

CITY OF MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

Policy Number: 2007 - 002	Revision Date:
Date Approved: 5/31/07	

POLICY: **WEB PAGE DESIGN STANDARDS**

Overview

The quality of web pages and content on the City's web site reflect on the image of the City of Marquette. In order to ensure that navigation and appearance are consistent, guidelines are necessary to assist staff with preserving the integrity of the site. All staff who are involved in the design, development or support of the City's web site must adhere to the standards in this policy.

Purpose

Web content should have a professional appearance, provide user friendly tools to aid the viewer in making use of the site, and avoid those features that are known to distract and annoy visitors. Pages should have the same "look and feel", color schemes and navigational tools that convey continuity among departments and across pages. Creative design is encouraged, but only when it can be accomplished without sacrificing any of the above goals. As a result, Information Services has adopted the standards in this policy for developing web pages, in general, and home pages, specifically.

Web Page Design Standards

For the purposes of these standards, a home page is considered to be the top level entry page for the City of Marquette along with any department within the city. All pages must follow page design standards, and home pages must follow home page standards as well as page design standards.

Home Page Standards

1. The City of Marquette main page will be a template with protected areas, and the same template will be used for all departmental home pages.
2. Pages must fit within the screen without horizontal scrolling.
3. Pages must have attractive, subdued colors that professionally represents the City of Marquette.
4. The City of Marquette official logo should appear on each page within a template in the same location and be sized so that the height of the logo is no smaller than the height of the department's name or other identifying text. If any other logo appears on the page, it must be no larger than 75% the width of the city logo.

5. The home page should be freestanding and include the following links:
 - An informative title (which also becomes the text of any bookmark to the page)
 - The organization's identity (City of Marquette or mqtcty.org)
 - A creation or revision date
 - At least one link to a local home page or menu page
 - The "home page" URL on the major menu pages
 - City contact information
 - Web site standards
 - Disclaimer policy
 - Privacy policy
 - Freedom of Information Act
 - Link to description of the city's Open Records/Public Information Act policy/procedures
 - Site Map
6. Pages must reside on the City of Marquette's web server unless the functionality is hosted by a third party under agreement with the City of Marquette.
7. A home page must include, near the top of the page, the proper name of the unit or activity to which the page relates.
8. Each home page should provide links to the City of Marquette home page and to the home pages of any other higher level units, such as division and department pages.
9. Each department will have its own home page with no more than 4 subordinate pages. If pages must be consolidated to conform, consider grouping multiple pages into one page and add links at the top of the page to jump to individual page sections on the same page.

Page Design Standards

1. Content other than official City of Marquette information will not be placed on any web pages.
2. Links to other sites external to the City of Marquette are permissible provided the link is to another government agency.
3. The font, font size and color settings for normal text are Verdana 10 point, black.
4. The font, font size and color settings for headings are Verdana 12 point bold, navy.
5. The font, font size and color settings for headers are Verdana 14 point bold, navy.
6. Menu links are Verdana 14 point bold, navy. Flyover menus are Verdana 12 point bold, with black text on background.
7. Neither foreground nor background screen colors will be changed.
8. Frames are not to be used. They create unnecessary problems for some browsers, they interfere with book-marking of pages, and they limit the ability to cross-link material.
9. Every web page should contain a date of last update in the footer. This should be coded as actual document text such as April 1, 2007. The month may be either spelled out or abbreviated, but not expressed as an integer.
10. Every web page should provide a means to contact the city or department, such as a "Contact Us" link in the footer.
11. Avoid design elements that distract the viewer or that negatively affect the professional appearance of the site, such as animation, audio, blinking or flickering images, video, flashing text, and scrolling message bars.
12. Avoid internal acronyms and abbreviations as they may be meaningless to the public. Use full departmental, building, and other names. Include area codes in all telephone numbers.
13. The page must have links to top of page and a home link to the city's main page.

14. Linking:
 - Whenever possible, avoid multiple links to the same page or file. Links are difficult to find and maintain when they are on numerous pages.
 - Provide in-line links to other web content mentioned in your text.
 - Use meaningful, descriptive linking text on all links. *i.e.*, avoid the use of "click here".
 - Consider what related material the reader is likely to wish to visit next, and provide direct links to such content.
15. Using images:
 - Whenever possible, utilize images of not more than 800 x 600 pixels. Larger images will require scrolling for many viewers.
 - Photographs will be limited to absolute necessity or used sparsely to complement text. The web site will not be used as a photo album.
 - JPEG format should be used for photographic or scanned images. For icons, business graphics, maps, and other diagrammatic content with relatively large areas of solid color, GIF format is best.
 - Consider utilizing clickable thumbnail images to access larger images.
16. Use industry-standard PDF files and avoid vendor-specific formats such as Microsoft Word or WordPerfect. Such files are only accessible to viewers who happen to have that particular software available on their system.
17. Use file names for HTML and PDF files that comply with browsers and page publishing software. Do not use spaces or symbols in file names that cause problems with browsers. Acceptable naming conventions may be *myfilename.pdf* or *my_file_name.pdf*.
18. Once a set of web pages has been published, avoid reorganizing the material in ways that change the file names of any part of the material. There is no way to judge how widely existing URLs have been book-marked or linked to from other locations. Arbitrary name changes will cause content to `disappear'. If a name change is unavoidable, always `cover' any prior file names with working pages directing the viewer to the new location.
19. Splash pages do not add meaningful content and will not be used.
20. Audio and video content will not be used. They consume excessive bandwidth and are not compliant with accessibility standards.
21. All files that are used on the site must contain a descriptive name. Naming a file by date without a name makes it difficult to determine what it is.
22. Dates are not to be used on documents, pages, forms unless absolutely necessary (*i.e.* when bids are due).
23. Images should always include an appropriate ALT field that conveys the same information as the image. For images containing text, this should mimic that text. For images used as bullets, horizontal dividing bars, and the like use an ASCII equivalent as an ALT field. For decorative images that do not convey page content, use ALT="".
24. For figures, graphs, and other images too complex to fully describe with an ALT tag, also include a LONGDESC tag containing a complete description of what the image is intended to convey to the viewer.
25. Documents and screen pages anticipated to be printed should fit on one standard letter-size page.
26. Use destination links to section off a page rather than creating a new page for each topic. The sections should contain links to return to the original page or to the top of the current page
27. Do not place too much text on one web page. Generally, a web page should not contain more than two printed pages of text.
28. Leave plenty of whitespace (blank space) on each page to reduce clutter. Less is more.

Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to, and including, termination.

Exceptions

Any exceptions are at the discretion of the Information Services Director, with approval from the City Manager.

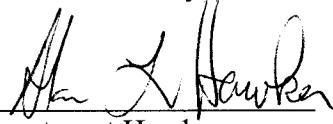
Definitions

Home page – A home page is the top level entry page for either the main web site (mqctcy.org) or the first department page that displays from the top level entry page.

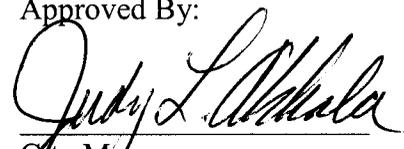
Splash page – A splash page or screen refers to an introductory or pre-home page that usually provides no real information except for browser requirements or a web counter. The page is often graphics-intensive and may take a long time to load, especially for users with slow internet connections.

Subordinate page – A web site contains a structured hierarchy of web pages beginning with the home page at the top level with linked or subordinate pages below. Subordinate pages are named as such because they are called from a higher level web page. Clicking a link on a home page that displays another page is an example of a subordinate page.

Recommended By:


Department Head

Approved By:


City Manager