

How to make a website happen

Managing the project from conception
through to launch and beyond

Jane Burrows
Making Links
Sydney, November 2005

INTRO

- Have worked in in-house publishing roles in print and web environments for the past 5 years.
- Now in charge of Infoxchange Australia's online news and information services – community sector news boards.

Work daily with the web, and with web designers and developers, plus other techs who manage the networks and hardware.

But NOT a technical person – my perspective is project management, not web development in the usual, techie sense.

I.E. I approach websites as a communications activity not a technical project.

This is why I have elected to run this workshop- because managing a website project is a lot less daunting than the jargon makes it seem.

Also because resourcing of community organisations and NGOs means that often workers take on communications projects like this one with little background or support.

How to make a website happen
Overview of session

- Planning –purpose and usage
- Development – dealing with contractors
- Launching – make a splash
- Maintenance – post-launch updating

With that in mind I have divided website project management into four parts:

1. Planning – working out the why and who for of your site
2. Development – toing and froing with designers and developers.
Please note: this does not cover creation of sites in Dreamweaver or similar packages, however there are website design workshops included in the program.
3. Launching – some tips for making sure your hard work doesn't go unnoticed.
4. Updating – keeping the site alive once the novelty has worn off.

I'd like to flag at this point that I have taken this from the most basic starting points, but I'm sure some of you have experience with website projects. I hope I'm not teaching you how to suck eggs!

Please also feel free to raise examples or issues from your own experiences in the course of the workshop.

How to make a website happen
Planning: Who

➤ Who will use the website? (And why?)

Like with any type of project, the planning phase is crucial – being thorough here will make the rest of the project much easier.

For this reason, discussion about planning forms the greatest part of this workshop.

You can build a picture of

- How complex a site you'll need
- What type of software should be used
- The tone of the content on the site
- How hard it will be to maintain the website
- How much it will all cost

There are some key questions for this phase that can help to clarify these issues.



In other words, your site's **target audience**.

Different users are likely to have different needs of a website.

Some demographic differences that can affect the way people use a website.

- Young/old
- People with disabilities (cognitive, vision)
- People whose main language is not English

The user's relationship to your business also has an impact on what they need from it.

For example:

- Clients will want information about the services you provide
- Donors will want to know what benefit your activities serve
- Staff might need tools to help them do their jobs

How to make a website happen
Planning: How

- Who will use the website? (And why?)
- How will they use it? (And what for?)

Who they are has a bearing on how they will use the site – how and what for

How to make a website happen

Planning: How

- From home, work or a public access point
- Regularly, hardly ever or once
- Long sessions or short visits
- For fun or for work
- Passively or (inter)actively

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From home, work or elsewhere:

- This has a bearing on the way your site is developed. Home users can't be presumed to have the latest computer or broadband internet, so a heavily graphical site that takes a long time to load is going to be nothing but frustrating.

How frequently:

- If your site is for staff, they might log on at least weekly.

- On the other hand, your site might be devoted to a topic such as applying for a study grant. Your target audience might use it once, or a few times in an isolated period of their lives.

- This has a bearing on whether you can rely on users to learn how the site works, or whether everything should be up front from the outset. Also, whether there should be effort put into drawing people back to the site – probably not in the case of the study grants.

How long for?

- Organisation members might check into the site regularly for a reasonable time to catch up with the news.
- Staff members might use it five times a day just to look up phone numbers or download a resource.
- A student using your site for research might visit once for an extended session.

Leisure or labour?

- Does your site have a professional interest, or a personal one?

Passively or actively?

- By contributing their own content

How to make a website happen

Planning: Aims

- Who will use the website? (And why?)
- How will they use it? (And what for?)
- What is the main aim of the site?

At this point you should be able to sum up the main intention behind developing your website.

(You can of course start from this point, but I find I always end up asking myself the first two questions before I can clarify the third.)

How to make a website happen Planning: Aims

A resource for people with a particular community service need with information about available services and related news.

I have included some statements of aim for different types of websites that would be used in different ways by different people.

1. Could be used regularly or irregularly, quite likely from home. Usage would be passive – finding out from the website, not interacting.
2. Not likely to be used regularly by that many people. Suggests a more formal 'PR' tone of content. Very useful as an online billboard – letting the internet-using world know you're there.
3. Regular usage, quite possibly for personal interest. Users have the opportunity to interact with each other and the site managers.



- HOME
- ABOUT US
- REGISTRATION
- NEWS & EVENTS
- DISCUSSION FORUM
- SUPPORT GROUPS
- LIBRARY
- WALLETBOOK
- RESPIRE PACKAGES
- SERVICES DIRECTORY
- WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Enter your e-mail

ABOUT US

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres are part of the National Respite for Carers Program, which is an Australian Government initiative to provide assistance for Carers in our community.

Are you a carer?

Many people do not see themselves as 'carers' and do not call themselves 'carers'. The word carer is used by Carer Respite Centres throughout Australia as a broad term to describe someone who is:

- A wife or husband
- A mother or father
- Daughter or son
- Brother or sister
- Grandparent
- Partner
- Relative, friend or neighbour

And who gives a significant amount of their time to care for a person who:

- Has a disability
- Has a mental illness
- Has a long term chronic or terminal condition
- Is frail with age and/or has dementia

How to make a website happen

Planning: Aims

A resource for people with a particular community service need with information about available services and related news.

A showcase of the organisations achievements and a new way for people to find out about the organisation.



Welcome to the Kensington Management Company

The Kensington Management Company is a partnership between the Victorian Government and Housing Services, Office of Housing and Federal Property Developers. It is the liaison of the Director of Housing and beyond that KMC is a generation focused on supporting the development of a high quality housing development project, which incorporates a high standard of facility management across individual and corporate housing.

What we do

The Kensington Management Company takes responsibility for key aspects of management of the Kensington redevelopment project including:

- Community building
- Body Corporate Management
- Facility Management
- Tenancy Management, in collaboration work with the Office of Housing to enable effective provision of tenancy management of the public housing on site.

KMC is a not for profit organisation with any surplus generated or accrued being reinvested back into activities supporting achievement of its mission and vision for the site and wider Kensington.

- A diverse and inclusive mix of housing;
- A high standard of housing, community building and grounds;
- Environmentally friendly management practices;
- Strong, positive community values, networks and services;
- Active community participation and resident involvement facilitating ongoing dialogue reflecting the on-site life;
- A safe and secure environment;
- Deliberate efforts to harness the benefits of the local economy and the local community, particularly those on low incomes.

Kensington Management Company
.....creating a diverse and vibrant community
.....facilitating a great neighbourhood in which to live



How to make a website happen

Planning: Aims

A resource for people with a particular community service need with information about available services and related news.

A showcase of the organisations achievements and a new way for people to find out about the organisation.

A hub for a 'community of interest', with an open news board, a space to discuss views and access to relevant resources.



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EVENTS

CALL FOR PAPERS

ACROD national conference on social participation

ACROD national conference for providers and funders of services for people with disability

- WHAT'S NEW**
- New releases from APO members
 - New government reports

In RESEARCH TOOLS, new reports on mental health, the 2004 election, workplace privacy, family violence and Indigenous disadvantage. In BEST OF THE BEST Jac-Cheng Tham shows how the provisions of the draft Anti-Terrorism Bill 2005 dealing with control orders and preventive detention orders fall short of the principle of judicial oversight, and a new study looks at how to raise the level of political awareness and engagement among young people. And on our IN PRINT page Klaus Neumann reviews *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia*

Social rights and social capital: welfare and co-operation in complex global society

Australian Review of Public Affairs

Social capital is a useful but contested concept, with ongoing confusion over indicators and (negative) outcomes. However, Roger Putnam argues that the

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COMMENT & OPINION



POLITICS

11.11.1975

Father than grab-power, Malcolm Fraser simply needed to wait for the next election – around twelve months away – to be sent to office, without additional

How to make a website happen
**Planning: Development and
Management**

- Who will use the website? (And why?)
- How will they use it? (And what for?)
- What is the main aim of the site?
- Who will create the site?
- Who in the organisation will manage it?

The final two points are the 'pointy end' and often come down to resources.

How to make a website happen
**Planning: Development and
Management**

Development options:

- In-house
- Design agency
- Volunteer

Management:

- Single administrator
- No structured coordination
- Designated team

How to make a website happen Development

- Budget
- Audience and purpose
 - Accessibility requirements
- Logo/corporate style
- Client ideas for look and feel
- Proposed content
- Client intentions for updating
- Timelines

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1. The big question: How much do you want to spend?
2. A good design agency should also want to know all the points we just covered: your audience and your purpose. In particular, any accessibility or usability requirements of the audience will impact on how the site is developed.
3. Also
 - Do you have an organisation logo/corporate style.
 - What look and feel you have in mind – Infoxchange likes to find out what other websites the client uses and likes.
 - What content you have in mind – how much, and in what sort of structure.
4. Do you want to edit it yourself? Using content management software, or a standard web publishing package. Most of the sites we create at Infoxchange are built with Content Management applications because clients can edit the content by just filling in a form. This means you don't have to buy any software or train staff in how to use it.
5. Timelines – when you need it by, when you will have the content ready by. Considerations for this are the workload of the contributors, and the approval process (something Infoxchange clients frequently underestimate.)

How to make a website happen Launching

- Launch event
- 'Narrowcast' promotion
- Mainstream PR and advertising
- Direct mail

How you launch your site depends on your budget, the audience and the scale of the project.

Offline strategies:

- For a staff or member-focussed site you could host a launch party. Use the opportunity to show users how the site works and sign people up for any mailing lists or password protected areas.
- If it is a site for a 'community of interest' or a specific topic, try approaching other organisations in that field to ask if you can issue a notice via their communication channels. In particular, sites that offer a community service, or service information, will often be of use and interest to other community service workers. You may wish to offer reciprocal linking or promotion of their activities on your site in exchange.
- If you are trying to attract a very broad audience ('the general public') you would be well advised to issue a press release – unfortunately this process is a story for another workshop, but as a tip, the community and IT sections of mainstream publications may be interested in your site.
- Direct mail or email is a targeted option for an audience that is already known to you, e.g. existing clients. If the budget stretches, mouse pads or stickers are still a good way to connect the offline communication to the website. Email is ideal, however, as a link can be included.

How to make a website happen
Launching: Website optimisation

- Website metadata
- Frequently used keywords
- Registration with search engines
- Linking
- Sponsored links and banner ads

And then there is 'website optimisation'.

This means raising your site's position in search engine rankings.

There are companies that will do this for you – depending on the purpose of your site this may be worth the money.

But there are some tricks that you can employ yourself:

- Metadata – title, keywords and description.
- Use of keywords in the content of the site as frequently as possible.
- Registration with search engines. This will enable your site to be categorised, for example on Yahoo.
- Links from other sites – every time your site is linked from elsewhere on the web, your ranking increases.
- Internal links – this applies to links within the site itself.
- Sponsored links – for example, the right hand bar of Google. Banner advertising is also gaining ground as a form of revenue even for not-for-profit entities.

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 Healthcare Search [X] The web (Pages) From Australia [Advanced Search] [Professors]

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How to make a website happen Maintenance

- Plan ahead
- Impose an updating schedule
- Designate a content team
- Make the site the focal point

Infoxchange sees it happen all too often: a client works hard to develop their site, does all the right things in terms of planning and even splashes out on champagne for the launch party.

6 months later, the news item about the launch is still on the site – along with a notice advising users to ‘Stay tuned for more useful resources coming soon’.

Maintaining the initial momentum of a new website is difficult, particularly when the organisation and its stakeholders have got along fine without one for so long.

- Planning for the long-term maintenance of the site in the first place can help. For example, it might be a nice idea to have a news section, but do you really have enough news to sustain it? Or time to update it? Dated content in a News section can give the impression that the site isn’t maintained, even when you are updating other areas.
- With or without a news section, consider implementing an updating schedule: its frequency will depend on the nature of your content. If there are numerous people contributing content make sure they know at the outset that they are expected to update it on that basis.
- If your organisation is large and there are numerous different contributors across it, you could also convene a web content team. Give individuals responsibility for their area’s space on the site, and meet every now and then so they know of other developments and can provide feedback.
- If that doesn’t do it, you might want to force the issue: refocus some of your stakeholder communications onto the site. For example, instead of emailing a PDF of the newsletter, send an email with a link to the same information on the website.

How to make a website happen Summary

- Planning
- Development
- Launching
- Maintenance

With that in mind I have divided website project management into four parts:

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How to make a website happen
Contacts

Thank you!

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So there you have some of the ingredients for a good website project. I hope this has taken some of the mystery out of it – it really is like any other project in many ways.

Thank you for your time.