

Web Page Guidelines and Required Elements

April 27, 2007

Web Server/Site Structure

1. All schools and departments that store their web pages on the Behrend web server must save the files to the proper directory and subdirectories. In general, HTML files are saved to the main directory. Images, audio, and video are saved to their respective subdirectories. For example: compcntr/images. (Other subdirectories may also be added as needed.)

Example:

- compcntr - Directory where HTML files are saved
- images - Subdirectory where images are saved
- sounds - Subdirectory where audio clips are saved
- video - Subdirectory where video clips are saved

2. All school and department web pages should have a main menu page (called index.htm) so that visitors can easily find the information they need. The structure of the menu can take various forms such as drop-down menus, list of menu items, etc.

Directory and File Naming Conventions

3. Do not use extremely short or long names for your files or directories. (If a name is too short, such as 3 characters, it usually isn't an adequate description. On the other hand, visitors don't want to type unnecessarily long addresses in the browser's location box.)
4. Use a **consistent scheme** throughout your site for forming directory and file names. (A hyphen or mixed case letters may be used to distinguish between "words" in a file name.)

Examples:

- compcntr/facultysurvey.htm
- compcntr/FacultySurvey.htm
- compcntr/Faculty-Survey.htm
- compcntr/faculty-survey.htm

5. Do not use spaces, underlines, ampersands or other special characters (i.e. &) in file names. (These characters may make an address difficult to read in printed materials or may cause problems with web form processing.)

Examples of what NOT to do:

- comp index.htm
- comp_index.htm
- comp&index.htm

6. The main menu page must be named as index.htm. (When you have a lot of html files, this makes it easier to know which one is your home page.)

Example:

index.htm

7. The second part of the file name (whether it's the menu page or any other web page) must end with the letters, .htm. (Although, .html is legitimate, only .htm is used to provide consistency.)

Example:

compindex.**htm**

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Application Development

8. Penn State Behrend supports a specific set of technologies which may be used for the development of web sites. For example, ColdFusion and SQL server may be used to create dynamic web pages, process forms, etc. The college has specific guidelines and procedures for the use of these technologies to ensure consistency, security, and ease of maintenance. (This includes such things as naming conventions for databases, tables, DSNs, and folders; the use of stored procedures rather than queries; etc.) Please contact the Computer Center staff for more information on supported technologies and associated guidelines and procedures.
9. Comment your code. Be sure to include your name, email address (optional), and date. In addition, include comments to identify each section of your code and a one or two sentence description of the purpose of your stored procedures and other elements.

Penn State Policies, Copyrights, and Photography Release Form

10. Penn State has a set of policies regarding web pages. Please review and follow these policies.
 - a) [Policy AD54 \(Web Page Design and Image\)](http://guru.psu.edu/POLICIES/AD54.html) - This policy discusses the visual elements that are required for all official Penn State web pages. Web site: <http://guru.psu.edu/POLICIES/AD54.html>.
 - b) [Policy AD52 \(Links to and from Penn State Web Pages\)](http://guru.psu.edu/POLICIES/AD52.html) - This policy discusses: a) the use of links to commercial or profit-making web sites from University web pages and b) links to Penn State pages from other web sites. Web site: <http://guru.psu.edu/POLICIES/AD52.html>. Exemptions to this policy may be found at: <http://guru.psu.edu/policies/AD52exemptions.html>.
 - c) [Policy AD20 \(Computer and Network Security\)](http://guru.psu.edu/policies/AD20.html) - This policy discusses security regarding University computer and network resources. Web site: <http://guru.psu.edu/policies/AD20.html>.
11. Penn State has an online publication called the [Web Style Guide: Guidelines and Resources](http://webstyleguide.psu.edu/) (<http://webstyleguide.psu.edu/>). Please be sure to review this guide.
12. Do not use copyrighted images or materials. More information about copyrights can be found at Penn State's web site, [Policies, Guidelines, and Laws](http://cac.psu.edu/policies/) (<http://cac.psu.edu/policies/>), or at Behrend's web site, [Copyright Information](http://pennstatebehrend.psu.edu/compcntr/web/copyrights.htm) (<http://pennstatebehrend.psu.edu/compcntr/web/copyrights.htm>).
13. If you take photos of an individual or groups of people, you are advised to ask these people for their permission in order to use their image on a web page. If they agree to let you use the image, then they will need to sign a [photography release form](http://pennstatebehrend.psu.edu/compcntr/guides/photo-release-form.doc) (<http://pennstatebehrend.psu.edu/compcntr/guides/photo-release-form.doc>). Keep this form on file as long as you use their image on a web page.

Miscellaneous

14. Design your web pages so that they will work with any browser.
15. Design your web site so that it is accessible to those with disabilities. Disabilities might include vision (including color blindness), hearing, motor coordination, etc. (Remember, some people may need to use screen readers or other assistance devices or software in order to access the information on a web site.) Sites must be W3C compliant (<http://validator.w3.org/>) and adhere to Section 508 standards. For information on accessibility, see Penn State's [Creating Accessible Web Sites](http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/accessibility/) (<http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/accessibility/>) and [Web Accessibility Resources](http://www.equity.psu.edu/accesspsu/web_resources.asp) (http://www.equity.psu.edu/accesspsu/web_resources.asp).

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16. Use a style sheet for web page layout and the formatting of text. Be sure that the content is still readable if style sheets are disabled.
17. Use of XHTML is required (and use of XML is encouraged).
18. If you copy text from Word and paste it into a web page, be sure to paste it as unformatted text (i.e. use *Edit/Paste Special*). Then apply a style to the text as needed.
19. If you use Microsoft Word to create web pages, you must remove the bloated code that is generated by Word. (The enormous amount of bloated code is generated so that Word can preserve the format of the file as both a Word document and as a web page.)
 - The removal of bloated code is necessary for two reasons. First, the resulting code that Word produces causes a reporting problem when the web server administrator runs reports from WebTrends. (WebTrends is a software package that compiles statistics about the web site.) Second, the bloated code makes it difficult to troubleshoot problems.
20. It is strongly advised that you do not use frames for two reasons.
 - a) A visitor may wish to bookmark a certain page in a framed site, but the resulting bookmark will actually be to the home page and not to the individual page that contains the desired information.
 - b) Depending upon how a framed site is created, visitors may become confused as to where the information originated. If you use frames, structure it such that when someone clicks on a link to go to a different page, the page will be displayed full-screen (i.e. target=_top). (This prevents an outside web page from being displayed in a framed window in which the browser's location box still lists a Penn State web address. Otherwise, it is possible that a visitor might bring up an objectionable web site from somewhere outside of Penn State, yet the location box lists a Penn State web address.) Example:

See the [example of a framed web page](http://pennstatebehrend.psu.edu/compctr/webhints/frames-links.htm)
(<http://pennstatebehrend.psu.edu/compctr/webhints/frames-links.htm>).

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Required Elements

A specific set of elements are required on all web pages that reside on the Behrend web server (pennstatebehrend.psu.edu). These elements are incorporated into the templates. For non-template web sites (usually outreach centers), please be sure to include those elements that are specified in the table below.

Important: For more specific details about required elements, see:

[Policy AD54 Web Page Design and Image](http://guru.psu.edu/policies/AD54.html) (<http://guru.psu.edu/policies/AD54.html>)

[Web Style Guide](http://webstyleguide.psu.edu) (<http://webstyleguide.psu.edu>)

[Web Standards](http://webstandards.psu.edu) (<http://webstandards.psu.edu>)

[News Article on New Web Policy](http://live.psu.edu/story/10756) (<http://live.psu.edu/story/10756>)

Note: The gray column indicates which features must be included on web pages. The letter “**T**” indicates that this element is only required for template pages. The word “**All**” indicates that this element is required for all pages, template and non-template pages.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| T | 1. Use an approved Penn State Behrend mark on your web page which has a link to http://www.pserie.psu.edu . Marks may be obtained from: http://webstyleguide.psu.edu/index.php or from Behrend’s Office of Marketing Communications. The mark must appear in the top, left corner of the web page. (This is a University-wide requirement.) See the Web Style Guide for exact placement. |
| T | 2. All pages must include a search element that follows the new recommendation. The search element must contain links for: this site, people, departments, and Penn State. See an example at: http://webstyleguide.psu.edu . (It’s located in the top, right side of the page.) |
| All | 3. Include a web page title. (The web page title appears at the very top of the browser’s window in the title bar. This title is used when someone bookmarks your site.) |
| All | 4. Use a page heading that aptly describes the contents of the page. |
| All | 5. Specify alternative or title text for all images. Exception: Images that do not communicate information, such as bulleted images, should have a null value. |
| All | 6. If buttons are used for links, include text links as well. |
| All | 7. Provide contact information. At minimum, this should include an email link (preferably to the department’s email alias that is used to receive correspondence from the web site or the staff person who is responsible for maintaining the content of the web page). |
| All | 8. Include the date when the page was last updated. Type the complete month, day, and year. Do not use abbreviated numeric dates (such as 08/09/02); this will avoid any possible confusion in those countries which use a different abbreviated format. |
| All | 9. All pages must include a link to Penn State Behrend’s home page (http://www.behrend.psu.edu). |
| T | 10. All pages must include a link to your department’s or school’s home page. |

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- All** 11. Include a META tag to provide search engines with more information about your web page. Use the following as the keywords: Penn State Behrend, Behrend, Penn State Erie, Erie, Behrend College, college, university, Pennsylvania. For details on how to implement a META tag, see <http://pennstatebehrend.psu.edu/compcntr/webhints/searchengines.htm>.
- T** 12. The footer of all pages must include links to these PSU policies: non-discrimination, equal opportunity, privacy, and copyright. See the [PSU home page](#) for an example. (They grouped these policies together and labeled them as Privacy and Legal Statements. The link for the non-discrimination, equal opportunity, and privacy policies is <http://www.psu.edu/ur/legal.html>.)
- All** 13. Include a copyright statement. For template pages, include a link to PSU's copyright policy (<http://www.psu.edu/ur/copyright.html>).
- T** 14. The footer of all pages must include a site index link. The site index link provides a list of links to all pages within the site. For an example, see [PSU's site index page](#).
- T** 15. The footer of all pages must include a link to a text-only version of the Web site. For an example, see: <http://www.psu.edu/indexto.html>.
- T** 16. The footer of all pages should include a link to the other campuses/colleges (<http://www.psu.edu/ur/cmppcoll.html>).
- T** 17. Optional: Add an ASKPSU link to provide a convenient location for someone wanting to ask a question of a department. For an example, see: <http://ask.psu.edu/psu.html>.
- All** 18. If you use a technology or feature that may not function in a person's browser (because they have disabled that feature, use an older browser, etc.), be sure to include an alternative means of providing the information. Example:
 - Some people or organizations disable Javascript in their browsers. If your web site uses a menu system which relies on Javascript, these visitors will not be able to use your menu. As a result, you will need to include text links to the same information so that people have an alternative path to reach the information.