

Web Site Tips & Considerations

Determine if your group needs a web site. Does the Monday night knitting group really need a web site? Perhaps they want more members or want to show pictures of completed projects or be a resource for other knitting groups.

Promote who you are using the PW Purpose. Graphics can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcusa/clipart

Who will maintain the web site? If no one is responsible, it will not get updated.. It is frustrating for Internet users to go to web sites that are out of date. Check your site at least once every 6 months.

Is your Synod, Presbytery or church willing to host your site? If not, contact an Internet Service Provider to determine the cost of hosting a web site (~\$20/month + setup fee). There are FREE services but you must tolerate their advertising. Here are some other resources to consider:

www.protopage.com—free group start page
www.webmedly.com—\$60/year, web based—
 no special programs needed
 Full-featured web site hosting starting at \$125/year—
 ask me for details

Do your homework before buying anything. There are countless options, make sure you know what you are getting into.

Consider a WSIWYG web editing program, this makes maintaining the site much easier. The two most popular are Dreamweaver and FrontPage. Special pricing on software for Churches and Non-profit organization can be found at www.1computerbargains.com and www.microsoft.com/licensing/programs/open

Monitor site visits using a statistics program. It can't tell you specifically who visited the site but can tell you the referring site (e.g. Google, Yahoo, etc) and the domain of the service provider (e.g. Comcast, ATT, etc). Ask your web host if a stats program is available.

Contact information should be located or linked from the main page - your main page is like your business card. Include the organizations name, address, phone, fax, and a contact email

If possible, try to keep the info limited to one screen, many people do not like to scroll and it is hard for new users.

Minimize the number of clicks it takes to get to information. People give up after a few clicks.

Provide detailed information about upcoming events. Provide registration information.

Books to help:

The Non-Designer's Web Book by Robin Williams

Ministry Marketing Made Easy, Yvon Prehn

Books published by:

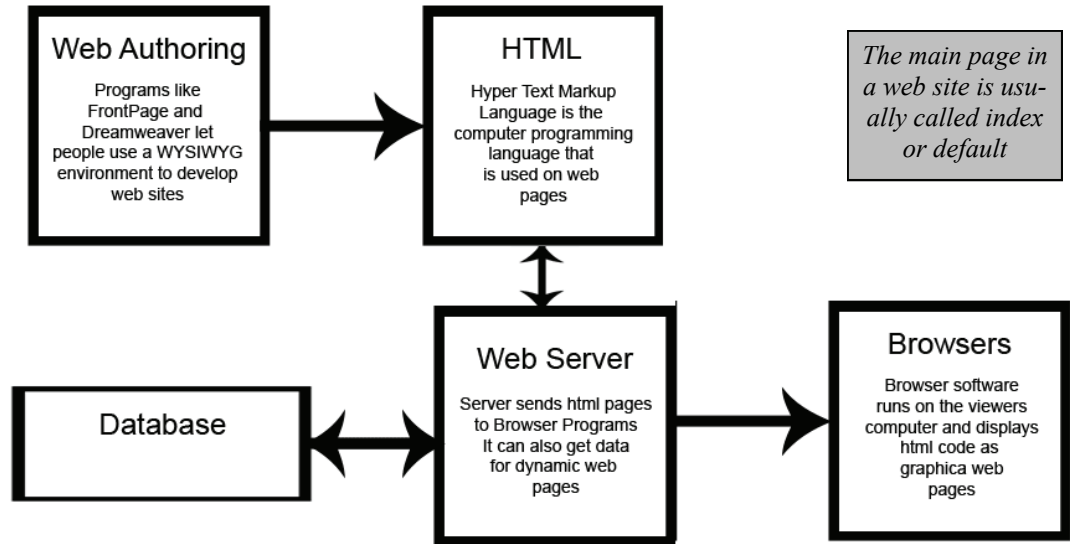


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Images

A picture is worth a thousand words. There are two standard formats for images used on web pages. They are:

- .gif – line art or drawing (pronounced g-i-f or Jiff) - only 256 colors and allows for transparent regions in image
- .jpg – photographs (pronounced Jay-peg or j-p-g) – millions of colors (like a photograph) and does not allow transparent regions in image

PDF—Portable Document Format

A PDF file can be viewed on almost any computer, it is the “standard” for sharing files on the Internet. You can visit the following sites to create a PDF file:

createpdf.adobe.com
www.pdf995.com
www.cutepdf.com

It's a good idea to include a hyperlink at your website to the FREE Adobe PDF reader
www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html



Domain Name

A domain is the www portion of your web site. The name can be registered with your web host or on sites like www.godaddy.com or www.tucows.com

Never assume people will find your web site. Make sure you put your domain name on EVERY piece of printed material! This includes emails, fliers, registration forms, letterhead, business cards, press releases, bulletins, advertisements anywhere and everywhere you can think of. It doesn't make sense to spend money to develop a site that no one will ever look at. Publicize it and register it with the search engines.

Hyperlink

A hyperlink is active text on a web page. Click on a hyperlink and your browser will display additional information about the topic. Hyperlinks are usually underlined. Your mouse will change to a hand when you roll over a hyperlink

Include a map at your site, link to:

www.mapquest.com
maps.google.com
maps.yahoo.com



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Five Tips For a Professional Looking Web Site

1. Keep it simple. User's may not have a high-speed connection or the latest software.
2. Each page at your site should have a similar look and feel.
3. Keep it fresh. Update your site at least every 6 months.
4. Test everything. Make sure you site works on multiple browsers
5. Keep links alive. Check your links every few months to make sure they are still active.