Title: It's Your Web Site, Not Your Newsletter
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Summary: There are some differences in creating content for the web con
for print distribution - your web site will work if you can successfully tra
activities to online equivalents and making them work in a web environme

After you have created your site, identified and recruited people to main
put together the processes to keep things moving, you need to focus on g
across. Since you already are publishing your message and information i
some sense to be consistent and it can save you a lot of time to use as r
have on your web site.

You should already understand enough about the web to afford not the same as print is
and the experience is quite different. Print media are much more tactile
presentation is consistent. If I hand you an 8.5 x 11" piece of white pape
8.5 x 11" piece of white paper printed in color and all the information on
location it was when I created it. More photos don't make a piece of prin
turning the page take longer. You also can (and usually do) read a printe
end - that is not something easily done on the web (it may not even be p
Here are some specific dos and don'ts to help you fill your web site with
web.

Do: Write for the web

People read differently on the web and how you write for the web learn is not a
Herculean task, it just requires some effort. Earlier, I mentioned the line
is a term applied to print materials, but not to the web. In general, you r
sooner online than you do in print. An online reader has much more mate
someone holding a printed piece and the effort is much less to find a nev
is for someone to find a new book or article offline.

Tip: Get to the point sooner

Also, for the same reason as above, highlight key words and phrases. Rather than
reading the entire page, online readers skim, only stopping when you cat

  Bold text
  Bullet points
  A table of contents
  Section headers and
  Images

all work to draw their attention to specific areas. Use them wisely and ju

Another thing to remember - the people who view your web site may not b
pick up your newsletter, they may not even be in the same country as the
newsletter. Carefully read your items in your newsletter and announceme
someone who has never been to your church - what assumptions were you
that document? Be sure all abbreviations are spelled out, all acronyms a
language is easily understood or jargon. short -
Don't: Repurpose print publications

An all-too-common approach is to pick up your newsletter, your bulletin,
your calendar and start to copy the information to your web site. While y
information from those sources, you have to remember they were designe
page and that doesn't always (read: almost never) translate to acceptabl

You may use a specific font that is available on your computer - when yo
create the pages and it doesn't matter what font my computer has availab
computer. When you put fonts and text as part of your design, you should be se
'safe' fonts, that view the same (or almost the same) on all computers ar
fonts are specifically designed for optimum viewing on screen and improv

Something that happens quite frequently is print PDF (Portable Document saved a
Format) or DOC (Word Document) files and then placed on the site for downloa
provide the user the documents in the same layout as the original, but it
print layout still doesn't match the screen dimensions, people are likely
on their computer that will open the PDF or DOC file, but it is not guarar
know what the content is until after they download it, the search engines
Do: Have web-only content

If I am a member of the congregation and I attend services regularly - wh
web site? Is there something on your web site that will keep me coming b
member of your congregation, but I am looking for a new church home in
about your church that I will not get by driving past your location, readir
calling your office?

The web gives you a unique vehicle to deliver content - make the most of
and reach. This may be your biggest challenge because you may not have
creating online content. For this, you will need to spend some time looki
idea of what is currently online. Combining video, audio, discussion foru

message beyond Sunday morning are all ways to leverage the power of th
Don't: Publish everything

The web can be an endless sea of information - use discretion when addi
site. The reality is - computers have moved us no closer to being a pape
of redundancy online, don't make me say it again. If your members are getting
announcements handed to them every week, why do they need to see ther
there may be people that are traveling, or unable to attend a particular w
your announcements appear for more than a week? I know I see a lot of r
announcements and bulletins I receive.

As I stated above, each item you post online needs to be written for an o
really have time to rewrite each of your articles for readability online? I'
have 1 thing in common - connecting with their viewers and leading them
you. The web is both informational and experiential. If you just dump eve
chance do you have to connect with people? It is OK for people to have q
have a way to ask those questions. Your goal is to engage and connect,