



Course Website Design Guidelines

The following are considered good design guidelines for websites in general and online course sites in particular. To learn more, visit the links at the bottom of this page.

- Be sure that all components are **accessible** to students with visual or auditory disabilities, or that an alternative is available for them. For example, Blackboard allows you to set your navigation controls as text instead of buttons, greatly enhancing their accessibility for users with visual disabilities.
- Keep navigation menus **simple**. More than a half-dozen or so links in your course menu can be hard to process at once.
- Be **consistent** with fonts and colors. If the heading for your first topic is in garnet Times Roman 12pt, use the same for other topic headings.
- Go for a **clean look**. Excessive decoration makes things harder to download and use. Try to avoid flashy colors, ornamental clip art, video for its own sake, and other things that merely "look cool".
- Keep your structure **parallel**. If Week 1 contains a document called "Introduction to Week 1", may be slightly confusing to students if a similar document in Week 2 is labeled "Exploring the Second Week."
- **Group** related items together and present them in a chronological **sequence**, as they might be used by students. There's no need to send students to three different areas to get their lectures, assignments, and web links for Week 5.
- Make your site **usable** by putting yourself in the student's position. What will they see first? How will they know what to do next? Can they get the software needed to read that Powerpoint file? Can you follow your instructions for posting discussion threads? Be empathetic and do real-world testing (perhaps even a pilot) of your course site.
- Rough out your content and structure **offline** on your local computer before uploading it.
- **Know what you're doing**. Learn **file management**, Blackboard operation, and perhaps a little bit about web production. You'll be more independent and confident when you deliver instruction online.

For more information on good design for course websites, see:

FSU Web Standards

Color scheme, seal/wordmark, fonts, and footer.

FSU Image Server (requires FSU login)

A searchable database with thousands of web-ready images of FSU people and places including banners and other images sized specifically for dropping into the FSU web templates. Browse the categories or use the search function.

Blackboard Colour Picker

Handy guide shows hexadecimal color codes in Bb's color picker -- to help you match colors in HTML documents uploaded to your course site. Many thanks to [Annemaree Senior](#), the University of Otago, Dunedin, NZ.

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