



The Web is here to stay—are people staying with your site...or leaving it behind?

Make Your Website Invaluable

Institutionalization is a five-dollar word that has everything to do with making sure your Website gets its foot in the door and stays there. In other words, if someone tripped over the electrical plug on your server, would people cry real tears?

Walk in Others' Moccasins

What information would a veteran need to find? An employee?
Survey Readership: employees & veterans, formal & informal
Set up a kiosk, watch over shoulders
Always ask for feedback

Incorporate User Feedback

Treat e-mail like gold
Read Between the Lines: What are people really trying to tell you?
Magnification: One message = 50 like opinions of others who didn't write
Take Things Personally: "Where is this on your site?" = a poke in the eye

Employ Smart Information Design

Attack of the Short Attention Span: concise writing style, bullets, breaks, sidebars, text-level formatting
Invest resources where they're due: a 40 kb JPEG; one project over another
There's No Place Like Home (Page): To cram or not to cram?
Topic- and audience-focused areas work well

Hand-Holding

Make Navigation stick out
Search on every page
Develop help screens & sidebars
Develop new user resources
Offer assistance, electronic and in-person

Quality & Performance

Use site tools for Data-Driven Decision Making
What are the Top Ten pages on your site? What *should* be?
The Weakest Link: offer quality URLs
Honor customers even when you're not the right one to ask

Make Friends

Establish relationships with councils, product lines, work teams
Get on the agenda at major meetings
Make presentations to veteran groups
Trial by Fire: ask Public Affairs for a review
Close the Loop: Report back
Play Nice in the Sandbox: Offer assistance to colleagues

Expand Your Staff

Build Trust (see *So You Want To Be On The Web...*)
Place onus of content updating on subject matter experts
Become a master at following up
See something you like? Dial Direct and Offer Credit

Learn more about the
VISN 2 Website at—
[www.vsn2.med.va.gov/
about.html](http://www.vsn2.med.va.gov/about.html)





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Tell It Far and Wide

- Send periodic newsletters
- Build a mailing list
- Items of Information, Press Releases
- Blanket your coverage: employee news, veteran news, organizational news
- Utilize Multiple Media: People still read paper
- Add something useful or valuable
- The URL Sniper Strikes Again
- Advocate and evangelize the Internet

Get The Exclusive

- Solve Overload: Post most-wanted documents or information
- Advocate communication solutions (see *Building a Communications Bridge*)
- Advocate process solutions: Develop must-have applications
- Offer one-stop shopping
- Make your site Authoritative

Plan Now For The Future

- Write a SWOT, write a Strategic Plan
- Codify collaboration with others: strategic plans, e-mail, agenda, minutes
- Incorporate new technologies
- Extrapolate: Envision what's next and plot course
- Yank the Rug: Be prepared for change

Pace Yourself

- Make it worth it to yourself
- It'll all be here Monday
- Learn something new every week
- Self-Esteem Shrine: Tack up the good ones
- Give genuine thanks

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about.html](http://vaww.vsn2.med.va.gov/about.html)





Information is in constant flow from the organization. Harness this into a publicly accessible information source.

So You Want To Be On The Web...

In planning your website, consider this list of standard questions for Web development projects. Use this list as a guide for refining and providing exactly what is needed as the content expert.

1. Mission

What is the purpose of your website? It could be: employee information/awareness; patient information or education; sharing resources; explain policies and procedures; distribute documents; highlight best practices; public relations/media/communications; add value to current services offered; educational or teaching new skills; orientation or help resources; information retrieval or collection via database.

2. Audience

Who is the audience? Does your audience have the access and training to utilize your information in a Web format? Why would they visit your Web page? Is the potential audience large enough to justify investing in Web development?

3. Value

What information or services can you put on the Web that will be of value? Can your site provide organization, time savings, convenience, cost savings, or services not available elsewhere? Are there peer resources on the VA or other websites that will add value? Will people come back for repeat visits?

4. Scope

How many potential visitors would the site affect? How does the content represented on the website fit in with the rest of the organization? How does it reconcile with stated organizational or national goals? (This question helps in assigning priorities when several projects are under development.)

5. Survey the Arena

Is somebody already doing this? What related Web resources already exist? What features or qualities would you like to emulate from other sites? How can you improve or localize what you see elsewhere? What information or service gaps can you fill?

6. Organizing Content Development

Who is the content author or expert? Are all parties represented on the site involved with providing content? What existing documents can provide content? What photos, charts or other graphics will add value to the message? Logistics regarding material in an electronic format. Can Web content be repurposed into alternate media?

7. Conceptualization and Prototyping

What are the main sections of the site? How will it be organized? What will the site look like, what feeling will it portray? What kind of navigation system will be needed? This is among the last steps.

8. Promotion

How will people find the website? Are you utilizing media beyond the Web to communicate with your audience? What other media printed brochures, documents, posters, bulletin boards, displays, flyers, presentations, e-mail, networking, meetings, press releases, etc. Are you putting your URL on everything? What is the public relations potential of your Web project. Does it enhance the internal or external view of the organization?

9. Updates and Maintenance

How often will content be added? How will people know what's new? What will be the process to update information? Encourage assignments and specify intervals. Who will have what specific responsibility?

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