Digital Signage
Content & Format Requirements

• General Considerations:

The creation of content for the Digital Signage system requires consideration of technical, legal, and aesthetic factors. The technical considerations deal with the system's capabilities and limitations. The aesthetic or creative considerations relate to making the digital slides and digital video visually interesting and effective communicators. The legal issues associated with digital signage refer to the fair use of imagery and copyright laws.

• Legal Issues:

  o Copyright Laws and Copyrighted Material: Do not incorporate elements into digital slides that violate copyright laws. Theft of another’s intellectual property will not be tolerated by this department. If you are in doubt, contact Alexandra at x3619 or find an alternative means of expression! Copyright laws are very complex; read below for a basic checklist to help you decide if you will be in violation. Residence Life and Housing and its employees are not responsible for any imagery illegally used. Educate yourself via the suggested web site below for authoritative information:

    - If it’s not part of a clip art library that you have permission to use, it’s not yours to use.
    - If you don’t get permission from the owner to use an image, it’s not yours to use.
    - If you did not conceive the idea/image yourself, it’s not yours to use.
    - If you copied the image from an internet website that does not state its imagery is for everyone’s use, it’s not yours to use.
    - If you copy an image and redesign it, change the wording on an image or logo, or create an image in the likeness of a copyrighted image (and all original artwork is considered copyrighted, even if it does not bear the copyright or trademark symbol) to fit your needs, it’s not yours to use.
    - College logos are okay to use and can be obtained from the publications website at www.oswego.edu/publications. Do not change them without the appropriate permission! Also, there is a ‘Graphic Identity Guide’ that spells-out appropriate use of the college logo. Please review this information and stay within the guidelines. Use of other department logos on campus are subject to that department’s approval.
    - To learn more about what is or is not protected by copyright laws, go to this online article, “10 Big Myths about Copyright” via the following url: http://www.templetons.com/brad/copymyths.html
• **Technical Considerations:** Minimum Requirements

When creating content for digital signage, it is important to consider the system's 10 x 7.5 horizontal aspect ratio.

Content submitted for display on the digital signage system must meet the following minimum requirements before it will be approved and scheduled for display.

  o **Aspect Ratio:** It is important to realize that digital signage content should be created in a horizontal format. The areas of the digital signage screens reserved for display of digital slides uses a 10 x 7.5 aspect ratio (10 units wide and 7.5 units tall). This means that when preparing digital slides using Power Point, we will be using the “default” size. Digital slides with the following dimensions display best on the digital signage system: 720 x 540 pixels, 1024 x 768, 1152 x 864, 1280 x 960 pixels, 1360 x 1024, 1400 x 1050 etc. or maintaining a 4:3 ratio (WIDTH x HEIGHT).

  o **File Format:** Digital slides must be produced and submitted in Microsoft Office PowerPoint for editing purposes. (Go to Page Setup under the DESIGN menu and use the default 4:3 ‘on-screen show’ or change the horizontal field to 10 and vertical field to 7.5). Contact Alexandra at x 3619 for any deviations.

  o **Digital Video:** must be 15 seconds or less in length and may not contain audio. Compatible digital video file formats are: .asf, .asx, .avi, .m2v, .mp2, .mp4, .mpg, .mpg1, .mpg2, .mv2, .vob, and .wmv

  o **Color Restrictions:** Digital slides or digital video using a solid RED background will not be scheduled for display. Solid red backgrounds are reserved for Emergency Communications only.

• **Aesthetic Considerations:** Less is Best philosophy of design.

Graphic recognition and text readability, balance, color scheme including compatibility and contrast (within graphic and against background; between font color and background) and overall signage graphic style must be addressed for optimal conveyance of your message!

In the realm of digital signage, **LESS is BEST!**

  o **Readability:** Digital slides are typically displayed for 7 to 10 seconds at a time. Therefore, it is best to keep graphics simple and limit the number of elements (text and graphic images) on the slide. This is important so that viewers have sufficient time to read the slide and quickly process the information. Additionally,
take into consideration this limitation when combined with the viewer’s brief attention to the digital signage as s/he rushes by to class.

- **The 5 Ws:** Simply and concisely answer the 5 Ws.

  - Who, What When, Where, Why or How

  Slides submitted that do not answer these questions will not be approved!

- **Text:** Limit the number of characters (letters, spaces, etc.) in a line and the number of lines on a slide. Forty characters or less is a preferred line length. A maximum of 5 or 6 lines per slide is a good target.

  Use upper and lower case lettering instead of all caps for faster reading. Psychological studies on word recognition show that the ascenders, descendens and neutral letters in a word form a shape that works simultaneously with the reader’s letter recognition. This makes reading faster in upper and lower case in comparison to all caps. All caps should be used strictly for very short lines and headings only as they visually create “stripes”.

- **Fonts:** Because of resolution limitations, digital signage displays require the use of simple, bold text. It is best to avoid light, ornate fonts with fine thin lines or fonts with delicate serifs (even in larger sizes) because they are difficult to read. NEVER use a script or ornate font in all caps! As a general rule of thumb, avoid font sizes smaller than 20 points. NEVER, or be very careful, when using word art. In most cases, it renders text completely unreadable!

- **Composition:** Be sure to allow sufficient “white space” or breathing room between and around text so that it appears balanced and visually pleasing.

- **Graphic Images:** When using graphic images in digital slides, be sure to use images that are visually compatible with the other elements in the slide. Use images whose formats are compatible with creating slides in PNG and JPEG formats.

  Try to limit the use of 1 (one) image per slide.

- **Color and Contrast:** Other readability considerations are color and contrast. Insufficient contrast between text and background colors can make reading difficult. Some color combinations may provide sufficient contrast but still be difficult to view because one or more of the colors is extremely bright. Therefore, we encourage you to limit background colors to white or black. Polled students say they prefer a black background.
- Color Restrictions: Digital slides or digital video using a solid RED background will not be scheduled for display. Solid red backgrounds are reserved for Emergency Communications only.

- Digital Video:

Digital video can be created in any program that can save the video in one of the following file formats: .asf, .asx, .avi, .m2v, .mp2, .mp4, .mpg, .mpg1, .mpg2, .mv2, .vob, and .wmv

  - Timing: Digital Video must be 15 seconds or less in length.

  - Audio: Digital video may not contain audio. Digital video content with audio will not be approved for display.

  - Aspect Ratio: It is important to realize that digital signage content should be created in a horizontal format. The areas of the Digital Signage screens reserved for display of digital video use a 10 x 7.5 aspect ratio (10 units wide and 7.5 units tall or maintaining a 4:3 ratio.

  - Copyrighted Material: As with static imagery used on slides, do not use digital video clips or incorporate elements into digital video content that violates copyright laws. (See page 1 of this document for more information.)

Residence Life and Housing would like to thank you in advance for reading this document and adhering to its guidelines.

This document can be found online at:

www.oswego.edu/reslife/staff_resources