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UMaine website managers

Community update • December 2020

You are receiving this email because you have an account in UMaine's public website system, WordPress. If you no longer manage web content, please contact us at um.weboffice@maine.edu

In this email:

- Reminder: Digital Communications online for website support
- New menu style available (horizontal navigation for site sections)
- Academic program fact sheets
- Trainings and consultations via Zoom
- Upcoming training dates
- Training topics by appointment
- Accessibility and inclusion: Using content features for their intended purpose

[If you have a question you would like to see answered, let us know.](#)

Quick links:

- [User guide for UMaine websites](#)
- [Contact Digital Communications for support](#)
- [Updates and campus guidance for fall 2020](#)

Reminder: Digital Communications online for website support

Warm holiday wishes from the team here in Digital Communications!

Please note that as holiday season is upon us, it may be that members of our team are taking much needed breaks and there may be delays in our response if you

monitored by whoever is "on duty" while others are on vacation.

New menu style available (horizontal navigation for site sections)

The UMaine website design allows for site navigation as a horizontal bar below your website header title and image. This is sufficient for many sites, but larger websites do need "sub-section" navigation for better usability.

To date, this has been accomplished using the sidebar template on pages where a secondary menu can appear. [Our Digital Communications website showcases this behavior](#) (the lefthand column on pages has navigation specific to our area of Marketing and Communications). While this solution works well for text-heavy content, it is not ideal for pages making use of content blocks where the full page width is more appropriate.

New menu style, "tertiary navigation"

Our new menu location is named "Tertiary Navigation" in the menu editor. It works in much the same way as the sidebar menu solution, in that rules are set to determine when the menu is shown or hidden. You can see this menu style on our user guide, in the [Content Blocks help section](#).

In order to avoid problems with existing content, this feature is turned off by default and must be enabled by our team for your use. If you are interested in making use of this new menu location, please contact us at um.weboffice@maine.edu and we will work with you to enable this feature and set it up for your website.

Academic program fact sheets

Did you know that PDF fact sheets exist for most programs at UMaine? The website [Find a major](#) has links to printable fact sheets alongside links to the applicable college, school, department or program site. Some of these fact sheets may be out of date, and should be reviewed for accuracy.

If you find that a fact sheet needs a refresh or update, contact Printing and Mailing Services, and they can assist in your update. Once a new PDF is available, send it to Digital Communications at um.weboffice@maine.edu and we will update the website information for you.

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unfamiliar with using Zoom and plan to attend an upcoming training session, please ensure your computer is set up to work with this technology. If you are unfamiliar with Zoom to conduct team/committee/group meetings, [their online tutorials are helpful](#). For faculty who need help with adopting this technology for classroom instruction, [training in using Zoom tailored for classwork is available from UMaine's Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning](#), as is a [helpful quick start guide for students](#).

Upcoming training dates

Training is currently conducted via Zoom videoconferencing. [More information about Zoom is available](#).

UMaine WordPress Basics: Alternating Thursdays, 10–11:30 a.m.

Jan. 7 and 21, Feb. 4

This 90-minute session covers the basics of using WordPress at UMaine — how to log in, create pages, and edit header, footer and sidebar elements. We welcome anyone and everyone to join us for an orientation or refresher. Email um.weboffice@maine.edu to join one of the upcoming sessions.

UMaine WordPress Beyond the Basics: Alternating Thursdays, 10–11:30 a.m.

Jan. 14 and 28, Feb. 11

If you need to create web forms or event calendars on your website, this training is for you. In this 90-minute session we go beyond the basics of creating pages and posts, and focus on additional features you may find useful. The WordPress Basics training is a prerequisite. Please email um.weboffice@maine.edu to register for one of the upcoming dates.

Friday consultations: Every Friday, 1:30–2:30 p.m., 2:30–3:30 p.m. (two 1-hour sessions)

Jan. 8, 15, 22 and 29, Feb. 5 and 12

Two 1-hour time slots are available every Friday afternoon at 1:30 and 2:30 if you are interested in a website consultation on any of our training topics, or simply want to review your website and brainstorm improvements. [Email us at um.weboffice@maine.edu](#) and we will work together to find a convenient available date. Zoom videoconferencing is available for these sessions.

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held via Zoom videoconferencing.

UMaine Map Training

If you need to depict points of interest on campus, across the state, or around the globe, our UMaine map feature is worth exploring. In this training you will learn how to create individual map points, categorize map points together in a single map, and customize the map points by adding icons for easy visual identification. Please email um.weboffice@maine.edu to schedule.

SEO Workshop

What is SEO? This jargon is an abbreviation for "search engine optimization," and our SEO workshops will explain what you should focus on to improve how your web pages are found by users of Google, Bing and our own UMaine site search. Please email um.weboffice@maine.edu to schedule.

Using Monsido to Improve Your Website

The University of Maine System has provided a website tool to aid in the important task of managing the quality and accessibility of web content. Monsido scans UMaine websites, and interactive reports are available. If you want to learn more about Monsido's reports and how you may use its information to fix broken links, find misspellings, and discover where content updates are most needed, email mike.kirby@maine.edu to get started, and review your site's scan results.

Website consultation workshop

Is your website helping you meet your goals? Do you want to make improvements, but do not know where to begin? We now offer "office hours" style website consultation workshops, where we can meet to focus on your content and brainstorm improvements that can be made. Please email um.weboffice@maine.edu to schedule.

Accessibility and inclusion: Using content features for their intended purpose

Web accessibility has always been a requirement for UMaine websites, and has been a regular feature in our monthly newsletter— and ensuring your content is accessible is part of an inclusive communication strategy. This month, we focus on how different website features should be used for their intended purpose

Heading tags

style heading at the top of content pages, but home pages and landing pages that are showcasing the important areas of your site do not necessarily need to adhere to a strict heading structure.

What to avoid: try not to use heading styles on paragraphs of text, and avoid using headings out of their intended hierarchy. If you have a message at the top of a page, it is better to create it as bold text.

[For more information about headings, please see our October 2019 article.](#)

Tables

We rarely see tables being used for page layout purposes these days, our "content blocks" page building system is understood to be more mobile-friendly, and the upcoming Gutenberg page editor will be an improvement for page editors.

However, even properly built tables used for their intended purpose can pose problems for our website when viewed on mobile devices— and Google gives importance to how website content behaves for mobile and tablet users. For this reason, it is best to avoid using tables altogether unless the table is 3 columns or less.

What to avoid: Do not use a table for your content if it will not be fully visible when viewed on a mobile device. An easy way to check for this is to narrow your web browser window as much as possible, and check to see if the table can fit in that narrow width. If some of the table is cut off to the right margin, that content is unavailable to mobile users (you cannot scroll sideways to see more of the table).

[For more information about tables, please see our June 2019 article.](#)

Images

All images that are displayed in your content should have an understandable text alternative, also known as "alt text." This can be as simple as "portrait of Jane Smith" for a photo of Jane Smith, or as complicated as necessary to describe everyone in a group photo.

What to avoid: Do not use images of text rich content, such as tables, flyers, or documents. It is much better to recreate this content in a way that the text is understandable to a screen reader, and in the case of complicated tables, a download of the table file or a link to an online-hosted version of the table (such as Google Sheets or Microsoft Excel in Office 365) is preferable over a PDF copy of the information.

[For more information about images and alt text, please see our September 2018 article.](#)

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Our website gives a shaded box treatment when using the blockquote style, and Digital Communications has at times advised to use this feature to help call attention to text on a page. While this is our preference over using a heading style to make text larger and colorful, web accessibility best practices tell us that blockquotes should only be used for quotes.

What to avoid: If you are simply using the blockquote feature to create a shaded box around your content, consider changing to the [new "call to action" shortcode, mentioned in this October 2020 article](#). It is a better solution for pages that are using this element improperly.

If you have any questions about web accessibility, or want to see us cover an accessibility topic in a future newsletter, please get in touch with us at um.weboffice@maine.edu.

We hope you have found this update from Digital Communications helpful.
Feel free to forward this newsletter to a colleague:



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