

Website healthcheck list

When did you last *really* look at your website? Have you just assumed that it's happily doing its job? Here are some suggestions of the type of things you need to check on a regular basis:

The purpose of your site	Comments, action!
What is your target audience e.g service users, general public, trustees, etc?	
What is the purpose of your website e.g. organisational image, newsletters, useful links, jobs, fundraising events publicity, online fundraising, etc?	
Are you thinking of rebranding or change the organisation's logo in the near future.	
Maintaining your site	
Is it up to date? There's nothing worse than visiting a website and finding that, for example, all the jobs advertised are past their closing dates or the latest newsletter says Happy Christmas in May.	
Do you use any content management system (CMS) such as Macromedia Contribute or a simple CMS built or installed by the web designer?	
Do you know how to upload updated and new pages? Do you have the File Transfer Protocol (FTP) settings, user name and password?	
Are your pages dated?	

Who is responsible for updating the website? Have you thought about delegating updating to project workers or staff member, so the admin staff will upload/update the newsletters and contact details and the project workers will update their project page, etc.	
Are contact details up to date? Make sure you're not referring to staff members who left six months ago or old phone numbers.	
Have you done any promotion of your site? Are your clients/members/service users aware of its existence? Have you submitted it to any search engines - where does it figure in a Google search?	
Accessibility and navigation	
Have you done an accessibility audit? For example, do pictures or non-text elements have text alternatives? Have you run a WebXACT (formerly Bobby) accessibility test or asked AbilityNet for a free check?	
If there are embedded applets and scripts, is there an alternative method of navigating the site?	
Are all the links (internal and external, web, download and email) current, appropriate and working?	
Are graphics displaying correctly?	
Does your site display correctly in different browsers? Not everyone in the world uses Internet Explorer – ensure that it works in Firefox, Netscape, Opera and Safari at a minimum and, if you have a Linux machine, check in Galleon.	

<p>If you need to use another application to open a document on the site, is this adequately described or a link to download the application provided (e.g. Adobe Reader)? Don't assume that everyone has Microsoft Office – use pdf or universal text formats like rtf.</p>	
<p>Can you get back to where you started with one click?</p>	
<p>Is it obvious where you are in the site at any time? Has your site got a "breadcrumb trail", for example.</p>	
<p>Do search facilities (especially those linked to hosted search engines) work properly?</p>	
<p>Design and Usability</p>	
<p>Do the pages download quickly over a slow (dial up) connection? Not everyone has broadband...</p>	
<p>Will text resize using the browser's View – Text Size menu (or using the mouse scroll wheel with the Ctrl key held down)?</p>	
<p>When did you last check with your website users that it's meeting their needs? Can you arrange for an online (or manual paper-based) survey?</p>	
<p>Have you tested your site on known users and other staff or volunteers? A small "focus group" test will highlight issues on your site that you may not have thought of and allows users to help with developing the site</p>	
<p>Have you avoided other site's mistakes – check www.webpagethatsuck.com for some great examples!</p>	

Domain administration	
Do you know when your domain name is up for renewal? If you don't re-register then you could lost your domain which could be bought by another company – or have it held to ransom. Check your domain details through (http://whois.domaintools.com/)	
Are you able to access and interpret site statistics?	
Do you know how much you are charged for hosting and whether it is good value for money?	
Do you know what hosting requirements you might have (such as FrontPage extensions, PHP, MySQL, Active Server Pages etc)? This is important if you are looking to change hosts.	
Do you use your domain emails or your ISP email?	

Some useful resources

My Web My Way <http://www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/>

Watchfire WebXACT (formerly Bobby) <http://webxact.watchfire.com/>

ICT Hub Knowledgebase listings
<http://www.icthubknowledgebase.org.uk/webaccessibilityresources>

Healthcheck carried out by:

Date:

Produced by Lasa Information Systems Team, November 2006 with assistance from Superhighways Partnership



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