

Creating an In-House Stylebook

- Putting your stylebook online
- Ideas for subject-matter-specific stylebooks

By Doug Kouma, Special Interest Media copy chief, Meredith Corp.; www.simstylebook.com

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <http://www.simstylebook.com/>. The browser's address bar also shows the text "SIMStylebook.com - Better Homes and Gardens® Special Interest Media Stylebook and Resources". The browser's search bar contains the text "Google". The browser's tabs show "MDP Webmail", "Meredith @Work", "Google", "SIMStylebook.com", "CNN.com", "BHG.com", and "Des Moines Register". The browser's address bar also shows "Gmail - Inbox (960)" and "SIMStylebook.com".

The website's main content area features a large header with the text "SPECIAL INTEREST media STYLEBOOK & RESOURCES". Below the header is a search bar with the text "Search" and a "Word List" with letters A through Z. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- WELCOME TO SIMSTYLEBOOK.COM**: A banner image showing a desk with a computer monitor and a chair.
- WHAT'S NEWS**: A section with a list of news items:
 - Yang promoted to senior associate art director
 - Doug Hall named GDL editor
 - Liskey promoted to senior editor, BHGA "[more]" link is provided below the list.
- SIM CALENDAR**: A section with a list of events:
 - Thu 4/12 - 3 p.m. KBI PG pin-up
 - Fri 4/13 - 9 a.m. HBkg 07 planning session
 - Tue 4/17 - 1:30 p.m. KBI ND07 work session
 - Thu 4/19 - 9 a.m. WW yearlong
 - Fri 4/20 - 11 a.m. DIY WI07 work session
 - Tue 4/24 - 10 a.m. BH LS07 pin-upA "[more]" link is provided below the list.
- RESOURCES & TOOLS**: A section with the text "Helpful links, news, and information".

The right side of the page features a vertical sidebar with a large image of a flower bed. The sidebar contains the following text:

- STYLE ON THE GO**
April 5, 2007
- Blah, blah, blah**
- A reader recently expressed her disappointment in us because we described doors as blasé.
- Blasé* means world-weary: After three visits to Paris in the past year, she was rather blasé about our weekend in Omaha.
- Even if inanimate objects could be blasé, that wasn't the meaning we wanted. We were trying to convey that the doors were dull.
- "I think that you meant to say 'blah doors,'" our reader said. And she was right.
- Compiled by Elizabeth Keest Sedrel. Have a question you'd like addressed in a future issue? [E-mail it.](#)

Putting your stylebook online

By Doug Kouma, *Special Interest Media copy chief, Meredith Corp.*; www.simstylebook.com

ORGANIZATION

- If converting an existing stylebook, determine whether its organizational structure (i.e., alphabetical, by chapter, etc.) will translate well to Web use.
- Give users a common starting point—the home page—and build around it. Determine whether the home page will include current information that's regularly updated (such as news and calendars) or remain static.
- Determine whether to include nonstylebook information on your site.
- Include an easy-to-access updates page.
- Evaluate whether the stylebook contains any proprietary information. If so, either don't include it or set up adequate security measures.

DESIGNING & BUILDING YOUR SITE

- If possible, use on-staff talent to design the site, and work with your IT department to build it.
- Consider bypassing IT if they don't understand the project or tell you it can't be done.
- If needed (and within your budget), hire a professional or a talented college student to create basic page templates and launch the site for you. Use the templates to create new pages yourself.
- Train yourself to use basic Web-design software (such as Adobe GoLive).
- If all else fails, do it all yourself at no cost! Learn basic HTML coding (visit the Beginners section at Webmonkey.com), build simple pages with limited or no graphics, and place the pages on your server (access will be limited to only other users of that server).

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Build in a Google site search (<http://www.google.com/coop/cse/>).
- Include text links to all pages so the site is fully indexed by Google and other search engines. (Duplicate links in small type at the bottom of the page if necessary.)
- Avoid working in live pages on the server. Work in copies stored on your local computer; then upload them to the server when finished. If more than one user will edit pages, make sure a user downloads the most recent pages from the server before making any changes. (Some Web publishing software will help sync users automatically.)
- If you can't host the site on your company's servers, consider a small Web-hosting company (such as Adbay.com). When things go wrong, you'll appreciate the opportunity to pick up the phone and talk to a real person.
- Keep your domain name registration (yoursite.com) up-to-date.

Ideas for subject-matter-specific stylebooks

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- Include common grammatical questions so copy editors can quickly and easily find answers.
- Adapt existing style from other sources as needed. For instance, the SIMStylebook.com stand alone cities section incorporates lists from *AP* and *Words Into Type* and includes places such as Boulder and Savannah, which show up regularly in our publications.
- Provide word lists for correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage of common words and phrases within a specific subject or category. In a digital format, link entries from a word list to definitions and/or illustrations.
- If you're producing multiple publications or subject-specific sections within one publication, strive for a master style that applies to all. Create addenda or special sections with additional rules that apply only to certain sections or titles.
- Apart from master word lists, provide single-subject lists of terms for proper spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage. SIMStylebook.com includes lists of wine and cheese names in the food section and often-confusing plant names in the garden section.
- Establish a hierarchy of references. For style questions, SIM copy editors check sources in this order: 1. *SIM Stylebook*; 2. *Words Into Type*; 3. *Chicago Manual of Style*; 4. Various sources such as *AP*, *New York Times*, and *Gregg*.
- Ask all copy editors to work from the same dictionary. SIM copy editors check these dictionaries in this order: 1. *Webster's Collegiate*, 11th edition; 2. *Webster's Third New International*; 3. *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- Include basic design style rules. For instance, the SIM Stylebook includes guidelines on using jump lines, end bugs, running titles, cover logos, and magazine spine information.
- Identify preferred resources for occasional questions within a subject but outside current style rules. For example, we turn to Herbst's *The New Food Lover's Companion* for culinary questions and *The American Horticultural Society A–Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants* for horticultural questions.

SIMStylebook.com table of contents

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <http://www.simstylebook.com/stylebook.php>. The browser's address bar also shows a Google search icon. The browser's tab bar includes tabs for "MDP Webmail", "Meredith @Work", "Google", "SIMStylebook.com", "CNN.com", "BHG.com", and "Des Moines Register". The browser's address bar also shows tabs for "Gmail - Inbox (960)" and "SIMStylebook.com - Bett...".

The website's header features the logo "SPECIAL INTEREST media" in purple and blue, with "STYLEBOOK & RESOURCES" below it. To the left of the logo is a Google search bar with a "Search" button. Below the search bar is a "Word List" with letters A through Z. To the right of the search bar are several navigation buttons: "SIM Stylebook", "Home Design", "Gardens & Outdoor Living", "Family Food Collection", "Creative Collection", "Style on the Go", and "Tools & Resources".

The main content area contains the following text:

This stylebook addresses the style questions that seem to crop up most often in our publications. Please use it and the SIM Word List as your first reference.

Use *Words Into Type* and *The Chicago Manual of Style* 14th Edition as supplemental guides to grammar, punctuation, and usage. Those books should be available in your department. *Webster's Eleventh Collegiate Dictionary* is the primary reference source. For words not listed in *Webster's Eleventh*, refer to [Webster's Third New International Dictionary](#) (unabridged). See the [Spelling](#) section of this style guide for more information about these dictionaries.

Sections in this style guide are arranged alphabetically, and each subject section contains rules and examples.

If you have questions about SIMStylebook.com, please e-mail SIM copy chief [Doug Kouma](#).

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SIMStylebook.com word list

SIMStylebook.com – Better Homes and Gardens® Special Interest Media Stylebook and Resources

http://www.simstylebook.com/stylea.php

MDP Webmail Meredith @Work Google SIMStylebook.com CNN.com BHG.com Des Moines Register

Gmail – Inbox (960) SIMStylebook.com – Bett...

SPECIAL INTEREST **media** STYLEBOOK & RESOURCES

Google WWW SIMStylebook.com

Search SIM Stylebook Home Design Gardens & Outdoor Living Family Food Collection Creative Collection Style on the Go Tools & Resources

Word List A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A

aah (ahh is acceptable in some graphic/typographic treatments)

A-A plywood

[abaca cloth](#)

A-B-C (easy as A-B-C)

aboveboard

above-grade (adj)

aboveground (adj)

above ground (adv)

abovestairs (adj)

accordion door

acoustic

add-on (n)

[Adirondack chair](#)

adviser

[A-frame](#)

aha

[Aida cloth](#)

airbrush (n, v)

air-condition (v)

air-conditioned (adj)

air-conditioner (n)

air-conditioning (n)

air-dry (v)

airflow

air lock (n)

air-lock (v)

air locking (n)

air-paint (v)

airspace

airtight

aka (no periods)

[à la carte](#)

[à la mode](#)

[alfresco](#)

[alençaon](#)

[allée](#)

[allen wrench](#)

allover (n, adj)

all over (adv)

ambiance

[Anaglypta](#)

[anigre](#)

[anise seed](#)

[antebellum](#)

antique (is old)

antiqued (looks old)

antiques shop

apparel

[appliqué](#)

Note entries linked to definitions

SIMStylebook.com tools and resources page



SIMStylebook.com – Better Homes and Gardens® Special Interest Media Stylebook and Resources

http://www.simstylebook.com/resources.php

Google

MDP Webmail Meredith @Work Google SIMStylebook.com CNN.com BHG.com Des Moines Register

Gmail – Inbox (960) SIMStylebook.com – Bett...

SPECIAL INTEREST media STYLEBOOK & RESOURCES

Google WWW SIMStylebook.com

Search

SIM Stylebook Home Design Gardens & Outdoor Living Family Food Collection Creative Collection Style on the Go Tools & Resources

Resources & Tools for SIM Editors

Dictionaries

- [Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged](#)
Turn here when you can't find what you're looking for in Webster's 11th.
- [Oxford English Dictionary](#)
Still no luck? OED may be your best bet. (You must log on from a Meredith computer.)

Writing Help

- [The Elements of Style](#)
Turn to Strunk's classic to brush up on language rules before you break them.
- [Roget's II: The New Thesaurus](#)
This site contains 35,000 synonyms and 250,000 cross-linked references.
- [The American Heritage Book of English Usage](#)
A good place to turn for vexing language questions, although it skews slightly more formal than SIM's typical conversational style.
- [Common Errors in English](#)
Is it "fit the bill" or "fill the bill"? Find the answer to that and hundreds of similar questions at this simple site.
- [Bartlett's Familiar Quotations](#)
When you know *someone* said it, but you just don't know who.
- [Rhymezone.com](#)
Crafting the perfect headline? Find rhymes, synonyms, homophones, quotes and more.
- [U.S. Government Printing Office Style Manual](#)
Another style guide that can be particularly helpful for government or military terms.

Master lists

- [ISSNs](#)
Find ISSNs for SIM, Food, and Crafts titles.
- [Postal ID statements](#)
Find the text for postal ID statements, along with rules about where they go.
- [SIM trademarks](#)
- [Back issue sales](#)

Other References

- [United States Postal Service](#)
Find ZIP codes, correct spellings for city and street names, and more.
- [U.S. Census Bureau](#)
Look up place names, demographic information, maps, and American vital statistics.
- [U.S. Patent and Trademark Office](#)
Click on the search function under "Trademarks" to investigate current trademark status.
- [ITA Trademark Checklist](#)
Search this easy-to-use checklist to find common registered trademarks.
- [USDA Plants Database](#)
Find spellings of names, growing information, and photos of many North American plants.
- [Convert-me.com](#)
Convert British, U.S., and other units of measure to metric units.
- [Illustrated Architecture Dictionary](#)
Need to know what an ogee arch looks like? How about a quatrefoil? Find pictures and definitions of many building terms here.
- [National Geographic Map Machine](#)
Generate a map of nearly any place on ...

SIMStylebook.com typical inside page

SIMStylebook.com: Caption Directionals

http://www.simstylebook.com/directionals.php

MDP Webmail Meredith @Work Google SIMStylebook.com CNN.com BHG.com Des Moines Register

Gmail - Inbox (960) SIMStylebook.com: Capti...

SPECIAL INTEREST
media
STYLEBOOK & RESOURCES

Google WWW SIMStylebook.com

Search

SIM Stylebook Home Design Gardens & Outdoor Living Family Food Collection Creative Collection Style on the Go Tools & Resources

Word List A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Captions, SR6.2

Directionals

[View examples of correctly used directionals. \(PDF\)](#) *Note link to illustration*

Every photo, illustration, chart, or graph must have a reference to the image through a caption, directional in text, or both). Directionals may be placed at the beginning or end of the caption, or internally, but treatment should be consistent throughout the same issue.

Internal directionals should be placed as close as possible to the noun they are emphasizing. **Always use commas to set off internal directionals.** The comma following the directional should be in the same typeface as the directional.

WRONG: The blooming roses create refreshing fragrances, *left*, near the patio.
RIGHT: The blooming roses, *left*, create refreshing fragrances near the patio.

No directionals are necessary when:

- A caption is graphically linked to the photo it references.
- A caption uses an arrow or another similar character that indicates the appropriate photo.

Set off internal directionals for individual photos and graphics in a typeface opposite that of accompanying text (for instance, italic type within roman copy). Do not use opposite typeface for directionals to other elements, such as body copy, sidebars, photo collages, or entire stories or packages.

The porch, *left*, features ample seating.
Trace the patterns on *pages 57 and 59*.
See the Buying Guide on page 112.

Do not use opposite typeface for spatial references in copy.
There is ample storage below the sink.

Do not use opposite typeface for spatial references within a photograph.
The living room table *left* of the window, *top right*, accommodates eight.

Opposite, right, left, or WHAT?

If a photo jumps the gutter, do not use *opposite*. If the entire photo is on the opposite page, use *opposite*.

Multiword directionals

Use two-word directionals this way: *top right* and *bottom left*. One element of three-word directionals should be set off with a comma: *opposite, top right*.

Three or more photos

Use *middle* instead of *center*.

Overprinted captions

Use *this photo* when a caption is printed over a photo. If that is the only caption on the photo, a directional is not necessary, although it is recommended if other captions are present on that spread. An overprinted caption on a spread-bleed photo never needs a directional.

[Captions, SR6.1](#)
[Directionals, SR6.2](#)

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SIMStylebook.com PDF link from Captions page

Examples of correct photo directionals, per SIM style

