NOIRLab Visual Identity v.0.5

— NOIRLab Brand Manual
“A logo is a flag, a signature, an escutcheon, a street sign. A logo identifies. A logo is rarely a description of a business. A logo derives meaning from the quality of the thing it symbolizes, not the other way around. A logo is less important than the product it signifies; what it represents is more important than what it looks like. The subject matter of a logo can be almost anything.”

Paul Rand
Introduction — about this manual

This Visual Identity or Branding Manual provides detailed information about the graphical standards that must be adhered to in all public communication on behalf of NOIRLab.

The NOIRLab Visual Identity (VI) is the official “manual” that sets out the visual aspects of branding that we create in order to evoke certain feelings and experiences connected with our identity. It includes logo design, fonts, photos, and any other visuals that we produce to communicate our brand.

A strong VI is not just pretty; it is purposeful. We are not just designing for today, but for our brand’s future. Our VI should be:

- Flexible: It should be able to grow with our brand, as we may branch out into new areas, projects or services;
- Comprehensive: We want to equip our designers (and any content creators) with the tools they need to properly do their job;
- Intuitive: It should be intuitively designed and well constructed so that each element complements the other;
- Accurate: A VI is a tool to communicate our brand essence – our personality, values, etc;
- Practical: the VI should have examples and templates for the different products, and be accompanied by a template download page.

This will be expanded in the future as we collect more use cases.

For questions about design issues, please email: graphics@noirlab.edu.

For questions about branding decisions, please email lchristensen@aura-astronomy.org.

About NOIRLab

NOIRLab Mission: Enabling breakthrough discoveries in astrophysics with state-of-the-art ground-based observatories, data products and services for a diverse and inclusive community.

Our tagline is Discovering Our Universe Together and our products and services are the design, maintenance and operation of infrastructures making astronomical observations.
We:

- realize the scientific and operational synergies of an integrated multi-mission center;
- stimulate and pursue current and future opportunities for domestic and international collaborations to advance ground-based OIR facilities and capabilities;
- serve as a focal point for community development of innovative scientific programs, exchange of ideas and creative development;
- engage the public in the process of astronomical discovery to stimulate curiosity and interest in STEM subjects and to enhance general appreciation of science;
- drive advances and innovation in technology and data science;
- foster the development of a diverse and inclusive workforce in the US;
- are a world leader in ground-based OIR astronomy, providing a center for development of future projects across all scales, from international flagship observatories to university-led projects, and fully exploiting the investments made to date in our existing facilities, increasing synergistic operation, e.g. for transient detection and follow-up.

**NOIRLab’s goals:**

1. Through its Programs — the Community Science and Data Center (CSDC), the international Gemini Observatory, the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory (CTIO), the Kitt Peak National Observatory (KPNO) and, once operational, the Vera C. Rubin Observatory — NOIRLab serves as a focal point for community development of innovative scientific programs, the exchange of ideas, and creative development.

2. The lab’s infrastructure enables the astronomy community to advance humanity’s understanding of the Universe by exploring significant areas of astrophysics, including dark energy and dark matter, galaxies and quasars, the Milky Way, exoplanets, and small bodies in our own Solar System.

3. NOIRLab enhances the strengths of each facility and provides new opportunities for staff while expanding scientific capabilities and improving the experience for users.

4. By providing cutting-edge facilities that benefit both the staff and the scientific community, the lab positively impacts ground-based nighttime astronomical science. In addition, the lab focuses on developing international collaborations and partnerships to advance ground-based optical and infrared facilities and capabilities.

5. In collaboration with the astronomical community, partner organizations, other US optical and infrared system operators and NSF, NOIRLab develops and advances a strategic vision for future NSF-funded optical and infrared facilities.
NOIRLab Design briefs

A good logo is distinctive, appropriate, practical, graphic and simple in form, and it conveys the organization’s intended message. It should be possible to print a logo at any size and, in most cases, it should be effective without color. A logo should be simple, memorable, timeless and versatile.

Logo

- Should be unprecedented and groundbreaking
- Should be distinct, memorable, and unique
- Should be simple and scalable (vector)
- Should convey astronomy and ideally evoke discovery and innovation
- Should be welcoming of sub- or derivate logos for Programs, and if needed even for telescopes or projects
  - Needs to meet accessibility criteria for distinction between logos
  - Should have distinct elements that can be reused for Program logo versions
- Should not have negative or confusing connotations/associations
- Should be versatile, mutable and flexible according to use case (web, print, small, black/white, large...)
- Should be identifiable to non-specialists
- Should be attractive to specialists (incl. staff)
- Visual part should be usable without words (e.g. when tiny)
- Should indicate new ways of communicating science
- Should communicate that our observatories are revolutionizing forces in astronomy
- Should capture public appeal and intrigue
- Should have newsworthiness (meaning having conflict, new interesting angle and aesthetics)
- Should have the capability to show diversity, equality and inclusion
- Other expressive keywords: durability, power, respect and intelligence
General branding principles

In the environment around NOIRLab we have 9 brands:

- NSF
  - AURA
  - NOIRLab
    - Gemini Observatory
    - MSO
      - CTIO
      - KPNO
    - CSDC
    - Vera C. Rubin Observatory

**NSF’s NOIRLab** is our main brand and is a “branded house”, the NOIRLab logo should be used on all products without exception.

We must *always* show close visual or textual association with NSF (see separate section below) and with AURA (typically at the bottom of a page, or on the back).

We do not use an abbreviation (no NAL, no NOARL).

The MSO brand is not used towards the public, but may be used towards the user community.

All 9 brands will eventually have their own logos. NOIRLab will be the defining and top-level logo.
The NOIRLab Logo

There is usually a meaning behind an effective logo, and it communicates the intended message.

It is human nature that different shapes can influence how people will perceive a brand. For the graphical element of the logo, geometric shapes were chosen over more organic or circular shapes because humans associate geometric shapes with innovation, durability, power, respect, and intelligence. A conscious decision was made to match this perception by choosing a font that is bold and modern, yet will be timeless as well. Sans serif fonts convey innovation, bold fonts convey power, and straight fonts convey stability.

The logo is based on the design brief and on keywords from nationalastro.org: community, innovation, ideas, diversity, exchange, creative, development, science and discovery.

- The designers considered how these words relate to NOIRLab and its Programs, and how to make these words into imagery.
- The developed logo has numerous meanings:
  - The large black half circle represents a dark sky, black (NOIR), a planet and a black hole.
  - The smaller circles that surround it represent community, diversity, ideas, discovery, networking, a galaxy, moons or stars.
  - The five colors of the smaller circles represent the five Programs within NOIRLab.
- The intention was to create a logo that is both geometric and organic. Both of these styles evoke certain feelings within people, from bold and innovative to friendly and inclusive.
NOIRLab text

Short name for the NSF’s National Optical–Infrared Astronomy Research Laboratory.

Text choice:

- sans serif fonts: innovation
- bold fonts: power
- straight fonts: stability.

NOIRLab logo variations

Preferred Version

Use the full-color logo wherever possible. Only when it is not possible should the others be used.

Special Applications

For applications where options 1 and 2 will not suffice or for one-color application, embroidery, one-color printing, etc. these three options are available.

One-color Black

One-color White

Version with long name
Appropriate and Inappropriate Uses

Clear Space
There must be a minimum defined space around all instances of the logo so that it stands out from other logos and text that it might appear with. The clear space (CS) must be equal to the height of the NOIR letters.

The same applies when using the NSF and NOIRLab logo together
NSF and NOIRLab

In all print products, with very few exceptions, the NSF and AURA logos are included with the NOIRLab logo (NSF | NOIRLab and then AURA further down). The only exceptions are:

1. Products where space is extremely limited (e.g. on a pencil, in certain social media contexts)

2. Products where we’d imply that we’re acting on behalf of, or impersonate, NSF: “NSF’s logo cannot be used in a manner that falsely implies employment by or affiliation with NSF” (e.g. on a business card or a letterhead).

3. The NSF and NOIRLab logos should always be used in color if at all possible.

4. The NOIRLab logo should not overpower the NSF logo in terms of size: the size of the black hole should at most be 70% as big as the blue NSF “ball”.

![NSF and NOIRLab logos](image-url)
NOIRLab Typefaces

NOIRLab’s primary font was chosen to be bold and modern, yet timeless as well. Studies have found that sans serif fonts convey innovation, bold fonts convey power, and straight fonts convey stability.

- Titles should use the same typeface as the logo
- Copy-text can be in a different typeface, possibly even serif
- Fall-back typefaces, commonly found on all standard computers, for both titles and copy texts should be provided

The Visual Identity defines three standard typefaces:

- The primary typeface for headlines, subheads and call-outs should be Quatro. If Quatro is unavailable, Arial should be used. No other typefaces may be used for headlines, subheads and call-outs.
- The primary typeface for body text should be Arial or Times New Roman as an alternative, which also is a standard Mac and PC font.

Quatro – primary typeface

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
Arial – for body text and as an alternative for headlines, subheadings and call-outs

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Times New Roman – alternative for body text

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abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

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Color Usage

Beyond our logo, color is the most recognizable aspect of our brand identity. Using color appropriately is one of the easiest ways to make sure our materials reflect a cohesive NOIRLab brand.

We have seven colors in our pallet. You are not required to use them when designing your communication material, but if you do, please use the color specifications below.

The NOIRLab color palette consists of a primary and a secondary palette.
Applications of the Visual Identity

Letterhead
The NOIRLab Letterhead follows the AURA model — NOIRLab name and logo on the top and listing of all Programs down the right side:

- Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory
- Community Science and Data Center
- Gemini Observatory
- Kitt Peak National Observatory
- Vera C. Rubin Observatory
Date goes here

To Whom It May Concern:

Jane Doe
Head of Cosmic Occurences
NOIRLab/Gemini Observatory
879 N. A'ohoku Place
Hilo, Hawaii, 96720, USA
+1-520-123-4567
jane.doe@noirlab.edu

Re: Lorem ipsum dolor

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Sincerely,
Date goes here

To Whom It May Concern:

Re. *Lorem ipsum dolor*

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Sincerely,

Jane Doe
Head of Cosmic Occurences
NOIRLab/Gemini Observatories
670 N. A'ohoku Place
Hilo, Hawaii, 96720, USA
+1-520-123-4567
jane.doe@noirlab.edu
Presentation slides

This is the template for Powerpoint or Google Presentation slides:

Office Door Signs

Templates for printable tags for employees offices.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Matt Mountain, AURA President

FROM: Patrick McCarthy, NOIRLab Director
Address Block if needed
City, State Zip

CC: Lee Curtis, Linden Hickey

DATE: Date goes here

SUBJECT: Lorem ipsum dolor

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NSF’s National Optical-Infrared Astronomy Research Laboratory

Document Title (use the Title preset style)

Author(s) Name(s)

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Credit block for CAD drawings

Operated by AURA
under cooperative agreement with NSF

Acknowledgments and Affiliations

Acknowledgments in scientific papers

This public webpage lists the different scientific acknowledgments needed in scientific papers: https://nationalastro.org/research/scientific-acknowledgments/

Affiliations on conference badges, email signatures etc.

Suggested email signatures
Should display NOIRLab as affiliation. Program affiliation may added be before NOIRLab.

Examples:

- Jennifer Lotz
  Director, Gemini Observatory
  NSF’s NOIRLab

- Henry Roe
  Deputy Director, Gemini Observatory
  NSF’s NOIRLab

- Lori Allen
  Director, Mid-Scale Observatories
  NSF’s NOIRLab

- Bob Blum
  Acting Director for Operations, Vera C. Rubin Observatory
  NSF’s NOIRLab

- George Jacoby
  NSF’s NOIRLab
Suggested affiliations for scientific papers:

- NAME, NSF’s NOIRLab, 950 N. Cherry Ave., Tucson, AZ 85719, USA
- NAME, Kitt Peak National Observatory/NSF’s NOIRLab, 950 N. Cherry Ave., Tucson, AZ 85719, USA
- NAME, Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory/NSF’s NOIRLab, Casilla 603, La Serena, Chile
- NAME, Gemini Observatory/NSF’s NOIRLab, 670 N. A’ohoku Place, Hilo, Hawaii, 96720, USA
- NAME, Community Science and Data Center/NSF’s NOIRLab, 950 N. Cherry Ave., Tucson, AZ 85719, USA
- NAME, Mid-Scale Observatories/NSF’s NOIRLab, 950 N. Cherry Ave., Tucson, AZ 85719, USA

Image and video Credits

Credits for images and videos will have the Program before NOIRLab, NSF and AURA. A photographer can be added.

Examples:

- KPNO/NOIRLab/NSF/AURA/A. Name
- International Gemini Observatory/NOIRLab/NSF/AURA/A. Name

Branding issues in press releases and other texts

- Aim to always mention the NSF’s NOIRLab brand first NOIRLab can be mentioned thereafter.
- All press releases have NSF’s National Optical-Infrared Astronomy Research Laboratory in the boiler-plate. NSF is also mentioned separately (with URL):

  NSF’s National Optical-Infrared Astronomy Research Laboratory, the US center for ground-based optical-infrared astronomy, operates the international Gemini Observatory (a facility of NSF, NRC–Canada, ANID–Chile, MCTIC–Brazil, MCTIMINCyT–Argentina, and KASI–Republic of Korea). Kitt Peak National Observatory (KPNO), Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory (CTIO), the Community Science and Data Center (CSDC), and the Vera C. Rubin Observatory. It is managed by the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy (AURA) under a cooperative agreement with NSF and is headquartered in Tucson, Arizona. The astronomical community is honored to have the opportunity to conduct astronomical research on Iolkam Du’ag (Kitt Peak) in Arizona, on Maunakea in Hawai’i, and on Cerro Tololo and Cerro Pachón in Chile. We recognize and acknowledge the very significant cultural role and reverence that these sites have to the Tohono O’odham Nation, to the Native Hawaiian community, and to the local communities in Chile, respectively.
More to come...