Web Sites For Advocacy and Community Organizing:
Basics, Essentials, and Best Practices

Web Site Maintenance

Community Technology Foundation of California

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Learning Goals

► Emphasize importance of web site maintenance

► Raise awareness of staffing considerations

► Remember technical considerations

► Discuss hosting options

► Understand essential domain registration practices and issues

Web Site Maintenance & Upkeep

► Common misconception:

- Creating your website is "most of the work"

► Maintaining and evolving your website is the larger challenge in successful web presence

- Content and graphics need to change on a regular basis to sustain use and traffic
- Stale websites can be a significant liability

► This requires organizational commitment

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Maintenance Best Practices

► Staffing Considerations

- Budget both time and money for ongoing maintenance

- Make sure you designate a specific staff person to "own" website maintenance

- Have organizational check-ins on a regular basis about website direction and content

- Anticipate ongoing graphic design and software development support

Maintenance Best Practices

► Content Considerations

- Develop a message and action calendar for the front page of the site and other landing pages

- Freshness

  - Consider new graphics as frequently as possible in order to encourage repeat traffic

  - Remove or archive out-of-date events or action alerts

- Ideally, have "quick response" content ready, or at least planned, for various campaign evolutions

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Maintenance Best Practices

► Technical considerations

- Security patches and upgrades to software
  - Take patches seriously
  - Hopefully your hosting service or web person handles this
- Backup Procedures
  - Local and remote files and database
- Verify 3rd party software integration
- Test for compatibility with major browser releases

Maintenance Best Practices

►Web hosting

- Don't host your own site!
  - It's like having an electronic pet that needs 24/7 supervision

- When selecting a host
  - Compare disk storage, bandwidth limits, email hosting, security, "shell access", traffic analysis tools

- Understand "Shared" vs. "Dedicated" hosting
  - Shared doesn't work for high-volume sites or peaks

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Maintenance Best Practices

► Web Hosting Services We Like

- Progressive
  - ElectricEmbers.org
  - Gaiahost.com
  - Riseup.net
- For-profit/corporate
  - Opensourcehost.com
  - MonkeyBrains.com
  - VerioHosting.com

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Maintenance Best Practices

► All about domains

- Domain names are essential internet real estate
- All organizational internet activity should take place within domains you control
  - Never let staff email from personal accounts such as hotmail and gmail
- Keep domain registration up to date
  - Registrant email contact addresses **must be current**
  - All address/contact info must be "real"

Maintenance Best Practices

► All about domains

- Never host a website or campaign on a domain you do not control
  - e.g., don't use URLs like myorg.wordpress.com
- Always register domains yourself, don't let your hosting service or web consultant do it for you
- Consider buying .org, .com and .net variants for each domain name you own
  - If you don't, your opponents will, or else spammers and squatters will

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Maintenance Best Practices

► All about domains

- Registrars: buyer beware
  - Domainsite.com is pretty good: cheap with good tools
  - GoDaddy.com, Network Solutions: Avoid
  - Beware "slamming" tactics, like Domain Registry of America
- Registering for multiple years is a good idea
  - In most cases; campaigns may be exception
- Consider "locking" your domains at the registrar

End Of Section

►Questions?

►Comments?

Thank You!

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