The UConn Library’s web pages are an integral part of our ability to communicate information and provide services to our users. It is not just a place where content is delivered, but a place where impressions are made. As a result, it is important for us to have an attractive and usable website where users can easily find what they need.

The practice of website management has long been decentralized at the UConn Library and while that allows for greater flexibility for content, it also brings with it issues of inconsistency and various levels of look and feel. This guide is designed to provide some basic tips for writing and designing your webpages.

If you have any questions about something on the web, please contact the Web Governance Workgroup (WGW) which is chaired by Joel Atkinson. The WGW has the authority over the site, and will work with you to determine whether content is appropriate. WGW also reserves the right to reassign ownership of pages that do not comply with these rules.

Writing for the Web

Good web writing is the difference between having a usable website and one that is not. Writing for the web is different because people read websites differently than they do print. The first significant difference is that reading online is often scanning to find information quickly, not reading every word. And secondly, the user is task focused and looking for specific information. Here are a few key tips to keep in mind when writing for the web.

• Rearrange your content - get the important information upfront.
• Know your audience and write content at their level.
• Use descriptive headings to help orient them while they skim.
  o Make it easy for people to read
  o Use clear, concise, and short paragraphs
  o Cover only one topic per paragraph
  o Use short sentences
  o Skip unnecessary words
  o Use bullets instead of paragraphs
• Avoid jargon.
• Write in an active tense.
• Avoid needless repetition.
• Address your web visitors directly. Use the word "you".
• Use a conversational tone while remaining professional.
Appearance and Navigation

- If you have written concisely, there should be room for both high quality images and white space. Both are important.
- Link, don’t replicate. Minimize the number of places information has to be updated.
- Link to related policies, locations, and services in the right sidebar.
- Link to the UConn Library’s pages that you mention in your text. Don’t force users to hunt for them.
- Do not use clipart or animation. Work with Public Programming, Marketing & Communications to create high-quality photographs and graphics. You may also use images from UConn’s Photo Database: http://mediashare.uconn.edu/res/sites/public/

Style and Branding

The UConn Library is part of a larger effort for style and branding and our pages must be in compliance with all UConn style and branding rules.

- UConn Library (not UConn Libraries, University Libraries or University of Connecticut Libraries)
- One space between paragraphs.
- One space after a period.
- Headings are used for structure, not emphasis. First heading is <h2>.
- Do not use ALL CAPS for emphasis.
- Fonts:
  - No changing the font colors.
  - Font faces are Helvetica Neue and Helvetica. Normal text is 14px.
  - You can use bold or italics, but not both together. Use italics sparingly.
- No underlining.
- Spell out acronyms on first use and reference it for future use.
- Give pages unique, descriptive titles to increase the effectiveness of the A-Z index.
- Primo should be referred to as the Libraries’ Search or General Search.
- Use ordered lists (1, 2, 3…) for items in a sequence, such as steps to complete a task. Otherwise, use unordered lists (bullet points).

Follow UConn’s best practices for university web content:
http://brand.uconn.edu/standards/web/best-practices/

Colors and styles must be consistent with those set by UConn Web Standards:
http://brand.uconn.edu/standards/web/
All pages must meet state accessibility guidelines:
http://www.access.state.ct.us/policies/accesspolicy40.html

In other matters, web content should follow the AP Style Guide. For quick reference, the following is adapted from Brandeis University’s Web Style Guide:

Numbers
- Spell out the numbers one through nine.
- Use Arabic numerals for 10 and up.
- Always use Arabic numerals for ages and percentages, even for numbers less than 10.
- Spell out numbers that start a sentence. If the result is awkward, re-work the sentence: 
  Seventy-five students attended the symposium yesterday. Yesterday, 635 seniors were awarded degrees.
- The exception to this rule is a sentence that begins with a calendar year:
  2007 was a record-breaking year for fundraising.
- Use Roman numerals for wars, monarchs and Popes:
  World War II, King George VI, Pope John XXIII
- In the case of proper names, use words or numerals according to the organization’s practice:
  3M, Twentieth Century Fund, Big Ten

Academic Degrees
- Avoid abbreviations: Jehuda Reinhart, who has a doctorate in modern Jewish history ...
- Use an apostrophe in bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, etc.
- There is no apostrophe in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science.
- Use abbreviations such as B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. only when the need to identify many people by degree on first reference would make the preferred method cumbersome; use the abbreviations only after a full name and set the abbreviations off with commas: 
  Dorothee Kern, Ph.D., delivered a lecture on enzymes.

Dates
- Always use Arabic figures, without st, nd, rd or th.
- When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Dec.:
  Fall Open House will be held on Oct. 8.
- When a phrase lists only a month and year, do not separate the month and the year with commas:
  The new Web site will launch in December 2007.
- When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas:
  Jan. 15 2008, was the first day of the semester.

Time
- Use figures except for noon and midnight
- Use a colon to separate hours from minutes: 3:30 p.m.
• 4 o’clock is acceptable, but time listings with a.m. or p.m. (with periods) are preferred

United States
• As a noun, use United States: Connecticut is part of the United States.
• As an adjective, use U.S. (no spaces): A U.S. senator will speak at UConn tomorrow.

Apostrophe
• For plural nouns ending in s, add only an apostrophe: the students’ grades, states’ rights
• For singular common nouns ending in s, add ‘s: the hostess’s invitation, the witness’s answer
• For singular proper names ending in s, use only an apostrophe: UConn’s mission
• For singular proper names ending in s sounds such as x, ce, and z, use ‘s: Marx’s theories
• For plurals of a single letter, add ‘s: She received all A’s this semester.
• Do not use ‘s for plurals of numbers or multiple letter combinations: the 1960s, USEMs

Colon
• Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence:
  She promised this: The team will go to nationals this year. But: There were three issues with the project: expense, time and feasibility.
• Colons go outside quotation marks unless they are part of the quoted material.

Comma
• Do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series: Storrs, Mansfield and Hartford
• Use a comma to set off a person’s hometown and age:
  John Smith, Newton, was accepted to UConn. Jane Smith, 22, graduated yesterday.

Hyphen
• Use a hyphen for compound adjectives before the noun:
  well-known student, full-time job, 20-year sentence
• Do not use a hyphen when the compound modifier occurs after the verb:
  The student was well known. Her job became full time. He was sentenced to 20 years.

Parentheses
• The temptation to use parentheses is a clue that a sentence is becoming contorted. Try to rewrite the sentence, putting the incidental information between commas or dashes, or in a separate sentence. If you must use parentheses, follow these punctuation guidelines:
• Place a period outside a closing parenthesis if the material inside is not a sentence (such as this fragment).
• If the material is an independent complete sentence, place the period inside the parentheses.

Period
• Use a single space after the period at the end of a sentence.
• Do not put a space between initials: C.S. Lewis; J.K. Rowling.

Quotation marks
• In dialogue, each person’s words are placed in a separate paragraph, with quotation marks at the beginning and end of each person’s speech.
• Periods and commas always go within quotation marks.
• Dashes, semicolons, question marks and exclamation points go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted material. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence.
• Use single marks for quotes within quotes:
  
  Smith said, "She told me, 'I wish I had been accepted to UConn.'"

Titles
• Titles of academic courses:
  o Do not italicize course titles or put quotation marks around them.
• Titles of books, computer games, movies, operas, plays, poems, albums, songs, radio and television programs, lectures, speeches and works of art:
  o Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters
  o Put quotation marks around all such works except the Bible and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material: “The Star-Spangled Banner,” “Gone With the Wind,” NBC’s “Today Show,” Encyclopædia Britannica
  o Translate a foreign title into English, unless the American public knows the work by its foreign name: Rousseau’s “War,” not Rousseau’s “La Guerre.” BUT: Leonardo da Vinci’s “Mona Lisa.”
• Titles of newspapers and magazines:
  o Do not place these titles in quotation marks.
  o Capitalize the in the name if that is the way the publication prefers to be known.
  o Lowercase the before names if listing several publications, some of which use the as part of the name and some of which do not: Time, Newsweek, the Washington Post and the New York Times
• Titles of directions/regions:
  o Lowercase north, south, northeast, northern, etc. when they indicate compass direction: The cold front is moving east.
  o Capitalize compass points when they designate U.S. regions: A storm system that developed in the Midwest is spreading eastward.
- With names of countries, lowercase compass points unless they are part of a proper name or are used to designate a politically divided nation: *northern France, western United States, Northern Ireland*
- With states and cities, lowercase compass points when they describe a section of a state or city: *western Massachusetts, southern Atlanta*
- Capitalize compass points when used in denoting widely known sections: *Southern California, the Lower East Side of Manhattan*

**Titles of seasons:**
- Lowercase spring, summer, fall and winter, as well as derivatives like wintertime unless part of a formal name: *the Winter Olympics*