Web Solutions Workshop – Tips for Making the Most of Your Web Site and Uploading Content
Handout Summary
September 2011

Tips for Dynamic Homepages
- Rely on minimal amounts of text, a strong navigation menu and one or two clear, bold pictures.
- Make use of the News and Events feeds to keep your homepage constantly updated. The best part about using the Events feed is that it automatically updates your home page with the latest events – and automatically circulates off the old ones.
- Home pages don't need to be updated on a daily basis, but should be fresh and current.
- Make it easy for site visitors to find you, contact you and worship with you.
- Avoid the never-ending scroll-down. If possible, keep the most important info toward the upper portion of the screen.

Navigation
- A lengthy primary navigation menu can be intimidating. Narrow it down. Review other churches' navigation menus, and borrow from them. You can review other Web Solutions sites at http://www.thediocese.net/Resources/Web/Examples/. Shoot for no more than seven or eight primary navigation items. For churches with lots of pages, this can be particularly difficult – you'll have to find the right balance for your congregation.
- Invite at least two people to do an honest review of your site: a church "insider" (a vestry member, volunteer or someone else who will be making frequent use of the site) and a church "outsider" (a friend who isn't a member of your congregation). Assign them each a list of things to locate/accomplish, and then ask them to gauge how easy it is to find those items.
- When you're organizing your navigation system, remember that sub-pages don't have to be neatly categorized in one place. For example, a site visitor might look for the Staff Directory in any of several locations – so list it in all of those locations places (i.e., under the Contact Us menu, under the About Us menu, etc.). That's where Adding Sublinks comes in handy. Adding a Sublink is adding an item to the left-side navigation system that is not a brand new page, but is a link to an already existing page (either on your site or another site).

Photos
- There are two photo tools in your rows of editing icons. The first (Insert Image) you use to upload photos and to access your gallery of page photos. The second (Insert/Edit Image) you use to edit photos.
- It's best to resize photos BEFORE uploading. If you upload large, original photo files and then resize them, the page will still load slowly. Both Macs and PCs have simple photo editing equipment installed (iPhoto or Microsoft Office Picture Manager). Picnik.com is also a great, free, Web-based utility that can be used for simple photo editing – and links easily to any existing Picasa, Flickr or Photobucket accounts.
That said, you do have the option to edit a photo AFTER uploading. I recommend this option only for what I call "tweaking" of a photo. You can use Web Solutions tools to Crop, Resize, Flip or Rotate a photo after it's been uploaded. But this option won't work if the photo is full-sized to begin with. To access these tools, click on the Insert Images button to access your photo library. Click on the arrow that corresponds to the photo you want to edit and select Edit. The example below shows that editing screen and the options available to you.

The ideal width of a homepage photo is around 400 pixels.
The maximum width of a standard page photo is 800 pixels.
Consider using more photos of people, fewer photos of buildings.
Rotating photo galleries are a great way to incorporate interest, show faces and get more people looking at your site. Web Solutions offers an add-on module gallery, but Google offers a completely free product called Picasa with a similar concept. You can embed the Picasa album on your own site — just ask Emily to send you the step-by-step instructions.
• When you're inserting photos, take careful consideration of the width of the photo. Full-column-width photos often (but not always) have more impact. My personal opinion is that the photo editing tools work better when you are using full-width photos as opposed to photos that have text wrapped around them. (See example below – the top photo has text wrapped around it, the bottom photo is a full-width photo.)

• Of course, having text wrap around photos is still a reasonable option. To do this, after inserting a photo, select that photo and then select how you would like to position it using the Styles pull-down menu in the editing screen. Photo Right moves the photo right and the text to the left; Photo Left does the opposite; Photo Treatment simply adds a border around the photo. Keep in mind that if you want to move the photo right, then you change your mind and want to move it left, you must first select the photo, then click on the Remove Formatting icon (looks like an eraser in the bottom row of editing icons) before you make that change.
• When you do insert wrap-around text photos, make sure you adjust the padding/spacing around the photo for the desired effect. To adjust the padding, after inserting photo, right click on it and select Insert/Edit image (or click on the photo and select Insert/Edit image from the top row of editing buttons). Go to the Appearance tab and enter figures in the Vertical and Horizontal Space fields – try small figures, like 1-5.
• Keep things fresh. Consider using graphic icons for calls-to-action or to enforce branding. These icons can serve as buttons that call attention to special events or opportunities. You can hyperlink these images to pages on your site. You can even create simple graphic icons in a desktop publishing system like Publisher, then save them as images to upload to your site. To make an image a clickable link, just insert the image, then select it, click the hyperlink chain icon, and enter the URL of where this image/button should link to. In the example below, the Rector Search Process image is actually a link to a separate page.
Inserting Video

- To embed a YouTube video, first navigate to the video you want to embed. Right click and select "Copy Video URL." (If you don't have a right-click mouse, then click on the Share button under the video screen, then click Show Options, then select Long Link, then copy the provided URL.) Do not use the URL from the URL bar at the top of the screen. Navigate to your site editing page and click on Insert/Edit Embedded Media. Select iFrame as the type, then paste the URL you just copied into the File/URL field. Adjust the dimensions as you see fit, then click Insert.

- To embed a Vimeo video, first navigate to the video you want to embed. You'll have to make sure that your browser allows pop-up windows from Vimeo.com. Click on the Embed link that corresponds to the video. A window will open with an embed code. Copy and paste the code into notepad. Then, select the portion of the code immediately in quotes after the words "iframe src=" – only copy through the first quotation mark. Navigate to the page in your site where you want to embed the video and open the editing screen. Click on Insert/Edit Embedded Media. Select iFrame as your type, then paste the newly copied code into the File/URL field. Adjust the dimensions as you see fit, then click Insert.
Inserting Audio

- You can embed audio files so that when your site visitors click on the appropriate link, the file opens in a new window. To do this, use the Insert File button, just as you would for uploading a PDF or Word document – only you'll be uploading an mp3 file instead.
- If you're planning on uploading lots of audio files, or particularly lengthy sermons that are large files, you might want to consider an outside provider. The file limit size is 50 megabytes. A couple of outside providers include Podcast People and PodOmatic. The latter has a free version available.

Simplifying Your URLs

- You are not locked into the pre-assigned URL. When you add a new Subpage or a Subpage of a Subpage of a Subpage, Web Solutions automatically assigns that page a name based on the title you give that page. But you can alter it on the SEO tab of each editing screen, in the URL field.
- Keep in mind that if you're changing the URL of a frequently visited page, you'll want to notify people to change their bookmarks.
- Having concise and descriptive URLs is part of the field known as Search Engine Optimization, which is a topic I hope to explore through a Webinar in 2012.

General Tips

- You can upload multiple files at a time. You just can't insert multiple files at a time.
- The Contact Form is great – but it shouldn't be the ONLY way people can contact you. Embed or use code when inserting e-mail addresses.
- If you're engaging in social media, make sure that the social media links are featured prominently on your site. It can be difficult to maintain – and keep track of – various blogs, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds, but it's helpful for the Web site to serve as the central hub where all of these utilities are available.
- Encourage your congregations to take advantage of the RSS feeds, both of which are available on your News and Events modules. RSS, or rich site summary, is a way of delivering regularly changing Web content. So, for example, if someone subscribes to your News feed, they'll receive an update every time you upload a newsletter or issue a press release. We hope to create some literature to educate your congregations on how to use and subscribe to RSS feeds in 2012.