

CMS Newsletter

Greetings to the Skidmore CMS Community

The fall semester kicks off the academic year, and finds the campus full of students, faculty and staff again. Two very common things happen this time of year: departments catch up on web work left idle during summer months, and student workers begin looking for CMS training to assist their departments.

The first and best thing you can do is look ahead during the summer months, know what will have to be updated for the fall, and make a plan to do it ahead of time. The help request "queue" can get rather long in late August and September, with so many users needing last-minute urgent help for updating their sites! If you are on campus at all during the summer, doing your web updates ahead of time can put you ahead of the curve and avoid delays during "start of semester crunch time." As always, we try

to help users in the order that we get your request, and more complex requests take more time to resolve. The more proactive you can be, the more timely the results will be.

For your student workers, it's often hard for them to attend the daytime training sessions due to class schedule conflicts. There are a variety of resources available on the [CMS Help Site](#), including training videos, most of the full beginner class, Frequently Asked Questions, and a complete user manual. To get your new student worker started, you should send an email to Jenn Crewell (jcrewell@skidmore.edu) to request that they be added as CMS editors for your site, and then if they cannot attend a training session, you can direct them to the help site and walk them through basic procedures.

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Fall Website Tips

Contact Us– Did you know that the best way to be sure of getting timely help with your CMS questions is to email both Liz Katzman and Jenn Crewell? Too often users only contact one or the other, and have to wait for a reply. Use our [web form](#) to make the process easiest!

Only Publish Links to the Read Server – When making links to pages on the CMS, please be sure to send visitors **only** to the CMS read server (<http://cms.skidmore.edu>), and not ever to the author server (<http://cmsauthor.skidmore.edu>). We reserve the author server for doing our own work, and it's not set up to handle the stress of a multitude of guests! Please only use regular CMS addresses in publications and advertisements, this is very important to be sure that the work server remains stable and useable for all CMS editors.

Check Your Dates – The main challenge any website faces is timely updates. Often you will have dated material on your site (Spring 2008 course lists, or due dates for various materials, etc.) It's a good rule of thumb to look over your site once a month for making updates to "dated" materials like these, but once a semester is the absolute minimum you should plan. There's nothing more frustrating for your visitors than outdated content.

Validate Your Links - At the same time, be sure to check your links to make sure that none of them have "broken" since the last time you checked. You can use the "Validate Links" tool under "Tools and Information" or you can manually click each link to see where it leads. Sometimes a valid page will no longer have the information that you had originally linked to, so it's good to periodically visually check pages for content.

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Fall Website Tips, cont.

Organize Your Archives – If you are uploading a new item into your archive area, remember that most archives are organized with the most recent addition at the top of the list. To find out the navigation order of your new item, count upward from the bottom of the list, with the last entry being 'zzzz', the next one up being 'yyyy' and so forth until you get to the letter you need to assign to your new item.

Set the Seasonal Mood – If you have images on your site which are specific to the season, you may want to consider changing them to fall-appropriate images. You can view images at the college image archive, and request the full-size images using the CD and image numbers you find associated with each picture. Contact Pat Wright (pwright@skidmore.edu) with your requests. You will then need to edit them for your site

(see the [FAQ](#) for hints and suggested sizes).

News Postings – You may have noticed that news and right column items you post no longer show up immediately. A slight delay in updating helps to keep the servers running smoothly, but you should see your item appear within an hour or two of posting. You can clear the page cache to see results more quickly.

Other News of Interest

Training Classes and Study Halls – The classrooms used for training and study halls can be difficult to reserve, as their primary purpose is for student instruction. However, the list of training classes and study halls will be posted on the [CMS Help Site](#). Seats are on a first-come-first-served basis, and the first training class is already full up!

New Events Calendar – The Skidmore events calendar underwent a complete update at the hands of our web programmer, Liz Katzman. You can check it out [here](#). We strongly encourage all departments to enter their events into the campus calendar, even small lectures or presentations. Any event that you enter into the campus calendar can be re-used on any of the CMS sites with the

Events feature ([Current Students](#), [Faculty/Staff](#), [Arts Portal](#), [Sciences at Skidmore](#) for example). Help us keep the campus up-to-date about all of your activities and events!

Server Redirects for CMS Sites – In conjunction with Instructional Technology, we are working to create server-side redirects for all sites fully converted to the CMS. What this means is that instead of manually overwriting every file in your old WWW directory, IT will put into place one single file to redirect all traffic to your new CMS site. This removes old outdated pages from general web searches, and allows IT to keep a cleaner file system on the servers. For sites already converted, email notices will go out to site editors to confirm when this process is due for their site.

For any sites converted in the future, this will be an automatic process.

Additional Training Through Academic Technologies – The Web team of the Office of Communications provides training and support for the CMS, but what about editing your photos? What about formatting a PDF form? For these programs, you can get your training through [Academic Technologies](#). They provide in-house workshops, as well as access to online training through Atomic Learning.



CMS Newsletter is produced by the Web Development Team of the Office of Communications. To contact us, please use the [web form](#), or email both Liz Katzman (ekatzman@skidmore.edu) and Jenn Crewell (jcrewell@skidmore.edu) for best results.