

Web Guidelines

WEB GUIDELINES

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PHILOSOPHY

Most schools and districts offer little more on their home pages than photographs of the school, a list of staff, and a few examples of student work. A good home page would do at least three things:

- Point internal users to good outside information resources.
- Point external and internal visitors to good curriculum resources.
- Introduce external visitors to the school.
- Inform parents and students of school schedules, lunch menus, and activities.

Examples of school home pages which offer more than just the basics are listed below.

Rice School

Mankato Schools

Los Alamos High School

Science Academy of South Texas

ROLES

The Role of the District Web Administrator

- 1) Establish training for Campus Web Site Managers, Web Teams, and Departments on the creation of web pages.
- 2) Create and manage the district web servers.
- 3) Guide visitors to good outside information resources.
- 4) Provide publishing opportunities for site managers and technology facilitators.
- 5) Make sure web guidelines are observed.

The Role of the Campus Web Site Manager: Web Site Managers, those trained in how to organize information to support efficient searching and retrieval, should have a leading voice in how the school web site is designed. In Grand Prairie, Campus Web Site Managers will make sure that the following goals are met:

- 1) Introduce the school.
- 2) Guide visitors to good internal curriculum resources.
- 3) Guide visitors to good outside information resources.
- 4) Provide publishing opportunities for student work.
- 5) Make sure standards are observed in order to minimize loading time and use of bandwidth as well making sure copyright issues are observed.

Campus Web Team The campus web team should consist of 4 to 7 teachers from different grade levels and/or subject areas. Campus administrators are also welcomed to join the team. The web team will work with the campus website manager to :

- 1) Create and maintain the campus web pages.
- 2) Determine the audience and purpose of the campus web site.
- 3) Make sure campus web pages have an educational focus.

The Role of the Instructional Technology Facilitator

The instructional technology facilitator assigned to each campus will help with the technical aspects of producing and maintaining a web page for each school.

The Role of the Principal

The school home page is a public document welcoming the outside world to the school. Administrative support for the design of quality home pages is encouraged.

The Role of the Staff

Staff will be an important part of the design team, helping to advise those who construct the school's pages with regard to curriculum content.

The Role of the Student

Students may play an important role in the development of well-constructed web pages. With careful staff supervisions, students can act as "curators" for virtual museums and producers of good pages.

GLOSSARY

Anchor

A specified point on a web page to which you can link so that the page jumps to that particular spot.

Bandwidth

How much data can be transferred through the data pipeline.

CSS

(Cascading Style Sheets) are used to control the way that page elements are displayed. From formatting text to adding borders and backgrounds to tables and text, CSS can be used to guarantee consistency in your site.

Frames

Individual web pages held together in sets. Looks like a single page within a browser.

FTP

File Transfer Protocol; a protocol for moving files over the Internet from one computer to another.

GIF

(graphical image format)- image format ideal for small files using minimal colors. GIFs can support up to 256 colors as well as the use of transparency and are ideal for buttons, lines, and backgrounds.

GIF animation

A single GIF file created from multiple frames. GIF animations are ideal for Web pages because they have small file sizes.

Home Page

introductory, main, or initial page of a web site.

HTML

Hypertext MarkupLanguage- the language used to create pages for the World Wide Web.

HTTP

Hypertext Transfer Protocol- The way World Wide Web pages are transferred over the web.

Hyperlink

A clickable piece of text or image that takes the site visitor to another page or reference in the site, to another Web site, or to an open email application.

Imagemap

an image with areas that are links to other pages or sites.

Internet

The hardware and software that together support the interconnection of most existing computer networks, allowing a computer anywhere in the world to communicate with any other computer that 's also connected to the Internet.

Intranet

An internal network used for distributing information broadly within an organization but not to the general public.

Javascript

A programming language for creating scripts that add functions to Web pages.

JPEG

(Joint Photographic ExpertGroup) the best format for photographs because jpegs contain millions of colors. Jpegs do not allow transparency or interlaced images.

Metatags

The term used for keywords and descriptions used by search engines to locate sites that match a search request.

PNG

An image format similar to the GIF. PNG files can have millions of colors and are more effective at compressing files with large areas of solid color than JPEG files are.

Rollover

The effect caused by moving a mouse pointer over a web page button.

URL

(Universal Resource Locator) Internet address.

Server

A networked computer that provides some kind of server or information.

Template

Pre-designed pages on which you can model additional page.

Thumbnails

A smaller version of a graphic that, when clicked, opens to a larger version of the same image.

Web Page

An Internet document.

Web site

A group of individual web pages linked together into a single, multi page, document.

W3C

A consortium of many companies and organizations that exist to develop common standards for the evolution of the World Wide Web.

WEB TENETS

Tenet One: Less is more.

Take a minimalist approach to page design. Employ few graphics except where the visual contributes meaning. This saves bandwidth and allows faster loading.

Tenet Two: Web pages should conform to the generally acceptable standards for Internet accessibility for people with disabilities.

Tenet Three: Distinguish between menu pages and data pages.

Menus pages should help visitors move quickly to what they need. Graphics should be kept to a minimum. A menu page should be constructed with well-ordered annotated lists. Deeper into the site where information is provided, graphics intensive pages may be used if the graphics contribute significantly to understanding, as in the case of maps, charts, photographs, etc. related to the topic.

Tenet Four: Maintain smoothly guiding formats.

Speed of movement is enhanced by repeating basic formats. If the page includes a GIF file, for example, speed is enhanced by using the same for major sections. Random variation is the enemy of glide and also hinders continuity of design.

Tenet Five: Provide visitors with enough information to provide wise choices.

To avoid consuming mega-bandwidth, site designers should employ thumbnails to help the user know something about the content along with textual descriptions of contents and file size.

Tenet Six: Create comprehensive, concise and coherent menus using meaningful headings, or links.

Tenet Seven: Provide navigational tools in a systematically consistent fashion.

Every page should contain a link to the school and district home pages.

Tenet Eight: Always get written permission even if copyright notice isn't posted when republishing work.

Tenet Nine: Include appropriate copyright notices on every page.

Tenet Ten: Include postal and e-mail addresses, as well as contact names and institutional affiliations on major menu pages.

Tenet Eleven: Employ thoughtful file-naming conventions to minimize the need for sub-directories and folders.

It is easier to find items if each file has been saved with names which cluster all related files in groupings. If the naming of files is done by "conventions" agreed upon by all members of the group, it becomes much easier to share work. For example, you might want to make sure that the names of all files related to a section of the site (such as a student art gallery) might begin with a letter such as "a." A related convention might be to give related HTML and GIF files the same names excepting their file extension. A third convention would be to place a code "x" at the end of the file name if it is a "thumb print" (very small) version of a GIF file. Employing these three conventions, then, to name files associated with Sally's sailboat painting, they would emerge thus:

about.html | about.gif | aboutx.gif

If the group has planned eight major sections and assigned a corresponding letter to the front of each file, the files for the art gallery will group together, the files for the photo gallery will group together, and the files for the student writing will group together so they are easily found, and they will allow for simple address writing when creating HTML pages. An example would be .

Tenet Twelve: Balance breadth and depth when considering structure of menus and files.

Sufficient choices should be available on each menu level to keep visitors from having to click and click between each menu level. The top level should offer no more than 12-20 categories in order to minimize the need for scrolling. If a page offers more than a hundred menu items, it is too broad and should be condensed into categories.

Tenet Thirteen: Efficient linking to other WWW locations.

Strip away time-wasting top levels of those sites, provide addresses which take users directly to good information and include thorough annotations explaining what can be found at those locations.

Tenet Fourteen: Beware of casual endorsements.

Before an item is listed as a worthwhile site, a staff member should have visited the site to verify the site and its information are both developmentally appropriate and relevant to the district curriculum. The inclusion of items on a list implies endorsement.

Tenet Fifteen: Do not express personal opinion on the school's web site.

Tenet Sixteen: Do not post photographs and student work of students without written permission from students and parents according to the Grand Prairie Independent School District Acceptable Use Policy. Do not use students first and last names.

Tenet Seventeen: Have a librarian review all materials before publishing on the WWW.

Publishing brings legal responsibilities. Students and others providing content for your site may not have the judgment to know what personal material is appropriate and what material might be libelous and inspire liability suits.

Tenet Eighteen Avoid providing home pages for individuals.

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WEB DESIGN RULES

DEVELOPMENT TOOLS:

Web pages may be created in any HTML editor. Microsoft FrontPage 2000 is available on most of the computers throughout the district.

The web page should require limited scrolling. Anchors can be used in lengthy documents.

Graphics should be kept to a minimum on the home page. As a general rule a web page should around 40 k total.

Use only a few animated gifs. Constant movement distracts the visitor from the purpose of the page.

The introductory home page will not contain any pointers to outside sites.

The introductory home page will be labeled "default.htm(1)" or "index.htm(1)".

The introductory home page will contain a blanket copyright statement covering all pages on the site.

All pages will contain a link to the district Home Page.

Pages should not have links to pages that are under construction.

All graphics should contribute significantly to the understanding of the page.

All school home pages will include the school's postal address, telephone number, fax numbers, and the email address of the staff member most responsible for design and maintenance of the web page.

Campus Web Site Managers will be the only person on each campus with access to the District Web Server. Campus Web Site Manager or web team must review schools web pages prior to placement on the web server.

Secondary pages will list only outside WWW sites which comply with the Board of Education policy on Internet usage and the curriculum.

Secondary pages will generally avoid lists of more than a dozen items.

Any person contributing to an approved GPISD web page who is not an employee of the District must sign a release for their work to be uploaded.

The final decision regarding content or organization of web pages, rest with the administration.

Web pages should conform to the generally acceptable standards for Internet accessibility for people with disabilities.

Web pages with background music will not play continuously.