

Developing your community web site



Guidance notes resulting from research to identify what a community web site should consist of and how such web sites can best serve their communities

Project information

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Community Web Site Evaluation

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Foreword

Early in 2006, TalkingHat Associates and Tynedale District Council began to discuss the future of the Tynedale Village Halls Consortium Computer Learning Centres. Some twenty village halls in communities throughout rural Tynedale had been equipped, since 2000, with up to 4 desktop computers and associated peripherals. The intention was to provide community based facilities to encourage local people to become computer literate with facilitation and co-ordination provided by volunteer "Community Computer Champions" - people in each community who were prepared to give their time and energy to develop the project. A link with Ukonline was established and provided a funding route for the early stages of the project. Big Lottery Funds provided the centres with ADSL broadband as it was rolled out into rural areas. Over the six years of the project use of the computer centres, particularly for learning, had declined and there was no evident funding stream to enable the project to continue after December 2006.

TalkingHat Associates were commissioned to explore opportunities that would enable viable centres to continue and to run a short project in conjunction with Ukonline that would inject some revenue support for the year 2007.

Aspects of this work raised issues about the value and spread of local web sites serving these communities and TalkingHat proposed a short piece of work to examine the views of the communities and their understanding of the value of community web sites. TalkingHat Associates were partnered by Volunteering Tynedale in this research. These guidance notes and the report associated with them are the result of this piece of work.

We have tried to avoid detailed explanations and descriptions of technologies because the nature of technological advance is such that they will soon be out of date or fashion. The focus of the guidelines is on making use of established good practice. It is hoped that the notes are of value to those communities in Tynedale, (and possibly beyond), who are embarking on the development of a new community web site or the redevelopment of an existing one.

Bouquets to:

Susi Goncu, (Tynedale Council) and Mike Coleman (Volunteering Tynedale) were instrumental in setting this project up and sourcing the funding through Change Up (Northumberland Consortium).

The Volunteering Tynedale project officers, Andrea Lyons, Melanie Hall, Claire Heaviside and Roe Baker were generous in spending time to encourage people in their networks to complete our questionnaires.

And finally - our thanks to all the Community Champions who willingly answered our questions. The Tynedale village halls' learning centres' future may still be uncertain, but at least it's less uncertain than 6 months ago.

Copies of the report and these guidelines can be downloaded from the TalkingHat Associates' web site.

<http://www.talkinghat.co.uk>

Developing your Community Web Site

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Who will build and maintain your web site?

When you become involved in developing a community web site, you become a highly visible representative of your community. Begin by assuming that not everyone will see your community in the same way that you do. By simply presenting your own perspective, however well intentioned, you may find that you have upset some people. You can avoid this by consulting with your community and making sure you understand their position before you represent them. This may sound difficult, but it is really important. There are web site tools that will help you to consult. [Polling tools, questionnaires, blogging, message boards].

Involving the community is equally important and will help to establish your web site as a mouthpiece for the community. Your web site can incorporate features to encourage community involvement.

Checklist

- Do you have an appropriate level of skills in your community to tackle this project?
- How will you recruit volunteers from your community?
- Can you depend on the people who have offered their services to be available when needed?
- Who will decide what your web site looks like?
- Who will decide what soft technologies you will use?
- Is there a local organisation which will take a lead role in this project?
- How will your web site be maintained?
- Who will be responsible for maintaining the content?
- Who will be responsible for maintaining technical aspects?
- How will you ensure that your community participates in the development and maintenance of your web site?

If you are developing the web site as a small group or an individual, it's a good idea to enlist the support of some local organisation that already represents the community in some 'official' capacity. This will give your web site some degree of authority. You could, for example, approach the Town or Parish Council or the local Tourism Association, before you set up your site. They may be enthusiastic in their support and possibly may not have thought about a web site for themselves. It's also likely that they will be able to give you lots of contacts and provide you with lots of valuable content for your site - access to minutes of meetings etc. It would also be useful to talk to other organisations, such as the local churches, scout groups and the Women's Institute to agree reciprocal links between your web sites.

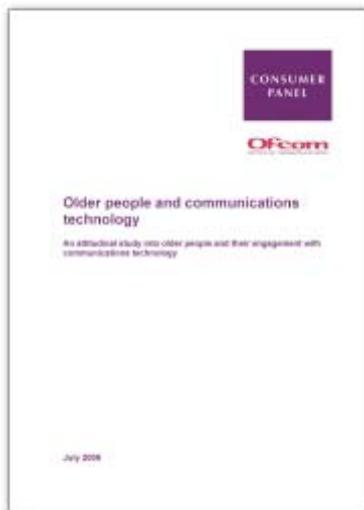
Begin by assuming that your community web site is just an idea in your mind or the minds of one or two people. You may already have talked about it and have agreed that it is appropriate for the community to have a web presence.

Should you do-it-yourself or outsource the work? You'll possibly have some idea of what you want from your community web site, but before you start any work, it's essential to discover what skills you will need, what skills are available in the community and who is prepared to

volunteer some of their time, skills and effort to help you achieve these aims - unless you're going to tackle it yourself.

If you have a good basic understanding of html, a good feel for graphics and colours, maybe some writing skills, you might feel you could undertake the web site design. If, on the other hand, you don't have these skills, or cannot find them in your community, it would be advisable to outsource the work. Outsourcing might simply involve enlisting some volunteers from the community or beginning to talk to professional web designers. Either way you'll want to know what sort of work they have done previously and whether or not it fits with your ideas of your web site, whether they can dovetail with your timetable and if you're going to employ someone, what their costs are likely to be.

It's fairly safe to assume that you will need people to fulfil the roles of designer/programmer, publisher/editor and web technician. Some of these roles may be merged into one person. It's quite likely for example, in a small community that the designer, and technician might be the same person. Creating these roles and sticking to them ensures that the workload is spread.



There is no doubt that taking on a community web site is not an intensive task, but there is no reason that you should do it single handed. There will be people in your community with either professional or self-taught skills. A recent report by Ofcom, ("Older people and communications technology" - An attitudinal study into older people and their engagement with communications technology - Ofcom - June 2006), identified 2 groups of people in the 55+ age group whose skills and knowledge are probably underused in our communities.

Maintenance of the content of your web site is essential. A web site with out of date information is certain to discourage your visitors from returning. Unfortunately, maintaining a web site is not as exciting as designing and building one, but, as they say, someone has to do it. A well-designed web site where layout and structure has been properly considered for maintenance is generally an easier one to maintain.

Who will visit your web site and how will you attract them?

It's important that your web site has some focus. For a community web site there are just 2 questions. Will this be a web site to serve just your community or will it be a web site to serve those outside the community? Reaching this decision makes it much easier to decide on what content your web site should have and gives it a sense of purpose.

A web site that serves your community will predominantly feature pages that relate directly to the lives of the people living there. So for example, information about local events, people, clubs, societies, the churches, organisations for young people, the weather and local transport information might form the core of your content.

If you intend your web site to promote the community, its services and your locality to an audience outside the area you will need to consider a different range of content. People outside your community may comprise tourists wanting to find somewhere to stay or information

about a visitor attraction, shoppers wanting to buy some local produce or goods, researchers looking for information about past industries or seeking information about ancestors. Some of them may be ex-residents now living abroad and keen to discover what the area is like now. Maybe they would like to make contact with old school friends. Meeting the needs of these visitors creates new issues. You may need to consider incorporating links to external commercial web sites, archives of data about the area, links to local libraries or museums, a photo gallery and possibly a forum where discussions can take place.

Don't be put off by some of these web features. To most web designers they will be fairly straightforward to implement. If you are attempting this project without a web designer, there are plenty of sources of help and there is a huge vault of ready-made, free scripts available on the web.

The responsibility for maintaining a static web site is fairly undemanding and it wouldn't be unreasonable for one or perhaps two people to take it on. This may be enough if your web site is to be static - a web site that simply invites people to visit and look for information without contributing anything. On the other hand if you are going to engage your community, encourage participation in the maintenance and development of the web site then you will need to add more features to meet people's expectations. A dynamic web site can offer

Checklist

- Who is your target audience?
- Who do you want to visit and make use of your web site?
- Is there more than one target group?
- How will you reach your target audience?
- What content will your web site have?
- What will be so special about it that it attracts visitors from your target audience?
- How will you know that you are getting the right sort of visitors?
- How will you know that they find the visit to your web site of value?
- How will you promote your web site to your community?
- How will you, if it's appropriate, promote your web site to the outside world?

varying degrees of interactivity. It may be fully interactive, with visitors being able to log on, take part in forums and post information. Using a Content Management System (CMS) allows you to give your visitors the opportunity to actually create and upload new pages or add images to pages. There are an increasing number of CMS tools which because they are built with Open Source programming are available free of charge. It helps to have a little programming knowledge but many of them are intuitive to install and offer technical support for those who need some help.

Involving the community in your local web site becomes easier as you increasingly consult with them and as new web technologies emerge to encourage visitor participation. Enabling the community to contribute material to the site, (through a CMS) and to feel some sense of ownership with it in a very real sense is so important.

Consider some of these ideas to increase community participation and reduce the burden of maintenance:

A message board. There are plenty of free, ready built message boards which can easily be downloaded and installed on your site; they enable your visitors to enter their own content which might be in the form of details of future events, items for sale, reports on past activities, requests for information, advertise services, etc.

A guest book will enable visitors, particularly those from outside the community, to express their opinions about the site. It's important to encourage and read these comments as part of your maintenance programme, and unless they are abusive, leave both the negative and the positive ones there for all to see. Seeing that a web site is active is important in maintaining visitor numbers. If people criticise and the criticism is fair, act on it.

It's a good policy to reply to all messages and guest book entries on your web site; it's usually appreciated, and always well received.

You should incorporate a way of capturing the email addresses of as many of the visitors to your site as possible. The message board and guest book are excellent vehicles for capturing this information. You don't really need any personal information from them, although it can be useful (but not essential) to capture their first and surnames. By setting up an e-mail list in your address book from these e-mail addresses will give you the opportunity to contact them with information that will attract them back to your site. You can, for example, send out a notification when you have added significant new content to your site. You can invite them to participate in online polls or to advise them about meetings or events. It's worth remembering that you should always remind people on an email list of this type that they have the right to request to "opt out" of your mailing list. If they make this request you should remove them straightaway.

You might think about establishing a chat room, although in a small community there is unlikely to be much demand for it, limiting the chances of meeting other people there at any given time. One idea, however, that had some moderate success was to agree and publicise a particular time and date for a “Virtual Workshop” with a local historian. Everyone on the web site's e-mail list was invited to the online event. This “community” included people from all over the world, who because they had already visited the web site and left their contact details had indicated some degree of interest in the village. The historian initially set some topics about which people asked questions, made comments and discussed quietly amongst themselves for the best part of a couple of hours.

A project, which developed from this, was the setting up of a section of the web site with a few archive photographs and scanned documents relating to the village. Those already on the email list and new visitors were invited to submit their own images and stories to the site. Naturally, anyone submitting material to the site was asked to leave their email address! Apart from adding valuable content to the site this produced a unique reference archive for the history of the village and has been significant in attracting new visitors.

Naming your web site

Registering a domain for your site is easy, there are no end of domain name registration agents on the web who will, in return for a small payment, register your domain name and offer you email addresses, web hosting and other related services.

A word of warning. Do beware of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) who, as part of your Internet connection deal (dial-up or broadband), offer you free web space which generally has a URL (or web address) something like this fictitious one

<http://www.freeforever.co.uk/villages/myvillage>

There's absolutely nothing wrong with them and for many people they are a simple and ideal solution to cheap web hosting. Your community, however, should aim to have a web address that is:

- short to type
- simple to remember and
- relevant to the community

If you are not building a parish council web site (see below) you should aim for registering something like **<http://www.myvillage.org.uk>**

Choosing a registration agent is not so easy. Many of their offers are difficult to compare with one another on an equal basis and sometimes advice is not given clearly. Some offer very cheap domain name registration and expensive hosting packages, others charge more for hosting and almost give away the registration - at least in the first year - but ask them how much the renewal of a domain name registration will cost in year two.

Amongst the fairest of these companies is Freeola, (**<http://www.freeola.net>**), who charge only a very modest sum for domain name registration and offer an unlimited number of email addresses together with free web hosting. There are no catches and you can register and host as many domain names as you wish.

Now for the most difficult part - choosing a domain name for your web site. It may be quite obvious that the name of your web site should be **[myvillage.co.uk](http://www.myvillage.co.uk)**, **[myvillage.gov.uk](http://www.myvillage.gov.uk)** or **[myvillage.org.uk](http://www.myvillage.org.uk)** but it may not be that easy. Begin by listing suitable names. Keep them

Checklist

- What will your domain name be?
- Will it reflect the nature and aims of the web site?
- Where and how do you register a domain name?
- Who will pay the annual costs for domain name registration, web hosting and any other services required?

short, simple and relevant. Don't be put off by finding that whatever name you have chosen has already been taken. Make sure you have some alternatives. For example, not only could you prepare a list of alternative domain names, but you could also agree some alternative suffixes:

www.myvillage.co.uk
www.myvillage.org
www.myvillage.org.uk
www.myvillage.net
www.myvillage.info
www.myvillage.uk.net
www.myvillage.com

If you are developing a web site for a Parish Council, however, you would be advised to adopt a ".gov.uk" url. These are only available through specialist domain name registrants, but instantly identify your web site as a credible e-government web site. Note that under the revised rules a parish council must adopt one of the following formats when applying for a ".gov.uk" domain name:

Either

myvillageparishcouncil.gov.uk

Or

myvillage-pc.gov.uk.

Whilst the addition of 'parishcouncil' or '-pc' is a bit of an encumbrance, you still have the advantage of being able to use the name of your community as a 'brand'.

There is information and an online application form for ".gov.uk" web sites here...

<http://www.hcidata.co.uk/register-dot-gov-dot-uk.htm>

<http://www.kantara.com/solutions/domains-ac.uk-gov.uk.htm>

Bear in mind that there are different scales of registration and renewal fees associated with each of the different suffix variations. These are usually displayed on the registrant's web site.

Content

A web site gives you many advantages over other forms of publishing. For a start it doesn't have a linear format. Intuitively, a web site enables visitors to jump into your site at almost any point, select the information they want and drill down to the detail. It isn't restrictive in the same way as a book. For this reason your pages should all have their own identity and you can make extensive use of hyperlinks to enable the visitor to quickly locate items of interest. Do some research; look at other web sites whose purpose is similar to yours. You don't need to copy them, just look for and make a note of ideas that you could benefit your site.

Checklist

- How can you plan your web site?
- What sort of structure should your web site have?
- How many fonts and colours should you use?
- Have you included a site map?
- Have you prepared a list of appropriate keywords?
- How will you promote your web site?

Try and stick to the three clicks rule. A visitor to your web site should be able to find what they want to see within three clicks. This rule will help you to determine the structure of your pages. You should make sure your site visitor can find what they want in a maximum of three clicks! It's a good idea to begin planning on paper, but rather than creating a story board in the traditional sense, you should adopt a spider diagram remembering that with a web site you can offer the user the opportunity to go sideways as well as back and forwards.

Start with your main subject in the centre of the diagram - an introduction or overview of the web site - this will be your home page - usually named the index page.

On the first layer you may have information about the main subject content of the site and links to those topics. On a parish council web site, for example this might include 'parish organisations', 'your council', 'planning applications', 'forum' and 'local history'

On the second layer you will break down the headings from the individual topics on layer one. Under 'Your Council' for example there might be links for 'Your Councillors', 'Dates of Council Meetings', 'Most Recent Council Minutes', 'Agenda for the Next Meeting' and 'Document Archive'.

It's not essential to have a third layer, some of the first layer links may not need it, some may. 'Local History' for example, may simply require a page of information on layer two and nothing more. Conversely, the link from 'Your Councillors' will take you to a page displaying photographs and contact details of your parish councillors.

Laying out your structure on paper will help you see how your topics relate to each other and how easy (or difficult) it will be for your visitor to navigate around the site. It's a good idea to

have your main menu appear on each page to enable the user to step back, (or sideways), quickly without having to take multiple backwards steps. If you can't do this, at least consider including links back to the home page and the site map (see below) on every page.

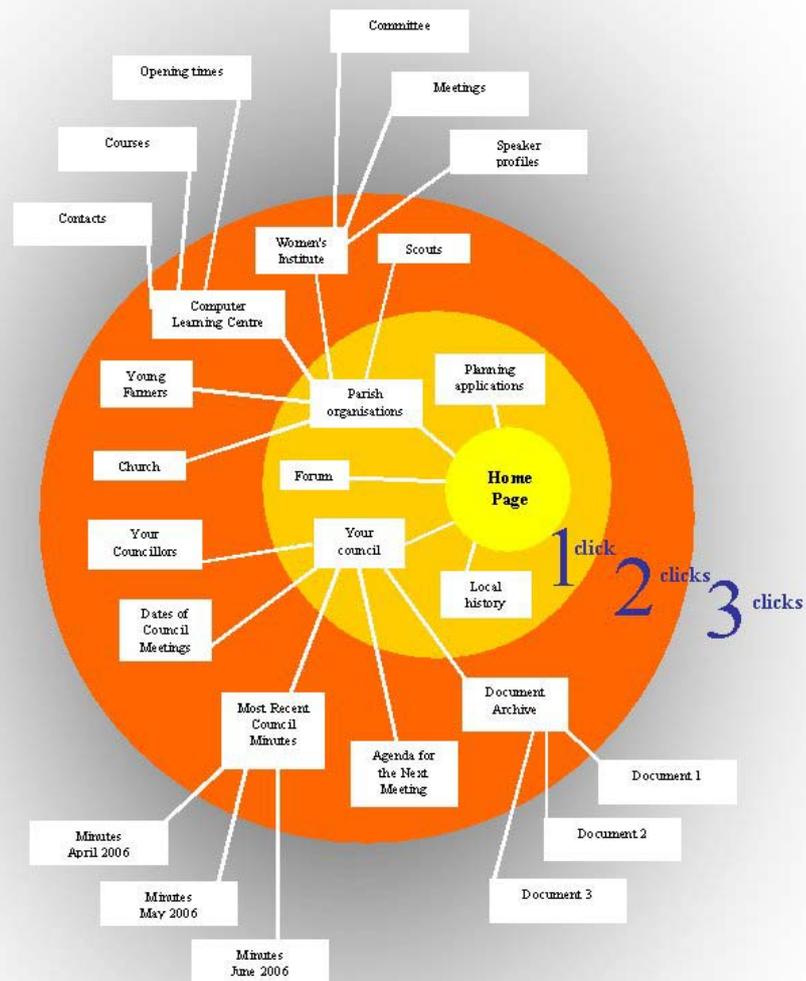


Figure 1: The Three Clicks Rule

Having created this master plan you can now begin to think about the layout and appearance of individual pages. This is where your research of other web sites will bear fruit. What looks good on the pages you have seen? To some extent a uniform, co-ordinated look to them can be more professional than those with different background colours, fonts, font sizes and layouts. One of the most significant aspects of the web is speed. The human eye and brain take longer to adjust to major variations in these components than if there is a degree of consistency. If you will be using navigation buttons on your pages, try and place them in the same place on each page. It's very frustrating to suddenly find that something you have become familiar with has suddenly moved to a new position.

Try not to vary the size of your fonts too much. Decide on font colours and sizes for headings and body text in order to make a clear differentiation between the two and stick to those sizes throughout.

A site map showing the structure of the web site and linking it to every page is essential. The site map enables a visitor to quickly find individual pages with relevant information and is also a useful feature for ensuring a good page ranking on search engines.

Once you are happy with the look and feel of the first few pages, get someone else, whose opinion you value to have a look at it. Take any comments or criticisms constructively and make revisions accordingly if they are appropriate. Do this frequently as your web site progresses.

When these pages are ready, publish them as soon as possible. The sooner you publish some of your pages, the sooner search engines will index it.

The look and feel and navigation of your web site are important, but there are other considerations to be made too. When you construct your index (or home) page, make sure that you use the domain name in the page's title tag. That's the name that will appear in the blue bar (called the title bar) at the top of your visitor's web browser. It also is an important step in ensuring that your site achieves good search engine rankings.

Keywords, which are hidden in the code of your web page, will also contribute to achieving high search engine rankings. Choose your keywords carefully - they should be relevant to your web site and its purpose. Think carefully about the words that you would enter in Google or any other search engine if you were seeking the sort of information that your web site will contain. That's a good starting point because search engines will index your keywords and depending on some other factors will use them as a basis for presenting your site to a searcher. There's plenty of information on the Internet about how many keywords to use and

how to present them. Whilst you are searching for information about keywords, have a look for tutorials about Meta tags too.

It's always a good idea to seek out other web sites that may target a similar audience to yours. For example if a local bed and breakfast business has its own web site why not ask them to include a link to your web site in return for you doing the same for them. This will enhance their web site by broadening the range of information available to their visitors and gives you the opportunity to support a local business. Contact the council and ask them to provide a link to your web site - and link to theirs in return. The council will probably be quite pleased to do this because it helps them meet their requirements for delivering e-government services.

When you have published your web site you will need to let your community know that it is there. Obviously, telling everyone that you meet about the new web site is a good idea, but you could also print out some notices to go to your local post office, pub, bed & breakfasts, hotels and schools, anywhere in fact that your community goes. If you have any printed stationery or literature, make sure that the URL is printed on it. Write an article (keep it short) and send it to your local newspaper. Think about adding the URL to every email that you send - even to friends and family. It's surprising how many people will follow the link just to have a look at it and then pass on the URL to others. If you are sending out emails to the community include the URL in each message. Actively seek out the email addresses of people you meet - even your neighbours and email them with details of the web site. With their permission add them to your list of contacts and remember to include them when you send email messages announcing new items or significant changes to your web site.

But what about the content that your visitors will actually see on the pages? Naturally, it's for you to decide what the actual content is, but there are a few guidelines that will help you bring it all together.

When you design your web site it is important that you consider the content carefully. Be sure that the content reflects the community in an appropriate manner, using images where it is appropriate and relevant simply worded descriptions.

Make sure your pages have variety and relevance. Keep the content to the core theme of the page subject, but try and add some variety within the theme. Personal comments and interests should be avoided, but content that that adds value to the subject is acceptable. For example on a parish council web site, a pen portrait of the councillors' would add value to their photograph and contact details.

Checklist

- Have you thought about the relevance of your page content?
- Have you used appropriate language?
- Is your content brief, but interesting?
- Can you apply the 3 clicks rule?
- Is your content up to date?
- Do you have an email contacts list?

Choose carefully the way you use language. A serious web page raising concerns about an environmental or planning issue should present the information in a more formal way than a light-hearted report about a local farmers tug-of-war.

Don't be tempted to ramble on. Brevity is the essence of a good web site. Your visitors will want to find information quickly and not have to scroll down through pages of text.

Remember the three clicks rule. Information should be easily identifiable and it should be easy to find. Put yourself in the place of a visitor - select topics or pages from your web site at random and see how easily you can get to them. Get somebody who is not so familiar with your web site to do the same.

Maintaining a web site may seem to be hard work, but if the content of your site never changes there will be no incentive for your visitors to return to it. The initial design should have unique content that makes people want to use it and return to it and subsequent updates will hold their attention. Maintain your contact list and send an email out whenever you update the content.

Information about communities changes with alarming regularity. Maintain a dialogue with key people in the community to ensure that they feed you with information to update calendars, timetables, and contact information.

Consider features that will add value to your visitors' experience and hold their interest. These are some of the features that you could add over a period of time:

Personal blog. A blog, (derived from the term Web Log), is a simple way of encouraging your community to participate in its web site. You can retain editorial control whilst others contribute web content directly to the pages.

Helpful tips - get the community to submit household tips.

Articles about local events and activities. Encourage local people to write articles about their community efforts.

Include a volunteers' forum where residents can see opportunities for volunteering and even offer their expertise to others. Contact the local Volunteering Development Agency (www.volunteeringtynedale.org in Tynedale) and ask if they will feed volunteering opportunities to you for publication on your site. In return you can offer to display a link to their web site.

A chat forum will encourage people to discuss issues that concern them. Make sure that anyone contributing information does so openly. Capture their name and email address. You may need to act as a censor at some point!

Establish a local business directory. Many businesses exist in small communities where little is known about them. Ask them to write a small feature about their business and offer them a link to their web site.

Create a local history photograph album for the community. Inspire some interest in the past of your community. Create some pages where residents can upload old photographs and anecdotes about the area. Interview a local character and write a feature on their life and times. Create a 'golden weddings' page.

Online questionnaires - on serious issues or just for fun. Questionnaires and online polls are popular. Make them current and topical, serious and fun. There are many small scripts available on the Internet to help you do this and incorporating them into your web site is fairly straightforward.

Incorporate contests (get a local business to sponsor a prize - say in the form of an Amazon voucher). You could use a mystery photo where visitors identify a location or a treasure hunt where your users find answers to clues on the web site.

Create a gardening page with seasonal articles. Somebody in your community will be an experienced gardener. Enlist them to publish their expertise in a useful way.

Government resources - create a page of links to useful e-government web sites, such as Defra, Inland Revenue and DVLA.

Local community resources - create a page of links to other community web sites.

There are endless opportunities to make your web site interesting, compelling and dynamic and there are almost certainly people in your community who will be willing to be involved.

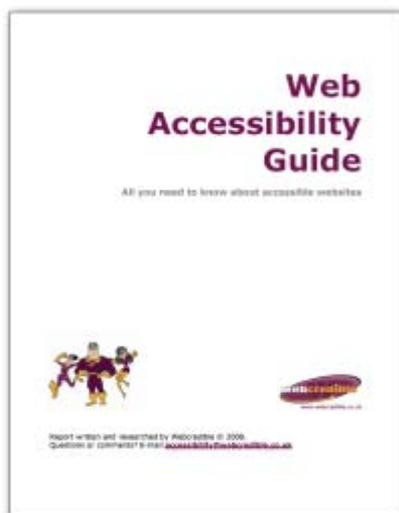
Accessibility

This is an absolutely crucial aspect of the design of your web site. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) is legislation to support accessibility and include accessibility in web design. Web accessibility is about making a website accessible to all Internet users (both disabled and non-disabled), regardless of what browsing technology they're using. For disabled users this includes those who are visually impaired, have poor or partial sight, are colour blind, deaf, are unable to use a keyboard or mouse or who have some other disadvantage such as epileptic users who must always be careful to avoid seeing flickering between 2 and 55 Hz, web users from outside your industry who may not understand industry jargon or acronyms or users whose first language is not English and who may not be able to comprehend complicated language. It's estimated that currently, one in 12 men and one in 200 women have some form of colour blindness. The contrast between a font colour and its background is of crucial importance. Don't rely on your judgment to achieve the right balance; there are tools available that will check this for you (see below).

Checklist

- Will anyone be able to use your web site? Anyone at all?
- Have you referred to the WebCredibile web site?
- Have you included alternative text (alt tags) for all your images?
- Have you provided alternative transcripts of any audio files for the benefit of hearing impaired users?

There are some excellent tools available to help you achieve full compliance with the DDA. Begin by looking at this web site,



<http://www.webcredible.co.uk>

and download the Web Accessibility Guide (PDF format) from:

<http://www.webcredible.co.uk/user-friendly-resources/white-papers/web-accessibility-guide.pdf>

There is a wealth of useful information on this web site. You could begin by looking at this page:

<http://www.webcredible.co.uk/user-friendly-resources/web-accessibility/uk-website-legal-requirements.shtml>.

A particularly useful tool for web developers is the Web Accessibility Toolbar, which can be downloaded from the WebCredibile site and enables you to validate the accessibility of your pages as you develop them.

Content Management Systems

If you choose to base the structure of your web site around a Content Management System there a large number of free applications for you to investigate. You will need a degree of familiarity (and expertise in some cases) to install and configure a CMS, but the rewards are manifold and once set up they more or less run themselves. Most of them have a good support infrastructure (help line, online forum, downloadable guides and manuals etc), but it helps to have a basic understanding of the concept of database and server technologies if you will be attempting this on your own.

Increasingly, Content Management Systems have grown out of blogging systems. A blog is a shortened term for Web Log - in effect it's an online journal where one or more contributors can submit comments, opinions, observations, questions and answers directly to a web site. Blogs have, to some extent driven Content Management Systems into the Open Source environment and widened participation in the Internet.

Below is a selection of Content Management Systems, some of which incorporate blogging features and the ability to upload images. Make a list of the sort of features you would like to have on your site and then have a look at what some of the following web sites can offer you.

PostNuke

<http://www.postnuke.com>

PostNuke is software that creates an impressive, dynamic web site and provides the webmaster with a site they can administer with a minimal amount of HTML knowledge through a web browser

But, PostNuke's functionality can be increased by installing modules, blocks and themes. For example, you can add a forum, a gallery and contact form. You can also change how your entire site looks by changing themes. All of this can be done with just a few clicks in the administration panel saving you hours of time, both in the initial creation of the website and in its day to day maintenance

PostNuke can do anything from traditional blog websites, to a community members' only website with hundreds of users. PostNuke can scale to thousands of uses but is just as easy to create a small website for friends and family.

Drupal

<http://drupal.org/>

Drupal is software that allows an individual or a community of users to easily publish, manage and organize a great variety of content on a website. Tens of thousands of people and organizations have used Drupal to set up scores of different kinds of web sites, including:

- community web portals and discussion sites
- corporate web sites/intranet portals
- personal web sites
- aficionado sites
- e-commerce applications
- resource directories

Drupal includes features to enable

- content management systems
- blogs
- collaborative authoring environments
- forums
- newsletters
- picture galleries
- file uploads and download

and much more.

Typo3

<http://typo3.com/>

TYPO3 is a free Open Source content management system for enterprise purposes on the web and in intranets. It offers full flexibility and extendability while featuring an accomplished set of ready-made interfaces, functions and modules.

XOOPS

<http://www.xoops.org/>

XOOPS is a program that allows administrators to easily create dynamic websites with great content and many outstanding features. It is an ideal tool for developing small to large dynamic community websites, intra company portals, corporate portals, weblogs and much more. It can be installed on an Internet host with a PHP-capable web server (e.g., Apache) and a database (e.g., MySQL).

XOOPS is released under the terms of the GNU General Public License (GPL) and is free to

use and modify. It is free to redistribute as long as you abide by the distribution terms of the GPL.

XOOPS is an acronym of eXtensible Object Oriented Portal System. Though started as a portal system, XOOPS is in fact striving steadily on the track of Content Management System. It can serve as a web framework for use by small, medium and large sites.

Plone

<http://plone.org/>

Plone is a ready-to-run content management system that is built on the powerful and free Zope application server. Plone is easy to set up, extremely flexible, and provides you with a system for managing web content that is ideal for project groups, communities and intranets. Plone is easy to install. You can install Plone with a click and run installer, and have a content management system running on your computer in just a few minutes.

Plone is easy to use. The Plone Team includes usability experts who have made Plone easy and attractive for content managers to add, update, and maintain content.

Plone is international. The Plone interface has more than 35 translations, and tools exist for managing multilingual content.

Plone is standard. Plone carefully follows standards for usability and accessibility. Plone pages are compliant with US Section 508, and the W3C's AAA rating for accessibility.

phpWebSite

<http://phpwebsite.appstate.edu/>

phpWebSite provides a complete web site content management system. Web-based administration allows for easy maintenance of interactive, community-driven web sites.

phpWebSite's growing number of modules allow for easy site customisation without the need for unwanted or unused features. Client output from phpWebSite is valid XHTML 1.0 and meets the W3C's Web Accessibility Initiative requirements.

Founded and hosted by the Web Technology Group at Appalachian State University, phpWebSite is developed by the phpWebSite Development Team, a network of developers from around the world. phpWebSite is free, open source software and is licensed under the GNU GPL and GNU LGPL.

Movable Type

<http://www.sixapart.com/movabletype/>

Movable Type is the premier blogging and content management platform for professional bloggers and medium and small businesses. It has been around for a long time and has a

strong following. There is an online community which can offer support and practical help if needed. At least one community web site in Northumberland is based on it.

Typepad

<http://www.typepad.com/>

Typepad is more of a blog and less of a CMS. It features easy, point-and-click authoring and the ability to fully customize your site's appearance and content through pre-built or custom templates. It is a lightweight, professionally supported platform and claims to improve customer reach.

Scoop

<http://scoop.kuro5hin.org/>

Scoop is a "collaborative media application". It falls somewhere between a content management system, a web bulletin board system, and a weblog. Scoop is designed to enable your website to become a community. It empowers your visitors to be the producers of the site, contributing news and discussion.

Community web sites in Tynedale

During the course of the research and interviews, respondents were asked to name web sites that served their communities. This list is a selection of those that were identified by URL and were found to be valid.

Other web sites were mentioned which, on inspection were specific to a local business, organisation or event and contained no general community information and have been omitted from this list.

Although it serves the whole county it was felt that the Northumberland County Council web site qualified as a community site because of the nature of much of its content and its links to, and promotion of, community web presences.

URL	Community Served by this web site
www.wylam.info	Wylam
www.hexhamyi.org.uk	Hexham Young people
www.sica.org	Stocksfield Institute
www.stocksfield.org	Stocksfield village
www.communigate.co.uk/ne/kwvill/index.phtml	Kirkwhelpington village
www.prudhoe.org	Prudhoe community
www.fawside.org.uk	Allendale communities
www.cybermoor.org.uk	Alston communities
www.acombparishcouncil.gov.uk	Acomb community
www.corbridge.gov.uk	Corbridge community
www.haltwhistle.org	Haltwhistle community
www.laverocks.co.uk/gilslandmag/	Gilsland, Greenhead and Bewcastle communities
www.kielder.com	Kielder community
www.slaley.org.uk	Slaley village
www.northumberland.gov.uk	Northumberland County
www.bellinghamvillage.net	Bellingham community
www.tynedale.gov.uk	Tynedale District
www.northumberlandlife.org	Northumberland County
www.prudhoeparishchurch.org.uk	Prudhoe Parish Church community
www.thischurch.com/html/ebenezer.html	Prudhoe Ebenezer Church community
www.ruralvoices.org.uk	Rural Northumberland
www.allenvalleys.co.uk	Allen Valleys communities