml>

C. Copyright

Copyright laws apply to websites just as they apply to other published materials.

Do not use photos, text or graphics from printed material or web sites without obtaining permission since such material may be copyright protected.

Remember to obtain permission before using photographs. Both the subject of the photograph and the photographer must consent to the use of a photo; it is prudent to obtain written consent when using photographs of individuals, especially if the photos will appear in material that can be considered promotional. If in doubt about the need for formal permission to use material, contact Public Affairs or the office of Legal Counsel.

D. Liaison

We also require that every unit of the University select a liaison/webmaster to consult with the Web Resources Group at Freeman B04, extension 4706, and gather the necessary resources to implement their unit's pages and to assume responsibility for updating.

II. Support for Web Site Look and Feel:

A. Training, Resources, Consultation, and Design Support

These may be requested from the Web Resources Group at the Online Academic Services Office at X4706 and at <http://www.fordhamfrc.org>. Training in the use of various software tools for web development and maintenance is regularly offered to members of the University Community free of charge on a regular basis. For the offerings and schedules, please see: <http://www.fordham.edu/training>.

B. Design Quality

Graphic design is the first part of a site observed by online visitors. Effectively designed Web sites grab viewer attention and offer clear, consistent navigation. The Web Resources Group at Online Academic Services (X4706 and <http://www.fordhamfrc.org>) provides templates (pre-formatted forms into which one drops their own content) to help design sites that are consistent with both the navigation procedures and the look and feel of the University's homepage and second-level pages.

If a template is not suitable, one may contact the Web Resources Office (see contacts) for help, however, there are some simple steps that can be followed to create a well-designed site:

1. Define Content

- a. Decide on the purpose and goals of your site
- b. Identify the needs of your audience
- c. Determine your audience's skill and Internet connection levels

2. Develop Architecture

- a. Create a flowchart that organizes and lays out your site
- b. Prioritize and categorize information
- c. Identify links within and outside the site

3. Create Design

- a. Consider the download capabilities of your site's visitors (i.e. Connection Speed, browser, computer, operating system, etc.)
- b. Develop pleasing look and feel with color, type and illustration
- c. Design using simplicity, contrast and consistent alignment
- d. Be consistent when you position the navigation links
- e. Ensure that your site designs are consistent with the University's homepage (consult the Online Academic Services site for style sheets for direction on colors, fonts, templates, etc. at <http://www.fordhamfrc.org> or at X4706).

4. Implement Site

- a. HTML code your copy
- b. Compress graphics
- c. Test your site on a sample audience
- d. Test your site on various monitors, platforms and browsers

5. For more detailed Web design tips, refer to the following sites:

- a. Project Cool Developer Zone: <http://www.devx.com/projectcool/Door/7051>
- b. Web Page Design for Designers: <http://www.wpdfd.com/wpdhome.htm>
- c. Web Design from About.com: <http://webdesign.about.com/compute/webdesign/index.htm?rnk=c2&terms=web+design>

C. Content Quality

1. Recommended Style Standards

For recommended style standards, consult Online Academic Services at <http://www.fordhamfrc.org> or X4706. For Web-related words, keep in mind the following:

- a. *homepage* is one word;
- b. *Web* is uppercase when it stands alone; lowercase when combined with another word (e.g. Web site; World Wide Web; webmaster);
- c. *download* and *upload* are spelled as one word
- d. *online* is one word, no hyphen

2. Sensitive Information

Be mindful of posting sensitive information online. Though you may be posting it for a small, select audience (your employees, students, etc.) unless it is password protected, it is available for viewing by the world.

3. Length of Text

Many Web sites that discuss style standards focus largely on design and coding with little information about actual content. Quality writing is quality writing regardless of the medium. However, the Web medium puts a premium on getting to the point and presenting content in an unambiguous manner; therefore, it is important to take your time when drafting text. Long pages of text can be tedious for viewers of Web pages. As an alternative to long sections of uninterrupted text you might consider a bullet list.

4. Reading on the Web

People read differently on the web than on paper. For an example, view: How Users Read on the Web (at <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9710a.html>) and consider that the Web version may need to be very different than the print version. In some cases, providing a print version, as a downloadable option is another approach to consider. For simple text, ordinary HTML is the ideal version but PDF files may be a good choice as they are platform independent, though they may take longer to download. A word processing file such as Microsoft Word can be considered but may present problems for some users. For optimum results, consult Online Academic Services.

D. Commonality

Creativity is always encouraged when designing a University Web site. When considering what information the site should contain and how it should look, it is always recommended that the site reflect the character of the office, organization or school it is promoting. By doing so, the site orientates the viewer immediately.

Equally, the site should also reflect Fordham University. In today's Internet world, it is not uncommon for a user to bypass a main directory homepage and link directly to a specific site. This is due largely to the use of Internet search engines. This type of direct linking can also cause users to question whether or not they are on an official or affiliated University site. Therefore, all University affiliated sites need to identify themselves as belonging to Fordham University.

1. Main Identifiers

The main identifiers which are required are:

- a. The word/graphic logos used currently on the University's homepage and
- b. The bottom bar menu also from the University's homepage

2. Use of University Marks & Branding

Fordham logos and word marks used on official University Web sites such as University departments, approved student groups and schools, are permitted as long as the logos are used correctly.

In addition:

- c. Web sites not affiliated with the University but using Fordham insignia require authorization from the University Trademark and Licensing office;
- d. Web sites that have a chat room are not allowed to use University insignia. Merchandise sites may use Fordham insignia for the express purpose of advertising licensed products for sale;
- e. News sites that provide information about Fordham University are permitted to display University insignia.

3. Navigation

- a. Clear, easy navigation through every page of the Fordham Web site is a necessity. A site and its pages should not be a maze where visitors must guess their next move or try the "Back" button to get out. Every page must, at the very minimum, include (a) a link to the Fordham University homepage and (b) the homepage footer menu bar. They should also include a link to the appropriate department/division/school/etc. that the page originates from. URL links should be tested routinely to ensure that they are still correct.
- b. The Fordham templates include navigation to frequently used sites within Fordham and quick links to the University's second-level pages. If an office chooses not to use a template, it is encouraged to include links to the University's selected URLs.

4. Templates

Fordham University does not require all Web pages to look the same or to contain the same design elements; however, some may wish to incorporate the design of the Fordham homepage and upper level or top-tier pages when creating their Web pages. To simplify this process, University approved templates are available for use at: Freeman, B04, X4706

5. Site Expectations

Every page of the Fordham University Web site has at least one thing in common — it bears the Fordham name. Keeping that in mind, every page is to be held to a certain standard of content and design. Using University approved templates is required at all top level pages, however individuality is just as important as consistency of look and feel. Every page, particularly top-level pages, are held to a standard worthy of bearing the Fordham name. If a page does not meet that standard, the responsible office will be contacted by the Web Policy Committee to discuss improvement options.

III. Standards, Tools & Tips

A. Web Guides to Styles and Standards

Many Web sites offer guides to styles and standards. Below is a selection of some of the guides:

1. *The Yale Web Style Guide* (<http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual>) may also be purchased in hard copy. This is a comprehensive reference.
2. *Web Page Design for Designers* (<http://www.wpdfd.com/>) offers advice on how to best put together Web sites; however, it assumes a knowledge of HTML. This site takes the users beyond just the basics.
3. *The HTML Writers Guild* (<http://www.hwg.org/>) provides online courses, mailing lists and other references for learning more about Web development.
4. *Creating Killer Web Sites* (<http://www.killersites.com/>) offers design tips, example sites and other information on Web design. This site will provide you with lots of creative input as well as technical information.
5. *WebMonkey* (<http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/>) offers a variety of resources for the web developer including many online tutorials.

B. HTML Standards

1. One attempt at addressing standards is being developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). For detailed information see the W3C Web site at: <http://www.w3.org/>.
2. Another Web site that is particularly useful is Jakob Nielsen's Web site at: <http://www.useit.com/>. The content of this Web site relates to making Web sites easy to read and navigate.

IV. Downloading and Accessibility

A. Download Times

Download times are dependent on many factors ranging from connection speed and the user's computer to the size of files the Web developer creates. Since a developer cannot control what hardware and software users have, it is important to be sensitive to the differences in user capabilities when placing items on a site for user download.

1. Keeping graphics files as small as possible while still maintaining quality is the main goal. Newer versions of graphics programs such as Adobe Photoshop include tools that make this a simpler process than in the past. Be aware that though code may not show up on the developer's screen, it may still add to the user's load time.
2. Features like JavaScript add to the load time since it must be interpreted before the page loads. Therefore, to ensure quicker load times, avoid any unnecessary code. Developers frequently make the mistake of creating a template, which includes JavaScript, and then use the same template on all the site pages whether the JavaScript is needed or not.

3. Programs like Dreamweaver frequently put FONT tags around each individual section of text. This again slows down load times. Two suggestions in order to limit this problematic situation: first, edit out the unneeded tags; and second, use style sheets to control fonts. By incorporating either of these solutions, site load times will decrease, making it easier for users to access the site. Style sheets conform most closely to the W3C standards.

B. Contact Information

1. Every University Web page must have contact information that is clearly shown. If there are questions concerning a particular page, a viewer should be able to easily contact someone to clear up the problem. The "homepage" for each responsible office's Web site must contain complete contact information for the office, organization or school including mailing address, phone number and e-mail address. Subsequent pages should contain at least an email contact preferably in the form of a link. It should be someone with direct knowledge of the page who can provide relevant information to the user.

C. Browser and Platform Considerations

1. A developer's life would be much simpler if every user saw sites on the same type of computer and used the same type of browser. Unfortunately, life doesn't work that way. Visitors may view your site on Netscape 3.0 using a Macintosh Power PC, or they may view your site on Internet Explorer 5.0 using a Windows 98 machine. We strongly encourage Web developers to design their pages for all audiences. This means keeping accessibility in mind as you are coding and designing your site. While nothing ensures that your design will be the same under all browsers on all platforms because of differing display characteristics of systems as well as different screen resolutions and settings on monitors, the best option is to follow the W3C standards

D. Accessible Web Pages

Given that Web accessibility is desirable, The Web Policy Group also recognizes that the newest technologies and design considerations sometimes make the goal of total accessibility difficult to attain. In the case of Web pages, which are not accessible to the visually impaired, providing a text-only page with the same content is an alternative. The specific federal regulation that covers this is Sec 508B of the WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998 and maybe seen at: (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/508/508law.html>). Which Web sites are covered by this regulation is yet to be definitively determined. For more information and the latest updates please see the resources section of the OAS website at: <http://www.fordhamfrc.org>.

V. Security

A. Information on your Web Site

Remember any information you put out on the Web is essentially available for anyone, anywhere to read and copy. Therefore, most Web information is not secure. Any information you do not want made public should be placed on a secure server and password protected. Once you post information to an unsecured Web site that information is available to anyone who has access to the Internet. Think twice before posting personal information, photos, research data or any other type of information that might be misused by someone.

B. Hackers

Other more technical security concerns such as hackers breaking into a server or manipulating a Web site are not as clear cut and easy to handle. For most developers, the main precaution that

can be taken is safeguarding usernames and passwords associated with connecting and transferring pages to and from the Web server

VI. Updating

A. Site Life Cycle

Information on Web pages should be updated regularly, reflecting its audience's needs, whether that be daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc. The date the page was last updated should be indicated somewhere on the page. If a page does not need to be updated more than once a year, the "this page last updated" should be changed at least once every six months to let visitors know that the information has been reviewed and is accurate. Every office is encouraged to update or refresh the content and design of their pages twice a year, preferably every fall and every spring.

VII. Contacts and Support

A. Web Resource Group at Online Academic Services: Freeman B04, 718-817-4706 and online at <http://www.fordhamfrc.org> exists to support with resources, training, and design.

VIII. Glossary

The following site is an attempt to define the most often encountered techno-speak terms:

<http://www.fordhamfrc.org/text/glossary.htm>

other helpful sites:

<http://webstandards.org/>
<http://www.webdeveloper.com/>
<http://www.jsmadeeasy.com/>
<http://www.coolhomepages.com/>
<http://www.w3.org/>
<http://www.lynda.com/>
<http://pro.corbis.com/>