



Lions Clubs International District 105w Website Tips

Perception Visibility Publicity

Lions Clubs are appreciating the benefits of creating their own website on the Internet. Electronic communication is now widespread and the Internet is for many, particularly younger people, a prime source of information. So today, any organisation which does not have a presence on the Internet risks becoming sidelined.

A Club website need not cost anything to set up. It can act as an electronic brochure, explaining where the Club meets, what it does and what it has achieved. More sophisticated sites can be developed to offer much more but whether it is small or large, make it interesting and readable.

This information sheet aims to give an overview and cover general principals, rather than going into all the technical details.

What is my target audience?

It is essential to define from the start who you are aiming your website at and to build your site to cater for their interests and needs. The principal groups to consider are:

- Your local community
- Other Lions
- Visitors, speakers and perspective members
- The media, particularly the press
- Members of your own Club

How do we start?

Whilst building a website is not difficult, it is desirable to find someone who knows the basics and has the enthusiasm to maintain the site after it has been set up. You could use a commercial web development company, but that will cost money in setup fees and regular updating. Some Clubs will have an enthusiast within their ranks or a younger relation with computer literacy and the skills required.

It is always worthwhile seeking advice from the District Communications team at an early stage but probably the best tip is to look at other Lions websites and learn from what they do, right or wrong.

How a website is constructed

Work out what to say and how you are going to break it down into individual pages of information. Consider pictures, images and logos.

Create the pages on your own computer using a software programme such as FrontPage, Dreamweaver or the many free programmes on magazine discs. Check the links, spelling, accuracy and layout. Then upload the pages electronically to your Internet Service Provider's webserver.

Where to place your site

All ISP's offer free webspace accessible 24 hours a day, beware some ISP's insist on placing adverts or popup windows on your site. For as little as £6 every two years, you can register a domain name such as:

www.anynamelions.org.uk and point it to your webspace. The domain also comes with many extras and generic email addresses for every member like:
president@anynamelions.org.uk

What to include on your site

It is up to each Club to decide what it puts on its website. No two webmasters will operate the same. A modest single page starter site may include basic detail such as the name of the Club, where and when it meets, the Lions logo and some form of contact. It should also have links to the District site www.lions105w.org.uk You may wish to include:

- invitation to prospective members
- details of forthcoming events
- history of the Club
- general information about Lions
- local Lions news and projects
- links to other Lions websites

Things to be aware of

- The Homepage is the most important element on any site and should illustrate positive activities. It is probably not a good idea to have a formal head and shoulders picture of the President but instead news of your Club in action, how you wished to be perceived in your local community.
- Try to strike a balance between managing a site that needs to be updated every couple of days and one which only changes very occasionally.
- Remember that the web is global. You are strongly advised never to include private addresses on your website. If you publish email addresses or telephone numbers, you need to get the individual's permission first.
- Within reason, link to other local organisations that have websites to give wide visibility and publicity tempered with the thought that you really want the visitor to stay with you, not drift away to another website.
- Only use good quality Lion logos available on the Lions Resource CD and best not to clutter the homepage with Award images.
- Animated graphics, background sound, crawling text all distract the visitor from the main purpose of having a website to get the Club message over to the local community.
- Have an understanding of the Data Protection Act and Vulnerable Person Policy particularly with respect to posting pictures of young people.
- If you do decide to add meeting minutes, either put them in a protected area of the website or ensure they do not contain confidential material.
- Finally, when your Club website is up and running advise the District Webmaster to add your Club to the District Website.

