



IT USE GUIDELINE

Web Site Hosting and Virtual Host Names

Provides guidance regarding issues associated with hosting of web sites and web pages representing UA or UA affiliated departments, organizations or groups.

Effective as of: **8/1/2014**

Sponsor and Approvers:

Scott Montgomery, Ashley Ewing - Sponsors

John McGowan, Ashley Ewing, IT Governance - Approvers

Status of Guideline: **Published**

Audience:

This IT Guideline should be observed by:

Students Faculty Staff

Contractors/suppliers

Other (specify) [Click here to specify "other"](#).

Statement of need and purpose:

There are numerous web sites representing UA interests that are hosted on servers in the UA data center and on servers in departmental areas or even at third party locations. These generally follow the convention "sitename.ua.edu" where sitename represents the group. These web site names are referred to as virtual host names.

The use of web sites to promote or advocate for department or group interests is encouraged and is a common practice. However, it is necessary that some conventions be followed to ensure the overall interests of the University are protected. This guideline describes those conventions.

Guideline:

- A. Virtual host names must be requested from and are provided by the Office of Information Technology (OIT).
- B. Requesting a virtual host name does not automatically mean that the request will be granted. OIT and appropriate UA offices will review each request to validate its adherence to policy, legal

and regulatory compliance, its alignment with the University mission, and its impact on available technology and support resources. UA reserves the right to review any web site at any time, and to revoke hosting privileges or virtual host name use by any site not in compliance with University policy or provisions of this guideline.

- C. Virtual host names will not be assigned or installed for sites that are planned but do not yet exist.
- D. A virtual host name must clearly and accurately reflect the name of the department, division, organization or purpose for which it is created.
- E. Any department or division of the University may request a virtual host name. Requests of the form “name.ua.edu” will be considered. Names of the form “name.division.ua.edu” may be more appropriate in some situations. A department may also request a virtual host name for a course or group of courses; in that case, the host name must include the name of the course, and the department and division to which it belongs.
- F. Approved student organizations may request a virtual host name for a web site on bama.ua.edu. No requests will be accepted for student organization names pointing to other campus servers. Student organization names will be of the form “orgname.studentorg.ua.edu” where orgname reflects the name of the organization. A virtual host name of the form “orgname.ua.edu” may also be granted as long as there is no potential confusion between the proposed name and an official University department. Student organizations must meet annual registration requirements and be approved by the Office of the Dean of Students. Organizations that fail to register, or that lose the approval of the Office of the Dean of Students, will lose their virtual host names, web sites, and bama.ua.edu account privileges.
- G. Campus professional or academic organizations, University groups, and faculty groups for which the University provides support or services may request virtual host names. Such organizations will be asked to explain the nature of their University support and affiliation. Hosting or virtual host name services will not be provided to organizations having no UA affiliation except as may be specifically authorized by directive from the Office of the President.
- H. Departments contemplating the purchase of a web site domain name, such as a name ending in .org or .com, should first consult with OIT. OIT will facilitate a review of the request by appropriate UA authorities (e.g. University Relations and/or Office of Council). In general, .com names will not be hosted on UA servers. In general, UA will not host sites for commercial, political, religious, or social organizations. Approvals at the deans/division head level or above are generally required for all host name requests.
- I. UA will not provide virtual host names for sites belonging to individual faculty, staff, or students or for other “unofficial” sites.
- J. An organization web site hosted by the University must acknowledge the support of The University of Alabama
- K. Hosting and virtual host name services may be suspended at any time pending review of possible violations of UA Policy, legal or regulatory compliance, binding contractual agreements, or publications deemed by University Relations or the Office of Council to be in conflict with the best interests of the University of Alabama.
- L. If the nature or purpose of a web site changes after virtual host support has been approved, the responsible department or organization must inform OIT of the changed nature of the web site. In such a case, a formal review of the site may be initiated by OIT and host name privileges may be revoked if the site no longer meets all the terms of this guideline.
- M. All web sites housed on University computing equipment must meet University guidelines and requirements for web sites, including the posting of the official Web page disclaimer, an

accurate “last updated” date, and information on contacting the Webmaster or department responsible for the site.

Compliance:

Compliance to Guidelines is voluntary but recommended. Not adhering to guidelines can cause disruption to services, security exposures, and/or adverse impacts to other users. Enforcement of guidelines is addressed when deviations cause issues for others or result in known and significant security exposures and are handled through the organizational management structure.