



## **Introduction**

Scouts Canada's councils and national office, as well as many areas and groups develop and maintain web sites as a communications tool with their respective members. Common sense and adherence to Scouting's Mission and Principles should guide volunteers and staff in determining appropriate content for web sites.

Because a great deal of program information, forms, leader resources, and youth-specific content is published on the national web site ([www.scouts.ca](http://www.scouts.ca)), groups, areas, and councils should link to the appropriate pages rather than recreating it in a new format. In terms of the type of new content that groups, areas, and councils should consider offering on their web sites, the following would apply: events calendar, local fundraising details, local news, local contact information, and weekly group/section meeting time and place.

## **Why a website?**

Groups or councils should establish a focus and purpose for their website. The World Wide Web is a big place, and it is impossible to create and maintain a website that serves all audiences. It is best to focus the site to serve the audiences that will benefit most from it. These questions will assist in establishing the focus:

1. Who do we think will visit our website, and how often?
2. Is the material we plan to put on the site of interest to a local, provincial, national or international audience?
3. Who is the target audience for the website: youth, young adults or adults?
4. Will our website be a passive or active place?
5. Will the material on the site "broadcast" to the world, or "target" our members.

## **Basic principles**

1. Domain names – should be consistent with [www.scouts.ca](http://www.scouts.ca). Subdomains of the Scouts Canada domain (scouts.ca) are available to councils.
2. Privacy: The Scouts Canada Privacy Policy applies to all web site content. With respect to youth members, there should be no names on photos of children; no addresses or phone numbers; photo release forms must be kept on file for each child pictured in published photos (the new Participant Registration Form now includes a photo release).
3. Content must be consistent with Mission, Laws, Promise, Policies and Principles of Scouts Canada; should reflect national web site's content.
4. Consistent Scouts Canada branding; only official section, group, area, council and national logos should be used.

5. Observe copyright, trademark and other intellectual property ownership laws. Do not use items (stories, articles, photos, graphics, songs or music) from other web sites or any other sources without express permission from authors.

6. Advertising is not permitted on websites.

7. Commercial endorsements are only permitted with approval of the Director of Communications.

8. Sites may link to other sites with content that is consistent with Mission, Laws, Promise, Policies and Principles of Scouts Canada (i.e. other chartered Scouting groups, areas, councils, or national, partners, sponsors).

9. Electronic commerce activities on websites are only permitted with approval of the Director of Communications. All electronic commerce activities must comply with the Canadian Code of Practice for Consumer Protection in Electronic Commerce.

### **Content Guidelines**

- Scouts Canada Logo, Bring On The Adventure Logo
- Name of your group or area
- Council name
- Table or list of contents
- Statement of copyright (i.e. “This web site in its entirety copyright of 1<sup>st</sup> Ottawa Scout Group. Not to be reproduced without express permission.”)
- Contact information – under “contact us” – should be easy to find. Be wary of listing personal contact information. Obtain permission from other leaders to list their personal contact information (they may or may not want this made public). E-mail addresses are preferable to home telephone numbers. You could consider creating a special email address specifically for your group.
- Links page (to useful sites that support group, area and council related activities)
- Research other sites to get some ideas that have worked for other people (be considerate of copyright).
- Calendar of events (very useful for parents)
- Link to useful and frequently used content and forms on the National web site (i.e.B.P.&P.)
- Go for a clean, uncluttered look.
- Writing should be brief and to the point.
- Keep to a consistent font (National site uses Arial 10).
- Review your site regularly and update when necessary.
- Have a webmaster e-mail provided for feedback.
- Don’t forget to be creative – make your site a reflection of your group and who you are!

### **Site ownership**

Wherever possible Scouting websites should be owned and controlled by a group, area or council. Many groups use webspace donated by a member or parent, but as members move on, these sites may not continue to be available, causing confusion to members.

If a group, area or council establishes a relationship with an Internet service provider or domain registrar, all arrangements should be summarized in a written service contract. The contract should clearly indicate that a group, area or council owns the content of the web site.

If a domain name is registered, the group or council should be listed as the registrant or administrative contact with the domain authority.

### **Links to other sites**

Scouting websites may provide hyperlinks to useful sites that support group, area and council related activities. Links reflect on the quality of a website, but are out of the control of website creators, so care must be taken to only include those links that are relevant and meet the same standards that govern the site they appear on. The Web is in constant motion, so it is expected that links will not remain the same forever. It is important that links be regularly checked to ensure they still bring viewers to the correct location, and that the linked site still meets our standards. Care must be taken to ensure that linking to a commercial website is not mistaken as an endorsement of a product or service.

### **Remember the world in World Wide Web**

Although a group, area or council website is typically targeted to a local audience, the World Wide Web is a global resource. Websites should clearly indicate the area the website applies to, both in Scouting and geographic terms. Any content should be reviewed to make sure it does not affect other groups or councils negatively (such as recruiting support from outside the area chartered for a group or council). In any interaction with people on the website should enquire where the person is from. If a person is outside the bounds of a group or council, it is common courtesy to refer someone to a more appropriate group or council.

### **Discussion Forums and On-line Chat areas**

The Web permits virtual discussions, but those discussions occur without any of the traditional means of ensuring the bona fides of the people participating in the discussion. For this reason websites should not use discussion forums or chat areas unless there are security measures established to provide information and control over who can participate in virtual discussions. Typically this means that virtual discussions only take place in password-protected areas accessible to specific member categories, and that all sites be monitored to ensure the discussions are in keeping with the mission, principles, and laws of Scouting.

## **Advertising and Commercial Endorsements**

Scouting is the single focus of a group, area or council website, and advertising and commercial endorsements can distract viewers from important Scouting information. Although it is tempting to add banner advertising or exchange advertising with other websites, it is difficult to control the content of these ads, and ensure the quality of the material they draw your viewers to.

That does not mean that groups or councils cannot acknowledge contributions made by donors by placing their names and logos on a website. Care must be taken to ensure that it is clearly explained why a name or logo appears on a webpage, and care must be taken to ensure that the size and placement of the name or logo does not compromise the impact of website content. As an example, if a local firm provides complimentary or reduced price web space it is acceptable to place their name and logo on the website, as long as the size and location of the name and logo do not interfere with Scouting content. Groups, areas and councils should seek approval of the Director of Communications whenever a logo or company name appears on a website.

It is also acceptable to place graphics, logos or links directing web site visitors to software required to increase their enjoyment of a website. Any software used on a website should be widely available to Canadians at no cost through web download, and available for the wide varieties of web browsers and operating systems currently in use.