
UAB Web Communications Style Guide

Fall 2006

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A. UAB Logo Standards

The correct logo should always be placed in the upper left hand corner and it should always link back to the UAB home page.

Our UAB logo consists of two parts.

- The monogram, what we most often think of as the logo, is the block-shaped type treatment of the letters UAB. The logo should never be stretched or any color other than green, white or black. This appears by itself or with a wordmark.
- The wordmark is the name of the university or one of its components in a prescribed type style and relationship to the monogram. Levels of branding are used to communicate the identity of the university and its many components. In some cases, the name of the UAB component that is most easily understood by the public and that best conveys the totality of the university will be used in place of the official name (such as UAB School of Medicine rather than UAB University of Alabama School of Medicine).

The UAB monogram and wordmarks cannot be used in conjunction with any other logos. When words are in association with the UAB monogram so as to be possibly construed as being part of the logo, those words must be in the wordmark configuration. Use of the UAB logo in conjunction with the logos or marks of other organizations (including corporate sponsors and government entities) in any publication, advertisement or other external communication material, should be reviewed by the UAB Office of Public Relations and Marketing. (Example Shown: University monogram with unit being marketed through signage and print and electronic media subordinate. Parent unit identification optional based on application.)



Logos that are incorrect: would include logos that are not in the UAB green, black or white, logos that are placed over a picture or icon, the UAB logo placed in conjunction with a title that is in a font other than the Helvetica font.

B. Font

Font for all content on web pages should fall as Helvetica, Arial, sans serif.
These are easy to read in small and large sizes.

C. Footer/Disclaimer

Footer/Disclaimer must be presented as follows on every page of the web site:

LINE 1: 2006 University of Alabama at Birmingham • All rights reserved • About this Site • Disclaimer

LINE 2: UAB Title of Web Site • Street Address • Birmingham, AL 35233 • Phone Number 205-000-0000

(See example <http://main.uab.edu/ofs/Templates/Home.aspx?pid=88704>)

D. Site Tools (search, UAB home link, print,)

Site Tools must include the following: UAB Home link, Search, Print and a Contact link

E. Contact Information

Contact Information must include mailing address, street address, directions/map, phone number, fax number, email.

F. Color Scheme

The standard UAB color pallet is a guide for color that should be used on UAB web sites. Green Hex#007352, White, Black, and Tan Hex# e1ddb7

G. Page Titles

Page titles should be short and be relative to the subject of the page.

H. Health System related sites requirements

All Health System related sites, including clinics, must have a link back to health system

I. Content management

All UAB web sites should contain current information, and contain no broken links.

J. Style Guide for Web Copy on UAB Web Sites

Web copy is very different than print copy. Keep in mind that people do not READ web sites, they scan them (Sun Microsystems Study says 79% of people scan when reading online).

People will not read a paragraph on a computer screen. Not only does the light and angle of a computer screen make it hard to read, but it takes 25% longer to read online than in print. The general rule of thumb is to make web copy 50% shorter than print and the shorter the better.

To get your message across, increase the scan ability

- Use short, simple sentences – *The American Press Institute* recommends 14 words max for print, so web copy should be even shorter.
- Write short paragraphs
 - Try to keep it at 2-3 sentences, 4-5 lines

- Use subheadings to break up a long page
 - Include key words – readers will read these first, so make sure they provide a roadmap.
 - Subheadings should summarize topics
- Use bulleted or numbered lists
 - Limit list to 5-9 items
 - Each item should only take up one or two lines

Your copy

- Use active verbs and write in active voice
- Write to your reader and write about your reader (use the word you)
- Avoid clichés
- Use good grammar
- Limit emphasis - No bold, italics, or all CAPS unless absolutely necessary.

Editing your copy

When editing, read your copy out loud and listen to your words to make sure the rules for good web copy above were followed. Also:

- Edit more than once and eliminate extraneous words (even if they sound good in print).
- Avoid wordiness
 - Not *Take Into Consideration*, but *Consider*
 - Not *The background is in a blue color*, but *the background is blue*.
- Avoid redundancies and repetition

Content Organization

When organizing a web site, keep in mind that it is non-linear:

- There is no beginning, middle, or end. There is no telling where the reader will start. Your content chunks need to make sense and every page on your site needs to stand on its own.
- Introduce the content of every page to let readers know what's coming:
 - Offer introductory topical paragraph
 - Write headings and subheadings
- For interactive pages, clarify what you want the reader to do and make these action verbs:
 - Submit a question
 - Contact
 - Request a brochure

Summary Paragraph

Poynter Eyetrack Study says 95% of readers will read all or part of an introductory paragraph:

- Keep them short
- Use the inverted pyramid – who/what/when/where/why

Links

When scanning, links are often all the reader sees. So make them simple and concrete:

- Do NOT put “click here” or “click here for more information” on your site. Instead hyperlink the content. For example, “Click here for more information” becomes “**Contact Christie Nichols** for more information.”
- Hyperlinks embedded in paragraphs are interruptions. Try to put links at the end of the paragraph or in a column to the left or right and call them “related links.”
- Only use relevant links – don’t link just because you can.
- Help the reader decide what to do – write a short sentence under a link allowing the reader to glimpse at what will be on the page when they link.
- Do not put the actual web address as a link – <http://main.uab.edu/chemistry/> becomes **UAB Department of Chemistry.**

Main Differences Between Web Copy and Print Copy

- Print – Focused on seeing; Web – Focused on doing
- Print – Navigation is not an element; Web – Navigation is key (hyperlinks, information architecture, etc)
- Print – Static text; Web – Non-static user engagement
- Print – Eyes walk over information; Web – Design leads hands to move the information.