Tualatin Website Style Guide and Standards

Web Page Elements

- **Headlines** are for time-sensitive information, including upcoming events. Priority will be given to events happening within the next week. Headlines should be changed often, perhaps weekly. Please make sure your event is removed from headlines within 1 day after the event occurs.

- **Key Topics** are for topical information. Events should not be posted here, unless it is part of a topical page. (Ex: October is Info Literacy month, including related programs.)

- **Images:**
  - Whenever possible, include a photograph on a webpage or calendar event.
  - Images should be directly related to the content of the webpage or calendar event (ie. photographs, maps, or diagrams).○Additional photos will be displayed as a slideshow.
  - Images may be left- or right-aligned.
  - In most cases, a photograph is preferable to a drawing or clipart.
  - Photos of the public with recognizable faces must have signed releases on file.
  - Photos require a caption and alternate text
  - Places to find royalty free photos:
    - Microsoft Office Online
    - Creative Commons Search
    - P or S drive
    - Flickr: Advanced Search, check Creative Commons box

- **Headers**
  - Headers will be shown in the results of a site search, so make sure they describe the page's content.
  - Do not use puns, or cute/clever headers that do not accurately describe the page.
  - Do not make all page titles start with the same word; they will be hard to differentiate when scanning search results or other lists.
  - The first two word s of all headings and subheadings are the most important.
    - Use passive voice if necessary to accomplish this.
    - Do not repeat the same two first words on headings and subheadings if possible.

- **Links:**
  - Use plain language and specific terminology
  - Be clearly differentiated from other links; don't use misleading words
  - Avoid "click here" or other pointers
  - Use action-oriented terms
  - Don't bury links at the end of a long sentence or paragraph

- **Logos**
    - Refer to the Standard Procedures and Graphics Manual for City Logo (found at S:\LOGOS-Forms-Templates)
    - For Library, refer to the WCCLS 2008 Logo Guide (found at M:\LIBRARY\Document Creation\Logos\WCCLS Logos)
    - Logos of outside partners should be used in compliance with the organization's logo standards.

Voice of the Website

- Approachable
    - Keep two things in mind when writing: the voice of the City, and who you are writing to. Language should be goal oriented and geared to the reader, not the writer.
    - Build cues into content to make it easier for use to find related information
    - Don't dumb down content; rather, scale down the level of complexity.
    - Use a sixth grade reading level language on the homepage and other main landing pages. Use an eighth grade reading level language on all other pages.
    - Write in a reverse pyramid style where the most important information is at the top. Keep all necessary information within the first two paragraphs.
    - Be as brief as possible. Use bulleted lists when possible.
- Trustworthy
    - Never allow bias, inaccuracy or hyperbole.
    - Be predictable and consistent in how pages are organized, how often updated, feedback response time, etc.
    - The "speaker" on the page is The City, not an individual speaker. Avoid personal pronouns. Second person (you) should be used sparingly and generally reserved for events and publicity. Second person should not be used for policy or procedural information.
    - The tone of the site should be consistent throughout, unless an article is signed by the author (e.g. Message from Library Manager; Sally's Favorite Books.)
- Practical
    - Concentrate on the value and practical purpose of information.
    - Limit content to needed information; do not create pages or content which do not address what the user actually needs.

Specific style uses

Abbreviations

- Acceptable if part of formal name (Morgan Stanley & Co.).
- Avoid in running text (Professor Smith, not Prof. Smith).

- With place names, abbreviate *St.* (St. Louis) but spell out *Fort* (Fort Lauderdale) and *Mount* (Mount Prospect).
- *US* is acceptable as an adjective, but use *United States* for the noun. Do not use periods (not U.S.)

Acronyms

- Acceptable on second and subsequent references if given in parentheses after a first spelled-out use.
- The acronym in parentheses may be omitted if the second reference occurs in the same paragraph or soon after the spelled-out name.
- Acceptable without first spelling out if initials are widely recognized (e.g., AIDS, HMO, NASA, FBI).
- Do not put in parentheses after a first spelled-out use if the organization is never mentioned again.

Addresses

- Use plus-4 zip code when possible.
- In running text, spell out *North, South, East, West* before the street name; *Street, Avenue, Road, Drive, Boulevard,* and the like.
- State names should be spelled out in running text but may be shown as postal abbreviations in bibliographies, lists, and mailing addresses.

Ampersand

- Use only when it is part of a company or organization's formal name. Do not use in text to replace *and.*

Apostrophes

- Do not use to form plurals (it should be 1940s, not 1940's) unless it would be confusing without (thus A's and B's, not As and Bs; p's, not ps).
- Possessives of singular nouns ending in *s* are formed by adding *'s* (e.g., Russ's dog).
- Plural nouns modifying other nouns require an apostrophe (e.g., Men's Room)

Capitalization

- Capitalize:
  - official departments and offices (Tualatin Public Library, Community Development Department)
  - geographical areas and localities (the Midwest, the South Side of Chicago, New York City)
  - government bodies (the US Congress, the Tualatin City Council),
  - historical periods (the Depression, the Enlightenment),
  - names referring to the Deity (God, Jehovah), sacred books (the Bible, the Quran),
  - words denoting family relationships used in place of a person's name (Grandmother Jones),
  - registered trademarks (Xerox).

- Lowercase:
  - job titles (library manager)
  - departments or offices that are not the official name (library, planning department)
  - nouns used with numbers to designate chapters, rooms, pages, etc. (chapter 1, room 234, page 1,986);
  - derivative adjectives (french fries);
  - simple directions (west side of Tualatin).

Dates

- Use a hyphen to show a range of dates and do not repeat *20* (2012–13, not 2012–2013).
- If the day of the month appears, use a comma before and after the year (by the January 15, 2013, deadline).
- Do not use a comma between the month and the year without a date (by the January 2013 deadline).
- Do not use *st, nd, rd, th,* even if dates are adjectives (March 1 event, not March 1st event).
- Times come before days and dates (at 4 p.m. Friday; at 9 a.m. Monday, June 7).
- Months and days are not abbreviated.
- Use numerals for decades (1960s or the '60s).

Foreign words

- Italicize unless the word (*fait accompli*) has been Americanized or is commonly used (e.g., cum laude).

Forms

- Capitalize formal name (Library Card Application) but do not use quotation marks or italics.

Fractions

- Write out and hyphenate (two-thirds, three-fifths) in running text.
- A fraction and a whole number appear as numerals with no space between them (3½).

Headlines

- Every word is capitalized except articles (a, an, the), coordinate conjunctions (and, or, for, nor), prepositions, and *to* in infinitives.

Names

- No comma before *Jr.* or *Sr.* or *III.*
- Space between initials (J. P. Morgan).

Numbers

- *One* through *nine* spelled out; *10* and above in numerals, except that numbers of the same

category should be treated alike within the same context.

- *First* through *ninth* spelled out; thereafter, *10th, 11th,* etc.
- Use two letters in ordinals (22nd, not 22d).
- Use numerals with percent (7 percent), dollar sign ($3), temperature (8 degrees), scores (7-3), page (page 2), room (room 9), and chapter (chapter 6).
- Numbers beginning a sentence are always spelled out.
- For figures greater than 999,999, use *million* or *billion* (2.3 million, 4 billion).
- Use a comma in a figure greater than 1,000, unless it's a date.
- For inclusive numbers, the second number should be represented by only its final two digits if its beginning digit(s) are the same as the first number's (pages 343–47).
- A dash should not be used as a substitute for *to* in a range (from 1967 to 1983, not from 1967–83).

States

- States should not be abbreviated.
- Use commas before and after state names when they appear with cities (Tigard, Oregon, is north of Tualatin—not Tigard, Oregon is north of Tualatin).
- If a high school bears the name of its city, insert the state in parentheses: Downers Grove (Illinois) High School.
- If citing a newspaper that bears the name of the city, insert the state in parentheses: *Tigard-Tualatin (Oregon)Times*

Symbols

- In running text, spell out the words percent, degrees (temperature), feet, inches, and cents.
- In tables, it is acceptable to use symbols for these (%, ?, ', ", ?).
- Amounts greater than 99 cents should be in numerals with a dollar sign ($4).

Telephone numbers

- Use a hyphen between area code and number; no parentheses. Example: 503-691-3066.

Times

- Do not use *o'clock*.
- Lowercase *a.m.* and *p.m.* One space between the number and the *a.m.* and *p.m.*
- *Noon*, not *12 p.m.* or *12 noon*. Same for midnight.
- Do not use a dash in place of *to* in a range of times introduced by *from* (from 5 to 7 p.m., not from 5–7 p.m.).

Titles (publications and creative works)

- Titles of books, periodicals (including online magazines), movies, television series, plays, works of art, musical compositions, collections of poetry, and long poems published separately are italicized.
- Titles of lectures, speeches, episodes of television and radio series, songs, poems, articles from newspapers and periodicals, chapters, short stories, essays, and individual parts of books are in roman type and within quotation marks.
- Lowercase articles (a, an, the), coordinate conjunctions (and, or, for, nor), prepositions regardless of length, and *to* in infinitives. Capitalize everything else, including those parts of speech if they

appear as the first or last word in a title (*On the Waterfront*.)

Web and email

- Do not hyphenate *online.*
- *World Wide Web* is not needed; *web* is sufficient.
- *http://* is not needed at the start of a web address unless the address does not start with www or there might be some confusion about whether it is a web address.
- < > is not needed around a web address.
- Capitalize *Internet* but lowercase *web*.
- Two words: home page
- One word: website, webcast, webcam, database, webpage
- Italicize the titles of online publications *(Wired)* and blogs.
- Do not hyphenate *email;* lowercase it except at the start of a sentence.

Forms and Documents

- Whenever possible indicate if the document is an application, form or worksheet. The name of the form should be listed first (ie. Building Permit Application rather than Application: Building Permit.)
- Forms or applications for limited duration activities should be removed within 1 day of beginning of activity.
- Information packets and guidelines should be listed under documents.

News and Announcements
- Time sensitive items should have date listed in the heading.
- Headings should not be in all caps
- Body of items should not have additional heading formats

Calendar Items
- All items must have a contact person's name and phone number or email address
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Library-specific terms

- Book sale are two words.
- Ereader and ebook do not have a hyphen, and are not capitalized except when they begin a sentence.
- Library is capitalized only when used as part of Tualatin Public Library, Tualatin Library, or Washington County Cooperative Library System.
- Storytime is one word.

- Tualatin Public Library is the full, proper name. Use the full proper name during the first instance on a webpage.
- Washington County Cooperative Library System is the full, proper name. Use this during the first instance on a webpage. WCCLS is abbreviated without periods.