

Policies for Your MTPC Portfolio Website

Your MTPC portfolio website should be your original design and follow best practices. The site should be usable, accessible, well conceived, well executed, and attractive. You may adapt images and snippets of code as appropriate as long as the design remains your own and you have appropriately addressed permissions, copyright, and attribution. (MTPC Academic Portfolio page)

What does this mean?

Below we've illustrated how you might interpret some of the wording. These elaborations are by no means exhaustive. Apply what you have studied throughout your time as a student in the MTPC program, and ask questions.

your original design – As designers, we often observe elements we want to emulate: drop shadows, tabs for browsing, menu-item spacing, and so on. The elements you use in your design are frequently common elements others have used in the past. For instance, go to Creative Commons and look at its trademarked logo. Many designers have used circles and text together in creative ways, as did the designer of the logo. But Creative Commons' combination is unique. Yes, you could design with circles and text, too, but your design shouldn't closely emulate this logo. Make sure your design is your own on the whole. Do not use templates with existing designs that you, the user, drop content into. (Note: Dreamweaver templates only control the appearance across a site; a Dreamweaver template usually is a developer's own design, and such use of a template is fine.)

follow best practices – You should apply concepts from your classes for designing, writing, editing, coding, and ethically creating a site.

usable – You learn a great deal about usability in this program, so review those resources. Can users clearly read your name and content? Does everything work properly? Is information findable? Is your site easy to use? Is it pleasing to use? If your design is aesthetically pleasing but difficult to navigate, it's not very usable.

accessible – Even if you are not a web guru, you took ENGL 7060: Web Development and should know to put alt text in, to base a design on divs rather than on tables, and to head off problems such as empty links or text links that say, "read more."

well conceived – Is the design logical? Does it meet user expectations? Is it up to date (or does it look like Jakob Nielsen's Alert Box)? Does it chunk information

appropriately? Are parts too distracting? These are a few of many questions you should ask yourself.

well executed — Did you write well for your intended audience? Does the site look okay on a range of systems/browsers? Do you use CSS and do it fairly well (not have CSS created from highlighting in a WYSIWYG editor and hitting a bold button)? Is the code itself valid, consolidated, and easy to read?

attractive — Some of you are designers. Some are not. The portfolio doesn't have to be the height of design, but it should reflect best practices for document design. For instance, a simple site that applies principles such as contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity and follows best practices for type and color would be fine.

adapt images and snippets code as appropriate — You may use an appropriate image or a JavaScript snippet from elsewhere as long as

- 1) the Gestalt of the design is your own
- 2) you have received permission (e.g., the website you found it on says the JavaScript is free to use or asks you to attribute the source in the code),
- 3) you have adhered to copyright laws and, if appropriate, Creative Commons licensing restrictions and requirements

For example, if you find a series of Creative Commons–licensed images that you want to adapt into a masthead, you could do so if the Creative-Commons license for each image allows remixing (adapting). You would have to contact the photographer or graphic artist, confirm how that person would like to be attributed, attribute that person appropriately, and—if any of the original licenses are “share alike”—add the appropriate license image and link on your website.

appropriately addressed permissions, copyright, and attribution — Even if an image you would like to use has no formal copyright, seek permission from the image’s owner. If you are unsure about adapting code, seek permission. Always attribute the image or code’s owner as that person instructs you to.