



Style Guide

One important characteristic of a website is 'consistent user experience.' Similarly, entities which exist to share information (such as newspapers or news web sites) rely on a 'style guide' (like the Associated Press style guide used by most newspapers) to ensure that readers get a consistent product.

The SteamCentral style guide specifies how writers should format certain characteristics of Home page posts, links, and calendar additions. Anyone adding content to components of steamcentral.com (Home page posts, links, calendar entries) should follow these guidelines.

The style guide is not an attempt to homogenize the tone of different writers, or to force contributors to 'write like John.' Individual writers should write in their own voice.

HOME PAGE POSTS:

GENERAL: The normal purpose of a home page post is to highlight a recent or upcoming steam operation, and to point viewers to content on other web sites. Posts should be brief, informative, and factual. Home page posts are reporting (the presentation of information in an objective fashion), and may occasionally be analysis (discussing the impact of something that has happened), but opinion and commentary are not appropriate in a Home page post.

If the locomotive featured in the post will be operating again in the calendar year, mention the next operating date and provide a link to the schedules page (ensure that operating dates are in the calendar).

Posts should end with a Google Maps embed showing the location of the main photo in the post, or the main station of the railroad featured.

REFERENCES TO EQUIPMENT: the first reference to a particular locomotive (presumably in the post title) should be formatted as follows:

[AAR reporting marks or railroad name] [classification (*optional*)] [wheel arrangement (*optional*)] no. [locomotive number].

The following examples are all acceptable first references:

- PM no. 1225
- Pere Marquette no. 1225
- SOU Ms1 2-8-2 no. 4501
- SNCF 141R no. 118

The following examples are unacceptable first references:

- PM 1225
- Southern # 4501 (do not use the hash)
- SR 2-8-2 4501 (SR is not the correct AAR reporting mark)

In some cases a reference that is not the official AAR mark but is more explanatory (e.g. D&RGW instead of DRGW) will be permitted.

Subsequent references in the post should follow the format 'no. [locomotive number]'.

SteamCentral Style Guide (cont'd)

HOME PAGE POSTS: (CON'TD)

REFERENCES TO RAILROADS, ORGANIZATIONS OR A PERSON: the first reference to a particular railroad, organization, or person should be spelled out in full and hyperlinked to the appropriate web site if it exists. Subsequent references may be abbreviated and should not be hyperlinked.

Web sites referred to in a post should be added to SteamCentral's del.icio.us links (see "Links" below).

PHOTOS: there should be no more than one photo in a post. Photos should be no more than 480px wide.

Most importantly, the photo should be a creative, *un-resized* excerpt of a larger photo hosted on another web site, and hyperlinked to that photo. The photo should motivate the viewer to click on the excerpt to see the larger image.

Example: ``

(Including "class="lightview" in the anchor tag invokes the flash-based rendering of the photo.)

LINKS: links in posts should be added to the del.icio.us links. Exceptions are links to reports on non rail-oriented sites (e.g. CNN or a local newspaper), and links to specific stories on rail-oriented web sites (the del.icio.us links should contain a link to the home page of the organization's web site).

LINKS:

Links added to del.icio.us should be tagged with the appropriate 'where' tag: 'northamerica', 'europe', 'web', or 'steamcentral'.

SteamCentral Style Guide (cont'd)

SCHEDULES:

To add a calendar entry, send an iCal-format meeting request to 'schedules@steamcentral.com.'

Additions to Google Calendar should follow this format:

[locomotive reporting marks] [locomotive number] [originating city] – [destination city] [trip type]

in the "What" text field. Trip types are:

- RT for the typical "round trip" excursion
- OW for one-way revenue movements
- OWF for one-way non-revenue movements
- CT for "circle trips" as appropriate
- P for Plandampfs and photo specials ("charters")

The following examples are all acceptable schedule title formats:

- D&RGW 315 Chama, NM – Antonito, CO OWF
- SP&S 700 Portland, OR (for static display or short shuttle trips)

The "Where" text field should contain the originating city (to allow Google Maps to find it properly).

The body of the entry ("Description") should contain as much information as possible, including ticket information. If this information can be found on the sponsor's web site, begin the body of the entry with a link to the information, then copy it in the body. If it is available only in a PDF file, upload the PDF to steamcentral.com and provide a link to the PDF in the calendar entry.

One exception to providing as much information as possible may be photo specials. Information that helps people to buy a ticket for the event should be included (unless the sponsor does not want the event on the calendar), but information that gives away routes, photo locations, etc., should not be included.