

EASY BUTTON FOR FREE BASIC WEB SITES

In the AATF, thirty-three of our seventy-five chapters have Web sites of varying sophistication and states of upkeep. Advocacy coordinators have been able field a dozen of the fifty needed state-specific Web pages for the new Advocacy Commission.

As a chapter president with a Web site, you can recruit more widely, get information out to all members easily, and you know your chapter, not just current officers, has an established presence on the national site. If you are an advocacy coordinator with a state-specific Web page, you have omn-accessible updatable information to allow allies in different places to work on the same rescue mission.

This all makes sense, but an "easy button?" ...no doubt, a deceptive myth to be filed with that of the tooth fairy. While nothing in technology is as simple as we would like it, we need to admit that our own procrastination in the matter of an organizational Web page may also be the product of some myths.

Myth 1: Web space does not grow on trees; it is very expensive!

Here are some solutions you may already have, but have forgotten. How about your own Internet service provider (Charter, Road Runner, AOL)? Check with them now. You may already be paying for a Web directory even though you are not using it. How about your institution's Web site? If you are an advocacy coordinator, how about your AATF chapter Web site? Will your state language association host an announcement or advocacy page if you are a member?

What about free Web space? If you don't mind a few banner ads, here are some known individual free Web space providers:

Freewebs

[<http://freewebs.com>]

Geocities

[www.geocities.com]

50megs free web hosting service

[www.50megs.com]

Netfirms free Web hosting

[www.netfirms.com/web-hosting-free]

If you want to shop around, here are some directories of free Web space providers:

Free Webspace (directory)

[www.freewebspace.net]

Free Web Hosting (directory)

[www.free-webhosts.com]

100 best free Web space providers (directory)

[www.100best-free-web-space.com]

A blog solution may bring you free space, some Web making tools, and interactive possibilities; but there are also ads.

Blogger.com

[www.blogger.com]

Myspace

[www.myspace.com]

Web Logs (About.com)

[<http://weblogs.about.com>]

Myth 2: You have to have expensive software to make a Web page.

No. There are an adequate number of free or inexpensive ways to make a page or a site (Netscape Composer, word processing software, Sausage, etc.). Here are some sites to show you how to make simple Web pages:

Making a Web Page with Netscape Composer (PC)

[www.polyglot.pitt.edu/how/webpagepc.doc.pdf]

Netscape Composer is free. If you already have a reasonably new Netscape browser, it is there. If you don't, just go to [<http://browser.netscape.com>] and find the right browser for you. Once you have downloaded the Netscape browser, set it up, and opened it up, your File menu should have a New submenu on it. Go to Composer Page and let it open. It works almost like a word processor, with a tool bar, etc.

Tutorial - Making a Web page with Microsoft Word

[www.asa.edu.py/tch_work/technology/webpage_word]

Microsoft Word is not free, but many people have it. Essentially, you set up a word processor page the way you want a Web page to look, using tool bars to make Web addresses into interactive links, adding a splash of color and fooling with font sizes. Then you use the File menu command to Save As an HTML page. A number of word processing programs have a Save As HTML function, so don't give up if you don't have a slick, recent Office application. Here are two more ways to make Web sites for free.

PageKits (free Web templates)

[www.elated.com/pagekits]

WebPlus 6 - Free Web Site Design & Publishing Software

[www.freeserifsoftware.com/software/WebPlus/default.asp]

Myth 3: Nobody will come to a site that is not maxed out in bells and whistles.

Actually, the most used Web sites have a fairly basic appearance. Furthermore, if you want to make a Web page for organizational information or tasks, you need to keep it simple. The more complex, the less you will want to update it, and the more things can go wrong, etc. You should be able to copy and paste text updates on to your pages, and your readers should be able to copy text from you Web site to paste into

paper brochures.

Myth 4: You have to be Super-geek to put your page up on the Web.

Not so. To be sure, transferring files (your Web page) from your computer to your Web directory on another (the server) is where you are most likely to need the advice and help of others. Basically, your online computer contacts the server, giving username, password, and other information as called for. Once given permission, it transfers a copy of your Web file to the directory. However, your Internet service provider or Web space provider will provide help in this, through detailed instructions, a phone helpdesk, a tech assistant's visit to your office, or by using a Virtual Network Control Utility to configure your software the right way. Many teachers I know simply work with tech-oriented colleagues or students. My point is that help is around the corner, and that file transfer should not hold you up. These links should be of some help:

File Transfer Protocol (explanation in Wikipedia)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File_Transfer_Protocol]

Secure Shell (explanation in Wikipedia)

[<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SSH>]

File Transfer (a Google directory)

[www.google.com/Top/ComputersSoftware/Networking/File_Transfer]

Free FTP client software for Windows

[www.coreftp.com]

I should also point out that you can use Internet Explorer for file transfer (FTP) to a Web directory.

FTP procedure for Internet Explorer

[www.sjpc.org/internet/IEftp.html]

No "myth-take" about it, creating and maintaining a Web page that will support your role in the AATF is not impossibly hard or expensive.

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