



NEVADA STATE ELKS ASSOCIATION

WEBMASTER MANUAL

Adopted by:
Past State Presidents Advisory Council
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Foreword

This manual has been prepared to aid the Webmaster and Committee members in developing and maintaining the Nevada State Elks Association's (NSEA) website. It is not intended to be all encompassing as the technology continues to change and affects the end result of any website development.

About A Webmaster

The title of **webmaster** covers a broad spectrum these days. When most people hear the word webmaster, the definition that most often comes to mind is someone who creates websites. This is certainly true, but it only describes a fraction of a webmaster's duties and only still describes that fraction superficially. So what is involved in being a webmaster? More than most people realize. Let's have a look at a webmaster's basic job and then examine the 7 secret duties of a webmaster closer.

With tools like Microsoft Frontpage and Macromedia Dreamweaver available on the market, it would seem to suggest that making a website is no longer a specialized skill requiring a professional webmaster. But there are reasons why tools like [Dreamweaver](#) are not the best tools to use. Aside from this point, there are other issues to consider. A website is **More than** a collection of web pages, it's a complex document that requires a thorough understanding of basic webmaster principles to work well.

There's a great deal of thought that has to go into the overall scope and structure of a website before any HTML is ever written. Once they understand the site as a whole, a webmaster can begin basic page design. The site structure must come first because it influences page design heavily, particularly a page's menu design. The site's content then needs to be incorporated into the website's basic template. Though the actual work of adding the content is often done last, content must be sketched out and drafted early on as it also has an influence on page design.

Now that you've had a brief introduction on the basic duties of a webmaster we're ready to look at some of their other duties. Let's go through seven major duties a webmaster undertakes but most people don't know about.

1 - FIRST CONTACT

One of the most often overlooked responsibilities of a webmaster is that it is often their job to be the first point of contact for the State Association. Your website is the public face of the State Association online and your webmaster can often be the first person they meet. This means that your webmaster has to have strong customer service skills, a good understanding of State Association's structure so that they can redirect requests appropriately and they have to be monitoring their e-mail very often, ready to respond to user requests in a timely manner. After all, people online expect and appreciate quick turnaround on their questions.

2 - CONTENT FACILITATION

Another significant task that a webmaster is responsible for is what may be called "content facilitation". For some websites the webmaster can be the sole author of the site's content, but in a

State Association this is not always the case. In the State Association, the webmaster must play the role of a mediator between the audience, the website and the rest of the organization. This means that the webmaster must have a thorough understanding of the website's audience and an equally thorough understanding of the organization and its structure.

Everyone wants their content to be in a prominent location because everyone who writes content writes it for a reason. They believe it is critical information that the website visitors need. In real terms, this results in frequent discussions with people inside the State Association and equally frequent explanations of the website structure and why it works for your users.

A webmaster must also recognize which parts of the website are most important to develop further based on traffic patterns and visitor response. Then they must pursue the individuals within the organization who are best equipped to provide the needed content. The final step is to integrate that content into the structure of the website. In some cases, this is as simple as adding a single page and a link to that page. But sometimes it can be far more complex, requiring an entire section of the website to be re-structured.

3 - INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

Occasional re-structuring requires a webmaster to be well versed in information architecture. Information architecture is all about organizing information in a manner that will allow people to find what they're looking for. It sounds very straightforward, but it can become quite difficult. Every webmaster uses information architecture principles when building a site whether they're aware of it or not, but the more complex the structure of a website gets, the harder it becomes to fake your way through it. The strength of a website's information architecture will have a direct and immediate impact on your visitors' ability to find what they're looking for, so it's important for a webmaster to study up and get it right.

4 - LOG FILE ANALYSIS

Another task critical to a website's growth and development is the analysis of their website's logs. It's crucial for a webmaster to know everything about their web log file because it's the source of most of the information a webmaster will get on their visitors. But there's more to monitoring your log file than getting base demographic data on your audience. Monitoring a log file using a statistics package will allow a webmaster to react to, and sometimes predict changes. Those changes can take many forms, but the one big change that is important to watch out for is growth.

5 - FUTURE PLANNING

What we've already discussed generally relates to the present duties of a webmaster. But a competent webmaster must look beyond the present state of affairs and plan for the future. Traffic growth is but one of the many things that a webmaster has to plan for. Traffic growth is important because it will have a direct impact on the costs of your web hosting, but other factors such as general site expansion will also have an effect on hosting costs. Site expansion can require increased disk space, CPU usage, memory usage, special software requirements, databases, and more. A webmaster must be able to anticipate the audience's needs in order to properly plan for these eventualities.

Finally though, we can't forget about the most important future plan a webmaster (or anyone who works with computers for that matter) will ever make. That is the disaster recovery plan. A disaster recovery plan is all about how you would get your website back online should something bad happen to the computers where your site is hosted. A disaster recovery plan is important, important and important. It's like insurance, absolutely critical to have, but doesn't feel like it's worth it until you need it.

6 - ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY

Ensuring that a website is accessible is a substantial task that goes well beyond finding and using an accessibility checker. One such example is that you must make sure that your visitors are able to orient themselves no matter where they enter your site. While this is very difficult for an automated checker to measure, it is much easier when done by person.

The language you use must also be appropriate for as broad an audience as possible. As your topic becomes more complex and specialized, this task becomes harder. You can't always use basic language elements to describe complex ideas. Simplifying the language on your site then becomes yet another task that requires judgment calls on a webmaster's part. This type of judgment cannot be automated with today's technology.

7 - SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Search engine optimization is also a fundamental webmaster responsibility. If something is put on the web, it is safe to assume that you want people to find it. Search engines are what people use to find information on the web. As a result, a webmaster must have at least a basic understanding of how they work. Search Engine Optimization is a broad field, and can consume a webmaster's entire day, so it is something that must be balanced carefully.

These seven duties go beyond the basics that most people are aware of, but are not an exhaustive list of what all webmasters do. This article should have brought you from having surface knowledge of what a webmaster does to seeing the tip of the iceberg.

SUMMARY

A good webmaster makes the difference between a routine website visit and a rewarding online experience. The position of webmaster is an important strategic role, helping to boost satisfaction levels among lodges, members and visitors. Webmasters enhance the online experience by creating valuable content, simplifying navigation and ensuring fast, secure access and optimal availability for users.

NSEA WEBMASTER SPECIFIC

Purpose of Position

The purpose of this position is to manage the design, implementation, documentation, training and troubleshooting of all NSEA web resources. The committee consists of the Webmaster, NSEA President, President-elect and Vice President

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

The following duties are normal for this position. These are not to be construed as exclusive or all-inclusive. Other duties may be required and assigned.

- Serve as the administrator for the NSEA website www.nsea-elks.org.
- Develop, design, implement and maintain:
 - the Internet website for the State Association and its Members.
 - the State Association Committee pages.
 - any special NSEA web related projects or pages.
- Coordinates NSEA plans for all website communication including maintaining a E-mail data base to provide communication to the Lodges and Members.
- Monitors, improves, and updates the publication and performance of the NSEA website.
- Takes responsibility for the content, quality, design and style of the NSEA website.
- Meet with the advisors to agree on site's design.
- Enforces guidelines, standards, advisory board policies and state laws as they pertain to the NSEA website.
- Optimizes web architecture for navigability (browser and mobile platforms).
- Test different browsers and ensure people with different computers can access a website.
- Ensure the web software is operating accurately and files are kept small to ensure the site loads faster.
- Maintain, convert and optimize published documents for online use.
- Check hyperlinks regularly to insure validity.
- Regulate and manage access rights of different users on website.
- Track and analyze web traffic statistics for periodic reporting and review of content effectiveness.
- Test speed of access and improve upon loading speed.
- Test websites to see if there are any parts that are difficult to use.
- Create user manual(s) for administrative software designed and publish on the website.
- Post current upcoming information on the home page and/or the NSEA calendar.
- Maintain and load new convention photo albums received from the NSEA Photographer
- Maintains the NSEA Manuals on the website.
- Backup the entire website in a timely fashion to protect the site in case of a catastrophic server fault or the need to move the site to another host server.
- Submit the site annually Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee for the **Star Award** judging.

Additional Job Functions and Requirements

- Remain current in new and advanced web software and design practices for migration into the new software and procedures.
- Have your own computer with necessary software and hardware to perform website maintenance and development.

- Maintain the annual domain name license (**nsea-elks.org**) and hosting service fees (**inmotion hosting**).
- Outgoing Chair shall turn over all books, records or files to their successors.
- Obtain paid sponsors / advertisers for the website.

Position Requirements: Minimum Qualifications

To perform this position successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill and/or ability required.

- Attention to detail and strong organizational and communication skills. Ability to work well with others.
- Proficient in HTML, ASP, .NET, CSS, PHP, JavaScript, XML and other web technologies and standards.
- Knowledge of SQL or MySQL Database queries and functions for custom web reporting and formatting.
- Knowledge of IIS and web based authentication (Basic, Forms, Claims Based, Windows).
- Graphic design experience using tools such as Adobe Creative Suite and Expression Studio.
- Organizational skills in file management with a large variety of file types.

Responsibility

Responsibilities include: working under limited supervision following standardized practices and/or methods; leading, guiding, and/or coordinating with others; and tracking budget expenditures. There is a continual opportunity to impact the State Association's services.

Experience

Two or more years of job related experience with increasing levels of responsibility is required.

Immediate Supervisor

NSEA State President-Elect.

Hours Commitment

It is estimated that average of 4-7 hours weekly will be required to maintain the site with 10-12 hours per week required at peak times.

Expense Reimbursement

Stipend of \$250.00 as defined in the NSEA By-Laws. Present receipts and reimbursement forms for any expenditure to the treasurer on a timely basis.

Source of Information

- Elks.org User Manual
- Virtual Home Page Owner's Manual
- Public Relations & Media Manual
- Emblem Usage Guidelines
- Internet

Appendix A – NSEA Budget Request Form

Nevada State Elks Association
Budget Request Form

_____ Committee
_____ State Chairman

Specific Program Goals for Fiscal Year _____ : Date: _____

- 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Will your Committee generate any funds? Yes _____ No _____ How Much? \$ _____

How will these funds be raised? _____

State Association Funds required to accomplish the goals:

Committee Operations: (Postage, Phone, Copies, etc.) \$ _____

Awards: (Plaques, pins, etc. – Please specify.)

1. _____ \$ _____

2. _____ \$ _____

Grants – Please specify District or State \$ _____

Other requests – Please specify:

_____ \$ _____

_____ \$ _____

Do you plan for any Capital Expenditures? Yes _____ No _____

Specify: _____ \$ _____

TOTAL REQUESTED \$ _____

Signature of State Chairman

Endorsement by Liaison Officer

Approval by President-Elect

Approval by Board of Trustees

(ATTACH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS NEEDED TO SUPPORT REQUESTS)