Web **Standards**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Web and digital applications are one of the primary ways our brand comes to life for our audience and most often is the first way they encounter what we're all about.

Whether we're creating online experiences that encourage learning, sharing and interacting, or simply communicating through a single web page, we must do so in a consistent and mindful way.

The following standards are to ensure all of our digital interactions align with UofL's mission and foster positive outcomes.

COMPLIANCE

Compliance with the official web standards outlined below ensures:

- Your content will be properly indexed by both the internal search engine as well as external search providers. Indexing helps users find and use the information on your websites through search methods.
- Your content will be eligible to be included in the institutional information architecture. The information architecture aids users in finding your website's content via navigational methods.
- Your pages will be eligible to utilize the uofl.me link shortening service for social sharing and promotion.
- Your sites will be eligible to utilize the uofl.edu link shortening service for all other marketing and promotion.

DEFINITIONS

"UofL websites" are defined as any page or site on louisville.edu that is made in support of the university or that uses university resources (time, staff or equipment).

Examples of these include, but are not limited to, sites that represent UofL:

- Colleges
- Schools
- Centers
- Institutes
- Offices

- Departments
- Divisions
- Programs
- University initiatives

These sites are considered official university web properties that are subject to review and approval by the Office of Communications & Marketing. These sites must also follow the policies and guidelines created by Information Technology, and must be consistent with the overall mission of the university.

*Beginning in 2019, UofL web sites will be evaluated based on objective and organized into two main categories, **marketing** or **operational**. This is to help create a more purposeful, marketing-driven user experience for our external audiences while simultaneously serving the significant and evolving needs of our students, faculty, staff and administrators.*

MARKETING (EXTERNAL-FACING) WEBSITES

Web pages and websites whose primary purpose is marketing are published under the louisville.edu domain.

Examples of these types of sites include:

- Student enrollment
- Brand awareness and perception
- Targeted marketing
- Community relations
- Philanthropy

The primary audience for these sites is less familiar with the university, or do not have a substantial existing relationship with the institution.

The content for these sites is consistent with the university's brand platform and is created, edited and controlled by the Office of Communications & Marketing (unless otherwise delegated by OCM to communication or web professionals located within various units).

These pages and sites will be organized by desired navigational paths for specific individual audiences (e.g. prospective student, prospective donor).

Examples:

- Visiting UofL (louisville.edu/visit)
- Admission (louisville.edu/apply)
- Employment (louisville.edu/jobs)

OPERATIONAL (INTERNAL-FACING) WEBSITES

Web pages and websites with content whose primary purpose is to perform or communicate an operational need will be organized under the my.louisville.edu subdomain.

Examples of these types of sites include:

- Student retention efforts
- Improving the student experience
- Communicating and facilitating business operations
- Promoting internal communication to faculty, staff and current students

The audience for these sites is familiar with UofL and their interaction with our website requires access to data or content that is otherwise non-critical to or not appropriate for public, external audiences.

The tone of content for these sites is created, edited and controlled by the individual units within each division, school/college, department, etc.

These sites will be organized primarily by operational need and secondarily by our organizational structure.

The user interface design of these internal sites must be chosen from the set of official templates put forth by the Office of Communications & Marketing and distributed through our content management system. Exemption requests can be directed to web@louisville.edu.

Examples:

- Physical Plant (my.louisville.edu/physicalplant)
- Bursar (my.louisville.edu/bursar)
- Human Resources (my.louisville.edu/hr)

Resources:

- Flowchart: What type is my website?

STRUCTURE & CONTEXT

At all times, it must be assumed that visitors to louisville.edu websites are not familiar with the organization, and as such, care should be given to provide a way-finding experience that is clear, helpful and reassuring.

Likewise, visitors to my.louisville.edu sites already possess a basic understanding of our organization so utility and efficiency become top priority. Since both endeavors must result in successful outcomes, we have a responsibility to be good stewards of our site architecture.

The structure of our web content comes in the forms of information architecture (IA), navigation and the assignment of human-readable website addresses (URLs). The implementation of this structural foundation by a central office (OCM) ensures a clear, consistent navigation path for our users.

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

Good information architecture (IA) arranges pieces of content in a way that is easily understandable. The scope of a website's architecture helps inform the building of good navigation, a great user interface and a positive user experience.

The organization of content for the louisville.edu homepage, top-tier and subsequent sites must be arranged to be understandable to our primary external audiences. Because of this, our site is not intended to be organized by institutional or organizational structure/process.

Beginning in 2019, louisville.edu sites will begin the transition (through splitting of **marketing** *and* **operational** *sites) to a more structured, audience-focused IA in an effort to help create a uniform user experience. The goal is to create an architecture that maximizes the number of users that are able to easily navigate louisville.edu and my.louisville.edu using a basic understanding of web standards and common sense.*

At present, UofL colleges, schools, departments and other sites create and maintain their own navigation. The following are guidelines to help aid in this work:

GUIDELINES

When constructing your navigation and the architecture of your site, group content into related areas and keep the topmost navigation level to a manageable amount (recommended as under eight links). This allows users to employ a drill-down method of navigation that is intuitive and natural.

Be sure to place critical content such as contact links or helpful information in easily found areas—homepage, footer or top-level navigation. Users should not have to search for this content.

Sub-sites of louisville.edu must include an easily-found link back to louisville.edu if approved for exemption from using official university web templates.

NAVIGATION

UofL websites must use plain-speak, curated navigation and provide methods of contact that are easy for the end user to discover. For example, do not use confusing navigation titles (e.g. "tools of the trade"). Instead, choose common titles such as "what we do" or "services."

When selecting a style of navigation (based on the template you are using), give careful consideration to the type and amount of content you may have. Some styles of navigation are better suited than others to allow for a growth in content:

TOP NAVIGATION

- Top navigation (that spans the width of a site in a horizontal linear fashion) is better for drill-down navigation and sites with multiple levels of information, but is limited in number of top-level categories due to variable browser widths.
- Top navigation solutions also often use local left navigation for providing access to secondary and further levels of content.
- Top navigation should never break to two or more lines.

LEFT NAVIGATION

- Left navigation (in a list style on the left side of a website) allows for a greater number of top-level navigation items, but increases the difficulty for the user to navigate more deeply into levels of a site.
- Left navigation schemata are best used for smaller sites, or else employed as a sub-navigation technique in combination with a top navigation style.

BREADCRUMBS

A breadcrumb or breadcrumb trail is a navigational tool and user interface element that shows a user their current location within a site. Breadcrumb trails are often found near the top of a web page and define both the current location within a site's hierarchy as well as the preceding page path.

It is recommended that louisville.edu sites employ a breadcrumb trail if the amount of content and depth of navigational structure warrants.

WEB ADDRESSES (URLS)

The University of Louisville follows a specific set of guidelines for assigning and maintaining web site addresses (URLs).

See appendix for the complete URL Policy.

The university is in the planning phases of establishing https:// as the primary protocol to deliver all louisville.edu web pages. This will ensure a more secure user experience as well as help with the search engine optimization of UofL pages.

Resources

- Indexing HTTPS pages by default (Google announcement)

WEB DESIGN STANDARDS

In an effort to achieve a cohesive web presence, UofL has established fundamental visual standards for all sites and pages. This includes:

USER INTERFACE DESIGN (THEMES)

All UofL websites must use an official template put forth by the Office of Communications & Marketing and comply with the university's Brand Identity & Visual Standards.

THE USER EXPERIENCE

If a user has a negative experience with a UofL digital property, an unfavorable, lasting impression is left. How a user feels about your website directly impacts how they feel about UofL.

Therefore, all design and development decisions regarding web and mobile should be driven by the question, "What is best for the user?" This includes minding:

PLATFORM

All louisville.edu websites must be mobile-friendly. Pages and sites should gracefully transition between desktop, tablet and mobile sizes. Appropriate enhancements and features for each platform should be taken into consideration (e.g. telephone numbers should be interactive and obvious on mobile phone sizes).

INTERACTIVITY

Touch-based environments should have extra care given to all interactive elements. Make sure that anything "touchable" is of appropriate size and with the correct amount of space around the object to allow it to be interacted with, ensuring no accidental interference from other elements.

CONTENT

Content (the text) should be given top priority when creating a digital property for UofL. It should be easy to read, in a conversational style, and should avoid an institutional or corporate tone. Content should be up-to-date and accurate so as not to erode a sense of trust with the user. Content should be organized in a scannable, hierarchical manner, avoiding large, multi-paragraph sections and giving generous use of headings and subheadings.

More information on content can be found in the Content Standards.

GENERAL REQUIRED WEB ELEMENTS

COLORS

For on-screen applications (web, mobile, video, etc.), our brand colors as listed in the Brand Identity & Visual Standards must be observed.

Please use the hexadecimal or RGB values and adhere to tinting/opacity regulations.

TYPOGRAPHY

Typography on all louisville.edu websites should follow the regulations listed in the Brand Identity & Visual Standards.

To inquire about whether the university provides a web site license for Gotham, Mercury and Knockout, please contact web@louisville.edu.

HEADERS & FOOTERS

The UofL header (topmost section of a website) must include an official logo in the top-left position on every page. By default, this will be the Primary Logo. Units that qualify for secondary logos should use the alternate configuration due to the economy of size.

All logo use in the header must follow the guidelines included in the Visual Identity & Brand Standards.

Additionally, the logo should serve as a link to the root or homepage of whatever property the logo represents (e.g. If the primary UofL wordmark is used, the link should direct to louisville.edu; if the College of Arts and Sciences sub-brand mark is used, the link element should point to louisville.edu/artsandsciences).

The UofL search box must appear on all UofL websites in a top-right position to ensure a consistent user experience for those users visiting multiple UofL websites.

A global University of Louisville footer must follow the contents of all web pages on the louisville.edu domain, and must include links to the content areas as listed below. This global footer ensures quick, easy access for users to common UofL services:

| Contact | Privacy Statement | Apply | Jobs | Donate | Emergency |

Any deviation from this standard must be approved by the Office of Communication & Marketing.

BROWSER SUPPORT

Officially supported web browsers include the latest versions of Internet Explorer (IE 11), Chrome, Safari, Edge and Firefox. This does not include support for compatibility modes.

Please note that our websites no longer support depreciated versions of Internet Explorer 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

EXCEPTIONS:

To be considered for exemption to any of these design standards your project must:

- Be approved by the Office of Communications & Marketing
- Follow the university brand standards
- Comply with the university's agency policy, if applicable
- Comply with university accessibility standards (below)
- Not mimic, reuse or duplicate (in whole or in part) content or the user interface design of an official template (e.g. a site may not attempt to imitate the look and feel of the university's homepage)
- Include reviews by the university's Creative Director at the project milestones of information architecture, wireframe, initial concept, and prior to final launch

WEB CONTENT STANDARDS

More than just the words on a page, content includes photos, documents, forms, videos, illustrations, etc. UofL has established basic content standards for our websites in order to provide the best user experience.

All content on UofL sites must be:

- **_Mission-driven:_** all content must support and reflect the mission of UofL.
- **_Audience-focused:_** every piece of content must be created with specific audiences in mind. All words, photographs, design elements should be appropriate and helpful to these target audiences. Strive to identify particular challenges, concerns and/or desires of your target audience(s) and demonstrate how the university addresses those needs.
- **_Accurate:_** All content on a page or site must be free of errors and provide correct information to the user. This includes information being current and up-to-date. Outdated content should be archived or removed.
- **_Complete:_** A site or page should not be published in a state of being "under construction."
- **_Compliant:_** All content on a page or site must comply with legal restrictions (state and federal), university policies, accessibility standards, copyright and trademark rules and in compliance with university privacy standards.
- **_Purpose-driven:_** All pages and sites should have content that answers the question, "What should the user think, feel or do?" Content should be goal-oriented and compelling. E.g. convincing a student to apply; reassuring a parent about student services.
- **_Original:_** All site content should be non-duplicative of other content elsewhere on the UofL website. E.g. course or degree program information should refer to or embed data from the official Course Catalog instead of recreating this information.

DISALLOWED CONTENT

- Content that violates IT policies, public information policy, student code of conduct or general code of conduct
- Advertising of, or content that implies UofL's endorsement of businesses, organizations or non-university entities or products beyond our official partners. More information on advertising on UofL sites.
- Content or links to non-university sites that do not support or promote UofL's mission

NEWS & MEDIA RESOURCES

The Office of Communications & Marketing is the only UofL office authorized to contact the media, per the public information policy. Because of this:

- News content that is intended for the promotion of the university and/or the work of faculty, staff or students that is created for the consumption of externally-facing audiences must be distributed through the official means designated by the Office of Communications & Marketing.

- Specific resources for media may be included as a link on school/college, department or unit website. However, certain content (press releases, expert source contact information) must not be displayed on that site. Instead, please include the following text below the other content on your media resources page:

   Looking for** [insert unit name] **experts? The Office of Communications & Marketing may be contacted for all media inquiries by calling the director of media relations at 502-852-1108.

IMAGES

- Photographs should be .jpg file format and optimized for web to avoid large file sizes.

- Logos and illustrations should be .gif, .png or .svg format and optimized for web to avoid large file sizes.

- Photography used as visual assets on any of our external marketing sites must follow the university's photographic standards. For access to official university photographs that may be used on external marketing sites, please contact branding@louisville.edu.

- Because our operational websites are internally-focused, the need for marketing and visual promotion is greatly diminished and the focus is on the utility. As such, use of photos, diagrams or illustrations should be minimal and serve a communicative, not decorative, purpose.

- Official faculty and staff portraits are available in our asset management system. Access may be requested by contacting branding@louisville.edu.

- Images must contain alternate text (alt-tags) in order to be accessible to users with vision impairments.

Resources

- Google image optimization guidelines
- About alternative text (alt-text)
- UofL photo release form

VIDEOS

Videos are a valuable storytelling device on the web. Similar to other communication mediums, videos produced by any individual or group at UofL should represent the organization in a positive light and be of the highest production quality.

In addition, all video that is embedded on UofL websites that face external audiences or are otherwise used for marketing, advertising or promotional purposes (including social sharing) should:

- Have a clear vision and goal
- Follow the university brand standards
- Meet ADA digital accessibility standards (e.g. captioning)

The university has partner agencies who can provide consultation and production of video content in compliance with the university's agency policy (appendix).

All video concepts that impact the UofL brand, promote a university-wide strategy or have a broader focus than a single department must include consultation with the Office of Communications & Marketing.

OCM also oversees the university's main YouTube account where video posts and live streaming events are restricted to those approved by OCM.

ANALYTICS

The University of Louisville utilizes Google Analytics to monitor site traffic and user behavior with the intent of improving the user experience site wide. All UofL sites are required to include the university analytics master account tracking code but may include additional tracking codes if desired.

The Office of Communications & Marketing reserves the right to implement or remove additional tracking solutions as needed.

To ensure compliance with the university's digital privacy statement across all louisville.edu websites, requests for implementation of any additional tracking should be sent to web@louisville.edu.

CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM & WEBSITE HOSTING

There are multiple benefits of a centralized content management system and website hosting solution including better search engine optimization, controlled information architecture schema, standardized branding, comprehensive web analytics, disaster recovery and data backup solutions, cost savings, cohesive mobile-friendly user experience, and compliance (accessibility, privacy, etc.)

Because of this, UofL requires:

- **CMS** - The official content management system (CMS) of the University of Louisville is Plone. No other CMS may be used to manage content for an external or internal UofL website.
- **Hosting** - Web hosting for university sites must be provided by UofL IT (or designated third-party of their choosing). No other web hosting solution may be utilized.

EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to this policy may be submitted for consideration by the Web Standards Group by contacting web@louisville.edu.

Resources

- Plone v4 documentation
- UofL Plone Help Center
- CMS policy [to be written/approved]
- Web hosting policy [to be written/approved]

ACCESSIBILITY

The University of Louisville is federally required to have accessible web pages and web applications for individuals with disabilities according to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. University websites must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA requirement.

In addition to the core CMS and visual interface (themes/templates), all content published on behalf of the university by academic, administrative or other units must adhere to the university's Accessibility Policy, regardless of type of site.

The responsibility of creating accessible digital content resides with the unit or individual publishing those materials. This includes but is not limited to the use of photography, PDFs, video or interactive elements.

Digital content that is posted on a louisville.edu website by individuals on behalf of an originating person(s) should be made accessible at the origination point.

Resources

- Accessibility policy [to be finalized/approved]
- UofL common accessibility guidelines [to be written]
- Cynthia Says: scanning tool for assessing current accessibility
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0)
- World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Web Accessibility Initiative Perspective Videos — Learn how accessibility benefits everyone in a variety of situations

SEARCH & SEARCH OPTIMIZATION

Search is a vital part of our digital experience and helps users get to the information they need quickly and efficiently without having to rely on traditional navigation.

All UofL websites must have a search box in the header per our brand standards requirements. This box must search all louisville.edu domains by default. It is optional to have the search box additionally narrow the search to the local site it is implemented on, but that must be secondary in function.

OUR SEARCH

Our search solution is powered by Cludo. The integration and implementation of this is managed by Information Technology. Communications and Marketing oversees the indexing, keywords, boosting, page ranking and other features in order to align with the university's information architecture and institutional marketing goals.

Smart Banners are a feature within Cludo that allow the enhanced visual promotion of specific keywords and phrases. The design, content and implementation of Smart Banners are controlled by the Office of Communications & Marketing.

OPTIMIZATION

In order for the best content to reach our audiences, it is important to keep in mind:

- ***Site titles*** – Be sure to edit your site title in Plone. Avoid references to UofL and University of Louisville, as the affiliation is obvious to users (from the template branding and URL. Also avoid acronyms or overly long site names.

- ***Page titles*** – Don't use generic page titles. Official templates already include the site title on each page. Be sure to customize your page title especially if you've duplicated a page in the CMS (to avoid 'Copy of About Us,' as an example).

- ***Good content*** – The better your site content and the more useful it is to your audiences, the higher the ranking in search results. Our search engine learns and refines over time based on number of clicks, so providing valuable information goes a long way.

THIRD-PARTY PRODUCTS & INTEGRATIONS

The web experience for UofL extends beyond the services and platforms on louisville.edu. It is often necessary for campus units to purchase and integrate with third-party services in order to better accomplish their goals. Examples of these in the past have included:

- Email Marketing
- Social Platforms
- Event Management and Ticketing
- Student Engagement Services
- Customer Relationship Management
- Emergency Notification
- Academic Tools
- Online Payment Systems

To date the university has permitted a decentralized approach wherein individual units have been allowed to purchase these solutions without oversight.

Beginning in 2019, the Integrations Group will be evaluating all current and future contracts and purchases for third-party technology systems on criteria such as:

- **Compliance** - security, accessibility, PCI, privacy, Title IX, NCAA, HIPAA, FERPA, existing UofL contractual agreements, etc.
- **Cost** - cost benefit analysis, volume discounts, tax exemption, educational discounts, multi-year contract discounts, etc.
- **Maintenance** - redundancy, documentation, technical support, data management, reporting
- **Usability** - ease of use, tools and features, cross platform compatibility, roles and permissions management, etc.
- **Compatibility** - alignment with university mission, cross integrations with existing technology, enterprise scalability
- **Brand protection** – system white-labeling, brand application abilities, messaging controls

If you have a project you are considering that you think qualifies for evaluation from the Integrations Group contact web@louisville.edu.

ADVERTISING ON LOUISVILLE.EDU

Advertising refers to the promotion of products, services or causes for the intention of compelling consumers to respond in a certain way toward what is being advertised. As a public educational institution, UofL has a responsibility to maintain impartiality—to the best of our ability—in the consumer market as well as to protect the sanctity of the educational experience of our students.

Therefore, all advertising intended for use on websites under the louisville.edu domain as well as all constituent units must have explicit approval from the Office of Communications & Marketing prior to any agreements, contractual or otherwise stated.

Any UofL website that is maintained or owned by a UofL entity but is not currently under the louisville.edu domain must still adhere to the above standards for web advertising.

The only exceptions to the aforementioned standard include:

- The University Athletic Association website (gocards.com)
- The University Alumni Association website (uoflalumni.org)
- The Louisville Cardinal (www.louisvillecardinal.com)

ADVERTISING ON THIRD-PARTY WEBSITES

All public advertising, including web-based advertising is managed through the Office of Communications & Marketing. For more information, please contact OCM.

FUNDRAISING

Any website or digital communication (email, social media, etc). that performs the function of fundraising (solicitation of donations with proceeds going to the University of Louisville or UofL entity) must be done using the iModules platform.

For more information please contact University Advancement at 502-852-4919.

EDITORIAL
STANDARDS

The words on our sites illustrate who we are, what we stand for, how we're different and why the user should care about UofL. Our content highlights the functional and emotional benefits people attain by attending, supporting, working at, or being involved with the University of Louisville.

In order to ensure a consistent tone and message across our marketing websites, the following basic standards have been created:

WRITING FOR THE WEB

The style of writing for digital platforms differs considerably from print due to platform differences and user expectations. Content for web pages should be concise and easily scannable.

Web content largely exists to provide purposeful information and users typically have specific subject matter they want to find or tasks they need to complete. As such:

- Use short sentences and break text into short paragraphs for easy scanning.
- Be conversational and upbeat in tone and avoid a bureaucratic or technical voice.
- Put information that is most important to your audience higher up on the page.
- Avoid acronyms or institutional jargon that can alienate unfamiliar users.
- Make good use of headings, subheadings, bulleted/numbered lists.
- Prioritize important information higher up on the page.
- Do not use 'click here' links. Use contextual/embedded links, e.g. Read more about the honors program.
- Assume non-linear navigation. Many users will find a page from a search, not by click-navigation. Page content should be independent and readable regardless of preceding pages in a site.

Resources

- UofL editorial style guide
- Writing for the Web (usability.gov)
- Collection of articles on writing for the web (Nielsen Norman Group)

APPENDIX

URL Policy

APPROVED NOV. 2006, UPDATED AUG. 2018

PURPOSE

In order to ensure that the mission and identity of the university are being appropriately supported, the University of Louisville controls the function and designation of the names of its web servers, domains and resources.

The University also controls the peripheral naming schemes associated with URLs, such as vanity URLs, short URLs and other redirects, for practical management of the University's collective digital presence and search engine optimization.

This policy applies to all administrative, academic and other organizational units of the University of Louisville, as well as any domain purchased using university funds.

DEFINITIONS

1. ***URL*** (uniform resource locator) - A World Wide Web address for locating a specific, web-accessible resource. URLs are formulated by a standardized scheme of web server names, domain names, resource types, file paths, and file names.
2. ***Subdomain*** - URL structure where the traditional "www" prefix is replaced as the first part of the URL, e.g. subdomain.louisville.edu.
3. ***Vanity URL*** - A separate domain name purchased specifically to redirect internet traffic to a different web location, for the purposes of uniqueness, distinction and/or brevity.
4. ***Top-level domain*** - The root of all UofL websites is louisville.edu, and within a university setting, top-level domains are considered sites that are one file path extension immediately following. E.g. louisville.edu/academics.

POLICY

University of Louisville web domain names are managed and applied by Information Technology (IT).

The Office of Communications & Marketing (OCM) determines and assigns the university's louisville.edu domain. No URLs are assigned to this domain unless they directly support the University's marketing efforts.

Subdomains are restricted and must be approved by IT and OCM and may be required to redirect following the guidelines below.

No external URL (.com, .net, .org, et al.) or other third-party service requiring a louisville.edu subdomain may be purchased or used without prior approval of the Office of Communications & Marketing.

IT and OCM may refuse or disable a URL that violates the intentions of this policy.

APPEAL PROCESS

Appeals may be directed to the Director of Creative Services through the Office of Communications & Marketing.

MAINTENANCE OF POLICY

This policy is maintained, implemented and reviewed by IT and OCM through the Web Standards Group, comprised of equal representation from each unit.

GUIDELINES

Site names on the louisville.edu domain are established with the goal of being human-readable (no acronyms unless industry standard, e.g. HR) and optimized for search engine discovery. Following best practices established in the web industry, and knowing that over 50% of UofL web traffic begins from a web search (as opposed to direct navigation or redirection from another site), the following standard has been put forth:

- All colleges, schools, board-approved centers/institutes, university-wide initiatives/services and all marketing initiatives are eligible to be awarded a top-level domain (louisville.edu/sitename).
- All faculty websites will be placed under louisville.edu/faculty/userid.
- All research content will be placed under louisville.edu/research/sitename or else the organizational parent of the lab or research project, e.g. louisville.edu/medicine/sitename.
- All other URL requests will be reviewed by OCM for final assignment .

SUBDOMAINS

Subdomains are solely reserved for functionally-required use and are approved by IT/OCM on a case-by-case basis.

Requests for subdomains must demonstrate functional or business-critical purposes not otherwise addressable by university services.

Subdomain assignments must be requested prior to initiation of contracts, purchases or other commitments for services not offered by the University of Louisville. Purchases or commitments made without prior consultation with IT or OCM will be ineligible for receiving subdomain accommodation.

Subdomains given prior to 2006 are permitted to be retained, however they must serve only as redirects to the appropriate louisville.edu/subfolder top-level domain and must not be used in any marketing or promotional capacity. E.g. business.louisville.edu **must** redirect to louisville.edu/business

The prefix 'www' is no longer used (as of April 2009) and should not be used in any printed marketing materials, email signatures, social media profiles, etc.

Resources

- Subdomains vs. Subfolders article

VANITY URLS

Occasionally a vanity URL (.com, .org, .me, et al.) may be approved by OCM based on the purpose or audience of the site. No vanity URLs may be purchased or obtained without prior approval by OCM.

SHORT URLS

The domain uofl.edu has been established as a marketing-driven URL shortening service for the University of Louisville. The purpose of this service, which is hosted by IT and operated by OCM, is to create brief, memorable URLs for sub-units, groups or events for marketing purposes that otherwise do not quality for top-level louisville.edu domains. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Printing of URLs on merchandise, publications or other collateral where space is of concern
- Video, radio or television advertising where the audience is required to remember the URL

Use

Use of the uofl.edu shortening service is at present restricted to UofL OCM. OCM awards qualification for shortened links in order to assure no conflict with existing URLs. Questions or requests can be made by contacting web@louisville.edu

Restrictions

- Only louisville.edu domains may be shortened
- Existing top-level louisville.edu domains (e.g. louisville.edu/medicine) do not qualify for shortened URLs as they already have brief web addresses
- Time-based shortening (for temporary news or promotion) is not permitted. E.g. shortening a web URL for sharing on social media. These requests should still utilize the uofl.me Bit.ly service.

Examples

- uofl.edu/cft (instead of louisville.edu/kent/academics/couple-and-family--therapy)
- uofl.edu/radiology (instead of louisville.edu/medicine/departments/radiology)
- uofl.edu/welcomeweek (instead of louisville.edu/firstyear/events/welcome-week)

Removal

OCM reserves the right to terminate any previously awarded shortened URL if:

- it has not been used for greater than 180 days
- it contains content or links to content that violates any policies (student handbook, faculty handbook, etc) within the university
- it violates IT's user access and acceptable use policy

Agency Policy

WRITTEN: AUG. 2017, APPROVED:

POLICY

As a public institution, the University of Louisville must maintain and protect its brand and image by producing high-quality internal and external messaging that is consistent with the university's mission, pursuit of excellence and inclusiveness, and strategic priorities. This requires a strengthened and clearly defined relationship between the Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM) and business-unit-level marketing communicators throughout the university. The decentralized structure of university management creates dozens of administrative areas with communications needs, often leading to conflicting and inconsistent messages. Successful marketing strategies and communications efforts cannot ensue from isolated or ad hoc tactics. For the university to properly communicate with a consistent voice, it is essential that communications activities be coordinated through a central office.

To aid the university in its efforts to build, enhance and promote the university brand, OCM is responsible for working with Procurement Services to select—via a competitive bid process—marketing communications agencies authorized to perform various advertising, creative, promotional and strategic marketing services for the university and its schools and departments. The solicitation, review and selection process for these agencies is conducted in accordance with Kentucky's procurement law.

OCM is the only department authorized to contract with marketing communications agencies. Individual units or departments should not contract directly with a marketing communications agency without prior OCM and Procurement Services approval. Units and departments also are required to inform and receive approval from OCM for any work to be performed by the university's selected marketing communications agency/ies.

REASON

The University of Louisville is a nationally recognized metropolitan research university with a brand that conveys excellence in educational, social, healthcare, cultural, community and economic development. As such, all branding and messaging must be consistent across the university community. Effective, cohesive communication is key to the university's success. Whether it is through advertising, media relations, brochures and direct mail, promotional videos, TV commercials, web pages, or other means, the consistent application of strategies to promote and protect the university brand is of vital importance to the institution.

UofL has created a policy governing services performed via external marketing communications agencies to:

- Protect and maintain the image of the university for internal and external audiences

- Ensure adherence to Kentucky's procurement law.

- Oversee all work performed by agency partners to ensure the university community avoids conflicts or agreements that devalue the brand. Units entering into independent agreements with agencies or freelancers without prior approval from OCM and/or Procurement Services may violate existing, university-wide contracts or agreements.

- Protect the university from misrepresentation of its name and harm to its reputation; and safeguard the integrity of the UofL brand.

- Provide guidance to university units and programs; help prevent conflict-of-interest issues; and ensure compliance with university policies

Related Information

- Procurement Services – Bids/RFPs; PSCs; Purchasing; Policies
- Public Information policy
- Crisis communications policy
- Brand Graphics policy
- Digital Media policy
- Sponsorship policy

Additional information is available at http://louisville.edu/ocm/policies-guidelines

DEFINITIONS

Marketing communications services covered by this policy include but are not limited to: marketing research; strategic marketing plans; creative campaign development; graphic design; publication development (including print and electronic publications); logos and unit identity; advertising; social media; creative projects that include collateral, advertisements, long-form writing, etc.; projects involving digital design and web/mobile development; projects involving the filming, editing and post-production of videos; and/or media buying, research and campaign evaluation.

Campus Web Advisors

WEB STANDARDS GROUP

The purpose of this group is to establish and monitor rules and regulations regarding UofL web sites.

It will consist of representatives from the Office of Communications & Marketing and Information Technology.

INTEGRATIONS GROUP

The purpose of this group is to evaluate for approval or recommendation any technology-based solution brought forth by various campus entities.

It will consist of representatives from Institutional Compliance, Information Technology, Communications & Marketing, Procurement, Disability Services.

WEB ACCESSIBILITY WORKGROUP

The purpose of this group is to develop and implement a university-wide accessibility policy to address ADA requirements and to identify and address potential gaps that would impede compliance.

It consists of representatives from the Office of Communications and Marketing, Information Technology, University Planning, Design & Construction, Student Involvement, Delphi Center, Procurement, Disability Services, Audit Services, Institutional Compliance