

OSUL Website Content Guide

This document will attempt to instruct you in how your information will fit into the new Ohio State University Libraries' (OSUL) website. If after reading this and the associated documents, if you have questions, you are welcome to contact the OSUL Communications Department (Communications) or the Web Implementation Team (WIT).

How Does This Site Work

The architecture for the new website has been broken down into several page types, but many of them expectedly share layout similarities.

Common Elements

These elements are common to all pages on the OSUL website, and will be controlled by the Content Management System (CMS).

- **OSU Nav Bar** – The OSU Navigation Bar contains navigational elements that belong on every page of the university
- **OSUL Header** – This contains the OSU Libraries Logo, which also serves as a link to the OSUL Home page, and a search apparatus, which provides access to the catalog, journals, databases and more
- **First-level Navigation** – The most-broad categories of content for the OSUL website.
- **Second-level Navigation** – Depending upon which First-level navigation link is selected, the appropriate Second-level navigation will be displayed. (e.g. In the 'Stuff Happening' section, the Second-level navigation will be comprised of 'Events', 'Library News', 'Programs', 'Friends', and 'Lectures')
- **Footer** – This will provide contact information for OSUL and the Communications contact as well as claim of copyright.

Section Elements

- **Section Header** – The name of the section, optionally with a graphic. The graphic, if present, should be consistent throughout the section. If a Section 'Home Page' graphic (only for the section landing page) is desired, it should be placed in the Content section. Professional assistance in choosing or developing graphics for this section is available from the OSUL Communications department.
- **Section (Third-level) Navigation** – The third level navigation is to be used for the different pages in the section. There should be no more than seven items, preferably of one or two word titles.
- **Contact** – This section will have the information of the primary contact for the section. This need not be exhaustive, only the primaries. (e.g. The Building Administrator, Circulation Desk and Reference Desk for a location record.) Appropriate titles should be attached to all contact information. (e.g. Collection Manager, Janet Librarian, librarian.1@osu.edu, 614.292.0007.) This may or may not change throughout a section, depending upon the situation.

Page Elements

- **Links** – This is a specified section for links to more information about the content on the page. Depending upon the section and/or page, they might be separated into groups such as 'Resources', 'Outside Links', 'Collections' or 'More Information'. This may or may not change throughout a section, depending upon the situation. Navigation inferior to Section Navigation will also be located here.

- **Content** – This is where the bulk of the page-specific information will go. The exact details will be dependent upon the type of page, the section in which it resides and especially the content itself. Depending upon the page type, there will likely be several layout formats available for you to choose from. Images and graphics can be judiciously used, but should be carefully chosen to support the ideas presented on this page.

Where Does My Content Fit

A great deal of research and work has been done to determine a navigation schema that would serve several needs: allow patrons to find and use services, allow library staff to find and access information, allow visitors from outside the university to find and observe the work that we are doing here.

Categorization

We have found that the content can be sorted into nine page types. Most all of the pages that we reviewed would fit (or occasionally split) into these categories. Focusing on these types of categorizations should help us when creating and maintaining content in a manner that makes sense to our patrons and visitors.

Each of the following page types has a very well-defined and singular purpose. They will be highly inter-linked though, to ensure that the very complex relationships are maintained. You may be responsible for many different types of pages all within the content that you have heretofore maintained. (e.g. A Location page might have links to the Collections and Exhibits that are based there, the Departments that are housed there, and the Subjects that their resources specialize in.)

This specialization is an important part of writing for the web: small, specialized, unique units of information presented in a linked fashion. It will also be handy for visitors to find what they need. (e.g. A visitor can browse all the collections to explore an imprecise interest, and receive clearly presented information as well as links to relevant asides.)

1. **Department** – a page or collection of pages listing staff and their roles, the mission statement, internal policy and procedures. Each page should contain contact information.
2. **Subject** – likely a page listing the specialists and staff, populated with links to the pertinent Resources, Collections, and corresponding university departments.
3. **Location** – a page or possibly, collection of pages detailing the hours of operation, directions and parking instructions for a library facility. Separate pages might be used to describe the background, mission and history of the facility, *but there should be links to the Departments, Collections, Exhibits and Services that are housed there.*
4. **Collection** – information to simply describe the purpose and mission of the collection, its history with links to its Location(s), associated Exhibits, Resources and the Partners that help present the collection.
5. **Exhibit** – this can be a page describing a physical exhibit that exists (or has existed) over a finite amount of time, or a series of pages presenting a gallery of digital information. This is the page type that will be afforded the most lee-way from a design standpoint, even to the point of a completely separate design. Each exhibit should be sure to link to any Partners, Locations, Collections or Resources and of course back to the OSU Libraries.
6. **Resource** – finding aids, bibliographies, suggested database listings, these are different collections of library-generated reference information. They should link to

any Subjects or Collections that might provide more information to patrons or visitors.

7. **Partners** – organizations outside of the libraries, these might be university affiliates, sponsors, or collections of peers outside the library. This page provides a site-specific description of the relationship, possibly including the nature of the relationship, the history, and contact information for the Partner as well as any designated OSUL liaisons for that organization. (e.g. Friends of the Library are a charitable organization that... for more information contact... from the library.)
8. **Procedure & Documentation** – the pages describing the policies, procedures, instructions, workflows internal to the workings of the libraries. These are our operating manuals and policies.
9. **Service** – This is a page describing a service that OSUL offers. It should contain a description of the service, instruction on its use, notes on its availability and eligibility. It should have contact information for the person responsible for providing the service, options on what to do if something is amiss as well as links to Locations that it is offered at, and the Department(s) which provide it.

Navigation

Working with several OSUL Committees, we developed a User-Centric navigation, focusing on the goals that users have when they come to our site (e.g. ‘find when this location is open’, ‘find out who is in charge of this collection’, and of course ‘find more information about this subject’). There also is a standing goal of ensuring that the navigation is easy to use: the terminology is intuitive, the groupings logical, and the next step obvious to make.

Referring to the OSUL Website Navigation Schema, you can see the first level (the left-most column) is comprised of a broad painting of the goals of someone coming to the site. (Find, How to Find, News & Events, Programs & Projects, About Us, and My Account). These terms were selected to be approachable and show that we deliberately will not be using ‘library terminology’.

As you move from left to right, each navigation item will branch into the next list of subjects falling within its umbrella. You should note that there are several ‘stacked’ items labeled ‘Collection X’, ‘Exhibit X’ and the like. These correspond with many of the page types described above. These are a method to find all of the locations from a single page (similar to what we have now, but also a method to find all of the collections that we have, (which we don’t have now). This should help visitors to our site more easily find what they are looking for and promote some of the more less visible resources that we have to offer (each of these lists is one click away from any page on the site).

Try to determine in what categories your content will fit given the descriptions given here. It will likely fall in several areas. If you have questions you are welcome to ask a member of the Communications Department or the Web Implementation Team.

How My Content Looks

It is important to understand that there should be a clear disconnect between the style and the content of this website. The content should contain text and supporting images and should be marked up semantically. The styling decisions should be made as a whole and performed via the CMS and the associated Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). This is important for several reasons:

- The user-centered focus of this site demands a consistent design experience.
- Meaning tied up outside the semantics is lost when the content is presented in a different setting (e.g. via an adaptive technology browser or screen reader).

- The content should fit within the current design and easily change in the case of a future design revision.

The CMS will enable certain latitude in the layout of information to allow you to tailor how your content is presented, but will also enforce adherence to the design decisions made by the redesign group.

What My Content Says

Much of what exists on the existing website can be repurposed, but it all should be re-evaluated and possibly updated or even removed. The stewardship of the pages will be distributed following the organizational chart, but much of the work will likely be delegated as you might expect. On the other hand, with the CMS technology, the management of content will not require nearly the level of technical expertise as the previous methods. We hope that this puts the controls into the hands of more content providers and allows the focus to be primarily on content, not on the technical presentation.

There is another document that is part of this series which should help you determine what information you should include in your web pages, how it should be written, where you can get some help. The OSUL Website Content Generation Guide is a combination of a 'Best Practices for Web Writing' and 'Content Workshop Handout'. Please take a look at it when you are ready to start looking at your content, but keep in mind these ideas: keep it brief, keep it relevant, keep it current.

I don't think this will work for me...

Okay, you've read the pamphlets, tried the interface, something's not quite right...

- *I don't understand how to use the technology.*
Please consult your CMS migration assistant. They will be happy to demonstrate its use and help you to understand these new tools. This is a new technology for almost everyone and training is an important part of the project.
- *I don't think this accurately represents my work.*
Please try to analyze what you think is or is not happening. If it is something that the overall design is lacking, please make any suggestions to Communications or WIT, we always welcome new ideas. If it is something specific to your information, please contact us about a review of your needs.
- *I don't think that patrons are getting the most from my service.*
Part of what makes our organization great is the passion that our faculty and staff put into their work, however, we don't always do a great job of getting the word out about it to our patrons. We have tried very hard with the new design to enable visitors to find the best tools and services that we offer every day. A little boost is probably all you need to educate or remind patrons what we have to offer.
- *I don't think visitors will find my information.*
We have done a good deal of research to try and lay out an intuitive architecture and navigation schema. We have performed preliminary usability testing and plan on doing more once we have launched the new site. If you have questions or concerns or feel as if we've missed something, please feel free to contact us.