Creating an association website

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Most associations now have a website – which has today become an almost indispensable communication tool. This work aid provides tips on creating a cost-effective website. A glossary is provided to help you understand the many specialist terms used in relation to websites.

1. Purpose of an association website

- Presenting the association to external parties

- Giving the association a face (presenting executive committee, articles of association and activities)

- Getting new members curious and attracting them to the association

- Providing information to members (visible for everyone or password-protected)

- Networking with/among members and promoting interactions (e.g. with blogs, forums, bulletin boards, etc.)

- Facilitating internal data management and image storage (password-protected)

2. Online web tools – simple and cost-effective

Associations can use various online web tools to create their website. In the following, we briefly present three attractive tools.

Advantages of such tools:

- Quick, cost-effective and intuitive options for creating and revising the website

- Can be accessed from any computer with an internet connection

- Different users and access rights can be easily defined

- Large selection of preprogrammed design templates

- Variety of integrated functionalities that would be costly to have specially programmed

- Effective integrated spam protection

- Already SEO optimised, meaning the website is easy to find on Google, Bing, Yahoo and other search engines.

WordPress

WordPress is the most popular CMS for websites. It offers hundreds of free design templates. Creating a website with WordPress.com is easy. It takes you through the configuration process step by step, you then select the desired design and title, choose the settings you want and can then start adding content to the web pages.

https://wordpress.com

sites

A service by Hostpoint, a Swiss webhosting company. The tool is intuitive to use and easy to learn. It offers a website building kit that can be used to create a website without instructions. All website content is compiled using drag & drop. Sites can be tested free of charge. The basic service costs CHF 15/month for hosting, support and email addresses.

https://www.hostpoint.ch/en/website/create-website.html

Joomla!

Popular and widely used CMS with a large number of design templates available. These are generally available free of charge and can be changed according to the user's needs. Joomla! is based on a three-part system: functional site administration, content area and layout.

https://www.joomla.ch/

Other online web tools:

https://www.footeo.com/en/ (free website kit for football associations)

https://jimdo.com

https://www.weebly.com/uk

https://www.wix.com/

3. Checklist for association websites

The website...

☐ Is clearly arranged

☐ Is up to date

☐ Is simple and intuitive to use (max. 7 menu points, max. 3 navigation levels)

☐ Is easy to read (font, font size, line spacing, line width)

☐ Shows images (important: clarify image rights!)

☐ Is quick (pictures in web quality, i.e. not too "heavy")

☐ Provides benefits to the reader (information, entertainment, communications channel, etc.)

☐ Offers quality (precise, appealing and snappy content)

☐ Offers interested parties ways to get in contact (e.g. registration form, newsletter)

☐ Observes data protection guidelines

☐ Is easy to manage (with the CMS, factor in enough time and personnel resources!)

4. Glossary

Accessibility
Accessibility ensures that older and disabled persons have barrier-free access to all website content without external help.

Blog
A type of virtual diary or magazine in which new entries, known as blog articles, are written daily. It is used for sharing information, thoughts and experience.

Browser / web browser
Special computer programmes used for accessing websites on the internet. Well-known browsers: Internet Explorer, Firefox, Google Chrome, Opera, Safari.

Creative Commons licence
Creators of photos, videos, music, texts, poems and artwork, etc., can use free Creative Commons licences to regulate the reuse of their works. With a CC licence, the creator receives the copyright but the work can be used by others within a certain framework (some rights reserved). The CC licences are translated for various countries and adapted to national laws. https://www.creativecommons.ch

Content Management System (CMS)
A CMS can be used to edit, supplement and add content to a website via a graphic user interface without HTML knowledge.

Community / social media
Organised groups of people that interact with each other on the internet and share opinions, experience and information via social media platforms. Communities play a role in, for example, social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), communication (chats, blogs, etc.), fundraising (crowdfunding platforms), knowledge-sharing (Wikipedia, YouTube, etc.), shopping (eBay, Ricardo, etc.) and travel (TripAdvisor, Airbnb, Uber, etc.).

Database
A system for managing data electronically, such as managing member addresses in an association.

Disclaimer
A specialist term for the exclusion of liability.

Domain
A website address and thus the homepage's URL.

Footer
The part at the bottom of a website page, usually containing key contact details. The footer can also be used for additional website navigation, as a site map or to show copyright notices and a link to the legal notice.

Legal notice / obligation to provide a legal notice
Since spring 2012, there has been a general obligation to provide a legal notice for "electronic commerce" in Switzerland (Swiss Unfair Competition Act).

Link
A link (short for hyperlink) describes a place on a website that, when clicked on, triggers an action. A distinction is made between internal links (which will refer you to content on the same website) and external links (which will refer you to other websites).

Navigation
The navigation allows visitors to move through the website. It must be well structured: 5-7 main navigation points and no more than 3 levels. There are different types: main and subnavigation, and service, footer and breadcrumb navigations.

Open source
Short for open source code. A programme that can be adapted and changed to meet individual needs. Open source applications are almost always available free of charge. WordPress is an example.

Single-page website

A website that consists of one single HTML document whose content reloads dynamically. Unlike a single-page website, a traditional website consists of several interlinked HTML documents.

Plug-ins

A type of optional "extension module" that is integrated in a website to expand its functionality.

Programming languages for websites

Different programming languages may be behind a website (HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP, jQuery). The most important is HTML: it is used to structure the website and texts, as well as integrate graphics and multimedia content. CSS determines how content is shown (e.g. layout, colours and typography). JavaScript can be used for interactions with the user, for example.

Responsive website

A website in which the structure and presentation of individual elements, such as navigation, page columns and texts, are adapted to the end device used (smartphone, tablet, desktop computer).

Page title

One of the features that most stands out to users in the list of Google search results – highlighted and linked directly to the website. In CMS, the page title is also sometimes described as the "browser title".

SEO

Search engine optimisation, namely measures taken to optimise rankings in unpaid search engine results. Helpful factors include keywords in text and page titles, structured texts, image captions with alternative text.

Web server / host

There is a web server (also called a host) behind every internet address (domain). This stores files that are retrievable as a website. Hosting is (almost always) subject to a fee.

Site map

The hierarchical structure of the individual pages of a website. Most site maps are based on a tree structure, with main and subpages. Site maps help users to orient themselves.

Template

A design template for a website. The website is programmed on the basis of templates. For tools such as WordPress, the design templates are already programmed, ready for content to simply be added (called themes).

Typography

Typography supports readability, such as through font, font size (14px for running text), letter and line spacing and line length. Spelling mistakes, incorrect punctuation, run-on sentences or too many fill words reduce a text's readability.

URL

www-address of a website. URL = Uniform Resource Locator.

Usability / user-friendliness

User-friendly websites are quick and easy to use: with an easy-to-understand navigation, understandable texts, interesting content and clear visual design. Flashing and flickering should be avoided.

Web design

The visual, functional and structural design of websites.

Web 2.0 – the interactive web

Evolution from one-way communication (provision of information) to more dialogue and knowledge transfer. In Web 2.0, surfers are involved in creating website content, turning consumers into active participants.

Web 3.0 – the semantic web

The next web development phase. To manage huge quantities of data with a low level of information quality, Web 3.0 content is combined with semantic information. Web 3.0 uses semantics as an intelligent link between users, services and content and creates relationships.

Webmaster

Webmasters deal with the planning, graphic design, development, maintenance, marketing and administration of websites. They are the contact persons for technical problems, questions or suggestions regarding a website.

Web-optimised images

To keep website loading times to a minimum, photos and images on websites must be "web-optimised". Image processing programmes use the "save for web" function for this.

Widget

Dynamic components that can be added to a website, i.e. a type of mini-programme for websites. Examples include elements such as Google Maps, clocks, weather reports and visit counts on websites.

Wiki

A (partially) open authoring system for websites. The content is read by users and modified online. The most famous wiki is Wikipedia. Wikis can also be used in an association for gathering, passing on and enhancing knowledge (knowledge management).