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Digital Communications Newsletter, September 2020

University of Maine Digital Communications

UMaine Website Owners and Managers — September 2020 update

1 message

UMaine Digital Communications <um.weboffice@maine.edu>   Tue, Sep 22, 2020 at 10:25 AM
Reply-To: UMaine Digital Communications <um.weboffice@maine.edu>
To:

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UMaine website managers
Community update • September 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 <u>um.weboffice@maine.edu</u>

In this email:

- Update on 2020 website improvements
- Web analytics dashboards available
- Requesting website access for new workers
- Trainings and consultations via Zoom
- Upcoming training dates
- Training topics by appointment
- Accessibility and inclusion: Gender-inclusive language

<u>If you have a question you would like to see answered, let us know.</u>

Quick links:

- <u>User guide for UMaine websites</u>
- <u>Contact Digital Communications for support</u>
- <u>Updates and campus guidance for Fall 2020</u>

Update on 2020 website improvements

We are working to add a new display option for the text content block on all umaine.edu websites. This new style will allow for the creation of a text box that has a shaded background with the heading appearing in a dark blue bar above the paragraph content. Sites that have helped us test this new display include UMaine Online (the "Contact Us" box on their main page) and the Maine Business School (the Undergraduate and Graduate Business sections toward the bottom of their main page).

Look for instructions on using this new feature in our October newsletter.

Web analytics dashboards available

Our university websites have made use of Google Analytics for information on web site visitors and the pages they view for some time. This is configured in the "Insights" section of the WordPress dashboard, but aside from adding the proper Google Analtyics code, there is not much to "see" within WordPress itself.

We now offer access to web analytics through simplified data dashboards using Google Data Studio. If you want to routinely review your web traffic information, or need to generate reports on the usage of your website, these reports may be just what you are after. Contact us at um.weboffice@maine.edu if you would like to be set up with access to a report dashboard.

NOTE: If you are unfamiliar with Google Analytics, *please do not adjust any settings in this section*. Digital Communications sets Google Analytics for every site we support, and in most cases the "UA" number in those settings should not be altered.

Requesting website access for new workers

A reminder— if you have new faculty, staff, or students who should have access to your UMaine website. Please fill out this form to request access, and we will create an account. *Do not share your existing website login information*. Additional accounts are no trouble at all for us to set up, and allow for better access control for editing your website.

Training and consultations via Zoom

Trainings and consultations are conducted via Zoom videoconferencing. If you are 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.

Coming soon: training videos

The Digital Communications team has logged many hours using Zoom to conduct our live training this year, and we have begun assembling short videos on individual topics. We will be publishing these videos to our user guide in the near future. Look for more information about these videos in our October newsletter.

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.
Oct. 1, 15 and 29
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.
Sept. 24, Oct. 8 and 22
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)
Sept. 25, Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30
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.

Training topics by appointment

These training topics are available for our Friday consultations on request, and are 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: Gender-inclusive language

In our January newsletter, we shared guidance for accessibility and inclusion concerns when writing for the web. In this month's newsletter we focus on improving

content by removing gendered language.

In order to effectively reach the widest audience, gender-inclusive language is recommended when writing for the web. Words such as "mankind" may be intended to refer to all genders, but it is better practice to utilize non-gendered words such as "humanity." Doing this shows that consideration has been made to reach everyone in your audience.

Use of pronouns
While we have long utilized phrases such as "firefighter" and "flight attendant" instead of "fireman" and "stewardess" to remove gender bias in nouns, the use of pronouns is an area that has been rapidly evolving in the last decade. The Rainbow Resource Center's Safe Zone Training gives good guidance on this, and we recommend those who are interested in being more inclusive on campus RSVP for an upcoming training.

Established practices for use of pronouns include using both genders in a format such as his/her or she/he. Another tactic can be to alternate between male and female pronouns in your writing. Both of these solutions serve to call attention to the use of gender in pronouns, and rarely occur naturally in spoken conversation.

Consider using they/their/them
These plural pronouns— they, their, them— are inclusive when writing about groups, and usage is evolving to become a standard for a third-person, gender-neutral pronoun.

When in doubt, ask— but ask consistently
Many students, faculty and staff will share their preferred pronouns in their email signature, business card, or during introductions. When writing about a specific person, it is important to refer to them using their preferred pronouns. If you are unsure what those may be, you can always ask the person. At the same time, it is important not to assume that someone may or may not have preferred pronouns; if you do reach out to learn this information, be sure you are doing so consistently with everyone you are writing about.

More reading on this topic
The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has published a handout on gender-inclusive language.

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:

✉ Forward this newsletter

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