

# Introduction

Basic design guidelines ensure consistent visual and editorial identity across the library's online spaces. The UO Libraries web style guide outlines best practices for online content creation, including visual style, editorial style, and accessibility for all Libraries web content (e.g., Libraries' Drupal pages, Research Guides, and LibCal).

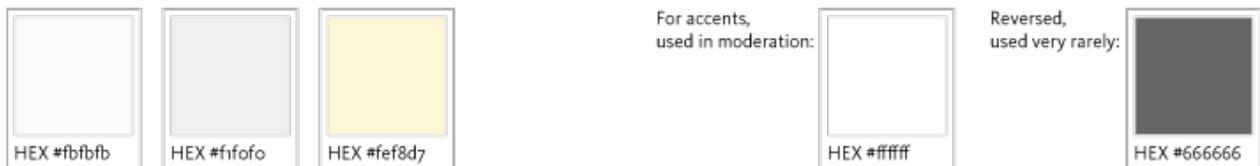
This style guide was created by the Online User Interfaces committee (OUI) to provide coherent, consistent standards for library content creators. Maintaining a consistent style across all of our content reinforces UO Libraries branding, clarifies our messaging, and helps library users navigate seamlessly between various pages on our website.

## Visual Style

### Color

Effective and comprehensive brand strategy for the UO Libraries must consider the critical importance of color. The colors here include some of those from the [UO's brand strategy](#) and some for use on the web.

#### Background Colors



#### Text Colors



### Font

It has been said that 90% of web design is typography. The UO Libraries has chosen the versatile Lato for its web font to complement the University of Oregon's more restricted or less web-friendly Quadon, Bauer Bodoni, Kievit and Melior.

Header 1: 'Lato', Helvetica, Arial, Normal, 25px, 32px, #bfb168

One morning, when Gregor Samsa

Header 2: 'Lato', Helvetica, Arial, Normal, 25px, 32px, #333333

One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from

Header 3: 'Lato', Helvetica, Arial, Normal, 25px, 32px, #555555

One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled

Header 4: 'Lato', Helvetica, Arial, Normal, 25px, 32px, #333333

One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found

Header 5: 'Lato', Helvetica, Arial, Normal, 25px, 32px, #2e2e2e

One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself

Header 6: 'Lato', Helvetica, Arial, Normal, 25px, 32px, #2e2e2e

One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself

Body: 'Lato', Helvetica, Arial, Normal, 25px, 32px, #2e2e2e

When Gregor Samsa woke up one morning from **unsettling dreams**, he found himself changed in his bed into a monstrous vermin.

## Logo Usage

The UO Libraries follows the University of Oregon's extensive [logo usage guidelines](#). Those guidelines include [secondary signatures](#) for UO Libraries; look for "University of Oregon Libraries."

## Imagery

### Part 1. Choosing Images

In selecting photographs for a web page or research guide, keep in mind how images reinforce the library – and campus – brand. To quote the official University Style Guide: “the way we choose, create and use images should reflect our brand, support our key messages and values, and help us tell our story.”

Select images that present the library as a dynamic, user centered environment. Create media rich content that relies on both textual and visual elements to convey meaning. Try to show individuals surrounded by their environments or working in groups rather than posing for the camera. Choose images which have a strong human element, interesting design feature or unexpected POV. Focus on faces or expressions. Avoid images which look staged or contain dated resources, spaces or technology.

### Part 2. Stock Photography

Web content creators should source photographs from the following UO image repositories before conducting Google image searches. High resolution JPEGs can be downloaded directly from these collections for individuals using a campus IP address.

[UO Libraries Stock Photos](#)

UO Libraries hosts an online collection of current (2012-present) library and campus related photographic images as part of the [UO Stock Photos](#) collection. Photos can be sorted by creator, topic, location, format and decade. Topics include libraries, classrooms, students, technology, seasons and work types.

### [UO Archives Photos](#)

For older UO Libraries images, search the [UO Archives Photograph Collection](#) which contains modern and vintage photographic images related to the University of Oregon. Photographs depict a variety of buildings, historic scenes, events, students, faculty and staff, and scenes of campus life.

### [UO Library Research Guides](#)

Within the Libapps platform, research guide creators can select image content from the Libapp's [Image Manager](#). The collection contains stock images pre-sorted and resized for use in Research Guide pages by the library's Communications and Marketing team. Photos are sorted by interior library spaces, employees, students, technology, etc. All images have been sized to fit image specifications for research guide pages.

## **Part 3. Copyright**

All photo on these UO stock sites are free to use for university publications, websites and other educational, not-for-profit types of outreach. In general, use of images created and published before 1923 is not a problem, as they are now considered to be in the public domain. For more information on copyright, visit the Oregon Digital's [Copyright, Access, and Use](#) page.

## **Part 4. Technical Guidelines**

Images uploaded to web pages should be a maximum of 270 px in width at 72 dpi. For features/tiles pages, a 16:9 image ratio is recommended. Files must be less than 600 kb. Allowed file types include png, gif and jpg. For help choosing or optimizing an image for a web page please contact the UO Libraries web developer or Mandi Garcia ([amandag@uoregon.edu](mailto:amandag@uoregon.edu))

## **Part 5. Original Photography**

If you need a special image for a web page, contact Lesli Larson ([llarson@uoregon.edu](mailto:llarson@uoregon.edu)) or Mandi Garcia ([amandag@uoregon.edu](mailto:amandag@uoregon.edu)) in Communications and Marketing with your request. If you would like to take your own photographs, follow the [brand.uoregon.edu](http://brand.uoregon.edu) style guide. Here are some quick tips for improving your cellphone photographs: keep your photographs simple, shoot from an interesting angle, select a specific area of focus in the image and edit using a third party editing and shooting app like VSCO cam or Snapseed.

## Part 6. Model Release

If you take shots of people that include facial close-ups or shots where they are the main focus of the image, a University of Oregon [model release form](#) must be filled out. If a photograph is taken of a large group where no single person is the focus or taken outside in a public space, then a release form is not required. The release form can also be used for audio/video interviews.

## Part 7. Captions

Use captions if you need to provide a photography credit or if the photo is a portrait and the subject needs to be identified.

# Editorial Style

## Tone

The editorial tone of our web communications should always reflect the UO Libraries' mission, voice, and values. The tone should portray the scholarly, literary, creative, and technological aspects of the library in an engaging and knowledgeable way.

The UO's institutional tone and voice is "[Intelligently Informal](#)." Our six key tone words are: Irreverent, Progressive, Extraordinary, Alive, Natural, and Inclusive.

## Writing for the Library

This editorial style guide outlines rules and conventions for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and points of style in cases that are specific to the University of Oregon Libraries. For questions not covered in this guide, please consult the following resources:

- [University of Oregon Editorial Style Guide](#) provides institutional guidelines for the most commonly asked questions about grammar, usage, and style.
- [The Chicago Manual of Style](#) provides more detailed information and addresses more topics.
- [The American Heritage Dictionary](#) is our standard reference for spelling, word division, meaning, and usage.

### I. First Things First: Is it *Library* or *Libraries*?

Our official name is *University of Oregon Libraries*. Always write out the full name on first reference. Thereafter, use either *the library* or *UO Libraries*. Note that *the library* as a synonym for *UO Libraries* is NOT capitalized.

- **Correct**  
Welcome to the University of Oregon Libraries.
- **Correct**  
Every student on our campus is served by UO Libraries.
- **Correct**  
Students like to study at the library.

- **Incorrect**  
Every student on our campus is served by the Library.
- **Incorrect**  
Every student on our campus is served by the libraries.  
References to libraries in general are NOT capitalized.
- **Correct**  
Americans love their libraries.
- **Incorrect**  
The services offered by Libraries are essential to all Americans.  
For assigning pronouns and subject-verb agreement, *University of Oregon Libraries* is treated as a singular noun. At first, this may seem counterintuitive: *Libraries* certainly sounds plural. However, *UO Libraries* is singular because it is *one institution made up of multiple parts*. It may help to think of another proper noun that seems plural but actually takes singular verbs and pronouns: the United States. (e.g., “The United States is where I live. It’s a country in North America. The United States exports electronics throughout the world.”)
- **Correct**  
The UO Libraries is made up of eight branch libraries. It serves more than 25,000 students. The United States is made up of fifty states. It has a population of 318.9 million.
- **Incorrect**  
The UO Libraries are made up of eight branch libraries. They serve more than 25,000 students. The United States are made up of fifty states. They have a population of 318.9 million.

## II. Library Terminology

**acronyms:** Always write out the full name first, and then add the abbreviation in parentheses. Use the abbreviation consistently thereafter.

(Example: The Center for Media and Educational Technologies (CMET) loans out GoPro cameras. You can also borrow other equipment at CMET.)

*Exception:* There is no need to write out the full name for acronyms that have become universally familiar through widespread, colloquial, non-specialist use (e.g., IRS, CIA, CD, DVD, SCUBA).

**e-book, e-journals, etc.:** Include the hyphen. When used at the beginning of the sentence, capitalize the E.

**e-reserves:** Provide the full name, *electronic reserves*, on first use. Use *e-reserves* for all subsequent uses. When used at the beginning of the sentence, capitalize the E.

**Interlibrary Loan:** Both words are capitalized. *Interlibrary* is one word. Write out the full name first. You may refer to it subsequently as *ILL*.

**LibGuides:** The proprietary name of the software. Do not use *LibGuides* as a blanket term for

documents created with the software. Instead, use the name of the specific type of guide you are referring to (e.g., *subject guides*, *course guides*, *topic guides*) or, for general reference, simply say *guides*.

**Library Catalog:** Capitalize both words when using this as a proper noun.

**librarians vs. library staff:** The term *librarians* is generally reserved for those members of our organization who hold [academic faculty status with rank](#). When referring to mixed groups of library workers, it is usually preferable to use the term *staff* as part of a phrase such as *library staff* or *reference staff*.

**stacks:** Do not use this term as a specific, spatial reference point in public documents. Use *floors* or *collections* as reference points instead.

- **Correct**

Current music periodicals are located on the third floor of Knight Library.

- **Incorrect**

Current music periodicals are located in the stacks.

**user/patron/borrower:** Whenever possible, address readers directly using the second person (*you*), not the third person. When necessary, use *borrower*, *user*, or *patron* depending on the context.

- **Correct**

You can get help via phone, email, or chat.

- **Incorrect**

Library patrons can get help via phone, email, or chat.

### III. Computer/IT Terminology

**database:** Not *data base* or *data-base*. When referring to the proper name of a database, do not italicize or place in quotation marks. (E.g., OneSearch, JSTOR, or ArticleFirst, not “OneSearch,” *JSTOR*, or “*ArticleFirst*.”)

**homepage:** Not home page.

**Internet / internet:** Capitalize when used as a noun (e.g., “on the Internet”) but not when used as an adjective (e.g., “internet resources”).

**log in, log on, log off (v.):** Two words when used as a verb. Use the phrase *log on to*—not *log onto*—when directing users to a resource.

- **Correct**

In order to log on to Iris, you must be authorized.

- **Incorrect**

In order to logon to Iris, you must be authorized.

In order to log onto Iris, you must be authorized.

**login, logon, logoff (n., adj.):** One word when used as a noun or adjective.

- **Correct**

Your computer login is also your Duck ID.

Did you receive your login credentials?

- **Incorrect**

Your computer log in is also your Duck ID.

Did you receive your log in credentials?

**online:** Not on-line.

**web:** Not Web, except in the proper-noun construction World Wide Web.

**website:** Not web site or web-site. Likewise, the phrases webcam, webcast, webinar, and webmaster are one word, all lowercase. However...

**web page:** Not webpage.

**URL:** In general, try to avoid writing out URLs, especially ones that are lengthy. Instead, whenever possible, hyperlink appropriate terms/content in the body text. For general references to a website, use its name rather than its URL. In other words, you would say “Go to Scholars’ Bank” rather than “Go to scholarsbank.uoregon.edu.”

If/when it does become necessary to write out the URL of a site...

- Do NOT include the www. or http:// protocol at the start of the web address.
- Do NOT include an end /.
- Avoid breaking URLs over two lines. If it becomes unavoidable, refer to [\*The Chicago Manual of Style, Section 7.42\*](#), for further instructions.
- Before publishing, check that the URL, as listed in your text document, works when typed in web browsers.
- Include end punctuation if the URL is the final element of a sentence.

## **Writing for the Web**

1. **Use plain language.** Keep our users’ needs in mind and write with the same words they use. This will help them understand the copy and will help optimize it for search engines. Unless absolutely necessary, avoid using library jargon. (e.g., say “books” instead of “monographs,” “periodicals” instead of “serials,” “collection” instead of “stacks.”)
2. **Front-load the most important content.** Like a news reporter, think of an inverted pyramid when you write. Get to the main point in the first paragraph, then expand upon it.

3. **Be concise and to-the-point.** [Research shows](#) that most people don't really read web pages—they just scan them. So, short sentences and paragraphs are better than long, rambling ones. The ideal standard is no more than 20 words per sentence, five sentences per paragraph.
4. **Chunk your content and use white space.** Breaking your text into separate, manageable sections reduces “noise” and makes it easier to scan.
5. **Include headings and internal subheadings.** They break up text and help readers get to the section of the document that is most useful for them. Questions, especially those with pronouns, make particularly effective headings and subheadings.
6. **Use pronouns to address readers directly.** The reader is *you*. The library is *we*. (e.g., “You can check out equipment at CMET,” not “Library patrons can check out equipment at CMET.”)
7. **Avoid the passive voice.** Write in the active voice. Don’t be afraid to tell your readers what to do. (e.g., “You can check out equipment at CMET,” not “Equipment can be checked out at CMET.”)
8. **Find opportunities to use lists instead of paragraphs.** Lists are easier to scan than paragraphs. Bullet-point or number your lists. Don’t make lists too long: 7-10 items is about the most that readers can process at one time.
9. **Make links an integrated part of your copy.** [Links](#) are another way readers scan web pages. They [stand out from normal text](#) and provide further cues about page content. In most cases, avoid writing out URLs—anchoring a hyperlink in the text is usually better. Before publishing, test all links to make sure they work.
10. **Always proofread before publishing.** Because it's a poor reflexion on the Uo libraries and a potential turnoff for a reader's when spelling, or grammatical errors undermine otherwise excellent web-site-copy.

## Accessibility

To ensure that Libraries web pages are accessible to the widest possible audience, adhere to the following accessibility guidelines:

### Alternative Text

All images must contain alternative text (aka alt tag), a textual description of the image for the visually impaired.

### Table Headings

If tables are used to present data, header cells must be associated with data cells so that screen reader users can easily navigate and understand the content of the table.

1. Describe complex tables using the summary attribute in the table tag
2. Consider using the caption element to describe the content of data tables
3. Use the elements to tag columns or row headers; nest these headers in a thead tag

### **Link Text**

The text for every link must accurately describe where a link will lead and make sense out of context. Screen reader users may choose to only read the links on a page. Links such as "read more" or "click here" should be avoided.

### **Media Captions/Transcripts**

All image must have captions, and all video must have transcripts.

### **Non-HTML Content**

1. PDF files must have embedded text
2. Word files must be accessible
3. Powerpoint files must be accessible

### **Color**

When using colored text to convey meaning, also use italics, underline, bold, or another mehtod to draw attention to text. Meaning should not be conveyed through color alone.

### **General Text**

1. Use real text rather than text within graphics
2. Ensure sufficient contrast between text and background
3. Limit the use of font variations such as bold, italics, and all capital letters
4. Avoid blinking or moving text
5. See font section for best practices with [font](#)

## **Research Guides**

The general rules for visual and editorial style should be used for research guides. Below are some best practices specific to creating a research guide.

## What to call them

It is important internally that we do not confuse LibGuides (the package) with the pages created with that package. It is important in communicating with library patrons that "LibGuides" not be used at all. It is best practice to call these resources a "guide" or a "research guide". It is also okay to call them subject guides, course guides, topic guides, or internal guides.

## Guide types

When choosing which type of guide to create, consider the purpose of the guide. Is it a subject, course, topic, or an internal guide? Refer to the [Getting Started with LibGuides' Best Practices page](#) for descriptions/use and examples.

## Best practices: structure & layout

A few best practices related to the structure of research guides and layout.

### *Guide naming conventions*

Rather than Getting Started With... or Researching..., choose guide names that cover the subject, course, and topic succinctly using 1-6 words. For example:

- Education (subject)
- Plagiarism (topic)
- HPHY 123 Human Physiology and Sports (course abbreviation, number, title). Always include course name and number for course guides.
- FIG: Breaking the Wall (FIG example)

### *Descriptions*

Keep it succinct with 1-2 sentences on guide purpose and ideal audience.

### *Subjects and tags*

Assign 1-3 relevant subjects to your guide

Tagging your guides with a few keywords will help users find it in the system. Tags should be simple keyword phrases that describe your content. There should be no more than 3-4 tags associated with any one guide and they should not duplicate words in guide titles or subjects.

### *Friendly URLs*

- Any customized URLs for guides, branches, subjects, and pages should be all lower case.
- Use hyphens (-) instead of underscores (\_) in your URLs
- URLs are constructed logically and in a manner that is most intelligible to humans (when possible, readable words rather than long ID numbers)
- For course guides, the course abbreviation and number should be used. For example: <http://researchguides.uoregon.edu/socwk100>

More information: <https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/76329?hl=en>

### *Profile boxes*

Include a profile box on the main page of the guide that includes contact information for the Librarian (or guide owner) in column 2.

### *Need Help widget*

Include the help widget at the top of column 2 (the same column as the profile box).

### *Keep as much as possible to top of guide*

Try to have as much of the important content of the guide clearly visible without having to scroll down. Many users will only read what is near the top of the screen. If need for scrolling is excessive, consider reorganizing the material.

### *Pages*

Avoid subpages as much as possible. Before putting content in a subpage, think about whether it can be put in a separate box on the parent page or homepage without making the page too long.

The organization of the pages should be consistent. Subjects and formats should not be mixed. For example, if one has an Education guide and one tab is “Educational Psychology” and another “Journal Articles”, students may be confused how to find an article on educational psychology.

### *Multimedia and using other visual materials*

Make use of images in your guides – they can liven up the page, catch the user’s eye, break up text, or provide graphical clues about content.

In addition to images, consider including multimedia sources such as podcasts or videos. They can add interest and appeal to guides, as well as useful information.

It is important to adhere to copyright and accessibility standards when using images and multimedia materials. If possible, use the photo/image assets available in LibGuides, or other options provided on the [imagery section](#).

## **Best practices: Database List & Photo/Image Assets**

Assets are [reusable content](#) (widgets, links, databases, books from the catalog, documents). More information: <http://researchguides.uoregon.edu/c.php?g=242389&p=2010220>

### *Databases list*

When listing databases, it is best to pull the information from the database assets list. This will ensure that any changes to the database link or information will also change on your guide without you having to do anything.

### *Photo/images*

Within LibGuides, the UO Libraries has created a database of photo/images that can be used on guides without copyright concerns. Refer to the [imagery section](#) for further details.

# Resources

- [LibGuides at The University of Oregon Libraries](#): Resources and Best Practices for creating and maintaining LibGuides at UO Libraries.

- [University of Oregon Style Guide](#): Institutional guidelines for brand positioning, application, and voice.
- [The Chicago Manual of Style](#): Reference for grammar, usage, and editorial style.
- [The American Heritage Dictionary](#): Reference for spelling, word division, meaning, and usage.

## Contacts

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