EAST CENTRAL COLLEGE

Web Content Guide

Like the ECC Style and Branding Guide developed to ensure visually consistency with all print media created for East Central College, this Web Content Guide is meant to provide guidelines for content editors to follow when developing or editing pages on the ECC website.

The guidelines covered deal with topics such as technical concepts, the tone of the copy, stylistic consistency, and best practices regarding images and online documents.

To request any functionality or visual elements that may not be covered in this guide or possible within the confines of the content management system, please contact the Coordinator of Web Services.

Contents

Concepts

Although it is not necessary to have advanced technical knowledge of web design and development to be a website content editor, familiarity with some of the concepts will help explain why these guidelines are important. Search Engine Optimization and Accessibility are two such concepts.

Search Engine Optimization

Search engine companies use hundreds to thousands of different variables to determine which results to display when someone submits a search query. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of optimizing content to increase the chance of higher ranking in those search results.

Although content editors at ECC don't need to know all the details about how search engines operate, some considerations should be made while editing pages to increase the chance of being seen in search results. This guide will cover some of best practices to use for SEO while developing the individual elements of a page—such as page titles, URL structures, or hyperlinks—without bogging the content editor down with exhaustive technical information.

Accessibility

As a public institution, East Central College is responsible for meeting the needs of all visitors to our website by way of guidelines described in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Although most of these guidelines are handled by the Office of Web Services through the design of the site's template, some requirements will need to be made by individual content editors.

Most accessibility requirements handled by content editors deal with the way screen readers interpret a web page. These accessibility considerations primarily involve images and hyperlinks, and will be described in the respective sections included in this guide.

Page Content

Page Titles

Page titles are the text seen in the tab of a user's web browser as well as the title used in search engine result pages.

Always front-load page title with the most important keywords of the page.

Instead of:

Checklist for Enrollment of International Students

Do this:

International Students Enrollment Checklist

Admissions Policies

Permalink: https://www.eastcentral.edu/admissions/**admissions-policies/** Edit

URL Structure

A URL (Uniform Resource Locator) is the full web address for a web page. When creating a new page in WordPress, the page's URL (also called a Permalink) is auto-generated based on the Page Title, but should be edited if needed.

If the web address for a page needs to be edited for any reason, the old URL will need to be set to redirect to the new URL to prevent any broken links, which are links that are pointing to URLs that no longer exist. In these cases, contact to Coordinator of Web Services through the Website Update Request Form to make these changes.

Writing for the Web

ECC primarily follows the Associated Press (AP) style, which is the standard for journalists and many other forms of written communication throughout the country.

Written communication for external use should closely follow the AP stylebook.

The Associated Press Stylebook provides a guide for capitalization, abbreviation, punctuation, spelling, numerals and many other written communication applications.

All writing for the web should be in third person.

Instead of:

You should meet with advisors to help select classes.

Do this:

Students should visit with advisors when having trouble selecting classes.

Web readers typically scan a page instead of reading every word. Give readers information clearly and concisely.

Web writing should follow the journalistic style of the inverted pyramid. Get to the point and put the most important information at the top.

Be sure to use smaller sentences and paragraphs to make it easier to scan and absorb information.

Best Practices

- Use bulleted lists when possible.
- Use subheads to break up lengthy copy.
- Keep the copy to a minimum compared to a print piece/press release.
- Hyperlink to additional resources.
- Use photos where applicable.

Styles

Most stylistic choices on the website—such as the layout, colors, and typefaces—are determined by the template of the content management system, defined by the template's Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). Although most design guidelines are explained in the East Central College Style & Branding Guide, the following sections are specific to the website.

Information on logo use and print fonts is available in the Style Guide.

Typefaces

Although typefaces can be altered by CSS or in the some plugin settings, all web text should be limited to the Libre Baskerville or Monserrat font families. The Libre Baskerville font family is to be used exclusively by page and section headings, while the page text uses the Monserrat font family.

Font weight is term used by CSS to determine the boldness of text. The font weight is determined by numbers rather than font titles (as listed in the font examples below). The font weights available for Libre Baskerville are 400 and 700. Monserrat fonts can use weights 300, 400, 500, 600, or 700.

Libre Baskerville Family

Libre Baskerville Regular (400)
Libre Baskerville Italic
Libre Baskerville Bold (700)

Monserrat Family

Monserrat Light (300)
Monserrat Light Italic
Monserrat Regular (400)
Monserrat Italic
Monserrat Medium (500)
Monserrat Medium Italic
Monserrat SemiBold (600)
Monserrat SemiBold Italic
Monserrat Bold (700)
Monserrat Bold Italic

Colors

Colors can be added to site by using their RGB or HEX values, listed under the swatches below. For those fluent in CSS, custom variables have also been implemented into the template for easy reference.

In consideration of accessibility, it is important that color is never used solely to convey important information. Never change the color of standard text.

Primary Colors

True Blue
RGB: 33, 51, 104
HEX: #002F6C
var(--true-blue)

Sunshine
RGB: 240, 179, 50
HEX: #F1B434
var(--sunshine)

Secondary Colors

Sand
RGB: 184, 150, 91
HEX: #B9975B
var(--sand)

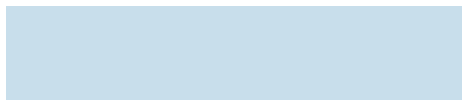**Aqua**
RGB: 92, 185, 178
HEX: #5CB8B2
var(--aqua)

Candy
RGB: 222, 84, 91
HEX: #DD5359
var(--candy)

Pumpkin Spice
RGB: 234, 114, 60
HEX: #F6800F
var(--pumpkin-spice)

Sky
RGB: 200, 220, 233
HEX: #C9DCE8
var(--sky)

Light Grey
RGB: 217, 217, 213
HEX: #DCDCDC
var(--light-grey)

Concrete
RGB: 167, 167, 168
HEX: #A9A9A9
var(--concrete)

Elephant Grey
RGB: 99, 102, 106
HEX: #696969
var(--elephant-grey)

Links

Link text defines the destination that a hyperlink is pointing to and is a very important attribute to search engines and screen readers.

Although it is common to see "Read more" or "Click here" used as the link text, proper link text should be descriptive of the page or site destination.

Instead of:

Click here for ECC's full list of available courses.

Do this:

Visit our Course Catalog for ECC's full list of available courses.

Using an entire sentence as the link text is permissible, but avoid making it any longer.

Online Documents

Digital documents such as PDFs should be used sparingly throughout the ECC website. Guidelines for different types of digital documents are provided in the sections below.

In an effort to decrease the amount of irrelevant or outdated information from ECC's on-site search function, PDFs and Word documents have been removed from the search engine results, so it is important to provide information on the site via web pages rather than PDfs whenever possible.

Forms/Applications

Printable forms or applications are an acceptable reason to link to digital documents on the website. All documents should be converted to the PDF format—avoid using Word documents.

If possible, all form fields in the PDF should be fillable so that a user can fill in the form before printing.

A repository page should be used for any PDFs to avoid creating links to the document across multiple pages.

Informative Documents

All informative document—such as FAQs or guides—should be converted into a web page. With a static web page, the page can be edited and the URL will remain the same, whereas updates to a PDF will require an entirely new URL. Any links to that PDF would need to be tracked down and changed to prevent old or incorrect information from being accessed. This isn't an issue with static web pages.

If there is a need for the informative document to be available as a downloadable file (such as an accreditation requirement), consider creating a new web page and then including a link or button to that document within that new page.

Course-Specific Documents

Any digital documents for individual courses—such as syllabuses, lab safety guides, or exam study guides—should be delivered to students via the Canvas learning management system.

Advanced Updates

Content editors in need of upgrades to their page that are not covered in this document should contact the Coordinator of Web Services or make a request through the [Website Update Request Form](). From there, the Coordinator can either make the change to your page or start a conversation on the project, depending on the complexity of the requested update.

Images

All images used on the East Central College website need to be approved and edited by the Office of College Communications and Marketing before being placed on the site. To add an image to a specific web page, Web Services should be contacted with the page URL and a description of the image that should be included. The image will be chosen from the library of images and photographs maintained by Communications and Marketing.

Additionally, although the addition of images on a page may seem straightforward, the default WordPress settings on an embedded image may need additional formating in order to scale correctly on a mobile device.

Plugins

WordPress plugins should never be installed or activated by anyone outside the Office of Web Services. Improper installation or outdated software can compromise the integrity of the content management system. To expand the functionality of a web page through the use of plugins, place a request and Web Services with investigate and install the proper plugin.

Custom Features

Sometimes requests for advanced features will require the design and development of new software. These requests usually require more planning and time than most updates, and due to the redirection of resources, may need the approval of the Vice President of External Relations before moving forward.