

RRUUC Web Site Style Guide

(Version 2 - 06/30/2009)

Web Page Design and Layout

The RRUUC web site is designed to present a consistent and professional look for RRUUC. The web design team has established these guidelines to promote this look by everyone who contributes pages for the web site.

All pages on the site use a standard template that provides a unifying style that includes the RRUUC name and web search at the top of the page, and a set of navigation items along the left side.

Tables

Avoid tables (especially with lines around them). Limit their use to information that is actually tabular — i.e., it has rows and columns that make sense as such, such as a calendar or a table of suggested pledge amounts by income level.

Links

When writing the text for a link, use language that would be self explanatory if the link were read without any surrounding text. For example, “click here” does not say what users are going to get when they click. Instead, use something like “the River Road Choir” or “pastoral care”.

Make sure that all links on any one page are consistent: If two links lead to the same place, give them the same (or almost the same) text.

Ensure that the text for each link matches the title of the page to which it leads. The match doesn’t have to be identical, but it should be close enough that the user should not be surprised at the effect of clicking on any link.

Photographs and Captions

There is a strong desire to include one photo on every page.

Photo positions on page:

- General photos appear along the right side of a page
- Photos are on the left side if they are associated with a bio of a person

Put a period at the end of a caption if and only if the caption is a complete sentence.

Use captions consistently on each page: Do not mix captioned and captionless photos on the same page.

Photo Size

Regular Pages: For pages other than the home page, photos should be 220 pixels wide. This can be set in typo3 which will resize any image to this size.

Home Page: There is room for up to 5 photos on the home page (two large and three small). Photo slots on the home page are a shared resource, and the RRUUC publications department is responsible for deciding among competing demands for these slots. To be considered for use on the home page, photos must be cropped to a 4x3 (width x height) aspect ratio.

For any photos, please provide the highest resolution possible, and the CMS will automatically convert photos to an appropriate resolution.

Text Formats

Putting words in capitals is like yelling; do not put titles of events in all caps nor long runs of words in text.

You may use boldface and italics (but not color or size) for words and short phrases within paragraphs. Use these for emphasis, however, and not for long blocks of text, as they are less legible than ordinary text.

Always use styles for headings (heading-1, heading-2, etc.) instead of brute-force techniques to achieve a look.

Links to Files

Generally any content created specifically for the web should be in HTML, and entered via the content management system (CMS). However, for documents that are inherently paper (budgets, committee minutes) and require a specific format or layout, posting a file rather than converting the materials to HTML is more convenient and can preserve the format of the paper document. Files to be posted on the web must be in PDF format. Using formats other than PDF creates problems for people who use screen readers, or who don't own a given software package. Formats such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint are not appropriate for posting on the web. Any of these file formats may be converted to PDF using freely available tools. [Primo PDF](http://www.primopdf.com) (<http://www.primopdf.com>) is one such free package.

Privacy of Personal Information and Use of Photos

Names, phone numbers, and addresses

In text about some event or committee, it is fine to use the person's name.

Personal email address, postal addresses, and phone numbers are never used on public web pages (only on private, members-only pages). If you need to include contact information, use the office phone number and generic email address (office@rruuc.org).

Personal email or phone numbers may be included on web pages that will be posted to the members-only part of the site.

Photos

Never mention in a caption who is pictured in the photo (unless it is a staff bio).

For adults in photos, try to obtain permission from all of the individuals if there are fewer than six people in the photo. For photos of more than six people, try to obtain permission of people who are in the foreground and are most likely to be recognized.

For children in photos (under 18), always obtain permission of a parent or guardian before using the photo. If there are 20 children in the photo, we need 20 sets of permission.

Email permission is acceptable for use on the web site (but not for printed material such as brochures). Copies of photo permissions are stored in the typo3 CMS on the special page Private Area > Photo Releases.

Writing Style and Wording

In general, the web site is written in the third person. However, to promote the idea that RRUUC is a collection of people and not just an institution, the first person plural (“we”, “us”, etc.) appears on many pages describing the overall institution. The sense here is that the collective is the entire congregation, so this usage should be avoided when it really means a committee. Don’t use “we would like to invite you to a committee {meeting, event}.”

Avoid the word “church” except in some specific contexts:

- Alternative words:
 - “church” as building is “RRUUC” or simply “the building”
 - “church” as a group of people who worship together is the “congregation”
 - “go to church” is “attend services” or “worship”
 - “church {library, office, broom, etc.}” is simply the object, but if confusion if the object belongs to RRUUC or someone else, use “RRUUC” to designate it (e.g., “RRUUC Office”)
- Church and River Road Unitarian Church are used only in historic contexts or to refer to other organizations:
 - history of congregational activities (e.g., “In 1969, RRUC...”)
 - names of sermons, talks, etc. that precede the June 2007 vote to change the name
 - when RRUUC participates with other houses of worship, using something like “RRUUC partners with other Bethesda churches to...” is fine.

The newsletter was the “RRUUC Newsletter” (changed from “Church Newsletter”, “Congregational Newsletter”).

The weekly information mailed emailed to members and friends is the “eWeekly” (note capitalization).

The printed material handed out on Sunday service is the “River Road Weekly”. The “Order of Service” is only the two pages at the center of the River Road Weekly that lists the parts of that week’s service.

The adult Choir is the “River Road Choir”, not the “RRUUC Choir”

The largest room in the building is the sanctuary unless it is being described for rental purposes, then it is the auditorium.

Ministers are referred to as “Rev. Jane Smith”, (not Rev. Smith, or Jane Smith)

Fiscal and congregational years are in the form 2007-08 (not 07-08, 2007/08)

Bulleted lists should not have a semicolon (“;”) at the end of each item. If the items are independent clauses, use a period (“.”) at the end each item. Otherwise, do not use any punctuation at the ends of items in a bulleted (or numbered) list.

Using MS Word for Documents that Will Be Posted on the Web

Always (ALWAYS!) use header styles (Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.) for headers. Do **not** use brute-force techniques such as font size, bold, italics, all-caps, and color. If Word’s standard styles don’t get you the look you want for your document’s printed form, modify the styles. Using styles will ensure that the content translates correctly into the RRUUC web style when it is posted on the web site. Not using styles will create unnecessary work for the web team (to fix the problems it creates) and will bring the wrath of the Spirit of Life down on you.

If you have posted a document to the web site and are not happy with how it looks on line, contact the web team. We will consider adding more styles to the site’s style sheet.