Editorial Policies and Specifications

Welcome to the PBS production checklist of all editorial policies and specifications. Don't be overwhelmed by the list. We have kept it short and succinct so you can spend less time reading and more time working on the things that are required for your production. Take a look at each item and be sure your content reflects what's listed in this section.

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Social Branding

Social account branding

- Handle name: PBS in the name (@shownamepbs)
- Display name: Show name | PBS
- Cover images: Tune-in if applicable, P-head

Show hashtags

- Must include PBS if used on broadcast (#WaltDisneyPBS, #RoadshowPBS, etc)
- Official hashtags should be submitted to PBS Digital for review before show packaging
- Exceptions to be cleared by PBS Digital in advance

Social image asset branding

- Must include PBS Shield logo

Social video asset branding

- Social video should include persistent PBS branding, either as a standalone Shield + PBS watermark or as a Shield + Show Logo watermark (Frontline currently does the latter).
- End card: PBS Shield logo must be included
- Closed captions required for all social short-form video that supports SRTs

Style

All sites must use a consistent editorial style, following style guides such as the Associated Press Stylebook or Chicago Manual of Style.

Site QA, Copy Edit and Fact-check

A thorough site quality assurance (QA) must be performed by the producer before delivery to PBS, including a professional copy edit and fact-check. PBS also reserves the right to require time in the production schedule for PBS QA at its discretion.

Questions?

- Browse our FAQs
- Submit a question
- Visit the Producer Facebook page

Copyright Protection and Notification

Producers must take full responsibility for protecting the copyright of a site as well as the property rights of materials licensed for use on that site and provide copyright information at the bottom of every page of a site. The following copyright information must be included at the bottom of every page on your site: *Copyright Year   Content Provider Name.   All rights reserved.* See example

Date-Stamping

All PBS.org websites must display the date of publication at the bottom of every page next to the copyright notice. If content is corrected or updated, the appropriate pages must also bear a "last updated on" date stamp.

Credits and Sources

All content, including images, must be credited and sourced. An author's name should appear next to the individual's work; if possible, a brief bio should be included, or the author's name linked to a page with biographical information. Authors' names should also be included in the Site Credits section.

Production Credits

If your site includes site or program credits, they must be presented on a separate page and not on the homepage or section index pages. The only exceptions are proprietary credits (such as "A film by…"), host and narrator credits as approved by your program manager.

Funder Recognition

On PBS.org, there are three opportunities for funders to be recognized for a program, including:

1. Funder logos in footer of program website
2. Funder text on Show page (Funder text is limited to 500 characters, including spaces, on the front end, but additional characters are allowed in the backend to accommodate hyperlinks and HTML coding.)
3. Up to :15 Funder Pod on full length video. Full specs here.

Alternative Content

Sites must be designed so that key content features are accessible to users without plug-ins. If a plug-in (such as Shockwave Flash) is used for a key feature, a non-plug-in version must also be included. This is to ensure that your content is visible on any device.

Photo/Image Alterations

Altering involves adding, subtracting or rearranging the elements in a photo and should not be done unless disclosed to the visitor. Techniques commonly used with stills that are not considered alterations include camera moves, cropping, highlighting a portion of a photo and computer layering.

Corrections and Updates

Substantive changes to content — such as additions or deletions that alter the previous meaning of the content or corrections of significant error — must include a published correction or an editorial note as close as possible to the corrected content. Minor corrections, such as misspellings or inconsequential punctuation errors that do not affect meaning, can be made without notifying users.

Site Updates

All sites must be maintained by the producer throughout the term of rights. This includes:

- keeping outside links current
- maintaining databases
- updating broadcast information
- responding to users
- troubleshooting site glitches

Users must have a mechanism for reporting broken and/or outdated links which create an experience that will discourage the audience from visiting or returning to your site.

URL Changes

Your site's url must be presented with your site map and approved by your content manager. Once the site is live, you must not change the url without permission from PBS Digital.

File and Directory Naming Conventions

You must use the following file and directory naming conventions in line with SEO best practices.

- The primary site url must match the program name if applicable, use hyphens between words, and omit articles such as *the*, *a* and *an*. **Correct:** pbs.org/program-name **Incorrect:** pbs.org/the-program-name or pbs.org/programname.
- A simpler redirect url may be created with PBS Digital's approval. For example: *pbs.org/program* redirecting to *pbs.org/station/full-program-name*.
- Subdirectories and file names must be given clear, descriptive names, use hyphens between words, and omit articles. For example: pbs.org/program-name/subdirectory-subject/descriptive-page-title.html.
- Files and directories must use an all-lowercase naming convention. Do not use capital letters, and do not use any characters other than a-z, 0-9, period (.) and dash (-) . Spaces are not allowed in file or directory names.

Title tags

Title tags must be included on every page and feed. All sites launched after November 1, 2009 must use titles that begin with targeted keywords relevant to each page or feed and end with the name of the site and "PBS." The title strategy should follow best practices posted to the SEO section of PBS's Producer Exchange , and must be approved by your content manager.

Outside Links

Outside links must be easily identified as such and open in a new window or tab. All links must be researched, vetted and maintained. Annotation describing the link and how it is relevant must be provided so users can quickly assess their interest in the site without clicking through. Any links to controversial content require pre-approval by PBS Interactive, and may require warnings to identify the content as potentially objectionable to the user. PBS reserves the right to require producers to remove inappropriate or broken links to outside sites.

No Direct Calls to Action

PBS.org Web sites may not include calls to action that support a specific viewpoint. Information about ways site visitors might take action around a particular issue or topic must have appropriate context and labeling. All content must pass a perception test to ensure that visitors to the site do not perceive that the site's editorial integrity has been compromised by a particular agenda or by association with an outside party.

PBS.org Privacy Policy and Terms of Use

All PBS.org content must conform to the PBS Privacy Policy and Terms of Use, and links to both must be included on every page of a pbs.org site. Read and link to the PBS Privacy Policy and Terms of Use at http://www.pbs.org/aboutsite/aboutsite_privacy.html and http://www.pbs.org/aboutsite/aboutsite_rules.html.

PBS Logo and Branding

Web site pages must not include more than one PBS logo; the PBS logo within the global navigation bar is the only PBS logo that should appear on the pages of your Web site.

The PBS logo — or "Phead" bug — should not be embedded in video that is only displayed on PBS.org as this video already appears within a branded, PBS-only context. Video for syndication, social media, and other media and content that can be seen outside of PBS.org must include branding elements, which can be provided by your program manager.

Design and Usability

Developers must be particularly careful to create a space that is clear and intuitive, with strong attention to readability, clarity and navigability. Compliance with The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) (http://www.w3.org) guidelines and recommendations is required to ensure good and up-to-date Web design and usability practices.

Global Navigation

The PBS.org global navigation bar must be placed on every page of your general-audience site using a standard server-side include. All other navigational elements must be in a consistent location on the site.

The PBS.org navigation bar is automatically generated by a server side include available in the PBS Product Documentation area at http://docs.pbs.org/x/L4Cr. This include must be inserted immediately after the HTML <BODY> tag, and must not be contained by any other design elements. The include may not be placed within a table, DHTML layer, <DIV> or any other tag. Do not hard code the resulting navigation bar graphics into your pages.

Maximum Page Dimensions

Web pages must be viewable without horizontal scrolling on a 1024 x 768 pixel screen resolution.

E-mail Feedback Form

Every site must include an e-mail feedback form and inform visitors how their feedback will be considered, indicate optional fields, and ask users for their permission to post. This tool for direct feedback is required in addition to any commenting opportunities that may exist on the site, which post publicly and are focused on specific content. All e-mail feedback forms must use the PBS Postmaster code widget (http://docs.pbs.org/x/doCr). Once producers are no longer obligated to maintain the site, they must update the form to send users to the general PBS feedback page at http://www.pbs.org /aboutsite/aboutsite_feedback.html.

No Under Construction Pages

"Under construction" pages are not allowed, however, producers may launch long-lead preview sites for promotional purposes in consultation with their program managers.

Custom 404 Pages

Customized 404 ("Page not found") pages must be submitted for pre-approval at the content outline and page design stages. All customized 404 pages must be in HTML only and must use PBS's redirect script at http://docs.pbs.org/x/dYCr.

A customized 404 page should match the look and feel of the site and must contain the following elements:

- A brief statement explaining the error (e.g. "The page you are trying to reach doesn't exist at this address. If you reached this page by clicking on a link, please fill out the form below. Be sure to include the name of the site you were trying to visit and the address (URL) of the page that brought you here. (Press the Back button on your browser to see this address.)")

- An e-mail form to report a broken link (it is recommended that you use the Postmaster code widget)

Description Metadata

A Meta Description must be included on each page of your site, and should follow best practices posted to the SEO section of the Producer Exchange at http://docs.pbs.org/x/U4Cr.

Keywords Metadata

A short list of content-targeted keywords must be included on each page of your site.

Search Engine Optimization

PBS Web sites must follow search engine optimization (SEO) best practices as outlined at http://docs. pbs.org/x/U4Cr .

Accessibility

You must plan and execute key content features in a way that ensures accessibility for audiences with disabilities, particularly those who are sight- or hearing-impaired. WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) 2.0 compliance is strongly encouraged, as outlined at http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20. Most grant-funded projects also require Section 508 compliance. For more information on making your content accessible, visit the National Center for Accessible Media's Web site at http://ncam.wgbh.org.

PBS Editorial Standards

In addition to the above policies for the Web, PBS has an editorial standards and policies document. For more information, visit: http://www.pbs.org/aboutpbs/aboutpbs_standards.html

Not-for-Profit Statement

All pbs.org websites launched or redesigned after April 1, 2012 must include the following text on every page, ideally in the site footer: "PBS is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization."