

Siena College Web Style Guide

April 8, 2010



1. Introduction

The objective of this guide is to promote and support the effort to create a consistent presentation and navigation across Siena College media. This guide will assist content managers/editors in their web publishing efforts and assure that Siena's presence in this global medium will reflect the same high quality standards as other official publications of the College.

The following information must be read and implemented by all Siena departments, units, organizations, and all content owners/managers/editors posting to the siena.edu domain. Failure to adhere to the style guide may ultimately result in removal of the page from the site.

The College Webmaster will notify content managers in the event that a page is not in compliance with the web guide and will work with the department or individual to rectify all non-compliance issues. If, following notification, steps are not taken to redress guideline infractions; a request will be made to the appropriate Vice President to enforce the guidelines. As a last resort, the Web Advisory Committee (WAC) or Information Technology Services (ITS) reserve the right to remove a page and/or its links from the web site/server.

Pages using third party applications must comply with the Siena College Web Style Guide to the greatest extent possible. Content managers/editors are responsible for maintaining their own pages. The College Webmaster will not edit another department's web page unless specifically requested to do so by the page owner or by the authorization of the appropriate Vice President.

2. Unofficial vs. Official Page

Refer to the "Web Content Administration" section of the Siena College Web Governance for differentiation between official and unofficial web pages. Official pages are required to follow all Web Style Guidelines. Unofficial pages are required to abide by the sections of the style guide listed below; however, it is recommended that unofficial pages follow all other guidelines whenever possible.

- Section 4 – Point l - not to use multiple frames
- Section 5 – Point f - disclaimer page

3. Supported Software

The following software is currently supported by Siena College:

- Web Design – Site Builder Toolkit

- Microsoft Office - Picture Manager
- Qualtrics Survey Software

Content managers/editors may use other software, as desired, with the understanding that the College Webmaster is not able to assist in troubleshooting problems. Regardless of the software used, the requirements established elsewhere in this document must be followed.

4. Design Requirements

This section identifies design requirements for all “Official” pages of Siena College’s website. Siena College’s official web fonts and colors are also defined.

- a. Fonts - Site Builder Toolkit (SBT) will have fonts set up for use on the website. Use of fonts other than those prescribed by SBT is prohibited. tags may not be used.
 - i. Arial is the standard font for all web pages – In order to establish a uniform presentation of information, Arial font must be the dominant font across all official pages. In limited occurrences, for the purpose of enhancing aesthetics, other fonts may be used for logos, captions and titles. If a content manager/editor elects to use a font other than Arial for the majority of a web page, said individual needs to document his or her deviation by referencing an external industry standard that requires it.
 - ii. Font size – Site Builder Toolkit uses a font of “Normal” for all regular text. Normal is a 10pt font.
 - iii. Font sizes for headings – Page titles should be the only use of “header 1” size font. All body content should begin with “header 2” size font for section headers, "header 3" for subsection headers, and “normal” for main body text.
- b. Color Values – Official colors for Siena College are green and gold. They are as important to the identification program as the logos. The application of these specific colors will create a strong and consistent identity for Siena College.
 - i. Font Colors
 1. Body text – black #000000.
 2. Main links – maroon #770a0a.
 3. Top-links – white #ffffff .
 4. Interior navigation – black #000000 .
 5. Widgets .
 6. Related information links – black #000000 .
 7. Old print-material green – light green #5c855c .
 8. Spotlight sub-links – gray #999999.
 - ii. Template Colors – see picture below.

#354830

#182316

#ffffff (SIENA college text)

SIENAcollege

#e4c77a

Prospective Students

Current Students

Alumni

Faculty & Staff

#ddab35

A-Z Index | Campus Map | Directions | Directory

Search Siena

News

Events

#c3c3c3 (light gray)

#444444



Three-peat
Get your brackets ready:
Saints are dancing into
NCAA Tourney once again.

**Moot Court/Mock Trial
Advances to Nationals**

Siena's Moot Court/Mock Trial team advances to opening round of the American Mock Trial Association national tournament.

More

Winter Issue of Siena News Online

Creative Arts Prof Awarded Grant

Siena Poll: Paterson Need Not Resign

View Full Siena News #5c855c

About Siena

History and Mission

Franciscan Tradition

Institutes and Centers

Employment

Emergency Info

Academics

Schools & Majors

Library

Career Center

Study Abroad

MS in Accounting

Admissions

Apply Now

Visit

Financial Aid

Why Siena

Fast Facts

Alumni

News & Events

Staying in Touch

Reunion

Give to Siena

Contact Us

Athletics

SienaSaints.com

Intramurals

Tickets

Athletic Calendar

Saints Gear

Student Life

Student Affairs

Residential Life

Campus Programs

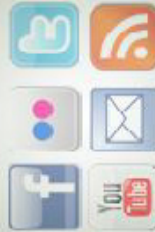
Public Safety

Parents Info

Make a Gift Online

#3d64c ("Developing the Potential" text)

Plan a VISIT Today



**Siena College
Research Institute**
Polling and Research

#3e3e3e

Developing the Potential for Extraordinary Achievement

Siena College - 515 Loudon Road, Loudonville, NY 12211

1-888-AT-SIENA (1-888-2387-4362)

Contact Us

#43503f

#8dbd8c (light gray)

#1c2918

- c. All-Capitalized text may be used only for titles, headers, or logos – A section of words that are all capitalized is perceived as “shouting” or “yelling” and are hard to read. Use sparingly.
- d. Blinking, scrolling, or marquee text may not be used – The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is an international community where member organizations, a full-time staff, and the public work together to develop web standards. Their accessibility guidelines state, “Some people with cognitive or visual disabilities are unable to read moving text quickly enough or at all. Movement can also cause such a distraction that the rest of the page becomes unreadable for people with cognitive disabilities. Screen readers are unable to read moving text. People with physical disabilities might not be able to move quickly or accurately enough to interact with moving objects.”
- e. Underlined text is reserved for navigation links and cannot be used for any other purpose – If emphasis is required, use bolding, italics or other alternatives. These alternatives should be used sparingly.
- f. Body or paragraph text must be flush left – Text that is flush left is easier to read than text that is either flush right or centered (this also aids re-flow if the user re-sizes their browser window frame).
- g. Image tags must include width and height attributes – These attributes allow pages to load faster. Setting their values (that is, what the attributes "=") equal to the dimensions of the original image is the most efficient.
- h. Create web pages that do not require horizontal scrolling on basic monitors – Most users have monitor resolutions higher than 1024x768 (76% by W3 Schools log-files). To ensure your page design fits within this limit, horizontal graphics and tables should not exceed: 940px for 1-column templates, 680px for 2-column templates, 440px for 3-column templates.
- i. Create web pages that do not exceed four screens (one or two is recommended) – Vertical scrolling allows a reader to advance in the text with less loss of mental "context" than does following a link. This advantage lasts up to about four screens of text. After that, there is a tendency for people to lose their context, get frustrated with the mechanism of scrolling, and their inability to keep track of what else is on the page. Exceptions to this point include linked or referenced material not designed specifically for the web (e.g. .pdfs, .docs, etc).
- j. Use Microsoft Office Picture Manager (www.siena.edu/pages/4136.asp) to change photos to 72dpi.
- k. All pages are required to use dark text on light backgrounds for all main body text (paragraphs, headings, and subheadings) – Dark text on a light background provides a high contrast that enhances accessibility, readability, and printing consistency. The best contrast is black text on a white background, and is therefore strongly

- recommended. If there is a need for a dark background (which is not recommended for official or unofficial pages) light text that does not cause undue strain on the eyes should be used.
- l. Do not use multiple frame pages.
 - m. The following information must be supplied on each page:
 - i. Contact information of the content manager or editor or a general number to contact for page questions/comments (e.g. name of content manager's name or department).
 - ii. Contact email address – This can be either the traditional way or by address mungeing (pronounced munj-ing). See section 9-e below.
 - n. Official Headers are required on every page – Headers will be supplied and controlled by ITS and SCIM.
 - o. Homepage
 - i. The main image rotator needs to have properly compressed images to allow the homepage to load as quickly as possible. The proper size of the image should be no more than 80kb.
 - ii. News ‘featured’ on the homepage should not be longer than two lines (more causes content below the news header to be pushed down). For more see ‘News Guidelines’ below.
 - p. News Guidelines
 - i. Titles – only the featured title should wrap to two lines (max).
 - ii. Other headlines – 45 character max (with spaces), which is essentially, ‘Siena Poll: Confidence Continues to Climb.’ This will make the site more consistent, not only on the homepage, but also for the interior landing pages.
 - q. Information Channels
 - i. Do not use your “related information” or the “persistent content” widget as navigation through your site. If page links need to reside “on” certain pages, then those pages should be moved or created “under” the parent page in the site hierarchy (this will allow the links to be in the main navigation) and/or linked within the body of the page.
 - ii. When using “related information” or “persistent content” widget, use one sentence to describe the link. If this is not filled out, “more” will be the only information for the user.
 - r. Extra Code - Any code inserted by content managers/editors should not influence or change the pre-defined templates approved by the WAC.

5. Navigation and Links Requirements

This section identifies navigation/link requirements for all “Official” pages of Siena College’s website. Some requirements have been implemented by the provided templates.

- a. Each page must provide a link to the Siena College Homepage.
- b. Images used as navigation links must provide text cues to indicate the link's destination. This is accomplished by editing the "advisory title" under the Advanced-tab in the images properties.
- c. Siena College reserves the right to designate official icons for exclusive use as links.
- d. All text signifying a link within the body of the page must be in hex color of #770a0a.
- e. Keep link text short and to the point.
- f. A link to Siena College's Web Disclaimers Page must be provided on the footer of each page – Each page author is responsible for understanding and abiding by Siena College's disclaimers concerning damages, server warranties, links to commercial sites, copyright/intellectual property, defamation, print vs. electronic media, unofficial pages and other issues. Refer to the following link:
- g. Links that have redirects to other sites should have "target_blank" location set (open in new window/tab). This best practice allows users to understand that the link that was clicked took them to an external site.

6. Title and Meta Tag Requirements

This section identifies a pages title and meta ('keywords' in SBT) requirements for all "Official" pages of Siena College's website.

- a. Titlebar Text - This is where the title of the page is set. This can be found in SBT under the "Navigation" tab. Search engines will use this as the first aspect of your page in which to index.
- b. Keywords - This refers to what your page is about. Use them to describe your page. This can be found in SBT under the "Search Engine" tab. Fill this section out with a few keywords that appear in the description paragraph on your page. Keep in mind that all pages should be written for a user and not search engines.
 - i. If you are creating a page about a class on calculus, there should be a paragraph at the top of the page that best describes the class. The paragraph would have keywords (such as calculus, mathematics, the course number) for the description. Use these keywords separated by a comma and a space (calculus, mathematics, MATH 200) in the keyword section under "Search Engine."
 - ii. Do not abuse this section by placing misleading keywords or too many keywords. Conflicting information between keywords and actual content and too many keywords will result in a poor indexing score (placing your web page low in search results or not at all).

- c. For more information refer to Google's "Things to do" tinypurl.com/5s2sf9 for Google-friendly sites. This is a best practice section for any search engine.

7. Accessibility Requirements

Siena College supports recent efforts initiated by the United States government and other internationally recognized organizations to provide individuals with disabilities access to and use of information and data that is comparable to that provided to those without disabilities. To comply with these guidelines, Siena College has established these requirements.

- a. ALT tags must be used and are required for XHTML validation – ALT tags allow for readers who have turned off the image-capability of their browser, those using a text-only browser, and audio browsers as used by the visually impaired. With spacer images and presentational content with no corresponding function on text-readers, use empty ALT tags (alt=""). This is accomplished in Site Builder within the image properties “Alternative Text.” If you want presentational text to appear over the image or link, add a short description to the “Advisory Title,” under the Alternate-tab. Example: ``.
- b. Provide a text alternative for any audio, video, or graphic presentations.
- c. Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.
- d. When using a multiple row or column data tables, XHTML text (not images), must be used to identify cells and headers.
- e. When applets, plug-ins or other applications are needed by the client system to present page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that will enable the user to interpret the content of the page – The plug-in or applet should be tested on PC and Mac platforms.
- f. When creating electronic forms to be completed online, use explicit label tags or place form elements immediately adjacent to their corresponding titles (not in separate cells of a table) – This will allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues. For additional information on explicit labels refer to tinypurl.com/yaohz8l.
- g. A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links – Web pages often feature standardized headers throughout a site with a set of routine navigation links. Non-disabled individuals can easily skim over these links and proceed directly to the content of the page. Disabled viewers using screen readers cannot freely skip the repeated links and must wait for the reader to announce each link before moving to the page content. In order to alleviate this problem, headers provided by the College will feature a bypass link, not visible to typical users, which

will enable users with assistive technologies to skip the repetitive navigational links. When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required – For more information on Accessibility Guidelines, refer to the following sites: tinyurl.com/am2gu and tinyurl.com/vvyi.

8. Site Maintenance Requirements

This section defines the parameters for keeping “Official” Siena College pages up-to-date and

- a. Review web pages and the related navigation links each semester (twice-per-year) to ensure they are:
 - i. Functional
 - ii. Accurate and up-to-date
 - iii. Appropriate

A link checker is provided in the External Links (section J)

- b. Only publish pages that are ready for general readership – Do not use apologies such as "under construction" or "coming soon."

If an urgent change is needed to be made to a page, the page should be set to inactive while undertaking maintenance. Since links to inactive pages are affected during this maintenance, content managers/editors should break links to inactive pages that need to be inactive for a prolonged period of time. Content managers/editors should also do their best to contact other respective content owners if aware of links to the inactive page are located elsewhere in the web.

Breaking links and then reestablishing the links in this manner causes less confusion for the user and keeps Siena’s website professional.

- c. The contact person receiving email or other feedback from site visitors must be capable of replying to questions related to the content in a timely fashion – For Siena departments and offices, the email address should be an alias, such as admit@siena.edu, so that the address may remain the same despite possible staffing changes.
- d. Web pages should be free of spelling and grammatical errors.
- e. When creating a web page you must use an appropriate name with no special characters.

Special characters: < > () [] { } ; : ? ! # & % + * = @ ~ ^ \$ / “


Refer to the Site Builder Toolkit Manual for questions on how to use the toolkit or contact helpdesk@siena.edu for more information.

9. Recommendations

This section of recommendations and best practices will help the Siena College website run consistently and smoothly. The following points are listed to help content managers/editors keep their pages as user friendly as possible while allowing user feedback to help keep information up-to-date.

Extensible code (code that revised for or preparing for future changes to technology) is one of the most basic ways to ensure your pages look the way you intend to the most people possible. HTML is the code that is used to display Siena's web pages. XHTML (a W3C recommendation) is an extensible version of HTML that helps render pages across most media types (computers, TVs, phones, etc.). This is not a different programming language but more of an extension of HTML. For more information see Section 10.a.iii.

- a. Use Page Templates
 - i. One-column templates are the most flexible when it comes to page-specific content. One-column templates do not have a left-sidebar or right-sidebar for menus, information channels, or contact information. These pages only contain a single column for content.
 - ii. Two-column templates refer to pages that have a left-sidebar and a main column for content.
 - iii. Three-column templates refer to pages that have a left- and right-sidebar with the middle column used for content.
- b. Organize and divide information into clearly defined sections.
- c. Situate important items at the top of the page to facilitate scanning – All major choices should be visible without requiring the visitor to scroll down the page.
- d. Supply additional contact information such as postal address and phone number.
- e. Obscure email addresses to prevent unwanted spam-mail – mungeing an email address means to change the formatting so that the address is obvious to humans but not to computer software used to farm email addresses for spamming. The two main ways of doing this is as follows:
 - i. Changing the text
 1. Change symbols to words – email address from admin@siena.edu to admin (at) siena (dot) edu.
 2. Substitute letters with a symbol to replace – st*v*@si*na.*du (replace * with e).
 3. Use your Siena College alias (e.g. admin from admin@siena.edu) – Contact me at “admin” in Siena’s email.
 - ii. Making a picture

1. A picture makes it harder for computers to read and decipher email addresses – admin@siena.edu = 
 2. With a picture you can have a link to a file (e.g. request form) that sends formatted emails once completed.
- f. Use JPEG format for photographs in order to achieve the best quality for online graphics.
 - g. Use the GIF format for graphics with fewer colors such as simple logos and graphic text.
 - h. Animated images can often be distracting; avoid them or use them sparingly.
 - i. Provide navigation clues – Users who come into the middle of a site from outside should be able to discern where they are within the site. This has been implemented by a “breadcrumb trail” at the top of each web page.
 - j. Do not use self-referencing links, such as "click here." Use the topic itself as a link – If the topic is exercise, instead of using: "For more information on exercise, click here", employ, "More information on exercise."
 - k. Background/foreground elements should not compete with or obscure the information on the page – If you use a picture or graphic as a background image, make sure that the picture is faint enough so the words in the foreground above it, are easily read.
 - l. Whenever possible, it is best to use black text on a white background for paragraph text, headings, subheadings and other captions.
 - m. Writing for the web
 - i. Understand your audience – provide relevant information formatted to suit the audience. Information should be presented according to order of importance (based on relevance on page and use by others) or sectioned alphabetically (for ease of searching). Use action verbs to attract your audience (e.g. “Connect with Us” and “Join In”).
 - ii. Write in an active voice with a positive sense. Readers will be more engaged in what is written (as opposed to passive and negative).
 - iii. Description of the page – the first paragraph of the page should be comprised of a short description of what the page is about. Contain key words/phrases in this first paragraph that reflect the title of the page and the pages topics covered (this will allow Google’s search program to properly index your page).
 - iv. Write web copy that is easy to scan. Use short sentences, bullet points, or short lines. If posting instructions, 120 word maximum will allow most people to understand the instructions. Long instructions cause confusion and your audience will get lost.
 - n. To ensure the widest possible viewing audience, it is best to test pages using as many up-to-date browsers as possible before posting them to the web – Some of the most popular browsers are as follows: Microsoft Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Safari.

- o. Do not use pop-ups, unnecessary graphics/animations, or scroll stoppers (graphics that look like the end of a page and used to 'trick' the user not to scroll further) since some users find them distracting.
- p. Pages should not start with "Welcome to ____" (then the site name) or use negative, passive writing. These detract immediately from the content of the page. Instead have a paragraph suggesting the objective of the page and use positive, active writing.

Site Builder Toolkit

- i. Uploading files should be uploaded in a folder that best represents the location of the web page to which you are uploading (i.e. on an Academics>OIE page an image is going to be uploaded and the image will be located in the database under a folder called OIE which resides in the Academics folder).
- ii. Naming conventions for files (like the syllabi on SIENAwatch). If you are linking to a file the link should read what the file is and the file name should be close to the same (plus or minus a date revised or version). This will help anyone trying to help upload files, overwrite old files if the old ones are not needed (saves space and search time), and helps users locate the files they just downloaded because they are not named, "Document.doc".
- iii. Files uploaded cannot be copyrighted from other sites.

Information Channels

A walkthrough for creating information channels and widgets can be found here:

www.siena.edu/pages/4153.asp

- i. Page Options
 - 1. Page: This needs to be the page number of the web page you are placing the information channels on. For example, if you wanted to start your information channels on page number 1449.asp, then I would put "1449" in this space (without the quotation marks).
 - 2. Apply to child pages:
 - 3. Starting nav page id: For pages that do not contain children pages (bottom of the hierarchy)
 - a. one-column template - there is no need to place anything here.
 - b. two-/three-column template - Place page number of parent page to show the parent page menu.
 - 4. RSS Feed: Heading/title must be filled out.

5. Photo Rotator Widget:
6. Social Media Widget:
- ii. Related Information - all sections must be filled out
 7. Options - Heading: Widget title needed (e.g. "Related Links" or "Links").
 8. Title #: Descriptive link - see section E.
 9. Link #: URL of link.
 10. Information #: Twenty word maximum describing link.
- iii. Persistent Content Widget: Use "Persistent Content Block" template under the "Templates" button on the SBT WYSIWYG editor for Contact information.
- iv. Landing Page Settings: Only to be used on landing pages.

10. External Source

- a. World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) – w3c.org
 - i. W3C – Accessibility Initiative - w3.org/WAI/
 - ii. W3C – Resources - w3.org/WAI/Resources/
 - iii. W3C – XHTML - tinyurl.com/yd3p7sm
 - iv. W3C – Validation Tools - w3.org/QA/Tools/
 1. HTML/XHTML Validator - tinyurl.com/vvzr
 2. CSS Validator - tinyurl.com/382hc
 3. Mobile Validator - tinyurl.com/2zjspr
 4. RSS Validator - tinyurl.com/2rjwnt
 5. Broken Link Checker - tinyurl.com/mwpdz
- b. W3 Schools – Quality Accessibility - tinyurl.com/ybypzjo
- c. How Users Read the Web - tinyurl.com/25vge
- d. Lynch and Horton – Web Style Guide - tinyurl.com/ch4q55
- e. Internet Engineering Task Force – www.ietf.org
- f. Siena College’s Web Style Guide Site - www.siena.edu/pages/3842.asp