Charcoal Branding Guidelines

Public/semi-public consumables

This document lays out a standard way to present Charcoal-related content that is intended for a public or semi-public audience. Internal documents need not follow style guidelines anywhere near as closely, though some resemblance doesn't hurt.

Who We Are

We are **Charcoal**. We are a volunteer group who fight spam across the Stack Exchange network. We use a combination of automation and a group of willing experts to create effective tools and teams that can keep the network clean.

Use this idea in combination with what we are not, below, when describing Charcoal in a public setting, or when you're looking for an idea of our organizational values.

A note about the name: the organization's name is Charcoal. Although we use a different username on GitHub (Charcoal-SE) and for our domain name (charcoal-se.org), these instances are borne out of necessity rather than choice.

Who We Are Not
We are not:

- **Official.** We are not part of Stack Exchange, Inc; we are not affiliated with them, nor are we specifically endorsed by them.
- **Legal.** We are not a legally-organized company; there is no legal corporate structure to Charcoal. We *are* an organization, but in the sense that we are an organized group of individuals not that we are legally defined.
- **Exclusive.** We are not a clique nor a secret cabal. We are open in what we do and we are welcoming of new members and expertise.

When communicating about Charcoal, avoid implying that we are any of these things.

What We Value
As an organization, these things are important to us:

- **Openness**. We are open in our methods, our processes, and our tools. We like contributing to the open-source ecosystem and to the Stack Exchange community.
- **Agility.** We appreciate being able to move quickly and not be bogged down by heavy decision-making processes or build systems.
- **Inclusiveness.** We value contribution and expertise bundled with respect for others. We welcome anyone, including dogs.

How We Communicate

Talking to other people who are not part of Charcoal comes up regularly. Sometimes it's in the line of work; other times in casual conversation. In either case it is important to communicate:

- **Clearly**. If you're talking, speak slowly and clearly. If you're using digital media, read your messages before you send them. Always think about whether you're making sense, and be prepared to revise or repeat what you've said to help others understand.
- **Calmly.** If you individually, or the group at large, is being accused of something or shouted at, remain calm. Yelling back never helps! Remember you can call on other team members if you don't feel able to carry on.
- **In a friendly manner.** Unless it would obviously be inappropriate (read: you're talking to the Queen of England), talk as if you're talking to a friend. Be personable and amicable.

Obviously, this only applies if you're talking about Charcoal in more than a casual manner. If it happens to come up in normal conversation and you say a couple sentences and move on, then don't worry about thinking too hard about How To Communicate!
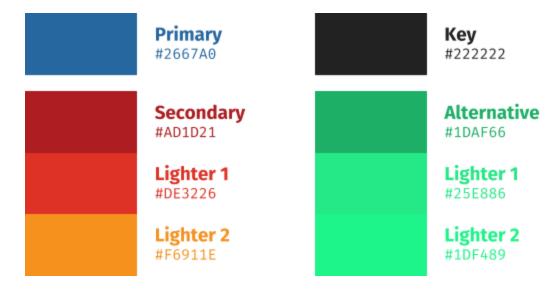
Our Visual Brand

Our visual brand is the form and style in which we present our content. It provides a cohesive baseline that ties our sprawlings together.

Colors

The uses of these should be relatively obvious. Use the key color for most text - the fact that it's not black is deliberate, so don't just use black. The primary color should be used for titling and related uses, and generally making things stand out. It's used in our logo with name, for example.

The secondary color and shades should be used when you want to make something stand out, or when you need a splash of color that isn't the primary again. Our website uses the secondary color for links and navbar breaks. You should almost never need the alternatives, except in some specific situations.

Primary
#2667A0

Key
#222222

Secondary
#AD1D21

Alternative
#1DAF66

Lighter 1
#DE3226

Lighter 1
#25E886

Lighter 2
#F6911E

Lighter 2
#1DF489

Typography

We use three primary fonts across Charcoal:

Maven Pro is our display font, and is used for major headings and most graphics. In web formats, including our organization website, it is used for all heading tags. In documents, it should be used for the document title and subtitle, but not for content headings.

Fira Sans is our primary content font. It is an easily readable, well-spaced and well-sized sans-serif font. Use it everywhere that isn't covered by either of the other fonts.

`Fira Mono` is our monospace font. It should be used for displaying code, non-hyperlinked URLs, computer or program output, and any other related uses that you think make sense. It is **not** for highlighting or emphasising words - judicious use of boldface and italicized text serves this purpose. Fira Code may be used for **code only** (not output, etc), with a fallback to Fira Mono where necessary (such as webfonts).

Wherever possible, these three fonts should be stuck to. They are available freely to anyone, and are included in Google Fonts, which makes them available for use on the web. If you must choose another font, try to choose it from Google Fonts wherever possible for the same reason.

Logo

Use the largest form of the logo as is reasonable for your intended use. Sizes up to 516x516px available on request; larger sizes may be possible but will require time.

In general, do not change the colors of the logo. There are a small number of places where this is the case to differentiate between two distinct uses in close proximity, but in general this should be avoided.

Use the logo on a contrasting background to ensure the crossbars show through.

When creating new Charcoal web products, use the Charcoal branding CSS (CSS at charcoal-se.org/assets/css/branding.css, usage details on GitHub) to mark it out as a Charcoal product.

Our Products

This isn't a complete list of everything we've ever made - this list covers our major work only.

The spellings and capitalizations of names used here are the canonical, correct versions.

SmokeDetector

Our big thing. SmokeDetector scans all new and updated content, across the Stack Exchange network, to try to detect spam as it comes in. It reports potential spam to chatrooms around the network and to metasmoke, and allows users to feed back on each report.

metasmoke

metasmoke is the web dashboard for SmokeDetector. Primarily, it stores SmokeDetector's reports and users' feedback, but it also has a number of other purposes for other organizational functions.