



## **Website Development Tips**

### **Overview**

A web site is a great tool for keeping members informed and showcase your organization—share news, events, officer rosters and committee information with your members. A web site is also an incredible recruitment tool, and can help your organization connect with students on campus, parents, and alumni of your organization.

### **Purpose**

The web site coordinator should:

- Remember all major audiences  
Review the list of suggested topics
- Visit other sites for ideas
- Decide the content for your site (this could be done by your officers or by a committee)
- Work closely with all officers to highlight various aspects of your organization
- Request input from advisers, alumni and parents
- Build the site
- Update information frequently and keep it timely

### **Activity**

1. **Secure your host provider:** In order for your web pages to be viewed by the world, they must reside on a “host” that provides Internet access, such as America Online, Prodigy, Compuserve, which allow subscribers web space as part of their account. Free web hosting is available from angelfire.com, geocities.com; and others. If you use one of these free services, be careful to monitor what advertisements these services post on your site. You won’t need much web space, unless you are planning on including a lot of graphics on your site. Most providers allow from 1-5 mb of free space. The host provider generally determines the Web address, although your user name on the account may be included (for example, if your user name is “UCD Group” your web site on AOL might be “http://members.aol.com/ucdgroup”).
2. **Decide your content:** Working with your officers, gather any information, email addresses, and pictures you want to include on your site. Review other sites for ideas.
3. **Download and install a website template (if desired) from your web host provider.**
4. **Customize the template:** After you download and install the template site in your website folder, you can now customize the “htm” files for your organization. (The template will generally have .htm listed after these files)

These files are generally “text” files and may be modified in any “editing” software such as a word processor or Windows notepad. You may also edit “htm” files in a web page designing program such as Netscape Composer, FrontPage, HotDog Pro, and PageMill.

Warning: When you open these files in a word processor, you will see lots of web “code” (or tags) which affect how your page appears on the web. These tags are important and, in most cases, should not be edited or deleted. Look for the sections that you want to edit (for example, if the template says “About Me” you would delete this and fill in “About Our Organization”). Edit the text only, not punctuation marks or symbols.

Follow your web host’s directions for viewing your web page in a web browser. Generally, web hosts provide trouble shooting directions and tips.



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5. **Publish Your Site:** Check with your host provider about instructions for setting up the address and “uploading” your files to them.

FTP (File Transfer Protocol) is typically the method used to copy files from your computer to your host’s computer. If you use a web page editing program, it probably has FTP-capability built in. Your host provider may provide an FTP program. Some popular FTP programs are: WS\_FTP ([www.ipswitch.com](http://www.ipswitch.com)), FTP Explorer ([www.ftpx.com](http://www.ftpx.com)), and Fetch ([www.datmouth.edu/pages/softdev/fetch.html](http://www.datmouth.edu/pages/softdev/fetch.html) This is for Mac users).

Special note about INDEX.HTM: The index is the first page of your site. Some host services require that your “index” page be named “index.html.”

6. **Advertise your site:** Tell all of your members the new web address in an upcoming newsletter and at meetings! Also, register your site to be linked with SPAC’s website. Include your website address on all of your organization’s publicity materials for your activities/events.
7. **Maintain your site:** Be sure to monitor and update the pages as the information changes. Review steps 4 and 5 whenever you need to make modifications.

Feel free to customize the pages to reflect the personality of your organization!

### **Ideas**

Here are some ideas of information that you may want to include on your web site:

- Description of your organization
- Calendar of Events
- President’s Letter
- Guestbooks
- Service events/ highlights
- Names: Members, advisers, committees
- Pictures
- Membership benefits
- How to pay dues
- Awards: Group and Individual
- Announcements
- Newsletters
- Directions to activities
- Method to update phone, address, email with organization
- Recruitment activities
- Your organization’s philosophy and/or motto
- Quick facts
- Useful forms