Editorial Standards & Content Management Process
Lansing Community College Library Website

Writing for the Web

It is almost impossible to look and read at the same time: they are different actions.

- Gerard Under, *While You're Reading*

All library staff who are content providers will be trained in Planning Your Content, Editing Your Content, and the Content Management Process. They will use the Editorial Standards Checklist, which covers the main points in the Editorial Standards, to edit content.

Content Managers will refer to the complete Editorial Standards when reviewing content which can be found at http://libguides.lcc.edu/styleguide

Library Website Audience, Purpose & Goals

Planning Your Content

1. Task Based Users
2. Personas
3. Internal Structure
4. Ordering
5. Length
6. Usability Testing Prep

Editing Your Content

1. Another Set of Eyes
2. Read Aloud
3. Usability Testing
4. Editorial Standards Checklist

Editorial Standards

1. Creating a Tone/Voice
2. Brevity

3. Page Titles
4. Headings & Subheadings
5. Text, Fonts, and Readability
6. Links
7. Lists
8. Anchors and Menus
9. Questions and Answers
10. Web Accessibility
11. Multimedia Content
12. Naming URLs/New Pages
13. Standard Terms A to Z

Content Management Process

1. Roles and Responsibilities
2. Workflows
3. Tools for Content Maintenance/Improvement
4. Training and Communication

Library Website Audience, Purpose & Goals

Digital Strategy for Library Website

- **Learn** – To intuitively connect customers with resources, communities, and individualized support.

- **Teach** – Provide faculty with tools, services, and resources they need to create an engaging environment.

- **Discover** – To create and share content that is useful, useable, and desirable.

What is the Library trying to achieve with our website content?
- Direct users to resources, hours, and services.

- Meet the needs of different audiences.

- Support faculty in working with students and support professional development of employees.

What do our users want and need from our content?
- Find resources to complete course assignments.

- Students expect to be able to easily find information about library services.

- Get help completing course assignments

Planning Your Content

1. **Task Based Users**

   - Users arrive at a web page to complete a task, not read text; make text that is scannable.

2. **Personas**

   - Work with the personas of different LCC web-users to brainstorm what different users will try to do on your webpage.
   - Decide which personas are the core audience for your page and focus on them.
   - Imagine what each persona wants from your webpage and the process they would employ to complete their tasks.
   - Personas can be found at: http://libguides.lcc.edu/personas/

3. **Internal Structure**

   - Begin with the conclusion – use the "Inverted Pyramid" approach. Place the most important information first or a summary giving a sense of page content.

- Use one idea per paragraph. Break information into small paragraphs, rather than one large chunk of text. On the web, a one sentence paragraph is okay. Lists and tables might be better than paragraphs.
- Make the topic sentence of each paragraph descriptive of the rest of the paragraph.
- Keywords first – place keywords first in headings and subheadings, and links.
- Transform long paragraphs into bulleted or numbered lists when possible to facilitate scanning.
- Help people see quickly if they need info. on a page. State exceptions first, in a positive way.

4. **Ordering**

- Think about the best way to organize items on a page. Alphabetical order only works if someone is looking for a known item and they use the same language as you do. Put the most important items first. Use numbered lists if appropriate.
- Divide web content by
    - Time or sequence
    - Task
    - People
    - Type of information
    - Questions people ask

5. **Page Length**

Decide how much to put on one webpage by considering:

- How much people want in one visit
- How connected the information is
- How long the webpage is

6. **Usability Testing Prep**
- Create three task based scenarios for users to complete on your webpage
    - Tasks should be simple and reflect what students/faculty do, e.g. "Find an e-book about global warming" or "You have a question about printing that is not answered on this page. How would you get help?"

Editing Your Content

1. **Another Set of Eyes**

- Have a co-worker look at the webpage and offer input.
- Ask for what she/he thinks are frequently asked questions about the topic.

2. **Read Aloud**

- Reading aloud gives you insight into how natural the language sounds to users.
- Identify areas where there are gaps in understanding.

3. **Editorial Standards Checklist**

- Review your content using the checklist.

4. **Usability Testing**
   - Use the task based scenarios you created when planning your content.
   - Ask a member of WIT to facilitate the testing. You will be the notetaker. Go out on campus to recruit students to be your test subjects (candy makes an excellent reward for participation)
   - Use the tools developed by WIT to complete your testing: http://libguides.lcc.edu/usability/

Credits

Thanks to Rebecca Blakiston for sharing sample website standards and a content strategy in the Library Juice Academy course. Parts of those documents have been adapted in this style guide.

Editorial Standards Checklist

All Web Pages

☐	**Content** – The content on the page is accurate and up to date including dates, processes, phone numbers, hours, and staff contacts. Spelling is correct.
☐	**Ordering** – Items are ordered by time, task, people, or questions people ask with the most important items listed first.
☐	**Page Length** – The page is an appropriate length and content is split up into multiple pages if necessary. Words that do not help patrons achieve their goals are eliminated.
☐	**Voice** – Patrons are referred to as "you," the library as "we." Active voice is used.
☐	**Page & Link Titles** – Titles are simple and meaningful to users. They are short and descriptive with all words capitalized except for articles/conjunctions (e.g. a, and, the)?
☐	**Headings and Subheadings –** Headings give you an overall picture of the content. Headings are parallel. Titles are H2 and lower-level headers are H3, H4.
☐	**Text** – Font is normal with minimal italics and bold and no underlining or ALL CAPS.
☐	**Links** – Link text is descriptive and clear. "Click here" is avoided. URLs are not spelled out. All links on the page work. If the link is to a PDF or Word Doc, use an icon.
☐	**Editing Process** – You have read the web page aloud and asked at least one other person to give you feedback on the webpage.
☐	**Standard Terms** – Conventions for words, dates, phone numbers are followed.

Research Guides

☐	**Link Descriptions** – Descriptions should be no longer than two or three sentences. Revise descriptions from other websites, "we" should refer to the Library.
☐	**Tabs** – There should be no more than one row of tabs. If you need more tabs, consider breaking up content into multiple guides.
☐	**Work in Progress** – Only pages that are complete should be published. If you create a tab as a placeholder for future content, hide the tab until it is complete.

Editorial Standards

1. **Creating a Voice/Tone**

   Focus on the user, not on the library. LCC Library website tone should be…

Knowledgeable, not preachy.	Professional, not pompous.
Helpful, not frustrating.	Conversational, not preachy.
Welcoming, not full of jargon	Approachable, not intimidating.

Sign in to request an article.

The customer should login to their Library account to make an interlibrary loan request.

Enjoy small snacks or covered drinks, but not on computer work stations.

Only small snacks or covered drinks are allowed. Do not eat or drink at Library computers.

- Use active voice directed towards the user. Succinct, active phrases are especially helpful for headers and link titles:

Find Book Reviews

Book Reviews

Request a Book

Books Available for Request

Contact a Librarian

Librarian Contact Information

Reserve a Study Room

Study Room Reservations

- Most of the time, use second person when referring to the user ("you" or "your") and use first person plural to refer to the Libraries or library staff ("us" or "we"):

If you have trouble finding a book, as us for help.

If the customer can't find a book, s/he should ask at a service desk for help.

Return your course reserves to the Checkout Desk.

Course reserves should be returned to the Checkout Desk

2. **Brevity**

- Use half of the word count (or less) of conventional writing.
- Focus on content; does the content help the user achieve their goal?
- Minimize the number of words in a sentence and sentences in a paragraph.

3. **Page Titles**

- Capitalize every word except articles and conjunctions (e.g. a, and, the).
- Titles are very important. Titles should not be too short or too long. They should be meaningful out of context. Keep titles short and descriptive; titles help users understand what is on the page.

   Page titles should follow the format: Page Title – Section Title - Library at Lansing Community College. For example, Materials Delivery – Services – Library at Lansing Community College

4. **Headings and Subheadings**

- Use headers on almost all pages to break up content. The title for the page is H2. Use H3 for primary headers (one level lower than the page header). Go one level down for each subsequent header.
- Don't end a header with a period/colon; only end a header with punctuation if it is a question.
- Start by outlining your content with headings. Then ask yourself the following questions:
    o Do you understand what each heading means by itself?
    o Do the headings tell a coherent story? Do they flow logically from one to the next?
    o Do they successfully give you the big picture?
    o Do they distinguish different sections? If you only wanted some of the information, is it clear where you would go for that information? (taken from Redish)
- Capitalize every word except articles and conjunctions (e.g. a, and, the) unless the heading is a long phrase.
- Keep headings 8 words or less.
- Headings should be parallel, e.g. **Do I** need a permit? **How do I** get a permit? OR **Applying** for a permit **Filling** out the application
- Verb phrases and questions work better as headings than noun phrases.
- Use subheadings when possible – they help clearly group related information and make content easier to scan. However, use only headings H2, H3, H4. If you need additional sub-headings, you might have too much content on one page.

5. **Text, Fonts, and Readability**

- Type directly into the Sharepoint Designer WYSIWYG editor. Do not cut and paste from another document or website.
- Avoid the <font> tag, <b> bold tag, colors, <u> underline tag, etc…
- Use bold sparingly only for emphasis.
- Use italics sparingly only when they serve a purpose (e.g. setting aside a quote, citation formatting). Large blocks of italics are less readable then regular font.
- Text should be aligned left. Never centered. Never justified.
- Avoid using ALL CAPS and underlining. If text is underlined, it will be mistaken for a link.

6. **Links**

- Avoid using "click here" or "here" as link text. Link text should be descriptive, but clear and concise. For examples, "Renew library materials" instead of "To renew, click here."
- Don't make new program or product names into links by themselves, e.g. One Search, instead – Search for articles and books – One Search
- Match links and page titles.
- Use action phrases for action links, e.g. Reserve a group study room.
- Add a short description if people need it – or rewrite the link.
- Use single nouns sparingly as links; longer, more descriptive links often work better.
- Coordinate when you have multiple, similar links, The first word or phrase in a link should not be repeated in other links, e.g. Introduction to Library Resources for Business, Introduction to Library Resources for Mathematics – put common words as a heading.
- Multiple links that point to the same page are an exception, in which case they should use the same link text.
- If you link to a page that is not HTML, include a description of the file type, i.e. Citing Sources (PDF)

7. **Lists**

- Only use numbered lists if you are referring to steps in a process, otherwise use bullets.

  How to Request - a LCC Library Item
  1. Locate the item in the library catalog.
  2. Click on the "Request" button.
  3. Enter your Library Account information. Don't have a Library Account? Click on Your Library Account to find out more.
  4. Choose a pick-up location from the drop-down list.
  5. Click the "Submit" button

- Don't end list items with a period unless they are complete sentences.
- If your entire page is a list of links:
  o Each link should be normal text, linked. Not bold.
  o Nothing should be indented.
  o The definition/description should be directly underneath the link – this means there is a line break, but no spacing. There should be one ENTER space between resource items.

  International
  International Codes Council Publications
  Building, electrical, energy, fire, fuel, gas, mechanical, plumbing,
  residential, zoning codes and more.

  National
  Architectural Graphics Standards, 11th edition
  Premier source for building design and construction information. Browse
  from your desktop or mobile device to download 3,000 architectural details
  in DFX, DGN, and DWG formats when needed.

8. **Anchors and menus**

- Only use a menu if there are 3+ headings or the content is lengthy enough that these will be useful. If one small scroll takes you to the bottom of the page, don't bother with these links.
- Use menu labels that are identical to the headers you are linking to.

- The menu items should be normal text, hyperlinked. Do not use headers for the menu items, even though they are linking to headers.
- If the menu items all fit in one line, place them in a line with a | in between. Such as:

Off-Campus Access to Research Databases

Login Screen | Browser Options | Access from Home | Access from Work

If the menu items don't fit in one line, list them as bullets like this:

MLA In-Text Citation

Examples are based on the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th edition, and assistance provided by MLA editorial staff. When available, MLA rule numbers are referenced.

- Basic format (Author-Page Style)
- Author's name in text
- Author's name in reference
- No author listed (cite by title)
- Two or more works by the same author(s)

- If the page becomes much longer than a typical browser window (and therefore requires significant scrolling), provide users with a "Back to Top" link.
- When adding anchors, name them as you would a URL, since the name becomes part of the URL (#anchor-name). Anchor names must be lower case with no spaces. For example:

  computer-use

  Article_IV._Computer_Access_Use

9. Questions & Answers (Q&As)

- If your page includes questions and answers, use H3 for the questions and normal text for the answers (not indented, not italicized). There should be a regular enter – line break – between each question and the answer. For example:

Who can check out an iPad?
Current Lansing Community College students, faculty and staff may check out an iPad.

How long can I keep the iPad?
iPads are available for 28 day checkout with no renewals.

10. Web Accessibility Guidelines

- Text-only equivalents (such as alt text, d tags & transcripts) will be used for any graphic or multimedia information.
- Colors will be navigational aids but will not be the only means of conveying information.
- Colors used on the website will be those distinguishable by the color blind.
- Tables will be logically structured with column headers (for ease of 'tabbing through')

- Forms will have an email alternative.
- No blinking or flickering text will be used.
- Very high contrast between text and backgrounds will be provided.
- All hyperlink titles will be meaningful (never just 'click here').

11. Multimedia Content

- Use graphics to enhance the meaning of the text, e.g. screen shots, icons, photos, book covers. Graphics can:
    - Illustrate a process or concept
    - Evoke an emotional response or set a mood
- Provide meaningful alternate text for every graphic. However, use empty alt attribute for purely decorative graphics, e.g. alt="", rather than "alt="decorative bullet"
- Keep image files under 30 KB
- Do not add images that violate copyright.
- Links to multimedia content should include information about the format and viewing time.

12. Naming URLS/New Pages

- Each folder must have a page titled "index.aspx"
- Use all lower-case letters
- Keep it short, lowercase, plain language
- Don't use punctuation, apostrophes, or symbols
- Don't use spaces or underscores
- Use a hyphen between words
- Use only one or two words
- Use short common words
- Do not include dates or author information.

psychology

cell-phones

psychology2009

cell-phones-guidelines-procedures

13. Standard terms A - Z

- & or and

    Use **and**

- check out and check in

    Verb, not hyphenated; for example:

- You can check out a Kindle.
- We will check in the Kindle and give you a receipt.

- checkout and check-in

  Noun or adjective; for example:

  - Available for 4 hour checkout (noun)
  - Upon check-in, you will get a receipt (noun)

- click on

  Use select rather than click on, this works for both desktops and mobile devices

- e-mail or email

  Use **e-mail** or **E-mail** when used in a header or title.

- e-book or eBook

  Use **e-book** or **E-book** when used as a header or title.

- e-journal or ejournal

  Use **e-journal** or **E-journal** when used as a header or title.

- faculty or faculty member

  Not capitalized

- full-text

  Two words, lower-case, hyphenated

- interlibrary loan

  Not capitalized, no hyphen, and not the acronym ILL

- Internet

  Capitalize as a noun (i.e. "on the Internet") but not as an adjective (i.e. "internet resources")

- librarian

  Not capitalized

- library catalog

  Not capitalized

- sign in

  Two words, not hyphenated, lower case, never login, or log in (unless this is the term used within an external systems we have no control over)

- website or web site

  Use **website** - all one word, all lowercase.

- webpage or web page

  Use **web page** – when referring to a single page of a website; lower-case, two words

- web or Web or www

  Use **web** – lowercase.

- dates
  Use the International Date Standard - day in numbers, month in letters, and year in numbers, spell out the month (example: April 11, 1967)

- phone numbers

  Use area codes in all phone numbers in the following format: 517.483.1957

- database descriptions

  Descriptions of individual research databases should come from the Databases webpage.

Content Strategy for the Library Website

1. **Roles and Responsibilities**

Role	Responsibilities	Who
Content Requestor	• Requests new content, content edits, or content deletions	Anyone
Content Provider	• Provides content for publication on the web	Library staff
Content Manager	• Edits, improves, and manages the lifecycle of content on the web	1 member of each team
Content Reviewer & Publisher	• Reviews the content before it's published on the web and publishes it when it meets standards	Suzanne B Tori
Web Improvement Team	• Reviews requests for new content and decides where it will go on the website. • Provides input on major revisions or changes to overall information architecture or homepage. • Annually, reviews web content created, edited, deleted, and recommends updates/changes to the workflow	WIT team members
Web Librarian	• Manages web improvement team • Sets up ongoing training for content managers and providers • Checks links on websites and on LibGuides on a biweekly basis.	Suzanne B

Content Managers for Teams
- Technical Services and Systems – Regina and Fran
- Reference & Instruction – John
- Access Services – Tori
- Communication and Outreach – Tori

Content Manager Responsibilities
- Stay aware of policies, procedures, standards, workflows
- Ensure all content meets standards and follow standards for new content

- Review all content once fall and spring semester and report to WIT results of review
- Keep content inventory up to date
- Create new content
- Use Google Analytics to make decisions
- Attend trainings
- Communicate changes to content
- Be open to & respond to feedback

2. **Workflows**

Creating New Webpages
1. Requestor talks to content provider.
2. Content provider talks to Content Manager.
3. Content Manager talks to Web Improvement Team.
4. Content Manager creates the page.
5. Reviewer edits the page.
6. Publisher publishes the page.

Creating New LibGuides
1. Requestor talks to content provider.
2. Content provider fills out a proposal and submits it to RST.
3. If RST approves the proposal, the content provider creates the guide.
4. Content reviewer provides feedback and the guide undergoes usability testing.
5. The results of testing will be shared at a WIT meeting or on the discussion board, changes will be made, and the content provider will publish the guide.

Creating Video Tutorials
1. Requester talks to Instruction Services Team.
2. Instruction Services Team will review the proposal and librarian will create a script.
3. Post the script to the IST discussion board in Desire2Learn for at least one week before recording the tutorial. You don't have to follow the script word for word, but it can help you sketch out the general direction of the tutorial.
4. Record a draft of the tutorial. Produce the tutorial, put it in the LCC files, and post the path to the video in the files on the IST discussion board for at least one week before you record the final version of the video. Get feedback from at least two colleagues on the draft.
5. Make changes based on suggestions and produce the final version of video.
6. Put all recording files in the LCC files and let Tori or Suzanne know it is done so they can post the video on YouTube, Library Website, and the Library LOR.

Deleting Pages - Reasons for deleting pages include lack of use, end of a service.
1. Content Manager determines page should be deleted.
2. Contact Manager communicates with stakeholders.
3. Content Manager removes or updates all internal links.
4. Content Manager deletes the page.

Moving Pages
1. Content Manager determines a page should be moved.
2. Content Manager brings the suggestion to the Web Improvement Team for approval.
3. Content Manager creates a redirect page which will remain live for 6 months, if the page has a lot of traffic (check Google Analytics).
4. If the content is available in the Learning Object Repository in D2L, the link will be updated by the Web Librarian.

Reviewing Pages

Content managers will be responsible for reviewing content (or assigning pages to other staff members to review) at least once every six months. If small changes need to be made, content managers can make changes immediately. If bigger changes need to be made, such as to the homepage or a major redesign of the page, they will post a draft of the changes to the Web Improvement Team discussion board in Desire2Learn and ask for time on the WIT agenda to discuss the changes.

At the end of each semester, check to see if new content is being used.

Content managers will update the content inventory after reviewing a page or making changes to a page (Page Review, Last Update).

After changes are made to pages, the content provider will send an email out to library staff or write a post for the public blog if the changes are more substantial.

Content will be reviewed for usage (Google Analytics) and we will focus on high usage pages and eliminating pages that are not used.

LibGuides and Video Tutorials will be evaluated on an ongoing basis. Each semester, librarians will post to the discussion board at the beginning of the semester outlining any changes made to their research guides.

3. **Tools for Content Maintenance/Improvement**

Content Inventory - To track content and data about its use. Contains a tab with the content maintenance log to track how many pages are created, deleted, updated, each academic year, as well as training dates/topics. Content managers are responsible for updating the log when they review or update pages.

Editorial Standards Checklist – To be used by content managers and providers to review content to ensure it is meeting standards.

Discussion Boards in D2L Library Community - To propose revisions and get feedback on website content.

Accessibility and Usability Research - WIT will conduct usability testing on the homepage, important individual pages, such as the research databases page, and the library catalog every year. We will devote at least one WIT team meeting to usability testing each semester.

LibGuides for Librarians – http://libguides.lcc.edu/librarians/ - To provide librarians with guidelines for creating, revising, and maintaining research guides.

Writing for the Web LibGuide – http://libguides.lcc.edu/styleguide/ - To provide easy access to the library website editorial standards and content review strategy and to help train staff in Writing for the Web.

4. **Training and Communication**

Spring semester, a subgroup of the Web Improvement Team will go through the website and assign Content Managers and Providers to each page of the library website. We will start revising some of the worst pages on the website and use the discussion board in D2L to share ideas for improving them. We will also finalize the content management strategy and prepare to communicate it with the rest of the library staff.

Initial training for content managers will include:
- editorial standards
- new workflows
- Google Analytics
- Writing for the Web

Ongoing Training
All new librarians will participate in a one hour Writing for the Web training. Ongoing "Refresher Trainings" will be offered in Library teams during Professional Development time. Content manager training will be incorporated into WIT and some time set aside each semester for content managers to review content.

Communication
There will be a LibGuides meeting at the end of every semester to discuss changes to research guides as a group and to do refresher trainings on writing for the web. Librarians will be encouraged to be involved in this training as they can provide examples of where they improved their guides. At the beginning of each semester, librarians will post to the discussion board a summary of changes/updates to their guides for others to review.

Report
Once a year, the Web Librarian will present at a Department meeting a snapshot of the current website – number of pages, videos, guides, pages deleted/changed, etc. The report will also include library website usage statistics such as:

- Visits to the library website, catalog, databases page
- Visits to the library website excluding the homepage
- Top 10 pages
- Top 5 research guides
- Views of videos on YouTube channel
- Visits to mobile homepage
- Visit from mobile devices
- Top 10 searches