



Style Guide for Bethany Web Pages

Policies and Guidelines for Page Formatting and Layout on Bethany's Website

Purpose and Place of this Guide

Bethany's public presence is nowhere more visible than on the internet through its website. Available 24 hours a day the world over, many first impressions are made here, and repeat visits are frequent. As we therefore value the quality of our representation on the world wide web, this document is designed to help us achieve our desire for a website with a look and feel that is professional, polished, consistent, attractive, contemporary, and functional, by describing our conventions for creating our web pages.

This guide addresses the formatting and style of Bethany's web pages, and is intended to complement the *Style Guide for Electronic Documents* which addresses the organization of content for such things as pdfs and web pages, the *Graphics Standards Manual* which addresses layout and presentation of Bethany's logo and print publications, and the *Chicago Manual of Style* for writing.

Programming Considerations

All standard, default formatting options will be pre-programmed by the webmaster so as to be available for Bethany's web editors through Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). These include base font and font sizes, various heading, bullet, and paragraph styles, linking style, and so forth. (CSS controls nearly all our display options, including page width, arrangement and template elements.)

Base Font (typeface, size, color, attributes)

In keeping with general web standards, Bethany's base web typeface will be sans-serif (Arial), black, as specified in CSS. The default font will be specified by CSS for all elements on Bethany's site. Most text on a page should be left in this default state (see Normal Text below). Any decorative fonts should be used sparingly, and should be rendered as graphics in order to be compatible with all platforms and browsers.

Headings and Heading Styles

Each page automatically carries a title in <h2> heading style through Drupal and CSS. Section headings or lead-ins on pages may either use bold, or a smaller heading style than the page title (h3 or h4). Both for reasons of good practice, as well as because Bethany has chosen blue as its primary color for headings, it is particularly imperative that other instances of heading style on pages should be avoided, especially for running text, so as to avoid obscuring the visibility of web links (which also appear in blue type, according to widely accepted web standards).

Normal Text – Paragraph Styles and Bullets

Consistent appearance (size, color, font) will be provided through CSS for normal paragraph text, with bulleted text programmed to mirror paragraph style. Except for headings, all text on a page should be in this normal paragraph style for readability and consistency. With rare exception, variations in typeface, color, size, capitalization, highlighting, etc. should be avoided, except for italics where appropriate, in order to avoid a garish, inconsistent, or unpolished appearance. This is not at all to say that the text should be bland, but that the methods of drawing attention to important information need to be through such organizational means such as section headings, bullet points, adept use of white space, the elimination of text that is not important, and the wise use of links and sub-pages. (See the *Style Guide for Electronic Documents* for more about these writing techniques.)

Linking and Link Style

It will be the webmaster's responsibility through CSS to ensure that the link style is both obvious yet unobtrusive, and conforming to reasonable web standards. It is imperative that this link style be consistent throughout the entire site, and not overridden by individual web editors. Furthermore, if special link text appearance or special link buttons are to be used on the site, the webmaster should ensure that there is a consistent look and feel to the text or buttons used and their placement on various pages, regardless of the page on which they appear. All links should include alternative text, so that Bethany's site is as accessible as possible. Please see the *Style Guide for Electronic Documents* for information about creating and naming links.

Graphics

Graphics are essential to the visual appeal of our pages, and so each page should include something of visual interest relating to the page content, typically photos. Due to our monochromatic web theme (blue), photos should be in color, with few exceptions. Other graphical elements are welcome, if tasteful and unobtrusive. All graphic elements should include alternative text, so that Bethany's site is as accessible as possible.

Webmaster's Role

In addition to providing the programming that allows web editors to function easily without needing to create or override defaults, the webmaster serves as a resource to web editors, one part of which is shaping and interpreting these guidelines. The webmaster is available to be consulted on proposed web updates and style considerations, and is glad to receive suggestions for style updates. Furthermore, as the one ultimately responsible for the overall look, feel, and functionality of the site, the webmaster has the duty to maintain the website in accordance with these guidelines. For more information, please refer to the Principles for Web Page Management.