Policy on Official Web Pages

Summary/Purpose: This policy governs all aspects of communication through the university's website at "olemiss.edu." It is intended to ensure consistent, high-quality representation of the university in all schools and departments, as well as ease of use by visitors to the website and ease of content preparation by university staff.

1. TERMS

The following definitions are used:

- **UM**: the University of Mississippi.
- **UM unit**: a school, department, institute, administrative division, or official organization of UM.
- **IT**: Office of Information Technology.
- **HTML**: Hyper-text Markup Language.
- **URL**: uniform resource locator – e.g. http://www.olemiss.edu.
- **Render:** the operation a Web browser performs as it translates HTML code into the layout and content of a Web page.
- **the Web**: the World Wide Web.
- **Web document**: any file made available on the Web.
- **Web page**: a Web document written (or generated) in HTML which can be rendered by browsers
- **website**: a collection of inter-linked Web pages consisting of a home page and various secondary pages, or a collection of Web sites grouped under a common home page.
- **Web application**: a Web page which interacts with the user, collects information via a Web page from a user, or performs some function via a Web page for a user - e.g. Web-based email systems, online registration, and interactive forms.
- **official Web page**: a Web page presented on behalf of UM, sanctioned by the appropriate UM unit.
- **UM Web Directory:** an application which displays links to various departments, organizations and other entities, in addition to giving information about committees and campus buildings.
- **WordPress:** an open source content management system created to host blogs, but capable of hosting entire websites.
- **Feed:** a resources offering frequently updated content to be consumed, processed, and rendered on a website.

2. MANAGEMENT OF OFFICIAL WEB PAGES

(a) IT responsibilities

IT is responsible for the following:

1. maintaining a central Web server (Cedar) for the UM home page and for pages of other UM units;
2. maintaining secondary central Web servers (Web1 and Web6) for UM units needing more advanced programming than is allowed on Cedar;
3. maintaining official pages not associated with any specific unit, including the UM home page (www.olemiss.edu);
4. creating and maintaining applications within the myOleMiss portal;
5. providing access by designated managers of official UM Web pages to appropriate directories, so that they may update and revise their pages;
6. providing and maintaining the WebID online authentication system;
7. maintaining secure Web servers;
8. maintaining user access to the UM Web Directory so that they may submit change requests;

9. maintaining the Blackboard online learning system;
10. access control for use of PHP, CGIs, and MySQL on IT systems;
11. maintaining URL aliases and redirects as required for relocated Web pages and shorter URLs;
12. maintaining virtual host settings to allow other domains to be hosted on campus Web servers (as directed by the Domain Name Registration policy);
13. taking appropriate action to contain and resolve security violations in the event of website hacking or misuse;
14. working with University Communications to create and maintain UM branded Web templates for use by UM units;
15. providing code and graphics for common shared Web resources (www.olemiss.edu/share).
16. creating feeds of common data to be used by campus websites.

IT will allow non-IT projects on production IT servers with the approval of the Chief Information Officer under certain conditions: (a) the application has campus-wide impact, (b) the department has a full-time staff member who is willing to take responsibility and work under the guidelines in place for the IT Web team, and (c) the application is reviewed for correctness and good security practices.

Note that IT is not responsible for preparing Web pages, images, or Web applications on behalf of any other unit of UM. Nor is IT responsible for the maintenance of any non-IT servers or the websites on those servers.

IT reserves the right to update any and all software on IT servers to maintain system integrity and security.

(b) University Communications responsibilities

University Communications bears the following responsibilities:

1. creating and ensuring compliance with graphic standards and communications practices;
2. approving new Web pages or designating appropriate authors for new Web pages as required to enhance the usefulness, appeal, and clarity of the UM website;
3. approving the content of the first and second level pages that make up the UM website;
4. overseeing the UM website and requesting UM Web authors to update or revise official Web pages when necessary;
5. revising this policy as necessary to best serve the members of the UM community.

University Communications is authorized to request IT to remove from the UM website any links to Web pages or documents that are not consistent with this policy if the manager of such a document is not available or not willing to maintain compliance.

(c) UM Web Planning Committee responsibilities

1. The UM Web Planning Committee must consist of at least one representative from each of the following: the undergraduate student body, the non-faculty staff (exclusive of IT), the faculty, and IT.
2. The committee advises IT and University Communications as requested for major website improvements or requests inconsistent with the web policy.

(d) Manager responsibilities

Every UM unit is entitled to a website and an appropriate link via the UM home page. That unit must designate a specific manager, who will be responsible for maintaining standards of clarity, accuracy, and timeliness. When the management of an official Web page is passed to a new person, the change must

be coordinated with the UM Webmaster. If a new server account is needed, the new manager must make arrangements for that through the IT Helpdesk. Changes for student organization site management must be approved by the Office of the Dean of Students.

The manager is responsible for all content in his or her website, including maintaining the validity and appropriateness of both internal and external links contained in the unit's site. The manager is also responsible for updating the website's information listed in the UM Web Directory. These responsibilities also apply to managers and UM unit sites which are not housed on IT servers.

Managers of websites that are hosted on an IT installation of WordPress do not require a server account. Since these installations are shared resources, IT staff maintains the server files. Manager accounts are maintained through the WordPress sites with WebID authentication.

For transferring management of official Web pages served on the official UM Web server, Cedar, the following process should be followed:

- managers must apply for a Cedar account (assuming they do not already have an account) which is assigned to their name and for which they hold responsibility.
- for new accounts, the user is assigned a temporary password which needs to be changed via logging into Cedar using a secure telnet connection.
- the new manager contacts the UM Webmaster to obtain access to the relevant Web space. The manager's supervisor may be required to approve the change of access.
- once access is provided, the new manager should update or create the Web Directory for their UM unit.

Because creating and transferring management for sites housed on the Web1 and Web6 servers requires cooperation with the IT Systems and Networking groups, new managers must contact the UM Webmaster for assistance.

(e) Print documents

UM print documents made available as Web pages will generally be the responsibility of the office that prepared the print document. Exceptions must be approved by the office that prepared the original print document. PDF documents are viewable by the greatest number of visitors, and consideration should be taken for the inclusion of accessibility features where needed.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFICIAL WEB PAGES

(a) General policy

The UM Appropriate Use Policy for use of UM computational facilities applies to all UM Web pages. This includes those policies regarding commercial use, copyright, and harassment. Third-party advertising (not a university entity) is not permitted on official UM websites. All UM unit pages may be reviewed by University Communications and the UM Webmaster based on required content, layout, accessibility, university editorial and graphic guidelines, ,general usability concerns, and professional looking graphics and images.

(b) Required content

The primary home page of each UM unit shall include:

1. the official UM banner, or banner variant supplied by University Communications approved by the UM Web Planning Committee;
2. a link to the UM home page (using the UM banner, if present);
3. the name and email address of the current document manager, or a "Contact" link to a page

which includes this information;

4. the official UM footer containing the following:
    a. links to the top level information tabs (About UM, Academics, etc.);
    b. links to UM services (myOleMiss, Blackboard, Email, etc.);
    c. a link to the UM copyright statement (www.olemiss.edu/share/copyright.html);
    d. a link to the UM Creed (www.olemiss.edu/info/creed.html);
    e. a link to the university's Accessibility Statement (www.olemiss.edu/info/access.html);
    f. Google Analytics code so that we may tracks site statistics.

UM academic unit home pages have the additional requirements to include:

1. links to faculty profiles maintained through the My Profile tab in myOleMiss;
2. lists for degrees and minors that link into the course catalog;
3. lists for courses and their descriptions also linked in the course catalog;
4. (optional) achievements for faculty and students.

Web pages must adhere to the disability standards listed in the Section 508 guidelines (see www.section508.gov/) and to additional standards set forth by the UM policy governing Accessibility of Technology Services.

(c) Security

All UM webmasters must be vigilant in providing proper security for all personal data retained or recorded and information flow between server and Web client when necessary. All Web applications developed or implemented by UM units must maintain proper security and system integrity. Web applications on IT servers which jeopardize either security or system integrity may be disabled without prior notification.

Use of the WebID online authentication system may be provided to non-IT systems and managers on a case-by-case basis.

See the Information Confidentiality/Security Policy (ADM.IT.400.030) in the UM Policy Directory at www.olemiss.edu/policies for more information concerning information security.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIAL WEB DOCUMENTS

(a) Coding and Content

An HTML document is a means of conveying information to a wide audience across a variety of platforms. Simplicity, clarity, and performance should always be high priorities. Consistency with university web graphics standards is essential in the design of each UM page. HTML should be used to semantically organize content without specifying the exact appearance of the various elements.

1. Web pages should adhere to the standards defined by World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) (see www.w3.org) for HTML, CSS, or other Web languages.
2. Webmasters should begin adopting HTML5 compliancy in order to take advantage of future browser enhancements.
3. Webmasters should use one of the provided UM Web Templates that have been created using responsive design techniques, or they should adapt their own templates using those techniques. This design will ensure that mobile users and desktop users have access to the same content, in addition to insuring a professional and unified UM presence across our website.
4. Web pages should conform to the UM Web guidelines as established by University Communications. Common UM branding elements must appear across the entire UM website. Designers of UM Web pages should incorporate these elements into their designs.
5. A department logo or a recognizable UM logo should appear in the header of each page.

6. Large graphics, backgrounds, imagemaps, and other features that degrade speed without adding content are discouraged.
7. Never use copyrighted material - graphics, audio, video, text - without prior written permission from the holder of the copyright. If in doubt, assume the content is copyrighted and obtain permission from the content creator. This includes content created by another UM unit.
8. Large files or files with unusual formats (images, sound, programs, or compressed files) should be accessed only through links that specify their size and format (e.g. 650kB .zip). Links to formatted word processor documents are discouraged; however accessible PDF versions of those documents are acceptable.
9. Videos should be uploaded to a service like YouTube or the campus Vimeo server and then included on the pages where they are to be displayed. Closed captioning is required for all videos.
10. Document managers should review the information presented in their pages to ensure it is correct and current.
11. Links to related off-campus resources should be clearly distinguished from links to local sources and should be checked periodically to ensure viability and appropriate content.
12. Links to individual Web pages of faculty, staff, and students may be included at the discretion of the document manager, in consultation with the dean, chair, or director of the unit. If such links are provided, they should be accessed from a menu that clearly designates the status of the individuals ("geology faculty" or "home pages of history majors") and includes a disclaimer that UM is not responsible for their content if necessary.
13. The <head> element (title, document type, and meta-elements) should be designed as carefully as the <body>, in order to provide keywords for search engine optimization. For standardization across the UM website, the <title> element should include the department's name in this format: <title>*Department Name* | University of Mississippi</title>
14. Avoid duplicating content by relying on feeds or linking to existing content. Feeds are available for the Event Calendar, Course Catalog, employee profiles, news, announcements, and more.

(b) File location

1. Cedar is the server of choice for housing official Web pages that do not require advanced programming (e.g. PHP, mySQL, etc.). Web6 is the server that offers advanced programming options, but access to it is more restrictive. IT maintains installations of WordPress for sites that only need a blog or that wish to make use of its content management interface.
2. Departments with their own resources may elect to maintain their home pages on their own servers. However, use of shared IT servers allows minimum duplication of resources, such as graphics, audio files, and applications, which may be useful across several websites. Departments choosing to run their own Web services are responsible for all administration associated with that server, e.g., providing UPS services, applying operating system patches, performing backups, managing security, etc. Graphic standards must be consistent with those issued or approved by University Communications.
3. Requests for URL aliases and redirects may be approved on a case by case basis to preserve URLs for relocated Web pages and to provide short URLs for use in printed materials.

Please note that any URL of the form "home.olemiss.edu/~user" or the shortcut "sites.olemiss.edu/sitename" is considered an individual Web page and should not be used for an official website. Individual accounts *may* be used for subsidiary pages of an official home page as appropriate (for example, course-related materials or individual faculty project descriptions).