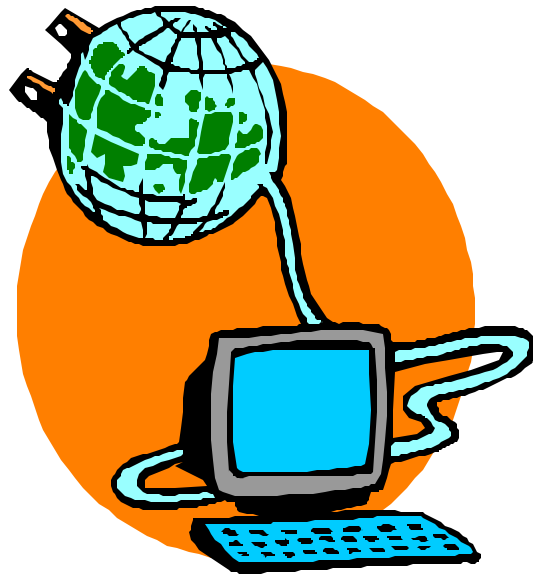


Building and Maintaining a School Website



Shelbyville Central Schools

Table of Contents

First Steps.....	2
Things to AVOID !!	3
More Things to AVOID!!	4
Things You Should Do With Your Website... ..	5
How to Start Creating a School Website.....	6
How to fill out the Web Page Development Contract.....	7
Shelbyville Central Schools Web Publishing Guidelines	8
Publishing Expectations:.....	9
Link Guidelines for SCS Web Pages	9
Student Information.....	9
Guidelines for Sponsoring Teachers or Administrators	10
General Procedures to Publish Web Pages	10
Shelbyville Central Schools Web Page Development Contracts.....	11
Principal Section.....	11
Sponsoring Teacher Section	11
Student Section.....	12
Parent/Guardian Permission for Publication of Student Work.....	13

First Steps

Posting a website is not a something to be taken lightly. When posting information to a website, you are posting information that literally millions of people can access and with that comes a responsibility to consider how that information may be used. This booklet is intended as a guide that lists some key issues to consider when planning and developing a website. This booklet also includes Shelbyville's Web Publishing Guidelines. As you are planning your website, think about these things:

Goals - Decide what you want the site to do for your school. Remember, with proper planning your site can be an effective communication tool with your community and an operational part of your school infrastructure, not just a decorative extra. Decide what you are trying to communicate and accomplish? If you can establish your goals and some measurable objectives, you then will know how to measure whether or not your site is successful. Also remember that the more ambitious you are to start off with, the more work that will be needed to update and track changes throughout the website in the future. It would be my suggestion to address your top two or three goals for the first few months and see how much work will be involved in maintaining your site. Then add other priorities as your time allows.

Audience – Who are you trying to communicate with? Are you trying to communicate with your students, parents, teachers, other members of the community? If you are trying to communicate with multiple groups you will have to consider developing several sections for your website. A parent considering moving to Shelbyville who is visiting your website for some information about the community has much different interests than one of your current students.

Content - What types of material could your site provide that would both attract your audience and meet your goals? This section is extremely important. If you look at other school websites, one thing that jumps out at you at many sites is the fact that there is either almost no content of any practical value or there is too much content that is not useful. If your website has two or three pages that are only updated once a semester, your site is not very inviting and probably not particularly useful since people probably rarely visit. On the other hand, if you post dozens and dozens of pages every month, chances are the majority of people visiting your site will get lost or are not interested in the vast majority of what you posted. ***Remember: The website is designed for your visitors' interests and needs and not designed for your satisfaction.***

Resources - How much time and money can you dedicate up front and over time to create and maintain your site? If you have limited time to review and update material being posted on the website, it would be foolish to maintain an 80 or 100 page website. Pages will get out of date, quality of design will suffer, and eventually you will post something by mistake.

Get others involved - Try to give as many people as possible involved in the development of the site. Talk to the secretaries in the front office since they receive the most calls during the day from the community. Talk to teachers in different departments or grade levels. Talk to the librarians. Keep people involved in the process

Keep it simple – Keep it simple in design, keep it simple in structure, keep it simple in navigation, keep it simple in maintenance... ***Keep it simple***

Review the district's Web Publishing Guidelines that are included at the end of this booklet.

Things to AVOID !!

Outdated Information – Need I say more?

Unnecessary “Bells and Whistles” - Web publishing should not be used to show off your technical prowess. Many people add “bells and whistles” to a website just because they can do it and not necessarily because it helps improve the delivery of content. The more technical aspects of web design should only be used to support and enhance the content of a web page.

Frames - I would strongly suggest that you avoid using frames in your web page development, they only cause problems. Search Engines get confused on how to index your site and there is a very good chance that a visitor's attempt to print out your page will end in failure. Bookmarking framed pages is usually a disaster and if there's a problem with one of your framed pages, it'll be difficult for anyone to report the exact page that is causing the problem since only the URL of the main page is displayed in the URL box.

Large Homepages – It is amazing how many main or home pages are filled with graphics or techy “Bells and Whistles” like a Flash or Shockwave “show” that takes forever to load on a 28K Internet connection. When web page developers are adding those extra “Bells and Whistles”, more often than not, they are doing it to show off their technical expertise and not doing it for the benefit of the visitor or to enhance the meaning of the content. Be kind to your visitors, keep your homepage small. Your school’s homepage should load in less than 20 seconds on a 28K Internet connection.

Long Scrolling Pages – Don’t make your visitors scroll and scroll and scroll to get to the bottom of your home page or main page. There may be reasons to create a long scrolling page in other sections of your site. But always include anchors on your pages to make it easier for your visitors to quickly get to another section of your page. To see an example of a name anchor go the Search page on Shelbyville’s Internet Research Center at: <http://www.shelbycs.org/IRC/search.html>

At the top of the page you will see anchor links to “General Search Engines”, “Metasearch Engines” or “Search Engines for Kids”. Those links actually just take the visitor to another part of the same page. Anchors are a quick navigation tool to get to different sections of a very long web page.

Music on a web page – It is an interesting “trick” the first few times someone visits your web page, but it can get very annoying very quickly. It can also slow down the time it takes for the page to load. Never, EVER put it on a main or home page for a school. If you feel you must include music, place it on a page somewhere off of your main page and instead of using the BGSOUND and EMBED sound tags, use a link to a MIDI file so that your visitor can have a choice about whether or not they want to hear the music.

Interlaced GIF’s - Don't use interlaced GIFs. If you don’t know how to create interlaced GIF’s, don’t worry about it because they are not particularly useful. Interlaced GIF’s give the effect of the image being continuously redrawn at a higher and higher resolution. The files for these images are actually larger than for the equivalent GIF, and take much longer to load.

More Things to AVOID!!

ImageMaps - Avoid putting imagemaps on your pages unless you have a really good reason for using them. Fancy imagemaps can be far more confusing than a well-formatted text list or a simple set of buttons. In many cases, it's hard to tell just where to click. This is especially true if the map contains both images and words. And since the words are not underlined, it's hard to tell if they're links. Imagemaps take up a lot of bandwidth and, in most cases, add nothing to your page.

Scrolling Text, Marquees, and Constantly Running Animations – Avoid including page elements that move, scroll or blink incessantly. A visitor to your site should not feel that they are walking down the Main Strip in Las Vegas. Allow your visitors to read the text on your website in some peace and quiet. People visit your website for the content and not the blinking sideshow. Many websites make up for the lack of content with blinking lights. Please don't be one of those websites, otherwise your visitors will not only not return to your website they will be annoyed by what they did see. As a side note, it is my opinion that the <BLINK> tag is one of the most annoying HTML “tricks” of all time.

Orphan Pages or Dead Ends – Make sure that all pages on your website clearly state they are a part of your school's website and have a link back to the main school page. There will be visitors that access some pages directly from links on other websites or search engines without coming in through your home page. If you do not identify that the page they are viewing is part of your school's website and do not include any links back to the main page for the school, you have created an Orphan Page that is a Dead End for that visitor. Remember, every page on your website is an entryway into your school's website and must be designed to help the visitor find their way through all of your web pages. This why it is required in the Web Publishing Guidelines that all school web pages must contain a direct link back to the school's home page and each school's home page must contain a direct link back to the district's home page.

Dissolves and Fades - Don't use tricky HTML to do dissolves, fades or other special effects when navigating between pages. Once again this a fancy “trick” that rarely enhances the content and many times looks odd or runs very slowly on different versions of different browsers.

Assuming your visitors are computer experts – Just the mere fact you can create and post a web page makes you more computer savvy than the majority of visitors to your web site. Keep your site simple and make it easy for the average user to find what they need.

Cookies – Do not create web pages that will be hosted on Shelbyville Central's website that place a cookie on anyone's computer. Cookies can be useful, but we are not using them on our visitors.

Overusing Animated GIF's - Animated images make the page load slower since they are big files. It is possible that your page might just sit there for a considerable time, totally blank, while the first animated image loads. One or two small ones may be OK, but be careful, they can be a very annoying element of a web page if they are too large or overused.

No Title for your web page – Make sure you add Titles to all of your pages. The Title is not the file name. If you are using Front Page 2000, go to the “File” menu and select the “Properties...” menu item. The “Page Properties” window will appear, now select “General” properties. There you will see a text box to add a Title to your web page. If you want some Search Engines to find and register your website appropriately, you should also learn how to add HTML Meta-tags like “keywords” and “description”. If you want to know more about Meta-tags, go to Google <www.google.com> and type in “meta tags description” in the search box.

Things You Should Do With Your Website...

O.K., now that I have rambled on about things to avoid, let's think about what elements are very helpful to your visitors.

There really are only three major activities taking place when someone visits your school's website. Those activities are:

- reading text
- viewing images
- interacting with its interface.

So the design of your website should focus on making it easier for your visitors to find the text and images they want or need.

Navigation and Structure - No matter how fancy your web site looks, if it is difficult to navigate, people will soon lose interest. Navigation is vital to any site's success. Give considerable thought to how you are going to structure your website to make it easy to navigate. Make sure you design your website based on your visitor's needs and interests and not on your own.

Three clicks and you're out - An good rule of thumb is the "Three clicks and you're out" guideline. This guideline states that from your main page, any visitor should be able to get to the information they need in just three clicks. There have been any number of surveys that show that the deeper you bury information in your website the less likely anyone will be to visit that page. This is a major problem in many school websites. Let's take an example from an actual school website I visited.

We are trying to find the homework assignments posted by a particular high school math teacher. The school's main page has a link to the Math department <click 1>. Then the Math department page has a link to the Algebra classes <click 2>. The Algebra class page has a link to all of the teachers teaching Algebra <click 3>. The teacher's page has a link to all the different classes she is teaching that semester <click 4>. The class page has a listing of dates to choose from <click 5>... Finally the visitor has reached their destination but it has taken five clicks to get there. While it may make a great deal of sense to those who designed the website, the fact is a large number of visitors will not get to the proper page and that information will not be used effectively all because it has been buried too deep in the website.

Link to your home page - Another critical piece of navigation is a link back to your school's home page on every page you post. This will help those who get "lost" in your website to quickly get back to familiar territory. Also remember that not everyone will access your website via your home page. Many visitors may have used a search engine that directed them to a long forgotten page in the murky depths of your site that you may have forgotten all about.

Use Tables - Learn how to use tables and you will be able to tightly control the look of your web pages. Tables let you break your page into precise segments and control the placement of graphics and text. You can use tables to create columns and grids to contain the images and text. You can even use tables within tables to create sub-sections that can be treated as a unit. Table cells can be filled with color to add contrast to parts of the page. Whenever you see a page that looks like a magazine or a newspaper, you can be sure that the structure is based on tables.

Use GIF and JPEG - Don't get fancy with graphics stick with GIF and JPEG formats unless this is an absolutely unavoidable reason to use another format.

Design your webpage with other browsers in mind – Remember not everyone is using the latest and greatest versions of Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator with all the latest plug-ins. When posting your websites, preview them using both Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer. You may be surprised how different your pages look. Many people are still using version of web browsers that are two or three years old. Also remember that many of visitors are using Internet Service Providers like America Online (AOL) and Compuserve that have their own built-in browsers that are different from other browsers.

Use Templates – Once you get the basic structure of your webpage developed, create a copy of that page and title it “template”. That template already has all the basic design elements created as well as all the links and necessary school information at the bottom of the page. All you have to do now is put in some text and a couple of graphics to create and post a new webpage. If you use templates, you will cut down a great deal on the time it takes to design and develop webpages and you will create a continuity of navigation and design for your visitors.

Be considerate with your choice of colors and fonts – Make sure you use a good contrasting background for your text. Remember, there is nothing wrong with black text and a white background. Choose fonts that are common on all machines (Macs and Windows-based) and the fonts need to be easy to read.

Keep it simple, keep it simple, keep it simple... - Take a look at the web pages of some major Internet companies like Yahoo! <www.yahoo.com> and Google <www.google.com>. Their design is very simple, graphics are used sparingly, and navigation is the essential element of their website.

If you would like to see what other schools in Indiana are doing with their websites, visit the Indiana Department of Education's School Home Page directory at:

<http://www.doe.state.in.us/htmls/k12.html>

How to Start Creating a School Website

First of all familiarize yourself with Shelbyville's Web Publishing Guidelines. A few of the issues are:

- You can not post any personal student information.
- You must have student and parent permission to post any student-created materials on the school website, regardless of whether or not the student is identified. This includes (but is not limited to) student created web pages, excerpts from written work as well as images of student created materials.
- Shelbyville Central Schools name or logo must be clearly visible on every page and there must be a link back to the school's home page on every page on the website.
- All teachers sponsoring student-created web pages are responsible to screen all posted information and check all links for accuracy and appropriateness.
- Students never upload web pages to the district's web server for any reason at any time. Any student-created material must first be reviewed for appropriateness by the teacher-sponsor and then the teacher or school webmaster will upload the web page to the district's web server.
- Employees of Shelbyville Central Schools may not publish a website not sponsored by the district that contains images or information about students, faculty, students or student work obtained at SCS facilities, SCS websites or through the use of SCS equipment.
- Last names of students are not to be published online.

How to fill out the Web Page Development Contract

Any teacher or student posting material to the district's website must fill out and submit a Web Page Development Contract. After a teacher is familiar with the Web Publishing Guidelines, that teacher can fill out a form with the school principal requesting to sponsor a web page.

If the teacher wants to post a web page or pages to the school's website, that teacher needs to fill out the *Principal* and *Sponsoring Teacher* section of the Shelbyville Central Schools Web Page Development Contract and submit it to the school principal for approval. **Once the *Principal* and *Sponsoring Teacher* section of the Shelbyville Central Schools Web Page Development Contract have been completed, that part of the contract will be kept in the principal's office.**

If the teacher is not going to include any student-created material on any of the web pages that teacher is sponsoring, the teacher does not need to complete any other part of the contract.

If the teacher is going to sponsor a student(s) or class in posting student-created materials, the sponsoring teacher needs to make sure that every student involved completes the *Student* section of the Web Page Development Contract and that every student's parents (or guardians) completes, signs and returns the *Parent* section of the Web Page Development Contract. **It is the responsibility of the sponsoring teacher to maintain all signed documents for all of the students they are sponsoring. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring teacher to update their Teacher contract information maintained in the principal's office to reflect the current listing of student names that are being sponsored.** The *Student* and *Parent* contracts may be periodically checked at any time by the administration or the Directory of Technology.

All teachers sponsoring student-created web pages are responsible to screen all posted information and check all links for accuracy and appropriateness.

If the teacher wants to post an example of student-created work on a web page (an example might be a poem or a photo of some student art work), the sponsoring teacher **must** have the student and parents fill out the Student and Parent sections of the Web Page Development Contract before the page is posted. The teacher must keep that information on file for as long as the student work is displayed.

Some things to keep in mind...

The Technology Department will maintain the District and School Board sections of Shelbyville Central's website. It is the responsibility of each building to maintain their own building's website. The District and School Board sections of the website will have links to each school's main page.

While the Technology Department will support you in your endeavor to create a website, the ultimate daily responsibilities of creating, maintaining and uploading web pages is yours. Once your principal has approved your application to create a website, contact the Technology Department for the technical information to get started. It may take 5 to 10 days to get everything set-up for you to load your web pages on the school's website. Make sure you discuss with your school's webmaster how there will be a link to your web pages from your school's main page.

Shelbyville Central Schools Web Publishing Guidelines

Shelbyville Central Schools website is meant as a tool to effectively communicate with the community about all building and classroom activities. The following guidelines are intended to assist district technology representatives, teachers, and administrators to be aware of the responsibilities of each individual, including students and staff, who publish content on the Internet.

Guidelines for all Web Publishing

1. All publications must comply with all state, federal, and international laws concerning copyright, intellectual property rights, and legal uses of network computers.
2. All publications must comply with the School Board policies, administrative regulations, SCS Acceptable Use Policy, these Web Publishing Guidelines, and other SCS guidelines provided for other corporation publications.
3. All district Web publications will reside primarily on the Corporation 's network server/s or the server/s selected by the Technology Department to store the district's website.
4. Shelbyville Central Schools name or logo must be clearly visible on every page.
5. Images of individual parents, faculty, administrators or staff members may not be posted without their express written permission, and only when it is appropriate within the context of the educational goals of the web page.
6. Images of students, faculty or student work obtained at SCS facilities, SCS websites or through the use of SCS equipment may not be published to a personal or non-SCS sponsored website.
7. Personal information should not be posted on the SCS web site. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Social Security number, student ID number or any other type of identification number of self or others
 - b. Passwords, log-in names, screen names or aliases of self or others
 - c. Activity or vacation schedules of self or others
 - d. Home address, post office box, phone number, pager number, fax number or any other personal contact information of self or others
8. Commercial use for the pursuit of personal or financial gain through a page posted on the SCS web site or a page linked to the SCS web site is prohibited.
9. There are to be no commercial advertisements or banner ads on any SCS web page.
10. Individuals cannot misrepresent themselves or others through data presented on the SCS web site.
11. At no time should students be given passwords to upload web pages or other documents to the SCS district web site. If a sponsoring SCS faculty member or administrator suspects or knows a student may have a password to access the SCS web site, that sponsor should immediately contact the school principal and the Office of Technology.

Publishing Expectations:

12. No "Under construction" web pages will be posted.
13. All school web pages should meet goals of high quality in both style and presentation.
14. Correct grammar and spelling are expected.
15. There should be continuity of design throughout the school or department web site. Part of that design needs to include an obvious and smooth way to navigate throughout the entire site.
16. All information is kept current and updated regularly.
17. Publications must include a statement of copyright when appropriate and indicate that permission has been secured when including copyrighted materials.
18. Group photographs of parents, students, faculty, administrators or staff members may be published, but individual names will not be listed.
19. Publications on the corporation Web site must identify affiliation with Shelbyville Central Schools.
20. Relevant referencing dates are required on all publications.
21. On the bottom of main page/s a date must be provided indicating last update. (ex. Last updated Oct 11, 2001")
22. The name of the principal, school phone, and school address must appear on the school's main homepage
23. Each school home page shall contain a disclaimer statement similar to the following: "We have made every reasonable attempt to insure that our web pages are educationally sound and do not contain links to any questionable material or anything that can be deemed in violation of the Shelbyville's Acceptable Use Guideline."

Link Guidelines for SCS Web Pages

24. Links to other websites must contain appropriate and educational materials and information.
25. It is strongly recommended that any link or list of links be limited to those sites with the highest educational value. It is generally accepted that maintaining a limited listing of high-quality resources is far more useful than having a large collection of links containing mediocre resources.
26. SCS Web pages cannot contain links to student-produced web pages where students have access to make and upload changes to those linked pages without supervision.
27. All web pages must contain a direct link back to the school's home page.
28. Each school's home page must contain a direct link back to the district's home page.
29. Each school's home page must contain a direct link to all other schools' home pages.
30. Games, links to games, and advertisements for games are not to be published online.

Student Information

31. SCS Web pages shall not display personally identifiable student pictures. Group photos (three or more students) may be used, but do not include any names or nicknames.
32. Student work (regardless of whether or not the student is identified) should not be published on a web site unless the student and the parent(s) or guardian(s) have signed the signature page (found below) each time work is to be published.
33. Web pages containing student contact information of any kind cannot be posted on the SCS web site or linked to the SCS web site at any time for any reason. No student email addresses, whether a personal or district account, may be listed on the SCS web site or sites linked to the SCS web site. At no time will a student's personal e-mail address, personal web site address (URL), home address, post office box, phone number, pager number, fax number or any other contact information appear on the SCS web site or sites linked to the SCS web site.
34. Last names of students are not to be published online.

Guidelines for Sponsoring Teachers or Administrators

Any teacher or administrator willing to be responsible for proofing student material prior to submission to the technology committee for publication on the school's World Wide Web home page.

35. Only SCS faculty and administration may act as student web page sponsors.
36. Sponsoring Teacher or Administrator must have read and agreed to abide by the established SCS Acceptable Use Guideline and the appropriate Web Site Guidelines prior to publishing online.
37. The sponsoring SCS faculty member or administrator responsible for the pages should make every effort to insure that information posted on the web page they are sponsoring is fair, accurate, verifiable and does not harm the reputation of an individual.
38. Instruct students on proper use and guidelines before development of student page begins
39. Insure that student work has educational value
40. Screen student material to insure that it adheres to the district goals, guidelines and policies (refer to guidelines below)
41. Screen all material before publication
42. Check all links for accuracy and appropriateness
43. Upload material to the district web server
44. Purge home page information of outdated pages or those no longer in use
45. Any use of obscene or inflammatory language will result in loss of network privileges.
46. If there are any questions about the appropriateness of any material, please check with the building principal.

General Procedures to Publish Web Pages

47. All students wishing to publish a web page must have a teacher sponsor them.
48. Using criteria established in this document, the sponsoring teacher reviews the content of the web pages to be published and if deemed satisfactory, contacts the webmaster maintaining the server to upload pages to the school's website.
49. The procedure for publishing a web page on Shelbyville Central's server must conform to any and all existing district policies for disseminating school information.

Shelbyville Central Schools Web Page Development Contracts

Principal Section

I have reviewed the Shelbyville Central Schools Acceptable Use Guidelines and Web Publishing Guidelines with the teacher sponsor named below. All signed contracts will remain on file at my school.

Principal/Site Supervisor (please print): _____

Signature _____

Date: _____

Sponsoring Teacher Section

As the sponsoring teacher, I agree to instruct the student on the district guidelines governing the development of a school web page. I agree to report any misuse of electronic information resources to my school principal or district supervisor. I will make every effort to insure that information posted on all web pages I sponsor are fair, accurate, verifiable and do not harm the reputation of an individual.

I accept responsibility for all material published on the web pages I sponsor.

Sponsoring teacher's name (please print): _____

Signature/Date _____

Please list the URL's of all the web page or the folder of web pages being sponsored below:

http:// _____

http:// _____

http:// _____

http:// _____

http:// _____

Please note that if you are responsible for an entire folder of web pages, you can identify the folder you are responsible for and do not have to list every individual web page contained within that folder.

Please list the names of all students who are being sponsored below. If you are sponsoring an entire class of students, you may include just the class name.

(Use back or add an attachment if needed)

Student Section

I agree to support and follow the Shelbyville Central School's Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Guideline and the Web Guideline and Contract. I understand any violations of the said contracts will result in the loss of my user account and may result in further disciplinary action. I agree to report any misuse of the electronic information resources to a Shelbyville Central Schools administrator.

Student name (please print): _____

Student signature and date: _____

Name of Sponsor: _____

Signature of Sponsor: _____

Note: Sponsoring teacher must update their contract to reflect this student's name as one being sponsored.

Please list the URLs of the web pages being developed:

http:// _____

http:// _____

http:// _____

http:// _____

Parent/Guardian Permission for Publication of Student Work

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read this contract and understand that access to electronic information resources is designed for educational purposes. **I agree to allow** my student's work* to be published on the school web page. I understand that it is impossible for Shelbyville Central Schools to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold the District responsible for controversial materials my child acquires on the Shelbyville Wide Area Network.

Parent or Guardian Name: _____

Signature/Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

* I do **not** give permission for my student's work to be published on the school's web page.

Parent or Guardian Name: _____

Signature/Date: _____

Shelbyville Central Schools