Draft AFRE Website Style Manual

Notes on best practices to enhance website accessibility and readability on multiple size browsing devices

by MT Weber

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- This note briefly documents a set of recommended and implemented best practices for the AFRE website.
- Motivation
  - Assists AFRE to meet essential MSU/CANR website accessibility standards, **and**
  - Improve AFRE's website content readability, regardless of browsing device.
- Draws on suggested best practices/learning tutorials at:
  - MSU Web accessibility guidelines - [Basic Checklist: Online Content Accessibility](#) see key hints on slide 3
  - Rutgers University – Communications and Marketing ([Writing for Websites](#))
  - Hampshire College [– Web Writing Style Guide](#)
  - [9 Simple Tips for Writing Persuasive Web Content](#) by Henneke – Enchanted Marketing

Basic Logic of AFRE Proposed Website Style Guide

- Web readers don't sit in front of their computer screens (or gaze into their mobile phones) and read webpages word-by-word.
- Instead, they scan pages for useful information.
- To provide easily scannable content, use these techniques in web writing:
  - Break information into "chunks" that can be easily accessed and comprehended.
    - (Website Top Level Tabs and corresponding Subtabs)
  - Depending on amount of information to present in a given subtab, consistently partition and label the contents of subtabs
  - Consistently use different size headers to denote the partitioning of content.
  - Use bulleted lists to present content detail.

AFRE Website Content Map
By Tabs and Subtabs

- About
  - Department Leadership
  - Biweekly Announcements
  - Advancing Economics, Transforming Lives
  - Statement of Values
  - Publications
  - Giving
  - History of AFRE
  - News
  - Contact Us
- People
  - Faculty
  - Emeritus/Former Faculty
  - Staff
  - Current Graduate Students
  - Completed Graduate Students
- Undergraduate Study
  - Agribusiness Management
  - Environmental Economics & Management
  - Food Industry Management
  - MSU Admissions
  - Undergraduate Scholarships
  - Undergraduate Academic Advising Office
  - Degree Requirements
  - Minor Requirements
  - Career Exploration
  - Study Abroad
- Graduate Study
  - M.S. Degree
  - Ph.D. Degree
  - Graduate Courses
  - Dual Major
  - Graduate Specializations
  - Applying and Visiting
  - Financial Aid
  - Grad Student Organization
  - Costs
  - Thesis/Dissertation Award Winners
  - Program Strengths
  - Job Placements

- Events
  - AFRE Weekly Seminars
  - AFRE Brown-Bag Seminars
  - AFRE Graduate Symposium
  - Development Brown Bag Seminars
  - AFRE/FSG Seminars
  - Economics Dept Seminars
  - CANR/Other MSU Seminars
- News
- Projects
  - Domestic Research & Outreach
  - International Research & Outreach
  - AFRE Faculty Specialization
  - Past Projects
- Centers & Services
  - AFRE's Expanding Horizons
  - Ag Credit Conference
  - Center for Economic Analysis
  - Economic Analysis of Sustainable Ag. & Food Systems
  - Extension/Outreach Programs
  - Food Security Group - FSG
  - Elton R. Smith Endowment
  - Morris Chair in State and Local Government Finance and Policy
  - MSU Income Tax School
  - North Central Regional Center for Rural Development
  - State and Local Government
  - The Food SCENE
  - The Product Center
  - Telfarm
  - Food Security Policy (FSP) Innovation Lab
- Connect With Us - Quick Links
- Additional Connect With Us - Quick Links

Examples – Chunks of Information, Consistent Tab and Subtab Headers, and Presentation of Basic Content via Bullets of Information

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AGRICULTURAL, FOOD, AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS

Home

About

People

Undergraduate Study

Agribusiness Management

Environmental Economics & Management

Food Industry Management

MSU Admissions

Undergraduate Scholarships

Undergraduate Academic Advising Office

Degree Requirements

Minor Requirements

Career Exploration

Study Abroad

Graduate Study

Events

Agribusiness Management

Degree Requirement

- For students who declared Agribusiness Management as their major on or before September 1, 2015, the degree requirements: Agribusiness Management Degree Requirements (pdf)
- For students who declared Agribusiness Management as their major on or after September 2, 2015 (first day of classes of Fall 2015), the degree requirements: Agribusiness Management Degree Requirements (on or after September 2) (pdf)

Degree Focus

- The Agribusiness Management major is designed to meet the needs of students who are interested in careers with agricultural input supply, agricultural production, commodity assembly and processing, and agricultural marketing organizations. The program, which focuses on the managerial functions performed by organizations throughout the agribusiness sector, provides a system–wide perspective of managerial problems confronting such organizations. Faculty members associated with the program maintain close relationships with agribusiness companies.

Careers Opportunities

- The US Department of Agriculture estimates that many more agribusiness careers are available than there are qualified people to fill them. The shortage will be greatest for managers, financial specialists and marketing/sales representatives — the careers upon which our program focuses.

Advisors

- Ruthi Bloomfield - bloomf19@msu.edu - 517-432-5298
- Dale Elshoff - elshoff@msu.edu - 517-884-8976
- Advising Office - Justin S Morrill Hall of Agriculture, 446 W. Circle Dr., Room 1.
  Advising appointments are scheduled online. Walk-in advising is closed for the summer, walk-in advising will start Wednesday, August 24.

Recent Training and Career Information

- Salary Range: $36,000 – $60,000
- Career Positions
  - Commodity Trader

Implementing Consistent Headers For Titles, Tabs and Subtabs

Title of Website [<h1> header assigned by EE software] White on Green Background

"About" Top Level Tab [<h2> header assigned by EE software] **Green and Bold**

"Department Leadership" Subtab [<h2> header assigned by EE software) **Green and Bold**]

- Subtab partitioning – sublabel a [<h3> header assigned by user] **Black & Bold**

- Subtab partitioning – sublabel b <h3> header (assigned by user) **Black & Bold**

- Subtab partitioning – sublabel c <h3> header (assigned by user) **Black & Bold**

"Biweekly Announcements" Subtab [<h2> header assigned by EE software) **Green and Bold**]

1. Heading where EE controls size of font : <h1> white and <h2> green and bolded.
2. Headings where users have control <3> and below: Use only one color in text – black .
3. Heading <h3> is automatically bolded by EE.   Consistently use <h3> on all sublabels on a given page
4. Text entered below sub-headers is organized by bullets and is the EE default font size

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Example of selecting ,<h3> (Heading 3) when posting text on a given page in EE.

Generally, let EE set defaults for "Font Family" and for "Font Size"

QUICK TIPS: Online Content Accessibility

Text and Contrast
Check that text has a strong contrast against the page background.
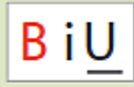
Text Styles
Use more than color to denote differences, emphasis, and content meaning.
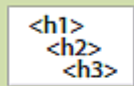
Heading Styles
Use descriptive heading styles to designate content organization.

List Styles
Use bulleted or numbered list styles to denote list structure.

Alternative Text
Provide alternative text for images, graphs, and charts.

Multiple Avenues for Multimedia
Supply multiple avenues for multimedia content (e.g., audio with a transcript or video with captioning).

Added Context
Use descriptive titles, headers, and link text to provide added context.

Do not rely solely on references to shape, size, or position to describe content.

Tables
Format and use simple tables with column and row headers.

The "Basic Checklist: Online Content Accessibility" with more details is at **webaccess.msu.edu/basiclist**.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Web Accessibility — webaccess.msu.edu

Key hints on editing AFRE's site in EE

1. Use black text on white background & use bolding carefully and sparingly.
2. Don't use colored fonts to get attention . Avoid All CAPS.
3. EE defaults for <h1> and <h2>. User selects <h3>
4. Use bullets for text rather than numbers. Avoid paragraphs of text
5. Insert alternative text as meta data on all images.
6. When uploading AFRE videos, use captioning. Links to outside videos w/out captioning ok
7. Don't use "click here". Use "view xxxxxx" so users know what information appears at this link.
8. Don't use tables to present info – Not workable in responsive mode

Why Does the Style Include a "Menu – XXXX" Subheader on Each Top-Level Tab

Short Answer – This is a short-term fix waiting for a longer-term ANR/Tec fix.

"Menu – XXXX" Subheader on Each Top-Level Tab is Redundant When Viewing The AFRE Website on a Desktop or Larger Screen. Menu Options are Seen on the Left

On Cell Phone Viewing of AFRE Website, No First Hand View of Navigating to Subtabs

ANR/TEC May Setup CANR Websites Similar to the MSU Website

Adding Menu- People Allows Easy Onward Navigation

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
MENU

DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURAL, FOOD, AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS

People
Overview

- Throughout its history, AFRE has been fortunate to have outstanding and dedicated people associated with all the dimensions of its research, outreach and teaching missions.

- Use the navigation bar at the left, or slect an option below, to see listings of AFRE current faculty, Emeritus/Former faculty, staff or graduate students.

Menu - People

- Faculty
- Emeritus/Former Faculty
- Staff
- Current Graduate Students

How The MSU Main Website Facilitates Navigation in Responsive Mode
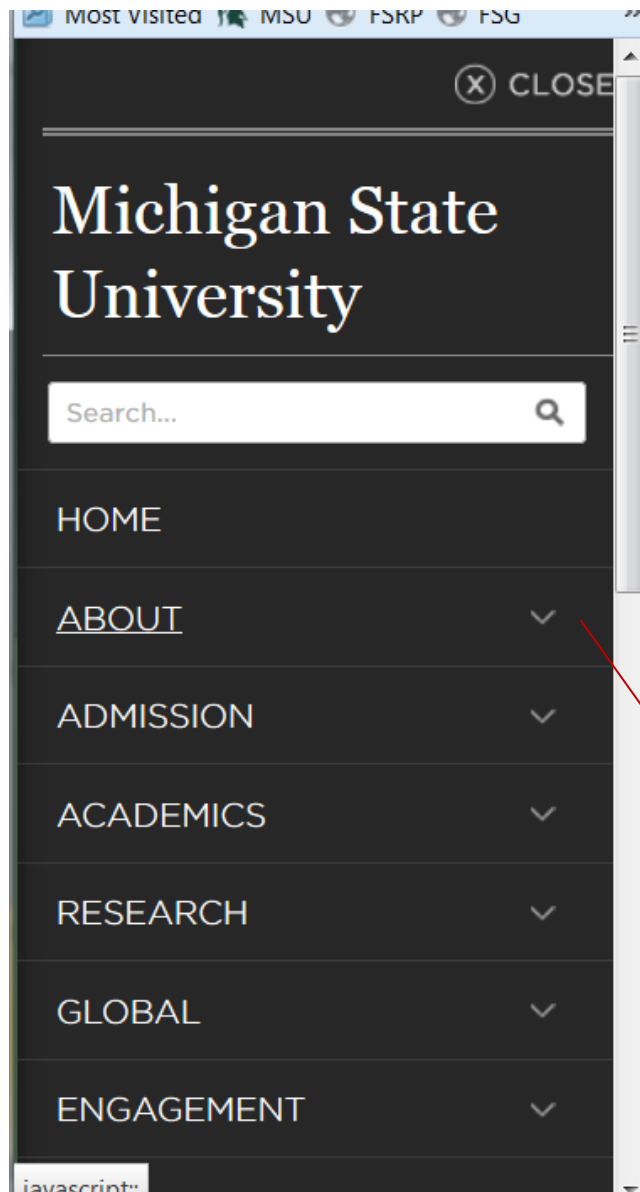
Down Marks Allow Clicking To View Subtab Contents
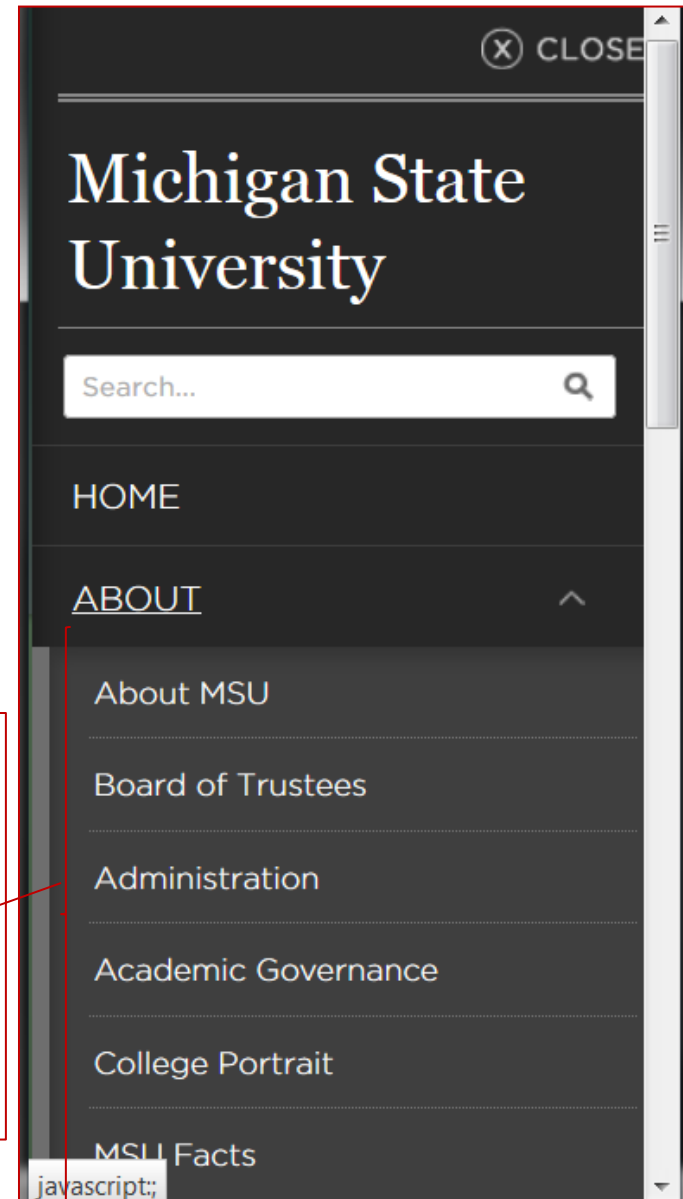
Going Forward:

- Who is Responsible for Website Posting of Materials Developed by Selected Faculty in Different Sections of the AFRE Website?

  - **Home** - News (Taylor Logan and others? Helped by Ellen
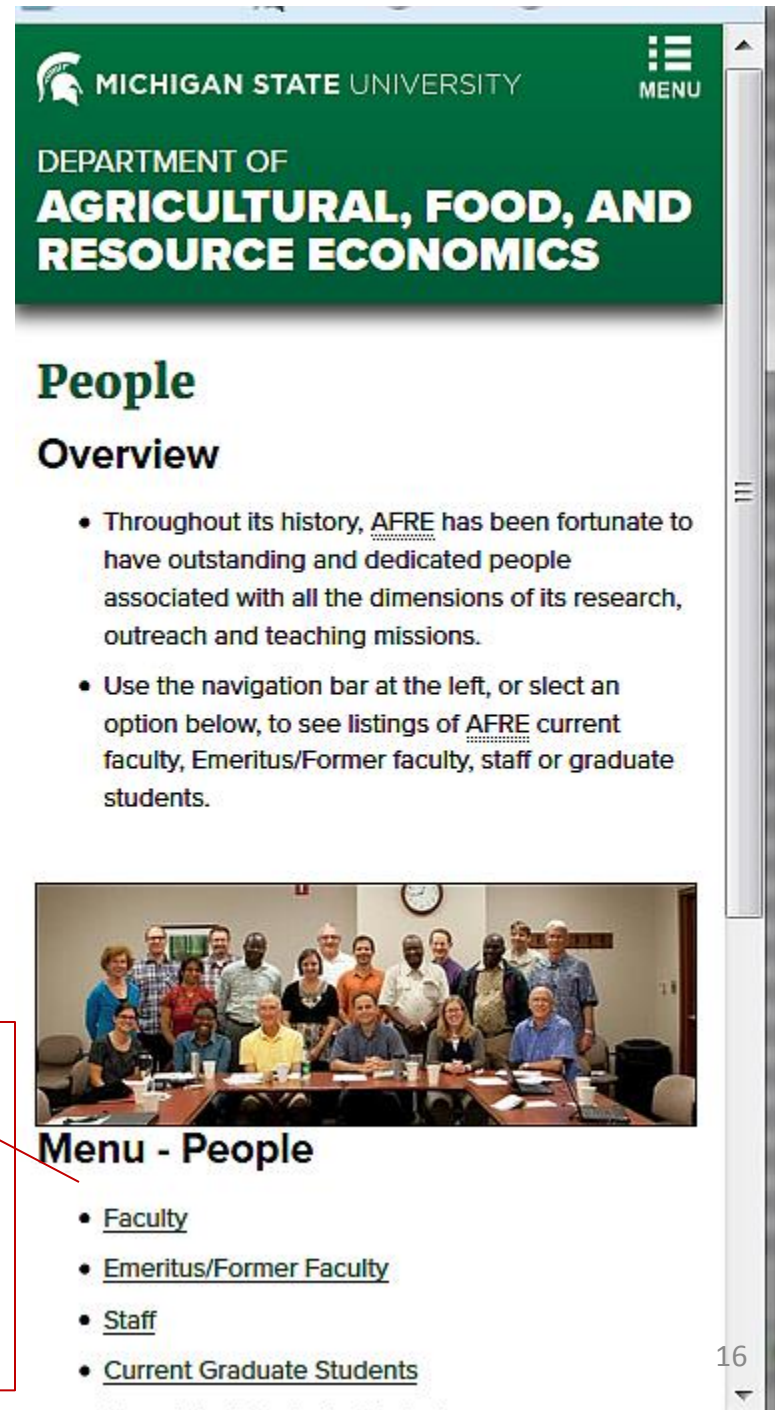 - **People -** Current and Emeritus Faculty, and Staff - Taylor Logan
    - Retiring/Departing Faculty need to be move from Current to Emeritus Section
  - **People -** Students - Debbie Conway
  - **Undergraduate** - Ellen Schueller
  - **Graduate** - Debbie Conway – also maintains the graduate thesis/dissertation data base
  - **Events** - Nancy Creed and others?
  - **News** - Taylor Logan and others? Helped by Ellen
  - **Projects** - Domestic - Michael Graff
    - Completed Projects need to be archived instead of removed.
  - **Projects** - International - To be determined given Weber's move to Florida?
    - Completed Projects need to be archived instead of removed.
  - **Centers and Services** - Taylor Logan
    - **Getting Good Pictures** – How to do this more systematically?
    - **AFRE Newsletter: Advancing Economics, Transforming Lives** – AFRE drafts, Eileen Gianiodis and Fran Adelaja process this for CANR and AFRE news items and put it into the AFRE Newsletter format. But Constant Contact, the version of the software used is not responsive - the newsletter cannot be read on a cell phone. According to Eileen Gianiodis, CANR is in the process of updating this over the next couple of months. Need to follow up on this. Food Security Group could also use this new version of the software for their newsletter.
- Who is Responsible for Overall Website Coordination and Oversite, and News Story Writing? -Possible new AFRE communication staff position?