

I. Standards currently implemented on George Mason University's new web pages designed by Electronic Publications in University Relations

Methodology used for Web Site Architecture in New George Mason Web Sites

1. Design with a consistent style in new second level pages to Mason's home page
2. Design with a consistent style between the 3 campus home pages
3. Design with a consistent style between new second level pages to the campus home pages
4. At the departmental level, use variety in design with consistency in regard to web architecture standards outlined below.
5. Research Center sites use variety in design with consistency in regard to web architecture standards outlined below.

ALL NEW SITES INCORPORATE THE FOLLOWING WEB ARCHITECTURE STANDARDS

1. Standard pages 580 pixels wide to accommodate users with older computer systems and small monitors.
2. Style sheets are used to standardize text size, color, and fonts
3. Breadcrumb navigation
 - a. Incorporated into the George Mason Signature required for every page
 - b. Navigation Bar at the top of the web page takes a user back to Mason's homepage (except home page, which navigation bar at the top takes the user to either Fairfax, Prince William, or Arlington campus)
4. No frames are used
5. No automatic pop-up windows, new windows only from links
6. The university name George Mason University and not GMU is used for the first mention of the university name. After the first mention, then George Mason's may be used eliminating the word university.
7. Headers from <H1> to <H6> in size are used
8. Contact information is added to sites
9. Pages other than the home page have last update dates
10. American Disabilities Accessibility features used for every page
 - a. Skip navigation feature
 - b. User Text sizing feature
 - c. Drop down menu with a go box for navigation
 - d. Alt attributes on images
 - e. Real text is used for text content, and bitmapped images for text are not used

Only Home Page Includes: Privacy Statement that links to George Mason's privacy statement and directs the user to the web development site that has links to the Responsible Use of Computing, to Mason's web disclaimer, to the Copyright policy, to Virginia's Internet and Systems Policy web site, to George Mason's web disclaimer, and

to the procedures that have been developed at George Mason in regard to web development on campus.

Additionally, the link takes you to the site that has links to George Mason's web accessibility site, developed as a result of the university's partnership with Web Aim, a project administered through a grant provided by the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education (FIPSE) and funded by the Department of Education.

This link also goes to the university's web accessibility statement that says "George Mason University is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)." This link also states that all of George Mason's web pages, to the extent feasible, must be accessible to people with disabilities. If this is not possible, reasonable accommodations will be made to provide the same materials in other formats. Web pages must be designed to accommodate text-only browsers. If graphics are displayed, an alternative description of the graphic will be provided for the consideration of users with non-graphical browsers.

II. State Web Architecture Standards vs. George Mason Web Architecture Standards

State and University accept the following from the introduction to the state document:

1. Web accessibility standards from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), including Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), The Platform for Privacy Preferences Project (P3), and other standards bodies referenced, such as Section 508 of the Federal Access Board, be adopted in both their present state and as amended or replaced unless otherwise indicated in the statement of Information Technology Resource Management (ITRM). ADA requirements consistent with Section 508.

State accepts midyear reviews and amendments. University calendar can accept midyear reviews, but amendments should be made on a yearly basis.

2. Midyear reviews can be conducted, but amendments made on a yearly basis.

(I) B. Web Site Architecture

B1. State and University Accept

Browser Windows opening from links and not automatically as pop-up windows.

B2. University flexibility desired for multimedia visual enhancement and artistic creativity

Request that equivalent accessible versions of multimedia be created for multimedia that is essential to an understanding of site content. Request that non-essential to the content multimedia be exempted from this rule.

B3. State and University Accept

Font Types as discussed in the document

B4. State Accepts and University requires consideration based on the following in regard to relative font sizes:

1. If you are using a style sheet, Netscape 4 can only handle font size set in pixels, which is absolute, and Netscape 4 can only resize fonts set with the font tag in the following fashion:

The browser can not resize or . These font sizes end up being too big or too small depending on the browser. Font tags are also deprecated, so they shouldn't be used anyway. Netscape 4 users are still going to need to be given pixel-set fonts. **A solution here is to change the university's browser of choice, which is antiquated at this time.**

2. Internet Explorer 5+ can resize any font tag, and relative fonts set with a stylesheet, but it is problematic in other ways. IE 5 is off-by-one in its font-size keywords (i.e. x-small is 12px in IE 5, and is 10px in every other browser), so if you use keywords (as the state example shows), you have to give IE 5 and IE 6 different sizes through hacks.

3. There are other issues as well. A good tutorial to see is <http://diveintoaccessibility.org/examples/fontsize.html>

B5. State Accepts and University requires flexibility or change

Using style sheets to control layout and presentation is inconsistent with the university's browser of choice Netscape 4.

B6. State and University Accepts

Color Usage as discussed in the state document

B7. State and University can accept

If a Text-Only site exists, the link should be on the top row of a template, but note that ADA does not require a text site and actually discourages the use of text sites, unless a site can not be made compliant otherwise.

B8. State and University accept

Header sizes from H1 to H6

B9. State and University accept

<TITLE> and <META> tags

B10. State and University accept

Frames prohibited (though 508 does not require prohibiting frames but rather ensuring that frames are created properly for accessibility compliance)

B11. State accepts and University requires flexibility for university branding and for design purposes

Search in the upper right of template (accessibility does not require this)

B12. State and University accept

Bread-crumbs navigation aid in a designated spot –recommend requesting flexibility as to location

B13. State accepts and University requires flexibility

Request that the location and pixel dimensions for the size of banner images be flexible in order to incorporate the university branding in progress.

B14. State accepts and University requires flexibility

Request not to limit location and presentation of text content, as the university has extensive variety in the type of content presented on each site.

B15. State accepts and University requires flexibility

More than eight main navigation links on the left of a page are needed on Mason's homepage, and several sites require more than 8 main links. Request flexibility based on the numerous operations of the university as opposed to the more regular operations of single state agencies.

B16. State accepts and University requires flexibility

While the university name is somewhat equivalent to an agency name, the placement of the name should be dictated by the design of the page. Request flexible location.

B17. State accepts that specific contact be placed on a web site. University suggests that all available and public contact information be added to a web site

B18. State accepts footer information on each page including agency, copyright, and an indication of WAI compliance. University requests that this information be linked from the university's home page at www.gmu.edu

B19. State accepts that all web sites link to a web policy with disclaimer, use of cookies, link policy, privacy policy, web site accessibility statement, and . University requests doing this site wide from the university home page, which currently links to the web development site that includes links to all of these policies except a policy in regard to the use of cookies. As cookies need to be set for the university text sizing feature and for some instances of authentication, suggest adding a policy or statement in regard to their use on the web development site.

B20. In regard to templates and university signatures currently exist on the Electronic Publications web site at www.pubs.gmu.edu/resources.html

Suggest that these templates can be updated, but should allow maximum flexibility to allow for variety in design that reflects the diverse nature of the university.

III. Summary of Requests To Be Made to the State for George Mason University's Web Architecture Standards

To be in compliance with the state, beyond what has been established as standard for web architectures, the following needs to be added to the university's web site:

1. A statement or policy in regard to the use of cookies as well as a statement or policy in regard to the plugins required for viewing all aspects of the site needs to be added to the web site.

Suggestion: These statements be added to the web development page at www.gmu.edu/mlnavbar/webdev

2. Flexibility be requested in regard to the size and location for Banners, page footers, sizing of text, use of style sheets, the use of web accessible frames, and number of navigational links. Flexibility is required for use of Netscape 4 as a university browser and for variety in design relative to the diversity of departments, research, organizational and student activity on campus, as well as to accommodate the university branding project currently underway.
3. Additionally, it is necessary to request that links to state required policies and statements be implemented site wide from the university's home page rather than on every web site.
4. ITU be designated as the central repository of university offered online services and email, and that flexibility be given for a number of designated locations for university online forms.