

Art of Central Africa Website Project Guidelines

The website can currently be viewed on a test site at:

<http://www2test.ku.edu/~arcc/>

Basic Layout of the Website

The specific recommendations I incorporated into this text were provided by computer technology expert, Phillip Melton, on the basis of having spent a lot of time cleaning up the existing website.

Please follow his specifications to the tooth.

Immediately after you have received *Dreamweaver* training you should layout the basic design for your website. If you wait too long, you will forget what you were taught. This is a lot of fun, so jump right in.

Use only *Dreamweaver*, do not use any other software to create this website. Your project is only a small portion of a much larger project. If everybody uses a different program, it becomes impossible to manage the site.

I. Basic Steps

- a. Use Dreamweaver
- b. Include a basic descriptive title on every webpage
 1. Appears in the upper left of the browser.
- c. Include a button (link) back to the "African Virtual Tour Homepage"
- d. On every page in your site include a button back to your own Home Page
- e. Your webpage should have a background design
- f. Your webpage should utilize borders
- g. Test your final website in several browsers
 1. Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, etc
 2. They will often display things differently.
- h. Maintain a consistent flow and style of information throughout your site
- i. Each site needs these basic pages:
 1. Formal Analysis
 2. Images and 3D View
 3. Cultural Context
 4. History
 5. Condition Report
 6. Donor
 7. Map
 8. Bibliography
 9. Links
 10. Technical Background

- j. Make sure your page is viewable within a 15-17 in monitor space
- k. On your homepage, make sure all links are immediately viewable to the surfer.
- l. **Do not** use popup commands or embed the entire site within a single page.

II. Using Text

- a. **Do not** embed text into images,
 - 1. Use layers if you want a background image.
 - 2. Example Ijebu Onile Website
- b. Do not use XML –
 - 1. Example Senufo Divination Container Website
- c. Do not overuse use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) for your fonts.
 - 1. Keep to the basics and use what you need.
 - 2. 6 styles are better than 48 styles.
- d. Do not use CSS to stitch your site together,
 - 1. **This is an editing nightmare**
 - 2. It makes any necessary corrections cumbersome and difficult
 - 3. Example Senufo Figure.
- e. Use a readable font (Times New Roman, MS Sans Serif, etc.)

III. Images

- a. Display images at either **.jpeg files** or **.gif images (jpeg is much preferred)**.
 - 1. These file types take up the least amount of space.
- b. If you create custom images in a Software program (i.e. Photoshop, Fireworks)
 - 1. Include the .psd or .png files as this will make editing easier
- c. Flash Buttons are easily created in Dreamweaver
- d. Do not puzzle piece images together, use a single image
- e. Display images at 70% resolution.
- f. If you want enlarged individual photos, embed them within a webpage
- g. If you scan images, scan them at a much higher resolution, at least 600 pixels, but save them at a 70% resolution.
- h. When photographing objects, too, use a very high resolution, at least 600. Then reduce the resolution for website use.

IV. 3-D Images

- a. Use Quicktime VR 1.0 in the ARCC lab
- b. Save the object as a **.mov file (Very Important!!!)**
 - 1. The default is an .obj file, so this **needs to be changed** to .mov
- c. Make sure that controllers are embedded in the final website
- e. Make sure that the final 3D image will fit into a **350 wide, 483 tall box**
 - 1. This will allow it to be viewed comfortably on the website

V. Multimedia (Sound and Video)

- a. Use a Quicktime plugin
- b. Test on separate browsers as different file types display differently
- c. embed sound files within the body of the webpage using the <embed> tag.

Bibliography

Before you can go ahead with any of the other writing projects you need to assemble a bibliography. Find general texts and exhibition catalogs that deal with Central African art, or with art of your particular region. Search the library's catalog for texts on your particular ethnic group as well. Search *African Arts* journal. The library (Art Library) has the complete run. *African Arts* is the major source of information for most African art. Search other databases (through the libraries Information Gateway) and check in particular data bases that cover Art History and Anthropology. You can ask a librarian to help you identify which databases you should search; the Art Index is a good place to start. As you are finding titles, identify the newest and most extensive volumes. Then search the bibliographies in these texts for further references. Finally, assemble this bibliography using for a format the Chicago Manual of Styles and identify the most important scholars that deal with your subject matter.

Due date: September 11 (first draft), corrected versions are due September 20

- 1) Provide a **properly formatted** bibliography which includes monographs and journal articles. If you include general texts on Central African art, include the page numbers for the sections that you will review.
- 2) Below the bibliography identify which scholars you intend to contact.
- 3) This assignment requires every team members' signature. I want to know that everybody has contributed to it. You can share information through blackboard; you can send each other drafts of material and edit them on blackboard. The final signatures can be gathered before class. Be sure that you designated a person who will print out the material.

Letter to a Scholar in the Field

Not all the objects in the museum are properly identified. In some cases we do not know for certain to which ethnic group an object belongs, or what the object is. Before you go much further asserting anything about the object, you need to verify the attribution with a scholar who is an expert in the particular subfield to which your artwork pertains. You will identify which scholars to contact and secure their addresses. You will write a letter asking for verification of the object's attribution and kindly request any information the scholar might have about the object that hasn't been published. You might ask the scholar for further references (attach your bibliography). It have to include a photograph of your object in your letter.

In addition you will try to solicit photographs or even video clips from the scholar's field work records for inclusion in the website. To do this, you need to know something about the work this scholar has done. You need to explain the nature of the website, you need to ask for copies of photographs or videos and for written permission to use this material on a live website. Be sure that you don't sound demanding. The scholars have better things to do than to make copies of photographs or videos for you, so you want to be very, very, very friendly and humble.

The letter to the scholars (maybe two or three scholars at the most) have to be extremely well written. Do not mail any letters until I have edited them. Provide a copy of your final draft with your team mates' signatures that verify that all team members have read this draft and given it their best shot. I will edit your final version and you will then mail a corrected version of it.

Due Date: September 13

1) A completed letter to the scholar with address. I will edit this letter, you will make last corrections by September 25th and then mail this letter.

Formal Analysis and Condition Report

The team member responsible for the condition report should examine the art work at the same time that photographers complete their job. This minimizes the strain we place on ARCC's staff.

All objects have to be handled with great care. You need to wear gloves (provided by the museum) when handling objects. Some of the objects may be fragile, so pay attention to what you are doing and prop objects up with supports when necessary.

You will receive a form from ARCC's staff, which you will fill out diligently. However, aside from the filling out the form, you will also write a very detailed description of the objects, so your observation should be keen and you should take extensive notes on a separate sheet of paper.

To fill out the Condition Report form examine the object from every angle and check for any obvious signs of damage, broken parts, missing parts, loose parts, reattached parts. Are there any signs of repair? Any signs of covering up cracks or painting over marks? Any signs of abrasion? Is there evidence of wear and tear? Has the object been used or does it appear to be brand new, perhaps a never used tourist object? Are there any signs of fungus or mold? What is the condition of the structure of the objects? What is the condition of attachments? Are feathers in good shape? Are textiles in tact and clean? Everything you notice needs to be indicated on the condition report in great detail. The condition report form will eventually go to the museum. Make a Xerox copy of it.

After your time in the museum, write an extremely detailed description of the object. This description will go on the website. This is a difficult job. It is not easy to write a description without boring the reader to death. You need to work hard on using eloquent language. This will probably take four or five drafts. Read out loud as you write. Doing so will help you create sentences that flow easily. You need to start by describing the art works overall form and then slowly zero in on all the details. Be organized about it. Pretend that you trying to describe the object to a blind person and that you are trying to make them feel something of the visual quality of the object.

When you are done with the description, take the information from your condition report and transform it into a paragraph made up of complete sentences. Call this subsection: Condition Report.

Due Date: October 11 (first drafts), final edited version due Oct 23

Provide the following:

- 1) A hard copy of very well written and carefully edited Formal Analysis with a subsection called Condition Report.
- 2) A photocopy of the Condition Report form you filled out for the museum, and
- 3) the original of the condition report form.

All members of your team should read your report and provide their signature that verifies they each read your text, edited it, and that this is the best your team can produce. This is true for all written material

Photography:

The photographers in the group need to set up an appointment with Tom Foor of ARCC to gain access to the work of art and to photography equipment. ARCC staff can only handle two teams or so per week. You should try to get this aspect of the project done as soon as possible, as you will need the photographs for further reference. I expect all teams to have completed the photography no later than **10/11/2006**. Tom Foor makes himself available specifically to assist you; he does not hold regular hours in Spooner Hall. It is therefore very important that you honor your appointments, that you show up on time, and that you follow the staff's directions to the tooth.

All objects have to be handled with great care. You need to **wear gloves** (provided by the museum) when handling objects. Some of the objects may be fragile, so pay attention to what you are doing and prop objects up with supports when necessary.

In the photography room you will find a digital camera, a tripod, and an area set up to allow you to spread cloths (of which there is a selection in the closet), and lighting equipment. You will receive instructions when you are on location. Your job is to produce high quality photographs of the object. The object should be properly lit and the background cloths should be clean, free of lint or dust, and arranged in a pleasing manner. You need photographs of all angles of the object and you need photographs of those details that are of particular interest. You should photograph the inside of face masks. Once the website is online, take a look at the photograph on the home page of the Bobo staff. That is the quality we are hoping for.

Your photographs should be taken at the **highest resolution** the camera can handle (at the very least 600 pixels/inch. After you are finished, you need to copy the images to a CD. Save one copy of all of the images at this very high resolution as a **TIFF file**. This CD will eventually be added to ARCC's archive.

Then reduce the size of all the images to a resolution of **72 pixels/inch and a maximum height of 768 pixels or a maximum width of 1024 pixels. Save these images as JPEG files. [Do not save images as GIF Files or Bit Maps.]** Once you construct the website, you may have to further reduce the size of the images. You will receive further instructions. For now you should know that most computer screens can only process the 72 pixel/inch resolution and the size I specified. Anything of a higher resolution or larger size just takes up an enormous amount of memory and slows down the website considerably. Following these specifications is therefore important.

Due date: October 11:

- 1) One CD with your photographs in a TIFF format at a very high resolution
- 2) One CD with your photographs in a JPEG format at resolution of 72 pixels/inch, downsized to a height of 768 pixels or a width of 1024 pixels.

The CDs need to be marked with a **permanent marker**: specify the **Group Number**, the **Name of the art work**, and the name of the photographers.

Although the 3d views of the objects will be created by a special team of students, Brett Schiezer and Evan Germann, you will need to provide a space for it on your website and a link to this space on your homepage. Check with Brett and Evan whether your website will receive a 3-d view or not (very large, very small, or flat objects are exempt) and obtain their assistance with attaching the 3-d view to your website.

Note: You may not use photographs on the website to which you do not own a copyright. You may include field photographs obtained from scholars, but only if you have their explicit, written permission. In the past, students have drawn pictures based on photographs. See the *Gelede II* website under images or the *Mende Sowe* website.

Background and Border Designs

I do not want any web pages that have a white background. Each website has to incorporate a background design and borders. These designs should relate to your particular object or to the ethnic group. In the past students have drawn pictures or created designs based on details of the objects. Make sure that your presentation is tasteful and that it doesn't interfere with the text. Do not embed text in the designs. For an example of a really nice background design look at the *Ijebu Onile* webpage. On several of the pages the students included beautiful renderings of the objects. On the other hand, don't overdo it. The *Yoruba Ekiti* figure page, for example is a bit much. The pink script on the psychedelic background is very pretty, but it is hard to read.

Due Date: October 30. On this day submit your website layout, maps, background and border designs.

Map

We already have maps for Chokwe, Lunda, Igbo, Zimba, and Kuba culture which we can attach to your particular website. For those of you working with objects from the Cross River region, the Cameroon Grasslands, Pende or Luba culture, you will have to create your own map. Look at the map attached to the existing Chokwe sites and follow this model as closely as possible. All of you have to create a page for the map and buttons on your homepage to link to it, whether you have to actually draw the map or not. Those of you who will use existing maps, obtain a copy of the map file from our computer coordinator, Casey Ensz.

Due date: October 30

Cultural Context

For the Cultural Context page you research the ethnographic information about the people who made your object and provide an iconographic reading of the art work, i.e., here you are concerned with the meaning the object had to the people who made it. You need to read the scholarly sources you identified in the bibliography you created earlier. All of your information has to come from scholarly books or articles. You may not use websites as a source of information for this project. You are creating an authoritative site with an .edu extension. People who will read your information will assume that the information is accurate and sophisticated. The cultural context you provide should consider how the object of your website was used by the people who made it. It should provide the indigenous name of the object and provide very specific information about the object's use. Further you should provide background information about the people's religious beliefs, political organization, sociological concerns, and historic information. (Some of the existing websites provide a timeline; e.g. the Kuba Bwom mask page has a timeline with the names of several hundred years worth of king's names.)Your essay should be extensive and fully cover the anthropological scholarship about the particular ethnic group. The essay should be well crafted, needs to be free of spelling mistakes, and free of grammatical errors.

Read the most current sources first. Start with articles, then turn to monographs. This project should be tackled by several members of the group, not just one person. All of your sources need to be properly cited using the Chicago Manual of Style. Provide me with an edited draft with an indication of who wrote the text and who edited it.

Due Date: Wed, Nov 1 (1st draft), edited version is due Nov 13

History

The history page differs from the content page in that it places the ethnic group into the context of the modern nation of which it is a part. Provide the reader with information about how the people fared during the colonial period and how their culture was affected by modernization, Christianization, etc. For this page, you again turn to scholarly material and properly cite your sources, but you may draw current statistical information from websites such as the US State department or websites established by the government of the country you are dealing with. NGOs (Non-Government Organizations)

may have vital statistics as well. Find a uniform way to site website sources and place those references in footnotes in the same manner you cite other sources. I want to see your edited draft with an indication of who authored the text and who edited it.

Due Date: Mon, Nov 15 (1st draft), edited versions are due Nov 27

Technical Background

Depending on your object you may have to create a page that explains the technical aspects of your art work. In the past, for examples, students wrote up information about the lost wax casting procedure (see the *Ijebu Onile* page) or about **iron smelting** (see the *Chokwe Bellows* page). They included diagrams to make it easier for the reader to follow along. This semester we need technical procedures for the Kuba cut-pile cloth, for the beaded crowns, the skin-covered head crests, and the Chokwe baskets.

Due Date: Nov 15, edited version Nov 27

Donor

Obtain basic information about the donor from ARCC staff. ARCC has detailed information about some of the donors, less detailed information about others. Some of you will have to write up a nice summary of this information and will have photographs available to you. For an example look at the existing *Chokwe Chair* website and its page on the donor Claude Brown. Others will only obtain very sparse information from ARCC and will have to conduct research. Find out what the donor's relationship was to KU. If this person was a student or a faculty member, you will be able to find more information by consulting the Spencer Research Library or the administration. Ultimately it is your job to locate this person or a descendent and to interview this person. Write up a report about the donor. If you cannot find much, then provide me with a trail of your investigation (a detailed account of where you looked, whom you contacted, etc.). In such a case keep your comments on the actual website brief.

Due Date: Nov 20, any corrections are due Nov 27

Links

You may create links to other websites, but make sure these are fairly durable sites such as museums or other organization we know will be there for a while. Especially websites with film clips or sound clips would be great. Do not create links to the departments at KU for which we have links on the "African Virtual Tour homepage."

This is not a requirement, so there is no due date.

Web Authors

Please create a page where you briefly introduce yourself and feel free to include pictures. See the *Yoruba talking drum* website. The web authors of that page did a really nice job.

Due Date: Nov 20