

PRAASA 2011 Website Round Table Minutes – March 5, 2011

In attendance - Brouck H, Jeff F (Area 17 - Intergroup Rep – Waikaloa), Lloyd B, Tripp J (Area 07 District 33 – Web Committee), Kris C (Area 09), Ham H (Area 08 - Treasurer), Elaine V (Area 02 District 02 - Guest), Maria B (Al-anon Guest), Frederic M (Area 07 District 34 - DCM), Lee H (Area 42 District 06 – DCM, former Ad-hoc Web Committee), Pat S (Area 42 – Area Newsletter Editor), Conrad J, Chappy C (Area 17 District 08 - Intergroup Webmaster West Hawaii), Kurt J (Area 69 Area Communications Standing Chair), Jim C (Area 9 – Past Delegate, Electronic Media Subcommittee), Bob H (Area 17 – Area Alternate Chair), Hugh C (Area 17 – Web Committee Chair)

The meeting opened with the serenity prayer at 10:00 P.M, followed by introductions of those in attendance.

After the introductions, Bob H then asked the group for suggestions for topics for discussion. The topics mentioned were website guidelines and policy; infrastructure; security and privacy.

Chappy talked about developing guidelines and policies for the West Hawaii Intergroup site to pass onto future Webmasters, and about “scrubbing” personal names and phone numbers from items submitted for posting to the website. Kurt said that Area 69 just followed the guidelines from GSO. There was a question about editing PDFs and JPEGs (suggested methods included editing original source, using free PDF editing software, using Acrobat, and using Photoshop). There was discussion about having websites open to the public, or only open to alcoholics. Bob said that his experience was that keeping personal information out of the site was largely a matter of education, and that it has taken 4 years of educating everyone on the matter, most items submitted for posting on Area 17’s website today do not contain personal information. Some websites are closed allowing access only via username/password.

There was then a general discussion about how websites developed guidelines. Area 17 copied Area 72’s guidelines. Someone said that “AA Area guidelines” was a great search term. <http://aa.org> has all area websites online except area 31; most area sites publish their guidelines. Western Washington adopted the guidelines published by GSO and fit them to their needs. Utah delegates website functions and responsibilities to different Area officers, rather than having a central website committee. Bob talked about having a Google Voice phone number as an anonymous phone number associated with an anonymous e-mail address. There was also discussion about people not using e-mail addresses set up for them and using their personal e-mails.

There was discussion about securing access to the website files. One person mentioned that multiple people had access to his website and that he was looking for ways to tier access. Open source content managers (Wordpress, Drupal, and Joomla) were mentioned as a way of delegating access to different pages on such a site. There were also examples where the IT person had full access to the site with the Webmaster having limited access, and no one else having any access. Someone mentioned that they had problems with junk e-mail on a public shared server, and moved to a private dedicated server. The general consensus that ideally only one person should have control of the site.

Discussion then started on presenting websites in multiple languages. Bob pointed out that websites developed in Drupal can be presented in multiple languages. Jeff said that there was a

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significant amount of Spanish translation done for his Website. Kurt mentioned that a large portion of Area 69's website is in Spanish, and the translation took significant effort; he runs a mirror website for a Spanish speaking District that covers the entire State of Utah; each site has to be updated separately every document he receives has to be translated with no one to verify translation. Tripp shared that his site had English and Spanish translations on the same site; Spanish speakers have to navigate the English prompts to get to the Spanish documents, but that did not seem to be a problem. His concern was that without having any way to measure usage, they are to be able to gauge the value of the effort to do the translation. CNIA has a translation team that translates the background material, and then goes back over the translation to capture the "language of the heart" that was in the original English document, Since there is significant effort being expended in translation, Kurt brought out that it would be good to know what others have done in this area and to exchange translated documents to avoid duplication of effort. Bob noted that for this PRAASA all the e-mails went out in English and Spanish, and for those who indicated that they were Spanish speaking; they received their literature in Spanish.

A discussion started on people using their personal credit cards to pay for fees associated with the website. It was agreed that this was not good practice, and that if possible a credit/debit card belonging to the Area/District/Intergroup should be used to pay expenses associated with the site. Similarly it was agreed that if possible payments/contributions coming in via Paypal, should not go to a personal bank account.

In a discussion on accessing websites on mobile devices, it was mentioned that WordPress has plugins that automatically format sites for mobile devices, and there were specific WordPress themes for mobile devices.

There was a discussion on distributing minutes, agendas, etc. via e-mail versus printing it. One opinion on this was that not everyone has e-mail, so it is necessary to still send printed material so that no one gets left behind. Another opinion is that in order to save money it is required to mandate that everyone get an e-mail address, and those who do not will not receive the material. One solution to this is to have the Area give out e-mail addresses and to use those addresses for all Area communications. The concern is that going all digital excludes members who don't have access to e-mail. The consensus is that it is possible to reduce the amount of printing especially with the proliferation of smartphones, but some printing is necessary so as to not exclude anyone from information.

Lastly there was a discussion on accessing Area e-mail; ISP webmail, Google, Yahoo, or Outlook. Area 17's policy is that the Area makes no commitment to set up e-mail Access on an outside client. Other Areas shared that they will help with setting up e-mail in other clients, in order to make communication via e-mail a more attractive option than printing. There was a concern about people putting last names into their address books, which gets picked up when e-mail is sent, thus creating a problem with anonymity.

There was a motion to close and the roundtable closed at 11:45 PM

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Name	Website
Tripp J.	http://cni.org , http://district33.cni.org
Ham H.	http://area8aa.org
Lee H.	http://aaarea42.org
Conrad J.	http://area72aa.org
Chappy C.	http://westhawaiiiaa.org
Kurt J.	http://utahaa.org
Jim C.	http://area09.org
Bob H.	http://area17aa.org
Hugh C.	http://area17aa.org