

Web Design 101 -- Tips from the Web Manager

The following tips and ideas are meant to be a general guideline for faculty, staff, students, and other campus organizations on how to upload web site pages to the Muskingum Web Site.

There's a lot of info here, but it is very useful when creating attractive web sites that will fit your needs.

1. CNS Web Space FAQ -- <http://www.muskingum.edu/home/cns/webfaq.html> -- This page provides contact information for the web manager and answers frequent questions that are asked.
2. BEFORE creating your pages, try to figure out what you want to have on your web page. Web design is MUCH easier if you know what you want before you start.
3. If you've seen a web page that has a style you like-- use it! In your web browser (Internet Explorer or Firefox or whatever), go to the page you want, and click the File menu... then click Save As. When prompted, choose a location to save it (I recommend My Documents), and choose "Web Page, Complete" from the "Save as Type" drop-down list. **Notes:** Don't use copyrighted graphics or logos! Although there is no official copyright on the page designs, the content of the pages IS protected, and your pages can be removed if appropriate. Also, stick with a simple design. Remember that the more complicated your design is, the harder it is to make it work for you instead of you working for the design.
4. Save all of your pages, graphics and files in one folder! Don't let them scatter on your hard drive or disk, because it makes linking to them in web pages a lot harder. When working in your web page software, use "document relative paths" if asked.
5. Nvu is your friend! Nvu is the program that I recommend for web page design. It is very easy to use, and is a lot like a word processor for editing pages. When all else fails, it has a decent Help that explains how to do things. You can get a copy, for free, from the CNS Web FAQ link above.
6. Your home page should be called "index.html" and all of your pages should end in .html -- not .htm or other extension. Our web server does not currently support some of the newer formats like PHP or ASP. Also, do NOT use spaces or punctuation in your filenames (except for the . dot before the html extension), and use all lowercase for your filenames. Spaces and Capital Letters will also create problems when linking to pages and images.
7. HTMLGoodies -- <http://www.htmlgoodies.com/> -- This web page can show you how to do anything and everything about web design. I recommend checking it out when you start to design your pages.
8. Although it is not required, if you have a lot of images, consider organizing them in folders inside of your web folder. Links to that folder are created as imagefoldername/picturename.jpg.
9. You should test your pages in more than one browser. Just because it looks great in Internet Explorer doesn't mean it looks great in Firefox, Netscape, Opera, or other browsers (and vice versa). The most common browsers today are Internet Explorer and Firefox, so you should at least test the page there.
10. When in doubt or if you have questions, please ask for help from the Web Manager... it is much better and easier to ask for assistance rather than make an assumption and run into trouble.

Software to Use:

I have posted several helpful files and programs on my computer for anyone to access. To do so, click START on your computer, and choose RUN... Type the following:

[\\webmgr\public](http://webmgr\public)

Then click OK. When prompted for a username and password, it's **Guest** and **muskies**.

Web Design 201 -- Even More Tips from the Web Manager

Here's a few advanced tips to consider:

1. On [\\webmgr\public](#) there is a program called FileZilla. This is an alternative FTP program to use instead of WS_FTP. I like it a lot, and I think it's easier to use than WS_FTP. However, some people disagree, so give both a try and use the one that works for you.
2. Also on [\\webmgr\public](#) there is a program called Irfan Image Viewer. This program is very useful for quick image editing and viewing, but it can also create image thumbnails and "slide shows". This is a great way to create photo albums.
3. Sometimes our site just doesn't let you have the functionality that you really want... some people have expressed interest in blogging, photo albums, and larger storage. The solution is that there are many free sites that let you gain this functionality. All you have to do is link to them from your own site, and then users can still go to one place to find everything. If you're interested in having a web log (blog) for your page, try <http://www.blogspot.com/> or <http://www.blogger.com/> These sites offer free space for blogging, as well as professional looking designs. Alternatives include MySpace, MSN Spaces, and Xanga.
4. When you're designing a site-- remember your audience. Although a design needs to reflect the designer and the group it serves, it also needs to be usable and attractive to the visitors you get. Pick a layout and a color scheme that won't make your visitors angry! Trust me-- Dark Fonts on a Light background is a much better idea than Light Fonts on a Dark Background. Resist the temptation to use Hot Pink or Lime Green on Black! Your eyes will thank you and so will your visitors!
5. When linking to pages on Muskingum's web site, the correct URL address is:
<http://www.muskingum.edu/> -- Please do not forget the www. Although technically it will work without the www for now, this may not always be the case as we update our web services in the future.