

Guidelines for simple web sites from Fareham Community Action

Domains

Domain registration

It is really impressive to have your own domain eg www.FarehamVolunteers.org.uk . There is a low cost to this. We can arrange this currently for £10 per year including space. The alternative to registering a domain is to use a folder after some general webspace. We could offer www.FarehamCommunity.info/yourname or www.hants.org.uk/yourname and you can arrange webspace with your ISP* for example www.homepages.tiscali.co.uk/yourname

If Fareham Community Action is helping to set-up pages then we need to know this in advance as it takes a day to activate settings.

Owning a Domain

People or organisations that register a domain never “own it” for ever, it might be better to consider it a 2 year rolling lease. If the fee is not paid for the next period then the domain becomes available to others again.

Choice of Domain name

Your choice of Domain name is usually helpful if it describes the service. Normally there are similarly named organisations in other areas so the local Scouts have chosen www.FarehamScouts.org.uk or in a particular area such as Portchester the community association has chosen www.PortchesterCA.org.uk. If the organisation is across a larger area then a different approach might be better eg www.FGMind.org.uk . The use of upper or lower case does not make any difference.

It is important to choose a name that is short enough to be typed easily without mistakes. Sometimes registration of two is appropriate eg www.FarehamFairTradeBorough.org.uk and www.fft.org.uk

Email addresses

A further benefit of registering a domain is that related emails can be set-up, for example, first.lastname@PortchesterCA.org.uk or with re-elected committee members chairman@PortchesterCA.org.uk then this can be forwarded to a personal email address eg Bloggs@btinternet.com –Then, at each election of chair it is a simple matter to change the forwarding to the new chair. This looks impressive and keeps written or distributed addresses up to date without fuss.

Email address inclusion in web pages

It is important not to include email addresses in web pages that could be recognised by Spaming Spiders*

Freedoms

A large number of ISPs will register domains. Some will be quite cheap. There is a wide variation in terms and conditions; if for some reason you wish to move the webspace – some ISPs will only charge £2 others will charge £30. Some ISPs still do not have standard email server handshakes that can make sending to them a problem from particular email addresses.

Registrant details

It is important to register the domain to your organisation rather than an individual when ever possible, this might just be a technical matter but it takes a lot of arrangements to change the registrant details. The least cost to transfer the 'ownership' will be £35 with Nominet. There could be other reasons why you would not wish to have your prize domain registered to an individual. The domain could be registered c/o Fareham Community Action if that would help.

Web Site Creation

Choice of Web Page Writing Software

There are a number of ways of writing web pages; we are only looking at the simple ways. See at the end for a mention of what we are NOT offering.

Many people are proficient in Microsoft Word and other Office applications; generally it is easier to create web pages than to use the more advanced parts of Word or Publisher .

The Microsoft web writing application is called FrontPage – it is no longer included in the Office pro package but is available to charities at about £40. Remember though that Microsoft will donate 3 pieces of software every 3 years to registered charities.

FrontPage has some particular requirements but people usually get used to that quite quickly. Most importantly it needs software called "FrontPage extensions" to be activated on your web space. This can be available on the space that can be provided through Fareham Community Action but it is not generally available on freebie web space including Hantsweb space

Dreamweaver is regarded as the industry standard and does not require special server applications for its operation – at least not for the basic levels.

Adobe **GoLive** is less well known but could become more popular in the future as they gain market penetration – [we say this because Adobe own the widely used Pdf reader, Photoshop Elements that is used to manipulate images and they have taken over Macromedia as well as having a serious desktop publishing application]

There are many other web writing applications – just look on the web

Reply Forms

It can be helpful to get feedback from website viewers this might be comment, questions, applications for events or anything else. Forms provide a good way to obtain the information that you need. There are generally some points to learn but it is relatively simple.

Hit counters

It is really useful to know how many people have looked at pages on your website. It may or may not be helpful to show viewers how many people have visited the site. Statistics might be included in your web package and there are a number of free scripts that can be included to give web site statistics. Our preference is to use Statcounter.com and always without a visible counter.

Testing your site

You will need to test your web site in several browsers to make sure that they 'behave' properly. The most common browser is MS Internet Explorer. Firefox seems to be becoming popular and others use Opera or Netscape.

Picture sizes

If you include pictures or other graphics you will need to make sure that they are small – small Jpegs or Gifs are normal. Large pictures can eat into your web space allowance and will take a long time to download – if really slow your viewer might not wait to see the page. Pictures can be edited in programmes as simple as Paint to make them the right shape or size. More complicated applications such as PaintShopPro or Photoshop Elements are other popular applications.

Data Protection

Data Protection is important to consider in websites. Generally you should not identify any person by name, image or give their contact details or personal information about them unless you have done your homework. Two aspects of law come into this – one is data protection in terms of permission to publish personal data. The other is processing of data and that includes publishing a web page; for this one needs to be registered as a data processor under the Data Protection Act.

The famous case is of Mrs Lindqvist a Swedish church worker who's case went to the European court

Copyright

Copyright covers all text and possibly images and logos including those on web pages. To use someone else's copyright you need permission.

Advertising your site

You may create a site but it will not be seen unless you tell people about it. This is done in a number of ways.

It is critical to get your organisation listed with Fareham Community Action so that it is included in evolve www.e.volve.org.uk

Inclusion on paperwork – letterheads, leaflets and other publications

Specific advertising, posters, postcards and business cards

Submitting the site to search engines ie Google, Altavista, Yahoo, Aol, Dmoz etc This can be done for free but it takes time to get indexed.

Improving your visibility in search engines

The search engines respond to factors in your pages. It is important to get those as best as possible otherwise your site will be ranked low in the search engines results. A key way to improve it is to ask other people what words they would use to search for your organisation.

The indexing is primarily based on the Title and Description in the meta-tags. The keywords, and links to & from the pages play an important role too.

Accessibility

You will want to consider if your pages are accessible to people with sight impairment. Some people also use screen reader software and that has particular requirements.

Generally if you use good contrast, logical layout and place 'alt' tags on graphics then the page is likely to reach the single A level of the WC3 requirements. More information is available on this.

Pdf files

It is relatively easy to make reference documents for web sites. These are normally uploaded as pdf documents; there are simple ways of creating these. See pdf factory from fineprint.com

Design considerations

Your design will lead viewers to spend time reading your messages or if poor cause them to skip quickly. Key factors in design do relate to the expected style of your key target audience and often include

- Uncluttered page
- Simple navigation to give a good understanding of the site content
- Interesting and relevant graphics

Avoid heavy colour and wizzy nauseating graphics !!

Words

The writing for web pages needs careful consideration – though as with most other writing it needs to give the message clearly. Usually, if you start with the words that you would include in your publicity leaflets then it is simple to adjust them for the web pages.

We are not offering any support for advanced web writing

There are many ways to make websites more complicated; by the time you need these you will be a master and not need simple help from us!! More advanced aspects include

- Content driven sites
- Flash content creation
- Dynamic content
- Database inclusion
- Payment facilities
- Bulletin Boards
- Log-ins
- RSS

However we have an IT support company that Fareham Community Action has helped set-up as a social enterprise. It is called The Really Helpful IT Company. Based in Portsmouth, it will assist voluntary community sector organisations with IT and web sites see www.trhitc.co.uk

Helpful reading

There are many books and many web pages about web design, one we particularly like is **Web Page Design by Brain Austin** £10.99 ISBN 1-84078-253-6 Published by Computer Step. A copy can be viewed or borrowed for a couple of days from Fareham Community Action:

***Glossary**

Spamming Spider the software that spammers use to collect email addresses from websites in order to send unsolicited nuisance email.

ISP – internet service provider –usually the company from which you purchase your internet connection.