Digital Media Governance

The development of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension website was an extensive undertaking and major investment in enhancing the Extension’s electronic image. It is important that as a statewide resource we maintain www.uaex.edu and all its sub-sites according to best practices and at the highest quality possible.

To that end, this document outlines the management and governance of the U of A Cooperative Extension web environment. Web governance refers to people, policies, procedures, standards, and guidelines that govern the creation and maintenance of our official website.  

Note: This is a working document and is subject to change to meet the evolving web needs of the university.

Objective

The primary objective of this document is to provide collaborative centralized governance for the ongoing development, deployment, delivery, and maintenance of the UA Cooperative Extension digital image and to achieve a consistent look and for the official Extension web pages consistently representing the UA Cooperative Extension brand through standard processes, roles, responsibilities, and practices.

This objective will be pursued with the website’s underlying strategic priority in mind: to facilitate a user experience that will develop a lasting digital relationship with all visitors – but particularly Arkansas residents and CES (Cooperative Extension Service) personnel – providing them with the information they need quickly, easily, and enjoyably. To that end, the website must be arranged in a way that intuitively presents information to users, particularly Arkansas residents and CES personnel, to facilitate a satisfactory, pleasant online experience.

Governance Structure

The Digital Media Council is composed of representatives from IT (Information Technology) including the Digital Media Manager and technical leads, reps from communication as well as designated team members from program areas.

It is the responsibility of the Digital Media Council to set the direction and policies for the Extension’s website and the web operating environment based on best practices. In order that directions and policies are set with a full understanding of the issues and impact of the decision, decisions appropriate to the jurisdiction of the Digital Media Council will be reached by consensus. Consensus is defined as achievement of full support for a decision after a complete airing of differing
viewpoints. Consensus is achieved through discussion. If the group cannot reach consensus, the options will be presented to the **Senior Leadership** (including the Director of Cooperative Extension, Associate Vice President, Associate Director of 4-H and FCS, ANR Associate Director, CED Assistant Director, Associate Director of Finance and Administration, Assistant Director of County Operations, Ozark District Director, Delta District Director and the Ouachita District Director) with a recommendation for resolution.

The Digital Media Council will continually look at opportunities to communicate relevant information to appropriate audiences and take input from the **Digital Media Advisory Board**, who will review requests from active users and content contributors. The Digital Media Advisory Board is comprised of representatives from administrative, operational, and technical teams from each of these areas: Farm & Ranch (ANR), Program & Staff Development, Yard & Garden (ANR), county representatives, 4-H, Community & Economic Development, IT, and a designated individual who represents their department’s interests on the website.

A group of content creators from every department within Extension make up the **Digital Media Forum**. The Digital Media Council will call meetings of the Digital Media Forum once a quarter and will regularly update the [www.areyouwebready.wordpress.com](http://www.areyouwebready.wordpress.com) with content and highlights about the UAEX website. The Digital Media Council and Digital Media Advisory Board will update the Digital/Digital Media Forum on project plans. The Digital Media Forum will then disseminate that information to their staff and department members. Throughout the year, the Digital Media Forum and other web visitors are invited to send ideas, requests, problems, and concerns to the Digital Media Council via [this form](http://www.areyouwebready.wordpress.com) (see addendum 1). These ideas, requests, problems, and concerns will be logged into a locally hosted database, and addressed as needed by the Digital Media Program Manager and the Digital Media Council.

**Responsibilities of the Digital Media Council and the Digital Media Advisory Board**

In response to the needs of web visitors, provide oversight of and set strategic direction for [www.uaex.edu](http://www.uaex.edu):

- Establish appropriate policies, processes, and procedures to govern current and future website standards
- Evaluate effectiveness, content, standards, and policies for technology and editorial components
- Suggest global changes to taxonomy, structure, branding, look and feel, navigation, styling, etc. as needed
- Ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory standards, including accessibility, security, etc., by consulting with the current Extension Civil Rights Compliance Officer
- Ensure site quality
- Recommend additional templates or changes to existing templates
- Facilitate and resolve non-compliance issues
Individual content creators within Extension are held responsible for the accuracy and validity of their content

Page content: Roles and Responsibilities

Page Proprietors are the department heads, executive team members or designated high level team members who have the final say in decision making for what is and is not allowed on their department’s pages.

Content Owners typically report to page proprietors and are responsible for the voice, content and writing of the information on their department’s web page(s). They may or may not be the individuals entering copy into the web editing tools, but they are the ultimate writers and crafters of content that will be read by the public.

Web Editors may or may not be writing the content but ultimately their responsibility lies in actually adding the copy to the page using the OU system. They are typically trained in the OU system and are responsible for uploading files, documents, videos or content to their designated pages. They report directly to the Content Owners or in some cases the Content Owner and Web Editor are the same person.

Governance Policies
Guidelines/Compliance

The website, www.uaex.edu, is the sole property of the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service; while certain faculty and staff will have access to edit certain portions of the site, create new content, and remove old content, the site and all its sub-sites remain the property of Extension.

The website provides a platform to showcase the Cooperative Extension Service’s best qualities and project a positive image to the entire world. It is a strategic asset that carries enormous influence and provides global access to all aspects of Extension’s services. With more than one hundred web editors managing portions of the site, guidelines that encourage clarity, accuracy, and consistency are essential to protecting Extension’s online image. This document aims to cover all areas of web governance, but if you have questions that are not answered upon reviewing this, please contact webhelp@uaex.edu, the Office of Communications, or IT Digital Media Services.

Extension reserves the right to revise or delete content housed either on Extension IT resources or external resources that does not meet acceptable use guidelines or the standards outlined in this policy.
For all written, visual and other media requirements please see the web standards guide.

**Request/Appeal Process**

Requests submitted to IT Digital Media Services will be reviewed by the Digital Media Program Manager before being assigned. If there are questions about the request, it will be referred to the digital media staff for a decision. If the requesting party disagrees with the decision, it will be reviewed by the Digital Media Advisory Board. The decision of the Digital Media Advisory Board may be appealed to the Digital Media Council, which will make the final decision.

**Roles/Permissions**

Permissions are determined by OmniUpdate user groups, which are generally the same for all editors assigned to that specific area (e.g., all users in the County user group have the same privileges). If specific needs are determined (e.g., someone can add copy but not publish to the live site) then a member of the Digital Media Advisory Board representing that department should contact IT Web Services and/or the Website Project Manager. Web content directors should also contact Digital Media Services if editors (e.g., work only when needed staff, former employees) should no longer have permission to edit the site. For their own reference, it is recommended that web content directors keep a list of their page editors and contributors. Additionally, that list can be posted to areyouwebready.com for periodic review.

**Quality Control/Workflow**

County and program management are responsible for determining their own internal workflow. It may be that there are multiple writers who report to a county or program manager. County and program managers need to contact IT Digital Media Services if there are content contributors in their groups who should only have the ability to “edit” pages, not “publish” pages. Only “publishers” will be able to make changes that will instantly go live on the site.

By default content contributors will edit copy then submit for review. Publishing will occur after the page is submitted to their superior for review and subsequently approved. Should county and program managers need content contributors to edit and publish without review, IT can be asked to set this feature up on a case-by-case basis.

Regardless of the structure, when your department makes changes to existing pages, have a second person review the webpage(s) content before you publish it. Make sure that you are checking the “Check Spelling” box within the Body Text area before you submit changes. It won’t catch everything, but is still a useful tool.
Content owners will be notified if their copy is found to be in error or incomplete. Visitors to the site will be encouraged to submit feedback regarding issues with the site and the copy will be under routine review and the content will be flagged for correction by digital media team members via an email to the content owner. Should the content not be resolved or fixed in a week’s time, the content contributor’s supervisor will be notified.

Requests for new pages must be submitted online using the Web Request Form (see Addendum 1 in this document).

It is imperative that we all work together to keep the new website free of typos, bad grammar, etc. and consistent in style and quality.

**Measurement**
Google Analytics has been embedded in all site pages, so departments wanting to track page views do not need to embed codes on their own. For help with interpreting your department’s page analytics, contact Digital Media Services.

**Large Web Requests**
Even though some departments may be able to make financial investments for web work on their behalf, all work orders and digital media projects must be approved by the Digital Program Manager. This is also the case for any request for proposals issued for website work.

**Content Management System**
All content will be held and propagated to the site using the approved Content Management System OmniUpdate and its implemented version. No other software product may be used within Extension’s approved CMS and its build architecture.

No additional blogs or websites on behalf of Extension will be established without approval by the Digital Program Manager.

**Accessibility**
All content contributors should familiarize themselves and follow the ADA Compliancy guidelines. Digital Media Services will run all site pages through a compliance monitor system within the OmniUpdate platform. Compliance monitoring systems within OmniUpdate can and will be utilized.

**Last Updated: March 2014**
ADDENDUMS

Addendum 1

**Training/Education**

Only content contributors who have been formally trained will be given access to the content management system once they are approved by their county or program area managers. The website development team and PSD teams are responsible for initial training, after which content contributors may utilize various support documents and training screencasts by visiting Extension help site at [www.areyouwebready.wordpress.com](http://www.areyouwebready.wordpress.com). The web editor, PSD and/or web development teams will periodic and recurring classes and labs both web based and classroom (in person) on how to edit on the site; it is the trainee’s responsibility to absorb the material, to practice what they learn in these sessions, and to utilize the training and style documents that are provided.

Addendum 2

**Written Content/Messaging/Branding**

The Extension’s new site embraces a writing style that engages our readers in a conversation. We want to speak directly to them, answer their questions, and give them information as concisely and clearly as possible. We don’t want to bog them down with text. Web visitors are task oriented – they skim and scan, getting just enough information to get to their next destination. Subheadings and bulleted and numbered lists are tools to help us achieve these goals.

So that we convey a clear and consistent message, it is critical for all parts of the site to use Extension’s official visual identifiers (logos) and Extension’s naming conventions and style outlined in the U of A System Brand Manual, the Extension Web Standards Guide, and grammar consistent with the AP style guide.

Addendum 3

**Visual Content**

Photography that meets a high professional standard plays a critical role in creating a positive image of Extension. The photographic images used on the website should effectively convey our mission of service and of being a resource to the community of Arkansas. Our photos should make a connection with the people and activities depicted and they should make citizens proud of the work done in and for their state. In order to achieve these goals, when posting photos on the site, please use primarily documentary-style photography that captures the authentic and vibrant interactions with Arkansans.
and Extension employees, as well as document processes and/or work as a visual aid for supporting content. Obviously, it will be important to show a range of genders, ethnic backgrounds, races, ages, etc., but try to avoid artificial-looking situations that are obviously trying to communicate diversity.

The Office of Communications is responsible for copy and images on the top 2 levels of the website in a tandem effort with the individual program areas. Communications, IT and web editors for individual units of Extension, will select all department, and county branding photos (the photos with the names of the programs departments, and counties on them). These may be rotated out periodically or at the request of the page proprietor. Individual departments and units are responsible for all other photos on their pages. Content contributors should follow the guidelines set forth in the brand manual, as well as keep photos under 50KB to allow for quicker page load times.

Part of the strategic plan when it came to the website was ensuring that there was a uniform, professional look to all faculty and staff photos featured on the official biography pages which at this time, can be found in the staff directory. Therefore, one of our Extension photographers based in the Office of Communications is taking all of the faculty and staff photos for the faculty bio pages.

Faculty members are welcome to use their own pictures on their own, personal websites. When faculty members are at the photo shoots with Extension photographer, they are welcome to look at the photos and get a retake right then and there.

As a public entity, it is critical to make our site accessible to all users. When adding photos, you need to include “Alt Text” so that those who are visually impaired and using text browsers can know what your picture or illustration looks like. The World Wide Web Consortium accessibility guidelines suggest that you imagine reading the picture/illustration aloud over the telephone. What would you say about the image to make your listeners understand it? Shorter is better: A good rule of thumb is to keep it between 5 and 15 words.

**Videos**

All videos posted on www.uaex.edu must be ADA compliant. All videos that appear on the UAEX.EDU website must be captioned and a transcript attached.

Each video should end with a video logo clip that can be found on the Logos and Standards webpage. If you need an alternate format for your purposes, contact Communications.

If you’d like a video embedded on the Division YouTube Channel, contact Communications.

**Addendum 4**

**Use of Social Media and New Technologies**

When participating in a social media site on behalf of Extension, clearly state your role and goals. Before you jump into a discussion thread or respond to a posting, think about the implications. Will
your response stimulate positive discussion, provide new information or insight, or inflame? If you have any questions about whether it’s appropriate to enter into a social media discussion or write about certain kinds of material in your role as an Extension employee, ask your supervisor before you post or contact the Office of Communications.

Uphold Extension’s mission and values in your activities. Don’t include political or personal comments. This includes changes to your photo or avatar in relation to political or social issues. Always double check your facts, and if you’re not the best editor, have someone else read your postings before going live. Additional social media policies and best practices can be found at the end of this document as Addendum 8. Note that if you are registering a Facebook page ensure that you have more than one person in your department who is able to log in and maintain the account. This is similar for LinkedIn professional groups and Twitter, Instagram or Pinterest accounts. Fill out the social media request form to begin the official Extension social media registration process.

For information on branding on social media sites, see the U of A system brand manual.

**Addendum 5**

**Mobile Applications**

Colleges, departments, and centers should contact IT Digital Media Services prior to launching mobile applications to ensure the applications follow Extension programming and development standards and support the Extension mission.

**Addendum 6**

**Website Modification Notices and Modifications**

All changes are to be posted and all pertinent parties notified of major changes and or outages, third-party integrations, operations, and capacity planning (with reports and metrics from our hosting vendor). Appropriate change management and communications with the hosting provider will be followed. The Digital Media Department will post all major planned events on the IT Technology Changes page. The notices will include browser updates, coding updates, etc.

Extension Social Media Policies & Best Practices

Welcome to the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service social media directory. Share, engage and connect with us.

**Addendum 7**

**Social Media Guidelines**

The purpose of the social media usage of the Cooperative Extension Service is to further our mission to provide research-based information through non-formal education to help Arkansans improve their economic well-being and the quality of their lives.
These guidelines govern the publication of and commentary on social media by employees of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service (“UACES”) and its related entities. UACES employees may publish or comment via social media tools in accordance with these guidelines. UACES employees are subject to these guidelines to the extent they identify themselves or are recognized as a UACES employee and engage in the use of social media tools as part of their job.

The Social Media Committee is a group of faculty and staff who meet regularly to discuss and plan UACES social media efforts. The committee researches and evaluates social media platforms, provides information on best practices, makes recommendations for training, advises when questions arise, and maintains the social media registry. The Social Media Committee is under the leadership of Amy Cole, Website Program Manager and Digital Principal.

Send questions, suggestions, or comments regarding social media to: Amy Cole, accole@uaex.edu

Social Media Channels

For the purposes of these guidelines, social media relates to any medium for online publication and commentary, including but not limited to blogs and social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube. Additional social media outlets may be used. A full list of Extension’s registered social media sites is available at www.uaex.edu/social-media/default.aspx.

Official Policies

Social media usage at UACES is governed by all official policies. Read the policies before engaging in any social media campaign as part of your official duties. All uses of social media must follow the professional ethical standards expected of UACES employees. These guidelines are in addition to, and complement, any existing policies or guidelines regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet.

Specific policies of interest related to social media include but are not limited to:
University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture
Brand Identity and Logo Standards and Guidelines

University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture
Code of Ethics
PMGS-09-4 Policy and Management Guidelines Division of Agriculture

System Management, Office Management, Employee Conduct
Policy Number: C.E.S.P. 4-11
New: 3-6-2012
Replaces C.E.S.P. 4-10 and C.E.S.P. 4-6
Advertising on behalf of external vendors is prohibited on Extension social media presences. Be mindful of the policies set by social media sites.

Obey copyright law.

If you have questions about policies or social media practices, contact (point person for social media).

**Getting Started**

Before engaging in work-related social media, employees must register their social media accounts (individually) with UACES at 501-671-2304. Designate who will be responsible for the account and ensure you have a backup person in your department and approval from a supervisor before starting to post. All accounts will be listed in the UACES social media directory.

Social media accounts for UACES entities, including 4-H, EHC, Master Gardeners and any other entity representing UACES, should be set up by the county agent or specialist. In the event an account is set up by a club member for the entire group, a county agent or specialist must be added as an administrator to maintain settings and controls as set forth in these guidelines.

If you need assistance choosing a social media platform or setting up an account, please contact Amy Cole, accole@uaex.edu.

**Privacy**
It's not permissible to post confidential information. Think before you post. Be mindful of posting personal information you wouldn't want clients or co-workers to know. Don't post anything you wouldn't say in public. What's posted online is online forever. It's not just about the organization but also about protecting your own online reputation as well. Don't talk negatively about anyone, especially co-workers or competitors.

Your posts should never include:

- Sensitive financial or legal information.
- Confidential information.
- Sensitive or personal medical information that would violate HIPPA regulations.

Protect minors. When posting photos of 4-H youth or other minors, follow this format: First Name, First Initial of Last Name, County; ex.: Joe S., Anywhere County.

Protect your own privacy. Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see professional profile information.

**Honesty**

Make it clear that you are blogging/Tweeting/Facebooking, etc. in your role as an employee of UACES. Individuals' use of social media can help to personalize the organization to the public.

Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.), but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion.

Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out.

If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly.

**Quality**

The quality of your posts reflects on your professional reputation and on the organization. Use clear, concise writing. Spell and grammar check. Proofread before posing. Use appropriate photos and properly edit them. If you have any doubt or need training, contact Amy Cole (501-671-2304).
Remember the mission of UACES is to provide research-based information to the public. Focus on providing non-biased, reliable, up-to-date information. Remember that writing for the web is different than writing fact sheets or journal articles. See “Tips for Writing for the Web” to make the most of your social media efforts.

When posting in your professional role, avoid making claims that may appear to endorse commercial products or services, political parties or viewpoints or religious affiliations.

**Response**

Social media requires regular attention. Check your sites at least a few minutes each day. Post fresh content several times a week. People will lose interest if your site isn't kept current.

Be prepared to accept and respond to comments on your site. At the very minimum, comments should be monitored regularly. Some sites offer an option to moderate comments before they are posted. Consider moderating comments when this option is available.

Comments that are completely inappropriate can be hidden or removed. Post the following statement on your official UACES social media outlets:

We reserve the right to remove all offensive and unrelated comments on our social media outlets. You may contact Amy Cole, 501-671-2304.

Understand that not all comments will be positive, and respond to negative comments professionally and respectfully, and by providing additional information that may help resolve the issue. If you see a post that you think needs an official UACES response, please contact 501-671-2304.

If you are commenting on someone else’s site as an official part of your job, be sure to indicate who you are and your affiliation with the UACES. Leave only constructive, helpful comments.

**Emergency Communication**

If an emergency is unfolding, please do not post speculative information about the situation on your site. For proper emergency communications response, please refer to our communications department. If you discover erroneous information about an unfolding crisis, please contact Mary Hightower, at 501-671-2126.