

New Zealand Webguide

Connect your community

A guide for community groups, iwi
groups, and not-for-profit organisations.

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and the Webguide Partnership

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WebGuide Partners

Tell us what you think about the Webguide

Introduction

This Guide will help you use the Internet and set up and run one of the most effective community websites in the world. We think community groups, iwi groups, and not-for-profit organisations will find this information particularly useful.

Overview

There are three key phases for any project: prepare, launch and review. The main sections in this book take you through what you need to know:

Connect

Introduces the Internet for those who aren't really quite sure what it is. Its greatest feature is that it connects people to one another — and that can bring about great change.

The active web

Joining in on the Internet provides exciting possibilities and challenges. This section looks at the benefits and drawbacks of participating — actively using the Internet to help your organisation achieve its goals.

Is a website right?

Assess whether or not to participate actively in the Internet, in what way and to what level.

Introduction

Understand the web

Careful planning and preparation are the foundation on which a website is built.

Develop the website

Choose the right team, put the website in the best place and give it the best name.

Maintain, review, improve

Make the most of your investment: keep your site up-to-date, measure its progress against your goals and improve it.

Section I: Connect

It seems like everyone is talking about the Internet. They all know what it is, but you're not *really* quite sure. Or you may know how it works but not how to make it work for you. This section introduces the Internet for those who have never used it before.

Topics in this section

Connect quickly and cheaply

The Internet lets us connect with others from around the world quickly, easily and cheaply. It gives us access to vast stores of information and creativity and allows us to contribute easily and cheaply, with a potential audience of a billion. Join the adventure!

Inform, discuss, change

The Internet allows you to find and provide information, persuade, discuss and change the world.

Get connected

You need a computer and an Internet Provider. There are faster and slower connections and some cost more than others. You can use a free or low-cost connection, such as at a Public library. You can get a free email address.

Further Reading

Learn more about topics mentioned in the previous sections.

Connect

List of links

A reference list of links to other websites and materials mentioned in the previous sections.

Connect quickly and cheaply

The Internet (the Net) is simply hundreds of thousands of computers around the world which are all connected together to form a network. They all store information and pass it around.

Change your world

When you connect to the Internet you join almost a billion others around the world who already use it. They make and look at web pages, send and receive email messages, documents, photos and videos, make phonecalls, chat with one another by typing their messages or by voice and sometimes with video. They play games such as chess or bridge or war games or strategy. They get weather reports and news, book air tickets or tickets to a rugby match. They make bets and send flowers. They buy and sell lawnmowers and cars and DVDs. They organise into communities, find friends and discuss every topic in the universe. In short, they communicate.

What do you have to say?

Everyone owns it

The Internet first began thirty or forty years ago in the universities. It came from the US Department of Defence (DARPA) and their network with research establishments. In the 1990s it started to get popular with ordinary people. As every week goes by someone finds a new way to use it and more people join in. The Internet is dynamic; constantly changing and growing.

Although there are protocols (rules) that control how the computers on the Internet connect to one another there's no central governing body that tells us humans what to do or say. In some countries the government does control how its citizens use the Internet, but in most countries anyone can use the Internet any way they like, within the normal bounds of free speech.

The good side of that is that you can share your opinion or point of view with the rest of the world, even if not many people agree with you. The bad side is that some people use the Internet for things others don't approve of, such as pornography, inciting hatred or supplying false information. We can all take a part in finding ways to use the Internet to improve our world.

What can you contribute?

We communicate

The Internet lets us communicate with others from around the world quickly, easily and cheaply. Most of what we do on the Internet is free even if you're connecting with people on the other side of the world. The only cost is whatever your Internet Provider charges you for your normal Internet connection. If someone provides a service you have to pay for it will be clearly marked, and you will only be able to use it after arranging payment.

Luckily for us, computer software handles all aspects of connecting to the right address, sending and receiving information. Unless you want to work as a technician you don't need to know a lot about the Internet in order to use it. The most important point to remember is that we're using imperfect machines which run on instructions, not intelligence. Things can go wrong sometimes and it's mostly not our fault.

Connect

What we need to be careful of is to get email and web addresses correct and to learn how to protect ourselves and our computers from those who are out to infect and hijack our machines with viruses and spyware or to defraud us of money or information.

The Internet gives us access to vast stores of information and creativity and allows us to contribute easily and cheaply and with a potential audience of a billion. We can find others who share our interests and we can develop new interests.

How about joining in on the adventure?

Inform, discuss, change

You can't get away from the Web these days: you see web addresses on buses and cornflake packets, they mention them on TV and radio, they're in every magazine and paper you pick up.

If you've ever spotted something like these then you've seen a web address, also known as a URL:

amazon.com

www.google.co.nz

www.webguide.net.nz

mactips.info

Communicate via the Web

The World Wide Web is one of the main parts of the Internet. It's made up of web pages which are grouped together into websites. A page might have text on it, pictures, maybe movies. It may have sound files (eg music or talking) connected to it or perhaps

Microsoft Word files or *PDFs*. The possibilities are growing every day.

You can play games through web pages, book movie tickets, order pizza, look up a dictionary, check the weather forecast, ask questions, debate almost anything you want to do, you can do through a web page.

It works like this. Let's say I have some information you might want to know. I store my information in a special format on one of the computers connected to the Internet. I make some arrangements to give that page an address and allow visitors to read it. It's now a web page.

You type the address in to your computer and then you can read the page. You might also use a special web page called a Search Engine to find information. Google is the most popular and well-known search engine.

You can read that web page at any time of the day or night, from any computer which is connected to the Internet and from anywhere in the world.

One important feature of web pages is that they are often interactive: you can click on an item to read more information, choose a CD to buy, send an email message, watch a video, listen to a speech or share your point of view with other readers.

Conserve energy

Most community groups could use a very simple web page to provide standard information people often want to know, such as a postal address, phone number, email address, opening hours, a list of resources for sale or dates for training courses and other events

Connect

in the coming year. You could also provide documents such as fact sheets or discussion papers.

This kind of website can reduce the time your group spends telling people basic information and allow you to spend more time on the work that counts.

Discuss via email

Email is a very popular way to use the power of the Internet. I can type a message into my email software, press Send and then you can receive it, even on the other side of the world, just a few seconds later. If you send a message straight back to me I can have your answer moments later.

Email's free and travels very quickly. You can easily send one message to one person and you can just as easily send messages to many people at the same time. You can send messages whenever it suits you – at 2 am if you like. The recipient will reply when it suits them - maybe at 2.02 am or maybe not until 9 am (or perhaps next week or never, just like normal mail).

Email's world wide. You can send a message across town, across the country or around the world and it doesn't cost any extra. You also don't pay any extra for the phone bill because you're not ringing the other country, but sending the message through your local connection to the world wide Internet.

Your message may be just a few words, or you can include pictures, music, movies, Microsoft Word documents, spreadsheets and all kinds of things. There are some rules you should learn about using email sensibly though or it's very easy to annoy people.

Use email

A community group can use email to save time, energy and money.

Email is one of the oldest and most fundamental methods of communication using the Internet. Your community group could use email to let people know about upcoming meetings, to discuss issues or to organise rapid responses to current events.

Discuss via chat or Internet phone

Chat's a bit like email, except both (or many) parties are online at the same moment and the chat takes place live, in real time. You may chat by typing, but some chat software can allow you to speak or use a video camera to see one another. Online chat also allows you to send files which people can look at while they talk to you.

Free chat and Internet phone

These days we can make phone calls through the Internet by using a microphone and speakers attached to the computer, or by using a specialised phone. You see the acronym VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) in connection with this. The most popular service is called Skype, so you may see that instead.

Why pay large amounts for conference calls when your community group could chat or make phonecalls at no extra cost? Use chat and Internet Phone for small group discussions where real-life get-togethers are expensive, inconvenient or impossible to timetable.

Infinite possibilities

The Internet is a communication tool and you can use it in many different ways. Just like the roading system, you can use a road to go to the beach to relax, to take the kids to netball practice, to

Connect

drive to a hospital for medical care or to take products to market. Web pages, email and chat are some of the more popular ways to use the Internet, but there are many more. Other sections of this Webguide will fill out that picture.

The key point to remember is that the Internet allows you to communicate quickly, easily and cheaply. That communication can let you build community, find information, inform others, persuade, discuss and change the world.

Want to join in?

Get connected

You need a computer

To connect to the Internet you need to use a computer. Some cellphones and other devices can also use the Internet, but as of 2006 you're still better off with a computer for regular use. Your computer must have a way to connect to the Internet. That could be a modem, which connects to a phone line, or it could be a broadband connection.

Dial-up: cheap and slow

A modem is the cheapest (and slowest) option. This is called "dial-up" you hook into your regular phone line. You can't make or receive phonecalls on that phone line while you're connected to the Internet.

Many modern computers should already have a modem inside or attached to them, but some of the newest models have already stopped including a modem. Wireless connections are making

modems somewhat obsolete. It may be possible to use a cellphone as a modem, but that can be fairly slow and very expensive.

A modem is good for email or surfing web pages, but it's too slow to handle video clips, music or other multimedia. It also makes it difficult to send and receive photos and files such as Microsoft Word documents.

Broadband: fast

Broadband is a high-speed Internet connection. There are different speeds available, but all are a lot faster than a regular modem. Broadband also costs more and needs some specialised equipment. With broadband you can use the phone for regular calls at the same time as you use the Internet. Broadband is great for multimedia and for sending files around.

You may get a broadband connection via cable (eg Telstra Clear) or via DSL (eg Jetstream), via satellite (eg ICONZ) or wireless (eg Woosh, Cafenet, various hotels etc). Many of these are available in only some parts of New Zealand but all are spreading rapidly.

Each method needs its own specialised equipment, which the Internet Provider can advise you on and supply. Older computers may be unable to use some of these methods.

You need a provider

Whether you use a dial-up modem or a broadband connection you will have to sign up with an Internet Service Provider (ISP). Check Consumer or Netguide to find out about ISPs and their prices or use the Yellow Pages to find one. Be sure too to ask your friends and neighbours.

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Costs depend very much on the amount of time you will spend on the Internet, the amount of data you will download and the speed of your connection. A low-use dial-up (low speed) connection could cost less than \$10 per month. High speed connections could cost as much as \$100 per month, but may be cheaper.

Another way to use the Internet is through a cheap or free connection at a Public Library, Internet cafe or a free wireless access point. Ask around to find out what might be available in your area.

You need a username

Your Internet provider will give you a username and password to use when you connect to their service. Don't tell others your password and don't write it down near your computer.

When you type in the password you must be really careful to get it exactly right. Don't confuse the letter O with the number 0 for example. Even though they look almost the same, your password needs the right one. The same goes for any letters or numbers which look similar. Also be sure to use capital letters in the correct places.

You need software

You need a web browser to use web pages. Your computer probably already has at least one, such as Internet Explorer or Safari. You can download and use any browser you like — they're almost all free. It's a very good idea to keep on updating your web browser software — as time goes by older versions can leave you open to security problems, or they may not be able to cope so well with new web pages.

Another popular browser is Firefox and others include Opera and Mozilla.

You can usually check your email via a web page, but this can be a slow and clumsy way to do email. It also means you have to be connected to the Internet to read your email. If you get specialised email software you can read and write emails while you're not connected. It's also easier for handling large amounts of email.

Your computer probably already has email software, such as Outlook Express or Apple's Mail.app. Other popular free email software includes Thunderbird, Pegasus and Eudora.

Free email address

If you use the Internet through someone else's connection (eg a Public Library) you may need a free email address. Even if you use your own computer you might want an extra email address.

There are many ways to get a free email address. Google's Gmail is very popular now as it can store a huge amount of email and you can check your mail through a web page or with email software.

Training is handy

You can start to use the Internet without training, using trial and error, but it's a good idea to get some help, as it can make things much easier. Ask around your local community college, Library, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Seniornet to find a training course. These days most such courses are free.

Connect

Further reading and links

If you're interested in learning more about this topic try these resources.

- . Tutorials on using email well
- . Tutorials on using the Internet
- . BBC webwise tutorials

List of links

- . Google search engine
- . Consumer Online list of Internet providers
- . Netguide list of Internet providers
- . Google Gmail
- . Ask for a Gmail invitation

Web browser software

- . Internet Explorer: www.microsoft.com
- . Safari: www.apple.com
- . Firefox: www.mozilla.org/products/firefox
- . Opera: www.opera.com
- . Mozilla: www.mozilla.org

Email software

- . Outlook Express: www.microsoft.com
- . Apple's Mail.app: www.apple.com
- . Thunderbird: www.mozilla.org/products/thunderbird
- . Pegasus: www.pmail.com
- . Eudora: www.eudora.com

Section 2: The active web

You can use the Internet passively to simply send a few emails and collect some information or you can actively use the Internet to build community and change lives. This section explains the possibilities, challenges and benefits of actively using the Internet.

Topics in this section

Possibilities

The Internet grows and changes. Every single day people find new ways to use it and create new hardware and software to use in connection with it. Every day too, more people get connected which makes it more useful.

Challenges

The Internet is not always the right answer to everything and there are "potholes" and "highwaymen" to watch out for.

Benefits

It's fast and cheap, with a wide reach. It overcomes barriers of time and distance.

Inspiration

Text messages help smokers quit in New Zealand, families keep in touch in Nepal, students in the Marshall Islands virtually attend classes held in distant Suva. There are many creative ways to improve lives with technology.

The active web

Further Reading

Learn more about topics mentioned in the previous sections.

List of links

A reference list of links to other websites and materials mentioned in the previous sections.

Possibilities

The Internet grows and changes. Every single day people find new ways to use it and create new hardware and software to use in connection with it. Every day too, more people get connected which makes it more useful: ten years ago getting people to use email was a hard sell because no-one they knew was using it; now it seems like everyone has email and if you don't then you're being left behind.

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of Internet access in the world. Already by late 2002 more than 75% of New Zealanders had access to the Internet. It seems reasonable to assume that by now the number will be greater.

Be active not passive

Because the Internet is fast, easy to use and relatively cheap many people use it for research, entertainment, work and leisure. You could use the Internet passively: reading comments and information created by others, watching video clips, listening to music.

You could also use it actively: add information to web pages, send out email notices, distribute training materials, recruit volunteers, promote your organisation's goals and philosophy.

Example activities

There are thousands of ways you can use the Internet. Here are just a few ideas:

- . arrange a committee meeting agenda via email
- . share photos from an Open Day via an online photo album
- . discuss an urgent matter with one or more national committee members via Chat or Internet phone
- . discuss your topic of interest with other specialists worldwide via an email mailing list or web-based discussion forum
- . keep up-to-date with research in your field via an RSS feed
- . give volunteers access to training documents, videos, audio files via a password-protected web page
- . download software for volunteers to use with clients
- . get help via mailing lists, discussion forums or web pages with software you use in your work
- . collaborate with other community groups to respond to proposed changes in legislation
- . use Internet banking to track your organisation's income and expenditure
- . use websites such as Good Practice Participate to improve your organisation's relationship with government departments and ministries
- . find funding for your group via Funding Information Service or Grants Online.
- . find a paid worker for your group via CommunityNet Aotearoa

The active web

- provide a regular audio or video podcast for the community on what's new in your area
- provide free Internet access to disadvantaged groups in your community
- provide printed copies of material from the Internet for disadvantaged groups in your community
- Follow the news on topics you're interested in.

Be visible

24 hours a day, 365 days a year a website allows anyone to read, hear and look at information about your group.

- Put your mission statement, history, phone number, address on a website so people can find out who you are, what you do and how to get in touch.
- Publish documents such as reports, papers, submissions to local government, research.
- Publish audio interviews with key members, photos of projects you are running, video of a fundraising event.
- Publish your organisation's schedule of meetings, minutes and plans.
- Provide registration forms for events and conferences.

Build capacity

The Internet offers many creative ways of increasing the numbers of donors, supporters and members.

Raise funds

Attract individual donors to your organisation and offer them a variety of payment methods including cheque, credit card and PayPal.

Build membership

Create relationships with your website visitors and increase your supporter base. Allow visitors to add comments, discuss topics, send in information.

Find volunteers

Let people know on your website that you're looking for volunteers. Tell them what's involved and how to contact you. Provide training materials and case studies to pique their interest and help them decide if your organisation fits their personality.

Find staff

Post job vacancies (paid or unpaid) and job descriptions on your website, your mailing lists and forums.

Build online communities

An online community is the gathering of people in an online space where they communicate, connect, and get to know each other better over time. Tap into an existing online community by offering your information in that network or, if you have the time and resources, start building your own community.

Build community

The Internet allows you to communicate very cost effectively with others who may be geographically close or quite distant.

- . Keep in touch by email, chat or Internet Phone.
- . Email newsletters or short notices to a large group of people with no effort.
- . Provide discussion forums or chat rooms, to allow your supporters and members to communicate with each other by email, chat or through a website.

The active web

- . Gather information about your audience through online surveys and polls.
- . Send and receive faxes over the Internet.
- . Make and receive phonecalls over the Internet.

Challenges

Cars and roads opened up our world with trips to the beach, speedy arrival of ambulances and fire engines, a one-hour drive to a nearby town instead of an all-day haul. But they've brought problems and challenges as well: pollution, road crashes, noise, traffic jams, rules on speed, laws on drunk driving.

The Internet offers us a new universe of possibilities in fast, easy and cheap communication, but it has its challenges too. It's not always the right answer to everything and there are "potholes" and "highwaymen" to watch out for.

People

Sometimes the Internet is just not appropriate. We may confirm a meeting in a quick email message but a face to face session is a more appropriate way to discuss a sensitive employment issue or personal problem.

Although large numbers of people now use the Internet some do not, can not or don't want to.

Some people just prefer pen and paper, phonecalls, meetings, especially for the "human contact".

The Internet has much to offer but many people don't know how to use all its features and they may not be very adept at the features they do use.

Some Internet users are out to defraud people. They may send emails phishing for personal information they can use to steal money or an identity.

You will almost certainly need to train staff, volunteers and other members if you decide to use the Internet to help achieve your organisation's goals.

Technology

Some people have their own full-time access to the Internet while others rely on visiting a Library or Internet cafe at irregular intervals. While Internet access is quite cheap for some, others find it very costly.

Some features of the Internet require powerful, modern computers and fast connections, while others can be available over slow connections and using old computers. People who use the Internet may be using older or newer equipment.

Some Internet connections are fast and reliable while others are slow and plagued with problems. There are some rural communities in New Zealand where electric fences and distance from a phone exchange interfere with connections making it hard to receive even a simple email.

Many computers are particularly vulnerable to viruses and similar malign programs. Anyone using the Internet must be sure to use proper anti-virus measures and take other steps to keep their computer safe. This often involves downloading frequent software updates.

Using the Internet generally means having and using many passwords. Some computer users choose easily guessed passwords or do not keep them safe. This can lead to various problems.

The active web

Safety

As a community in its own right the Internet is populated by a huge variety of people. While most are decent, law-abiding citizens some are not. Using the Internet can bring us into contact with pornography, fraud, illegal activities, the promotion of hatred and violence, stalkers; anything in fact you can think of, and even things you cannot conceive.

We need to be aware of the possibilities and take sensible steps to protect ourselves.

Law

Using the Internet brings up issues around safety, privacy, censorship, copyright. Your organisation may need to create policies and guidelines around Internet use.

You may also need to create policies or procedures around online safety, depending on how you're using the Internet.

If paid or unpaid workers are using the Internet your organisation may need policies on personal information, pornography, or other matters.

Money

People who use the Internet may be using older or newer equipment. They may not be able to afford new hardware and software, or there may be other reasons why they don't upgrade.

Some people will pay \$200 per month for the Internet without blinking, while others will have to save up \$5 for an hour at an Internet cafe.

The cost of an Internet connection varies, depending on many factors. In general, a slow connection is cheaper than a fast connection.

If your organisation wants to provide a website or a mailing list; if it wants to provide video clips or sound files, then there are costs involved. Actual costs vary, depending on many factors. There will be both initial, start-up costs and ongoing costs.

Using the Internet may save you money and time, allowing you to focus more on your core work. For example, emailing a newsletter to 300 people (or putting it on your website) may save the costs of envelopes, stamps, photocopying and labour in doing the mailout (at least \$150).

Benefits

General benefits

- . The Internet is faster and cheaper than other means of communication.
- . It reaches an almost limitless community.
- . It allows boundless access to information.
- . It enables research from one location.
- . It allows you to promote organisations, activities, ideas.
- . It provides greater reach when seeking sponsors, contributors, members.
- . It enables you to build a wider, more knowledgeable, and potentially stronger community of interest.

The active web

- . It can allow much greater access to information and services and participation in community for people who have disabilities, are housebound or keep unusual hours.

Share information

The Internet has transformed the way we create, transmit, store, process, and manipulate information. Google claims to search more than 8 billion web pages. An increasing number of media, governments, universities and other organisations and individuals are putting both current and older information online.

The Internet offers three particular advantages over other information sources:

Breadth

Sources include electronic libraries, reference works and archives, newsletters, discussion groups, radio and television broadcasts, and even graffiti. There is information, fact and opinion from every part of the globe on the Internet. You can read the Magna Carta and the Treaty of Waitangi. Every day more material is added.

Instant information

You can read an item as soon as it has been added to the Internet. Even people with no knowledge about how to make a web page can now easily add items to the Internet. As soon as they have added their item anyone from anywhere in the world can read it without delay.

Copy and paste

No more typing up information from a book and then photocopying it. The information on the Internet is already in elec-

tronic form. Copy, paste, send (with due reference to copyright laws, of course).

The easiest way to find things on the web is to use a search engine like Google or Alltheweb. A search engine that only searches within New Zealand's websites is SearchNZ. Simply type in key words and press Return or Enter or click on the Search button.

Inspiration

Be creative

Every day people are finding new ways to use the Internet and Information Technology to improve lives and bring about social change. Perhaps your organisation will find a way to make a real difference with Information Technology. Here are a few examples from around the world.

Disastersearch.

Palmerston North City Councillor Lynne Pope was awarded Person of the Year (2005) for her work on Disastersearch (formerly known as the Katrina Evacuee Help Center).

www.disastersearch.org

STOMP (Stop Smoking with Mobile Phones).

2005 Finalist, Health Innovation Awards. Text messages help young Aucklanders stop smoking.

www.healthinnovationawards.co.nz/05profilefinal23.html

Breath4CF.

Cystic Fibrosis raise funds online. 2005 winner, Excellence in the Use of IT in a Not-for-Profit Organisation, Computerworld Excellence Awards. www.breath4cf.co.nz

The active web

Hutt Valley refugees keep in touch with distant family.

Go Digital Podcast, Week 30 (approx 23 minutes from start).
news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/4165339.stm

The Digital Village.

Poor Indian farmers use computer terminals to get loans for seeds, health information and so on.
www.businessweek.com/print/magazine/content/04_26/b3889003.htm

Teaching net straddles Pacific islands.

A student in a classroom in the Marshall Islands attends a geography lecture taking place 3,000 km away at USNet headquarters in Suva. news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/3897919.stm

Text message classes for over 50s.

Lessons in sending mobile phone text messages for a group of over 50s in Glasgow. news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/3917665.stm

Wi-fi lifeline for Nepal's farmers.

Yak farmers in the mountains of Nepal are keeping in touch with their families via wireless internet technology.
news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/3744075.stm

Further reading and links

If you're interested in learning more about this topic try these resources.

1. The benefits of being online
2. 7 characteristics of an online organisation
3. 2002 percentage of New Zealanders with access to the Internet.
4. Introduction to Mailing Lists
5. Newbies Guide to NetNewsWire (about RSS feeds)
6. Speed Read with News feeds (about RSS feeds)
7. Catch a Podcast
8. Phishing Bait
9. Netsafe
10. ScamWatch
11. National Youth Workers Network (Example forum)
12. Gastric Reflux Support Network (Example Discussion Board)

List of links

1. Good Practice Participate
2. Funding Information Service
3. Grants Online
4. CommunityNet Aotearoa
5. Paypal (payment service)
6. Google (search engine)
7. Alltheweb (search engine)
8. SearchNZ (search engine)

Is a website right?

Section 3: Is a website right?

This section helps you assess whether or not to participate actively in the Internet, in what way and to what level.

If you've decided to create a website you need to look at your aspirations, the benefits and the drawbacks and you need to consider whether your organisation can invest sufficient resources of interest, energy, time, money and equipment.

You may find it useful to skim the other sections of this website, so you know more about what's involved in setting up a website.

Topics in this section

Do we need a website?

If you create a website without a good rationale you may find you've created a problem instead of a solution.

Dreams are free

Let your imagination run wild.

Potential and priorities

Look at the dreams and decide the focus.

Assess this project

Assess your resources.

Steps to success

A checklist to decide if your organisation is ready to go online.

Further reading and links

Learn more about topics mentioned in the previous sections.

Do we need a website?

Why make a website? Because everyone else has one? Because a volunteer offered a free web page? Because you feel you "should"?

Many organisations have made a website for one of those reasons and then found it's backfired: they didn't have enough time to keep it up, the volunteer left and no-one knew how to change the pages, the website didn't have good information or was hard to use and it put off the people it was supposed to attract.

A website can potentially be an asset for your organisation, but you need to be really clear about how to make it work for you. Work through this and the next sections and record your thoughts and ideas in a notebook or in a separate document on your computer. The notes will help you plan and run your website.

You may also find that a website is not right for you and you can achieve some or all of your goals through email, chat or good old-fashioned phonecalls and leaflets. If you jump in without some good planning you may find you've created a problem instead of a solution.

Dreams are free

Conjure a website

Before you start getting down to practicalities get your group together and have some fun imagining a website. Think about things you'd like your website to do. Just brainstorm at first, jotting down anything that occurs to

Is a website right?

you, even if you don't know if it's possible, how much it would cost or how you would make it happen.

Big ideas

This shouldn't be small actions and details like "click on a link on the right-hand side to read the newsletter" but larger concepts such as "let our members get the newsletter without us copying, stapling, folding and labelling", or "share our local training sessions with people from outlying areas".

Inspired ideas

Think about websites you've visited and things you found useful or inspiring there. Also, if they occur to you, jot down notes on things you didn't like at other websites (and why).

While you're brainstorming include thoughts, ideas and suggestions which use more aspects of the Internet than just a website. Include email, chat, Podcasts, Internet radio and phone and anything else which may crop up. Also include other information technology-based ideas, such as text messages, video, cameraphones and other gadgets.

No limits

This part of planning and discovery can be really fun and exciting as you don't need to worry about real life or limits or money or expertise just record everything that you can think of. Dreams are free: the sky's the limit!

Treasure chest

Make sure to record the things which come up in this session. There will be plenty of ideas and discussion which are invaluable for your organisation, even if you decide not to go ahead with a website.

Potential and priorities

Now that you've imagined a website, what can you achieve realistically?

How could a website benefit us?

Once you've run out of ideas and have nothing else to write see if you can sort everything out. List all the benefits from your dream website (and other ideas) that you would hope for or expect for your organisation and everyone connected with it. How would this dream website change lives? Here are a few possibilities.

We can offer more services because it'll save us time answering the phone just to tell people our opening hours.

Our clients (whanau / students / tamariki / the people who benefit from our services) will be able to read about our news.

Our literacy students / blind clients / busy volunteers could listen to our newsletter.

Our volunteers could get training materials from the website and save us photocopying costs.

We could video our training sessions so volunteers in smaller centres don't always have to drive to town.

We can include links to other websites around the world which have information on our interests so our clients can keep up to date with the latest research.

Making free national phone calls through the Internet could save us money that we could then spend on resources for unpaid workers.

Is a website right?

Every group will have different ideas about what the website might achieve and who exactly will gain the benefits.

What is most important?

Pretty soon reality will intrude and you may find you've imagined a million dollar website on a one hundred dollar budget. Now you need to decide what's most important. Out of all the ideas you had what are the top five? Keep the benefits in mind as you make these decisions.

Note down the top five, but don't lose the other ideas. Just be clear about which ones are top priority and why.

The one thing

Now comes the hard part. What say you could do only one thing? Which one thing from your list is the absolutely most important?

It may be you will be able to afford to implement all of your ideas, but choosing one top priority will help bring focus to the project and keep clear what the project is mainly aiming to achieve.

Assess this project

Maybe another time

After the brainstorming session you may have discovered that actually no-one in the group is really very excited by the project. If there is no time or energy for it then it may not be the right time to start this project.

A clear goal and audience

Every project needs a solid foundation and a clear direction. Before you can start on any concrete action your group must be clear on three vital points:

What is the goal?

What do we want to achieve? What is the aim? What's the point of doing this?

Who is the target audience?

Who are we aiming to reach? Who are the most important targeted audience for this project?

How can we sustain the effort?

If we set up a project now, how can we ensure we have time, energy, funding, expertise and the drive to continue with it?

Your main aim may be to recruit more volunteers, so your target audience would be people in the right age group with the right kind of skills and living or working in the right kind of area. You probably don't want to recruit anti-social adolescents in Auckland to go visiting hospice patients in Timaru

Perhaps you want to help anti-social adolescents in Auckland to avoid or stop using P and other drugs. There's no point targeting retired people in Timaru.

Of course, if you have a stunning idea which could combine those two notions, then go for it!

Choose the right project

You may also have found that some members are very much opposed to having a website. Your group should discuss this before

Is a website right?

going ahead. There may be very good reasons why a website is not the right choice for your group at this time. You may also find that you don't need a website but that you could use other technology, such as email or cellphones, more effectively.

You need support

Only enter into a website project if you have broad, ongoing support for it and if it's the best way to achieve your goals. It will take some time to actually get a website in place and then you'll probably want to keep it going into the future. A project can easily collapse if only one or two people support it and they leave the organisation or are voted off the committee.

A realistic budget

Implementing your ideas could cost any amount of money from nothing to millions. Decide on a realistic budget for your project. How much is your organisation prepared to spend?

You may need to allocate funds each year for a website or other technology project, so keep that in mind. You may apply for a grant and receive funds for the first year, but what will happen in the following years? Any project is likely to have both initial and ongoing costs.

Your budget needs to allow for costs in getting a domain name, hosting, preparing text and pictures (and any other files such as sounds, movies, reports and so on), training your own members, having the site created, maintenance, and perhaps costs for launching (publicity, a launch party etc).

Decide on a maximum budget in the first year and for the next few years. This will guide how you start and follow through.

Who can work on this project?

If there is energy and enthusiasm then you should note down who is interested, what expertise they have and how much time they can give to a website project.

Interested people may not know how to make a website, but there are many tasks they can do such as locating information, writing text, taking photos, proofreading, testing to see if the website looks good and works well, contacting others for permission to use pictures and text, organising publicity, catering a launch party and so on.

All the stages after "launch" are ongoing so your organisation will need people to put time into them and to train others to assist or take over.

Govern, implement, manage

You may contract out some or all of the work of creating the website, but the organisation itself still needs to take responsibility for governance of the project: making the decisions about direction and policy.

The organisation needs a team who will put time and energy into monitoring, advising and planning around the website. There should be only one person though who liaises with the web designer and who is authorised to make decisions on the finer points.

You will need to be able to replace individuals if they leave the organisation. Make sure that more than one person is knowledgeable about the details of what is going on. Keep good records of contact names, passwords and any other details. You may find a free Basecamp account useful for managing this project.

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You may contract out the web development and pay an individual or company or you may use an unpaid volunteer from within the organisation. In either case be sure to set up specific agreements and contracts about what work is to be done, by when, and what the outcomes should be.

Steps to success

- . Is your organisation ready to go online?
- . Do you have a clear and feasible plan for using the Internet that advances the goals of your organisation?
- . Do you have strong support from the whole organisation for the online project?
- . Will the project gain you more than it costs in time, energy, money and other resources?
- . Do you have a clear goal for the website?
- . Do you have a clear picture of your main target audience?
- . Can you fund both initial and ongoing costs?
- . Do you have enough people able and willing to do the work?

Further reading and links

If you're interested in learning more about this topic try these resources.

- . Techsoup: Technology Planning
- . Techsoup: The Total Cost of Ownership

Links

Basecamp makes it simple to communicate and collaborate on projects. A free account is available for managing a single project.

Section 4: Understand the web

While a carefully planned website (or other project) can be an asset, a badly done project can backfire and create problems for your organisation. A great website may be one page, made with free tools by an unpaid volunteer. Or it may be a vast resource, created by professionals and costing a great deal of money. Most likely, it will lie between those two extremes.

You may use paid or unpaid volunteers, contractors or others to bring the site into being, but however the website comes about and whatever it costs, understanding the medium, careful planning and preparation are the foundation on which it is built.

This section is about websites in particular, but the processes and principles apply to any technology-based project. You will gain the most benefit from this section if you've worked through Section 3: Is a website right?

Topics in this section

Understand the medium

The web is very different from print.

The best site for the least money

Widely accepted principles help make sure your website is accessible to and usable by all your visitors.

Understand the process

The three main stages are: prepare, launch and review.

Understand the web

Establish a brief

Identify criteria and concepts for the web developers.

Further reading and links

Learn more about topics mentioned in the previous sections.

Understand the medium

The web is totally different from print. It is vital understand the web before you plan your website.

Diverse visitors

A website is available 24 hours per day to people all over the world. Visitors may be blind and listen to websites, have difficulties with their memory, problems using a keyboard or mouse. They may be old or young, rich or poor, well educated or poorly educated. They may read and write English (or Maori, or other languages) extremely well or with difficulty. They may arrive from a search engine or by typing in an address they've seen in a magazine or by clicking a link from an email.

Diverse equipment

The one thing all the visitors have in common is that computer equipment is actually "reading" your web page and then presenting the information to the human being. Computer software will need to understand the coding which makes your web page possible and will then translate that coding into print on a screen or on paper, or a voice which reads the page aloud or even Braille.

People may visit with the latest in whizz bang technology at high speed or they may have old equipment and a slow connection.

They may use a cellphone or TV set to access your information. They may print off pages to read later. The software they use to visit your website may be very capable or very limited. The software may be good at the job it's supposed to do or it may not. Some software for visiting website is free while some may cost a great deal (for example, specialised software used by blind people for reading aloud what's on the computer).

Diverse browser software

The software for accessing web pages is called a web browser. There are many web browsers, such as Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari, Opera, Mozilla and others. Just as a band or orchestra playing the same piece of music will make it sound different, so will every web browser make your web page appear a bit different.

Each browser is constantly being updated too, so each version of the browser will be a bit different (the newer the better). It's just like a primary school orchestra, compared to a high school orchestra, compared to the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra as the age of the players increases so does their expertise.

Visitors are in a hurry

When people visit a website they behave differently from when they're reading a book or magazine. If they don't very quickly find the information they want they will probably give up and click on to something else.

When they look at a screen they only glance; they don't read carefully. They need to be able to very quickly see who you are and what you're about. They need to easily identify the links through to the specific information they want. They don't want to jump through hoops to access your information and are unlikely to

Understand the web

download extra software just for your site. If your website doesn't work properly or is hard to use it may create ill-will.

Get value for money

Your organisation will be spending hard-won time, effort and money on a website and you don't want to waste those resources. If you were having a house built you'd expect certain things: it should be suitable for living in, it should keep out rain and wind, the plumbing should work and connect to suitable disposal pipes or tanks. You'd expect electric fittings to be safe to use and that you wouldn't fall through the floor. You don't need to know how to be a plumber or electrician, but you know the outcomes you expect from their work.

In the same way, if you publish a website there are some things you need to know, even if someone else will actually be doing the website coding. For detailed information, read the next section: Key principle: The best site for the least money. Even if you don't want the details, skim through it as you need to understand the sorts of issues a web designer must consider.

The best site for the least money

While there are no actual laws about how to make websites there are widely accepted standards, guidelines and principles. These standards contribute towards making sure that your website is accessible to and usable by all your visitors. The contract with your web design team should specify that the site should meet certain minimum requirements. You will need to do some actual testing during and after development to make sure the website works as it should.

An accessible site

People with disabilities should be able to use your website and access the information you provide. There are many levels for measuring accessibility, ranging from level A (minimum) to level AAA (maximum) and many techniques for ensuring this. The web design team should be factoring in at least Level A accessibility from the very first moment of planning and creating the site.

The New Zealand Government provides Web Guidelines that establish standards for public sector websites in New Zealand. The standards are based on values of equity, integrity, trust and economy. It's appropriate for community groups to aim to meet these guidelines and to test the work of their web developer. See Easy assessment tests for detailed information.

Before you hire a web designer (or use an unpaid volunteer) discuss your requirement for an accessible site and test examples of their work.

A usable site

It's vital that your website visitors be able to use the site. They need to be able to find information, understand where they are and what they're doing. Each page and feature on your site needs to have a purpose and to answer a question your visitor has.

As you develop your website ask some real users to actually visit and give you feedback. Watch what they do when they arrive at your site and as they move around it, and ask what they think. Even basic user testing will make your website more usable and useful.

Jakob Nielsen is a specialist in this area of usability. He has many free articles on his useit.com website.

Understand the web

A sustainable site

There's not a lot of point in blowing your whole budget on some huge website that will be out of date five minutes after you've launched it. You need to be able to sustain the website you create by adding new content, updating existing content and keeping the site useful.

It's better to start with a small site and work out the routines for maintaining it and then expand it later on. As you work with it in the first year you'll find out just what it takes to sustain the effort, enthusiasm and interest.

Many websites are started in a burst of enthusiasm, updated for a few months and then forgotten by their owners. Visitors still find these dusty sites and build up a negative view of the organisations that created them.

You need to keep website content accurate, fresh and useful.

Use plain language

Your organisation will need to provide the web design team with the wording for the various pages. You need to write pages which aren't overly long, which are plainly written, get to the point quickly and which use plenty of headings and white space. Writing material for the web is very different from writing for print as people read computer screens differently from how they read a book or magazine.

Rachel McAlpine is a specialist in this area of writing for the web. She has many free articles on her Quality Web Content website.

Use valid HTML

There are many ways to make websites, but all of them rest on something called HyperText Markup Language (HTML). This is the coding which allows you to create headings, lists and paragraphs, include picture, movies and sounds and which lets visitors click on words or pictures to move to another page.

HTML was first developed in the early 1990s and has grown and changed since then. It has rules and you can easily test whether a web page obeys the rules or breaks them. If a web page breaks the rules of HTML it may not work properly for some visitors. Be sure the web designers comply with the rules of at least HTML version 4.01. XHTML is a newer version and may be more desirable.

Even if you know nothing about how to make a web page you can still easily check whether or not a page obeys the rules. See Easy assessment tests for details. Before you hire a web designer (or use an unpaid volunteer) discuss your requirement for a valid site and test examples of their work.

Use valid stylesheets

In the last decade methods for making websites have changed enormously. In times past designers would fill each web page with coding to set colours and fonts and to control layout. Modern techniques use a separate stylesheet: one document which contains all the font, colour and layout information and which is linked to the actual web page. Your website should use these Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) and again, a simple test will check whether there are problems with the stylesheet. See Easy assessment tests for details.

Understand the web

Before you hire a web designer (or use an unpaid volunteer) discuss your requirement for Cascading Style Sheets and test examples of their work.

Understand the process

If your organisation has decided to get a website you now become publishers, responsible for a publication and there are things you should know about websites to enable you to oversee the project.

There are three key phases for any project:

Plan and prepare

- Have and assess the idea

- Set goals and decide the target audience

- Prepare a budget and raise funds

- Prepare and plan

Implement

- Choose the development team, domain name and host

- Develop the website

- Train workers

- Publicise the website (ongoing)

- Launch

Review, maintain, improve

- Update and maintain content (ongoing)

- Review the site (ongoing)

- Improve the site (ongoing)

Creating a website can be a rather tangled process: you may find you need to choose a team to create the website before you can finalise your budget for example. During development there are likely to be many reviews and a lot of training. The only really clearcut sequence in the above is: prepare, launch and review.

In general, though, you will need to be very clear about your goals and your audience, as well as your budget before you approach someone to create the website. In discussion with the developer you may discover new possibilities or that something you hoped to achieve will be well beyond your budget.

Use the expertise

The developer (whether a volunteer, a professional freelancer or a big company) should have expertise in making websites and should be able to advise on the best ways to achieve your goals. You should make the most of the developer's expertise by approaching them with your goals, rather than with solutions.

Don't say: *"We want visitors to click on a bouncing bunny."*

Do say: *"We want some fun things for visitors to do, which fit in with our bouncing bunny campaign."*

Ask if the developer has other suggestions for your organisation which fit in with your website. For example, many companies who host a website give you one or more free mailing lists, meaning you can send messages to many people at once or set up discussion groups. You may not want to do those things straight away, but the web developer can at least let you know about the possibilities.

Understand the web

Be informed

Although the developer will know about how to make websites you have some responsibility for being informed and knowing what to expect from a website. If you were building a house you'd have the law to fall back on: a house must meet various regulations about being weatherproof, safe, sanitary and so on.

There are few, if any, laws about websites but there are things you should expect. For more detail see the section Key principle: Understand the medium.

Clarify development stages

Depending on the size and complexity of your website and the requirements of the developer there may be a number of stages in development. Clarify with the developer what those stages will be. A very simple one-page site made with a standard template could be prepared in an hour or two. A large and complex site, made to a custom design could take months to create. You may have to pay a proportion of the total fee before work starts and at certain 'milestones' along the way.

Set realistic deadlines

At some point you will need to establish a contract with the development team which sets out what's required, a timeframe and a budget. Once you do that you will need to be prepared to also work to the deadlines. Your organisation will need to provide content (text, photos, sound files, videos and the like), along with items such as logos, standard colour scheme and so on.

Note: even if you have a volunteer creating a one-page website do establish a contract outlining who will do what, by when, and what expectations both parties have.

Enjoy the process

The development team should prepare some drafts which you will comment on and gradually the website will evolve. Some drafts may go in quite the wrong direction. This is your chance to finetune the shape and purpose of your website.

Watching your website taking shape and becoming real can be very exciting. Enjoy your opportunity to be part of creating a valuable resource.

Celebrate the launch

Finally, at some point, the site will be declared finished and at that time you should launch it, with publicity and a party.

You can make a splash, invite friends and colleagues, funders and sponsors, people who use your services. Invite the press. Take photos and movies, record the speeches.

Remember to let CommunityNet Aotearoa know about your new site.

Most important: take time to celebrate your fine achievement and all the hard work that has gone into this creation.

Establish a brief

Once your organisation decides to go ahead with a website there will be a lot of work to do. You need to choose someone who can actually create the website, decide on which members of the

Understand the web

organisation will be directly involved in the process and day to day decision making, create and assemble content such as text, pictures, sounds, movies, documents for visitors to download, liaise with the web development team, test the site before it goes live, organise publicity and organise the launch and so on.

Once you understand the nature of the medium and what the process involves you can establish a brief for the website developer. The brief will outline what you want in and of your website, what criteria you will use for assessing when the site is ready for launch and what expectations and requirements you have.

Discuss your expected outcomes with the website developer. You may find you need specific features, such as search, feedback forms, registration forms, a shopping cart or payment system.

You should include these items in your brief:

- . the purpose of the site
- . expected outcomes, such as visitors signing up for an email newsletter
- . the intended audience
- . the date when you want to launch the site (Note: you may want to time the launch to coincide with another event such as an annual awareness day.)
- . a list of the content you want to include
- . the budget available
- . any specific requirements (eg meeting Level A accessibility guidelines, valid HTML and CSS), wanting to be able to track statistics (eg who visits the site, how many visitors etc)
- . contact details for the one person who will liaise with the web developer
- . who will own copyright in the design and content

Further reading and links

If you're interested in learning more about this topic try these resources.

- . Jakob Nielsen's Usability 101: Introduction to Usability.
- . Rachel McAlpine's Quality Web Content. Free articles on writing for the web.
- . Video: Keeping Web Accessibility in Mind. This 11.5 minute video provides an excellent overview of the difficulties users with disabilities face on the Web and some of the motivations for Web accessibility.
- . New Zealand Government Web Guidelines
- . Tell CommunityNet Aotearoa about your new site.
- . Planning a Web Site: Navigating the Maze of Opportunities

Section 5: Develop the website

The right people, the right names, the right places, the right cost — once you decide to create a website there are many choices to make. This section helps you choose the right team, put the website in the best place and give it the best name.

Topics in this section

Types of website

Think about the future.

Web developers

Choose the right team.

Domain names

Choose a good domain name.

Website hosting

Choose the right hosting service.

Your part of the work

You need to gather and provide materials, sort out copyright issues, rewrite text, find photos, gain permissions, liaise with the developer, guide development and make decisions.

Further Reading

Learn more about topics mentioned in the previous sections.

Planning checklist

Being well organised can save a lot of time, money and irritation. Check you have things organised.

Reference material

Photo releases, domain names, web designers, hosting, accessibility.

Easy assessment tests

Run these free simple tests on the site you are developing and fix any problems before launch. Also run them at other times as a regular "Warrant of Fitness" for your site.

List of links

A reference list of links to other websites and materials mentioned in the previous sections.

Types of website

There are many ways to make websites and your website developer should be able to help you decide on the best type for your needs.

Two important aspects

If you build a house there are two "sides" to it. One aspect of a house is all the electrical wiring, plumbing, beams, piles, studs and so on which hold the house together and the roof up and allow you to walk on the floor, have a shower, plug in the fridge and so on. The tradespeople who build the house need to know all the details of how to implement these things, but as the houseowner you don't. You just need to be sure everything works, both in fine weather and foul, in good times and in bad times.

Develop the website

The other aspect of the house is what directly affects the occupants: how it looks, how big the rooms are, the colour of the walls and so on. The houseowner will probably have some strong opinions on these matters.

Similarly, a website has two "sides". The web developer needs to know the rules and methods (the codes) for creating the structure of the website; how to set it up for the owner and the visitors. You should not need to understand the details of this part during construction, but you'll want to be assured everything works properly.

The other side is the content. You will be directly responsible for this, deciding what text and pictures the visitors will be able to access. You will also advise on colours and features you want on the website.

Look to the future

If you plan on keeping the website up to date yourselves after it has been launched, or adding and changing content, then it's crucial you discuss this with the web developer before work begins.

Publishing a website is a bit like owning a car. Some people want to learn all about engines and gears and fix the car themselves. Others prefer to leave maintenance and repair to trained car mechanics.

If you want to update your website yourselves then one or more people will need to develop at least some expertise in this. Even the most user-friendly website still requires some knowledge to be able to update and maintain it.

On the other hand, it may be cheaper and easier in the long run to pay a web designer to make updates, freeing you from the need to

be "hands-on" with the website and assuring you that the quality of the site will remain high.

A static site

One way of making a website is with static coding, using HTML (HyperText Markup Language) and CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), perhaps Javascript, Flash, and other technologies you may not want to learn about. If you want to fix a typo you will need to understand some or all of these things, along with how to use FTP (File Transfer Protocol).

Your web developer may be able to set up a system where you can edit static content through a form or using relatively inexpensive software.

A static site is good for a small site where content doesn't change very often.

A Content Management System

Another way to make a website is to use a Content Management System (CMS). A blog can be a simple example of this type of system.

If you need to fix a typo with this system you visit a web page and enter a username and password. Once you've been granted access you can simply click on the item which needs changing and fix it, then click a Save button.

Under this type of system you can add new material just as easily, and probably using a Toolbar which lets you choose to make an item into a heading, or a list, or to click a button to create a link or include a picture.

Develop the website

In either case there are still skills you need to learn so you can do a proper job, but in the case of the Content Management System, you can focus more on the content and don't need to worry so much about the "plumbing".

A Content Management System is particularly useful for a website where you frequently add fresh, new content.

Many modern Content Management Systems include an RSS newsfeed which allows interested parties to receive your new content automatically. This is a very useful feature.

Beware bad systems

There are many Content Management Systems available, ranging in cost from free to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Some use very outdated techniques for making websites and some require you to use certain software to be able to interact with them. There is no correlations between price and quality. Some expensive systems are very poor quality; while some free systems excel in all areas of current practise.

Discuss your needs with your web designer so you can choose the best type of website for your organisation. Weigh up the need to train staff or volunteers to update the website against the ease of having the web designer do it. Be sure to specify that however your website works behind the scenes it must use valid, accessible coding. See Section 7] Tests anyone can do for information on how to check that requirement.

Web developers

Making websites is still a very new thing. The first websites came into existence less than 15 years ago and the Internet has been growing and changing at very high speed since then.

These days anyone can create a web page by choosing Save As or Export from software such as Microsoft Word, Publisher or Front Page, but the resulting web pages can be full of hidden traps unless the person making the web page has a lot of expertise and knows exactly what they are doing.

Designer? Developer?

Website developers have a number of different titles associated with them including: Web Master, Web Designer, Web Developer, Web Consultant, Graphic Artist, Graphic Designer. The important thing is not what they are called, but whether they can do the work which best suits your organisation.

Assess for skills

There are many people and companies who can and do make websites. Their charges vary between free and astronomical and their levels of skill and expertise vary from almost none to expert. There is no direct link between cost and expertise. There is also no organisation which "registers" web developers, so you have to know enough to make an informed choice. Section 4 Key principle: The best website for the least money explained that you need to ensure your developer can create a valid and accessible site which meets current standards and practices.

Develop the website

Test the portfolio

Don't judge a website only by whether it looks good. You wouldn't buy a used car simply because it was shiny you'd run the engine, try out the brakes, check the lights, look for rust. In the same way, there's more to a website than how it looks and some web designers forget that. What's important is whether it works properly.

Ask the developer for addresses of other websites they have created and visit those sites. Try out some accessibility tests and validation checks on a few of their pages to see what happens. See section 7] Tests anyone can do for some simple, free tests you can run on any website.

How much to pay

You may be able to get a great website for free, or you may have to pay a substantial amount. If you've prepared well though (See Sections 2, 3 and 4) then you will know certain things:

- . your goal for the website
- . the target audience for the website
- . your maximum budget
- . your desired launch date
- . the content you want to include
- . the features you want

With all of this knowledge and the brief you've prepared you can approach some designers, including any volunteers from within your organisation, and ask for an estimate.

Professional developers will charge at least \$50 per hour to make and maintain websites; the average may be three or four times as

much. The simplest single-page website may take at least two or three hours to create, depending on what you require. The longest part of any design process is establishing the look and feel of the first page. Keep in mind too the time the designer spends communicating with your organisation about the page.

You can keep costs down by being organised and decisive, by having material ready on time, by having only one person who is authorised to deal with the web developer and by giving that person authority to make day to day decisions.

Negotiate the fee

Ask the developer how you can reduce costs. It may be you've asked for a particularly expensive option and they could do something similar in a cheaper way. Ask about rebates, discounts and sponsorship. They may offer a reduced price if you agree to use an existing template or to carry a link promoting their services.

Remember to tell them what your goals are and allow them to suggest ways to achieve those goals.

A free website

There may be someone in your organisation who has expertise in creating valid and accessible websites and who would volunteer their time. Approach a local college or training establishment as they may have students who would welcome an opportunity to make a site for a real organisation.

Don't just use cost though as a way to choose a developer. Professionals charge for their services because they have (or should have) relevant expertise which has taken time, money and

Develop the website

training to acquire. Students and volunteers might not have sufficient skills to build a website which will reflect well on your organisation.

There may also be organisations which can provide a free website because this is part of their charter. For example, Converge, Cobweb and Wellington Community Net can offer free websites if you meet their criteria.

You can also create free web pages and websites at various places around the Internet. Many of the free solutions allow you to use a wizard or template system to create one or more pages and they are usually paid for by including advertising on your site.

If you decide to use one of those services be very careful about the kinds of ads they include as they may not be appropriate for your audience. You also cannot usually choose your own address.

Find a developer

Find a web developer via Consumer, Netguide or in the Yellow Pages. Also be sure to ask friends and colleagues if they can recommend someone to you or contact your Internet Service Provider.

Look at websites you like and ask the organisation who created their site and whether they would recommend the web developer.

Selection criteria

Use this checklist to help you decide on a web designer, whether they are an unpaid volunteer or a professional company.

- . their work is of high quality and passes the accessibility and validity tests
- . they know and use current web standards and techniques
- . they understand your work or know the organisation well
- . they can meet the deadline
- . they can carry out updates and maintenance
- . they can provide advanced features
- . they charge less for non-profit groups
- . they are free or cheap

Domain names

Choose your domain type

"Everybody's got to be somewhere!" The Goon Show's Eccles

Your website has to exist somewhere on the web, with its own unique address. All web addresses start with the letters **http://** but it's the rest of it that's really important.

The distinctive part of the web address is called a **domain name**. It's combined with a **domain type** (suffix) which clarifies which "suburb" of the web your site exists in. People expect a New Zealand community group to use ".**org.nz**" as the domain type, as that's the one intended for community groups.

If you choose ".**org.nz**" it can help people guess the address of your website.

Develop the website

Domain types in New Zealand

Domain type	Community of Interest
.org.nz	Not-for-profit organisations
.maori.nz	Maori people, groups, and organisations
.iwi.nz	A Maori tribe, hapu or taurahere group (only certain groups may apply for this)
.co.nz	Organisations pursuing commercial aims and purposes
.net.nz	Organisations and service providers directly related to the NZ Internet
.gen.nz	Individuals and other organisations not covered elsewhere
.geek.nz	For people who are highly adept with and very interested in computers
.school.nz	Primary, secondary and pre-schools and related organisations
.ac.nz	Tertiary educational institutions and related organisations
.cri.nz	Crown Research Institutes (only certain groups may apply for this)
.govt.nz	National, regional and local government organisations operating with statutory powers (only certain groups may apply for this)
.mil.nz	Military organisations of the NZ Government (only certain groups may apply for this)

Choose your domain name

Once you have chosen a suitable domain type (eg, .org.nz) you will need to choose a descriptive term for the name of your organisation. For example, if your community organisation is called "My group" you might want to choose the domain name

"mygroup". Then you can have a website address of www.mygroup.org.nz and use the email address: info@mygroup.org.nz.

You may find that someone else has already used your group name in an address and you will have to find another. Visit the Office of the Domain Name Commissioner and type the name you want into the area called "domain search". Choose the domain type from the pop-up labelled ".nz 2ld". If the name you want to use is available the results page will say "available".

If another group is already using that name the results page will say "Active" and you will have to choose another.

A good domain name is short and memorable

Certain rules apply to domain names. A .nz domain name can use only letters, numbers, or a hyphen ("-"). It cannot include spaces. The domain name can be up to 63 characters long.

A good domain name will be short, descriptive and memorable. A long and awkward name can be difficult to remember, hard to fit on letterhead and stationery, tricky to spell and hard to use.

Before you finalise the name imagine yourself giving a talk about your organisation perhaps speaking on the radio and spelling out the domain name. Is it hard to say, spell or remember? Choose something easier.

You don't have to use your organisation's name in the domain name: you may instead choose words related to the service you provide. For example, the NZ Family Planning Association have a website for teenagers whose address is: theword.org.nz.

Develop the website

Register and pay for the domain name

You will have to pay an annual fee to renew your domain name. Once you have purchased the right to use a domain name, you can use it for your email address and your website address.

To own your domain name (for the time you pay for it) you will have to register it. The Domain Name Commissioner's site has a list of registrars for New Zealand domain names.

All domain names cost something. New Zealand domain names start at \$40 per year. Some companies offer a free 12-month domain name if you host your website with them. Others may offer a free domain name, but you must accept advertising.

If you want a professional looking website we recommend that you spend some money to at least pay for your own hosting and domain name.

Website hosting

A hosting company stores the content of your website on their server and makes it available for anyone using the Internet. They can also store your emails for you until you download them from the server to your computer. Visit Consumer or Netguide to find lists of companies providing web hosting. The host for your website does not have to be the same company as your Internet Service Provider.

Annual hosting costs

You will have to pay a monthly or annual fee for hosting your website. Different companies offer different services and costs can range upwards from \$50 per year. You will need to discuss with

your website developer what services are required and decide on a hosting company in conjunction with the developer.

Your web developer will know if you need services such as MySQL, FrontPage extensions and other technical details. Not all hosting companies offer everything.

Free hosting

A number of companies host simple websites for non-profit organisations at no cost. Your organisation may be eligible for free hosting.

Keep in mind that free hosting may not provide all the services you require. Other services offering free pages may force you to include their advertising and may limit you greatly in what you can do and how you can do it.

A very simple free site

If your organisation simply wishes to list events and news then a free Blogger or Wordpress.com website may be an ideal solution. See the article [blog your group's events in Panui Issue #40, May 2005, at CommunityNet Aotearoa](#) for details on what a Blogger website is and how to set one up (in 5 minutes).

Blogger and Wordpress.com provide a framework and all you need to do is provide the content.

This would be an excellent starting point for a group wanting to experiment with a website and may even be enough for many smaller groups with simple needs.

Develop the website

A very simple low cost site

Typepad offer a reputable blog service from US\$50 per year for the blog itself and hosting costs. You can use your own domain name. They have templates you can choose from and a good helpdesk.

Typepad provides a framework and all you need to do is provide the content.

This would be an excellent starting point for a group wanting to experiment with a website and may even be enough for many groups with modest requirements.

Your part of the work

Your web developer can construct the website for you, arrange the look and feel, the navigation, the framework, but your organisation will have to provide the content. You need to say what you want on the website, gather appropriate materials, sort out copyright issues, rewrite text, find photos, gain permissions and so on.

You will need to liaise with the developer, providing timely feedback and information, guiding development and making many small and large decisions.

Prepare materials and resources

You need to gather electronic copies of the material you want on your website. Possibilities include:

- . logo
- . mission statement
- . charter or trust document

- . photos of workers, volunteers, board members (get permission)
- . photos from events (get permission)
- . profiles of your work and the workers
- . case studies
- . success stories
- . conference report
- . newsletters

If you don't have electronic copies of the items you want available or used on your site then decide whether you really need them. If you do need them then find the best quality printed copies you can. If your web designer has to scan in or recreate material then allow for extra costs.

If you need new information for your site then someone will need to write it up and enter it into a word processor file. Check with the web designer first about how it should be typed up—it may need to be specially formatted.

When you write new material, be sure to use plain language with plenty of headings. Make the headings more like headlines, so that a visitor who just skims through the headings on a page can quickly get a summary of the page.

You may need to convert some material. Some programs, such as Microsoft Publisher, produce files which are almost impossible for a web designer to work with. If your old newsletters were created with Publisher you may need to either convert them or decide not to use them.

Unless you've agreed it in the contract with your web designer you will need to provide the exact wording for almost everything on

Develop the website

your website. The designer may provide guidance on page titles, navigation links and similar items.

Your web designer will also need to allocate time to your project. You need to supply information promptly and at the agreed times or you may find your project is put aside until the next available slot in a schedule.

Copyright and permissions

If you use photos of real people then you may need their permission to include the photo on the website. While photos of people in public places may be OK to publish without any special permissions, you should try to get permission for publishing other photos. See section 6] Further Reading for more detailed information.

If you include your own material on your website then the copyright clearly belongs to you. If you want to restrict others from reproducing your materials then you should include clear copyright statements. For example, if you provide a worksheet for visitors to download and use for their personal development but you want to be sure they don't copy it and use it on another website then the worksheet should include a copyright statement, as well as having a general statement on your website.

You may find a Creative Commons Licence relevant to your work. Creative Commons is a nonprofit that offers a flexible copyright for creative work.

You should not use material belonging to others without their permission. This includes, for example, photos which have appeared in a local newspaper, and material from other websites or newsletters, or photos taken on your behalf by a professional

photographer for a different purpose. If you want to use such material then find an address and ask for permission.

In essence, unless you created a work yourself then the copyright belongs to someone else and you cannot use that work without permission. See section 6] Further Reading for more detailed information.

Assure privacy, security and credibility

The web is instant and worldwide. Search engines give us the power to retrieve in a moment information private investigators would have spent months collating only a few years ago. There have been many cases around the world of identity theft, financial fraud, stalking and online harassment in connection with email and websites.

When you create a website you need to protect the safety of the members of your organisation and assure visitors that they are safe.

Avoid using home phone numbers or addresses on the website and definitely not without permission. Create generic email addresses for your organisation and use them. For example, **info@organisation.org.nz** is a much better address than **jenny@organisation.org.nz**. If Jenny leaves or is not available then Bronwen can just pick up on using the **info** address.

Train your workers

Some members of your organisation may be involved in creating material for your website, eg writing text, or adding and updating items once the site has been launched.

Develop the website

They will need expertise in writing text for the web, preparing photos for a web page, using the system your web developer creates. If they don't already have such expertise then they will need training.

Be sure to train more than one person in these skills; if they are not available for some reason then others should be able to take their place.

There are many books, courses and websites with useful information on writing text for the web and preparing photos for web pages. There may also be inexpensive local adult education courses which include these topics.

Further Reading

If you're interested in learning more about this topic try these resources.

New Zealand Government Web Guidelines

www.e-government.govt.nz/web-guidelines/index.asp. This document establish standards for public sector websites in New Zealand, based on core values of: equity, integrity, trust and economy. It's appropriate for community groups to aim to meet these guidelines. As an absolute minimum be sure to use plain language, keep file sizes low and ensure that every single image includes appropriate alternate text.

Blog your group's events

The article *Blog your group's events* in Panui Issue #40, May 2005, at CommunityNet Aotearoa has details on what a Blogger website is and how to set one up (in 5 minutes).

Rachel McAlpine's Quality Web Content

www.qwc.co.nz: free articles and tips to make your online content more usable, accessible, readable, credible and profitable and more successful with search engines.

MacTips.Info Learning Centre

Make a website: articles and tutorials about all aspects of creating websites.

Creative Commons

Creative Commons is a nonprofit that offers a flexible copyright for creative work.

Copyright Protection in New Zealand

www.med.govt.nz/buslt/int_prop/info-sheets/copyright-prot.html.

Copyright Council of New Zealand

www.copyright.org.nz.

Publication of Photographs: Is A Release Required?

This brief and clear United States article from 1999 explains the reasoning behind a photo release form: *Publication of Photographs: Is A Release Required?* Copyright 1999 Lloyd L. Rich.

Copyright and Fair Use: Releases

This Stanford University book chapter, *Copyright and Fair Use: Releases*, contains detailed explanations about photo releases.

Develop the website

Planning checklist

Being well organised can save a lot of time, money and irritation.

Check you have these things organised:

- . purpose of the website
- . a defined target audience
- . good quality electronic copies of graphics you want to include (eg logo)
- . copyright permissions and photo releases
- . good quality electronic copies of texts and information you want to include
- . one person who will be the liaison with the web designer and make small decisions quickly
- . a process for making complex or larger decisions
- . funds for the first year
- . a funding plan for subsequent years
- . a realistic desired launch date
- . a promotion plan
- . a plan for thorough user tests and previews
- . a desired domain name (with alternate choices)
- . people who will make updates after launch
- . a plan and funds for any relevant training
- . a plan for reviewing and monitoring the site

Reference material

Photo releases

In general it's a good idea to get a signed "release" from anyone whose photo you publish on a website. This is particularly important where there are photos of children; you should get a signed release from the parents, caregivers or guardians, especially if the children could be clearly identified.

You shouldn't need a release if you take photos of people in a public place, such as on the street, unless you're photographing them doing something they can reasonably expect to be private.

You also may not need a release from staff, volunteers and other members of your own organisation, especially if they have a contract which mentions that the organisation may require them to carry out any tasks the organisation requires of them.

It is polite though, to check with staff members, even if their contract may allow you to use their photos. Many people have quite a lot of anxiety and negative feeling about photos of themselves and may prefer not to have their photo on the world wide web.

If you take photos at conferences and other similar events then you may not need a release from participants, especially if they're group shots and people aren't very clearly identified. It would be a good idea though to mention in registration material that you'll take photos and may use them on the website or in newsletter, and let people know who to talk to if they don't want their picture published.

Develop the website

If you're taking photos of conference speakers then it might be polite to ask them for a release — they may prefer to supply a photo which fits their professional image.

A release doesn't need to be complicated — it should have the name of your organisation and the name of the person (or people). It should be dated. If it's for a child then that point should be noted and the person signing should include their status (eg parent).

Example: "I hereby give [the Organisation's Name here] permission to publish photographs taken of me. These photographs may be used in any lawful manner."

Domain names

Find out whether the domain name you want is available by searching at the Office of the Domain Name Commissioner www.dnc.org.nz.

On the same website there is a list of registrars who can help you register your preferred domain name: www.dnc.org.nz/story/30056-27-1.html.

Web designers

Find web designers in New Zealand

- via Netguide www.netguide.co.nz/isp_directory/index.php?directory=webdesign
- in the Yellow Pages: yellowpages.co.nz/quick/search?cat=9267&view=cat&page=search

Hosting

Find hosting companies through Netguide at www.netguide.co.nz/isp_directory/index.php?directory=hosting.

Find free hosting for non-profit groups via:

- . www.converge.org.nz
- . www.cobweb.co.nz/free.htm
- . www.wcn.net.nz (Wellington)

What accessibility means

The New Zealand Government provides Web Guidelines for government websites at www.e-government.govt.nz/web-guidelines/index.asp. This document establishes standards for public sector websites in New Zealand. The standards are based on core values of the Public Service:

- . Equity
- . Integrity
- . Trust
- . Economy

It's appropriate for community groups to aim to meet these guidelines. As an absolute minimum be sure to use plain language, keep file sizes low and ensure that every single image includes appropriate alternate text.

All visitors, regardless of disability or the equipment they are using must be able to do the following on your website:

Visitors must be able to navigate, or move through and around the pages of your site using the menu system.

Develop the website

Visitors must be able to do everything on the site that it is set up to do, such as submit forms, do a search or read content.

Visitors must be able to read everything on the site, unhampered by hard-to-read fonts, small text, or indistinct or jarring colours.

Visitors must be able to reasonably understand the purpose of your website, and the content that it contains. Text on the website must be written in a style that is appropriate for the Web, and in a language that your intended audience will understand.

Your accessibility checklist could include:

- . If visitors do not use JavaScript, can they still reach all areas of the site and access all the content?
- . If visitors cannot use a mouse, can they still reach all areas of the site and access all the content?
- . If visitors use a text-only browser, can they still reach all areas of the site and access all the content?
- . Can visitors with text browsers or with JavaScript turned off or not using a mouse do everything on the site, such as fill in and submit forms, etc?
- . Can visitors easily change the size of the text?
- . Do pages download quickly if visitors are using a dial-up Internet connection?
- . Are pages written in plain language with plenty of helpful headings?

Easy assessment tests

Run these free simple tests on the site you are developing and fix any problems before launch. Also run them at other times as a regular "Warrant of Fitness" for your site.

Accessibility

It's impossible to just use automated checks for accessibility — you need real human testers.

You can get a rough test by using the Cynthia Says test site at: www.icdri.org/test_your_site_now.htm. In the section called "Test Your Site Now" put in the address of a web page and click the Test your site button.

The page you see after the check will show a pass or fail and probably warn you that you need to check certain aspects. Before you hire a web designer (or use an unpaid volunteer) discuss your requirement for an accessible site and test their site and sites from their portfolio.

Another option is to visit webxact.watchfire.com and enter the address for a web page into the search form, then click the Go button.

In the Results page look for a Tick and the statement: "This page has no issues". Note: there are many levels of accessibility; one or two warnings or failures may be acceptable.

Validate HTML

Visit validator.w3.org. In the section called "Validate by URL" put in the address of a web page and click the Check button. The page

Develop the website

you see after the check will either have a blue band stating the Page is valid or a red band stating it is not.

Validate CSS

Visit jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator. In the section called "Validate by URI" put in the address of a web page and click the Check button. The page you see after the check will either state the CSS is valid or that it is not.

Turn off images

This is easiest with a browser such as Opera, though you can do it with any web browser (such as Firefox, Safari, Internet Explorer) by visiting the Preferences or Options section. Older versions of Opera have an image icon on the Toolbar; the latest versions have the word Images. Click on the icon to turn off images or choose No Images from the pop-up. Now try to use the website. Does it make sense and can you find your way around?

User experience

Visit a website you're not familiar with. Can you easily see how to find your way around? Can you get to the information which interests you? Do you need to have special software? What happens if you try to make the text larger or smaller? What happens if you make your web browser window smaller or larger? Does the website have annoying features such as music you can't turn off or things which flash and bounce on the screen?

See if you can find people who don't know your website to test it for you and encourage visitors to let you know about problems. Every problem you learn about is an opportunity to improve your site and be more successful.

Measure page weight

A web page should download quickly. How long it takes depends a lot on how much text and how many images there are. To measure download weight visit www.websiteoptimization.com/services/analyze/index.html and enter the address of a web page in the box marked Enter URL to diagnose. When the results page appears scroll to the bottom and look at the section marked Analysis and Recommendations.

Note that the accessibility test site mentioned earlier: webxact.watchfire.com will also report on page size and download times.

List of links

Accease

Accease, a New Zealand accessibility specialist, work with clients to create accessible websites, intranets and documentation.

Blogger

Blogger offer a free blog.

Consumer

New Zealand Consumer have information and tests about web-site hosting.

Converge

Converge host some national non-profit organisations.

Domain Name Commissioner

The Domain Name Commission allocates domain names. Search the site to see if the name you want is available.

Develop the website

Freeweb

Cobweb Designs provide a free website because this is part of their charter.

List of Domain Name registrars

Domain Name registrars can help you secure a domain name.

Netguide

Netguide list web developers.

Typepad

Typepad offer a good quality low-cost blog.

Wellington Community Net

Wellington Community Net offers free webhosting to not-for-profit organisations based in the Wellington Region. You can have a free domain name as long as the domain name ends with .wellington.net.nz. You can use other domain names for a fee.

Wordpress.com

Wordpress.com offer a very high quality and easy to use free blog.

Section 6: Maintain, review, improve

The work on your website doesn't stop when you launch it. In fact, in some ways, that's when the real work begins. To make the most of your investment you need to keep the site up-to-date, measure its progress against your goals and improve it.

The Internet changes quickly and new technologies will come along that you want to take advantage of. You will also find that you develop more expertise and ideas around the website. Feedback from your visitors will help you shape your ideas.

Topics in this section

Promote your site

Take every opportunity to let people know about your website.

Maintain your site

Keep information up-to-date - visitors expect a website to be current and accurate.

Manage your site

Decide in advance who will do what in relation to the site, and also who is responsible for making crucial decisions.

Review your site

Track visitors and check content. Be sure your website is serving a useful purpose.

Maintain, review, improve

Further reading and links

Learn more about topics mentioned in the previous sections.

Other resources

A reference list of links to other websites and materials mentioned in the previous sections.

Promote your site

Take every opportunity to let people know about your website. Use the web address whenever you can: add it to your emails, add it to your letterhead, card and newsletter, tell other local groups about your site, list it on CommunityNet Aotearoa. Use it in any advertising you already do. Mention it any time you're talking about your organisation or its work.

This is where you'll be particularly glad you chose a short, effective and memorable domain name.

Get the message out:

- . Hold a launch party; show off the site and give everyone a card or sticker with the address.
- . List your website on search engines and directories.
- . Set up reciprocal links with similar organisations.
- . Add the web address to banners and posters.
- . Add the web address to every email you send.
- . Contribute useful information to mailing lists, forums, bulletin boards.
- . Make useful comments on blogs.
- . Provide an RSS news feed for frequently updated items.
- . Create banner ads for use on other websites.

You may need to discuss some of these options with your web developer.

The best source for promotion, however, is being active, and having a visible presence. When you share news and expertise, publish stories or make useful comments you will get noticed.

Maintain your site

The good thing about a book or brochure is that once it's been printed it's "fixed" and you can just distribute it through the usual channels and forget it. Then, some time later you'll decide to print more and will think about what's changed.

Keep information up-to-date

Because you can (with the right skills) update your website at a moment's notice, it's much more important to keep an eye on it and update information when things change. People will forgive a brochure for being out of date, but visitors expect a website to be current and accurate.

Appoint a website "monitor" in your organisation. It will be the responsibility of this person to say: "Our PO Box number has changed - have we put that on the website?", or "We've added an important new book for our volunteers - should that be on the website?".

Look at the website from time to time (or ask the Website monitor to look) and see if it still looks and feels right for the organisation.

Maintain, review, improve

Spring-clean

Try to avoid dated material and dead or broken links. It is important to have a spring clean at regular intervals. At least every three or six months you need to:

- . Check links still go where you intend them to.
- . Archive old news and event notices.
- . Create a back-up copy of the site: save a copy of files in case something goes wrong with the server.

Develop new content

Make the website part of normal and ongoing activities in your organisation. Build on what you're already doing: add press releases, newsletters or submissions to the website. You can also add annual reports, conference or event photographs, minutes from meetings and any other material you are already producing.

Also think about creating new content that is specific to the website. Remember that writing for the web is different from writing for print. Put your key information first and use plenty of meaningful headings.

Respond to feedback

Make it easy for visitors to your website to contact you. Include email links or a contact form (or both). When visitors email you with comments or questions respond promptly and helpfully. Keep some records of the feedback and look for patterns and trends.

If you can't respond immediately then send a standard reply letting them know you've received their feedback and telling them when you will reply.

Do people complain they can't find the Annual Report? Perhaps you should consider adding the Annual Report for visitors to view and download. Perhaps you already have the Annual Report online and people should be able to find it. If they can't find it then there's a problem with the navigation or the search facility, or something else.

Has the website stimulated discussion on a certain topic? Is that topic an area of work you haven't previously covered in your organisation?

Comment and criticism through feedback are valuable resources. Treasure them. It may be useful to assign one person to monitor feedback and comments.

Keep up with technology

The Internet grows and changes every day. Techniques for making websites change and may become outdated; meanwhile new technologies pop up. If you keep at least superficially up to date on trends you will be able to spot new opportunities for improving your website.

This may be an opportunity to make use of your wider networks: perhaps a volunteer or a committee member's relative may be 'up with the play' and willing to do a short presentation to the group every few months on what's new on the Internet.

Manage your site

Key roles

Once the website has been launched there are many different tasks to look after. It's useful for an organisation to decide in advance

Maintain, review, improve

who will do what in relation to the site, and also who is responsible for making crucial decisions.

Good record-keeping is also very important. There should be a list of names and contact details and a note of all the relevant passwords and other website details. Keep all passwords and other sensitive information in a safe place, but available in case the person who normally does a particular job is not available.

Key roles may include:

Web developer

This person is capable of making major changes to the site, such as adding or removing whole sections, "fixing" the site if something breaks. This requires technical knowledge. This person will know certain addresses and passwords. Your organisation should record these and keep them in a safe place.

Web developer liaison

Who has the authority to ask the web developer to make changes? There should be only one person with this authority.

Content editor

This person may add and remove content (eg notices, news, newsletters) and edit existing material (eg fixing typos). They may also edit for grammar and readability. This person should understand how to write for the web. This person will know certain addresses and passwords. Your organisation should record these and keep them in a safe place.

Web manager

This person has authority over what goes on the website. Ultimately the responsibility rests with the Collective, Committee or Trust who manage the whole organisation, but one person

should have the day-to-day authority. Your reputation is at stake so you need to ensure the content represents an organisational viewpoint. Some organisations have an editorial panel to review all content before it is published.

Train staff and volunteers

Think about what happens when staff leave the organisation or are on holiday or away sick. Keep good records and train more than one person for each role within your organisation.

Review your site

When you first decided on a website you had at least one clear goal in mind. Once the website has been launched you will want to check whether that goal is being achieved.

You may find that your goals change a little or a lot, grow larger or smaller, or even, perhaps, that a goal is achieved and no longer as important as it once was. Wider changes in society may also have an effect on the goals for your website.

Measure progress

You may have set goals like these:

- . Gain 50 new members.
- . Gain 50 new volunteers.
- . Double the number of mentions in the media.
- . Raise an additional \$5,000.
- . Get an additional 50 responses to our petition.

Maintain, review, improve

If you want to measure your success in such goals you will need to have a baseline before you begin and you may need to ask some new questions as a matter of routine.

For example, when a volunteer signs on you may ask: "How did you hear about us?" and keep a tally of those who heard about the organisation through radio, newspaper, website, a friend etc.

Keep track of visitors

In most cases you can view statistics about your website. This is something which you need to include in your brief for the web developer as a requirement.

Visitor statistics are valuable information as they can tell you how many people have visited the website, where they came from (by country), which pages were most popular, how long they stayed, which words they used to find you via a search engine and so on.

Assign one person the job of checking the statistics each month, and keep some records. Look at the statistics and see what they're telling you. Include the statistics and any analysis you have in reports to the Board or Committee.

Surveys and focus groups

You may choose to actively ask visitors for feedback and their views.

You can survey visitors online or offline. You may like to ask questions about the quality of information, the website design, and you may seek suggestions for new content. There are some free survey tools available.

Focus groups are facilitated sessions to get feedback and ideas.

Keep everyone involved

Your organisation will want to know how the website investment is doing. You should

- analyse and report on visitor statistics.
- provide regular updates and reports about the website.
- provide success stories.

Further reading and links

If you're interested in learning more about this topic try these resources.

Promote

Search Engine Submission Tips

This section of Search Engine Watch is primarily for webmasters, site owners and web marketers. It covers search engine submission, placement and marketing issues. It explains how search engines find and rank web pages, with an emphasis on what webmasters can do to improve their search engine rankings: searchenginewatch.com/webmasters/index.php

Publicise your site

Techsoup offers a good resource for promoting your website:
Publicizing Your Web Site: Getting the message out there.

Market your site

Coyote Communications article: Marketing Your Organization's Web Site.

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Search Engine Watch

Looking for search engines? This section of Search Engine Watch lists some top choices in various categories:
searchenginewatch.com/links/index.php

CommunityNet Aotearoa

List your site on CommunityNet Aotearoa

Hauora.com

List with the Maori Health Workforce Development community:
www.hauora.com

Greenpages directory

The Green Pages is a comprehensive and dynamic directory of non-profit organisations active in the areas of conservation and environmental protection, education, and restoration in Aotearoa/New Zealand: greenpages.org.nz

The Pacific Development Directory

The Pacific Development Directory provides details of agencies and organisations working in development throughout the Pacific: www.dev-zone.org/pdd/index.php

Maintain

Be credible

Today it's not enough to be trustworthy. You must clearly demonstrate that you are trustworthy. You need to deliberately construct your credibility: Beat the credibility crisis (by Rachel McAlpine)

Checklist for credibility

When you are evaluating or upgrading a website, you will certainly want to check its credibility: Check the twenty credibility factors (by Rachel McAlpine)

Review

Self-evaluation criteria

What to look for in a website: How to evaluate a web site (by Rachel McAlpine)

Statistics

Accurate statistics

Plain language information on the accuracy of web statistics:
How accurate are web site statistics?

Assess website usage

For a detailed analysis of assessing website usage have a look at Tools for Assessing Web Site Usage (the page links to a 400 Kb PDF) which was prepared for the international development community.

Analyse website traffic

Michael Stein's article: Analyzing Web Site Traffic

What should non-profits track?

Michael Stein's article: What should nonprofits track?

Keep up to date

CommunityNet Aotearoa

CommunityNet Aotearoa Panui

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Netguide

www.netguide.co.nz

InfoTech

www.stuff.co.nz/infotech.html

NZ Herald Technology section

www.nzherald.co.nz/technology

Listener computer column by Russell Brown

www.listener.co.nz/default,1077.sm

User feedback

Surveys

Zoomerang. Zoomerang Basic (free) allows users to create and send shorter, less complex surveys.

Focus groups

Focus Groups Build Excellence has details on what focus groups are and how to run them.

WebGuide Partners

The Partners

Community Employment Group (Connecting Communities Project)

Community Employment Group (CEG) of the Department of Labour was the lead agency responsible for implementing the whole of government Connecting Communities strategy.

Communities Online Trust

Communities Online Trust's goal is to assist communities to use the Internet to enhance communication and collaboration between members in a way that encourages grass roots participation, nurtures equality of opportunity, and encourages acceleration of community and economic development.

Department of Internal Affairs

The Local Government and Community Branch works toward the Government and Departmental goal of building 'strong sustainable communities, hapu and iwi'. The Branch's services contribute to the building of strong communities in the broadest sense – connecting central government, local government and communities, hapu, iwi – to identify, plan for and realise their futures. The

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Branch fills an interface role between central and local government.

Another key role is administering community grant funding, and maintaining a website for the Lottery Grants Board and COGS online applications, www.cdgo.govt.nz. Community Development Advisors in 16 regional offices are supported by central staff to provide advice and information to community groups. Information for community groups is also available through the CommunityNet website, www.community.net.nz.

Te Puni Kōkiri

Te Puni Kōkiri works in close partnership with the state sector in the areas of capacity building, monitoring, auditing, and strategic policy advice, with the aim of improving the Government's overall responsiveness to Māori and to foster support for local level solutions.

2020 Communications Trust

The 2020 Communications Trust's goals are to eliminate the Digital Divide in New Zealand and develop "smarter communities" that can fully participate in the Knowledge Society.

Waikato Management School ICT Research Group (WMS)

WMS has a goal of using knowledge gained from their research on the socio-economic consequences of ICTs to enable New Zealand citizens and organisations optimise

use of ICTs. WMS initiated the WebGuide project. Find out more about our research at www.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/ict.

Wellington Region 2020 Communications Trust

The vision of the Wellington Regional 2020 Communications Trust (W2020) is that all the citizens of the Wellington region will be empowered by information and communication technology (ICT) and their communities strengthened through full participation in the information society; and that the Trust will be recognised as a leader in bridging the 'digital divide'.

Membership is open to other parties who share the Partnership's goals.

Content and site design

The members of the WebGuide Partnership who contributed to the writing of the WebGuide are:

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- . Debbie Sidelinger, Te Puni Kōkiri
- . Ross Whicher, Communities Online Trust
- . Professor Ted Zorn, Waikato Management School and Waikato 2020 Communications Trust

Tim Jordan and Karaitiana Taiuru also contributed to the writing.

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Miraz Jordan of MacTips.info edited and rewrote the content, and designed the website, using the content management features of WordPress. Learn how to use WordPress by reading the book *WordPress 2 : Visual QuickStart Guide*, written by Miraz Jordan and Maria Langer.

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Contact the Webguide Partnership at nzwebguide@gmail.com, or via the website at <http://webguide.net.nz>.

Tell us what you think about the Webguide

We want to know what you think about this Webguide. We want to know what you think should be added. In fact, we want all your thoughts on the Webguide. Fill in the form below, with your comments and send it to: Webguide Feedback, C/- Wellington Region 2020 Communications Trust, Box 2170, Wellington, or complete the form online at <http://webguide.net.nz/?p=81>.

Your name: _____

Your email: _____

Your postal address: _____

Your comments: _____
