

Creating an Inviting Website—Content Best Practices

TIPS FROM THE UC SAN DIEGO RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

Would a visit to your website leave a curious first-generation college student feeling like an imposter or empowered to reach out to you to learn more about your research? Does your website content reach all your audiences, including colleagues, potential students, cross-disciplinary collaborators and others unfamiliar with your discipline’s language and conventions?

General guidelines for website design are readily available (see those from the campus [Content Management System](#)), but faculty have requested additional information about what content to include on their research pages and how to organize them. We designed this tip sheet to help you make your research website content more inviting to all audiences.

GENERAL TIPS

- *Start with a hook.* Capture the audience immediately, for instance, try an eye-catching image, a thought-provoking question, puzzle, a surprising fact or an inspirational quotation.
- *Funnel the audience in.* Provide the big picture before the details. Context is not off-putting to discipline-specific colleagues, but lack of context is off-putting to everyone else.
- *Humanize the process.* Research is not just what you study, but how you study it. Try to convey how the process of your work has involved diverse intellectual contributions.
- *Make it digestible.* Minimize use of terminology and acronyms and define any you use. Organize content in bite-sized sections and use visuals, which may include [artistic depictions](#).

SPECIFIC TIPS

Research Page

- Aim to answer three questions concisely: Why, What and How. 1) **Why** do you do your research and why does it matter? 2) **What** do you research? 3) **How** do you research it?
- Consider linking to a short video of you stating what excites you about your work.
- Provide insight into the unanswered questions a student could work on, as well as how your approach or system is novel or powerful.

Biography Page

- Include your career milestones (i.e., education, positions held, honors and awards), but make this page more than a list of them.
- Consider beginning this page with a brief description of what sparked your interest in your field or area of research—your “spark story.”
- Share something beyond your professional interests that can help make you relatable to students, such as a hobby, inspiration, aspiration, list of favorites or childhood photo.

Publications Page

- Include lay-language abstracts of publications, especially for your recent work.
- Provide links to press-coverage of your work, social media and videos of your talks.
- Keep your publication list up to date. A [Google Scholar Profile](#) may help.

You may add pages to this template as relevant, such as team members and links/resources.