Managing the WWW:  
A Delicate Balance Between Control and Anarchy

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Presentation Overview

The WWW has grown to become an essential tool for teaching, recruitment, internal campus communication, public relations, and campus administration. Therefore the management of a campus WWW presence, the formation of policies relating to the WWW, and the dissemination and distribution of services, are all now becoming increasingly important factors contributing to institutional success. The four campuses to be represented on the panel include large and small, public and private institutions, and all have different approaches to managing the WWW and adopting policies to ensure that the WWW becomes an effective tool. They have been at this for various lengths of time, and some have committees charged by different means to get the WWW organized and improve on its presentation look and feel. Each panelist will give a brief campus overview, describe their approach to managing the WWW and provide details on policies and committees involved. In addition, each presenter will describe the goals of their school’s web site and given that, what type of management structure may or may not be appropriate. Issues and problems will then be discussed with the panel seeking audience participation so that a variety of institutional experiences may be presented. It is interesting to note that the members of this panel came together through discussions on this topic that occurred on the CAUSE Chief Information Officer Listserv (CIO).
Paper Overview

There are a number of initial issues involved in the creation and management of a campus WWW server. The first natural question concerns responsibility for the server and its data. Do you form a committee to look after the server or do you handle it within a single campus organization? If you form a committee, what areas of the campus need/should be represented? How is the committee charged and by whom? Are the members elected or appointed and, if appointed, who does the appointing and what criteria is used to determine membership? Once a determination is made about the need for a committee and, if relevant, the make-up of the committee, the next order of business would undoubtedly be the creation of a policy or policies to govern the use of the WWW server. Who can put information on the server? What type of information is allowed? Is there a distinction made between “official” and “unofficial” pages?

What follows are the perspectives of four institutions on some of these questions.

Establishment of a Committee to Oversee the WWW

Lewis & Clark College

In the fall of 1994 a task group was formed within the Information Technology Department (IT) to determine the relationship that the WWW would have to our existing Gopher server. A decision was made within that group that the WWW would serve to replace our existing Gopher system and would offer considerable functionality beyond what we had in place at the time. We then began informal dialogs with people on campus to see which areas of the community would need to be represented to properly grow a campus-wide information system. In some cases people on campus contacted us to see if they could be involved. In the Spring of 1995 a self-motivated committee of volunteers gathered from across the institution to address the issues of use, growth, and maintenance of our WWW presence. This committee now serves as a formally recognized self-directed work group overseeing our WWW and its policies. The group determines what issues need to be addressed and then does so. In doing so, the committee establishes its areas of responsibility as it evolves. We also have a WWW Technical committee comprised of members of IT, and other interested parties, to address the technological growth of our server and its attendant services.
California State University, San Marcos

California State University, San Marcos is one of the very few recently built public universities in the United States. It is in a phase of rapid growth, with an FTE today of over 3200, just seven years after opening its doors to students. As the university is in the process of “inventing itself” it is still developing policies, procedures, and appropriate committee and other organizational structures. At the present time CSUSM does not have a committee specifically concerned with Web management. While there has been some discussion of the desirability of such a committee, at this time the responsibility for Web management and policy resides in the Computing and Telecommunications Department, with the Director of Academic Computing serving as the Webmaster. To the extent that Web policy exists, it has been approved by the University Computing and Telecommunications Committee, which is a broadly-based committee with representation from faculty, students, staff, and administrators. This year the university is engaged in a campus-wide effort at policy development, and one probable outcome of this will be some changes to current committee structures, including those concerned with the use of computing resources in general, and Web management in particular.

University of California, Irvine

UCI’s first WWW oversight and policy development committee was called the "CWIS Steering Committee." It was formed in August of 1991 by the Director of Academic Computing. It served as a advisory committee to the Executive Vice Chancellor. It’s purpose was primarily to foster the development of a campus-wide information systems. The committee was disbanded in May of 1996 having accomplished its goal.

The CWIS Steering Committee successor is the WWW Advisory Committee. The Executive Vice Chancellor directed the Director of Analytical Studies and Information Management to assemble and chair this committee. The WWW Advisory Committee was organized in August of 1996. The Committee’s primary purpose is to make recommendations on the general development of UCI’s WWW. Topics within its oversight are Web policy development, web functionality, and site standards. I direct the implementation of new policies or features, or recommend to the EVC other courses of action.
Mary Baldwin College

The first appearance of a Mary Baldwin Web page was a joint effort CIS and Advancement Services (our bureau in charge of campus publications). It was very dry and extremely text based. A second version of the page was the result of a special directed inquiry course in which an MBC student explored HTML programming and spiced up the page with graphics as her course project.

After the second variation of the Home Page was mounted, different departments and offices began receiving feedback from various constituencies. Some comment was favorable while other wasn't so supportive. The feedback created an awareness for the power of the Web in several important offices that was not there previously despite efforts at education. Once they realized that people do actually look at information on the Internet the issue of maintaining the image of Mary Baldwin College became a priority. The President appointed the Director of Advancement Services as the Web Page Editor. This department has responsibility for all publications of the College. They had been an advocate of the page and had viewed it as an electronic publication. The Director assembled a team made up of faculty, staff and administrators who had been working with the page since the beginning.

Committee Membership

Lewis & Clark College

Our committee contains broad representation from across our institution and includes faculty, staff and students. We also entertain requests from others on campus to join the committee. We should note that, without exception, people on the committee find this to be the most productive and enjoyable committee on which they serve and they genuinely hate to miss meetings.

The following areas are represented on our WWW committee:

Information Technology Department
Undergraduate Admissions Office
Alumni Office
Publications Office
California State University, San Marcos

As described earlier, management of the WWW is contained within a single department.

University of California, Irvine

The committee is composed of the following members:

- Director of Analytical Studies & Information Management
- Director of Academic Computing
- Director of Administrative Computing
- University Librarian
- Assistant Vice Chancellor of Communications
- Chair, Senate Computer Policy Committee

An unique feature of this committee is that it only "meets" by e-mail.

A related committee is the UCI Web Design Team. This group is developing "look and feel" standards for UCI's WWW pages. It is composed of the Director of Publications, a representative from the Library, and two UCI faculty members (one from the School of the Arts and another from Information and Computer Science), and the Director of Analytical Studies. Its goals are to develop a design and an organization for UCI's web pages. As the committee gets closer to finalizing its work, it will also be developing design guidelines (I guess you could say policy).

Mary Baldwin College

The Web committee included the Director of Advancement Services and a faculty member who has shown extreme interest in the Web page development as Co-Chairs. Other members included the Director of Computer and Information Services, the
CIS Network Administrator, the College Librarian, the Public Services Librarian, the Director of Art and Printing Services and the Dean of Admissions. This team outlined goals for the page which included policy development, look and architecture design, template creation and training. An additional goal of this team has been handed off to a special Task Force appointed by the Dean of the College. This Task Force, made up of faculty, will generate ideas about the constructive use of the Web to promote Mary Baldwin College and enhance teaching and learning activities.

Policies Governing Use of the World Wide Web

Lewis & Clark College

The first self-charged activity of our WWW committee was an update of our Responsible Use Policy. We purposely chose a policy that did not go very far into specifically prohibited items, but focused on a distinction between "primary" and "secondary" activities and that covered all technology resources from telephone and data networks (from office, dorm, and dial-in) to staff consulting time. Primary activities are defined as using the available technology "... primarily as tools for enhancing and facilitating teaching, learning, and scholarly research..." Secondary activities are defined as any other use. The policy then goes on to state that "... Should such secondary activities in any way interfere with primary activities, they may be terminated immediately..." This gives us a mechanism to cope with issues such as someone viewing nudes for an art class (which would be considered "primary") vs. someone looking at adult magazines on the net for purely personal interest. Of course, having a policy worded the way we have chosen also means that we will not have to rewrite it every time some new technology arises, or new laws are passed.

The WWW committee is also responsible for the creation and maintenance of our “official” pages which consist of all pages up to three levels deep and assorted other pages (such as catalogs and other official publications). Departments, offices, and individuals may all have their own pages but those pages must conform to our Responsible Use Policy.

Our “Responsible Use of Information Technology” policy can be found at:

http://www.lclark.edu/GENERAL/WEB/POLICY/use.html
California State University, San Marcos

At CSUSM we take quite different approaches toward the management of web pages that are "official" and "unofficial". The former are pages that will be managed in the context of our Campus Wide Information System (CWIS), while the latter represent personal home pages of students, faculty, staff, and others. Computing and Telecommunications role in managing personal home pages is minimal; with the exception of responding to complaints about misuse, or other violations of our computer access policies we simply provide users with some disk space and a form to register the page. With regard to managing "official" pages that will reside in our CWIS, we take several approaches to encourage or require that certain standards are met. Standards are defined in an "info for contributors" area (see below) so that all developers are provided with tools to make it easy for them to follow. Extensive and ongoing training and support is provided by Computing and Telecommunications for those developing web pages. With much of the actual development work being done by students, Computing and Telecommunications works closely with end-user departments to ensure that appropriately trained student assistants carry out the work. In the special case of Web applications where security is important, or where access is made to institutional databases (i.e., what are commonly referred to as Intranet applications), are developed exclusively under the direction of the Systems Development and Software Engineering group.

CSUSM’s policy for use of the Web, is at:

http://coyote.csusm.edu/computing/policies/public.html

This is quite short and includes some procedures, and along with access policies at:

http://coyote.csusm.edu/computing/policies/Faculty-Staff_Computer_Access_Policy.html

http://coyote.csusm.edu/computing/policies/Student_Computer_Access_Policy.html

and information for contributors, which include publishing standards and other items at:

http://coyote.csusm.edu/contributors/
represent our present level of documented Web policy. Like all policies and procedures at our campus these represent "works in progress" that are frequently revised to reflect our experience and changing conditions and needs.

**University of California, Irvine**

The only formal campus-wide WWW policy at UCI is the "Policy for Electronic Publication of Official UCI Information" which can be viewed at:

http://www.uci.edu/policies/web_policy.html

Its purpose is to ensure that official UCI information published electronically (via the Internet--WWW, Web, Gopher, etc.) is (1) correctly representative of UCI and the University of California; (2) accurate, well-written, and visually appealing; and (3) on par with the same high standards as other official publications which appear in print or other formats (audiovisual, etc.).

Another policy for corporate sponsorships of UCI's WWW pages is under development.

**Mary Baldwin College**

The policy draft originally included areas requirements and guidelines for information placed on the Web. After review the areas of guidelines and requirements have been broken out into separate documents.

Our policy can be viewed at:

http://www.mbc.edu/policy.htm

requirements at:

http://www.mbc.edu/policy1.htm

and guidelines at:

http://www.mbc.edu/policy2.htm