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Columbia.edu Style Guide

Policy, design, and technical standards

Version 1.3.1
November 14, 2005

If you have questions about this document,
send an e-mail to:
webteam@columbia.edu.

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OVERVIEW

Management Process

Day-to-day updates, corrections, and queries pertaining to the homepage and top-level pages of Columbia.edu are handled by the two-person Web Team, which consists of a producer and a multimedia developer employed by Columbia University Digital Knowledge Ventures (DKV). The team provides a range of services including information architecture, content development, design, HTML coding, and customer service.

Additional DKV staff are called on, as necessary, to provide photography and photo research, rights clearance, design supervision, advanced programming, and the development of new Web-based applications. The Web Team also maintains a close relationship with staff at AcIS, who maintain the servers and provide technical support for the search function, e-mail, site hosting, security, and other back-end processes.

Questions or suggestions that require discussion are forwarded by the Web Team to the Chair of the Web Advisory Committee (WAC) and either resolved by him or put on the agenda for the next month's meeting.

Each month, DKV staff selects new photographs for the homepage in consultation with DKV's Executive Director. These images are then sent for approval to the WAC and Columbia.edu's senior advisors: the Provost and the Vice President for Information Services. Any other significant change in content, navigation, or layout of the homepage and top-level pages must likewise be approved by the Provost.

News

Headlines and announcements are selected by the Public Affairs Office on a daily basis. Anyone wishing to submit a story or announcement for consideration should visit the Public Affairs Web site for more information:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/opa.html>

Pages maintained by the Web Team

Co-owners provide content for their pages.

about_columbia/
administration.html
directions.html
history.html
index.html
mission.html
map/
tour/
Co-owner: Office of Public Affairs

academic_programs/
index.html
departments.html

az_index/
index.html

faculty_staff/
index.html

help/
about.html
copyright.html
index.html
search.html
visitor_info.html
slideshow/

cu/jobs/
Co-owner: Human Resources Department

neighbors/
index.html
local.html
opportunities.html
outreach.html
Co-owner: Office of Government and Community Affairs

prospective_students/
index.html

publications/
index.html
school_departmental.html
student_periodicals.html

research/
departments.html
index.html
publications.html
research_institutes.html
Co-owner: Office of the Executive Vice President for Research

students/
index.html
org_gov.html
org_gov_az.html
services.html
Co-owner: Student Services

Related Projects

The Web Team also manages longer-term projects with three primary goals: extending the design direction of the homepage to prominent Columbia sites; applying editorial standards to the information in the A-Z Index and other lists on the site; and developing systems for ensuring greater accuracy and timely updates to content at the top levels of Columbia.edu.

Ownership of Other Top-level Pages

Alumni (<http://alumni.columbia.edu>)
Owner: Alumni Relations Office, UDAR

Athletics (<http://gocolumbialions.com>)
Owner: Physical Education & Intercollegiate Athletics Department

Columbia News (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/index.html>)
Owner: Public Affairs Office

E-mail & Computing (http://www.columbia.edu/email_computing/index.html)
Owner: AcIS

Events Calendar (<http://calendar.columbia.edu>)
Owner: Student Services

Libraries (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/>)
Owner: CU Libraries

Medical Center (<http://www.cumc.columbia.edu/>)
Owner: CU Medical Center

WORKFLOW CHART

The Web Team fields suggestions and assembles a proposal.

Additional staff at DKV review.

Academic Information Systems (AcIS) is consulted if necessary.

DKV's Executive Director determines if the proposal requires review by the WAC Chair. If not, it advances.

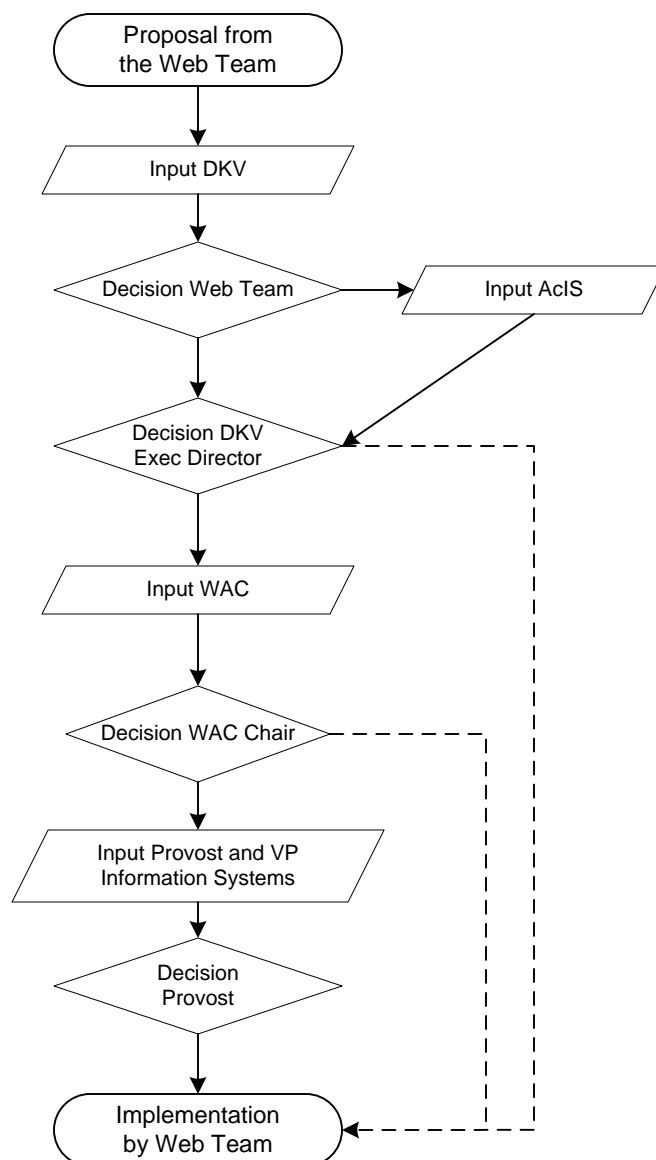
The Chair of the Web Advisory Committee reviews the proposal and may forward it for consideration to the entire committee.

The Chair determines if the proposal requires review by the Administration. If not, it advances.



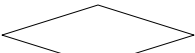


The Provost and the Vice President for Information Services consider the proposal.

The Provost has final decision-making authority over the top levels of Columbia.edu.

Upon appropriate approvals, the Web Team proceeds with the project, working with AcIS and other DKV staff as necessary.



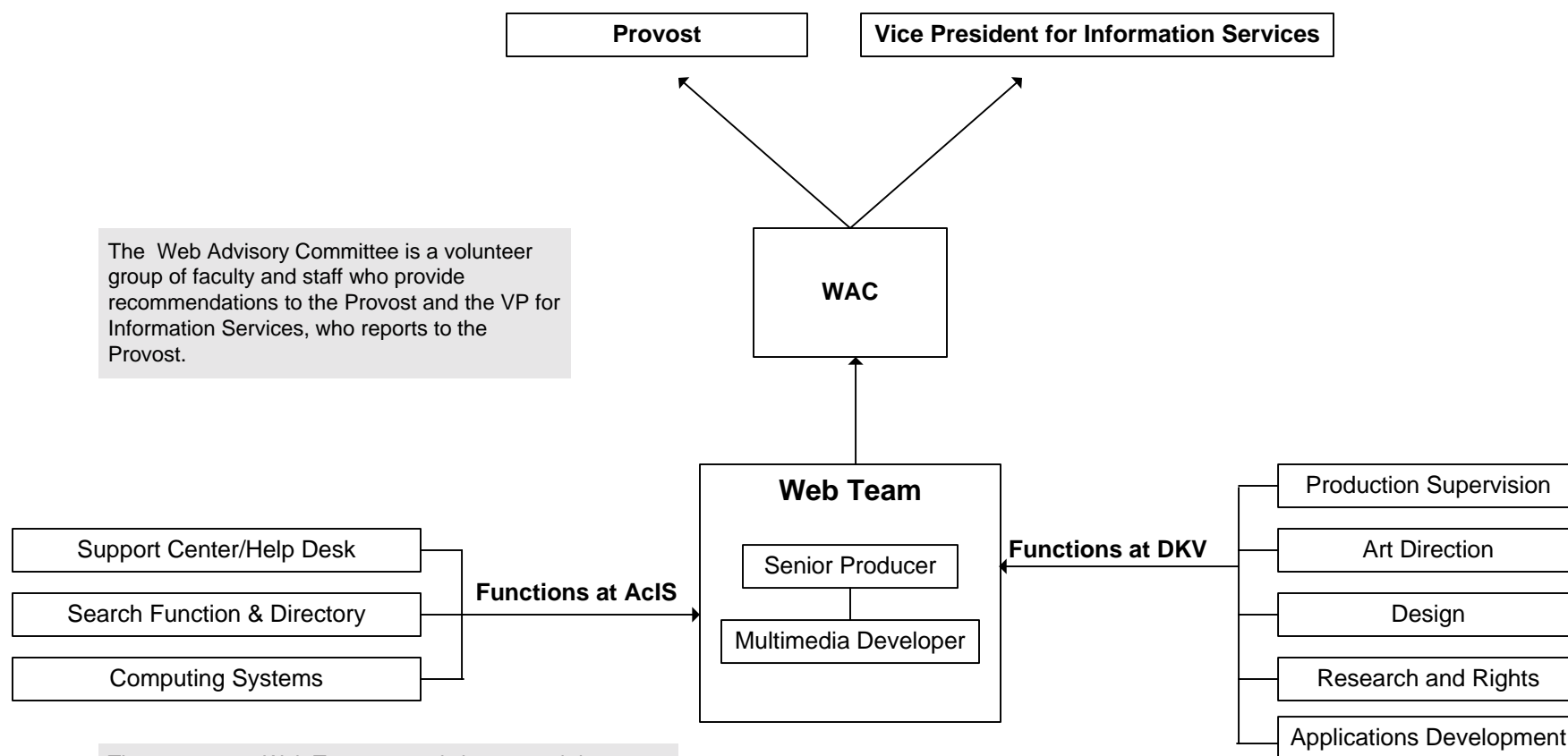
Key

-  Endpoint
-  Input
-  Decision
-  Proceed to next step
-  Skip steps

ORGANIZATION CHART

Organization Chart for the Columbia.edu Project

As of March 2005



The Web Advisory Committee is a volunteer group of faculty and staff who provide recommendations to the Provost and the VP for Information Services, who reports to the Provost.

The two-person Web Team expands into a much larger "virtual" team with the assistance of staff at DKV and AcIS. Guidance is provided by the Executive Director of DKV, DKV's Senior Director of IT Services (who also manages the Research & Development group at AcIS), and the Deputy VP, AcIS.

GLOBAL ELEMENTS

Banner

The banner establishes the visual identity for Columbia.edu. It contains several elements that remain the same from the homepage through most of the top-level pages.

CU Home Link

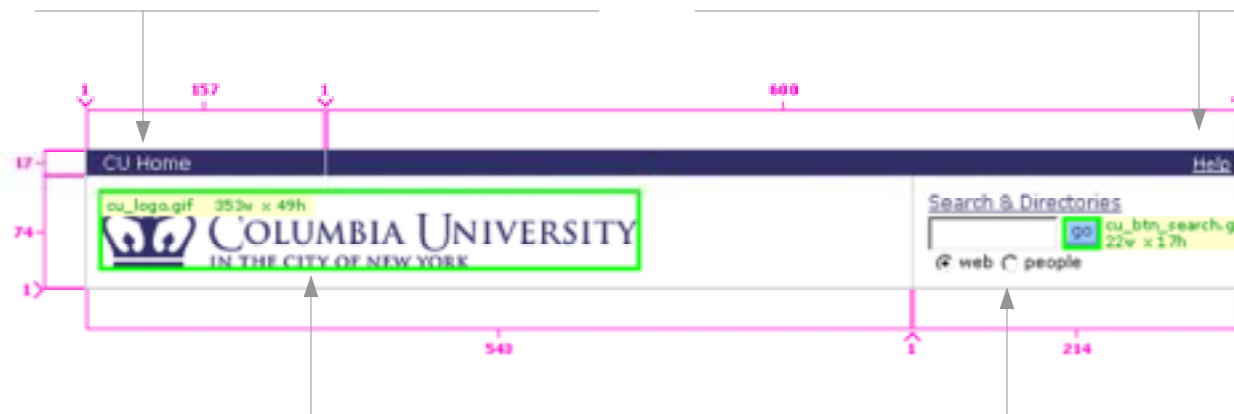
Although the logotype itself should be hot-linked to the homepage, this text link provides another navigation option for users.

Verdana, 12 pixels
style class **navLink**

Help Link

This links to a Help section with information on resolving technical problems, using media plug-ins, and communicating with the Web Team and AcIS.

Verdana, 11 pixels
style class **linkHeader**

**Logotype**

Neither the words nor the crown may be modified for other uses, other than to scale the graphic in direct proportion to the original. All words must be legible. Minimum space equal to the height of the phrase "in the City of New York" must be maintained on all sides.

cu_logo.gif
Preferred size: 353 px width x 49 px height
Minimum size: 200 pix width x28 px height

Search & Directories Feature

This feature includes a direct link to the Search & Directories page as well as an input field and radio buttons that allow the user to search either the sites hosted on Columbia's servers or the directory of faculty, staff, and students.

Search & Directories
Verdana, 12 pixels
style class **n/a**

"go" button
cu_btn_search.gif, 22 px
width x 17 px height

Search box size=12 to
ensure proper display in
Netscape 4.7.

"web" and "people"
Verdana, 11 pixels
style class **smallText**

GLOBAL ELEMENTS

Navigation

Providing a consistent navigation bar from the homepage through the top-level pages helps users to explore the site without getting lost.

Tip: To avoid confusion, the style of this bar should not be replicated with other links (i.e., with different navigation elements on other sites). Consider using just one of the blues, or a different color scheme.

Navigation Row Height

Most cells in the navigation bar are 17 pixels high. The first and last cell in each block are 22 pixels high.

Dividers

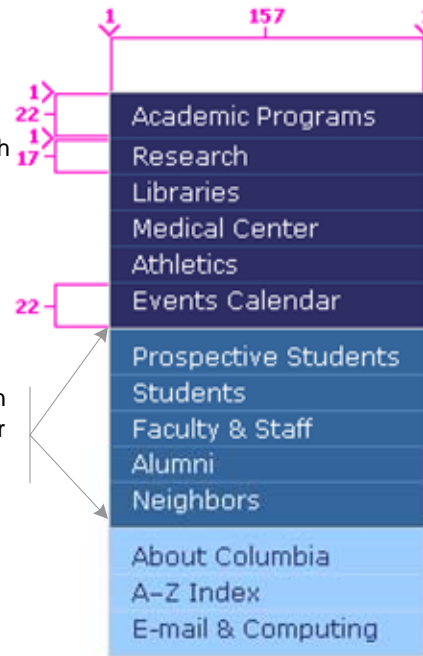
A 1-pixel high row divides each navigation row (see colors on the right).

Dividers between navigation blocks are 1 px height, color #CCCCCC

Current Section

White triangle next to the section link indicates current section

cu_nav_on.gif
7px width x 17px height



Navigation Block A

style class **navLink**
background color #2D2A62
divider color #314E83

Navigation Block B

style class **navLink**
background color #336699
divider color #5285B8

Navigation Block C

style class **navLink2**
background color #99CCFF
divider color #B8DBFF



GLOBAL ELEMENTS

Footer

Footer elements remain the same from the homepage through most of the top-level sections.

Webmaster Link

Queries through the Webmaster link are routed by AcS. E-mail goes to webmaster@columbia.edu.

style class **footer**



Columbia University Copyright

This is a direct link to the copyright page.

style class **footer**

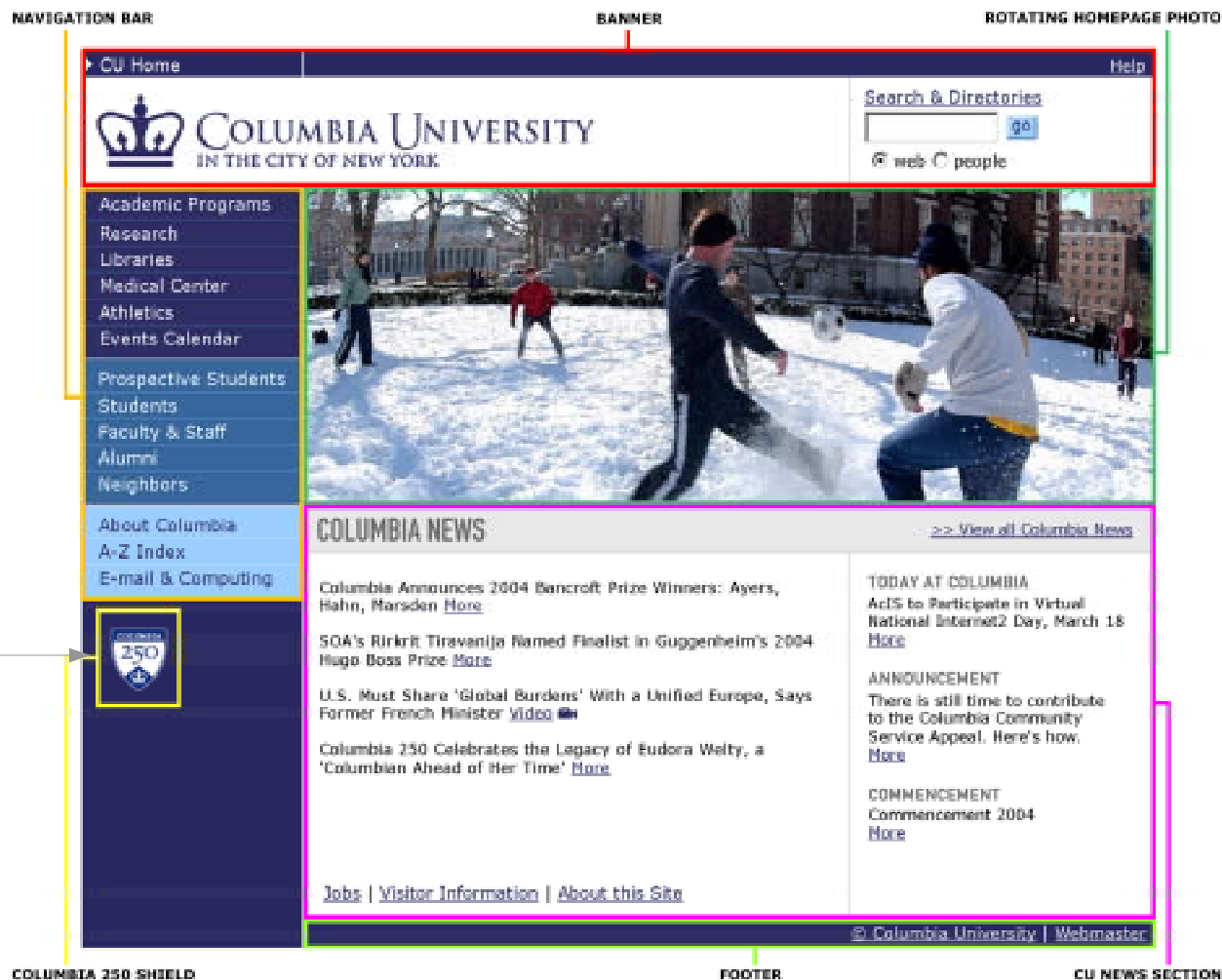
HOMEPAGE

Overview

The homepage consists of two unique areas: a series of rotating photographs and a section for news and announcements. Additional links to Jobs, Visitor Information, and About this Site are provided exclusively on this page.

Top-level pages using this design retain the global elements (banner, footer, and navigation bar) while incorporating a separate set of styles for the content area (see page 11).

Special graphics for important universitywide events may be placed below the navigation for a limited period of time. The C250 logo was removed in 2005 and a graphic for Commencement was later added. Requests must be made to the Web Advisory Committee.



HOMEPAGE

Photographs

At any given time there are at least 12 large images or image pairs, with at least one-third being replaced monthly. The photographs load randomly each time a user reloads the homepage, ensuring variety. The mix of images is selected to reflect different aspects of the Columbia experience: iconographic images of Columbia's physical space (e.g., Alma Mater, Low); academic scenes in classrooms and libraries; representative images of New York City, especially where it surrounds our campuses; student life, including studying, athletics, and leisure; diversity of people, especially the international aspect of the CU community.

After a photo is taken out of circulation it is catalogued in the "Homepage Slideshow Archive" at <http://www.columbia.edu/help/slideshow/>. Photos may be used again, particularly for seasonal purposes, without going through the review process twice.

template file `cuedu_home_photo.psd`
 dimensions 600px(w) x 217px(h)



HOMEPAGE

Columbia News

The content for Columbia News is supplied by the Public Affairs Office, through a web-based application developed by Columbia DKV. The application allows Public Affairs to post up to four headlines in the middle column and up to three events or announcements in the right column. Columbia DKV provided a range of graphics to label the right column, such as “Announcement” or “Upcoming Event.”

Information on submitting ideas for articles or announcements is available on the Public Affairs Web site:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/opa.html>

See **Typography** (page 14) for typography and spacing rules.

See **Headers** (page 13) for details about section headers and subheaders.

The screenshot shows the Columbia University homepage layout with a grid overlay. The grid is defined by pink lines and numbers. The main content area is divided into three columns: a left sidebar, a central news column, and a right column for announcements. The grid dimensions are as follows:

- Columns:**
 - Column 1 (Left Sidebar): 1
 - Column 2 (Central News): 185
 - Column 3 (Right Announcements): 1
- Rows:**
 - Row 1 (Header): 1
 - Row 2 (Banner Image): 38
 - Row 3 (News Section Header): 1
 - Row 4 (News Content): 256
 - Row 5 (Footer): 20

The content of the screenshot includes:

- Header:** CU Home, Help, Search & Directories, Columbia University logo.
- Left Sidebar:** Academic Programs, Research, Libraries, Medical Center, Athletics, Events Calendar, Prospective Students, Students, Faculty & Staff, Alumni, Neighbors, About Columbia, A-Z Index, E-mail & Computing.
- Central Column:** COLUMBIA NEWS, View all Columbia News, Columbia Announces 2004 Bancroft Prize Winners: Ayers, Hahn, Marsden [More](#), SOA's Rirkrit Tiravanija Named Finalist in Guggenheim's 2004 Hugo Boss Prize [More](#), U.S. Must Share "Global Burdens" With a Unified Europe, Says Former French Minister [Video](#) [More](#), Columbia 250 Celebrates the Legacy of Eudora Welty, a 'Columbian Ahead of Her Time' [More](#), [Jobs](#) | [Visitor Information](#) | [About this Site](#)
- Right Column:** TODAY AT COLUMBIA: AcIS to Participate in Virtual National Internet2 Day, March 18 [More](#), ANNOUNCEMENT: There is still time to contribute to the Columbia Community Service Appeal. Here's how. [More](#), COMMENCEMENT: Commencement 2004 [More](#)
- Footer:** © Columbia University | Webmaster

INTERNAL PAGES

Overview

Section Banner

Top-level sections are identified with a banner that includes a topical photograph or pair and a gray bar with the name of the section in all-caps.

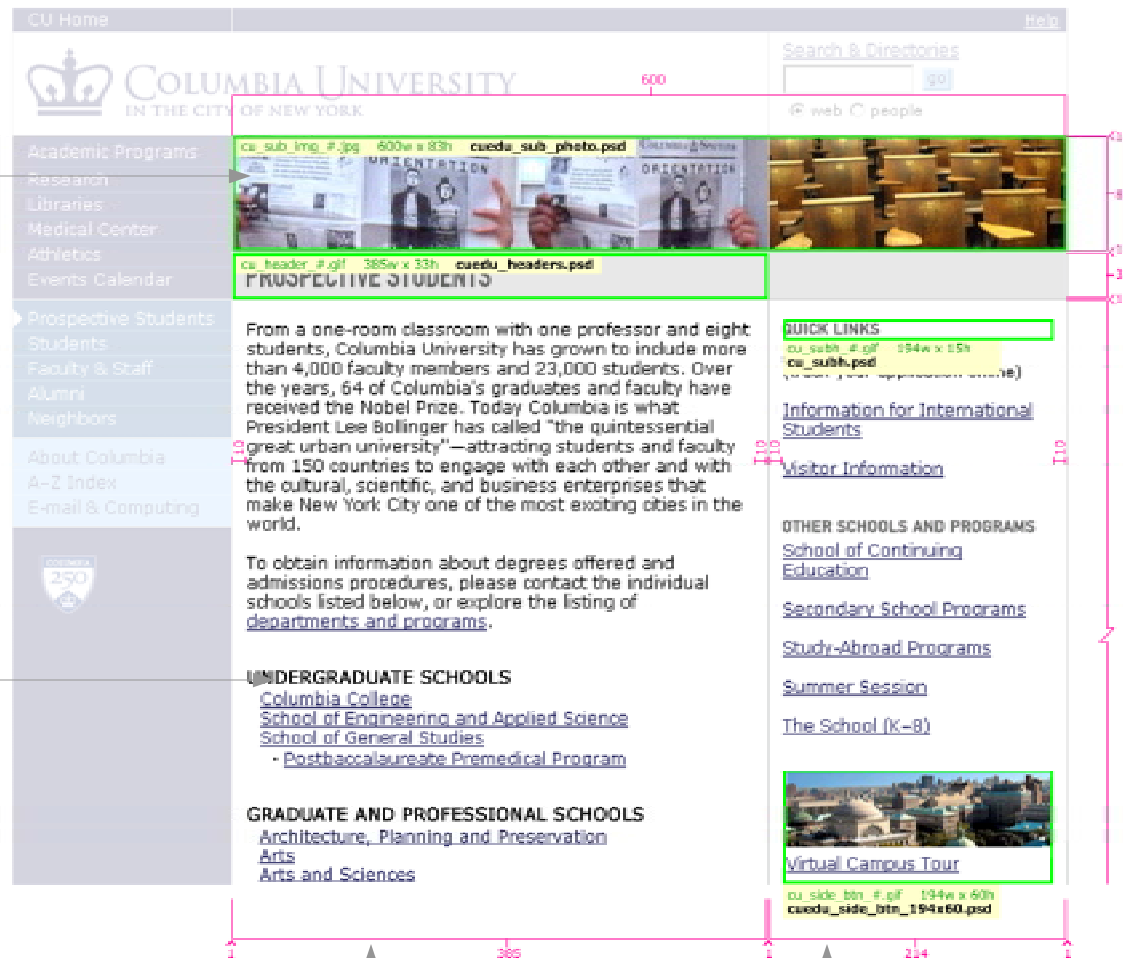
See **Headers** (page 13) for details about section headers and subheaders.

Content Area

The section template provides space for an introductory paragraph, lists of links, and sidebar text and links. Lists of links should be alphabetized unless there is a compelling reason not to do so.

See **Typography** (page 14) for details about text size, headers, spacing, and indenting.

See **Indexing & Editing Guidelines** (page 20) for information on organizing lists.



Left Column

When there are two columns on a section page, the width of the left column is 385 pixels, with space of 10 pixels on each side.

Right Column

Graphic headers such as “Quick Links” go above any other graphics or images. When a sidebar column is used, its width is 214 pixels, with space of 10 pixels on each side.

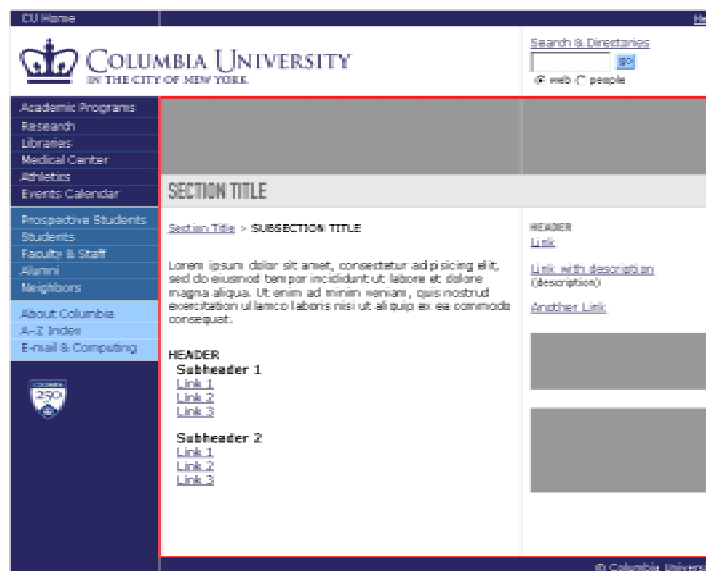
INTERNAL PAGES

Sub-Pages

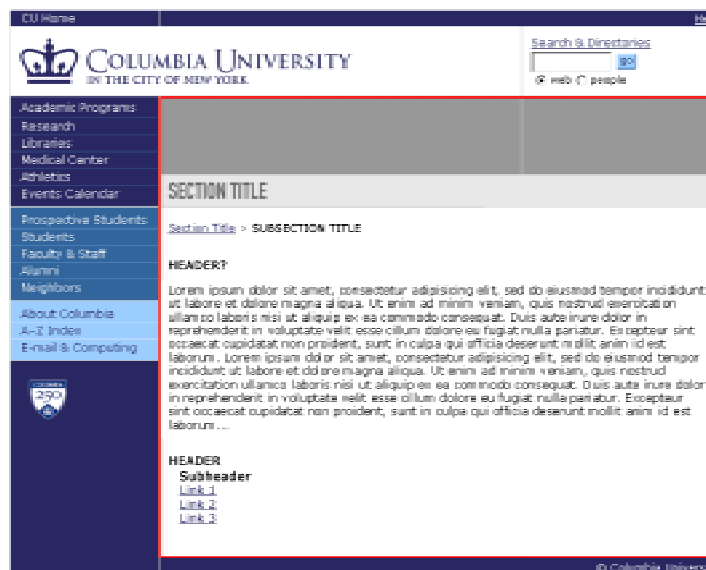
Pages within a section (excluding the main page) use a "breadcrumb" style of subnavigation, which includes a link to the main page of the section and the title of the sub-page. These elements are placed beneath the graphic section title header.

The content area of sub-pages can be developed in one of two ways: with a right-hand column for links and graphics, or without the column, when it is not useful.

See **Typography** (page 14) for typography and spacing rules.



See Students > Students Services page as an example of this layout.
<http://www.columbia.edu/students/services.html>

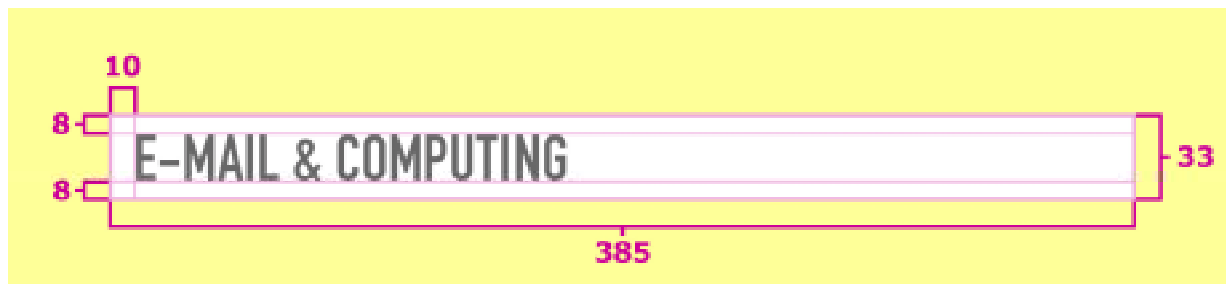


See About Columbia > History page as an example of this layout.
http://www.columbia.edu/about_columbia/history.html

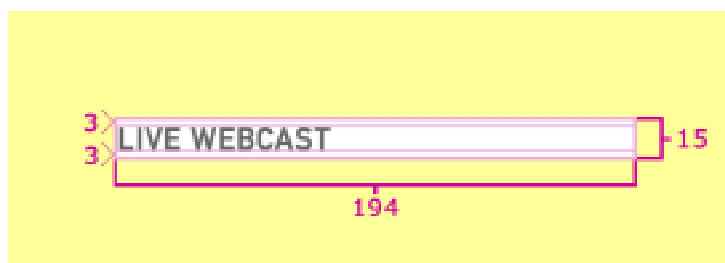
HEADERS

Graphic Page Headers

Dimensions	width: 385 pixels height: 33 pixels
Font	DIN 1451 Engschrift, 24 pt, Smooth hex value: #666666
Matte	hex value: #E5E5E5
File name	cuedu_headers.psd

**Graphic Sidebar Subheaders****One-line subheaders**

Dimensions	width: 194 pixels height: 15 pixels
Font	DIN 1451 Mittelschrift Alternate, 11.4 pt, Crisp hex value: #666666
Matte	hex value: #FFFFFF
File name	cuedu_subh.psd

**Two-line subheaders**

Dimensions	width: 194 pixels height: 27 pixels
Font	DIN 1451 Mittelschrift Alternate, 11.4 pt, Crisp hex value: #666666
Matte	hex value: #FFFFFF
File name	cuedu_subh_2lines.psd



Place one
 tag between a sidebar subheader and the text beneath it. Place two
 tags between each text item under the subheader (see http://www.columbia.edu/academic_programs/index.html).

TYPOGRAPHY & SPACING

Homepage

Text Copy

Verdana 11 pixels with 17-pixel line-height (for News and Announcements sections)
style class **smallText**

Secondary Pages and Sub-Pages

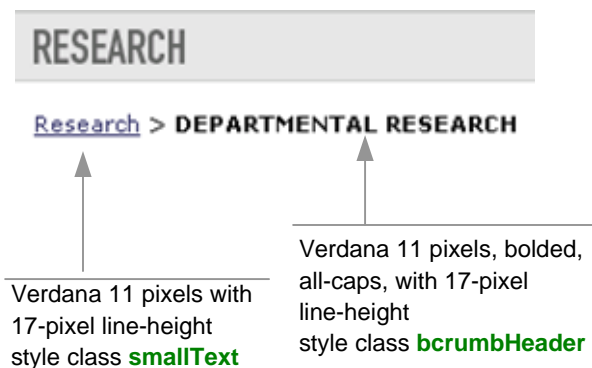
Text Copy

Verdana 12 pixels with 18-pixel line-height for both main content area and right-hand column.
style class **none needed**
This is the default style for <td> cells.

Exception: Parenthetical descriptions under links use style class “smallText.” See:
<http://www.columbia.edu/research/index.html>

Subnavigation

Pages within sections are denoted with a small title and a link back to the main page of that section.



Text Headers

Text headers are used to organize listings or text.

Level 1

Verdana 12 pixels, bolded, all caps, with 18-pixel line-height
style class **header**

Level 2

Verdana 13 pixels, bolded, with 21-pixel line-height.
style class **subheader**

Line breaks

Place one break (
) between a header and listings. (See <http://www.columbia.edu/students/index.html>.)

Place two breaks (

) between a header and text content. (See http://www.columbia.edu/about_columbia/administration.html.)

Place one break (
) between a subheader and all content beneath it.

Place three breaks (

) between the end of a content section and a new header. (See <http://www.columbia.edu/research/index.html>.)

Place two breaks (

) between the end of a content subsection and a new subheader. (See <http://www.columbia.edu/research/index.html>.)

Lists

Indenting

Listings beneath headers are indented, using a 10-pixel wide column as a spacer.

Wrapping

If a listed item wraps, subsequent lines should be indented slightly. See HTML Coding Standards (page 15) for the code used to force indenting.

Bullets

Bullets are used when showing sections that fall within a single listing. See:
http://www.columbia.edu/academic_programs/index.html.

“Back to Top” link

Pages with long listings include “Back to Top” links that return the visitor to the top of the page.

On pages without a sidebar column, the “Back to Top” link is aligned with the final entry in each section in a 100-pixel wide, right-aligned column. See: http://www.columbia.edu/az_index/index.html.

On pages with a sidebar column, the “Back to Top” link is placed in a separate, right-aligned row. Place two breaks (

) between the final listing of a section and this link. See:
http://www.columbia.edu/students/org_gov.html.

HTML CODING STANDARDS

To preserve formatting and keep the code standardized, HTML should be coded by hand, not by using a WYSIWYG editor such as Dreamweaver or FrontPage.

Tags

Content sections should be denoted by tags such as `<!-- BEGIN [CONTENT SECTION] -->` and `<!-- END [CONTENT SECTION] -->`

Text

Paragraphs should not wrap to new lines within the code. New paragraphs begin on new lines:

```
Columbia University in the City of New York was ...  
<br /><br />  
From its beginnings in a schoolhouse in lower ...  
<br /><br />
```

Space breaks

Space between lines of text should be made using `
`, not `<p>`.

Wrapped text in listings

Code has been added to the style sheet to force a wrapped line of a listed item to indent. Each item in the listing should include `<p class="indent"></p>` when using this style:

```
<p class="indent"><a href="http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/">Journalism, Graduate School of</a></p>  
<p class="indent"><a href="http://www.law.columbia.edu/">Law, School of</a></p>
```

Images

Always set width and height for images.
Always assign "alt" values to image tags.

Attribute Quotes

Always use attribute quotes (e.g., `<table width="200">` not `<table width=200>`).

FILE NAMES & LOCATIONS

Graphics

Graphics files are stored on the DKV production server in the following folders:

Homepage photo templates

Folder: 'other_projects\columbia_edu\design\FINAL\homepage_photo

File name: cu_home_photo.psd / cu_home_#.jpg

Columbia 250 shield

Folder: 'other_projects\columbia_edu\design\FINAL

File name: cu_c250_shield.gif

Headers

Folder: 'other_projects\columbia_edu\design\FINAL

File name: cu_headers.psd / cu_header_#.gif

Subheaders

Folder: 'other_projects\columbia_edu\design\FINAL

File name: cu_subh.psd / cu_subh_#.gif

Site files

All other site files are located on wwwgrp.columbia.edu. When changes are made to a file, the file is uploaded first to the cu_staging server for QA. When QA is complete, the file is transferred to the cu_src folder. The file moves from the cu_src folder to Columbia's live servers when the "Push Home" script is run.

Only staff at Columbia DKV and AcIS have access to the root directories for pages managed as part of the Columbia.edu project.

Downloads

University groups wishing to adopt the Columbia.edu visual identity for their official Web sites may download the logotype, HTML example, stylesheets, and related files at:

<http://www.columbia.edu/help/styleguide/>

See **Visual Templates** (page 17) for more information.

VISUAL TEMPLATES

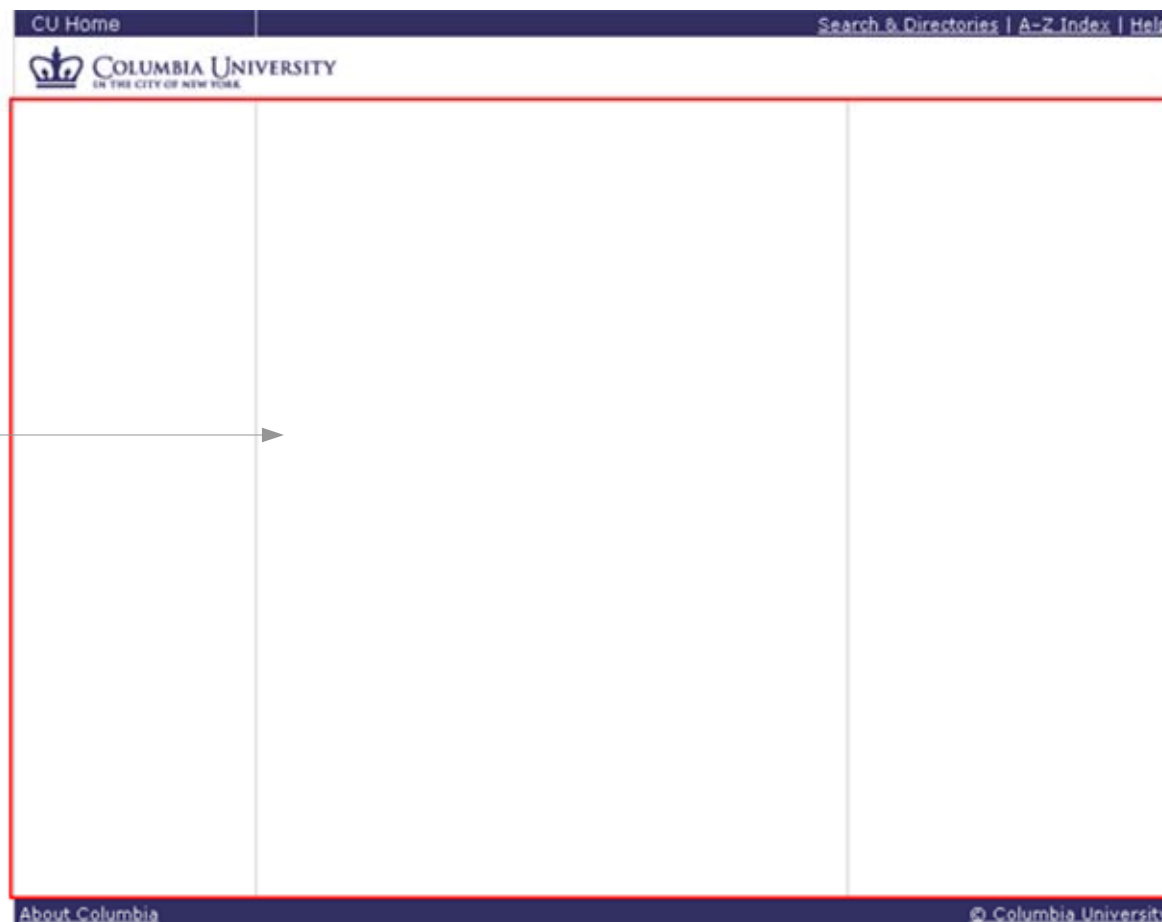
While Columbia University does not enforce design guidelines on sites produced by schools, departments, or offices, it is recommended that these groups incorporate some aspects of the university's identity into their Web pages. Options are provided through the generic template.

Generic Template

This template employs a smaller version of the homepage banner (see p.5 for details) and the footer (see p. 7). It does not include the left-hand navigation (p.6) because only university-wide sites are permitted to use the tri-color style of the homepage design, with approval of the Web Advisory Committee.

The space between the banner and the footer may be customized. The Web Team recommends that university groups design their own banners that clearly display their name. Navigation may run down the left-hand side or across the top of the page. The vertical gray rules are optional.

Tip: At a minimum, it is helpful to users if official university sites place the dark blue strip with "CU Home" at the top of their pages.



Download

Files for this template are available for downloading at:
<http://www.columbia.edu/help/styleguide/>

VISUAL TEMPLATES

Senior Administrator Template

This template was developed for use by senior University administrators. It has been integrated with the content management system developed by Administrative Information Systems (AIS) and thus can be maintained by non-technical staff.

It includes the following elements:

- Homepage banner, footer and navigation bar (see pages 5-7)
- Administration banner with name of office, navigation for office pages, and Low Library photo
- Photo of Administrator (150w x 150h)

Tip: Senior administrators should contact the Web Team for information on using this template.

The screenshot shows a web page for the Office of the Senior Executive Vice President at Columbia University. The page layout includes a dark blue navigation bar at the top with 'CU Home' and 'Help' links. Below the navigation bar is the Columbia University logo and a search box with a 'go' button. A left sidebar contains a menu of navigation items: Academic Programs, Research, Libraries, Medical Center, Athletics, Events Calendar, Prospective Students, Students, Faculty & Staff, Alumni, Neighbors, About Columbia, A-Z Index, and E-mail & Computing. The main content area features a banner image of the university building, the title 'Office of the Senior Executive Vice President', a navigation menu (Home | Biography | Executive Staff | Initiatives | Contact Us), a placeholder text block, a photo of Robert Kasdin, and a 'Useful Links' section with links to Getting Things Done, Ombuds Office, CUMC, Campus Plan, Columbians Behind the Scenes, and University Calendar. The footer contains the text '© Columbia University | Webmaster'.

INDEXING & EDITING GUIDELINES

Alphabetical Lists

In alphabetical lists, the substantive word should lead the entry. Generally speaking, the word "Columbia" should appear first only when it is the proper name of a university entity and its absence would be misleading or inaccurate. While rules for indexing are somewhat subjective, the following examples should assist in adding future entries.

Schools

Journalism, Graduate School of
Public Health, Mailman School of

Departments and Programs

Epidemiology Department
Materials Science and Engineering Program

Institutes and Centers

Accounting and Security Analysis, Center for
Excellence in
Child and Family Policy, Institute for
Chazen, Jerome A., Institute of International
Business

Student Groups

Glee Club
Columbia Daily Spectator
American Institute of Aeronautics & Astronautics at
Columbia (AIAA)

Administrative Offices

Student Financial Services
Provost, Office of the
Executive Vice President for Health and Biomedical
Sciences, Office of the

Compare the entries for "Columbia Community Service" (an incorporated organization) with "Neuroscience Society" (the connection to Columbia is implicit).

For Institutes and Centers, place a second complete entry in the A-Z Index, e.g., Center for Excellence in Accounting and Security Analysis (CEASA).

For national organizations with Columbia chapters, use "at Columbia" at the end of the entry.

Editing

Pages managed by the Columbia.edu Web Team conform to the editing standards outlined in the comprehensive Editorial Style Guide developed by Columbia University Digital Knowledge Ventures. In matters of style DKV follows primarily *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition (CMS), and for spelling relies on *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition.

The Columbia.edu Editorial Style Guide is available in web-based and printer-friendly format at:
<http://www.dkv.columbia.edu/edstyleguide>