

Design Memo

To: Dr. Karen Kuralt
From: Tenzing Briggs **TB**
Date: 9 May 2023
Subject: Final Portfolio — *IGB* Safety Manual Design

The documents described in this memo are “Safety Manual Design 1,” “Safety Manual Design 2,” and “Safety Manual Design 3,” with Design 3 being the final version and Designs 1 and 2 being earlier drafts.

Introduction and Purpose

These documents are safety manuals for the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign’s Institute for Genomic Biology (IGB). They outline the contact information for, policies for, and definitions of emergencies relevant to IGB lab operations, as well as have appendices with checklists for lab checkout procedures and research safety; these documents’ purpose is to not only inform the reader on all these things, but also allow easy access to specific procedures or checklists for specific circumstances. Their purpose, then, is also to compartmentalize different practices into different chapters, appendices, or subsections, so that they can be navigated and referenced easily both in emergencies or in everyday safety.

Description of the Users/Readers

The audience for these documents are primarily lab workers within IGB. Potentially, another audience is OSHA, with these documents demonstrating to them that the IGB has proper and well-outlined safety standards. As a safety manual for a *university*, it is especially important that safety procedures are both well-outlined and well-documented, as lack of safety could potentially affect large communities such as the student body or neighboring residents.

Description of the Employer/Client

For these documents, the client expects that they will be specific, formatted for navigation, and professional, so that they are practically applicable for safety situations. They especially expect

them to have multiple heading levels, so that readers can find the sections they need to at a moment's notice.

Description of the Context and Design Constraints

The documents' main contexts are that they contain information needed both in emergencies and in everyday operation and that they have many sections which detail operations that run independent of each other. They also have the context that they must be exhaustive in their information. Their design is thus constrained in terms of how much information can be cut or reformatted. Thus, while designs can add meaning by including pictures, the primary design considerations cannot be reductive in language and are mainly based around navigation.

Design Evolution and Rationale

In my first draft for this safety manual, I primarily focused on managing headings and the table of contents. Heading colors were chosen based on the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's colors of orange and blue, taken specifically from their website; similarly, I chose the fonts of Georgia and Source Sans Pro from one of their websites on their style. I also included their logo, taken from their website. I set the first and second level headings apart from each other by having one be highlighted in gray. Furthermore, I made the choice to split the text into two columns, since many entries were short and took up a small block of space that way. I also made the choice to add to the appendices second level headers, since some of these were either checklists or sets of descriptions for different procedures; by adding second level headings to the appendices' submaterial, the table contents allowed easy navigation to specific portions under them, instead of just listing the page number for an appendix's beginning.

My second draft primarily focused on the inclusion of images and respacing of text. Specifically, I re-spaced the text so that images would split sections up, often with a column of a section on one side and a related image (e.g. images of safety goggles, gloves, refrigerators, sinks, lab coats, respirators, or chemicals). I thought that this careful inclusion of specific images would allow readers to better skim the text or find the portions they are looking for, which is especially important for a manual, where readers will likely only read or search for certain sections at a given moment. Such inclusion of images also better divides individual sections that contain

different content, especially subchapters, such as in the case of safety procedures all under “Specific Safety Policies” which all refer to different situations or equipment; it naturally divides the pages up, which is important because at times having two columns means reading across columns is difficult.

For the final design, I redesigned the margins so that the pages would have more white space; this way pages would be less full of information and easier to digest. As a result, I also added new pagination in the footer, as the second draft’s header became cramped with the new margins. I also adjusted spacing so there would be more space between the header and the main body of text, and continued to adjust positioning of pictures so as to better divide separate sections. I decided to change the second level headings, swapping out the gray highlighting for border lines above and below. Finally, I redesigned the cover page, adding a higher-resolution University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign logo and editing the background image to remove the blurred imagery from it. I also removed border lines from the boxes of text on the cover page.

In terms of rationale, then, the main elements I considered in designing were the formatting of header levels or styles, division of subchapters, and the stock photos that would represent the content on certain pages. In terms of general spacing, I focused on having more white space in the margins and between text and images. I believe the final version works well because its headers are distinct from one another. Moreover, its sections are divided by ample white space; it benefits from careful attention to how much content can fit on a page, separating sections that would be cut off if grouped together on a single page. Additionally, the level of headers make navigating these divisions from the table of contents easy. By using Microsoft Word headings in this way, it establishes consistency throughout the document, despite its length.

Design Assessment

I learned in making this that consistency in a document can be achieved through careful formatting in a program such as Word. I also learned that spacing deserves special attention—in experimenting with the margins, I found I had to still analyze the content on each page to determine if unique spacing made sense, such as on pages with multiple images of different sizes. I also had to consider when to move or separate content, more specifically considering

whether sections should be further separated by white space. For example, I found there were instances where I had to consider more unique spacing, where two or more sections would not fit together on a single page, with one or more being cut-off awkwardly. Given more time, I would add more images and readjust the spacing with those added images.

In terms of programs I became more familiar with, I gained more experience with Microsoft Word's style headings and table of contents feature.

Sources

Royalty-free images for these designs were sourced from pexels.com.