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NKU standardizes Web site style

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Northern Kentucky University's College of Informatics Web site is the first to adopt the school's new Web-design standards.

The university's Web site, www.nku.edu, was cobbled together independently by the school's many departments and organizations. NKU didn't have a central authority dictating how it should be created. Now that Web sites are the primary information portal for current and prospective students, that cobbling has led to each page having its own design, structure and layout.

In 2005, the school decided to rebuild its Web presence.

The Informatics site changes are "reflective of the designs that will over time be incorporated into the whole university site," said Kathy Bennett, manager of the Web rebuild project.

"We are standardizing the look and feel so that in the future it will be apparent to all visitors that they are on the NKU site as they travel through our site. It also ensures consistent branding and navigation is utilized," said Bennett.

Bennett said every NKU page will have the same header, footer, navigation, fonts and colors. Her team is also building a style guide for individual departments to follow when constructing their site.

A big part of Bennett's job will be to make sure every department and organization sticks with the new design.

"Initially, the IT Web team and the marketing and communications department will be working closely together to build the new department sites so we will be ensuring standards are met," said Bennett. "After (being) deployed, marketing and communications will be responsible for monitoring standards."

"However, just as on the Informatics site, there is plenty of room for individuality in the departments," she said.

Chris Brewer, NKU's director of online technology, said the redesign will help get the word out about the new College of Informatics.

"As a work in progress, the new Web site provides the college a framework to highlight the exciting efforts of our student and faculty - within the context of higher education as well as in the greater community," said Brewer. "We plan to continue adding content to the site - in the form of multimedia features - about the accomplishments and efforts of our students, faculty and staff."

Students will be doing much of the work.

"These students will benefit from dealing with real-world requirements, project management, deliverable schedules, cross-discipline teams and the public display of their work," said Brewer. "Their resumes and portfolios will be filled with relevant examples of their work in use."

The new Web site can be found at <http://informatics.nku.edu>

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