

# Small Non-Profit Sites

LOCAL SITES BENEFIT FROM A WEB PRESENCE, TOO



When I designed this small site a few years ago, my goals were simple: Make it clean, crisp, and quick enough for the computers and the computer users who would be viewing it.

## SOUTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Contact Us | Join the Society | Join Our Mail Lists | Order Items | Visit Our Museum | Volunteer

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- ◆ *Spring Cleaning?*

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*You are visitor number since February 5, 1998.*

*We participate in the following [web rings](#).*

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Many of the web sites that I saw for similar organizations back then were long, cluttered pages with multiple fonts, colors, pictures, and backgrounds. I made the home page clean, easy-to-read, and quick to load. I set up the site for a banner exchange, which was a method of free advertising among similar groups, and sought out similar free advertising opportunities for the organization.

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Larger non-profit sites might be able to afford very flashy sites or may attract pro bono services of some of the larger web design firms. If you're a small organization, though, you need a way to get your message out, attract volunteers, and reach the community that you organized to help. A simple web site can do that.

What do you need in a simple site? What are the basic requirements?

## The Basics

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The basics for a small nonprofit group vary widely, but most seem to have the following five types of pages:

- Home page — The startup page. It used to be the fashion to have a fancy page with a "Click here to enter" button, but these days the home page is more often used to give a quick overview of who you are and what you do.
- Contact Us — Even if you choose to have contact information at the bottom of each page, you'll want a page that gives additional information such as contact hours, opening/closing hours, additional forms of contact, preferred forms of contact, and so on.
- Directions — If you have an center that is open to the public, you'll want a directions page. Yes, it's true that customers can get a detailed map from Yahoo, Google Maps, or MapQuest, but what if the roads have changed and those sites haven't caught up with the change? Or, what if — as I've often found — none of the three agree? You'll want a page with your own directions or at least a link to the map site that provides the best directions to your location. You'll also want to include information about access by public transportation or parking.
- About Us — Who are you? What are your organization's goals? What awards and grants have you won?
- Services — What services do you provide, and who is eligible?

In every page, there are three important elements that help you stay in the reader's mind:

- Logo and tagline — Repeated at the top of each page, the logo and tagline say who you are and what you do.
- Quick contact information — Repeated at the bottom of each page is the organization's name, address, and phone number, and a link to your email address.
- Meta tags — If you don't know what meta tags are, don't worry. All you need to know is that they're pieces of information that help people who use search engines (like Google) to find your site.

You can add more pages as needed — either later or at the time of the initial design.

## Ideas for Additional Pages

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Some of the pages that you might consider adding are as follows.

- News and Events — Announces rallies, meetings, fundraisers, and volunteer needs.
- Newsletter signup — Do you have an electronic (or paper) newsletter? People can sign up online.
- Fundraising — Do you have items for sale? You can have a catalog with a form that people can print and mail in, or from which they can order by phone.
- FAQ — Short for Frequently Asked Questions, this can be a great time-saver. Do people always ask you the same questions? Answer them here.
- Articles — Promote your cause. Write a short article on a timely subject, or obtain permission to reprint one here from a respected source.

## Other Add-ons

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You can easily add interest to any page by adding the following elements, which are available at no charge:

- Weather
- Add to Favorites
- Photos
- Coupons

## Need Something More?

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But what if you want a site that you can update yourself and add to and have the changes reflected immediately? Or what if you want an events calendar that appears as an actual calendar page?

I have a package plan for a site of 5 pages, with a small design charge per additional page. I can design the pages so that you can learn to update them yourself (or ask someone else to update them) or you can purchase an update service where you just email me the information and I put it on your web site.

For dynamic sites that you can update yourself or where users can register and log on, I can create a site using content management technology and show you how to use it. Tell me what you have in mind and I'd be happy to give you a quote. Contact me at the web site below or phone 1-508-519-9169 and leave a message with your name, phone number, and what you're looking for in a site. I'll do some research and get back to you as soon as I can.