SCOUTS-L

INTERNET ADVICE

Date: Tue, 21 May 1996 02:21:41 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: Jenniffer Jack <jax@wizard.net>
Subject: Internet Development

Jenniffer,

Please call me Mike. If you were using the links at the U.S.Scouting
Service Project or MacScouter sites, you probably saw my name on the link
pages - one of my spare time :-) projects was to develop the links to
help other Scouters navigate to resources on the web. I tend to do a lot
of writting for Scouting and some of it ends up on the web too. If
other Scouters find useful stuff and it helps them give a better program
to their Scouts, then its all worthwhile.

I don't envy you getting 400 or so people automated. That really takes
some doing. Many tend to be suspicious of change and afraid of computers
where they may have responsibility for the product. It is always easier
to blame the DP department than to have the dreaded PC on the desk. We
learned in a personnel management course that the cycle of change is a
hard thing to manage because people start out rejecting, fearing, and
then denying change. Next they tend to start to want to make decisions
without having enough knowledge. Only after this stage do you get some
forward motion.

> I have some basic ideas for information to be posted, but I want to be
able
> to accept information (not necessarily applications yet) but definitely
> email and complaints- that sort of input. I have one group (division) that
> wants to do all sorts of fancy things (the entire BOCA code book,
download &
> payment for GIS information, etc) which may happen- but I'm fighting to
get
> the working model onto a permanent provider so we get stable
operations.
> Then there's the Intranet- someone told me a little about it- not enough
to

All of the things that you are talking about are doable and you probably
should plan from the beginning to develop a system that can accommodate
them. Your plans will drive the both the software and hardware that will
need to be purchased. There is an advantage to have some group think on
this. Those who participate will have a sense of ownership for the final

product and it won't be your fault soley when something has an initial glich.

Here are a few things for you to think about:

1. Consider starting with an information page to get the site up and running quickly. The information page can have a mail icon on it to allow e-mail to your department and complaints to be sent in.

2. You can develop the page using a standard word processor like Word for Windows or Word Perfect. Both offer an internet template that converts the word processing document to html so that the page can be seen on the Internet. For Word go to http://www.microsoft.com and jump around to the free downloads. You'll find a product called Internet Assistant. Once you download it and install it on your PC, you will be able to write up the page with ease. I have forgotten the WP site name, but you can find it with a search engine like Alta Vista or Web Crawler, http://www.altavista.digital.com or http://www.webcrawler.com.

3. To facilitate the use of a large body of text and search capabilities like with your code book, you will need a program that has a built in search engine. One of the best is called Open Text. Please go visit their site at http://www.opentext.com and go through the demo. The product is designed to facilitate an intranet site. The idea is that you would have a front end site that would be accessable to the public and a second site that would be internal -- the intranet part. They have password protection. (A word of caution - the internet and intranet sites should not be linked, otherwise a hacker can crack the password and get in). With Open Text you could break up the code book into segments that can load quickly - files of about 40-50k. You really don't want to have a file the size of a book - a user on the other end may tie up your server for hours loading and using it. Small bits are best.

If you visit http://www.macscouter.com and go the the Commissioners' Internet Resources Workshop you will see a very simple way of presenting a book length work (240 text pages scattered across 20 files). This works, but is limited without the search engine.

4. For payment options using the net, security is a big concern, because the transaction will be visable across all the intermediate servers between your department and the citizen. A solution is to use a secure payment program like "First Virtual" that allows a credit card payment to be encrypted for transmission. You can find this program by using a web

search engine.

5. Once you figure out the software you are going to need, think about a
server for the site. You really will need a dedicated server that can
handled a large volume of simultaneous connections. Sun Microsystems
has
some really good servers like the Ultra that can do the job. They will
also make your Unix folks happy because they use Unix. They are a bit
pricey, but worth the money. I don't have a figure to give, you'll have
to talk with Sun to see what rates they'll give a local government.

I'm still learning a lot about all this sort of thing and fortunate that
I have the support of a couple of engineers who really understand all of
the technical stuff. You'll probably need to have a software specialist
help with the integration of all the stuff needed to make a working site
too. Putting up a page is easy. The hard part is when you want it to do
more than just give out information to one or two users at a time.

I work for the Navy in Virginia. Traffic is tough, but not that bad.
Unfortunately, my office is one of those that does not have an outside
connection from the lan. Kind of ironic that I'm the one that is doing a
lot to get everyone else on the net. :-) But, while my office won't be
on the net for awhile, I don't mind working with others who will be. And
I do a lot of the work at home. That is why you see the capaccess.org
address instead of a government address. Capaccess.org is a freenet
operated by WETA radio. That will also explain why almost all my e-mail
is sent in the evening and early morning hours. I tend to be a bit of a
night owl.

Through a second IP I have been able to use IRC. Try the channel
#Scouting to talk with Scouters from around the world. Good fun.

My nickname Professor Beaver came from Wood Badge. I was in the
Beaver
Den and the folks at the course thought I was more like a professor than
a Scouter. ASTA is the American Scouting Trading Association (Patch
Trading). ASTA tries to instill ethical patch trading. And yes I do have
a few patches on my uniform. I've been at this game for a total of about 27
years all told.

Be happy to look at a draft of your text for the web page. Later I'll
give you some hints on where to find web graphics to dress it up; e.g.
neat lines, background colors and textures, etc.

Speaking Only for Myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman
a/k/a Professor Beaver (WB), ASTA #2566, OA Vigil Honor '71, Eagle
Scout '67, Serving as Deputy District Commissioner for Training,
G.W.Dist., Nat. Capital Area Council, BSA - mfbowman@capaccess.org

Date: Fri, 31 May 1996 09:23:48 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: Jenniffer Jack <jax@wizard.net>
cc: jjack@CapAccess.org.co.pg.md
Subject: Re: Help!

Jenniffer,

Sorry to be so long in answering. I'm about 250 mail messages behind
this week. Arghh. Hope to catch up this weekend.

With regard to graphics there are several ways to get interesting and
useful graphics:

1. Look at any big computer super store for the $5 to $15 graphic
collection CDs. Some have as many as 15000 graphics.

2. Make sure you have a good browser like Netscape that will allow you
to download graphics from any page you see. If you find graphics at
another site that you like, you can click on the graphic with your right
mouse button and download directly from the page.

3. Do a web search for graphics pages and download.

4. For lines and backgrounds that will spark up your pages try visiting
the following sites:

WEB PUBLISHING - BACKGROUNDS
   http://www.netcreations.com/nc-cgi/pat-list.pl
   http://www.acm.ndsu.nodak.edu/backgrounds/contact.sheet.html
   ftp://grunt.berkeley.edu/pub/www/backgrounds/
   http://netletter.com/9509/gini.htm
   http://www.netcreations.com/nc-cgi/pat-sel.pl/0
   http://www.netcreations.com/nc-cgi/pat-sel.pl/256
WEB PUBLISHING - GIF LINES
   http://www.eecs.wsu.edu/~rkinion/lines/lines.html
   http://www.cit.gu.edu.au/images/FancyLines/Images.html

http://pmwww.cs.vu.al/noule/dsbouma/rulers
http://www.cit.gu.edu.au/images/Lines/Images.html
http://www.contrib.andrew.cmu.edu:8001/usr/as8w/solid.html