

# SAIS Web Site Style Guide



September 2005

## Introduction

In the world of journalism, almost every print publication utilizes a style guide defining everything from a headline's font and size, to how news stories should be written. Flip through a magazine like *TIME*, or a newspaper like *The Washington Post*, and you will see that headlines, subheads, body text, etc. are all displayed consistently throughout. The same is true of many Web sites, which in order to maintain a professional appearance, should also have their own clearly defined styles.

The SAIS Web team is in the process of applying its own style standards consistently throughout the site. If you come across pages that do not conform to the official standards, please let us know at [gibarrus@jhu.edu](mailto:gibarrus@jhu.edu) or [abortmes@jhu.edu](mailto:abortmes@jhu.edu).

There are two primary reasons for using consistent styles:

### 1. SAIS Brand Identity

For the sake of maintaining the integrity of the SAIS brand identity, it is important that all programs using the common SAIS templates apply the same styles and formatting for headlines, subheads, body text and photo captions. Research centers that have their own unique branding and site design are encouraged – but not required – to follow SAIS standards, but at a minimum should be consistent within their own site. A consistent brand identity creates a sense of place and familiarity with the site users, helping to reinforce their mindshare of SAIS as the world's premier graduate school for international studies.

### 2. Legibility and Accessibility

All pages should be easily readable to everyone who tries to access them, including disabled users. The SAIS Web site Style Guide will help to ensure that the site is accessible to all users.

This document is intended to explain how and when specific styles are used on the SAIS Web site, as well as appropriate use of modules and other site features. Please keep in mind that the SAIS Web site Style Guide is a work in progress, and will continue to be updated as we move ahead with developing new design features for the SAIS Web site.

For more information about styles, as well as Web site layout, design and navigational structure, we recommend Lynch and Horton's *Web Style Guide* at: <http://www.webstyleguide.com/>.

## Body Text

The term "body text" describes most of the site content in paragraph form. It refers to all text that is not a header, subhead, caption, ordered/unordered list or hyperlink. The standard SAIS style for body text in Site Executive is "Normal."

**The “Normal” style is currently defined as:**

Font-face: Arial, Sans Serif

Size: x-small

Color: black (#000000)

**Note:** Please make sure that the body text on your pages conforms to the above style. Always use black text, and please keep the font size set at “x-small.”

All paragraphs or blocks of text used on the SAIS Web site should always be **left-justified**. Centered or right-justified text results in ragged margins or odd word spacing that make text difficult to read. Paragraphs should **never** be centered or right-justified. Paragraphs should be separated by single carriage return, resulting in one line of white space between each paragraph.

## **Headers**

Every SAIS Web page should contain a header that clearly and succinctly describes the page’s content. Never make the header a link unless absolutely necessary (although it is fine to make the header an anchor). The standard SAIS style for primary headers in Site Executive is “**Header1**.”

**The “Header1” style is currently defined as:**

Font-face: Helvetica, Arial, Sans Serif

Size: large

Color: blue (#336699)

As with body text, headers should always be left-justified to ensure readability. Pairing centered headers with left-aligned text results in a disorienting and unpredictable reading experience.

## **Subheads**

Subheads are used to identify sub-sections of a page. For example, please see the “About SAIS” page located at: <http://www.sais-jhu.edu/pubaffairs/AboutSAIS/index.html>. Never make the header a link unless absolutely necessary (although it is fine to make the header an anchor). The standard SAIS style for subheads is “**Subhead**.”

**The “Subhead” style is currently defined as:**

Font-face: Arial, Sans Serif

Size: x-small

Color: blue (#336699)

As with body text and headers, subheads should always be left-justified to ensure readability.

## **Bold-facing, Italicizing and Underlining Text**

Text formatting should be used sparingly, and there should **never** be an instance where an entire paragraph block is bolded, italicized or underlined. The following are the only instances where text formatting should be used:

### **Acceptable use of bolded text:**

- To emphasize a particular thought or idea (example: “There should **never** be an instance where an entire paragraph block is bolded ...”)
- To highlight proper names (such as event speakers and organizations)

### **Acceptable use of italicized text:**

- Names of periodicals (such as *The Washington Post* and *The Economist*)

### **Acceptable use of underlined text:**

- Hyperlinks

## **Using Images**

Please keep the following in mind when importing images into a Site Executive page:

- Do not post copyrighted images without permission from the copyright holder.
- Image resolution for images should always be set at 72 dpi (or 72 dots per inch) in Photoshop.
- Please use GIF’s for line art and JPEG’s for photographs.
- All images should have a 1-pixel black border applied in the “Insert IMG” dialog box in Site Executive.
- All images should have an alt tag applied in the “Insert IMG” dialog box. The alt tag is used by screen readers for the blind to provide context to the photo. When creating the alt tag, please use the syntax: “Photo: Description of photo”.
- Please use no more than 2 pixels of horizontal and vertical space in the “Insert IMG” dialog box.

## **Additional Notes**

- When creating new pages, please remember to include the “.html” extension at the end of the file name (example: “index.html”).
- Web pages, image files, Microsoft Word documents and PDF’s should never have

spaces in the file names. If a space is required, please use an “\_” to represent it (example: “about\_sais.html”).

- All file names on the Web site should be in lower case – never use capital letters, or all-caps.
- Never place a “.” in a file name for the Web site, except when adding a file extension (such as “.html,” “.jpg” and “.gif”), or use special characters such as “\*” and “%” and “&” – all of these have meaning in HTML, PHP, Perl and other scripting languages and can cause problems when people try to view your pages from certain browsers.
- Please do not use the “Print this Page” module on a page if there is no written content.
- All links to external sites should be set to open in a new window.
- Please do not include “coming soon” links in your navigation.