

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE WEB DESIGN GUIDELINES

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Version 3

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1 Purpose

The Houston Community College website is designed as a source of vital information for its faculty, students and staff. It is the responsibility of the college to ensure that the site is effectively managed to provide information that is accurate, pertinent and accessible to all users, including those with disabilities.

These guidelines are intended to establish standards for all HCC web pages linked to/from any page found on <http://www.hccs.edu>. Further, this document establishes guidelines to create and maintain a common look and feel for Houston Community College, promoting a positive image and ensuring accountability for information presented in the name of HCC.

2 Houston Community College Home Pages

The Vignette Content Management System has been put in place for faculty and staff at Houston Community College to manage content displayed on the HCC websites.

The official internet site address for Houston Community College is <http://www.hccs.edu>. The District Site's primary objective is to provide an attractive, distinctive, clear and easily navigable point-of-entry to the information on HCC's Internet servers, and to set a tone and style for the college pages.

HCC also hosts the following college sites, which are accessible from the District home page using top navigation functionality.

- Central College - <http://central.hccs.edu>
- Coleman College - <http://coleman.hccs.edu>
- Northeast College - <http://northeast.hccs.edu>
- Northwest College - <http://northwest.hccs.edu>
- Southeast College - <http://southeast.hccs.edu>
- Southwest College - <http://southwest.hccs.edu>
- Distance Education - <http://de.hccs.edu>

3 Web Page Standards

3.1 Branding and Logo

As with all great, highly recognizable brands, it is imperative to demonstrate consistency at all times and in all areas of the websites.

HCC is defined as classic “branded house” architecture. A branded house architecture is one in which the individual colleges that make up the whole are presented in a manner that supports the master brand.

3.1.1 Colors

The primary colors to be used on the website are gold and black, with sky blue as the supporting color. All colors within the palette may be used as screens at the discretion of the web designer, but are subject to final approval by members of HCC Administration.

3.1.2 Fonts and text

The following fonts have been chosen as the official web fonts for HCC sites,

Arial, Helvetica, Sans-serif

Other fonts should not be used. It is recommended to use a font size of "110%" for regular text.

These are general guidelines for fonts and text usage

- Large amounts of text should not be centered on a web page. This makes it difficult to read on the page. Text should be flush left.
- Default color for text must be a dark color, preferably black. Background color on inside pages must be light, preferably white. This allows the page to be printed and easily read.
- Do not use blinking text for any reason.
- Use upper and lower case on all text on pages, including headings and titles. All upper cases should be avoided.
- Large amounts of italicized text are hard to read. Do not bold or italicize entire paragraphs unless absolutely necessary. Use bold and italic type sparingly.
- Underlining text that is not a link can confuse the user. Do not underline type -- body text or headings.
- It is best not to use overly large size fonts or text. Readers use different size monitors and browser settings. Text that is too large is hard to read and will appear unprofessional. Using the font sizes listed above (section 1) for standard font sizes on your page will help keep a uniform look for HCC. Header tags and larger font sizes on titles and sub-titles should balance with the rest of the text on the page.

3.1.3 Logo

The standard HCC logo is representative of the district brand and should be displayed on each home page (District site and all colleges) in the upper left corner of the page, including the registered trademark symbol.

On the websites, the logo is not to appear tilted or stretched. Additionally, no drop shadows are to be added, nor should the logo be placed on a distracting background.

3.2 Vignette Templates

The current HCC templates are to be used in developing a cohesive look for the college. While the header, footer and navigation are to remain consistent throughout, the body of the page allows for individuality of the campus unit. **Contact the Web Content Coordinator to receive template information.**

3.3 Page Load Times

HCC web pages are expected to load in less than 4 seconds. The following tips are offered to ensure that pages adhere to this standard:

1. Use fewer images and graphics
2. Reduce image file size, dimension, or resolution
3. Predefine the size of your images
4. Re-use the same images whenever possible
5. Avoid animated/moving graphics
6. Convert JPG files to GIF files when possible
7. Use valid HTML and CSS code
8. Decrease the size of your pages
9. Avoid unnecessary code
10. Use CSS-based design instead of table-based design
11. Use separate CSS files rather than containing the CSS in the page
12. Avoid excessive use of JavaScript and Flash

Please refer to the Vandelay Design Blog, located at <http://vandelaydesign.com/blog/design/designing-pages-to-load-quickly/> for further information.

3.4 Screen Resolution

Current statistics show the majority of Web site visitors are using computers with resolutions of 1024x768. Many visitors still use the standard 800x600 screen resolution. With this in mind, it is recommended that HCC pages are designed to fit various screen sizes, minimum of 800x600.

4 Publishing Guidelines

The college is reflected in the appearance and content of its web pages. Therefore, official HCC pages should be prepared with this function in mind. Care should be taken to ensure that information is accurate, up-to-date and consistent with the HCC mission *prior* to publication.

Content owners are responsible for reviewing all content before approval and publication to the websites. Once published, the Communications Department, under the direction and advice of HCC Administration, maintains the authority to request the removal of any published content it deems inaccurate or, in any way, does not adhere to established HCC policies.

In general, all approved, non-time sensitive content will be published to the District Site during a daily publication process managed and executed by Web Services. (Each college is responsible for publishing approved content to their own websites.) In the event that time-sensitive content needs to be published, a request must be sent to the Help Desk, requesting an “off-cycle” publication.

5 Accessibility

Houston Community College is committed to providing accurate, up-to-date information via its websites to all of its site visitors, including those with disabilities. A conscious effort has been made by HCC to meet regulatory guidelines and compliance, promoting consistency, quality and a cohesive, unifying image for the institution while also assuring individuality. State law requires all state pages to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

Below are links providing details for general ADA compliance standards that all official HCC web pages must comply with.

- Section 508 (<http://www.section508.gov/>)
- W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/>)

6 Copyright and Privacy

Information created by a government agency is largely considered to be in the public domain. "Found" graphics or outside information must not be used on the Houston Community College websites without proper attribution. Copyright laws policy must be followed.

7 Oversight and Responsibilities

Web Services and College Web Coordinators, under the direction and advice of the Communications department and/or the Vice Chancellor of Information Technology, can refuse to link to or display web pages which are not prepared or maintained in accordance with HCC policy, web site guidelines contained within this document, and/or State of Texas guidelines.

Every organizational unit (College/ Department), shall designate an individual(s) to serve as department Approver or Publisher, with the following responsibilities,

- Ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of the information presented;
- Offering readers pages that represent professional design and quality presentation;
- Abiding by HCC Web publishing and branding standards, and complying with all IT policies and guidelines, and all applicable State of Texas Web requirements;
- Regularly updating and keeping published information current;
- Understanding and complying with copyright, privacy, accessibility, intellectual property and libel laws;
- Responding in a timely fashion to inquiries and comments directed at one's published material; and
- Users must, uniformly, guard against abuses that disrupt the system and threaten its long-term viability, degrade performance, deprive access to a HCC resource, or embarrass the college.

Appendix A. References

URLs

<http://www.hccs.edu>

<http://northwest.hccs.edu>

<http://northeast.hccs.edu>

<http://southwest.hccs.edu>

<http://southeast.hccs.edu>

<http://central.hccs.edu>

<http://coleman.hccs.edu>

<http://de.hccs.edu>

<http://vandelaydesign.com>

<http://www.section508.gov>

<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10>

Documents

Title	Version

Appendix B. Document Control

Document Revision History

Version	Release Date	Revised By	Revision Description
1	09/23/2008	Sri	Created version 1
2	10/08/2008	Belinda	Revisions to V1
3	10/08/2008	Sri	Revisions to V2

Document Storage

This document was created using Microsoft® Word 2003.

Document Owner

The Web Services Lead Developer is responsible for developing and maintaining this document.