Writing for the Web
Using Your Web Site to Recruit and Retain Members

Create Goals for your Web Site
- What do you want to accomplish with the site?
- Inform group members of news and events
- Attract new UA Alumni Association and group members
- Share photos
- Encourage scholarship donations
- Anything else?

Things to think about:
- Who is your audience?
- Who is already coming to your site, and who do you want to come to the site?
- What are you offering?
- Fun events, networking, what else?
- What do you need to have on your site?
- What information should be on the site?

What does your audience need to do on your site?
- Contact you
- Become a member
- Find event information
- Read newsletters
- View photos
- What else?

Define your site’s goal(s)
- What action do you want your visitors to perform on your site? That’s your goal!
- You can have more than one goal
- Can you think of a couple goals?
- Recruit new members
- Share event info

Writing for the Web
- You have determined your Web site goal(s). So, now what?
  - Build (or modify) your site around the goal(s)
  - This is where your site content comes in….
• Don’t hide important information
• Don’t make people dig for it!
• If information is relevant to your site’s goals, then make sure it’s front and center.
• Keep vital information on the homepage, event pages, etc.
• Make it easy to find
• Be sure to keep it updated!
• Use “Quick Links” to link to events, scholarship info, membership, etc.
  • You can put snippets of text about membership, upcoming events, news, etc. on your homepage and link to other pages for extended information.

Why is this important?
• Reading text on the Web is not like reading printed text
• On the Web, people don’t “read” text, they scan it
• 79% of test users always scanned any new page they came across (http://www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/)
• Only 16% read word-by-word
• Large blocks of text are hard to read on a computer screen

What can you do to help?
• Use headings and sub-headings
• Organize the page into sections
• Help readers find specific topics and information
• Use key words

Paragraphs
• Stick with one idea per paragraph
• Get to the point
• Keep paragraphs short
• No more than 5 lines or so
• Don’t be afraid to use the “Enter” key!

Use lists
• Lists draw the eye
• Break down important information
• Use numbered lists where the order of entries is important
  • First, second, third, etc.
• Use bulleted lists where order of entries isn’t important
• Menu for event
• Ensure each list is introduced by at least one line of text

Bold text
• Use bold text sparingly
• Remember - making everything bold effectively renders none of it bold (doesn’t stand out)
• Keep it for headings or very important information

**BLOCK LETTERING**
• Please don’t SHOUT at people
• Most computer users consider the use of all capital letters to be the Internet equivalent of shouting
• It’s hard to read
• BLOCK TEXT IS HARD TO READ BECAUSE WE LOOK AT THE SHAPE OF THE WORD. WE DON’T READ WORDS ONE LETTER AT A TIME. BLOCK TEXT MAKES IT ALL RECTANGULAR.

**Write like you’re having a conversation with your site visitors**
• Grab their attention
• It’s ok to write informally
• Yes, contractions are ok!
• The word “you” is fine, make it personal
• Use a name to call or e-mail if they have questions
• Contact Wilbur Wildcat at wilbur@wildcatforlife.com with questions.

**Be brief**
• If you can say something with fewer words, then do it

**Be clear**
• Use words that people can easily understand

**Use visible prompts to take action**
• Sign up buttons

**Web Site Styles**
• Use black text on white (or very light) backgrounds.
• Avoid low contrast between text and background
• Make sure your images have high contrast so those who are color blind or have other visual impairments can still make out what the image is
• Don’t use very small text. Make text large enough to be read easily
• Please don’t use blinking text or images, or scrolling text (marquees)
  o Overwhelming to users
  o Blinking objects can trigger seizures in people who have photosensitive epilepsy
  o Same for using Moiré patterns – please don’t
• Don’t underline text that is not a link
  o It is common for links to be underlined
  o Underlined text can easily be confused for a link
  o Links should stand out, regular text should not be underlined
• After making changes to your Web site:
• Look through the site yourself
• Recruit your club/group members to look at the site
• Recruit family/friends
• Ask them to give honest feedback
• Remember, you can’t please everyone, but take heed of repeated comments
• Be sure to remove empty pages, fix broken links, and update outdated information!

**Promoting Your Web Site**

How?
- Include the Web address in newsletters, e-mails, postcards
- Send us your events to list in *Alumnus*
- Create a Facebook fan page
- Create a LinkedIn group
- Create a Twitter feed
- Other ways?