APS WEB BRANDING

a style guide for writing and visuals

ALBUQUERQUE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2016

Gretchen Kramer. Web Content Specialist
Daniel Torres. Multimedia Specialist

aps. identity

Aps.edu houses our identity, defining visual and communicational standards to carry out our messages and goals that are inextricably linked to student success.

We brand our identity with each news and event posted, through social media outlets, and essential information. It is further strengthened by the experiences and expectations of our students and parents, our teachers and staff, and our district community and partners.

Consistency in our identity and brand is important, which is why the APS Web Team have created a web style guide with our department web editors in mind. In providing straightforward guidelines on logo use, approved website colors, incorporating images and icons, ADA compliance, and writing for the web we can maintain a unified look and feel for our aps.edu visitors.

contents

one. logo

The APS Logo, when used across the district website and School Loop websites, must adhere to specific colors and sizes. Below are examples of correct and incorrect use of APS logos.
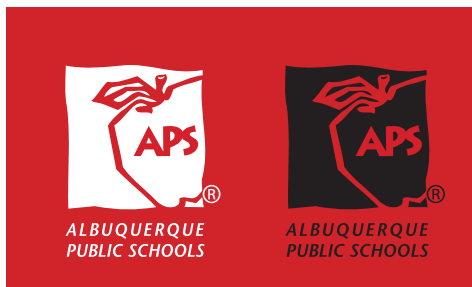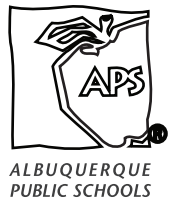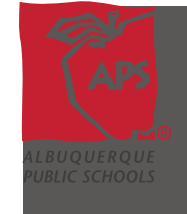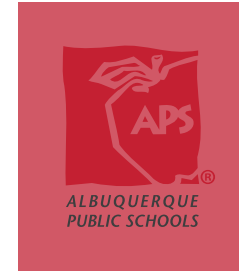
correct usage

horizontal version

stacked version

without text

logo must retain
registered trademark

incorrect usage

two. colors

APS has approved specific colors for use across the district site.

dark moderate cyan #3A6F7F	moderate cyan #56AEC2	bright orange #F69F38	strong red #C41230

monochromatic guide

	#99C4CE		#334144
	#CEA16D	#C47F2D	#443624
	#CE5167	#440611	#441B22
		#C4C1BC	#918F8B

three. type

Depending on the user's operating system, Arial and Helvetica are the only approved typefaces.

arial

a b c d e f g h l j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

a b c d e f g h l j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

a b c d e f g h l j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

helvetica

a b c d e f g h l j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

a b c d e f g h l j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

a b c d e f g h l j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

four. headings

There are only two accessible headings for content in Plone, h2 and h3 reflecting our current fonts, Arial and Helvetica.

h2	h3
heading 2	heading 2
heading 2	*heading 2*
heading 2	**heading 2**
heading 2	***heading 2***
HEADING 2	HEADING 2
HEADING 2	*HEADING 2*
HEADING 2	**HEADING 2**
HEADING 2	***HEADING 2***

five. images

Images enhance and compliment written text. Incorporating images properly will help keep the rest of your content interesting and relevant. Be sure that your images are not blurred, but high-resolution images so that you don't diminish the quality of your visitors' experience.

low resolution

high resolution

six. buttons

Identify all the types of buttons used across the website, when and how they are used, conclude what colors and sizes are permissible across entire site.

Button

Button

Button

Button

Button

Button

Button

Button
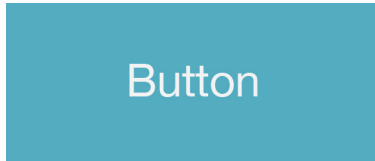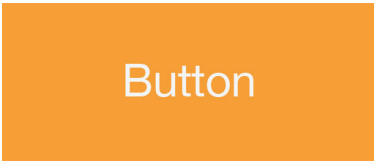
seven. icons

Icons are used to grab the attention of the user faster. They are used as a common visual indicator that can be highly recognizable. They should only be used sparingly as they can lose effectiveness when overdone on a web page or department site.

eight. writing

Writing for the web is different than writing for a newsletter, brochure, letter, or article. In fact, it's a brief, reformatted, and repurposed version of those items that you would post on a website.

Below is an outline on how to reach your audience in delivering your most important information.

language & tone

Have a goal and priorities.
Be strategic and have a purpose. Understand the objective behind what you are posting for the user.

Do: Think about if the information is essential: does the user really need to know this?

Avoid: content such as mission and vision statements, information that takes the user away from their task.

Use the appropriate voice.
Keep the text active, friendly and positive.

Do: "As you wait to hear from HR about your background clearance, please complete your paperwork."

Avoid: "While you wait to hear from HR about your Background Clearance, work on your paperwork."

Embrace brevity.
Be short and concise in everything you do. Less really is more when being direct and getting to the point for your visitors.

- Think 2-3 sentences to get your main idea across
- Use headers to indicate top level importance
- Try out bullets to highlight steps
- Chunk content

eight. writing

language & tone

Stay simple
Be sure not to complicate your message.

Do: "Apply Here"

Avoid: "Completing the online application and submitting it will start the process."

Do: use these guidelines for keeping it short

Headings: 4–8 words
Subheads: 1–5 words
Sentences: 1–20 words
Paragraphs: 1–7 sentences
Documents: 300–500 words

Avoid: overloading your page with text that requires scrolling, long lists of steps or links, or biographies.

Write for your audience
Make it people-centric, rather than department-centric.

Put audience needs first, writing in a way they will understand by using "you".

Do: "Get all the information you need to become a volunteer."
Avoid: "A volunteer should be sure to read all the information below to be effective."

Develop visual copy
Layout information in a way that creates interest beyond just text.

Do: Think about content placement and alignment on the page. Use text, images, and video that are complimentary. Preview your work to ensure flow.
Avoid: cluttering the page, white space is your friend and maintaining balance is key to reaching your users.

eight. writing

capitalization

Capitalization
Capitalization is often used unnecessarily for emphasis or incorrectly.

Do: job titles, organization names and titles, names of people and places
Avoid: caps for general descriptions or titles

When writing for the web, steer away from title-style caps for headings, sub headings, and labels

Do: "Read this form"
Avoid: "Read This Form" or "READ THIS FORM"

Use contractions
It's easier for the user to understand and gives a bit more of an informal, casual tone.

Avoid exclamation points
What are you shouting about? Is it necessary to yell about this information?

eight. writing

grammar
and punctuation

Numbers
Anything under 10 should be displayed in words, anything above, use figures.

Do: one, two, three, and 10, 11, 12

If there's a mix of the two in the same sentence, use all figures.

Do: There are 3 options out of 11 on the list that are free.

Dates and times
Always write the date, century, and time in full.

Do: Monday, November 30, 2015
Do: twenty-first century
Do: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Hyphens
Most words can be written without using a hyphen, but should be used when two vowels are alike.

Do: re-elect, co-opt or in some exceptions, part-time and half-term. Check your dictionary if in doubt.

Acronyms
Users to your site may not be familiar with the words are phrases you use at the department level. Write the full title in capital letters with the acronym following for clarity.

Do: Albuquerque Public Schools (APS)
Avoid: only using IT, HR, EOE, BOE throughout the page without clarification.

Spelling and grammar
As always, proofread your text for correct word usage and spelling. Spellcheck is not always reliable.

nine. naming

It is necessary to title all images and documents for visitors and department staff. Using short and identifiable names for all files makes them recognizable and easy to find.

Use either camel case or words with hyphens to title your files:

Camel case: yourFile
Words with dashes: your-file

ten. links

Broken links or those that link to outdated sites and information can be a major source of frustration for your visitors. It can also send a message to visitors that they are not valued when the website is not being tended to.

Systematically check your site for broken and outdated links. Remove links that are no longer relevant and update those that have been moved to a different web address.
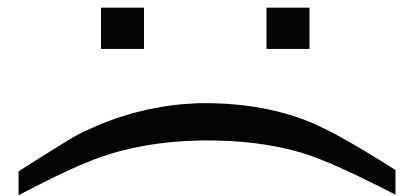
eleven. accessibility

APS is dedicated to developing an accessible website. We are requiring that all departments take some simple, yet essential steps in making sure that content can be available to all visitors.

- Only images that are informational will need descriptions before they are posted to your site. Title your image file clearly and provide a brief description.

Informational graphics include:
  - Clickable buttons that take users to registration form or new pages
  - Graphs
  - Organizational charts
  - Flow charts

- Readability is important in making content accessible, too. Most adults read at a 7th to 9th grade level, so check you content to make sure you're reaching your diverse audience.

The Readability Test Tool
http://www.webpagefx.com/tools/read-able/

- If you plan to post a video to your website, provide a transcript, turn on video captions, and include audio.

- Acrobat Reader DC has an Accessibility Assistant off of the Edit tab to help create documents that can interact with assistive

twelve. references

CAN Branding Guidelines. (2007, March). Retrieved February 18, 2016, from https://media-mediatemple.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/can_branding_guidelines.pdf

Designing Style Guidelines for Brands And Websites – Smashing Magazine. (2010). Retrieved February 18, 2016, from https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2010/07/designing-style-guidelines-for-brands-and-websites/

Easy Group Brand Manual. (n.d.). Retrieved February 18, 2016, from http://easy.com/the-brand.html

Writing for the Web. (n.d.). Retrieved February 18, 2016, from http://ucm.rutgers.edu/web-ecommunications/web-writing

Writing - Style - Google design guidelines. (n.d.). Retrieved February 18, 2016, from http://www.google.com/design/spec/style/writing.html#writing-capitalization-punctuation

University of West Florida, Web Style Guide. (n.d.). Retrieved February 18, 2016, from http://uwf.edu/offices/marketing/resources/web-style-guide/