WEBSITE TRAINING

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Writing for the Web

- Good web writing = good writing
- Good writing means considering:
  - Why are you writing? (Purpose / Intent)
  - Who are you writing for? (Audience / Readers / Users)
How do users read web pages?

- They don’t. They scan.
- In an average visit to a web page, most users will read only 20% of the words on the screen (Weinreich, Obendorf, Herder, & Mayer, 2008).

Guidelines for Web Writing

1. Write concisely
2. Make your writing scannable
3. Put important things first, details last
4. Use language that everyone understands
5. Build credibility with meaningful links
1. Write Concisely

“Remember that most web users don’t want to read much. They want to grab information. The key to successful writing on the web is to let go of the words without losing the essential messages.”

-Ginny Redish *Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content that Works*
2. Make Your Writing Scannable

• Create whitespace
• Write excellent headings
• Organize text with bulleted & numbered lists
3. Put Important Things First, Details Last

- Inverted Pyramid
4. Use Language Everyone Understands

“Writing informally is not ‘dumbing down.’ It’s communicating clearly. It’s writing so that busy people can understand what you are saying the first time that they read it.”

-Ginny Redish, Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content that Works
5. Build Credibility With Meaningful Links

- Write link text that tells visitors what they can expect to happen when they click on it.
- Avoid “More” and “Click here”
- Match link text with the page it connects to
- Include file type and size information (if the link is to a file, like a PDF)
Responsiveness

Responsive web design (RWD) is a web development approach that creates dynamic changes to the appearance of a website, depending on the screen size and orientation of the device being used to view it.
Desktop

**Research Is Integral**
Whether in the classroom or independently, scientific research offers intellectual rewards.

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**Living Liberal Arts**

*Grinnellians Take Manhattan*
Exploring international relations and human rights in New York City during spring break.

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**Campus Life**

*Shaping Campus Culture*
Students choose the entertainment and events that come to campus each year.

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**Events**

- **Spring Break**
  Ongoing through Monday, March 30, 2015, 8am

- **Baseball Spring Break Trip**
  Thursday, March 19, 2015, 10am – 10pm
  Away

- **Swimming and Diving: NCAA National Meet**
  Thursday, March 19, 2015, 10am – 10pm
  Away

- **Baseball Spring Break Trip**
  Friday, March 20, 2015, 10am – 10pm
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Smart Phone

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Accessibility

- Perceivable
- Operable
- Understandable
- Robust
Perceivable

- Audio disabilities
  - Captions for video and live audio
  - Transcripts for all audio

- Visual disabilities
  - Meaningful links
  - Alternative text for graphics
  - Page readable and functional at 2x zoom
  - Associate text labels with form fields
  - Color alone can’t convey meaning
  - Color contrast
Operable

• Motor disabilities
  • Keyboard access
  • Focus indicators
  • Distinguishable links
  • Logical reading/navigation order
  • Consistent navigation
  • Skip links
  • User control over time-sensitive elements
Understandable

- Cognitive disabilities
  - Memory
  - Attention
  - Visual or linguistic comprehension
    - Non-literal text, such as sarcasm, satire, metaphor, or slang
    - Non-existent text, such an implied meaning

- Everyone!
  - Semantic organization (headers, lists, etc.)
  - Chunk and/or simplify content
  - Good writing!
Robust

• Functionality Across Current and Future Technologies
  • Avoid web content that requires a certain technology,
  • As a general rule, the more control the user has, the more likely the user will be able to access the content effectively.

• Using Technologies According to Specification
  • Valid HTML
  • Clean code
Checklists

- http://www.apstylebook.com/grinnell_edu
What is a CMS?

- Central interface to manage websites
- 3 Parts to build “pages”
  - Content: Database
  - Code/Function: Scripts
  - Style/Design: CSS
Why Use a CMS?

- Edit content, menus, navigation, etc. on the web
- Enter information once, display in different ways on different pages (lists, grids, calendars, …)
- Create some pages on the fly and automate updates
- Use workflow tools to better manage the site
- Separate content from style/presentation
  - Style is consistent across site
  - Style can be updated for whole site quickly and easily
- Different users can have permission to do different things
Drupal: Our CMS

- **Free and Open Source** software
  - We don’t have to pay for a software license
  - We can modify the software
- Large and vibrant *community* of users and developers
  - Many people testing it, finding security issues, etc.
  - Many modules freely available from developers
  - Many people donating their time to writing documentation, helping new users, etc.
- **Flexible architecture**
  - We can create our own modules for custom features
  - We can create our own themes for custom design
- **Based on standards:**
  - Core software is PHP/MySQL, giving many hosting options
  - Output uses XHTML, CSS, JavaScript, so compatible with most browsers
Nodes

- Drupal organizes most content around the concept of a “node”
- Most of the pages you’ll be working on are nodes
- Nodes are just pieces of content
- Only a few things on our site aren't nodes – users, groups, menus, modules, views, and themes being the main ones
- Other stuff, from calendar events, to RSS feed items, to page content is a node
Content Types

• Content types define input fields and how the content is displayed
• New content types can be created
• Content type creation should follow careful consideration of site architecture and purpose
• Examples on our site:
  • Group info pages: Pages that have descriptive “blurb”, department contact information, news and events blocks
  • Landing pages: Left menu inherited from group info, center content area, breadcrumbs
  • News items: news articles that can be used on home page or in the News blocks on group info pages
Content Type vs. Node vs. Page

- Content types define a type of information
  - E.g.: News Item
- Each node is a specific instance of that type
  - E.g.: Opeyemi Awe '15 Earns Watson Fellowship
- Many nodes will share a content type, but each node is a single type of content
- Most of our web pages are nodes. Exceptions:
  - Views/lists of pages
  - Views/lists of people
Other terminology

- Module: an add-on to provide new functionality
- Theme: a set of templates and stylesheets that determine the look and feel of the site
- Permissions: access to specific content and features
- Roles: sets of user permissions
- Taxonomy: the way Drupal categorizes content; “tags”
- Views: ways to customize presentation of content
Creating and editing content

- As easy as filling out a form!