



## South Solihull u3a Website Style Guide

Recent Changes:

27/11/2022

- References to Scribd documents have been removed.
- Minor formatting improvements.

31/10/2022

- Guidance on use of Gallery or Slideshow revised.
- Naming of uploaded files and images is now formalised as a standard, rather than guidelines, so has been moved to the *Website Standards* document.
- Some paragraphs reordered into a more logical sequence
- Minor formatting errors corrected.

26/8/2022:

- Minor typographical corrections.

3/7/2022:

- This document has been created as an extract of the previous *South Solihull u3u Standards and Style Guide* document. It now contains only the style guide. Standards are in the *South Solihull u3u Website Standards* document.

# Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION.....	3
2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT.....	3
3 HOME PAGE.....	3
4 USE OF ENGLISH.....	3
4.1 Spelling.....	3
4.2 Grammar.....	3
4.2.1 Misplaced Modifier.....	3
4.2.2 Verbosity.....	3
4.2.3 Missing Verbs.....	4
4.2.4 Punctuation.....	4
4.3 Words Often Misused.....	4
5 IMAGE, GALLERY OR SLIDESHOW?.....	5
6 DEVICES.....	5
7 MINIMISING DOWNLOADED DATA.....	5
8 FILE FORMATS.....	5
8.1 Read-only Documents.....	6
8.2 Documents for Editing.....	6
9 VISUALLY IMPAIRED VISITORS.....	6
10 TRAINING AND TESTING.....	6
11 UNITS.....	6
11.1 Metric Units.....	6
11.2 Imperial Units.....	7
11.3 Time.....	7
12 ELEMENT POSITIONING.....	7
13 UPLOADED FILE MANAGEMENT.....	8
13.1 Old Files.....	8
13.2 Unique Names.....	8
13.3 Photo Meta-Data.....	8
13.4 Security And Integrity Concerns.....	8

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This document supplements the information in the *Website Standards* document. It provides additional guidelines for those situations where it is difficult or inappropriate to prescribe rigid standards, but where the developer has to exercise flexibility or creativity in constructing web pages.

It is strongly recommended that the introductory section of the Standards document is read before reading this document, as important topics such as purpose of the website, and its desirable characteristics, among others, are covered, and will not be repeated here.

The contents of this document have been approved by the ssu3a committee, who expect all website developers to abide by these guidelines.

## **2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT**

It is intended that the rules set out in the *Website Standards* document should apply as widely as possible to all pages of our website. However, it is not possible to anticipate every circumstances that may arise, so these guidelines are general statements within which the developer has scope to respond to particular situations.

If a developer encounters a situation that is not covered by the standards or guidelines, or they seem to be inappropriate, they should refer to the ssu3a committee for guidance, with a potential revision of this document.

## **3 HOME PAGE**

The Home Page is the first page that visitors searching for u3a will land on. It is always the starting point for navigating to pages of more detailed information.

When a visitor first finds the Home Page, it should be clear that they have found the website they were looking for. On subsequent visits, the visitor should feel comfortable that they have returned to the same Home Page.

Ideally, the home page should mostly consist of links to other pages from the navigation menu at the top of the page. Recent photographs will be included.

The home page should not be used for large amounts of text, but items of urgent news may be mentioned in brief, with a link to a page giving full details.

## **4 USE OF ENGLISH**

All text should be written obeying the normal rules of English grammar, syntax, punctuation and spelling.

### **4.1 Spelling**

On spelling; although Weebly uses an American dictionary for spell-correction, the English version is preferred where there is a difference.

### **4.2 Grammar**

There are very many common grammatical errors. Authors are encouraged to look on the internet, read, learn and avoid them!

Here are just a few of the most common:

#### **4.2.1 Misplaced Modifier**

There is a difference between “a good bottle of wine” and “a bottle of good wine”. We often say the first, when in reality it is not the quality of the glass bottle, but the quality of the liquid contained therein that is of concern.

There are some good jokes based on this type of mistake, such as “Wanted: Stool for milkmaid with three legs.” Make sure the word or phrase that describes a noun is close to the noun itself.

#### **4.2.2 Verbosity**

Look for unnecessary words. They slow down reading without adding meaning. Here are some examples:

- Extraneous words inserted to sound erudite. Here are some common examples, with their snappier equivalents:
  - “in order to” = “to”.
  - “can be found located in” = “is in”
- Sentences starting with “And” or other conjunctions can usually have the “And” deleted.
- Stock phrases and management jargon should be translated to plain English, such as “Going forward” = “next”; “at this moment in time” = “now”.
- Tautology and pleonasm: insertion of words that mean the same thing as you have already said or implied. For example “A big giant” or “A new innovation” (is there any other kind?). “A little small tree” (little and small mean much the same thing).

### 4.2.3 Missing Verbs

Generally speaking, all sentences should have an object and a verb. You may get away with breaking the rule occasionally for literary effect, but you need to be skilled to do so!

### 4.2.4 Punctuation

Authorities differ somewhat over the rules for punctuation marks. The rules tabulated here are the variations preferred for the ssu3a website.

Mark	Derived Marks	Rules
. [full stop]	! [exclamation mark] : [colon] ? [question mark] ... [ellipsis]	When used to terminate a sentence: No space before, two spaces after.  When full-stop is used to terminate abbreviations: No space before, no space after.
, [comma]	; [semi-colon]	Used only within a sentence, not to terminate it. No spaces before, one space after.
- [dash]		Avoid if possible. One of the other punctuation marks is usually more appropriate. If you must use it, put one space before, one space after.
() [brackets]		Avoid if possible. Commas are usually more appropriate. Always used in left and right pairs. Left Bracket: One space before, no space after. Right Bracket: No space before, one space after.
' [single quote]		Encloses a word or phrase for special attention. Always used in pairs.
“ [double quote]		Encloses direct speech. Always used in pairs.
/ [slash]		Use only in sentences to mean 'divided by', as in '2/3' for two-thirds. Also used as the separator in technical contexts, including dates and pre-decimal currency. Any other use courts ambiguity. Never used it as a substitute for “and” or “or”.

## 4.3 Words Often Misused

Many words or phrases in English have several distinct meanings, or shades of meaning, leading to confusion about their correct use. Also, it seems that it only takes one 'influencer' to use a word incorrectly for the rot to spread rapidly. The list below shows a few illustrative examples that seem to be prevalent currently, and the actual meaning, when used in the same context.

Word	Used to mean...	Actually means...
Blueprint	Initial plan, template	The final definitive plan or drawing
Backlash	Adverse reaction	Small amount of slack in the system
Begs the question	Makes you wonder if...	Assumes what it should be proving (circular reasoning)
Decimate	Destroy	Reduce by 10%
Epicentre	Centre	Point on earth's surface where an underground earthquake breaks out, i.e. <u>not</u> the centre

Following	After	Being lead by
Fulsome	Generous. Gushing	Excessive, over the top
Refute	Disagree	Totally disprove
Restive	Restless. Figity	Refusing to move, immovable
Scan	Read quickly (skimmed)	Read carefully
Sanction	Punish. Suppress	Law or decree (e.g to prohibit, permit or reward)
Scurrilous	Untrue. Rumour	Obscene

Let the above be a warning to check carefully that you really know the meaning of a word, especial if it has recently come into current use.

## 5 IMAGE, GALLERY OR SLIDESHOW?

Where several pictures are to be displayed, use of a Gallery or Slideshow element is preferable to creating multiple Image elements. Gallery works well for 2 or 3 pictures. For more than that a slideshow is usually better. For best results all pictures should be the same aspect ratio, preferably 16:9, landscape.

## 6 DEVICES

It's more important than ever that our website looks amazing for every visitor, whatever device they use.

Web pages that automatically adjust to the size and shape of the screen they are being displayed on are called 'responsive'. The Theme we are using is moderately responsive, allowing our pages to fit reasonably well on a small screen. It is possible to see how a page will look on a 'phone by using the 'Device Switcher' on the top Website Builder menu.



Elements that are arranged left-to-right on the PC screen will be re-arranged into a vertical stack on a 'phone. For this to work properly it is important that developers place elements in the correct position relative to each other. Frequent switching between device views when constructing a page will help avoid mistakes. See Section 12 for hints on how to position elements.

## 7 MINIMISING DOWNLOADED DATA

To provide maximum performance for visitors, it is desirable that the amount of data downloaded on one page is minimised. In general, plain text is not a problem, but graphics, especially photographs can be very large.

The following guidelines for photographs are recommended.

- Size: not to exceed 1920 x 1080 pixels (2 Mega-pixels)
- Aspect ratio: 16:9
- Orientation: Landscape

Where the visitor might want to view a larger version of a photograph, for example to be able to zoom in closely, or to print it out in large format (greater than A4), a link to download a larger version could be provided.

## 8 FILE FORMATS

The file formats chosen for documents should permit reading and, if necessary, editing, on any operating system, without requiring the visitor to purchase software<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Microsoft Office is paid-for, either bundled with Windows or as a separate licence, costing between £10 and £70 depending on version and how purchased.

It is acceptable to require visitors to download and install free software.

## **8.1 Read-only Documents**

Wherever possible documents intended to be downloaded for reading only (not editing) should be PDF (Portable Document Format) files.

Programs to read PDF files are freely available for any device. Adobe Acrobat is the most popular.

## **8.2 Documents for Editing**

It is unwise to assume that all visitors have Microsoft Office installed. Some people use other options, such as Open Office or Apple Pages, which may not always interpret the formatting of MS Office files (.DOC) correctly, therefore this file format should be avoided.

The .DOCX file format is gradually gaining popularity as an industry-standard, and is recommended for files that the visitor may want to edit.

It should be noted that the standards for .DOCX files are continually evolving, and therefore any given software may not be 100% compatible with the latest developments, but documents that do not use 'fancy' features should be compatible with all popular word-processing packages.

PDF is not intended for editing files. Although some PDF software allows limited editing, such as attach comments or highlighting section of text, in general, these advanced features are only available on paid-for software, and so visitors should not be forced to use them. Consequently, files that are provided with the intention that the visitor should edit them should not be in PDF format.

## **9 VISUALLY IMPAIRED VISITORS**

Wherever possible, web pages should be compatible with 'screen reader' software used by visually impaired visitors. Compliance with the 2022 Accessibility Act concerning Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) is desirable. There are many articles on-line concerning how to do this. Weebly have a section of their help facility devoted to accessibility, here:

<https://www.weebly.com/app/help/us/en/sections/web-accessibility>

Developers are encouraged to look at the above for useful hints, and should pay particular attention to the use of Alt Text for images.

## **10 TRAINING AND TESTING**

In the past, test pages have been created on the live site. This leaves the website vulnerable to accidental corruption or deletion in the hands of inexperienced developers. In view of the difficulty of recovering damaged or lost material, testing or training on the live site will not be allowed.

A separate website has been created expressly for the purpose of training and practice. Any person wishing to learn or practice using Weebly should see the relevant page on the ssu3a website, where an on-line course is provide, including links to the training site.

In addition, anyone can easily set up their own personal website to practice their skills.

Developers authorised to work on the live site will be appointed by the ssu3a committee.

## **11 UNITS**

### **11.1 Metric Units**

Metric units are preferred to Imperial units, except for geographical distances, which may be given in miles.

For names, abbreviations and multipliers of metric units, we will adopt the S.I. conventions. See the internet for details.

It is acceptable to use industry standard practices for technical information, for example the electronics industry uses a condensed notation for component values, e.g. 4K7 = 4,700.

## 11.2 Imperial Units

For Imperial units we will adopt the convention that names start with a lower-case letter, for example “3 miles” is correct, “3 Miles” is not.

## 11.3 Time

Time is not metric (not yet anyway!) therefore a colon, not a decimal point, is the correct separator. For example: “10:30” is correct, “10.30” is not.

For preference, use the 24-hour format, for example “07:30”, or “19:30”. Do not append a.m., or p.m., but “h” or “hrs” may be appended to emphasise the 24 hour clock, e.g. “07:30 hrs” cannot be confused with “7:30 p.m.”.

If the 12-hour format is used, always append a.m. or p.m. For example: “7:30 a.m.”, or “7:30 p.m.”.

Also acceptable, is the condensed notation common in Europe, where 'H' replaces the colon, e.g. “12H30” = “12:30 hrs”. This is useful when brevity is required or space is at a premium.

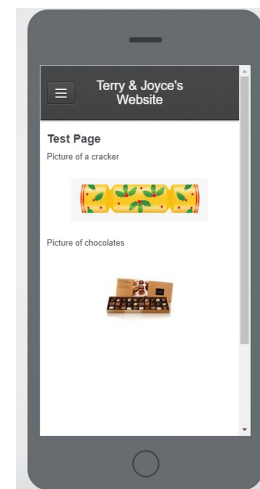
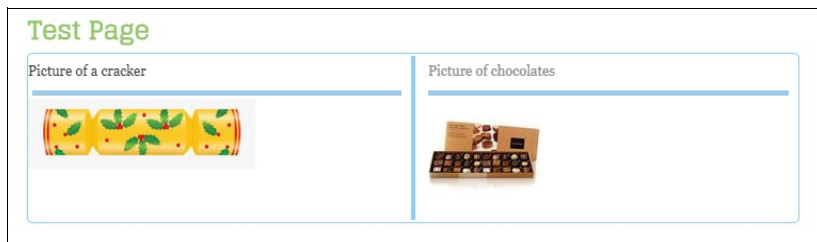
## 12 ELEMENT POSITIONING

The order in which elements are nested on a page has implications for how a responsive theme works.

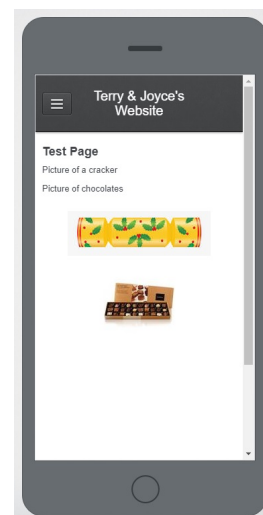
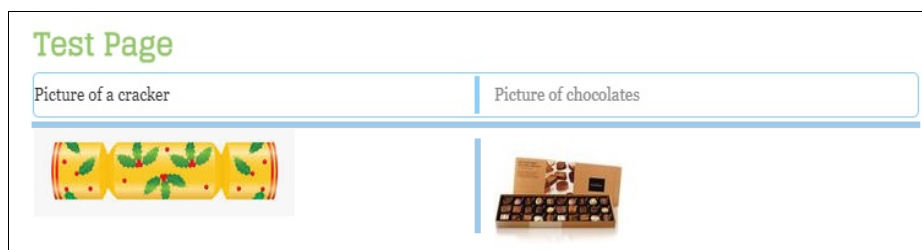
Consider placing four elements on a page, in a 2-by-2 grid. There are 2 ways of doing it: You can either make 2 rows, with 2 elements in each row, or make 2 columns with 2 elements in each column.

It is important to note where Weebly shows the blue vertical or horizontal positioning line as you move the element around. The developer must find the right relative position for the elements. As an example, consider the situation where text is associated with a picture placed below it. We must build each text and picture pair in a column so that they display correctly on a 'phone, as shown:

(In these diagrams the blue lines have been added for illustration, Weebly only shows one of these lines at any time.)



However, if the page is built as 2 rows, with both text elements on the first row and both picture elements on the second row, it looks exactly the same on the PC, but is incorrectly re-arranged on a 'phone.



## 13 UPLOADED FILE MANAGEMENT

### 13.1 Old Files

Weebly does not have any means of managing uploaded pictures and files. Files that are uploaded are stored in the Weebly database and there are no facilities for deleting them.

It is not known for certain that deleting a link to a file also deletes the file; it may be that the file remains in the database forever. If this is the case this has implications for security and integrity, in that visitors who have created a bookmark to a document, even if the links to it have been removed from the web pages might still be able to see it.

It is also probably that our allocated storage space is consumed by redundant files, (though the author has not been able to verify this).

In general, care should be taken to upload only files that are really needed on the website.

### 13.2 Unique Names

Be sure that uploaded files (documents or images) have unique file names. [See the Standards document for file naming rules.](#)

**If you upload a file with the same name as a previously uploaded file, the original file will be overwritten WITHOUT WARNING!**

In some cases, you may want to do this (e.g. to update with an edited version).

### 13.3 Photo Meta-Data

When uploading photographs please check that it does not contain any meta-data that you would not want the world to see, for example, GPS location of photos taken in a member's home.

However, please do ensure that the Date Taken field of the meta-data is filled in and correct, as this helps identify the event to which the picture relates. A meaningful entry in the Title or Subject fields can be used by the developer to apply a suitable caption to the picture.

### 13.4 Security And Integrity Concerns

There are recorded instances where Weebly has 'lost' uploaded documents, and the only solution available to the developer is to re-upload them. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that a local copy of every document uploaded to our website is retained ready for immediate upload, should it be necessary.

In theory, all uploaded documents should be strictly controlled by GDPR regulations, however, we are all aware that no security system is perfect. Therefore it is wise to assume that any uploaded document could become public property at any time. A good principal to work by is "Do not upload anything you would not want printed



on the front page of your local newspaper”.