

CWIS Policy Implementation Committee  
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TITLE: Policies and Preferred Practices for UF Campus-Wide Information System Implementations

STATUS OF DRAFT:

As of 25 May 1995, this draft has been endorsed by the Council on Information Technologies and Services and adopted, effective that same date, by the Office of Information Technologies and Services. It differs from the provisionally adopted version of UFRFC-8, dated 09 Feb. 1995 and effective 15 Feb. 1995, only in Sections 1.d, 3.g, 3.h, and this Status paragraph.

ABSTRACT:

This document describes policies for distribution and attribution of responsibility for information provided via Campus Wide Information System services at the University of Florida ("UF-CWIS" hereafter) and for basic systemization for implementation and management of those services. The policies are designed to provide clear-cut determination of the authority behind any given document in the distributed, interlaced CWIS structure without imposing any significant new enforcement or monitoring burdens.

This document also includes Preferred Practices. These are provided as guidance, which, if followed, will result in the collective UF-CWIS environment which presents a reasonably consistent picture of the entire University, including a reasonably consistent look and feel.

## 1. POLICY ON RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

### a. Background -

There is great variety in the authoritativeness of information provided by units and persons of UF. Authoritativeness and formal standing are not necessarily the same as usefulness. Nevertheless, full compliance with legal and Board of Regent's Standard practice responsibilities is as incumbent on UF in the electronic medium of CWIS services as in any other medium.

### b. Determination of authority and responsibility -

The usual way that authoritativeness of a document and responsibility for its contents, freshness, etc. is determined at UF is to determine what person in which unit issued the document. Example: although a Faculty member's course syllabus may provide a more utilitarian description than the catalogue description, anyone in the University knows which description is official, simply by noting that Office of University Registrar issues the Catalogue. Currency is determined by noting the date of issue and date of most recent revision, if any.

c. Irrelevance of the medium in which a document is presented -

Although various CWIS environments are less familiar than time-honored paper documents, the same method of determining the authoritativeness of an electronic document can be used provided that every UF document is labeled clearly by its contributor (with contributor defined abstractly but unambiguously as the document author, reviser or manager, as appropriate), the unit which the contributor represents (for the purposes of that document), the original date and/or the latest revision date, and the email address of the contributor. NOTE: this labeling does not speak to the issue of authenticity, i.e., of deliberate or accidental mislabeling, misattribution, etc.

d. Policy -

On the basis of the preceding considerations, responsibility for the authoritativeness and freshness of a document provided to or via UF-CWIS services by any member of the UF community shall be determined by the same standards and rules as for any other document in an older medium. In order that users may determine responsibility for a document, its authoritativeness, and its freshness, each and every UF document linked to UF CWIS services shall be identified clearly and unequivocally as to

its contributor (document author, reviser, or manager, as appropriate)

UF email address of the contributor

unit represented

origination or latest revision date, as appropriate

Postings by individual members of the UF community which relate to that individual's professional or student role at UF shall be readily and clearly discernible as that individual's contributions (hence distinct from contributions from a UF unit or from another individual). Note: for clarity of purpose, such contributions are defined as "individual" not "personal".

## 2. POLICY ON SYSTEMIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

a. Policy recommendations for UF CWIS in whatever technological embodiment (e.g. World Wide Web, Gopher, etc.) will be formulated by the Council on Information Technologies and Services, with decisions as appropriate by Office of I.T. and S. or the Provost. Oversight of operation and implementation, including drafting policy for the Council, developing designs, recommending technological innovations, and obtaining commitments from various campus organizations and monitoring the results, will be by Council's Committee on CWIS Policy Implementation (hereafter "CWIS Committee").

b. Maintenance and management of the central University component of UF's CWIS services shall be by the University Libraries.

i. Because CWIS services are distributed by nature, the role of the Libraries is not to be misunderstood as custodianship of all UF documents.

- ii. Subject to policy as delineated in this or preceding sections, the Libraries will implement top-level or general campus CWIS services including the UF World Wide Web (hereafter WWW) home page, top-level indices, CWIS policies, general disclaimers (if any), etc.
  - iii. Subject to guidance from the CWIS Committee, the Libraries will solicit contributions and linkages to UF-CWIS services via existing liaisons with academic departments, development of analogous relationships with administrative units, and public communications via the Public Relations office of the Libraries.
  - iv. Libraries will provide and activate links from the top-level pages managed by the Libraries to pages managed by a unit only upon receipt of a signed Memorandum of Understanding between the unit in question and the Libraries. Libraries will provide a standard Memorandum of Understanding whose content and form has been reviewed and accepted by the CWIS Committee. Libraries will provide, as one of their top-level pages, an index of all those units which have valid Memoranda of Understanding in effect.
  - v. The Libraries will monitor currency of material and consistency with UF CWIS Policy and Preferred Practices of pages to which Libraries-managed pages provide direct links. Contributors will be reminded of policy and encouraged to follow Preferred Practices by the Libraries. Upon development of currency-of-information standards by the CWIS Committee, Libraries will alert contributors regarding stale contributions, then turn off top-level links thereto if the currency standards are violated. In case of apparent violation of University policy (including SUS Standard Practice), state, and / or federal law, Libraries shall have the management authority to suspend links from top-level pages they manage to pages managed by other providers until Libraries are able to consult with the Office of Information Technologies and Services.
  - vi. The Libraries will support the UF Help Desk when needed with regard to referrals of queries concerning top-level UF-CWIS services.
- c. Design for the UF WWW Home Page shall be the responsibility of the CWIS Committee. Implementation shall be a part of the responsibilities of the University Libraries. No other home page shall portray or represent itself as being for the University as a whole.
- i. Explicit notice of copyright shall be included.
  - ii. The UF WWW Home Page shall include an explicit statement to the effect that the UF-CWIS is an access point to the University of Florida information technology environment, hence by virtue of using UF-CWIS, users agree to abide by the highest standards of responsibility to their colleagues and agree to comply with all applicable University and State University System policies, and with applicable state and federal laws concerning appropriate use of information technology. The statement also shall point out that non-compliance is a serious breach of University standards which may result in disciplinary and/or legal action. The Office of Information

Technologies and Services is to provide the appropriate documents or links to relevant standards.

- iii. For reasons of effectiveness and simplicity of use, the design criteria for the UF Home Page shall include an objective of simplicity and clarity, both in graphical content and in the number and types of entries (links). The same simplicity and clarity criteria shall apply to related campus-wide pages (also called top-level pages) whose implementation is overseen by the CWIS Committee. As much as possible, contributions are to be by links to the Web site of the contributor, not embedded in the top-level CWIS services.
- iv. The design criteria for the UF Home Page shall include responsiveness and performance for a diverse range of user clients as a specific objective.
- v. For top-level pages managed by the Libraries, any stubs (links-to-be) which appear must be labeled explicitly as "not yet active."

d. The official top-level UF URL shall be <http://www.ufl.edu>

### 3. PREFERRED PRACTICES FOR UF-CWIS IMPLEMENTATIONS

- a. "Preferred Practices" in UF usage are just that. They are recommendations and advice to the University and its people. As such, they are not mandatory, not rigid standards, and not policy.
- b. Each UF document contributed or linked to UF CWIS services should have its mandatory contributor data (see Sect. 1.d, above) displayed clearly, either at the end of the document or as a direct link to those data. Where date of original could be helpful to users (e.g. to show development of the contents of a document), contributors are encouraged to post the date of original also.
- c. For html documents, an explicit button for an action is preferable, if appropriate in context. If a clickable word or phrase in a sentence is used, it is preferable to highlight that word or phrase by formatting and not depend solely on colors (underscoring in monochrome). The practice of embedding the clickable word "here" in text is discouraged strongly.
- d. Stubs to intended destinations which supposedly or actually are under construction should not be activated for use until enough construction has been completed to provide something useful. A mere announcement that construction is under way is not useful.
- e. Photographs, complex graphics, video clips, audio clips and other elements which require time-consuming loads should not be compulsory parts of usage of a document. Rather these should be user-selected options, e.g. "Click on this button for a message from our Department Chair".
- f. Simplicity, clarity, usability, and performance should be explicit design objectives; note Sects 2.c.iii and 2.c.iv, above. As much as possible, contributions

and participation should be by links to the Web site of the contributor, not embedded in a higher-level Web site. Such forced higher-level embedding not only complicates and slows the service to the user but also tends to confuse the issue of identification of responsibility and authority.

g. Whenever a UF document is created or amended substantially, consideration should be given to posting an explicit notice of copyright. Similar consideration should be given to the posting of a disclaimer (for example, of warranty) for material (for example, shareware) which others might use with unintended or unexpected results. Model disclaimers are available from the UF Home Page.

h. Because WWW documents and other CWIS documents are easily obtained and often appealing, all members of the UF community are reminded that all the usual laws and standards associated with intellectual property, copyright, citation, plagiarism, etc. apply just as much to these documents as hard-copy versions. If a document belonging to someone else is appealing, the preferred practice is to link to it. If one wishes to copy it for reuse or for purpose of alteration, then the express, prior permission of the document owner(s) must be obtained. Evidence of such permission should be retained by the receiver.

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