

Communications Breakout Session

with Jim Matysek (web) and Bill Volckening (newsletters)
Thursday, September 16, 1999



Minutes recorded by David Radcliff, Oregon LMSC Newsletter Editor
Report prepared by Bill Volckening

Number of Attendees: 51

Bill Volckening began the discussion by asking the group how LMSC's get started with a project, whether it is with a newsletter or a web site. One of the most important questions is determining the tools and standards for the project. during the introduction, Bill pointed out that the breakout session would be crossing over between web pages and newsletters, and that Jim Matysek was available to direct the discussion with web sites, as Bill would be available to direct the discussion for newsletters.

There was a question from the floor about privacy issues, followed by some additional discussion. Jim Matysek mentioned some standards used by the USMS Web Site.

Bill redirected the discussion toward basic questions for getting started. The first topic of discussion was how to facilitate the beginning of a project, such as how to select tools and locate resources. Several tools and resources were discussed:

1. **COMPUTER TOOLS:** there was some discussion about PDF files. Adobe Acrobat's Portable Document Files (PDF) have become an important tool for newsletters and web sites. Both Mac and PC can read it. Discussion from the floor included securing computer software from a class or computer conference. Bill recommended Adobe Page Maker because it makes PDF files in a short time. There was additional discussion about Quark, and how it has a function to produce PDF files.
2. **VOLUNTEERS:** Starting a communications project, there was a suggestion from the floor that there is a need for volunteers with specialized skills, including: a designer/layout person and an editorial/gathering person.
3. **STANDARDS -** Bill asked for input on how LMSC Newsletter Editors or Webmasters established standards for their publications. He sited an example in the New England Masters Newsletter, which has great pictures and graphics to identify regular columns, and is printed on 11 x 17 inch paper and folded for a more professional look. Tom Lyndon, NEM Newsletter Editor added that the weight of paper can effect mailing cost. He mentioned an unwritten rule of having no more than two fonts on any page, and encouraged people to challenge that idea. One goal is to have pages to relate to one another. He mentioned standard fonts, including: Times New Roman, Impact and Arial. He also suggested carrying an icon over from page to page. There was additional discussion to pool ideas within the LMSC board to determine what is needed/desired.
4. **PRODUCTION DECISIONS -** Bulk mail vs. first class. There was some discussion about using professional mailers vs. editor putting it out. There was also discussion about the method for getting the information out. One idea was to get information into a PDF file on USMS so all the LMSC can benefit from it.

The discussion turned to the topic of designing a website. Jim encouraged web designers to focus on the goals of web site, as it will be a valuable tool to gain new members, and distribute national information. During this phase of the discussion, the ideas were being generated quickly with not a lot of time to record the ideas. Some of the following ideas were discussed.

1. The way the web site looks is your own personal idea, but keep everything within 3 clicks of the mouse.
2. "KISS" (Keep It Simple Stupid) - be able to move quickly from one page to another.
3. Taking an online course makes it easy to do a web site.
4. 20 MB is available from many providers at a very reasonable price.
5. Once you get the web site going - it is not too hard to maintain. Loading time should be kept at a minimum. Jim recommends "Opera". Be careful with tools - some are fancy but they can burn you.
6. identify images - don't use a code
7. there are a lot of free things on the net.
8. the question has been asked about what people are using for ISP's - more and more are using their own domain names (\$35 a year) Pair.com is very reasonable for \$5 a month.
9. Look at other examples before starting a new site. Talk to those with experience.
10. Maintain a National Data Base - (of your LMSC - names, places to swim) Tap into USMS for a lot of your info. The info is already there.
11. Tom - by electronic or by paper - need a communication person for each LMSC. Some info goes up, down or across

CONTENT - What is going into your newsletter or web site

1. Advertising - can hurt non-profit status. Much discussion on this - Some LMSC's are doing it, but it is not clear how it effects the non-profit status.
2. How much does the Board contribute? The Editor is putting together and staying in touch with those who contribute. Costs / duties
 1. PDF or mail? PDF will cut down on volunteer work. Another advantage is quickness of getting entry blanks out to members.
 2. choice to members - less money for membership if you take newsletter by email with link to newsletter.
 3. Meet directors are required to post pre and post results on web. Hy tek can do this.
 4. Camera - Sony Mavica on floppy, only need 72 dots for web site. Jim has Olympus and has memory card also.

Jim mentioned a few other resources, including:

websitegarage.com

htmlhelp.com

webpagethatsuck.com

The following outline was provided by Bill Volckening to facilitate the discussion about communications. This outline was similar to the one written by Jim Matysek.

COMMUNICATION BREAKOUT DISCUSSION OUTLINE

- 1) How do we get started?

- a) tools (computer, DTP, image tools, e-mail, web)
 - b) ideas (what should it say?)
 - c) “standards” (column graphics, fonts, masthead, display fonts, # of columns)
 - d) learning how to do it / examples of others
- 2) How will the newsletter best express who we are?
- a) where are we from? identity? (Oregon, New Jersey, Texas, California)
 - b) the “face” of the organization - whose faces? (elite swimmers, volunteers, newcomers)
 - c) choices about columns and topics (news, results, etc.)
 - d) how it looks (conservative, artsy, modern?)
- 3) How will we produce the newsletter?
- a) controlling / reducing costs / projecting costs & rolling costs into yearly dues
 - b) frequency of publication / deadlines
 - c) production work / mailing / e-mail / volunteers / advertising
 - d) editorial duties / delegating / reporting news (styles)



**WELCOME
BACK,
DAVE
RADCLIFF!**

**THANK-YOU
FOR
RECORDING
THE
MINUTES**

