Welcome to the Web Site Workshop

Catholics Come Home

- Communications Department
  Diocese of Green Bay
Why focus on your Parish Web site?
Who is your audience?
What are they doing?
Content
Organization and Appearance
Domain names
Break-out groups
Why focus on your Parish Web site?
Why focus on a web site?

- A Web site is a unique communications tool
  - Available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week
  - Very accessible
  - It offers a low-risk avenue for users who seek you
  - It can be changed/updated within minutes
  - It's relatively cheap
Why focus on your Parish Web site?

- Catholics Come Home (CCH) campaign
- CCH commercials
- Welcome, Worship and Web site
- Establish local presence via web
- Stay connected
Who is your audience?
Who is your audience?

- Knowing your audience will help you craft your content and your message

  - Audience could include:
    - Current parishioners
      - Engagement -- From heavily involved to rarely involved
      - Age -- From children to seniors
      - Education -- From those who know the Catholic faith to others who know much less
      - Contribution -- From those who are looking to give (prayer, service, sharing) to the Church to those who are seeking something from the Church
    - = Big Audience
Who is your audience?

- Audience could include:
  - Current parishioners (previous screen)
  - Potential members
    - People who were never members of a faith
    - Lapsed but informed Catholics
    - Lapsed and not catechized Catholics
  - So who’s your audience?
Diocese of Green Bay

October 2009

Communications Department

Catholic Church – Here comes everybody!
Who is your audience?

- Knowing that the demographics are broad:
  - Always remember to see your web site from their perspective
    - Add value to people’s experience -- provide content they are looking for
  - When writing, use a conversational style
  - Keep it short (the shorter the better)
  - Most people scan web sites so use bullet points and secondary headlines to help the visitor
  - Use words that the average person uses (avoid words like “catechesis,” “vicar,” “ecclesiology,” etc.)
  - Ask people to provide suggestions and feedback
Content
Is your home page welcoming?

Does it clearly state with words or photos:

- who you are
- what you are
- where you are
- why they should consider you
- how to contact you

Users allocate minimal time to initial Web site visits, so you must quickly convince them that the site's worthwhile.
Provide information visitors want:

- Mass times
- Contact info/office hours
- How to baptize your baby
- How to schedule your wedding
- How to care for an ill loved one
- Events for a variety of interests

Users must be able to easily determine whether your services meet their needs and why they should engage with you.
- Provide information in a barrier-free way:
  - Easy-to-read type
  - Easy-to-read size
  - High contrast between text and background
  - Left-justified text
  - Consistent visual cues
    - Ex: all links are underlined and blue
  - White space
  - No italics
  - No all caps
Organization & Appearance
Organization and Appearance

- Offer simple, consistent page design
- Provide clear navigation
- Create information architecture that puts things where users expect to find them
  - What do you do if you don’t know?
    - Ask people for feedback – informal feedback is better than no feedback
    - Use an analytical tool such as Google Analytics
Organization and Appearance

- The Golden Triangle
Photos

- While each of us has the right to photograph pretty much anything, people on the other end of the lens have the right to a reasonable degree of privacy. (private property, public property)
- People have the right to grant (or deny) commercial use of their image. This is why the Diocese, most schools, nursing homes, etc., require people to sign release forms before being photographed or filmed.
Photos continued

- Recommendations:
  - Any time photos or video are going to become public (newsletter, web site, blog, brochures or other promotional materials, etc.) it is always better and safer to receive the person’s permission (ideally written). It builds trust and goodwill. It also gives people the opportunity to opt out.
  - If children and/or vulnerable adults are in the photo, get written permission from their parents/guardians.
Organization and Appearance

Photos continued

- Recommendations:
  - Do what you can to protect a child’s identity.
    - Don’t use the child’s name or only use his/her first name
  - Examples:
    - "Jessica, Michael and Sam enjoy some time in the playground." 
    - "Barbara Smith and her daughter work on an Advent wreath." 
  - Set a reasonable length of time to use the photo/video. Using outdated photos can create problems (children grow up and people pass away).
  - It’s OK to use photos/videos in which people are unidentifiable, such as group photos. Permission or release forms are not needed.
Photos continued

- Recommendation: Mind copyright laws
Domain names
Domain names

Registering

- Have your domain name (ex: www.gbdioc.org) registered in the name of your parish or school, even if an outside company or person does all the work to maintain your Web site.

- WHY? If it’s registered in someone else’s name, that person officially owns the registration. If that working relationship ceases, your use of that domain name could end, too.
Domain names

- Registering
  - Renew your domain name only through reputable firms such as
    - Network Solutions (www.networksolutions.com)
    - Yahoo (http://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/domains/)
    - Possibly your current internet provider
  - WHY? All registration information is available free on the Internet. Disreputable firms use this information to contact the registrant and offer to renew their registration.
names

- Continued ë
  - What’s the risk?
    - The company may take your money without renewing your registration.
    - Or it may promise to renew your registration for several years then go out of business.
    - Or your Web site may disappear for a while (think of those error messages: “Remote server not found”). Why? All sorts of technical reasons, but it’s kind of like moving and having your mail forwarded – it will probably get there eventually, but days or weeks later.
Registering

How do you find out which company you are registered with and when does the registration expire?

- Look in your billing files.
- Or go to www.networksolutions.com/whois/index.jsp. In the box where it says Enter search term here, type your Web site address (e.g., www.gbdioc.org). Click on Search WHOIS. It will show names of the registrant, administrative contact and technical contact, and the date when the registration expires. Renew your registration only through the person or firm listed at technical contact.
Last tip:

- Keep your domain name active by paying the annual registration fee. **Do this even if your parish or school has closed, merged or changed names.**
- **WHY?** If a Web site registration lapses, **anyone** can pay the fee and claim your name.
  - Implications
    - Example
    - Embarrassment
  - Easily avoidable
    - $10 annual fee is cheap insurance for protection & peace of mind
Questions?