THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS • UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS • YIELD & ENGAGEMENT

Celebration Downloads — Optimization Analysis

One shared /celebration-downloads page • 49 assets • GEO / SEO / AEO / UX / WCAG

Block: #ku-celebrate-v1 • Target URL: admissions.ku.edu/celebration-downloads

Modeled on Purdue's celebration-downloads page; adapted to KU brand and our optimization framework

Single-paste KUTE HTML paragraph • No Asset Injector • CKEditor-hardened • self-hosted, same-origin downloads

Prepared by our KU Admissions web team • July 10, 2026

Apples-to-apples analysis vs. native Drupal blocks + a Dropbox link, with monitoring workflows

Executive Summary — What We Built and Why

One canonical celebration page, self-hosted on KU, that turns a quick download errand into brand time

The moment a student is admitted is our highest-emotion, highest-intent touchpoint. Every reference school we studied runs a single self-hosted celebration page rather than linking out to Dropbox. We built one #ku-celebrate-v1 block for admissions.ku.edu/celebration-downloads that serves first-year, transfer, and international admits from one source of truth, keeps all engagement and search value on a KU page, and gives students genuine reasons to stay: browse 49 assets, learn how to use them, and share the news.

What ships	Detail
Seven collections, 49 assets	Desktop/video-call wallpapers, phone wallpapers, 11 social frames, 20 Instagram Story frames (two device sizes), 7 printable posters, a pennant banner, plus copy-ready captions
Purdue-proven structure	Quick-jump nav + preview-and-download cards; we kept the layout but used visible anchored sections (not tabs) so every card is crawlable
Full schema graph	CollectionPage + ItemList (7) + FAQPage + BreadcrumbList + WebSite/Org; every @id resolves; speakable on the intro
Dwell drivers, honest	Jump pills, a copy-caption panel, and a working FAQ — more to do, not tricks
Self-hosted + tagged	Same-origin download links (forced download) so every click is measurable and stays in-session

WHY IT MATTERS

49
assets on one canonical URL, not three welcome pages

44–52s
healthy engagement band for research-style higher-ed pages

0
network requests added — no Asset Injector, icons, or images beyond the assets

1
SERP feature type live for KU today: BreadcrumbList

100%
same-origin downloads — fully measurable in GA4

SOURCE • KU internal — kucelebratev1analysis.pdf (2026); Purdue, UC Davis, Iowa, Rochester celebration pages (2026); circle S studio & Carnegie engagement benchmarks (2024–2025)

Research Foundation — The Evidence Behind Every Decision

Our project library plus current external standards located this week

OUR PROJECT LIBRARY (applied)

Source	Decision it drove
kucelebratev1analysis.pdf (2026)	One shared /celebrate-style page linked from all three welcome pages; seven collections; self-host off Dropbox; two-file model (WebP preview + full original)
Purdue celebration-downloads (2026)	Jump nav + preview-and-download cards; two print sizes per poster; self-hosted direct downloads
UC Davis / Iowa / Rochester kits (2026)	Framing desktop wallpapers as Zoom/Teams backgrounds; pennants as a category; a short “how to use these” panel
KU Optimization Playbook (2026)	44–52s engagement band; interactive content earns ~52% more engagement; FAQ + structured data ≈ +44% AI citations
KU Brand Center — color & typography	KU Blue/Crimson/Lake palette; three-family type (United Sans, Roc Grotesk/Halyard Display, Halyard Text)

EXTERNAL / CURRENT (July 2026 web research)

Source	Decision it drove
web.dev — lazy-loading & LCP (2024–2026)	loading=“lazy” + decoding=“async” on all preview images (they sit below the fold), cutting network contention on first paint
MDN / SitePoint CWV playbooks (2026)	Aspect-ratio boxes on every preview so images reserve space — zero layout shift (CLS) as they load
Google Search Central (2023–2026)	JSON-LD preferred; schema must mirror visible content; FAQ rich result deprecated — we keep FAQ for GEO/AEO value, not a SERP badge
Schema.org (CollectionPage/ItemList)	Correct entity types for a curated download library that AI engines can enumerate
W3C WAI-ARIA APG — disclosure pattern	FAQ built as button + aria-expanded + aria-controls; fail-open so answers are never locked shut

SOURCE • web.dev “browser-level image lazy-loading” & “too much lazy loading”; MDN & SitePoint CWV guides (2026); Google Search Central; Schema.org; W3C WAI-ARIA APG

Apples-to-Apples — Native Drupal + Dropbox vs. Our Block

The realistic baseline: stock KUTE blocks plus an off-site Dropbox link, measured across all eight categories

Category	Baseline (native blocks + Dropbox link)	#ku-celebrate-v1
GEO	Assets live off-site on Dropbox; nothing for an AI engine to enumerate or attribute to KU	CollectionPage + ItemList of 7 collections on a KU URL; every asset described in crawlable HTML
SEO	Link value leaks to dropbox.com; no schema; thin copy	All signals stay on the indexable KU page; descriptive filenames, alt text, and a question-led H2
AEO	No direct answer; task completes off-site	Answer-first intro + FAQ resolve “how do I use / print / set this” on-page; speakable intro
UX	Leave KU, hunt through a Dropbox folder, download by hand	Jump nav, preview-and-download cards, copy-caption panel — the errand finishes on one page
WCAG 2.1 AA	Dropbox UI is outside our control	APG disclosures, aria-live copy status, focus-visible rings, reduced-motion override, 44px targets
Conversions	Download is the only action; no next step	Verb-first CTAs, share captions, and a path back into next-steps content we control
Accessibility+	Unlabeled generic file list	CSS-mask icons, aria-labels naming each file and format, list semantics preserved
UI	Default theme list; off-brand Dropbox	KU palette tokens, three-family type, Fire-and-Ice hovers, responsive card grids

Load speed: the block adds zero network requests of its own — no Asset Injector file, no icon fonts, no decorative images. The only bytes are the asset previews, and those are lazy-loaded below the fold with aspect-ratio boxes, so first paint is plain HTML/CSS.

SOURCE • KU internal — kucelebratev1analysis.pdf (2026); web.dev LCP/lazy-loading guidance; Google Search Central structured-data guidance

Schema Architecture — A Library AI Engines Can Read

JSON-LD @graph — Google's documented preferred format — validated for parse integrity and @id resolution

Node	Purpose	Notes
CollegeOrUniversity	Grounds the KU entity with AAU/Wikidata sameAs	Knowledge-graph disambiguation for every AI engine
WebSite	Declares admissions.ku.edu as the site entity	Makes the CollectionPage isPartOf @id resolve
CollectionPage + speakable	Names the page as a curated collection; marks the intro as speakable	Correct type for a download library, not a generic WebPage
ItemList (7 items)	Enumerates the seven collections with names + descriptions	Exactly what an AI answer lists when asked “what can I download”
FAQPage (4 Q&As)	Mirrors the visible accordion word-for-word	GEO/AEO value even though Google retired the FAQ rich result
BreadcrumbList	KU Admissions › Celebration Downloads	Our one currently-live SERP feature type

What this schema will and will not show: none of these types generate a Search Console “Enhancements” dashboard for a downloads page, and Google retired the FAQ rich result. The payoff is upstream — clean entity extraction so AI Overviews, AI Mode, ChatGPT, and Perplexity can enumerate and attribute our collections to KU. We therefore measure this through AI referrals, citations, and answer ownership, not a rich-results badge. FAQ answers stay parity-matched to the visible text per Google's rule.

SOURCE • Google Search Central — structured-data & FAQ changes (2023–2026); Schema.org CollectionPage/ItemList/FAQPage/BreadcrumbList

Engagement — Real Reasons to Stay, 44–52s Target

Dwell rises because there is genuinely more to do — browse, learn, share — not because of tricks

Driver	Mechanism	Why it works
Quick-jump nav	Eight pills scroll to each collection; invites scanning all seven groups	Interactive, low-friction orientation keeps students exploring rather than bouncing
Browse + choose	Preview thumbnail per asset; posters offer print sizing; two Story device sizes	Choosing is inherently interactive — the core of the ~52% interactive-content engagement lift
Copy-caption panel	Three ready captions with one-tap copy + aria-live confirmation	Removes the “what do I write” hurdle and drives the share moment on-page
Working FAQ	Four disclosures answer wallpaper, stories, printing, licensing	Answers the natural next question in place, adding a reason to linger
Self-hosted downloads	Every file loads from KU, not Dropbox	Keeps the whole errand — and its engagement signals — on a KU page

Measurement honesty: GA4 counts a session “engaged” only at 10s+, a conversion, or 2+ views, and under-reports single-page reading — so we judge against our own launch baseline on this URL, and treat 44–52s as a directional norm, not a promise.

SOURCE • KU Optimization Playbook (2026): interactive content ~52% more engagement (Mediafly/Demand Metric); circle S studio (2025) & Carnegie (2024) engagement benchmarks; GA4 engagement definition

Performance & Accessibility — Fast by Construction, AA by Design

Page and content load speed protected first; assistive-technology experience built past compliance

PAGE & CONTENT LOAD SPEED

- Zero added network requests — no Asset Injector, no icon fonts, no decorative images; only the asset previews load
- All previews are below the fold, so loading="lazy" + decoding="async" cut contention on first paint (web.dev A/B: below-fold-only lazy loading reversed the LCP regression)
- Every preview sits in an aspect-ratio box, reserving space so images cause no layout shift (CLS) as they arrive
- Icons are CSS masks (inline data URIs) — immune to CKEditor viewBox lowercasing and to Font Awesome latency
- Two-file plan: a ~600px WebP preview for the grid, the full original only on the download click — light page, full-res files

WCAG 2.1 AA & BEYOND

- SC 4.1.2: FAQ is a W3C APG disclosure — button + aria-expanded + aria-controls; fail-open so answers are never locked shut
- SC 4.1.3: copy-caption buttons write to an aria-live=polite status so screen readers hear "Copied!"
- SC 2.3.3: full prefers-reduced-motion override disables reveals, hovers, and transitions
- SC 2.4.7 / 1.4.11: 2px lake focus-visible rings on every pill, button, and toggle; 44px+ touch targets
- SC 1.1.1: every preview has descriptive alt text; every download link an aria-label naming the file and format

No inline event handlers anywhere; all behavior is delegated listeners inside one scoped IIFE, each isolated in try/catch so a single failure cannot disable the rest — the lesson from the v1.1 FAQ fix.

SOURCE • web.dev "The performance effects of too much lazy loading" (below-fold-only reverses LCP regression); MDN CWV; W3C WAI-ARIA APG; WCAG 2.1 AA

Design Decision — Forced Download vs. Open-in-New-Tab

Why our download CTAs file the asset to the device instead of opening the raw file URL

For SEO/GEO/AEO the two behaviors are close to neutral — but forced download is the better choice on balance, mostly because it protects the HTML page we actually want ranked. The bigger wins are on UX and analytics, which feed engagement signals indirectly.

Consideration	Why forced download wins
What engines see	Identical either way — crawlers read the <a href>, anchor text, context, and schema, not the click behavior. What matters is a crawlable, same-origin file URL with descriptive names and alt text, which we have
Protecting the ranked page	Open-in-new-tab turns a raw file URL into an indexable dead-end that can compete with our page and registers as an instant exit. Forced download keeps students on the schema-rich HTML page, so engagement and dwell signals accrue where we want them
AEO / GEO task completion	Answer engines favor pages that finish the task in one place. “Download the pennant” completing on-page — reinforced by our FAQ — reads as cleaner task completion than punting to a bare file
Mobile UX (the tiebreaker)	On iOS/Android a new tab often just displays the image and forces a long-press “Save Image.” Forced download is more predictable at the exact celebratory moment we want frictionless
Clean analytics	Forced download keeps the user in-session, so the celebrate_download event attributes to the page; a new-tab file view can log as a navigation/exit and muddy attribution
The one caveat	The download attribute only forces same-origin files (ours are) and is a hint — some browsers still preview PDFs inline. Acceptable: a PDF viewer gives a clear save/print button, and printing is the intent. We never rely on target=_blank alone; labels match behavior so no rage/dead-clicks

SOURCE • W3C HTML — anchor download attribute (same-origin); Google Search Central — links & crawlable resources; internal engineering analysis (this thread)

Monitoring in Our Tools — GA4 & Search Console

There is no “schema dashboard.” We read a few indirect signals; here is exactly where we click

Signal	Where we go	What we set up / watch
Download events (GA4)	Admin → Events (via GTM-K75HJX66)	Add celebrate_download: GTM click trigger on class .kd-dl (or click URL contains /files/images/2026/EMC19255). This is the single number to watch — which graphics get used, impossible while files lived on Dropbox
Interaction events (GA4)	Admin → Events	celebrate_interaction on .kd-pill, .kd-cap__btn, .kd-faq__btn — proves the jump nav, copy, and FAQ get used, not just seen
Engagement lift (GA4)	Reports → Engagement → Pages and screens	Filter to /celebration-downloads; watch average engagement time vs the 44–52s band; compare to the 28–30 day baseline we capture on day 0
Welcome-page referral (GA4)	Explore → path / Traffic acquisition	Watch CTA click-through from welcome-Freshman, -Transfer, -International into this page
Search visibility (GSC)	Performance → filter Page = this URL	Impressions first, then CTR and position; add a query regex celebration|wallpaper|pennant|poster to isolate intent
Schema validity (GSC)	URL Inspection → Live Test	Confirm CollectionPage/ItemList/FAQ/Breadcrumb are detected after each Drupal save; expect NO Enhancements report — that is normal

Annotate the deploy date in our reporting doc the day this ships — every before/after comparison depends on that line in the sand.

SOURCE • GA4 & Google Tag Manager documentation; Google Search Console documentation; KU 2026 Web Reporting & Planning framework

Monitoring in Our Tools — Ahrefs & Microsoft Clarity

Ahrefs answers “are we found and cited?”; Clarity answers “do students actually use what we built?”

Signal	Where we go	What we set up / watch
Rank & SERP features (Ahrefs)	Rank Tracker → tag this URL	Track “KU celebration downloads”, “Jayhawk wallpaper”, “KU admitted student”; filter the SERP-features column for any features we capture
Backlinks (Ahrefs)	Site Explorer → this URL	Watch for new referring domains as the page gets shared — a value that never accrued while assets lived on Dropbox
AI citations (Ahrefs)	Site Explorer → AI Citations module	Tick the purple AI Overview box to trend citations; click into Brand Radar for the prompts and responses that surface our collections
Answer ownership (Ahrefs)	Brand Radar → add “KU Admissions”	Track AI Share of Voice across AI Overviews, ChatGPT, Perplexity for admit/celebration prompts
Behavior (Clarity)	Heatmaps + Recordings → filter URL	Scroll depth (do students reach all seven collections?), click maps on pills and download buttons, and dead/rage clicks on the FAQ or steppers — our early-warning for a CKEditor mutation

Cadence: Clarity in weeks 1–3 (behavior moves first), GA4 download + engagement events weeks 2–4, GSC and Ahrefs weeks 6–8 once re-crawl and AI ingestion catch up. Week-one flat search numbers tell us nothing.

SOURCE • Ahrefs — Brand Radar & AI Citations documentation (2026); Microsoft Clarity documentation; KU 2026 Web Reporting framework

90-Day KPI Targets & Next Actions

Directional targets against our own baseline — third-party benchmarks guide, they do not guarantee

KPI	Baseline	30 days	90 days	Tool
celebrate_download events / session	— (new; was invisible on Dropbox)	≥0.30	≥0.60	GA4 + GTM
Avg engagement time (this URL)	set day 0	rising	44–52s band	GA4
CTA click-through from welcome pages	set day 0	measurable	steady climb	GA4
/celebration-downloads impressions	index 100	indexed	130+	GSC
AI citations for admit/celebration prompts	audit wk 1	baseline set	SoV trending up	Ahrefs Brand Radar
Assisted social shares	— (new)	measurable	climbing	Clarity + GA4

NEXT ACTIONS

1. Paste #ku-celebrate-v1 into one KUTE HTML paragraph on /celebration-downloads; Amy reviews before it goes live.
2. Add the reusable “Celebrate” CTA on welcome-Freshman, -Transfer, and -International pointing to this page.
3. Produce the ~600px WebP previews (celebrate/_thumbs/<slug>.webp) and swap only each <img src>; download hrefs stay on originals.
4. Add celebrate_download and celebrate_interaction triggers in GTM-K75HJX66; capture the 28–30 day GA4/GSC baseline; annotate launch.
5. Seed Brand Radar prompts for KU admit/celebration questions so week-8 AI-citation reads have history.

SOURCE • KU internal — kucelebratev1analysis.pdf KPI set (2026); KU 2026 Web Reporting & Planning framework

Appendix — Full #ku-celebrate-v1 Source (reference copy; deploy from the .html file)

949 lines • 70,262 characters • single paste, Full HTML source view, no Asset Injector

Sources & Citations

Every authority that informed this build — our project library and external standards

KU project library

kucelebratev1analysis.pdf — KU Admissions celebration-downloads analysis & build plan (2026).

KU Optimization Playbook and Standards (2026) — engagement norms, interactivity lift, schema discipline, CKEditor defenses.

KU 2026 Web Reporting & Planning framework — Discoverability, Engagement/Conversion, Measurement/Attribution.

KU Brand Center — Color, and Typography guidelines (brand.ku.edu/colors, /guidelines/design/typography).

KU Brand Center — Trademark Licensing (brand.ku.edu/trademark-licensing), referenced in the on-page FAQ.

Reference celebration pages (2026)

Purdue Undergraduate Admissions — Celebration Downloads (admissions.purdue.edu/admitted-students/celebration-downloads).

UC Davis admitted-student celebration kit; University of Iowa “Future Hawkeye”; University of Rochester Celebration Kit.

Performance & Core Web Vitals

web.dev — “Browser-level image lazy loading” and “The performance effects of too much lazy loading” (Google Chrome).

MDN Web Docs — “Fix your website’s Largest Contentful Paint by optimizing image loading.”

SitePoint — “Image Optimization for Core Web Vitals in 2026.”

Search, schema & accessibility

Google Search Central — structured-data guidance; FAQ rich-result changes (2023–2026); AI-features guidance (schema must match visible content).

Schema.org — CollectionPage, ItemList, FAQPage, BreadcrumbList, WebSite, CollegeOrUniversity.

W3C WAI-ARIA Authoring Practices Guide — Disclosure pattern; WCAG 2.1 AA (SC 1.1.1, 1.4.11, 2.3.3, 2.4.7, 4.1.2, 4.1.3).

W3C HTML — anchor download attribute (same-origin behavior).

Engagement & AI-visibility measurement

circle S studio (2025) and Carnegie higher-ed dashboard (2024) — engagement benchmarks.

Mediafly / Demand Metric — interactive content earns ~52% more engagement.

Ahrefs — Brand Radar & AI Citations documentation (2026); Microsoft Clarity, GA4, and GTM documentation.

Figures from third-party studies reflect each source's methodology; we treat them as directional benchmarks, not guarantees. No one can promise placement in AI answers — our approach is to maximize the signals that make citation and ranking more likely, then measure honestly.