

# Making the Most of the Information Age: Developing an Advising Website

NACADA National Conference 2005

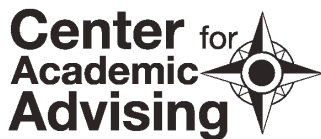
October 5-8, Las Vegas, NV

Concurrent Session 171

Cyndi Faircloth  
cyndil@uidaho.edu

Sara Stout  
sstout@uidaho.edu

[www.uidaho.edu/advising/](http://www.uidaho.edu/advising/)



## AGENDA

- 1) Considering Your Audience
- 2) Creating your homepage
- 3) Navigation
- 4) Checking content
- 5) Routine maintenance
- 6) Annual maintenance and assessment
- 7) Technical tips

# CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE:

Who will be using your website?

What do they need to know?

Make a list:

<b>Audience</b> -	Current Students
<b>Content needs</b> -	Core information, registration information, Career exploration, Campus directory....
<b>Audience</b> -	Advisors
<b>Content needs</b> -	Advising workshops, professional development, announcements, "how-tos"....
<b>Audience</b>	Prospective Students
<b>Content needs-</b>	Getting admitted, how advising works, setting up email, FAQs....

# CREATE YOUR HOMEPAGE:

Your homepage will "anchor" your website. It should provide identity information for your audience at the same time it allows them to navigate your content. Remember the KISS principle and "keep it simple" so your identity is clear and not muddled by a lot of words

## TYPICAL HOMEPAGE CONTENT:

**TOP BANNER:** this piece will repeat on all pages so your users will know they're still on your site.

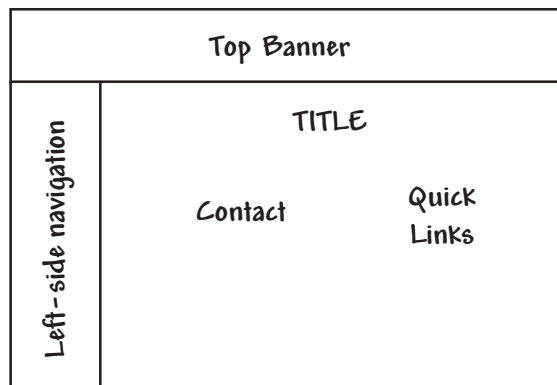
**TITLE:** This will identify the page as your homepage. Though the banner appears on the top of all pages, each page will have a heading. Your department name or logo works as your heading on this page.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** Phone, mailing address, email...

**NAVIGATION MENU:** Left-side of page

**QUICK LINKS (OR "HOT LINKS"):** These are usually the most frequently used tools on your site. Generally, there aren't more than 5 items in the list.

**URL:** Meaningful and easy--also creates identity



## NAVIGATION:

Generally, website navigation appears in the form of a left-side menu. Menu items generally stay the same from page to page, though once users leave the home page there should be a way to get back to the homepage. This allows them to “start over” if they’ve layered themselves in too far.

### LEFT-SIDE MENU ITEMS:

*Generally, no more than 10 navigation menu items*

*These items are traditional navigation items:*

SITE INDEX OR MAP: An outline form of your site if someone wants to see a list of all content/navigation items

CONTACT INFORMATION: staff names, photos (?), duties

FAQs

*Other ideas:*

“MENU” for each of your audiences

STAFF LIST

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OTHER MAJOR ITEMS universal to all of your audiences

SEARCH

## DEVELOPING YOUR CONTENT:

Your initial starting place might be your FAQs. Decide on tools and resources to address the most frequently asked questions. Brainstorm *as much as possible*--you can always edit something out later. Look for examples on other sites. What are your faves? What wouldn't work on your campus?

### SOME ADVISING PAGES OR TOPICS IDEAS:

*For Students:*

FINANCIAL AID: Do you need different information for students and advisors? For other audiences?

CAREER ADVISING

GETTING INVOLVED ON CAMPUS: Student clubs, volunteer organizations, Associated Students, Student Ambassadors....are there other ‘resume builders’?

REGISTRATION: Who? What? Where? **How?**

*For Advisors:*

REGULATIONS

“How Tos”

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES: *The Mentor*, advising workshops, NACADA Clearinghouse, on-line advising handbook....

ONCE YOUR CONTENT IS DEVELOPED, request feedback. Ask advisors who will use your site to tell you how it works. Let them know where to send feedback if they have ideas later.

## MAINTENANCE:

We usually think of maintaining our content in two groups: "Routine" and "Annual"

### ROUTINE:

*Fix broken links as you find them* (remove or re-link to the new server)

*Staff updates, contact information, resources*

BE SURE YOUR CONTENT IS AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE

*Feedback from users*

### ANNUAL:

*Look at your content organization*

Do you have any new audiences?

Does your content make sense where it is?

Is there information that isn't necessary? (**AVOID EXCESSIVE TEXT!**)

Are there any resources that are outdated? (e.g. Catalog updates? Old "updates" or "announcements")

## TIPS FOR BEING USER-FRIENDLY:

### MAKE JUDICIOUS USE OF "BELLS & WHISTLES"

ADA Compliance

eg: Blind & Visually Impaired--browser size, technology reads the page images--coding for readers

### AVOID EXCESSIVE TEXT

Too much text and you'll lose your audience

NEW WINDOWS v. pop up blockers

### INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS

GRAPHICS--should enhance but don't overdo it (modems)

"DON'T MAKE ME THINK"

READ NOT SCAN - use headlines

HEADINGS = critical (8 words or less)

BULLETS - easy way to highlight/separate info

LISTS - easy to read

DOCUMENT LINKS = .pdf format

FIND A GOOD WEBMASTER