

PCC Web Site Authoring Checklist

Please print this checklist and go through it as you create Web pages. After a while, you'll have it memorized, but it's a good idea to periodically review it to be sure your site is in harmony with the rest of the PCC Web site.

This document has columns of checkboxes for both department Web sites and faculty sites. Items with **black checkboxes are required**, while those with gray boxes are merely recommended for a more consistent and professional site.

Keep in mind that your department's pages are not an independent Web site. They are a section of the PCC site, just as your information in the printed catalog or class schedule is a coordinated part of the larger whole.

Don't worry too much about your pages looking a little dull. Our visitors don't come to be entertained, and we don't have the resources to compete with the places our students go for entertainment. There's nothing dull about quickly getting the information you need. A few good photographs and some text "call outs" can add color and interest.

Departments	Faculty and Staff	Item	Details
		Text Formatting	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black text only (except links, which are automatically blue).	For faculty sites only: If you want to use colored type, see "PCC Color Schemes" under "Faculty Site Requirements if NOT Built with PCC/WebEasy," at the end of this document.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All text and headings left aligned. Don't center anything or indent paragraphs.	In a table, it's OK to right align numbers in a column.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nothing is in all-capital letters, except acronyms. This includes headings and page titles!	To emphasize something, use bold, sparingly. In headings, don't capitalize prepositions or articles unless they're the first word of the heading.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Normal body text has the "Standard" format.	Set this with the PCC/WebEasy tool bar's pop-up menu. Don't use a "Heading" format to make a paragraph stand out. Use the "Heading" format only for headings.

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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lists of items should usually be formatted as bulleted lists.	<p>Use numbered lists only if the items are steps that must be taken in sequence. If the list items are short, and are not complete sentences, don't end the lines with a period. If they are sentences, or are long enough to look like sentences, use periods after all of the items in the list.</p> <p>For clarity, avoid multi-level bulleted lists. But if you need them, use the WebEasy tool bar's indent buttons to move items up or down a level.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't overuse bold text, and avoid italics.	<p>Too much bold text defeats the purpose, which is to make something stand out from the surrounding material. And while italics are fine for printed brochures, they're harder to read on the low-resolution of computer screens.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ampersands have not been used.	<p>Although we occasionally use ampersands for visual effect in special display graphics, don't use them in normal text and headings.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tighten up lines that don't need space between them.	<p>To start a new line without extra space above it, use Shift-Enter. This is good for items such as multi-line contact info (name, title, phone, email) and office hours. The lines are close together, like a bulleted or numbered list, without the bullets and numbers.</p> <p>Don't use Shift-Enter to force breaks in headings or normal text paragraphs, because you can't predict how lines will break on another computer.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use the Arial font, always.	<p>PCC's graphic identity specifies variants of Helvetica and Palatino. For text on Web pages, the font must be on the user's computer, so we substitute the ubiquitous Arial for Helvetica. Occasionally, we may use Palatino for graphic call outs.</p> <p>PCC/WebEasy should automatically use Arial, but we've seen cases where some text appears in Times, perhaps as a result of cutting and pasting from a Word document. If this happens, and you can't get it corrected, call the help desk at ext. 4400.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Format phone numbers correctly.	<p>Use hyphens in phone numbers, not periods or parentheses.</p>

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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Headings	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Write a good Level 1 heading for your page.	Use meaningful page headings. Web search engines usually index your Level 1 Heading—the one at the top of your page. Keep this heading as short as possible, but long enough to state the topic of the page. Avoid starting headings with words like A, An and The, which convey no meaning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Format headings and subheadings with proper HTML heading tags.</p> <p>Be sure:</p> <p>You have not used heading tags to format text that is not a heading.</p> <p>You have not used a graphic image as a heading.</p>	<p>The heading formats don't just set the size of the type. They establish a hierarchy of information that some devices, such as screen readers for the visually impaired, cell phones and PDAs, can use to help navigate.</p> <p>In PCC/WebEasy, use the pop-up menu at the top of the tool bar to change from "Standard" text to a heading level.</p> <p>The first item on the page should be your page's title, set to the Heading 1 format, with the same words (or nearly the same) as the PCC/WebEasy page title field. This should be the only "Heading 1" item on the page.</p> <p>Tag any subheads with Heading 2, and continue in outline-style, tagging section headings within a Heading 2 with a Heading 3, etc.</p> <p>Exception: For text that's just a label, and not a major section of your document, just use regular text and make it bold:</p> <p>Contact: Music Department Phone: 503-XXX-XXXX Fax: 503-XXX-XXXX Email: music@pcc.edu</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You have not skipped from a Heading 1 to a Heading 3, with no Heading 2 between.	Skipping levels in your "outline" scheme can reduce accessibility, confusing adaptive devices often used by people with disabilities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Except for your starting "home" page, don't put the department name in the Level 1 headings.	Your program's name is already in the colored header, at the top of each page. Use your Level 1 heading to clearly tell the user what's on the page, and this heading should use the same words (or nearly the same) as the Page Title field in the PCC/WebEasy "Edit Page" screen.

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Graphics and Photos			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clip art, animated GIFs and cartoons have not been used.	It would be impossible to maintain visual consistency with all the possible illustration styles, and cartoons can make PCC look juvenile. Also animated GIFs rank with email spam as the most annoying features of the Internet. The PCC Web site uses photos and call outs to add visual interest. Contact College Publications if you have a special need.
<input type="checkbox"/>		Consider “call outs” to add interest	<p>“Call outs” are used in newspapers and magazines to display a colorful, enlarged excerpt from the text. We’ve broadened the term to include anything you’d like to say in this format, so you could have a colored box with text that says “96 percent of our graduates pass their licensing exam on the first attempt.” Or “You must be admitted to the program before registering.” For department sites, College Publications can quickly prepare good-looking call out graphics for you, using the proper type fonts and colors.</p> <p>For information, go to: www.pcc.edu/pcc/webcenter/callouts.htm.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Photos on your main pages are high-quality and used sparingly.	<p>Three or four professional-quality photos scattered over 10 pages are better than 10-15 amateur snapshots. If your photos are covering an event, as in a page titled “Photos from our Spring Picnic,” it’s fine to take the photos yourself, but for most of your pages you’ll want photos that reflect well on the quality of your program.</p> <p>College Publications has an expanding library of high-quality photos for nearly all PCC programs. If they don’t have what you need, they’ll send someone to shoot new photos. For examples and information on College Publications’ free services, go to: www.pcc.edu/pcc/webcenter/photos.htm.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>		<p>Photos have been Web-optimized by College Publications.</p> <p>(Sorry, but we can only offer this service for department sites.)</p>	<p>If you have photos you’d like to use, send them to College Publications for Web optimizing before you put them on your pages.</p> <p>Digital cameras produce files that are about 10 times too big for Web pages, so they must be reduced before uploading, and also converted to the JPG format (not GIF). College Publications can do this for you at no charge.</p> <p>They’ll adjust brightness, contrast, and color balance, and will add the white border that WebEasy needs to keep the text from running right up to the edge of the photo. Please, do not put photos on your Web pages that haven’t been optimized.</p> <p>For information, go to: www.pcc.edu/pcc/webcenter/photos.htm.</p>

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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Photos are properly sized.	<p>We use photos to add color and visual interest to Web pages, and they don't have to be large to do this. Smaller dimensions lead to smaller file sizes and faster downloads—something everyone appreciates.</p> <p>We recommend:</p> <p>Small verticals: 120 px wide.</p> <p>Large verticals: 200 px wide.</p> <p>Vertical for home page: 300 px wide.</p> <p>Largest horizontals: 240 px wide.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Photos have been sized before uploading.	<p>Don't upload a large photo, and then make it smaller by setting its size in PCC/WebEasy. If you do, the user's browser just loads the large image and then changes it to the smaller size, slowing things down.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Photos have "alt text" for accessibility.	<p>Each image should have an "alt tag" to meet ADA accessibility requirements. The alt tag is a short, written description of the photo that a screen-reading computer can read aloud to a person with a visual disability. You can enter this when inserting the photo. To add this later, right-click on the photo and choose Image Properties.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Set photos to right align. (This PCC/WebEasy feature is coming soon.)	<p>Click to the left of the first word in the paragraph. Then click on the "Insert Image" tool bar icon to put the photo on the page. Then "right-click" the photo to set image properties to right align.</p> <p>Don't put a photo above your Heading 1 or between it and the text below.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid using more than one or two photos per page.	<p>If the point of the page is to show photos, you can use a few more, but don't overload the page with many slow-loading graphics. It's usually better to split the photos among several pages, so the browser downloads them in smaller batches, rather than all at once.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The page background is white only, without textures or patterns.	<p>When was the last time you read a book that had a wood-grain texture or a pattern of logos behind the text you were trying to read? It's harder to read text on a screen than on paper, so be kind to your readers.</p>

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		Naming Links and Pages	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Set the Page Title Field in PCC/WebEasy.</p> <p>Don't precede the title with special characters, such as ">" or underlines, in an attempt to create bullets or divisions in the menu.</p>	<p>The page title you enter at the top of your PCC/WebEasy editing screen should match the main heading at the top of your page, because it is used to create the menus your readers will see. If this main heading needs to be more than about 50 characters long, you can paraphrase it for the Page Title. This will keep it from running too many lines in the narrow menu columns.</p> <p>For help writing page titles, see "Writing for the Web" in the guidelines area at www.pcc.edu/webcenter.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Links are properly named.</p>	<p>Good navigation depends on carefully constructed information architecture and effective site design and layout. But even if these elements are well-executed, site navigation can be derailed by poorly labeled links.</p> <p>As a test, try showing just the labels of your navigation to members of your target audience and ask them to describe what they would expect the resulting page to contain. See how consistent the responses are.</p> <p>The link name should normally match the main heading (your Heading 1) of the page to which you are linking. So, when the user clicks a link, the next thing seen should be a page with a heading at the top that is similar to the link they just clicked.</p> <p>Wrong: There are four steps to the admissions process: click here</p> <p>Right: There are four steps to the admissions process. (links to a page titled "Admissions Process")</p> <p>Also, don't write "click" or "click here" when naming links or end links with a colon.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Links are not redundant.</p>	<p>Don't put multiple links on a page that all go to the same place. Duplicating navigation on a page doesn't make it easier to find the right link, it simply provides more choices for the user to weed through before they can feel confident that they have found the right choice.</p>

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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WebEasy “Page Description”	<p>This is an optional field in PCC/WebEasy where you can enter a few descriptive words about your page. If you clearly title your pages, it's usually not needed. If you enter a description, it appears in several places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It “pops up” when the user hovers their mouse arrow over the page title in the left side menu. ■ It appears after the page title when the page appears in the PCC site's search engine results. ■ It's displayed after the page title on WebEasy's second-level menus. <p>For help writing descriptions, see “Writing for the Web” in the guidelines area at www.pcc.edu/webcenter.</p> <p>Experienced Web Coders: Don't confuse this with the keyword meta tag. In PCC/WebEasy, the page description is used for the meta description tag.</p>

Central Information Resources			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Link to existing information, rather than duplicating it.	<p>Avoid duplicating information from the PCC Catalog, course descriptions, CCOGs, class schedule, or the staff directory. You can link to centrally maintained sources that are always up-to-date. For instructions, see “Linking to Central Information Resources” in the guidelines area at www.pcc.edu/webcenter.</p>

Tables			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid borders in tables.	<p>Borders are the lines that separate the individual cells in tables. This checklist is formatted as a table. Unfortunately, in Web pages, table borders have a dated, 3-D beveled appearance. If your table is simple, or is used to arrange text or photos on a page, set the border size to zero to make them disappear.</p> <p>If your table is large and complex enough to require borders for clarity, don't go larger than 1 pixel. Before you resort to borders, try adding a little cell padding or spacing to create space between rows.</p>

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<p>Faculty Site Requirements if NOT Built with PCC/WebEasy</p> <p>While the Web Steering Committee's requirements for faculty sites are automatically met by PCC/ WebEasy, faculty building sites with tools such as Composer or FrontPage have a few requirements and several recommendations. The goal is to promote a professional online appearance that reflects the site's affiliation with PCC. Students will benefit from a more streamlined experience when using Web pages published by a wide variety of PCC departments.</p>			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	PCC navigation bar	<p>This is the black bar you see at the top of most PCC Web pages, with links to the main PCC home page, maps, the search feature, etc.</p> <p>In the faculty area of www.pcc.edu/webcenter, there are templates you can download to use in their entirety or as a source for HTML code. Placement of the navigation bar must be exactly as it is in the template.</p>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	PCC logo	<p>See the templates in the faculty area of www.pcc.edu/webcenter. Placement of the PCC logo must be exactly as it is in the template. Please do not modify the logo in any way.</p>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	PCC footer	<p>The footer is, of course, what you see at the bottom of most PCC Web pages, with the affirmative action and copyright statements. See the templates in the faculty area of www.pcc.edu/webcenter.</p>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessibility: Section 508	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Header	<p>An area at the top of the page that identifies the site or section of the site. See the templates in the faculty area of www.pcc.edu/webcenter.</p>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Navigation column	<p>120 pixel-wide column on the left side, for related links. See the templates in the faculty area of www.pcc.edu/webcenter.</p>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contacts and call outs column	<p>120 pixel-wide column on the right side, for contact information, photos or call outs. See the templates in the faculty area of www.pcc.edu/webcenter.</p>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact information	<p>How to contact the page author, usually put in the right column of the author's main home page, though you could put it on all pages.</p>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	PCC fonts	<p>For the Web, Arial and Arial Black.</p>

Departments	Faculty and Staff	Item	Details														
	<input type="checkbox"/>	PCC color schemes	<p>General philosophy is to avoid the bright, intense colors that computers usually offer in selection palettes. For the main site, we use more muted colors for a professional academic image.</p> <p>For faculty sites only: If you want to use colored type, we recommend you use it for emphasis only—not for all the text on a page. Most of the default colors on the WebEasy pop-up are too “loud” for a professional, academic image. Try adding these more subdued, custom colors in the RGB field:</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Green</td> <td>1C7569</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Teal</td> <td>1D5E91</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Light Blue</td> <td>007DC9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blue</td> <td>3240AB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Violet</td> <td>330099</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maroon</td> <td>973246</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Red</td> <td>E71946</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Green	1C7569	Teal	1D5E91	Light Blue	007DC9	Blue	3240AB	Violet	330099	Maroon	973246	Red	E71946
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page dimensions	Maximum 760 pixels wide.														
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page total file size	Less than 50K, including the HTML file and all graphics. This is sufficient for several properly prepared photos.														