ARTS EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE
COMMUNICATIONS PLAYBOOK

AEC's primary audiences:

- school and district administrators
- teachers
- arts and cultural staff
- teaching artists
- funders

AEC EMAIL

Best Practices

- Short and simple content is easier to skim and could increase the audience's intake and retention
  - Trim copy to 200 words
  - Use 25 or fewer words per sentence

- Using a consistent format/template will help the reader know where to find the information they are looking for
  - Most important information and main takeaways should appear first
  - Dividing text into sections allows the user to quickly scan your email if they're short on time
  - Provide clear and obvious calls to action – buttons are a great call to action (CTA)
  - Font size should be 14-16px for readability across devices

- Adding more images throughout the text will provide better balance
  - Make sure images are consistently sized throughout the email to maintain balance

- Text in colored boxes is often hard to read

- Use MailChimp's 'optimal send time' to try to reach users when they're most likely to read your email

- Segmenting your mailing lists to send specific emails to your various audience groups will improve open rates and click through rates

When to use

MailChimp: MailChimp should be used to send e-communications when they're a broad communication requiring a more sophisticated design or layout. Examples include AEC's quarterly newsletter and event invitations.

Salesforce: Salesforce should be used to send detailed and data-driven e-communications. For example, you can send parking information, details about lunch, and confirmations to those who have registered for an event such as the **art**look®'s happy hours using the info they provided when registering to attend.

Style Guide

Font: Lato
Headline: Headline 1
Copy: Default text
Spacing: 1 ½

Colors

Red: #BE1E2D – used for headlines
Blue: #00AEEF – used for line breaks and all links within copy
Black: used for all copy

💬 **AEC** SOCIAL MEDIA

Best Practices

- Post weekly on AEC's Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram channels

    - A regular posting schedule is a key part of ensuring AEC's placement in any social media algorithm and allows the audience to know what to expect

    - According to early 2023 analytics, Thursday is AEC's highest traffic day

- Keep content brief and intentional

    - All post copy should be brief (2-3 sentences, max)

    - Make sure spelling and grammar are correct and all links are operational

    - Check if there are partner pages you can tag or a hashtag that should be included

        - Consider creating a **catalogue of partner social media channels**. Anytime a new partner is added, update this shared document.

    - All posts should be shared with an image, graphic, or link

        - With all images posted, provide a brief alt-text description (1-2 sentences, max)
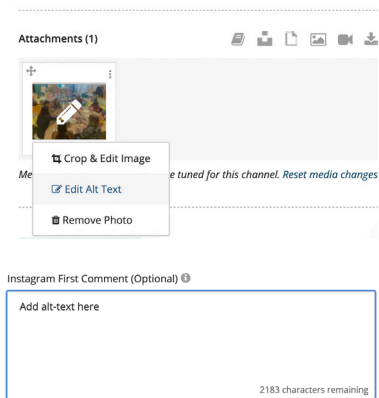
Facebook and Twitter: When building posts in Loomly, alt-text can be added during step 4. Once a photo has been attached, hover over the image and click the pencil icon or three stacked dots. Add and save your alt-text.

Instagram: This channel does not offer an alt-text option. To ensure AEC's posts are accessible, add the image description as the first comment under the post. When building posts in Loomly, you will see this option during step 4. Once a photo has been attached, add and save you alt-text.
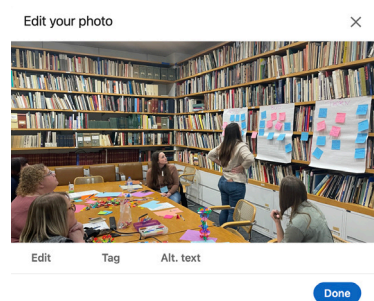
LinkedIn: This channels has not yet been added to Loomly but does offer an alt-text option when posting natively to the channel. Once a photo has been attached, LinkedIn automatically offers the option to edit the photo, tag a partner, or add alt-text.

💬 **AEC** SOCIAL MEDIA

- Perform daily channel checks

  - Respond to messages and comments

  - Engage with posts AEC is tagged in

  - Like and comment on partner and funder posts

- Create a photo library of evergreen photo and graphic assets to be used at any time

  - AEC's photo library should be a shared, organized space containing labeled folders of the best photography from AEC events

  - After any AEC event, a member of the staff should create a new folder with the name of the event and photographer

  - Only the best event photos should be saved. Examples include:

    - High-resolution images

    - Landscape and portrait

    - Posed and candid shots

    - Engaging photos where faces are visible

    - Photos that demonstrate the scale or success of the event

- Engage with partners, funders, and other arts organizations

  - Leveraging these relationships will showcase AEC's connections and increase brand awareness

  - Activate partners, funders, teaching artists, and others to post about their relationship with AEC and help amplify messaging

    - In communications with partners via emails, instructional documents, or conversations, directly ask them to post about AEC's support and tag AEC's social media channels.

    - If you see a partner post about work AEC was included in, comment on the post and tag AEC.

AEC WORDPRESS SITE

Logging in:

Type **artsedcollab.org/wp-admin** into your web browser to get into the backend of your website.

Your username is: **AEC**
Your password is case sensitive: **Roy-G-Biv27**
The email associated with this account is **info@artsedcollab.org**

Note: This user has admin privileges and access to the whole site and its settings. You can create multiple user accounts with different privileges under Users.

Now you're looking at the WordPress Dashboard.
The left-hand sidebar of this page has everything you'll need to edit your site.

.org **Updating pages:**

Find and click on PAGES on the left-hand side bar.

1. Scroll down until you see the page you want to edit.
2. Once you hover over the page title, options will show up underneath it. Click on Edit.
3. The page editor will open. Scroll down until you see what you want to edit. Hover over the area until the gray edit options show.
4. Click the "pen" edit icon. That item will open and you can make your changes.
5. Once finished make sure to click SAVE on the edit content window.
6. To make these changes live, scroll up and click on the blue UPDATE button on the top right-hand side.
7. Now your updates have been made and you can see your changes by clicking on the URL under the page title. You can always go back and edit pages by clicking on the Edit button in the black editor bar on the front end of the site.

Adding/Replacing Images

1. Hover over the Image and click the pencil icon to edit.
2. In the first section of the pop-up window, click the edit button.
3. Optional: Look at the image info on the right-hand side to make sure your new image is the same size. If this is not important to the layout of the page, you can disregard this step and click Remove from the previous screen.
4. Click Upload image.
5. On the Add media screen, at the top, click on the Upload Files tab.
6. Click Select Files and upload the new image.
7. Once it's uploaded, you will return to the Add media screen with your new image in a blue frame with a blue check mark box checked. On the right-hand side, make sure to fill in the Alt Text. It's a description of the image for screen readers and search engines to read. Important for accessibility and SEO ranking. Also, make sure the title is something a human can read, not just abbreviations or numbers.
8. Click Insert into page.
9. You will return to the Image settings screen. Click Save on that pop up window.

Editing Text

Your site is designed with preset formatting for text. This not only sets the size and weight of the text, but also tells search engines what is the most important information on the page. There are 7 different presets:

Heading 1
Heading 2
Heading 3
Heading 4
Heading 5

Heading 6

paragraph

- Heading 1 – for page titles/the most important information on the page
- Heading 2 – the second heading/the second most important information on the page
- Heading 3, 4, 5, 6, so on and so forth

You'll want to keep your formatting consistent throughout your site not only for accessibility standards, but also to keep the website visitor familiar with the content layout.

The best way to do this is to look at the formatting of the previous content, or look at a similar page's formatting.

To keep the formatting while editing, or see the formatting:

1. Click the Text tab on the right-hand side above the text editing area. It will show you the hidden coding. <H2> is for example. If you don't need this, you can highlight and delete everything including the <H2> to </H2>.
2. To edit the text, click into the text after <H2> and edit the title there. Be careful not to edit the closing </H2>.
3. Once finished click Save on the edit box.

Adding Text & Links

1. Once the Text Block Settings box opens, click the black clipboard button. This will make sure what you paste into the text area doesn't bring in any invisible formatting from your word doc or elsewhere.
2. Highlight all the text in the box, delete and paste in your new text.
3. Check to make sure spacing and returns are correct. Pasting from an outside resource usually adds unintended formatting.
4. To add a link to text:
   a. Highlight the text you want to hyperlink and click the chain link icon on the type editing toolbar.
   b. A new pop up window will open. Paste or type the link you want in the link area. Then click the gear. This will expand the link options window. If your link will take the visitor off your site, make sure to click the box that says Open link in new tab.
   c. Click the blue button, Add Link.
5. Click Save on the Text Block Settings box.
6. When you've finished editing the whole page, click the Update button on the right hand side bar. No changes are saved until you click the Update button.
7. View the site from the front end to make sure you like your changes.

.org **Uploading and linking a PDF**

Before you upload any doc or pdf to the web, make sure to name it appropriately. When a user downloads or views that doc, the filename will be visible.

Find and click on MEDIA on the left-hand Dashboard side bar.

1. All of the Media for the site will be shown on a new page. At the very top, click on Add New.

2. Click SELECT FILES.

3. Locate your PDF wherever you saved it on your computer.

4. It will upload and "crunch 100%" Click on the Edit link that appears.

5. Your pdf attachment page will show. On the right-hand sidebar, find the File URL – this is the PDF location on the web now.

6. Highlight this entire URL and copy it. You'll paste this URL into the link later.

7. Go to wherever you'd like the link to the PDF to be, highlight it, and click the chain link icon.

8. A new pop up window will open. Paste or type the link you want in the link area. Then click the gear.

9. This will expand the link options window. Click the box that says Open link in new tab.

10. Remember to save on the content editor window, then Update on the page editor.
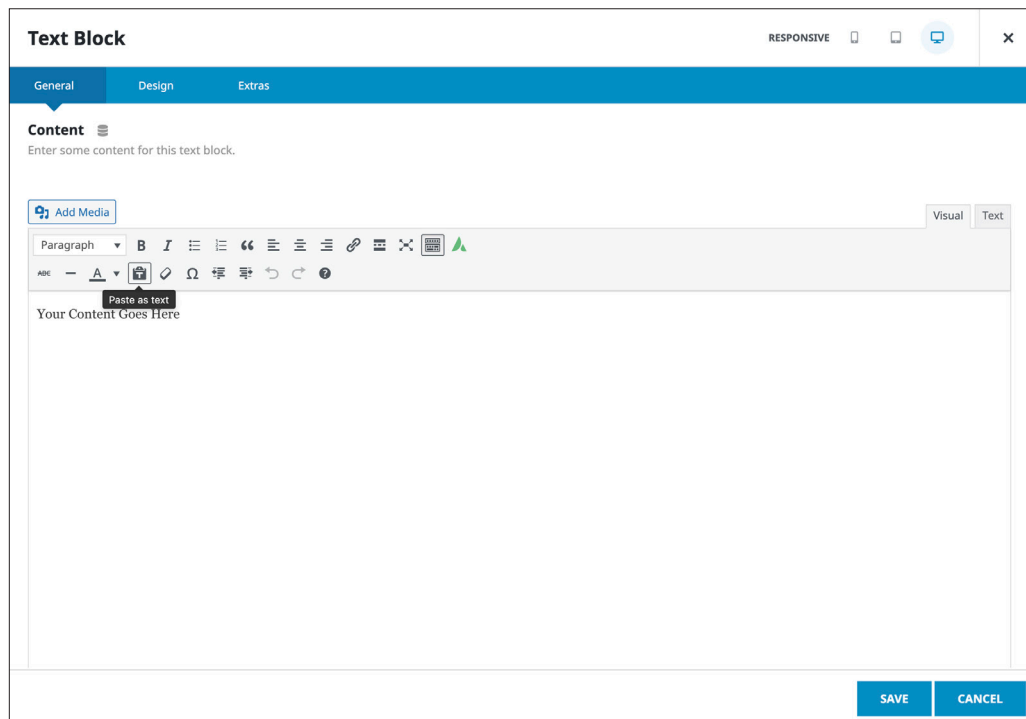
Adding a News Item

1. While logged into the back end of the site, hover over the +New in the black admin top bar.
2. Click on Post
3. A new Post page will appear. Enter the title.
4. Click on the blue Avada Builder button.
5. In the Avada Builder box, click the Library tab in the black bar.
6. In the next window, click on Templates in the blue toolbar.
7. Find Post Template, and click on Load – Replace all page content.
8. A pre-formatted template will populate.
9. Edit the content of the template: Title, Image, content.

   - If this is a "News" post:
     - In the text editing box, enter the news source and the date it was published. For example: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette – (May 22, 2022)
     - Paste the rest of the text. Be sure to check the spacing and returns.
     - At the bottom of the text, type in 'Read the full story here' and link it to the article, clicking the box to open the link in a new window.

10. On the right hand sidebar, start at the top and check through each options section:

    - Publish box: if you want to set the post to auto publish, you can select the date in the future you'd like it to post on.
    - Format can stay at Standard.
    - Make sure the correct Category or Categories are chosen.
    - Add a featured image. This is what will show on the main News page.

11. Optional, but recommended: Below the text edit box is the Yoast SEO box. This is for search engine optimization and social sharing. You may optimize your post here.

    a. Click on the Social tab
    b. Add a Facebook image. These need to be 1200×630.

12. Once you have everything ready, click Publish on the right-hand sidebar.
13. Your new post will be live. Check it on the front end.

Checking Responsiveness

It's always best to view any new content on multiple screen sizes to make sure the formatting looks as expected. To do this, view your site on Google Chrome's browser.

1. Control click (mac) or right click anywhere on the site.
2. Select inspect.
3. A screen with a bunch of code will show at the bottom of the screen. At the top of that, there is a small icon of two squares that looks like a cell phone. Click that icon.
4. The screen will resize. At the top of the browser window, you'll see options for which screen size you want to see. It's good to check multiple.
5. This is a good tool, but it does not display exactly the same as these devices.
6. Optional, but a good idea is to check your new pages across different browsers. Some items may display differently on Chrome vs. Safari, Firefox…

General WordPress Maintenance

When you're working on the site, or at minimum monthly, you should check for updates to your software. These optimize speed, compatibility and protect against virus vulnerability.

On the dashboard left-hand sidebar hover over Dashboard at the top of the list.

1. Click Updates.
2. If WordPress needs to be updated, click the blue Update Now button.
3. If you receive a Database update required screen, click Update WordPress Database.
4. If any plugins or themes need to be updated, you can click the box next to them then click the Update Plugins button.
5. Check the front end of your site for the update's compatibility.

.org **General Accessibility Best Practices**

The WordPress platform itself has been developed to conform to all Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2 .1 Level A and Level AA guidelines:

Level A addresses concerns considered to be accessibility barriers on a very wide scale that will prevent many people from accessing the site.

Level AA addresses concerns that are generally somewhat more complicated to address and may impact smaller groups of people, but are still common needs with broad reach.

To utilize this built-in feature:

- Use appropriate heading hierarchy (H1, H2, H3…).
- Use 2 different styling indicators to signify that text is a link. Both color and weight for those with impaired vision. (bold is a good solution)
- All site fonts should be 11pt. or larger.
- Limit text line length to 80 characters.
- Ensure the text to background contrast levels are appropriate for users with impaired vision. See resources below.
- All images should have Alt attributes to make them readable for screen readers.
- Use consistent styling across the pages of the site for predictability. This helps users find content, orient themselves within it, and navigate through it.
- Allow the ability to pause all videos. There should be no sound if a video autostarts.
- All forms on the site should have fields correctly and clearly labeled as well as placeholder text where applicable (example@example.com).

Potentially helpful accessibility resources

- **Eyedropper tool for your chrome browser** that lets you select a color from your screen.
- **Color contrast checker** - this free website lets you check the contrast of your foreground and background items. It has contrast suggestions already there for you if you fail any test.
- A potentially helpful resource for **a deep dive into accessibility**

AEC Web Colors

AEC Orange: #FA7C00
AEC Black: #231F20
AEC White: #FFFFFF
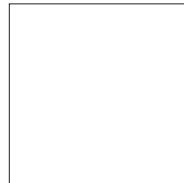AEC Blue: #00AEEF
AEC Red: #BE1E2D
Light gray background: #F4F4F4

#FA7C00   #231F20   #FFFFFF   #00AEEF   #BE1E2D

#F4F4F4

Text gray

Primary: #6A6768
Secondary: #231F20
Tertiary: #231F1F

#6A6768   #231F20   #231F1F

AEC Web Fonts

Body: Avenir Next
Headings: Kameron