Web Site Creation Manual

June 26, 2015

Version 1.10

This manual was created by

Isabel Anzani

Girl Scout Troop 1243

Croton on Hudson, NY

The contents of this manual may be freely copied or modified

# Introduction

## Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this manual is to inform local food banks and food pantries of the way in which they can set up a low cost and easy maintenance website in order to advertise their services, seek donations, recruit volunteers and other activities. The manual describes how to select a web hosting service, how to use the web design service and typical content for a web site of this type.

## Process Overview

The high level steps required to create the web site are:

1. Make a list of the requirements for the website in order to document the elements it should contain (e.g., pictures to be used on the various web pages).
2. Create a listing of web pages needed (e.g., Frequently Asked Questions).
3. Document / gather the content for each of these pages.
4. Research different web site build providers and select one whose product meets your needs. At a high level this means determining if a free service will be used or if one where fees are involved is selected (these are generally are more flexible for the user).
5. Build the website using the build tools provided by the web site service you have selected.
6. Test the website in order to ensure the pages display the way you desire and that links to content or other sites work correctly.
7. Launch the web site, using the tools provided by the web site service.
8. Create a manual for the website administration so that others are able to maintain it, if so desired.

Note: Step 8 should be done throughout the process by keeping good notes of what was done at each step.

# Process Detail

In this section, each process step is explained in detail.

## Make a list of the requirements for the website in order to document the elements it should contain

Typical requirements for a food bank / pantry web site are:

1. Provide visitors with the location and times of operation of the services
   1. Provide on the website a map and directions to the facility
2. Methods of contact
   1. Phone numbers
   2. Email addresses
   3. Links to social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
3. How to volunteer time and the types of help required
4. How to make a donation to the food pantry
   1. Offer the ability to make a financial donation online through the site
   2. Offer the ability to donate food
5. Information about the Committee / Board / Governance
6. A list of upcoming events
7. A list of businesses, local agencies or large donors that support the effort
8. Additional resources for assistance

## Create a listing of web pages needed

Here is a listing of typical web pages for a site of this type:

1. The Home Page
2. About Us
   1. FAQ
   2. Board of Directors
   3. Contact us
3. Projects
4. Supporters
5. Get involved
6. Donate

As a reference, a site that follows this format can be found at:

***www.foodpantryincroton.org***

## Document / gather the content for each of these pages.

Here is a listing of typical elements that you would want to include in the design of the site:

1. Photographs, showing activities where services are provided, photographs of committee members and volunteers (after receiving their permission for use).
   1. Any photography involving those being helped by the service should be carefully handled, again, with permission, in order to ensure individual privacy is protected.
2. Videos of activities and services (same guidelines as for photographs).
3. Gather the written content for each page:
   1. Investigate existing content (e.g., material in flyers, leaflets, other websites or items such as a Facebook page).
   2. Assign content requests to members of the food pantry who have the knowledge of the additional content you may need.
   3. Create any other written content and review it with the food pantry committee.
4. Information on donation:
   1. How to contribute with cash, check, money order, etc.
   2. Would the use of a formal donation form be desired?
   3. Will the food pantry accept use of Paypal or like services as an easy online donation method?
5. Generate a list of links to other websites appropriate for this site.
6. Assemble biographies for each of the Committee / board members.
7. Assemble the contact information.
8. Location and hours of operation.

It is recommended that you meet with the food pantry committee or a subset of members assigned to represent them and map out the information desired on each page, select visual content, etc. They may have additional requirements beyond those suggested above. A mock up of each proposed page, drawn out on paper could serve as a useful tool for any review meetings held with them.

## Research different web site build providers and select one whose product meets your needs.

There are two forms of web site hosting service:

1. Free services – where the user builds the site content themselves using the online tools and the website is then put on line by the service for no charge.
   1. Generally these services require the use of a website address that follows a format used by the company, as well as carrying their company logo or advertising.
   2. These services can also have limitations in functionality or storage space.
   3. An example of a company that provides free website services is wix.com.
2. Paid Services – where having the site online and having web site design and build performed by the company has fees associated with it.
   1. Generally these services have more flexibility in function, storage space, etc.
   2. An example of a company that provides fee based website services is godaddy.com.

Companies in this business will often offer both types of service. The recommendation is to use free services to build and then host the site where possible as the website needs of a food pantry or food bank do not require anything more than the basics. It is advisable though to purchase through the service provider a formal web site name (www.foodpantryinXXXXXX.org) which can then be linked to the web site you create for a small annual fee. This eliminates the confusion of users seeing an obscure web name that they do not associate with the food pantry and avoiding it because of uncertainty regarding its authenticity.

A very popular and easy to use service is WIX.com, which was used to build the website for a local food pantry that led to the creation of this manual (see reference at the end of section 2.2). Other popular services are web.com, godaddy.com or squarespace.com.

## Build the website using the build tools provided by the web site service you have selected.

Each web site service company will have different design tools and processes as part of their offering. Therefore, this section refers to typical steps in the process. It uses wix.com as a general reference but the reader should know that other service companies will differ slightly in the “look and feel” of the site. However, all of these services provide tools that are designed to be simple to use, requiring no specialist knowledge and have help modules available at each step of the process. Therefore, the reader should feel free to follow the specific web site directions.

The general process steps are as follows:

1. Access the website of the provider you have chosen.
2. Log in as a new user and establish a username and password for the site.
3. Select the option to create a new site.
4. Select a template from the options available, such as on wix.com, the “Kids Charity” option.
5. Press the option to edit the template.
6. Web services such as wix.com will show an introduction video to help guide the user through the initial steps.
7. You can use the template and edit the content to customize based on the design plan you built in sections 2.2 and 2.3.
8. Menu options offer the capability to add new pages, add content to existing pages, add application elements such as a maps function, Paypal function, etc. For example on a wix.com site:
   1. On top left of screen, select page to be edited.
   2. To edit text, select the text box. A screen pop up will appear. Select the edit text option. Make the necessary changes. Move to the next box to be edited.
   3. If a picture is to be edited, click on the picture, and select an option, such as change image.
   4. If new images are to be used, ensure the image is loaded into the computer by selecting the upload images option. Once complete, select a new image from those available, and then press the change image button to install a new picture on the website.
   5. If an application is to be used, e.g., Google maps or PayPal button, then on the top left of the editor, go to the Wix app market button, and select the desired application.
9. Remember to press the save button, typically on the top menu bar of the editor, periodically so your changes are not lost. Use steps above to make changes to any other pages or add pages, then on top menu bar, press preview button, to check the changes you have made.
   1. Web site editors often have 2 modes – one for displaying the web site on computer screens and one for a mobile option. Check your content in both modes in order to ensure both options present the material correctly.
10. Once complete, in order for others to see the web site content online you need to “publish” the web site. Initially you will only want people selected to test your web site to know of its existence. Therefore, when you use the publish feature for this initial step, do not choose any options that will allow the web site to be found using search engines.
    1. You will typically be asked to provide key words that can be used by search engines to direct users to the site, or will be asked if the site can be enabled for search engine access.
       1. Do not take this step yet; wait until the testing and feedback process is complete.
11. After this initial publication or if you have completed some of the build process and must leave the work for a while, log out of the editor after saving the work for a final time.

## Test the website in order to ensure the pages display the way you desire and that links to content or other sites work correctly.

Provide the website address to a small group of people who are willing to test it. Typically this would be the committee members for the food pantry you are working with. The testers will be responsible for:

1. Checking they can access the site.
2. Reviewing each page, assessing accuracy of the content, testing navigation between pages, using website functions (such as map, directions, donation button) and checking any web links provided.
3. Document the results of the test, in terms of suggested modifications and any errors uncovered so corrections can be made.

After testing is complete, the results should be compiled. Errors can be corrected, but before content or design modification is finalized ensure that there is agreement from everyone on the changes to be made.

The test process should be repeated if the changes made are significant in nature, until everyone is satisfied that the web site is ready for publication.

## Launch the web site, using the tools provided by the web site service

A typical service allows the web site to be built in private and when ready, you click on the option to publish. As part of that process you can provide key words so that search engines (such as Google) can incorporate them and then direct online searches that match the key words to your site. Choose keywords that make sense for the area that you serve -- “Food Pantry in (insert your town here)”, or “Food Bank for (your county)”, or “Volunteer Food Pantry in XXXXXX”, etc. Additional keywords can always be added subsequently, when republishing the web site for minor changes or corrections.

If the food pantry or food bank is part of a network or wishes to be linked to other services, you will want to inform these other organizations of the web address so they can use it in their sites or in other materials they use to inform about general services.

Local papers and news services will often also provide information about local services so you may wish to inform them of this new resource.

## Create a manual for the website so that others are able to maintain it

The manual should provide the following information in order for long term support and maintenance responsibilities to pass to other personnel within the organization.

1. Use this manual as a guide and document any changes or adjustments used in the process.
2. Assemble all the materials gathered in the creation of the website.
   1. Store on a memory stick or CD Rom any photographs, videos and electronic documents used.
3. Document details about the web service used, the account name and password and any paid services chosen.
4. Identify contact info of subject matter experts for the food pantry who contributed to the web site content.
5. Identify a primary owner and a backup owner for the ongoing web site maintenance activity.

# Periodic Review and Update of Website Content

Once the website is published, you should plan on reviewing its content with the committee / board members at least annually to ensure that the content is updated and relevant. More frequently, the site’s list of ‘upcoming events’ (if any) should be updated, with past events removed and new events added. The actual timing of this review will depend on the number and frequency of events you include on your website.

Document Revisions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Version Number | Document Changes |
| 04/04/2015 | 0.1 | Initial Draft |
| 04/06/2015 | 1.0 | Initial Release |
| 06/26/2015 | 1.1 | Final Release |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |