

Writing and Designing for the Web

YOUR ePRESENCE

So You Want a Website

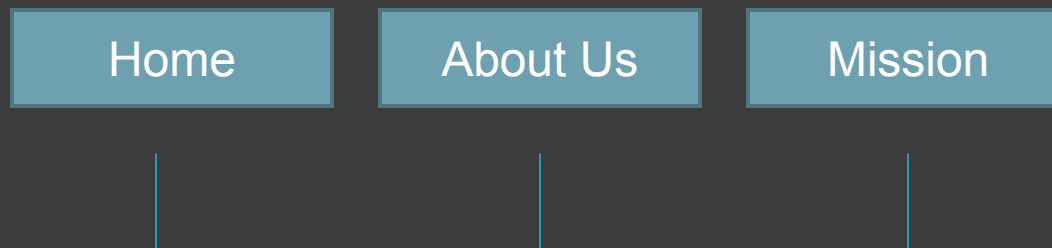
- ◉ Websites are a parked url that is hosted by an internet service provider.
- ◉ Typically, the domain name or url costs approximately \$29 per year and there is a cost to host your website as well or park it on a server. This usually costs approximately \$10 to \$20 per month.
- ◉ Some companies will host and design your website for you, but time issues and rights issues could arise from this. It is important to communicate management of the website to the next board for your state or chapter to reduce future website issues. Websites can be complicated to both manage and have managed.

Templates

- Numerous service providers offer PHP templates for you to use. PHP templates are becoming easier and easier to utilize.
 - They usually have a backend interface to input content that require no website programming. It works like a database and automatically archives and posts your content for you.
 - Research providers to see if they have Wordpress (an example of a PHP website template) templates you may use.
- Software packages also offer website templates. Depending on the age of the software package, websites can be very complex to program this way
 - Adobe Dreamweaver
 - iWeb (for the Mac)
- Beware of lesser known web software. Some web software is made for programmers and may be complex.

Create a Sitemap

- The first step for a new website or the next step for an existing website that needs a revamp is to create a sitemap. Sitemaps are a visual representation of how your website works.



Keeping the Website Relevant

- Outdated or disorganized content will instantly cause the viewer to look elsewhere for what they want.
- Start out with a simple manageable website plan. This may mean that there are not many pages, but at least it will be current and helpful.

Most Important Information

- ⦿ Association name, address, main contact information
- ⦿ Current contact Information for and names of board members, consultants and advisors
- ⦿ Mission statement
- ⦿ Bylaws
- ⦿ State convention location/date information
- ⦿ Events
- ⦿ Sitemap

Second, Be a Resource

- ⦿ Ask yourself, “How does my website help my audience?”
- ⦿ Students are interested in:
 - Schools in your state
 - Programs at those schools
 - Scholarships
 - Websites that offer scholarships for your state or nationally
 - Events
 - Education about prenursing and nursing student leadership opportunities

Breadcrumbs

- ⦿ At least post a link to your homepage on every page. This way the viewer can go back to the homepage.
- ⦿ Instead or in addition, breadcrumbing may be helpful so the user knows where they are.
- ⦿ For example: Home > Board of Directors > John Doe Contact Info
- ⦿ Breadcrumbing allows the user to click on any of the identifying history links instead of hitting the back button over and over.

Photos on the Web

- Photos are an excellent way to both highlight your membership and show your state and chapter leaders at work in the community
 - Remember to format photos so that there is white space around the photo (known as VSPACE and HSPACE in web lingo and design software). Text that is literally leaning on the photo can turn viewers away or scare them away from content.
 - In addition, try to have photos on the page that relate to each other instead of a smattering of photos. Otherwise, your reader may get lost.

Type for the Web

- ◎ Sans serif typeface
 - Verdana is the font of choice due to legibility and formatting style.
- ◎ Much like print, too many or too artsy typefaces can cause problems
 - The user may not have your funky font on their system and so your website will appear differently to them.

Monitors and the Web

- ⦿ The color that is exhibited on your screen may vary greatly from your audience's monitor.
- ⦿ Viewers may have a different size viewing area, so your website may view differently size-wise.
- ⦿ Links may act differently depending on the audience browser and computer age.
- ⦿ It is important to test your website on a variety of browsers and computers to make sure it is working correctly.

Conference Registration

- ⦿ A site called Wufoo (wufoo.com) lets you create forms and connects to Paypal for receiving secure payments. This is an excellent option for conference registrations for your state association.
- ⦿ Make sure and use a secure method for accepting payments, like Paypal. A secure service has an 's' in 'http://', so should appear as 'https://' in your url.
 - Beware of sites that say they are secure but do not offer 'https://' security. They are not encrypted.

Website Management

- Effective use of your website will be a combination of website and email communications.
- Teasers to get users to go to your website will be useful in email.
- Your newsletter will be another effective vehicle to drive users to your website.
- Make sure that your content is accessible and updated if you do an email blast or offer newsletter links. Otherwise, this could drive users away from the website.



Your ePresence

- Come up with a one and five year plan for your website.
- How do you imagine future boards managing the website?
- How will you pass along website access?
- When will the website be updated? Weekly or monthly? Find a method that works with your schedule.
- Find a template or software that is feasible to manage.

Be realistic

- ◎ Sometimes it is more realistic, depending on funds, to have a website service manage and design your website for you.
 - Typical cost for a quality website:
 - \$1,500 to \$4000
 - Includes two to three templates to choose from
 - Backend PHP management system so you do no programming
 - Sitemap
 - A set amount of revisions and \$45 per hour for additional changes.
 - A good company will require a contract that protects them and YOU. Read your contract carefully. Don't be afraid to negotiate.
 - Monthly cost for hosting or company will identify a host provider for you. Typically \$10-\$35 per month.
 - Beware of one-person design shops and almost free or cheap website design services!
 - May take a long time to receive your website
 - May want to charge more and you cannot receive product as a result.
 - First warning of problem: no contract, free or cheap.

Resource Links for Media and PR Contacts

- ◎ www.nsna.org
- ◎ www.wufoo.com
- ◎ Do you have any resource links you would like to recommend?