



Web Design

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

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Description

- * Do you wonder what you can do with your website besides just using GradeA?
- * Maybe you have an extensive website, and wonder if your design is useful to students?
- * We will explore features that make your website painful to use, and features that make a website a great resource for your students.

Topics

- * Content
- * Text Format
- * Navigation
- * Organization of content
- * Counting the cost – file size and type
- * Special effects – resisting temptations
- * Ways to make it easier to maintain and update your websites

Content Can Include...

- * Syllabus
- * Calendar of assignments, tests, quizzes
- * Lecture notes, power point slides
- * Your schedule so they can find you
- * Review guides for tests
- * Handouts, worksheets, rubrics
- * How to get help
- * Links to sites that expand or apply ideas
- * <http://cstl-csm.semo.edu/tansil/>

For an online class

- * Lay out plan for entire semester so they can plan ahead for tests
- * Avoid dates except for calendar: When you miss changing dates and reuse the material, it confuses the students
- * Have a help page where you explain what to do when things go wrong
- * <http://online.semo.edu/2009summer/ma123-740/class/>

Text : Font

- ✧ Use common fonts (widely supported):
 - Fixed: Courier
 - Serif: Times New Roman
 - Sans Serif: Arial
- ✧ If you feel fonts are important to your message, create a pdf of your Word document.
- ✧ Use italic and bold sparingly. Avoid ALL CAPS and underlining. (underlined words should be links)

Text: Color

- * ☹️ White text when printed on white paper does not show up
- * ☹️ Poor contrast causes eye strain
- * 😊 White or pale background is good
[text color](#)
- * ☹️ No text on background image
[background example 1](#) and [2](#)
- * Background images also use up bandwidth

Navigation

- ✦ Have a home page in your [root directory](#)
- ✦ [One page site](#): navigation to headings
- ✦ [Multiple page site](#) : navigation bar on top
- ✦ Hint: Use template or includes so that you can edit the navigation bar in one place, instead of updating each page
- ✦ Avoid “Dead Links”: If you feel you must reorganize your page, put in some redirects: [see page with dead links](#)

Navigation 2

- * No FLASH navigation
 - * Requires user have your version of Flash
 - * Slows down page
 - * Not handicap compatible
- * Java buttons are error prone, especially with Dreamweaver
- * Good idea: SharePoint templates allow you to have a common navigation bar that can be edited once for all pages (see the CSTL staff)

Navigation 3

- ✦ Give link itself a meaningful name, instead of click [here](#)
- ✦ A link should look like a link
(No Mystery Meat navigation)
 - links [not obvious](#), or [small moving targets](#), and [it-looks-like-a-link-text](#)
- ✦ No [spaces](#) in file names
- ✦ Give each page a unique [title](#) : This is the default name when bookmarked

Navigation 4

- * Simple can get the job done
- * OIS templates are good
- * Navigation should be reached without scrolling
- * Think about what your page is like for a tired student who is trying to find the assignment mentioned in class

Organization of Content

- * Have a home page: What happens when they go to your [root directory](#)
- * Only one idea in a paragraph/bullet
 - [2.3 notes](#)
 - [15.1 notes](#)
- * No more than three screen scrolls
- * ADA Compliance
 - * Tag images
 - * No frames

Organization of Content 2

- ✦ Make good use of the screen
- ✦ Don't center paragraphs
- ✦ Don't squish to extreme side
- ✦ Unbroken text is hard to read
- ✦ Bullets, headings, whitespace – organize the page so they can find information

File Size and Type

- * Unless required by the class, do not use “proprietary files” such as Word documents, Power Point files, etc.
- * PDF using free pdf software

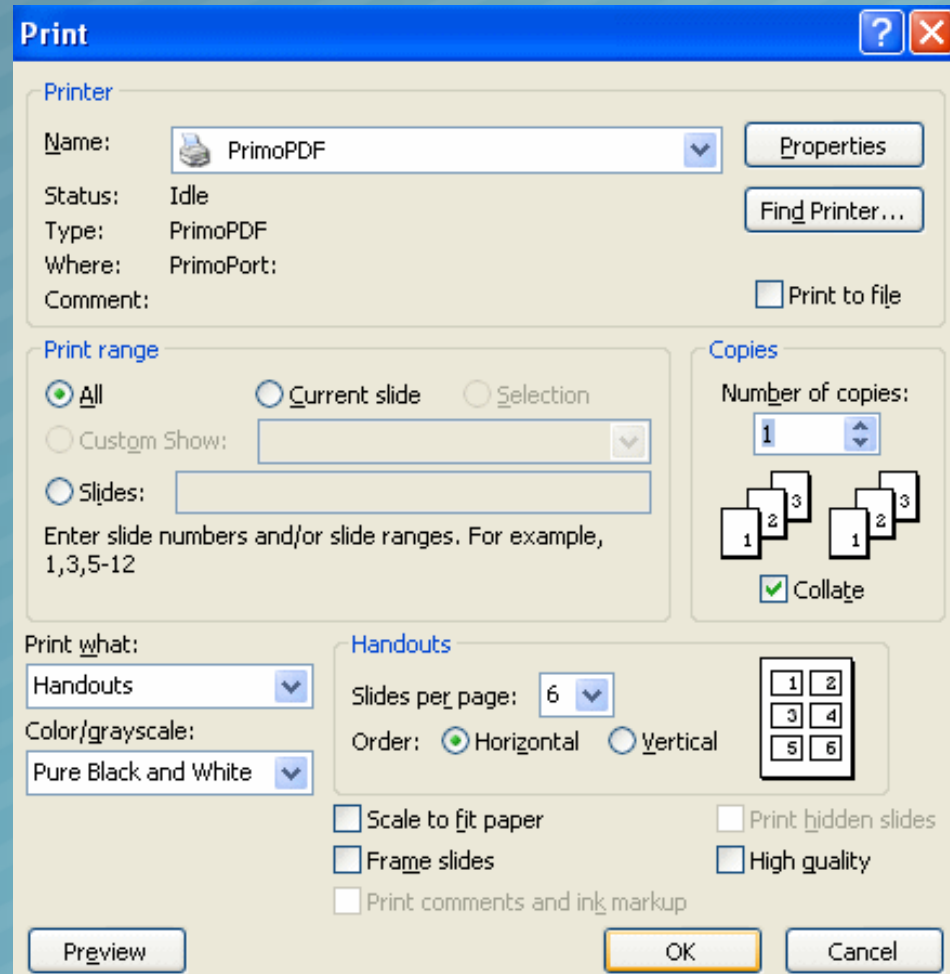
PowerPoint Handouts as PDF

★ <http://www.primopdf.com/>

Download
PrimoPDF

★ Install it


★ Print
(PrimoPDF
shows up as
a 'printer')

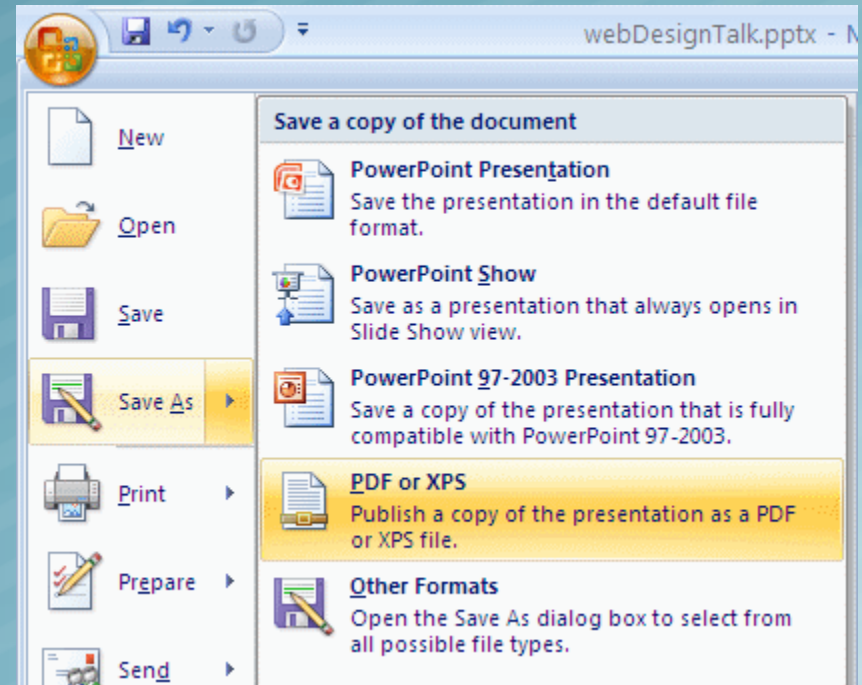


File Size and Type

- * [Word](#) example [Word](#) example
- * Turn Word documents into pdfs – PrimoPDF is free – or save as htm
- * “Print” PowerPoint handouts with multiple slides per page to pdf file
- * See the CSTL staff for hands-on help

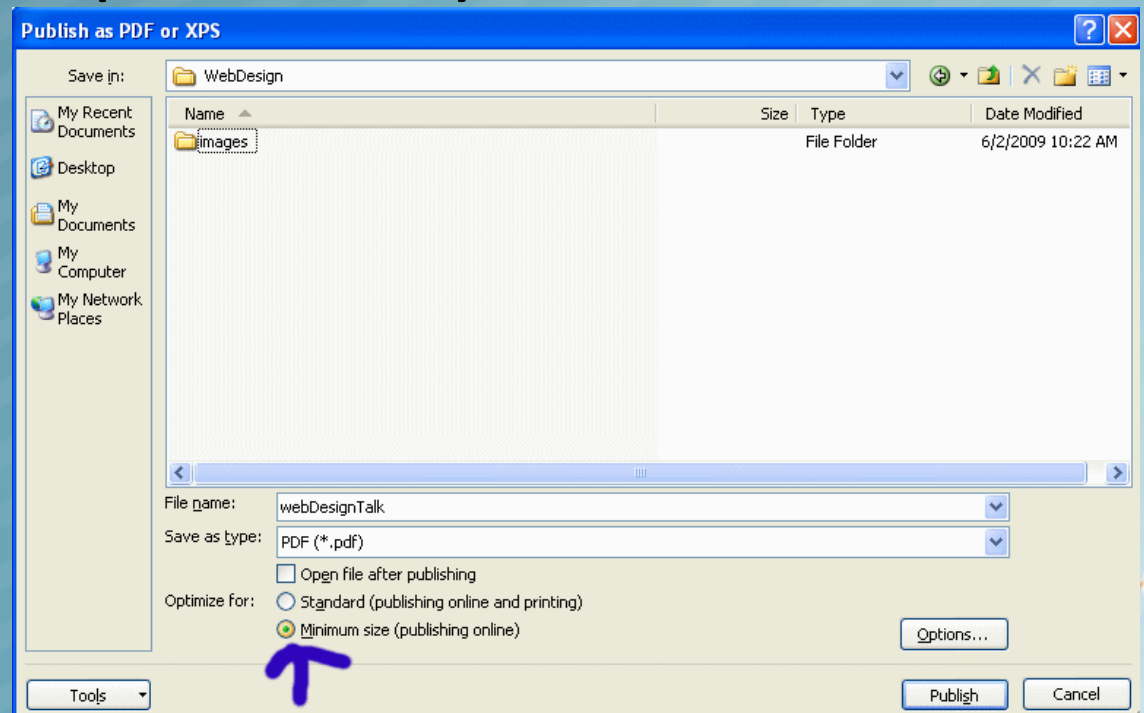
Convert Office 2007 PowerPoint to PDF

- * Install PrimoPDF
- * Create your PowerPoint
- * Office Button 
- * Save As
- * Pdf or Xps



Convert Office 2007 PowerPoint to PDF

- ✦ Select Minimum Size
- ✦ Choose a filename (no spaces)
- ✦ Publish
- ✦ Import your pdf file to your website



Minimize resolution of media

- * Images: The human eye upper limit is around 300 dpi. The ideal image resolution for the web is 72 dpi.
- * Camtasia: The entire CSTL server max is 100 Mb / second.
 - ☹ Do not encode at 1 Mb/s
 - ☺ 300 kb/s is recommended
- * Power Point files – no 100 Mb files !!
- * Scan pictures ‘for web’ -- not maximum resolution

More about Resolution

- * If your students create PowerPoints to upload to DropBox, give them tips on creating smaller files
- * Scan images on lower resolution
- * DropBox has a maximum file size for student uploads, so this can be important

Screen Resolution

- * Allow for screens that are 800 by 600
- * Avoid the [horizontal scroll bar](#)
- * Keep the important content in that 800 by 600 window

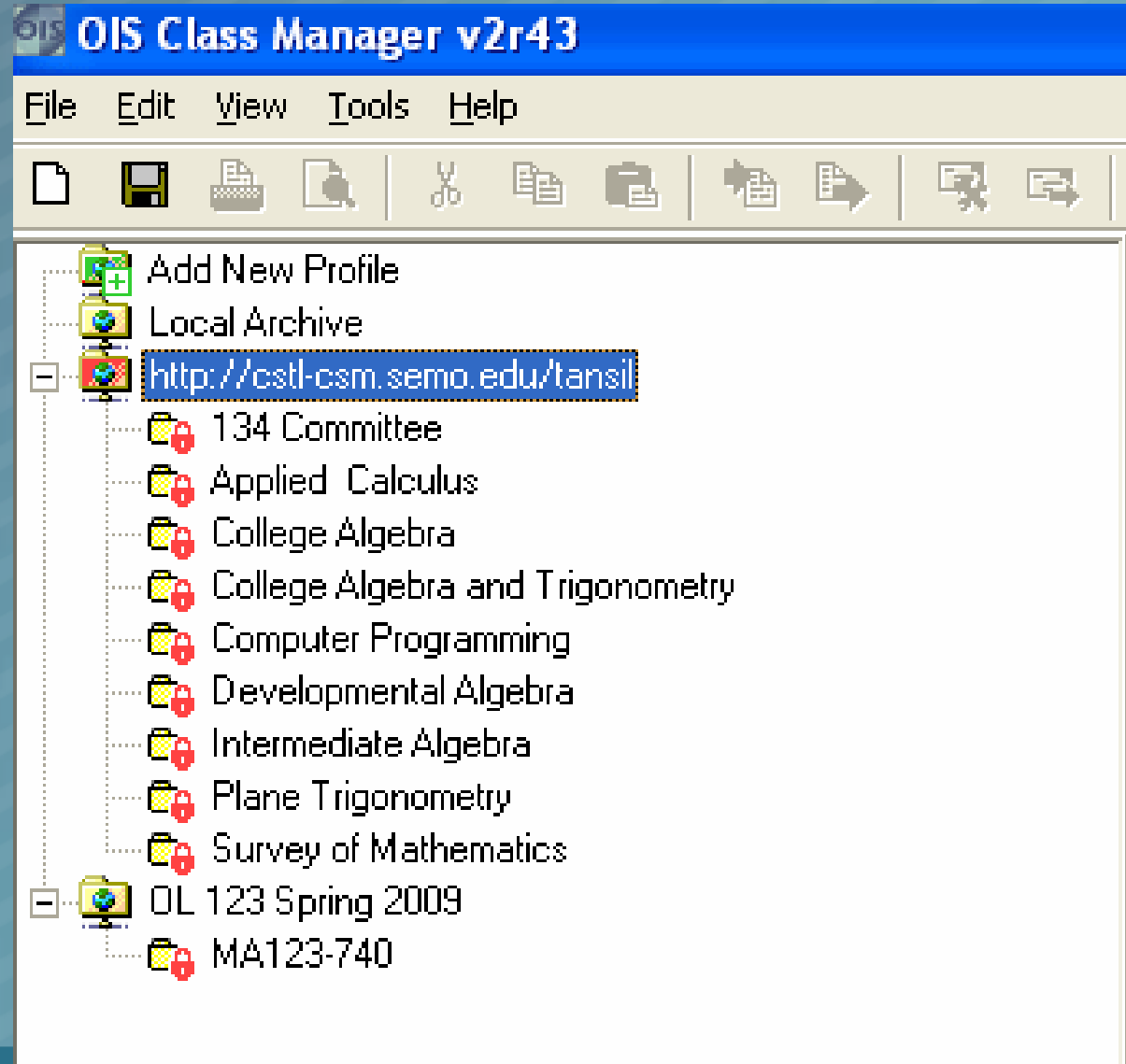
Special Effects

- ✧ Eliminate unnecessary design items
- ✧ Plugs-ins: use wisely
<http://www.cs.cornell.edu/courses/cs3410/2008fa/HW/HW4/FAQ.htm>
- ✧ Overuse
<http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/shuttle/archives/sts-108/flash/sts108.swf>
- ✧ Animated gifs – only if add to understanding
[Topologically equivalent coffee cup and doughnut](#)
- ✧ Flash can be a good thing when content is worth it. ([art example](#))

OIS Manager Management

- * Each course only needs one website
- * Keep all your sections in one folder
- * Reuse your folder each semester
- * This lets you reuse the material already developed
- * Avoid 'hard coding' dates - put dates in your calendar or syllabus so you can update all dates at one (or a few) places

OIS Manager Management



Keep it simple

- ✦ Make the important information easy to find
- ✦ Make the page easy to read
- ✦ PDF instead of proprietary files
- ✦ Avoid huge files
- ✦ Use common fonts
- ✦ Navigation needs to be clear
- ✦ The CSTL is there to help you

Common Errors

- ✦ A page takes more than four seconds to load
- ✦ Mixed text colors on a page
- ✦ The site breaks when visited with Javascript turned off.
- ✦ The important content does not fit in the first screen.
- ✦ <http://www.webpagesthatsuck.com/top-30-web-design-mistakes.html>

Other ideas:

✧ Avoid the embarrassment caused by
Last updated 12-5-2001

✧ Check out your pages on different browser, different versions of IE, different screen sizes and resolutions.

✧ Read more: Search “web design” for help
Example:

<http://webdesign.about.com/od/webdesignbasics/u/webdesignbasics.htm>

Keep your eyes on the prize

- * The goal of your website is to help your students learn
- * Effective communication is the #1 goal

Some interesting sites

- ✦ [MIT Open Courseware](#)
- ✦ <http://www.jaydax.co.uk/tutorials/webdesign/badpageguide/badpgguide.html>
- ✦ <http://www.ratz.com/features.html> : Good and bad web design features
- ✦ Google “good web design”
- ✦ More [examples](#)