

MOUNT DESERT ISLAND REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL WEB PAGE GUIDELINES

I. Background

This document defines the specific standards and general guidelines that Mount Desert Island Regional High School will use to make information available on the World Wide Web (Web).

Why this document is needed: The World Wide Web and related Internet technologies hold great potential for providing information to the public more quickly, extensively, and efficiently than has ever before been possible. The remarkable growth in the number of WWW servers, the amount of material they contain, and their use by the public make the Web an increasingly attractive and effective dissemination channel for Mount Desert Island Regional High School.

This same rapid growth also intensifies the need to establish standards and guidelines to help users find, retrieve, and use the information they need. We need to learn some of the lessons traditional publishers and libraries have learned. From publishers, we need to learn the importance of consistent presentation and visual clues (i.e., look-and-feel, human factors). From libraries, we need to learn the importance of the universal uniform cataloging system and other resource-sharing tools.

Mount Desert Island Regional High School is making a major commitment to electronic networking as a primary means of providing information and services.

What this document is and is not: This document provides guidance to ensure high-quality and consistent content, organization, and presentation of information on Mount Desert Island Regional High School Web servers, in order to help users find pertinent information to answer their education questions. At the same time, this document tries to avoid placing unnecessary constraints on the design and operation of individual servers and services. Every school and program faces the special circumstances of its particular goals, content, technical capabilities, and organizational culture.

II. Union 98/Local School Controlled Content

Statement of Purpose

The content of all pages on Mount Desert Island Regional High School and local school Web servers, as well as pages on remote servers which are explicitly related to Mount Desert Island Regional High School activities, must be consistent with the mission and goals of Mount Desert Island Regional High School.

Responsibility for Public Web Page Content

For those web documents which will be made available to the public, the Union 98 staff member who posts those documents shall be responsible for ascertaining that they are in accordance with the Union 98 web publishing guidelines.

Content Specifics:

Information may not be posted if it:

- violates the privacy of others
- contains student personal contact information
- jeopardizes the health or safety of students or staff
- is obscene
- is libelous
- violates copyright laws or policies
- parental permission is not granted in accordance with the Maine State Statute (see below)

As per Maine Statute (20-A M.R.S.A. § 6001.2.), effective September 18, 1999:

“A public school may not publish on the Internet or provide for publication on the Internet any personal information about its students without first obtaining the **written approval of those students’ parents**. For the purpose of this section, “personal information” means information that identifies a student, including, but not limited to, the **student’s full name, photograph, personal biography, e-mail address, home address, date of birth, social security number and parents’ names.**”

Responsible Party/Contact

Every document (or document collection) will have an e-mail address, or a link to an e-mail form, which can be used to contact the responsible party regarding the content of the page(s). Organizations, programs, or projects are encouraged to establish generic e-mail addresses for their public points of contact instead of using personal addresses (e.g., library@emerson.u98.k12.me.us rather than john_doe@emerson.u98.k12.me.us.)

Accuracy

Complete accuracy for all online information is an important goal to:

- (1) ensure the accuracy of information on which users may base important decisions (e.g., grant application deadlines, policy guidance);
- (2) avoid inaccuracies which compromise meaning (e.g., missing text, misaligned table cells); and
- (3) fix trivial and cosmetic flaws.

Before any HTML document is made publicly available, spelling, grammar, and HTML syntax should be checked, and links should be verified.

Timeliness

The credibility of Union 98 Internet sites depend on the information's timeliness. Information, particularly time-sensitive information such as grant announcements and press releases, must be posted as promptly as possible. Out-of-date information must be removed or updated promptly.

Personal Home Pages

Personal and non-school related home pages are not supported on the Mount Desert Island Regional High School web servers.

School, Classroom, Department and Project Pages

These are supported and encouraged on Mount Desert Island Regional High School Web servers.

External Content

Approval

The decision to include a link to an external source should be based on the **Statement of Purpose**.

Context

In many instances, it may be necessary or appropriate to place external links in context for the user by including statements explaining the purpose of the link and disclaiming responsibility for or control over its content. It is important to avoid giving a user the impression that Mount Desert Island Regional High School is endorsing a commercial product. It is also important to avoid giving the impression that Mount Desert Island Regional High School is linking to frivolous (or worse) sites. Care should be taken when linking to external sites to ascertain that they do not themselves link to questionable or objectionable sites. Users cannot always easily tell when they are leaving Mount Desert Island Regional High School "webpace" via an external link.

III. Navigation/Organization

An important goal for Mount Desert Island Regional High School's World Wide Web services is to offer each user full access to the entire collection, regardless of the point at which the user enters the system. Reaching this goal will require that each server in School Mount Desert Island Regional High School, in addition to serving its own particular constituency, must provide links to other Mount Desert Island Regional High School servers. Staff members with school related web pages on remote servers will have links from the appropriate Mount Desert Island Regional High School web sites to those pages.

Home Page Links

Documents should be designed to minimize users' reliance on the navigational aids in Web clients (e.g., back and forward buttons, history lists). The back button, particularly, tends to retrace a path through every page the user has visited rather than logically backing out of a collection.

There should be explicit links on each page within a document or collection back to the home page for that document or collection. The home page for each document or collection should in turn include an explicit link back to the sponsoring organization, project, or program.

Dead Links

Dead links inevitable occur on Web servers as pages are modified, moved, or deleted over time. However, dead links can quickly damage a Web server's credibility. The responsible party for each organization, program, or project will monitor and maintain their collections. Dead links will be removed as soon as possible.

Restricted Access

Sensitive or confidential information shall not be placed in publicly available directories. In some instances, there may be a need to place documents and collections that are not officially public (e.g., discussion drafts, prototypes, collections which are in development) in a non-private directory. The sponsoring organization is responsible for determining whether to password-protect the materials to prevent access by unauthorized individuals.

Documents and collections that are not officially public will **not** be linked to publicly accessible documents or publicly available directories without an explicit warning to users and information on the access restrictions.

IV. Glossary

Document

A document is a set of information designed and presented as an individual entity. A publication is a good example of a document. It may contain logical subunits such as parts, sections, or chapters; but it is typically created, updated, and presented as a single unit. The Web presentation of a document may consist of one or many Web pages.

Pages

A page, in Web parlance, is an individual computer file that can be addressed by a hypertext link. Documents and collections are constructed of linked pages.

Although most pages are static files, some are not. HTML forms, Common Gateway Interface (CGI) scripts, and other mechanisms may be used to create pages that are front-ends to databases or other types of information services. Such services may dynamically create new pages containing query responses or customized forms in response to user input.

Home Page

A home page is the entry point to a web server or a collection. It is the first page of information received by a visitor.

Web Server

A Web server is a computer that provides access to one or more collections of documents using World Wide Web formats and protocols. Each web server has a main entry point or home page, although numerous files or pages are usually directly addressable.

Webmaster

Each Web server will have a Webmaster. This is an individual with primary responsibility for the server. By convention, each web server maintains a Webmaster e-mail address (e.g., webmaster@u98.k12.me.us) to which suggestions and inquiries about the site may be directed.

References

Stubbs, Keith M. U.S. Department of Education WWW Server Standards and Guidelines. 18-Mar-1996. U.S. Department of Education, Resource Sharing and Cooperation Division. Accessed 23-Feb-1998.

<http://www.ed.gov/internal/wwwstds.html>.

Publishing a Website, The Howard County Public School System

<http://www.howard.k12.md.us/ipolicies/pubweb.html>

Web Page Standards, Omaha Public Schools.

<http://www.ops.org/ops/webguide.html>

Copyright Tips and Issues.

<http://www.siec.k12.in.us/~west/online/copy.html>

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