

Web Style Guide Version 2

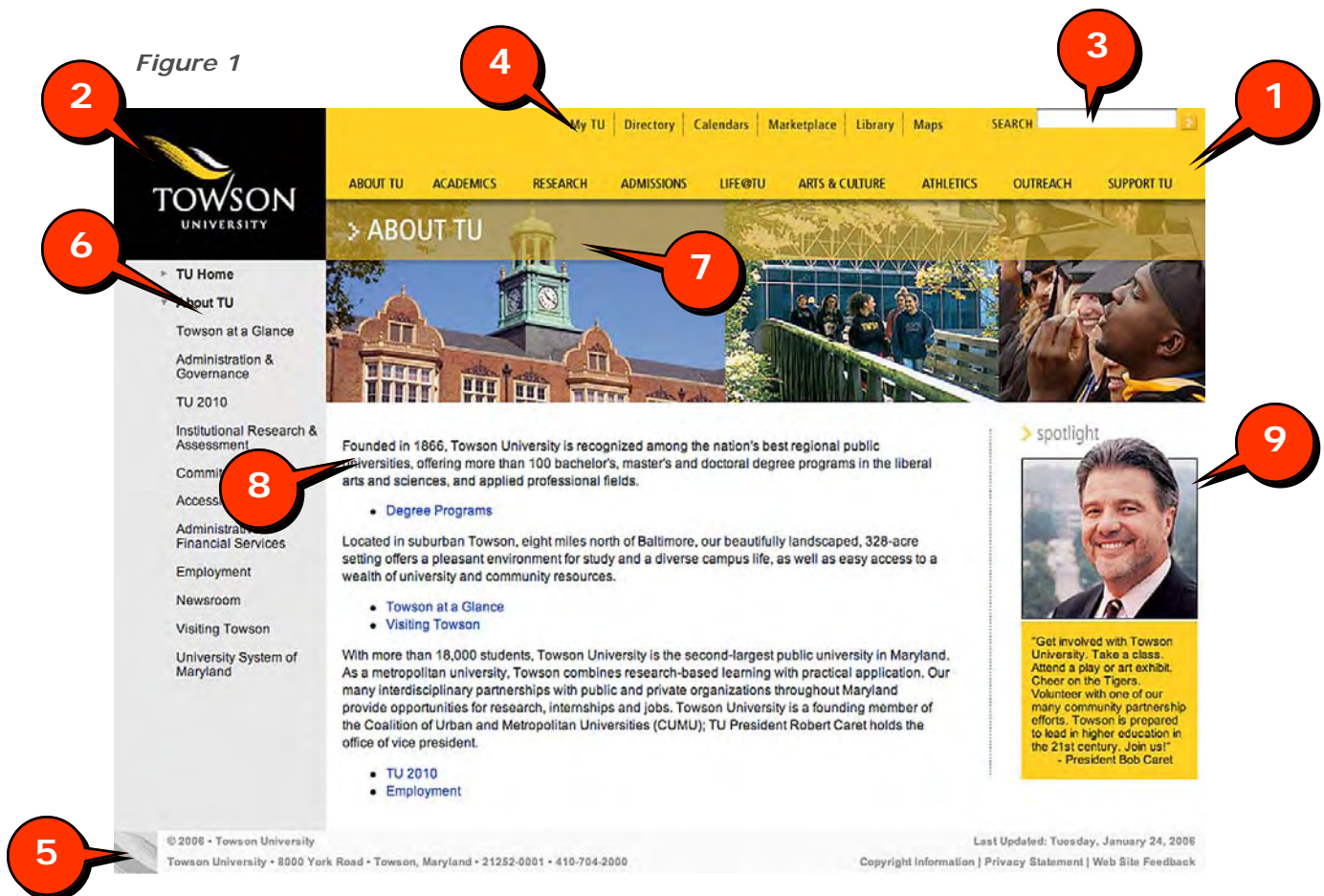
Towson University Web Template

Revised May 2006

Overview

The Web Style Guide provides guidelines for creating and maintaining your site in accordance with the Towson University Web Template. The Web Template can be found online at: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/templates/template18.asp>.

Elements such as the site-wide Global Navigation (Figure 1, 1), the Towson Logo (Figure 1, 2), the Google Search Engine (Figure 1, 3), the Footer Navigation (Figure 1, 5), and the font size and style remain consistent on every Web page and are updated centrally by the Web Team. Changes to those items will appear automatically on all pages using the template. Elements of the template that can be customized to meet your division's needs include: the Left Navigation (Figure 1, 6), text and photos in the Content Area (Figure 1, 8), Spotlights (Figure 1, 9), and Announcement Boxes.



How to Convert Your Site

1. Contact the Web Team

Please contact the Web Team at 410-704-3546 or fill out a Web Site Conversion Request Form at <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/webrequestform.asp>. The form will help the Web Team assess your needs and determine the level of assistance required. The Web Team will then contact you to set up a meeting to discuss your site and determine a timeline for its conversion.

What If I Wish to Convert My Own Site?

If you or someone else in your department has experience with developing Web sites, the Web Team can give you template files to work from to build your site. The information in this document will guide you through formatting your site according to the Web template.

2. Assess Your Site

Before you start thinking about the look of your new site, you should spend some time assessing your current site and its content. Consider the following. Site goals: What does your department/college/division want to accomplish and communicate with its Web presence? Is it in line with your organization's mission as well as the university's mission? Primary audiences: Who visits the site? How can you best serve each group?

3. Develop Site Architecture

Work with the Web Team to determine how your site's navigation will be organized. Review and revise your present site's "architecture," taking into consideration the Web template's navigation structure and the various audiences that will be using your site.

4. Review Content

Thoroughly review your existing content rather than automatically inserting it into the template. Evaluate the reasoning behind each piece of content on your site. Identify missing or outdated content. Think about whether your content lends itself to the Web. Determine text, images, Announcements and Spotlights that may be appropriate for each page. Make sure that you are not duplicating content that can be found elsewhere on the university's site.

Identify content writers: Who are the best people to write (or review) a piece of content? Are they available? Do they understand how to write for the Web? Assign content: Make assignments to the content writers that you identified. Allocate time to review content to make sure it is appropriate and integrates well with the rest of the site. Consider maintenance: Have a plan ready for maintaining your content. For frequently changing content, make sure that someone is responsible for updating it on a regular basis.

You can get advice and review of your content from Jackie Durbin, University Relations, 410-704-6285.

5. Web Team Builds Site Skeleton

The Web Team builds a skeleton of your Web site (unless you are building your own site) based on the site architecture you developed with the Web Team. The new site will include an .asp file for each page of your site, including your home page, which is called index.asp. The files will reside in a folder in a temporary location that cannot be found by the TU Google search appliance and will not effect the site that you currently have.

6. Populate Site with Content

Once the site skeleton is built, you can populate the site with text, photos, Spotlights and

Announcements. Contact the Web Team after populating approximately 5 pages, so they can provide you with feedback early in the process.

7. Site Goes Live

After the site is approved by the department, it will go live and replace any older sites your department has online.

Site Editing Tools

You and others appointed by your director will be granted access to edit the new Web site. Your Web pages can be edited with common Web design programs such as Contribute, FrontPage 2003 or later (older versions of FrontPage cannot be used with the new site), and Dreamweaver. It is up to individual Web editors to choose the tool they are most comfortable and familiar with. For information about purchasing Contribute, please contact Tim Collins in the University Store at tcollins@towson.edu or 410-704-5593. To set up training on any of the above-mentioned software, please contact OTS Training at 410-704-4070.

Putting Your Site Together

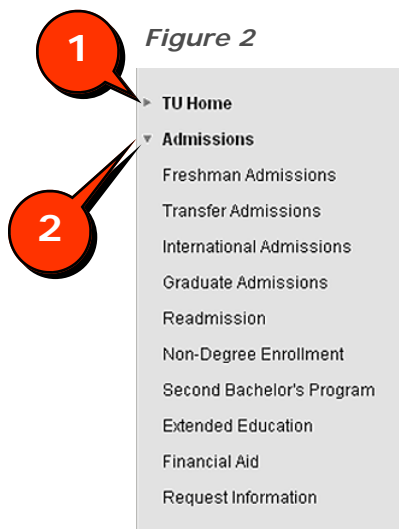
Elements of the template can be customized to meet your department's needs. These include: the Left Navigation (Figure 1, 6), text and photos in the Content Area (Figure 1, 8), Spotlights (Figure 1, 9), and Announcement Boxes.

Left Navigation (Figure 1, 6)

The Left Links are your site's primary navigation and are based on the site architecture that you developed. The Web Team will build out the left navigation as part of the site skeleton (see *How To Convert Your Site*, above). You can edit the Left Links using Contribute, Frontpage 2003 or later, or Dreamweaver, provided you have permission to do so. Refer to the Advanced Help section at the end of this document for editing and formatting of the Left Links.

For an example of how the left navigation works, see:

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/admissions/index.asp>. Click on "Freshman Admissions," then "Applying to Towson," then "Application/Checklist for Freshmen."



The left navigation reveals multiple levels of sub-navigation and allows users to trace their steps back like a breadcrumb trail. That means that all Left Links may not be visible at all times, but will open and close based on the section that you are in.

Next to the main Left Links are arrows. A right-facing arrow indicates a main link (Figure 2, 1). A down-facing arrow (Figure 2, 2) indicates that there is sub-navigation below the main link. The sub-navigation links do not have arrows and do not change to bold when clicked. A sub-navigation link becomes bold with a down-facing arrow only when on that page there is new sub-navigation pertinent to that section.

Every link in the left navigation corresponds to a page on the site. The name of the left link should match the page header and the page title (what the page is called in the URL) on its corresponding page. Please see "Page Headers," in the Content Formatting Guidelines, below, for information on correctly formatting headers.

If you add a link to the left navigation, you'll need to create a corresponding page or link to an already existing page on the site. For major structural changes to your navigation, please contact the Web Team at 410-704-3546 for assistance.

Creating a New Section

To create a new section in your site:

1. Create a new folder in your Web directory (this is done outside of Contribute or within FrontPage or Dreamweaver)
2. Name the folder according to your department's naming conventions
3. Copy the 'links.asp' and 'index.asp' files from the directory (before you double-click on the new folder)
4. Paste the two files into the new folder

Creating a Page

How a new page is created depends on the software you are using to edit your site. An easy way to retain the proper formatting is to open a current page of your site and use the "Save As" function to rename it as your new page. When creating a new page, always give it a descriptive page title to improve the search experience for users trying to find your content. Descriptive page titles are the title that you see at the top of a Web browser while viewing a page (note that the page titles are different from the page headers). Every page of the site also needs a header. The header corresponds to the Left Links (see Page Headers, below).

Page Titles

The recommended naming convention for university pages is:

The Department Name - Towson University (i.e. Office of the Registrar - Towson University)

or Page Title - Department Name - Towson University (i.e. Declaring/Changing a Major - Office of the Registrar - Towson University)

Page Headers

Page Headers are determined by the Left Links. Top-level headers (defined as H2 tags by the style sheet) are defined by:

- 1) The last bold Left Link OR
- 2) For department pages, the name of the department.

Sub-headers (defined as H3 and H4 tags by the style sheet) are defined by:

- 1) Sub-navigation in the Left Links OR
- 2) For department pages, by the name of the Left Link corresponding to the given page.

Example 1: The top-level header corresponds to the last bold Left Link and the sub-header corresponds to the page:

wwwnew.towson.edu/main/research/researchandfunding/externalfundinglinks.asp.

Example 2: If the Left Link is "English Department," the header should also be "English Department." If the user clicks on the sub-navigation "Faculty," then the header should be:

English Department [H2]
Faculty [H3 or H4]

Top-level headers are all uppercase; sub-headers are upper and lowercase. All headers are black. Sub-headers should not be bulleted or indented.

If the left link includes an ampersand (&), write out "and" in the header. Here's an example:
<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/artsculture/galleries.asp>.

Here's an example of headers and sub-headers:
<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/academics/colleges/index.asp>.

Adding/Editing Content

You can edit existing content and create new pages using Contribute, Frontpage 2003 or later, or Dreamweaver. Training is available by contacting OTS Training at 410-704-4070.

Important content should be kept in the central area because the printable area of the page extends only from the left side of the page to the dotted line on the right. Content on the right side of the dotted line will be omitted when the page is printed. Content can scroll down as long as it needs to on the page.

Content and headers (see above) on each page should correspond to the Left Links.

As part of the Web Template, specific content formatting guidelines have been established. Please see the Content Formatting Guidelines, below. Assistance in writing and editing your content is available from Jackie Durbin (410-704-6285, jdurbin@towson.edu) in University Relations.

Adding Photography

If you are interested in adding photographs or interactive media to your site, you are encouraged to follow certain guidelines (see the Visual Style Guidelines, below). Photographic Services (410-704-2561) can provide university-approved photographs. The Web Team at 410-704-3546 can assist in creating Flash slide shows, video clips and other specialized graphics.

Creating Spotlights (Figure 1, 9)

"Spotlights" are intended to highlight an interesting aspect of your department. The format is a cutout photo of a person, building or campus scene, with HTML text underneath. The text can be a quote or an interesting callout with or without a link to another page. Text should be left justified and when using FrontPage 2003 and Contribute, the font used is the Normal style and for Dreamweaver users, the style is Paragraph. For example, see:
<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/academics/index.asp>. Links in Spotlights may be included in sentences, or bulleted below the copy.

The text can be updated by typing information into the box, following template guidelines. Consider using content that doesn't become dated quickly and keep the copy brief. For example, the Spotlight on the Admissions page:
<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/admissions/index.asp>.

For assistance in creating a Spotlight image for your Web page, contact the Web Team at 410-704-3546.

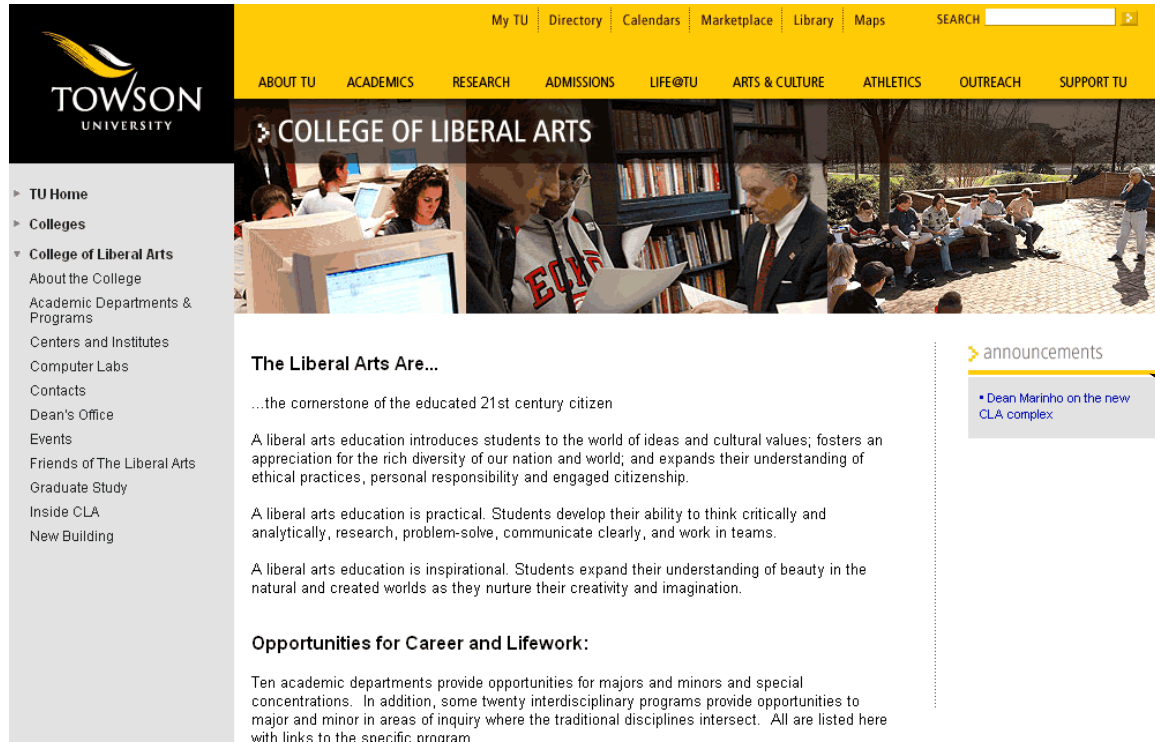
Creating Announcement Boxes (Figure 3, 1)

"Announcement Boxes" provide you with a space for news, events or other announcements (Figure 3, 1). The links are intended to link to pages with more information.

Text in an Announcement Box should be:

- A bulleted list or short paragraph
- Use ALT-0149 to create bullets without indents (refer to <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/templates/template18.asp> for additional information)
- Text should be left justified and when using FrontPage 2003 and Contribute, the font used is the Normal style and for Dreamweaver users, the style is Paragraph.

Figure 3



The screenshot shows the Towson University website. The top navigation bar includes links for My TU, Directory, Calendars, Marketplace, Library, Maps, and a search box. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for ABOUT TU, ACADEMICS, RESEARCH, ADMISSIONS, LIFE@TU, ARTS & CULTURE, ATHLETICS, OUTREACH, and SUPPORT TU. The main content area features a large banner image of students and faculty in a library setting, with the text "COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS" overlaid. To the left is a sidebar menu with categories like TU Home, Colleges, and College of Liberal Arts, with sub-links for various departments and services. The main content area has a section titled "The Liberal Arts Are..." followed by three paragraphs describing the value of liberal arts education. Below this is a section titled "Opportunities for Career and Lifework:" with a paragraph of text. On the right side, there is an "announcements" box with a red circular callout containing the number "1". The announcement text reads: "Dean Marinho on the new CLA complex".

Other options for the Announcement Box, include: none on a given page (for example, see: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/lifetu/serv/>); or more than one (for example, see: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/research/researchhighlights/forthebirds.asp>). The header "Announcement" can be changed to fit your needs as long as the arrow and graphic text style remain the same. Contact the Web Team (410-704-3546) for a custom graphic.

Site Reviews

Early in the process, the Web Team will provide a design and technical review of your site, offer suggestions, and provide support to help you make the transition. An editorial review of your content is also available. If you choose, a University Relations editor will check your content for style, grammar and accuracy. You may also need to have your site reviewed by key stakeholders within your department before the site goes live.

Content Formatting Guidelines

The Content Formatting Guidelines were developed to ensure a consistent presentation of

information across the Web site. If you have questions about the Content Formatting Guidelines or need assistance with writing or editing, please contact Jackie Durbin (410-704-6285, jdurbin@towson.edu) in University Relations.

Developing Content for the Web

Consider the following when determining the content that you want to put on your site. Refer to the Advanced Help section at the end of this document for information on writing style.

Assess Usefulness

Evaluate the reasoning behind each piece of content on your site and think about who the information is for. Remember that you may be speaking to several audiences, including prospective and current students, alumni, parents, faculty and staff, business, government and community members and the media. Think about text, images, announcements and spotlights that may be appropriate for each page. Provide overview copy, especially on your main page. Tell people what you do.

Identify Missing or Outdated Content

Does your site lack information that your audience would reasonably expect to be on your site? Is the content stale?

Web-Enabled Content

Does your content lend itself to the Web? Do you break large documents into easily managed chunks? Remember that users tend to scan rather than read on the Web. Consider breaking your information into easily manageable sections with subheads (as appropriate). Write shorter paragraphs and shorter sentences. Highlight links from the left navigation using bullet points (see Figure 1, 8) rather than hyperlinks.

Redundancy

Make sure that you are not duplicating content that can be found in other places on the university's site. For instance, an academic department's site could link to admissions information under "Admissions" rather than duplicating it.

Active Voice

The Web is suited to a second person, active style of writing (see Writing Style, in the Advanced Help section at the end of this document).

Grammar, Spelling and Style

Be sure to proofread all content for grammar and spelling errors.

Site Architecture Determines Content

The outline of your site architecture determines the information that belongs on each page of your site. The architecture determines the header and main topic of each page, and may guide decisions about appropriate links for the page. That means that you should put content on a page that the user will expect to find based on the Left Link and the corresponding page header. For example, if your page header is "Sample Financial Aid Packages," put the financial aid package samples on THAT page, rather than links to the samples. Or, if you're on the main page of your department's site -- the History Department for example -- present overview content on THAT page, rather than on another page titled "About the History Department."

Text Alignment and Paragraph Structure

Copy should be left justified only, with no paragraph indents. Mixing the alignment of heads, subheads, and body text (centered, flush left, and flush right) creates a fragmented feel and can be harder for the viewer to follow. Don't do it.

There should only be one space between sentences (not two) as in print. Write shorter sentences and paragraphs if possible. This makes it easier to read online.

Copy should be presented in paragraph form, followed by bulleted links as appropriate (see <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/lifetu/campusactivities/> for example). These bulleted links may have been referenced in the copy above, or they may be selected Left Links that you want to call out or emphasize. (See below for more on hyperlinking.)

Font Size and Style

When using FrontPage 2003 and Contribute, the font used for copy in the content area, Spotlights and Announcement Boxes is the Normal style. For Dreamweaver users, the style is Paragraph. The font for captions under photos is 10px Verdana bold.

Page Headers

See above.

Hyperlinks/Bulleted Links

Avoid using links (hyperlinks) in the body of the text. Instead, use a bulleted, indented link below the paragraph. For example, see: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/abouttu/index.asp>. These bulleted links may have been referenced in the copy above, or they may be selected Left Links that you want to call out or emphasize. They may also be links to external sites that are being suggested as additional resources.

Allow for one space between the paragraph above and below the bulleted link and no space between bulleted links. Links should be kept blue as defined by the style sheet in the example file. Use descriptive names for links rather than URLs (e.g. University Police vs. www.towson.edu/police). For example, see: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/research/researchandfunding/index.asp>.

When linking to a PDF or Word Document or other format file, please specify that in parentheses in the link. For instance: Training Manual (PDF) or Training Manual (DOC). For example, see: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/admissions/freshman/applying/application/index.asp>.

For internal links, don't open a new browser window. Remember that users can't use the back button if a new browser window is opened. If the link goes to an external Web site, you may want to open a new browser window to avoid sending users away from the Towson Web site.

Anchor Links/"Back to Top"

Anchor links at the top of the page are not recommended, unless used as a table of contents in a long document. Otherwise, anchor links usually mean that the text is too long and that you should consider cutting it into smaller pieces.

"Back to top" links are generally not necessary. If the page is so long that they are required, that usually means that you should consider cutting your content into smaller chunks.

Contact Information

Add Contact Information to the bottom of every page in your site, flush left, following these guidelines. Also include a "Contact Us" link as the last of your Left Links. For example, see: <http://onestop.towson.edu/>.

The font style is Normal.contactinfo.

Name of Department/Office

Building, Room 208

Hours: (optional, but follow this format) Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

1-888-4TOWSON (toll free) (include only if you have a toll-free number)

Phone: 410-704-xxxx

Fax: 410-704-xxxx

E-mail:

The format for the "Contact Us" page is as follows:

Version 1: http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/templates/depts/contact_us.asp

Version 2: http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/templates/depts/contact_us2.asp

Version 3: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/housing/contact/index.asp>

Version 4: <http://onestop.towson.edu/Contact-Us/>

Faculty Listings

Version 1: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/templates/depts/faculty.asp>

Version 2: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/templates/depts/faculty2.asp>

Version 3: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/provost/provost/ProvostsOfficeStaff.asp>

Version 4: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/studentaffairs/staff.asp>

Administrative staff should be included on the "Contact Us" page as noted above.

Telephone Numbers

Telephone numbers should be written with hyphens, for example: 410-704-2000.

Dashes

Use em-dashes, not hyphens, to denote an abrupt change in thought in a sentence or an emphatic pause. The dash is also used to set off a phrase within a sentence. Em-dashes are longer than hyphens. See the last paragraph for example:

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/outreach/index.asp>.

To insert dashes using Contribute, go to Insert>Special Characters>em-dash.

Pop-ups and New Browser Windows

Avoid pop-ups and new browser windows. Many users now have pop-up blockers, and will not be able to see the content in your pop-up. Opening new windows makes it difficult for users to return to the page they were on.

Search Engine Optimization

When working with the Google Search Appliance, use these tips and guidelines to improve the search experience for users trying to find your content.

Make Web Pages for Users, Not Search Engines

Think about the words users would type to find your pages, and make sure that your site actually includes those words within it.

Use Descriptive Page Titles

A descriptive page title is the title that you see at the top of a Web browser while viewing a page. To improve the search experience for users trying to find your content, always add a descriptive title to your Web pages. The recommended naming convention is:

The Department Name - Towson University (i.e., Office of the Registrar - Towson University)
or Page Title - Department Name - Towson University (i.e., Declaring/Changing a Major -
Office of the Registrar - Towson University)

Interactive Features

You can add features that will emphasize storytelling such as video, audio and slideshows. You will need to write copy and develop content for any special features on your site. The Web Team can work with you to create these features, though they may require a longer timeline than your initial Web site conversion. The Web Team at 410-704-3546 can assist in creating Flash slide shows, video clips and other specialized graphics.

Tables

When creating tables, please follow one of the examples shown here:
<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/templates/template18.asp>.

File Standards for Documents and Forms

Forms: It is highly recommended that forms be posted in the university's online Forms Repository rather than within a department's Web site. This is to eliminate redundancy of information, which requires greater efforts to maintain. Please contact Amie Voith at 410-704-2151 or avoith@towson.edu about the Forms Repository.

Microsoft Word Documents: It is advisable to save and post Word documents for the Web in the Word 2000 format or convert to PDFs if they will not need to be edited by the viewer.

PDFs: Instead of simply adding a PDF, please consider whether the information might be more useful as an actual HTML Web page.

If you do link to a PDF, please indicate that the document is a PDF in parentheses (e.g., "Web Template Guide (PDF)"). This will warn the reader that they will be downloading a file rather than linking to a new page. For example, see:

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/admissions/freshman/applying/application/index.asp>.

Also, you should provide a link to Adobe, so that users can download the PDF reader if they do not already have it installed on their computers. For example, see:

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/academics/ugrad/majors.asp>.

Visual Style Guidelines

When used properly, images can enhance the look of your Web page. Use images to present a more pleasing look and to reinforce the message of the written content. For an example, see: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/admissions/freshman/>.

The use of professional university photography is strongly encouraged. Contact University Photographic Services (ktakeno@towson.edu) if you need images or to discuss specific photo options.

The use of clip art, cartoon-like, animated images and/or unapproved logos is prohibited. The Web Team can provide you with icons for audio and video, if you need them. Background images or watermarks should not be used, since white is the only approved background color.

For examples of image use, see: <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/templates/depts/>.

- **All images should be 72 dpi (screen resolution).**
- **Images can have a vertical or horizontal orientation.**

- Images with a horizontal orientation should be no larger than 250 pixels wide. A recommended **standard** size is 225 pixels wide by 160 pixels high (Figure 5).
- Images with a vertical orientation should be no larger than 200 pixels wide. A recommended standard size is 225 pixels high by 165 pixels wide (Figure 6).
- **For both orientations a one pixel black border (can be done in html border=1) should be placed around the photo.**
- Images can be aligned **either left or right** (html align=left, align=right) to allow for text to wrap around them
- Images should have **vspace** (vertical spacing) of 8 pixels and **hspace** (horizontal spacing) of 10 pixels.
- If your image needs a caption or outline, it should be 10px Verdana bold.

"Saving" Images

All images should be ACTUAL SIZE at 72 dpi resolution before posting on your Web site. Do not save large images and shrink them to fit on the Web page layout -- the actual image is still large and users will have long download times. Likewise, do not save small images and enlarge them on the Web page layout -- they will appear jagged and pixilated.

Note: If saving your own images for the Web site in Photoshop, use the Unsharp Mask filter to ensure that they are as crisp as possible.

Image Format

GIF and JPG (or JPEG) files are used for different types of images, but both are compressed image formats that are ideal for the Web.

JPG: This file format should be used for most photographs or any images that have gradations of color.

GIF: This file format should be used for images that contain limited colors such as illustrations, text, charts, and graphs. GIFs can only display a maximum of 256 colors.

Color Choices

Colors have been defined by the template design and cannot be changed. For a list of approved Towson colors (primary and secondary palettes) that you may use on your department/division pages, go to:

<http://pages.towson.edu/designandpublications/colors.html>.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why the fixed-width format?

The template is targeted for a monitor with a resolution of at least 1024 x 768. The size of the template should not be modified. Research shows that approximately 85% of computers are set to display at least this resolution. Because of the fixed-width tables, you will see bands of white space to the right (and possibly to the bottom) on some screens set for a higher resolution. We have attempted to strike a balance between aesthetics and mainstream technology.

How does this system work for people with disabilities?

Whenever possible, the design elements and content areas of the pages will meet the basic recommendations put forth by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) in their Web Authoring Guidelines (<http://www.w3.org/WAI/Resources/#3gl>). The templates will continue to be reviewed for usability.

Advanced Help

Using Contribute to Edit the Left Navigation

To edit the left navigation for the Web page you are currently viewing in Contribute:

1. In the 'Address:' bar, after the last slash ('/'), type links.asp (you may need to replace the current page (ex. index.asp) with links.asp)
2. Hit Enter
3. You will see the links by themselves (with no formatting)
4. Hit 'Edit Page'
5. Now in edit mode, you can delete links, add links and edit links
 - a. To delete a link, highlight it and hit the delete key on your keyboard – make sure that the links below the link you're deleting move up (so there isn't a big space)
 - b. To add a link, put the cursor at the end of the line ABOVE where you want to put the link.
 - i. Hit enter
 - ii. Type in the name of the link
 - iii. Highlight the link, then use the link menu for deciding which option is best for your link (new page, browse, etc...)
 - iv. See the Contribute Guide for linking instructions
 - c. To edit a link, right click on the link and select 'Link Properties' – see the Contribute Guide for linking instructions

Arrow direction instructions (for the left navigation – arrows point to the right or down):

1. Make sure you are in edit mode (from the instructions above)
2. The last bold bullet point item has a down arrow
3. If you want to add a link that has an arrow pointing to the right:
 - a. Put the cursor at the end of the line ABOVE where you want to put the link – with the exception of the last bulleted item:
 - i. Hit Enter
 - ii. Type the name of the link
 - i. Highlight the link, then use the link menu for deciding which option is best for your link (new page, browse, etc...)
 - iii. See the Contribute Guide for linking instructions
 - b. If you are creating a new 'down arrow' item, just change what that last item says – for example, if the last bullet item says 'College of Liberal Arts,' change what it says and you will have the new section title.
 - i. No need to change the link, because it automatically points to 'index.asp' – which is the main page for that section
 - ii. Add the previous section title above the 'down arrow' item and follow the linking instructions

Left Navigation Format Guidelines

- As much as possible, use short, descriptive labels such as "Faculty & Staff" and

"Departments."

- An ampersand (&) should be used instead of "and" in the Left Links to conserve space. (However, spell out "and" in the page header in the Content Area.)
- The page header and page title (the name of the page in the URL) should correspond to the name of the Left Link.
- Sub-links should not be indented or in a smaller font.
- Avoid "external links" (links that go to sites that are not part of Towson.edu) in the Left links; instead link to external sites in the Content Area. (See <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/main/abouttu/visitor/areaact.asp> for example.)

Writing Style

When creating content for your pages, keep in mind that you may be addressing multiple audiences (such as prospective students, current students, current faculty, prospective faculty, members of the community, media, parents, etc.). Write copy that speaks to many different groups, some of whom may know nothing about your department. The main page of your site needs to be especially friendly and informative.

Rules for writing a paper document apply to writing Web page content. Use Spell Check and proofread the content prior to posting. The *AP Stylebook* is the university's standard reference for writing style and punctuation; it is available at the University Store. A quick reference is the university's Writing Style Guide, available at <http://wwwnew.towson.edu/adminfinance/ots/training/techdocs.asp>. For suggestions on how to write specifically for the Web, refer to the Yale Web Style guide: www.webstyleguide.com.

Follow these best practices for Web writing and presenting information:

- Make your text "scannable" -- say less (half the word count of conventional writing)
- Put more important content first (inverted pyramid)
- One idea per paragraph
- Use clear headlines and subheads
- Consider the users' goals
- Use active voice
- Integrate graphics and other media content