Draft AFRE Website Style Manual

Notes on best practices to enhance website accessibility and readability on multiple size browsing devices

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• This note briefly documents a set of recommended and implemented best practices for the AFRE website.
• Motivation
  • Assists AFRE to meet essential MSU/CANR website accessibility standards, **and**
  • Improve AFRE’s website content readability, regardless of browsing device.
• Draws on suggested best practices/learning tutorials at:
  ▪ MSU Web accessibility guidelines - [Basic Checklist: Online Content Accessibility](#) see key hints on slide 3
  ▪ Rutgers University – Communications and Marketing (Writing for Websites)
  ▪ Hampshire College – [Web Writing Style Guide](#)
  ▪ [9 Simple Tips for Writing Persuasive Web Content](#) by Henneke – Enchanted Marketing
Basic Logic of AFRE Proposed Website Style Guide

- Web readers don’t sit in front of their computer screens (or gaze into their mobile phones) and read webpages word-by-word.
- Instead, they scan pages for useful information.
- To provide easily scannable content, use these techniques in web writing:
  - Break information into “chunks” that can be easily accessed and comprehended.
    - (Website Top Level Tabs and corresponding Subtabs)
  - Depending on amount of information to present in a given subtab, consistently partition and label the contents of subtabs
  - Consistently use different size headers to denote the partitioning of content.
  - Use bulleted lists to present content detail.
AFRE Website Content Map
By Tabs and Subtabs

• About
  • Department Leadership
  • Biweekly Announcements
  • Advancing Economics, Transforming Lives
  • Statement of Values
  • Publications
  • Giving
  • History of AFRE
  • News
  • Contact Us

• People
  • Faculty
  • Emeritus/Former Faculty
  • Staff
  • Current Graduate Students
  • Completed Graduate Students

• Undergraduate Study
  • Agribusiness Management
  • Environmental Economics & Management
  • Food Industry Management
  • MSU Admissions
  • Undergraduate Scholarships
  • Undergraduate Academic Advising Office
  • Degree Requirements
  • Minor Requirements
  • Career Exploration
  • Study Abroad

• Graduate Study
  • M.S. Degree
  • Ph.D. Degree
  • Graduate Courses
  • Dual Major
  • Graduate Specializations
  • Applying and Visiting
  • Financial Aid
  • Grad Student Organization
  • Costs
  • Thesis/Dissertation Award Winners
  • Program Strengths
  • Job Placements

• Events
  • AFRE Weekly Seminars
  • AFRE Brown-Bag Seminars
  • AFRE Graduate Symposium
  • Development Brown Bag Seminars
  • AFRE/FSG Seminars
  • Economics Dept Seminars
  • CANR/Other MSU Seminars

• News

• Projects
  • Domestic Research & Outreach
  • International Research & Outreach
  • AFRE Faculty Specialization
  • Past Projects

• Centers & Services
  • AFRE's Expanding Horizons
  • Ag Credit Conference
  • Center for Economic Analysis
  • Economic Analysis of Sustainable Ag. & Food Systems
  • Extension/Outreach Programs
  • Food Security Group - FSG
  • Elton R. Smith Endowment
  • Morris Chair in State and Local Government Finance and Policy
  • MSU Income Tax School
  • North Central Regional Center for Rural Development
  • State and Local Government
  • The Food SCENE
  • The Product Center
  • Telfarm
  • Food Security Policy (FSP) Innovation Lab

• Connect With Us - Quick Links
  Additional Connect With Us - Quick Links
Examples – Chunks of Information, Consistent Tab and Subtab Headers, and Presentation of Basic Content via Bullets of Information

People
Overview

- Throughout its history, AFRE has been fortunate to have outstanding and dedicated people associated with all the dimensions of its research, outreach and teaching missions.
- Use the navigation bar at the left, or select an option below, to see listings of AFRE current faculty, Emeritus/Former faculty, staff or graduate students.

Menu - People

- Faculty
- Emeritus/Former Faculty
- Staff
- Current Graduate Students
- Completed Graduate Students
Examples – Chunks of Information, Consistent Tab and Subtab Headers, and Presentation of Basic Content via Bullets of Information
Examples – Chunks of Information, Consistent Tab and Subtab Headers, and Presentation of Basic Content via Bullets of Information
Examples – Chunks of Information, Consistent Tab and Subtab Headers, and Presentation of Basic Content via Bullets of Information
Implementing Consistent Headers For Titles, Tabs and Subtabs

Title of Website [ <h1> header assigned by EE software] White on Green Background

“About” Top Level Tab [ <h2> header assigned by EE software] Green and Bold

“Department Leadership” Subtab [ <h2> header assigned by EE software] Green and Bold

- Subtab partitioning – sublabel a [ <h3> header assigned by user] Black & Bold
- Subtab partitioning – sublabel b [ <h3> header (assigned by user) Black & Bold
- Subtab partitioning – sublabel c [ <h3> header (assigned by user) Black & Bold

“Biweekly Announcements” Subtab [ <h2> header assigned by EE software] Green and Bold
1. Heading where EE controls size of font: `<h1>` white and `<h2>` green and bolded.
2. Headings where users have control `<3>` and below: Use only one color in text – black.
3. Heading `<h3>` is automatically bolded by EE. Consistently use `<h3>` on all sublabels on a given page.
4. Text entered below sub-headers is organized by bullets and is the EE default font size.
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2. Headings where users have control `<3>` and below: Use only one color in text – black.
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4. Text entered below sub-headers is organized by bullets and is the EE default font size.
Example of selecting `<h3>` (Heading 3) when posting text on a given page in EE.

Generally, let EE set defaults for “Font Family” and for “Font Size”
Key hints on editing AFRE’s site in EE

1. Use black text on white background & use bolding carefully and sparingly.
2. Don’t use colored fonts to get attention. Avoid All CAPS.
3. EE defaults for <h1> and <h2>. User selects <h3>
4. Use bullets for text rather than numbers. Avoid paragraphs of text
5. Insert alternative text as meta data on all images.
6. When uploading AFRE videos, use captioning. Links to outside videos w/out captioning ok
7. Don’t use “click here”. Use “view xxxxxx” so users know what information appears at this link.
8. Don’t use tables to present info – Not workable in responsive mode
Why Does the Style Include a “Menu – XXXX” Subheader on Each Top-Level Tab

Short Answer – This is a short-term fix waiting for a longer-term ANR/Tec fix.
“Menu – XXXX” Subheader on Each Top-Level Tab is Redundant When Viewing The AFRE Website on a Desktop or Larger Screen. Menu Options are Seen on the Left.
On Cell Phone Viewing of AFRE Website, No First Hand View of Navigating to Subtabs

ANR/TEC May Setup CANR Websites Similar to the MSU Website

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Adding Menu - People Allows Easy Onward Navigation
How The MSU Main Website Facilitates Navigation in Responsive Mode

Down Marks Allow Clicking To View Subtab Contents
Going Forward:

- Who is Responsible for Website Posting of Materials Developed by Selected Faculty in Different Sections of the AFRE Website?
  
  o **Home** - News (Taylor Logan and others? Helped by Ellen
  
  o **People** - Current and Emeritus Faculty, and Staff - Taylor Logan
    - Retiring/Departing Faculty need to be move from Current to Emeritus Section
  
  o **People** - Students - Debbie Conway
  
  o **Undergraduate** - Ellen Schueller
  
  o **Graduate** - Debbie Conway – also maintains the graduate thesis/dissertation data base
  
  o **Events** - Nancy Creed and others?
  
  o **News** - Taylor Logan and others? Helped by Ellen
  
  o **Projects** - Domestic - Michael Graff
    - Completed Projects need to be archived instead of removed.
  
  o **Projects** - International - To be determined given Weber’s move to Florida?
    - Completed Projects need to be archived instead of removed.
  
  o **Centers and Services** - Taylor Logan
    o **Getting Good Pictures** – How to do this more systematically?
    o **AFRE Newsletter: Advancing Economics, Transforming Lives** – AFRE drafts, Eileen Gianiodis and Fran Adelaja process this for CANR and AFRE news items and put it into the AFRE Newsletter format. But Constant Contact, the version of the software used is not responsive - the newsletter cannot be read on a cell phone. According to Eileen Gianiodis, CANR is in the process of updating this over the next couple of months. Need to follow up on this. Food Security Group could also use this new version of the software for their newsletter.

- Who is Responsible for Overall Website Coordination and Oversite, and News Story Writing? -Possible new AFRE communication staff position?