Webster University Global Web Strategy and Guidelines

Originally Approved – July 2011

U.S. Web Strategy with International Campus Addendum
Updated – September 2014

Updated – November 2014
Background

The first Webster University website debuted in 1997 at www.websteruniv.edu. The site moved to www.webster.edu in June 1998. Minor revisions to the site occurred in 2001 and 2002, but it wasn’t until 2003 that the site got its first major overhaul.

The web design firm Enlighten designed a new look for the website in 2003. The design became the basis for the template built in Sungard’s Luminis Content Management System (LCMS) SiteStudio. In 2008, the home page was updated with a flash photo slideshow and a section for University highlights. The CMS did provide a branded structure for the overall website but was unreliable, slow and difficult to use.

In 2011, the Webster University Global Web Strategy was approved. Webster worked with Omni Update (OU Campus) to provide a new Content Management System (CMS) and consulting firm MStoner for website design. The new site was launched in fall 2012. All Webster U.S. locations were effectively pulled into a consistent CMS, providing unified University branding for all locations.

In 2014, the Web Strategy was expanded to include the international locations. The International CMS migration project is currently in progress. Simultaneously, a search engine optimization project was initiated.
Purpose

The purpose of the Webster University Global Web Marketing Strategy and Guidelines is to provide direction for the advancement of the Webster University website. This digital strategy incorporates elements of the new university strategic plan, Global Impact for the Next Century (2015). In particular, this website strategy addresses strategic plan theme three; “A Network of Academic and Operational Excellence,” and theme four; “Strategic and Sustainable Development.”

All University web pages created under the webster.edu domain will align with this strategy and adhere to these guidelines. Every effort must be made to ensure accessibility via traditional desktop, tablet, mobile device or other emerging mobile technology. All website pages must be: 1) easily accessible; 2) intuitive to navigate; 3) timely in content; and 4) complementary to Webster University’s image and brand (See Appendix A: Brand Platform).

While comprehensive in content, the website should be dynamic, both in content and style, and continually evolve (See Addendum 1: International Campus) to keep pace with changing audience needs and ever-evolving technology.

Mission

The Webster University website is the digital voice that conveys the University’s name, brand and identity as a premier U.S.-based university setting the standard for global education. Content should be consistent and represent the diverse audiences, geographic locations and communities Webster serves.

Brand

The digital brand will support the University’s brand platform of being locally connected — regardless of campus location — with access to a network of diverse learners and global opportunities.

Strategic Objectives

1. Position Webster University as a premier U.S. based university setting the standard for global education.
   a. Build the Webster University brand through consistent messaging.
   b. Provide a mechanism for dynamic content easily updated.
2. Make it easy for audiences to find information they are looking for and take action (inquire about programs and locations, enroll, give, connect, engage, etc.)
3. Enhance the Webster University digital experience for all audiences.
   a. Improve navigation and usability to serve students first.
   b. Integrate greater interactivity and social sharing.
4. Balance autonomy and content control within the Webster brand.
5. Provide mobile and responsive device accessibility.
Primary Audiences

All audiences are important and will be reflected in the website. However, to provide focus and clarity to the website (and in alignment with web marketing best practices), prospective undergraduate, prospective transfer and prospective graduate students and current students, are the primary audiences of the Webster University website. As outlined in the University strategic plan, all students, whether undergraduate, graduate, non-traditional or multi-generational, military or international will receive a distinct personal experience.

Secondary Audiences

1. Parents
2. Alumni and friends
3. Donors
4. Faculty and staff
5. Community (local, regional, national, international)
6. Partners
7. Media

Geographic Locations

- St. Louis home campus
- Metropolitan campuses
- International campuses
- Military bases
- Educational and corporate partner locations
- Online (anywhere)

Layout, Design and Navigation

The website is meant to provide easy, fast access to information. The layout and design will be clean and simple, rather than flashy or busy. It will be intuitive to the user and consistent with University Brand Standards and website design best practices. The Omni Update (OU Campus) Content Management System (CMS) enables a unified look, feel, and navigation throughout the entire University website.

The website content will reflect Webster’s core values as defined in the Strategic Plan:

- **Students:** All that we do to provide personal attention and ensure individual success, from small classes to engaging student life.
- **Learning:** All that we do to provide educational programs that join theory and practice, provide an international perspective, encourage creativity and scholarship, and foster a lifelong desire to learn.
- **Diversity:** All that we do to create an accessible environment for students of diverse cultures, ages, and socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as those efforts to instill a respect for diversity and understanding of others.
• **Connection:** All that we do to provide easy access to digital content and social sharing.
• **Global Citizenship:** All that we do to educate a diverse population locally, nationally, and internationally.

**Standardized Elements**

These elements will be consistent on all University web pages and will be provided via approved templates maintained in the OU Campus CMS:

- Standard header
  - Website search functions
  - Appropriate University marks
  - Approved links to frequently visited resources
- Standard footer including approved, appropriate links, standard throughout a navigation area, to include:
  - Appropriate Webster University copyright statement
  - Approved equal education and equal employment statements
  - Approved links to frequently visited resources
- Standard audience segmentation scheme at the bottom of each page providing appropriate navigation for each area
- Tuition and fees information
- Campus locations and academic program finder information

**Internal Website Search**

Webster University acknowledges the importance of search results, findability, and other fundamental aspects of the user experience. Each web page existing on the primary webster.edu website will include a special Search Box. All University web pages will be designed in such a way to optimize internal webster.edu search results for selected key words. They will include features to aid in search as it currently exists, but be flexible enough to adopt to search techniques as they evolve.

**Search Engine Optimization**

Different from internal website search (addressed above), it is imperative to the success of Webster University that all webpages be properly developed, tagged and optimized adhering to the most current set of external website Search Engine Optimization (SEO) standards to realize the greatest possible accessibility and university wide benefits provided by external search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc. Webster University has deployed Brightedge Technologies enterprise search engine optimization software platform to assist in this effort. Content editors should rely on SEO information and resources available via the GMC Digital Marketing & Communications Department.
Roles and Responsibilities

GMC is responsible for the direction, navigation, overall look and feel, brand marketing and communications coaching for the entire University website including the University’s home page and the home pages of each college, school, extended campus location and unit top levels of navigation. Priority time will be provided to the highest-level pages that will drive brand and enrollment impact for the university. GMC is responsible for leading, managing and updating the Web Marketing Strategy.

The colleges, schools, extended campus locations and units may have a designated content manager who will be responsible for developing and/or managing content for their site area. Any content managers will have a dotted-line relationship to the GMC unit, working cooperatively with GMC to develop and manage their own digital content based upon this document and guidelines herein. GMC relies upon the specific content experts within each segment listed above to manage their own website content.

The Chief Communications Officer (CCO) will have review and approval authority over all aspects of the University website and will create such processes necessary to carry out this duty.

The Office of Information Technology (IT) is responsible for system administration, maintenance and technical support in regard to the use of the OU Campus CMS and other web related technologies.

Governance

1) www.webster.edu

The University’s external facing website, www.webster.edu, is primarily intended to serve students, both prospective and current, as well as parents, alumni and friends, donors, faculty and staff, community (local, regional, national, international), military, and media. GMC is charged to develop and continually improve the website and the user experience, while maintaining truth in advertising integrity and compliance with brand standards.

2) Connections/Portal

An internal portal, accessible off the home page and present in the global navigation, serves as an internal communication tool for faculty, staff and students. This portal is currently referred to as “Connections.” The responsibility to keep portal content updated lies with any unit that has content residing inside the Connections portal and IT. GMC can link to content residing on the Connections portal.
3) **Mobile - Smartphone App**

IT is responsible for system administration, maintenance and technical support in regard to the Webster University mobile/smartphone application. GMC is responsible for segmented content management not relying upon a connection to outside digital resources (WorldClassroom, Connections, CX system/course schedules, directory, etc.).

4) **Recruiting Microsites**

GMC is responsible for all content appearing on any website specifically designed for recruiting new graduate and undergraduate students. Content and branding is consistent with that on [www.webster.edu](http://www.webster.edu). Recruiting microsites are used for building interest and lead generation.

5) **Recruiter (apply.webster.edu)**

Enrollment Management Technology (EMT) is the department responsible for all content appearing on any platform generated from our Customer Relations Management (CRM) platform, currently known as “Recruiter” deployed by the vendor Ellucian. GMC makes every effort to connect digital properties and recruiting enrollment technologies in a seamless manner to this platform whenever logic dictates. The look and feel of any public interface for the CRM system will be developed in consultation with GMC and in adherence with these Web Marketing Strategy guidelines. Content deployment and management is under the sole discretion of EMT.

6) **Affiliated Websites**

Websites that do not fall directly under any college, school, extended campus location or unit may be hosted on the University server if the requesting organization has a pre-existing and approved relationship with the University. The Dean of Students will approve websites representing student organizations. GMC does not manage, update or hold responsibility of said Affiliated Website unless specifically stated.

- **GMC Affiliated Website Accountability**
  - blogs.webster.edu/webstertoday
  - grad.webster.edu
  - 100.webster.edu
  - globalsnowglobe.com
  - [official institutional social media accounts](http://www.webster.edu)

7) **Personal Websites**

Personal pages developed and created by students, faculty, and staff that reside within the University’s domain are neither official nor affiliated Webster University sites. They are not subject to review or approval from GMC. The Faculty Development Center (FDC) may assist faculty with such website and pages when they are created for the purpose of “teaching & learning.”
8) WorldClassroom

WorldClassroom, operating on vendor platform Canvass, is the digital teaching and learning vehicle operated by Academic Affairs, FDC, Online Learning Center (OLC), Colleges, Schools and effected units. IT is responsible for system administration, maintenance and technical support in regard to WorldClassroom. GMC does not manage or oversee WorldClassroom.

URL Design

All URL naming conventions will be requested from GMC and designed to optimize Webster’s search engine ranking. For consistency and navigational purposes, the colleges, schools, extended campus locations and units will have a directory off the University site (www.webster.edu/abc) and all academic departments must fall within the directory of their respective college, school, extended campus location or unit (www.webster.edu/abc/department). All high level domains are provided by GMC and will be deployed at their discretion. This includes the granting of vanity (short) URLs to use on external marketing collateral. Subdomains (ex: 100.webster.edu) are provided to only the highest level of university initiatives and the granting of such subdomains must meet the approval of both GMC and IT.

Colleges, Schools, Extended Campus Locations and Units

Webster Colleges, Schools, Extended Campus locations and units will each designate content editors to work with GMC to develop and manage their websites and provide timely updates to content. A partial list is below.

- Admissions
- Advancement
- Athletics
- Career Services
- College of Arts & Sciences
- Emerson Library
- Faculty Development Center
- George Herbert Walker School of Business & Technology
- Global Marketing and Communications
- Housing and Residential Life
- Human Resources
- Extended Campus locations
- Information Technology
- International Campuses
- Leigh Gerdine College of Fine Arts
- Metropolitan Campuses
- Military Campuses
- Office of Corporate Partnerships
- Online Learning Center
- Partnerships
- President’s Office
- Provost’s Office/Academic Affairs/Advising Academic Resource Center
- School of Communications
- School of Education
- Student Life and Services
- Study Abroad

GMC will train and assist content editors to communicate effectively via the website. It is the responsibility of each college, school, extended campus location and units to keep their respective website up-to-date.
Compliance

As per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the University will provide the same level of service to individuals with visual, hearing, motor, or cognitive disability that we do to the general public. All pages on the website must include the utilization of W3C Content Accessibility Guidelines.

Social Media

The Webster University website fully integrates with third party applications such as Facebook and Twitter with three goals in mind: 1) Increase awareness of Webster University across social media platforms; 2) Increase engagement among target audiences; and, 3) Increase traffic to the University website. Ultimately, this will drive results for the university in the form of increased number of enrollments and those wanting to engage with the university.

Streaming Video Services

Streaming video services are under the accountability and management of the IT, specifically the Media Services Department.

Budget

Website budget and maintenance will be funded through GMC and the Office of IT unless otherwise specified.

Measurement

The website is measured for effectiveness on an ongoing basis using Google Analytics. Coding for the analytics is included on every page. This measurement provides feedback on which pages need to be revised or removed. GMC and content managers from individual units monitor effectiveness of the website and look for opportunities to continually improve the site.

Continual Improvement

Feedback and suggestions are encouraged and the website will continually evolve to embrace new communication technologies to most effectively communicate with target audiences. A feedback mechanism directs comments to GMC. Ongoing usability testing will help to ensure Webster is connecting with our intended audiences.
Addendum 1: International Campuses & Omni Update Migration

Inclusive of the following selected international campus locations:

- Geneva, Switzerland
- Leiden, the Netherlands
- Vienna, Austria
- Bangkok & Cha-am/Hua Hin, Thailand (1 site)
- Accra, Ghana

International Purpose

The purpose of this international addendum to the Webster University Web Marketing Strategy is to provide direction for the advancement of the Webster University website in selected international campus locations. The primary goals inherent to this strategy are as follows:

- Improve brand and message consistency
- Increase budgetary efficiency
- Streamline technology resources

All international university web pages created under any official Webster University website domain will align and adhere to the guidelines within this addendum as well as the original U.S. Web Marketing Strategy.

Current Situation (International)

Webster University international websites are currently utilizing various non- Omni Update Content Management Systems (CMS) resulting in inconsistent university branding, web content redundancy and inefficient technical and budgetary resource management. A migration of all selected international campus location websites will provide a more effective and seamless digital experience for potential new students, current students faculty and staff at all selected Webster University global locations.

Primary Goal (International)

Complete migration selected international campus location websites to the Omni Update (OU Campus) CMS.
International Strategic Objectives

1. Position Webster University as a premier international American university setting the standard for global education.
   a. Build the Webster University brand locally through consistent messaging.
   b. Provide a mechanism for dynamic content easily updated.
2. Migrate all selected international campus locations to the Omni Update / OU Campus Content Management System (CMS).
   a. Balance localization and control within the Webster brand.
   b. Reduce content redundancy
   c. Increase SEO
3. Enhance the Webster University digital experience for all audiences.
   a. Mobile and tablet device-responsive design
4. Make it easy for audiences to find information they are looking for and take action (enroll, give, engage, etc.)

International Standardized Elements

These elements will be consistent on all international location University web pages and will be provided via approved templates maintained in the CMS.

Content Ownership and Operation

Similar to all Webster University U.S. campus locations, ownership and content creation are the sole responsibility of the associated international campus. GMC can and will provide guidance, consultation and brand standards that must be adhered to. The GMC Digital Marketing & Communications Department and the CCO hold final approval and review of all content contained on any public facing Webster University digital property. Support and technical assistance as it pertains to infrastructure and international regulation are the responsibility of the IT Department.
Appendix A: The Webster University Brand

Our Mission

Webster University, a worldwide institution, ensures high quality learning experiences that transform students for global citizenship and individual excellence.

Our Position

Webster University, founded in 1915 with its home campus based in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, is the only Tier 1, private, nonprofit university with 100-plus campus locations around the world including metropolitan, military, online and corporate, as well as American-style traditional campuses in Asia, Europe, North America and Africa.

Our Personality

We attract diverse, interesting and accomplished students, faculty and staff who thrive in and contribute to the premier global network for learning. Our students, faculty and staff are locally committed, while taking full advantage of the opportunities afforded them by their global colleagues.

Our faculty, staff and graduates are equipped to work well with people of all cultures and be successful in their chosen careers anywhere in the world.

Our Attributes

• Our programs reflect global academic excellence and are purposefully structured to help students succeed in their lives and in their careers.
• Our distinguished faculty has the right balance of global scholarship and professional experience to bring first-class, real-world knowledge to their classrooms.
• Our small, highly interactive classes encourage innovation, collaboration and self-expression.
• Our faculty and staff at each campus location have strong local and international connections and provide unparalleled personal service to our students.
• Our students, faculty and staff have exceptional opportunities to connect with people from around the world.
• Our alumni form an elite global network of accomplished and connected citizens, equipped to advance their current careers, start a new career or expand their business to new markets.
Our Distinctive Characteristics

**Webster University – Global**
Students have access to classes taught in English by Webster University faculty from across the world resulting in a Webster University degree. Webster University, with campuses in North America, Europe Asia and Africa, has been recognized as a leader in international education for more than 30 years.

**Webster University – Online**
Webster University’s WorldClassroom affords access to the same high quality faculty who teach in our traditional classrooms from anywhere in the world.

**Webster University – Military**
Webster University and the U.S. Department of Defense have worked together for nearly 40 years to provide high-quality and cost-effective graduate programs at military installations and other locations throughout the country. We provide multiple, convenient campus locations to enable members of the military to earn their degrees, no matter where they are deployed.

**Webster University – Metro**
Webster University’s Metropolitan campuses offer convenient and flexible class scheduling for busy adult students allowing them to balance transitional education with work and family.

**Webster University – St. Louis**
Webster University – St. Louis is an exciting and vibrant residential campus that serves as an international hub where faculty, students, alumni and influential people come together, creating an environment of knowledge, ideas and creativity.
# Appendix B: Definitions and Terminology

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>Short for “weblog,” this is a special kind of website for self-publishing, often done by the owner of the site (the “blogger”), but sometimes by a committee of authors who rotate by day, for example. Blogs typically record and categorize all content updates by date/time and topic for easy tracking by readers.</td>
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<td>CCO</td>
<td>Chief Communications Officer leads the GMC Unit</td>
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<td>CMS</td>
<td>Content Management System</td>
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<td>Conversion</td>
<td>A desired action taken by a website visitor, such as making a purchase, registering for an event, subscribing to an e-newsletter, completing a lead-gen form, downloading a file, etc.</td>
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<td>CRM</td>
<td>Customer Relationship Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital Marketing &amp; Communications Department</td>
<td>A Department within the GMC Unit charged with overseeing the <a href="http://www.webster.edu">www.webster.edu</a> domain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extended Campus Location</td>
<td>Any Webster University teaching and learning location that is not located in Webster Groves, not online or a cohort and is not identified as a Webster University international campus.</td>
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<td>FDC</td>
<td>Faculty Development Center</td>
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<td>GMC</td>
<td>Global Marketing &amp; Communications</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>Internal Website Search</td>
<td>A website feature that allows users to look for a particular word used on the website by typing it into a box on a web page.</td>
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<td>Lead Generation</td>
<td>The generation of consumer interest or inquiry into products or services of a business. Leads can be created for purposes such as student recruitment, event attendance, e-newsletter list acquisition or other various needs pertaining to the business model.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Microsite</td>
<td>A website that is intended for a specific limited purpose, such as new student recruitment.</td>
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<td>OLC</td>
<td>Online Learning Center</td>
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<td>OU</td>
<td>Omni Update (vendor)</td>
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<td>OU Campus</td>
<td>Website Content Management System provided by Omni Update</td>
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<td><strong>Responsive Design</strong></td>
<td>Responsive design is an approach to web page creation that makes use of flexible layouts, flexible images and cascading style sheet media queries. The goal of responsive design is to build web pages that detect the visitor's screen size and orientation and change the layout accordingly.</td>
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<td><strong>Streaming Video</strong></td>
<td>Streaming video is content sent in compressed form over the Internet and displayed by the viewer in real time. With streaming video or streaming media, a Web user does not have to wait to download a file to play it.</td>
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<td><strong>SEM</strong></td>
<td>Search Engine Marketing. A phrase sometimes used in contrast with “SEO” to describe paid search activities, SEM may also more generally refer to the broad range of search-marketing activities, either paid or organic.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SEO</strong></td>
<td>Search Engine Optimization. Search engine optimization is the art and science of publishing information and marketing it in a manner that helps search engines understand your information is relevant to relevant search queries.</td>
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<td><strong>SERP</strong></td>
<td>Search Engine Results Page</td>
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<td><strong>Social Media</strong></td>
<td>Refers to all online tools and places that are available for users to generate content and communicate through the Internet. These media include blogs, social networks, file-hosting sites and bookmarking sites, among others.</td>
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<td><strong>URL</strong></td>
<td>Uniform Resource Locator; also known as a web address, Most web browsers display the URL of a web page above the page in an address bar.</td>
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<td><strong>W3C Content Accessibility Guidelines</strong></td>
<td>Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are part of a series of web accessibility guidelines published by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the main international standards organization for the World Wide Web.</td>
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<td><strong>Web Content Editor</strong></td>
<td>A person who specializes in providing relevant content for websites that speaks to the specific target audience. Content should</td>
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<td>Web Inquiry</td>
<td>The act of submitting a digital form and asking for information or to be contacted. Providing a name and one of the following: email address, phone number or physical address.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>contain words (keywords) that attract and retain users on a website and assist with SEO and SERP ranking. It should further be easy to read, offering the information in easy to understand clusters or laid out in bullet points.</td>
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