



Scout Website Guidelines

Introduction

The Internet is no longer a new phenomenon. It has been around for a number of years and even if not all adults are familiar with it, the younger generation is growing up with it and takes it for granted.

These are the same people who attend Beavers, Macaoimh, Scouts & Venturers. A number of Units, Regions and Campsite already have a presence on the World Wide Web and this document is designed to provide a guideline for developing a new site or updating an existing one.

What are the Advantages of a Website ?

The primary purpose of a website from a scouting point of view is promotion and public relations. It is unlikely that any unit or region will venture into e commerce on the Internet !

Websites, if used and promoted effectively can provide information on what activities we do and what scouting is all about, to our own members, our community and indeed the whole world.

It can also provide contact points for people who wish to join and through services such as message boards and guest books can facilitate communication with scouts from around the world.

What are the Disadvantages ?

Firstly it takes a lot of time to create a good looking website with enough information to make it interesting to people browsing.

It takes a level of technical expertise to set up website addresses and write html or even use WYSIWYG editors such as Microsoft Front Page.

It also needs updating on a regular basis. This does not need to be daily but certainly on a monthly basis, depending on the content.

As well as attracting interest from other scouts, it may also attract interest from less desirable people.

It is with these advantages and disadvantages in mind that these guidelines have been drawn up to assist Units / Regions in developing a scouting website.

Getting Started

Firstly, there is no point in paying out money for "webspace". Most of the ISP's (Internet Service Providers) will allow you some space for free of their server if you register with them.

Example: eircom.net

These ISP's may include some advertising on the top of your site or may require that you use their dial-up internet account to update your site.

Many ISP will also give you a free email account. As your email account and web space are often linked by an ISP, it would be a good idea to setup the email account with the same name as your website:

Example Email: 1stCork@eircom.net

Example Website: homepage.eircom.net/~1stCork

If you prefer an easier to remember website address, there are some services such as www.go.to that will give you a free redirect to your site, but again these use advertising on your site.

Example Redirect: go.to/1stCork

If you are willing to pay out for a nice website address you can register an address. This will however need to be hosted and you will likely end up paying an annual fee. If you own your own website address you may also be able to get personalized email setup.

Example: 1stCorkScouts.com

Keep a Paper Record

So now all the setting up has been done, it may be a good idea to open a file and include any records, such as payments and any usernames and passwords you have been given.

This will become very important, if the scout who was 15 when he setup the website, leaves or their family

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moves house and you need to allocate the webmaster task to somebody else in the unit.

And so onto the content

What to include on your Website

Name

You should clearly include your Unit / Regions name on the front page of your website or in a header frame.

Logo

You should also include our associations emblem or logo on your website and the world scout emblem. These are recognised emblems of scouting and help to identify you site as a scouting website,

Area

You should include the area that you are serving. For example if you are a scout troop based in Togher, you should clearly provide this information. Not everybody knows you by your Unit number.

Contacts

It is important that you provide a contact for people who may be interested in joining your unit or want to make contact with you.

It is not generally advised that you would give out any members address or phone number. An email address, such as the general one you setup with you ISP is fine, provided that it is checked on a regular basis.

Links

Links to other scout units in your area or in different countries is a good idea as they allow the browser of your site to link to other scout troops. You can contact other scout websites and ask them to include a link to your site and you can do likewise.

It is important to remember as we are a youth organization that any site we link to should have a content suitable for viewing by young members such as Beavers & Macaoimh / Cubs

Guest books

Guest book services are provided free by many service providers, but again, will include some advertising on your site. Guest books allow other people to put comments on your site or other messages. This is good as it allows you site to become more interactive.

Normally the guest book owner has some control with regard to deleting unsuitable or unwanted messages and comments. You should regularly check the guest book for unsuitable comments and delete them straight away.

What NOT to include on your Website

In the interest of all our members the following should NOT be included

Youth Members Contact Details

Under no circumstances should a youth members name and address be put on the website. In addition email addresses for youth members should not be included or phone numbers. An example may be providing contact information for pen pals. This should be sent directly to the leader or scout hall and monitored by the leader.

Chat Rooms

Chat rooms are a location where people can type in messages and "chat" to other people logged on at the same time. By their very nature they are anonymous and may be target of undesirable interests.

Scout websites should NOT include a chat room. Alternatives, such as message boards and guest books are permitted, provided that they are monitored on a regular basis and any unsuitable messages or comments are removed.

Photographs

Photos are great to brighten up a website and are a good way to show people what activities that we do.

However, names should not appear next to pictures. Group picture are best because patrol or clann names can be used – "Hawk Patrol on Camp". When individuals are included in picture – captions where used - should not identify the person, just the activity
Examples:

WRONG: Brian Jones tries his hand at abseiling
RIGHT: Abseiling during our hike in Kinsale

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In addition picture should be considered for good taste. You should consider the audience and show activity, group picture and people enjoying scouting.

Copyrighted Material

Material on the World Wide Web is copyrighted as are books and pictures. You should be careful to ensure that you do not infringe copyrights. Rather than say copy a knots page – link to it instead and include the site name in the link.

Also be careful if you are scanning material from books onto your website eg. Diagrams & Photos.