

Writing for the Web: Content is King

The key to good Web content is ensuring that your material is timely, relevant, well-written, concise and consistent. The guidelines in this document have been prepared to assist you as you write for the School of Management Web site, but the principles can be used in writing for any medium.

Less is More

A concise page of information is far more likely to be read than several pages of material that contain more detail than the reader wants or needs. Whenever possible, keep your content to one “screen load.” Studies show that most readers do not hit the “page down” button or scroll bar. A Web page should never exceed three screen loads. (This is equivalent to hitting the page down button twice.) Use progressive disclosure (links to additional information) to give readers who want or need more information the chance to “drill down” to the content they need. This will help you to avoid overloading each page.

Four Eyes Before Posting

Make it a rule to *never* post new content to the live Web site until *at least* two people have carefully proofed the material. Spell checkers and grammar checkers are helpful, but not foolproof, and it is very easy to overlook an error in your own writing. The best writers employ this rule without exception.

Consistency is Key

Some rules of grammar and punctuation vary according to different style guides. To ensure consistency on our Web site and in other School of Management publications, we use one style guide, the *Associated Press Style Guide*. The remainder of this document consists of guidelines for the top-25 style, grammar and punctuation inconsistencies found in School of Management materials. These guidelines will provide you with the most common AP style guidelines as well as a number of guidelines specific to UB and the School of Management.

If you have any questions, contact Jacqueline Ghosen, assistant dean and director of communications, at 645-2833 or ghosen@buffalo.edu. Like any Web document, this is a work in progress and will be updated periodically. Feel free to send comments about how we can make this guide most useful to you.

School of Management Editorial Style Guide "Top 25"

1. ALL CAPITAL LETTERS, bold or underlining are not used in our Web content.

To highlight certain information, apply the attention or warning font found within the Web editor.

2. E-mail (spell will a hyphen)

I received an e-mail message. (correct)

I received an email message. (incorrect)

Also, avoid using the word "e-mail" as a verb.

Send your application by e-mail. (correct)

E-mail your application. (incorrect)

When an e-mail is listed on Web pages (as opposed the Contact Us box), list as follows (note preferred use of e-mail alias as opposed to personal e-mail, and use of office name rather than a person's name):

For more information, contact the Alumni Relations Office at mgt-alumni@buffalo.edu or 716-645-3224. (NOTE: Make the e-mail address visible and provide a live hyperlink.)

3. When referencing the School of Management, spell it out fully. Never use SOM.

School of Management (correct)

SOM (incorrect)

Also, refer to the following usage when referencing the School of Management as a university unit.

UB School of Management (correct)

UB's School of Management (incorrect)

University at Buffalo School of Management (correct)

University at Buffalo's School of Management (incorrect)

4. Unless it's part of a headline, do not capitalize "university" or "school" when not part of its proper name (also applies to "center," "department," "office" and similar references).

Consult university guidelines for further clarification. (correct, not proper name)

The University at Buffalo has guidelines for clarifications (correct, proper name)

Consult University guidelines for further clarification. (incorrect)

The school's curriculum is extensive. (correct, not proper name)

The School of Management's curriculum is extensive. (correct, proper name)

The School's curriculum is extensive. (incorrect)

5. Avoid abbreviations or acronyms in Web content.

The Radical Underwater First United Sailors meets on Saturday mornings. (correct)

RUFUS meets on Saturday mornings. (incorrect)

The Radical Underwater First United Sailors (RUFUS) meets on Saturday mornings.

(Although this method is not incorrect, spelling out names is preferred.)

6. Spell out the word "telephone" completely in all references.

"Phone" or "Phone number" is not correct.

Area codes do not include parenthesis in AP style.

716-645-3206 (correct)

(716) 645-3206 (incorrect)

716.645.3206 (incorrect)

7. Do not capitalize programs, options, concentrations or tracks.

Learn about the School of Management's Professional MBA program. (correct)

Learn about the School of Management's Professional MBA Program. (incorrect)

Review the Supply Chains and Operations Management option. (correct)

Review the Supply Chains and Operations Management Option. (incorrect)

The department's Registered Accounting concentration is now available. (correct)

The department's Registered Accounting Concentration is now available. (incorrect)

The Financial Engineering track has just been introduced. (correct)

The Financial Engineering Track has just been introduced. (incorrect)

8. There is no hyphen in "online."

The application is available online. (correct)

The application is available on-line. (incorrect)

9. User name is two words, password is one.

Please provide your user name and password (correct)

Please provide your username and password (incorrect)

10. Spell out whole numbers below 10 and use figures for 10 and above.

They had three sons and two daughters. (correct)

They had 3 sons and 2 daughters (incorrect)

They had a fleet of 10 station wagons and two buses. (correct)

They had a fleet of ten station wagons and two buses. (incorrect)

Exception: Use numerals when referring to course credit hours.

A 3-credit-hour course and a 4-credit-hour course (correct)

A three-credit-hour course and a four-credit-hour course (incorrect)

11. Web site is two words with a capital “W.” Web is capitalized in most cases as well.

The School of Management launched its new Web site (correct)
The School of Management launched its new website (incorrect)

We looked forward to seeing the new Web applications (correct)
We looked forward to seeing the new web applications (incorrect)

Also note: when listing the School of Management Web address, do not use WWW.
Simply list mgt.buffalo.edu

12. Avoid using ampersands in Web text.

Management Science and Systems (correct)
Management Science & Systems (incorrect)

13. Eliminate use of exclamation points in business writing.

Join us for our senior celebration on May 11. (correct)
Join us for our senior celebration on May 11! (incorrect)

14. When listing bulleted items, either put a period at the end of each bulleted item or don’t put one on any. Be consistent.

15. Compound Modifiers (Hyphenation and Capitalization)

When a compound modifier (two or more words that express a single concept) precedes a noun, use hyphens to link all words in the phrase.

Full-time job (correct)
Full time job (incorrect)

Know-it-all attitude (correct)
Know it all attitude (incorrect)

Exception: Do not hyphenate the modifier if it includes the adverb “very” or all adverbs that end in “ly.”

A very good time (correct) Nationally ranked school (correct)
A very-good time (incorrect) Nationally-ranked school (incorrect)

Note: Many words that are hyphenated before a noun are not hyphenated after (She has a full-time job. vs. She works full time). Consult the AP style guide for details.

In headings and titles, capitalize all words in a compound modifier.

Information for Full-Time Students (correct)
Information for Full-time Students (incorrect)

In running text, do not capitalize all words in a compound modifier.

Full-time students should apply online. (correct)
Full-Time students should apply online. (incorrect)

16. AP style requires omitting the comma in a series before *and* or *or*.

Nancy is interested in tax, law and accounting. (correct)

Nancy is interested in tax, law, and accounting. (incorrect)

17. Eliminate periods in academic degrees

BS, MBA, MS, PhD (correct)

B.S., M.B.A., M.S., Ph.D. (incorrect)

Spell out degrees in running text: bachelor's degree and master's degree (note apostrophe "s") or Bachelor of Science, Master of Business Administration (note no apostrophe "s").

18. Place periods in the abbreviation for the United States

U.S. (correct)

US (incorrect)

19. Spell out "percent" instead of using its symbol.

Student enrollment increased 20 percent. (correct)

Student enrollment increased 20%. (incorrect)

20. Dates and times

For dates, use cardinal numbers vs. ordinals. This means eliminating numeral suffixes ("th" "st," "rd" and "nd").

December 8 (correct)

December 8th (incorrect)

August 3 (correct)

August 3rd (incorrect)

Times - Punctuate times using the AP guidelines for consistency

8 a.m. (correct)

8:00 a.m. (incorrect)

8 AM (incorrect)

5:30 p.m. (correct)

5:30 PM (incorrect)

9 to 11 a.m. (correct)

9 a.m. to 11 a.m. (incorrect – for efficiency purposes, eliminate the first a.m.)

For times, dates and places together, order as follows: time of day, date, place.

Example: The reception will be held at 5 p.m. on May 4 in the Alfiero Center atrium.

Place a comma after the year if you list a full date and the sentence does not end after the date. Example: Johnson will visit UB on September 5, 2009, and stay for five days.

21. Advisor (rather than adviser—an exception to AP style)

22. Résumé - Use accent marks. Special characters are available.

23. Seasons

Do not capitalize the seasons in running text.

My favorite time of year is fall (correct)

My favorite time of year is Fall (incorrect)

I am taking a class in the spring 2009 semester (correct)

I am taking a class in the Spring 2009 semester (incorrect)

24. New York – Capitalize Western New York, Upstate New York, etc. when referring to as a region. Do not use WNY. When necessary to distinguish the state of New York from the city of New York, use New York state (Lower case “s” per AP style.)

25. Academic titles

When just listing a person’s title on a contact page, list with title case (capitalize the first letter of each word)

David Costello

Assistant Dean and Director of Information Technology

Ann Cohen

Associate Professor

Department of Accounting and Law

However, in running text, do not capitalize titles unless the title comes before the name.

Arjang Assad, dean of the UB School of Management, said that...(correct and preferred)

Dean Arjang Assad said that ...(correct, but not preferred)

Arjang Assad, Dean of the UB School of Management (incorrect)

Exception:

When a professor has a “Named” or endowed professorship, it is capitalized when used before and when used after a name.

Arun K. Jain, Samuel P. Capen Professor of Marketing Research, will be presenting.