

# Web Essentials For Creative Ministry

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So, you think your puppet team should have a web site but you don't know where to start. Or maybe you have a site already but you'd like to liven it up a bit. This class will provide some basic information about how to plan and build a ministry site, and suggest tools to better manage, expand, and promote it.

## Initial questions:

- Who is your \_\_\_\_\_?
  - o This will dictate the design, colors, and navigation of the site.
    - Internet junkies / newbies
    - Public / private
    - Promotion / training
  - o Many sites will have multiple audiences.
    - Puppeteers / parents
    - Public / private
- What is your \_\_\_\_\_?
  - o This will guide initial development choices.
    - Information
    - Features
    - Activities
  - o Don't be afraid to start small and grow.
    - Start with the basics.
    - Avoid "Under Construction" or "Coming Soon" labels.
    - Use new additions to bring people back.

## What might a good puppet ministry web site include?

- Brochure info
  - o Who we are
  - o What we do
  - o Contact info
- Calendar
  - o Performances
  - o Practices
- Guestbook
- Photo gallery
- Publicity info
  - o Posters
  - o Flyers
  - o Bulletin inserts
- Performance contracts
- References
- Blog
  - o News / Tour reports
  - o Member communication
- Video clips / Podcasts
- Member forum
  - o For puppeteers
  - o For parents
- Member forms
  - o Commitment contracts
  - o Permission slips
  - o Medical release
- New member applications
- Store

## How do we get started?

- Determine \_\_\_\_\_.
  - o Free
    - Pro: Wouldn't cost a dime
    - Con: Might have to put up with random advertising
    - Con: Might have slow transfer rates or limited disk space
    - Con: Might be difficult to remember
  - o Piggyback
    - Pro: Could be free or very inexpensive
    - Con: Would not have own domain name
    - Con: Might not have direct access to the server

- Virtual
  - Pro: Could select a domain that is easy to remember
  - Pro: Would have access to domain e-mail
  - Pro: Would have direct access to the server
  - Con: Would require annual name registration fees
  - Con: Would require monthly/annual hosting fees
- Collect \_\_\_\_\_.
- Get to it!
  - Build it yourself.
    - Use blogging technology as a CMS.
      - Blogger / WordPress / Joomla!
      - Open-source
    - Or, invest in web design software.
      - Dreamweaver / Front Page / iWeb
      - Non-profit pricing
  - Solicit a puppeteer, parent, or church member.
    - That person might have a personal interest in the ministry.
    - The project could qualify for a puppeteer's class credit.
    - A friend may offer design services as an investment in your ministry.
  - Hire a design company.
    - It could cost you \$40-\$80/hour.
    - They would have professional coding and scripting capabilities.

### Web site specifics:

- Brochure info
  - Be organized before you begin.
  - Know some basic design rules:
    - Simple is good. Don't clutter.
    - Watch out for overusing fonts.
    - Use economy of verbage.
    - Remember good web etiquette.
- Calendar / guestbook / gallery
  - Find or purchase scripts that can be implemented on your site.
    - oneadmin
    - php.resourceindex.com
    - cgi.resourceindex.com
  - Be aware that not all scripts are "plug and play".
- Publicity info
  - Provide pre-made materials that can be printed out by your clients.
  - Consider PDFs and/or FlashPaper.
- Forum
  - Decide if the forum will be open to the public or protected for your members.
  - Decide if the forum be externally hosted or on your own server.
  - Consider assigning a moderator.
- Video / audio
  - Check with your host provider regarding bandwidth and server capabilities.
  - Watch out for copyrighted material.
  - Consider podcasting.

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