

web training manual

**For minority and indigenous activists,
journalists and campaigners in Africa**

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About Minority Rights Group

Minority Rights Group International campaigns worldwide with around 130 partners in over 60 countries to ensure that disadvantaged minorities and indigenous peoples, often the poorest of the poor, can make their voices heard. Through training and education, legal cases, publications and the media, we support minority and indigenous people as they strive to maintain their rights to the land they live on, the languages they speak, to equal opportunities in education and employment, and to full participation in public life.

We understand how discrimination based on age, class, gender and disability can have a multiple impact on disadvantaged minorities, and our campaigns target governments and communities to eradicate such attitudes.

Minority Rights Group International has over 40 years experience of working with non-dominant ethnic, religious and linguistic communities and we bring a long term view of these issues to bear in all the work we do.

We work with minorities as diverse as the Batwa in Central Africa, Roma in Europe, Christians in Iraq and Dalits in India and Nepal to name but a few.

MRG is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) with an international governing Council that meets twice a year. We have consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and observer status with the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights.

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Contents

Acknowledgements

About this Manual	4
Part 1: Planning Your Online Project.....	5
Objectives (what?).....	5
Target Audience (who?).....	5
Resources, Planning and Evaluation (how?)	5
Things to consider.....	6
Top tip for a successful campaign.....	7
Part 2: Websites and Blogs.....	8
Choosing the right tool (Website vs. Blog?)	8
Budgeting.....	8
Registering a domain name	9
Planning your site (design).....	10
Building your site.....	13
TUTORIAL: Creating a website using Wordpress	14
Publishing your site.....	18
Part 3: Creating content for your website	21
Text.....	21
What is multimedia content?.....	23
Images.....	24
Video.....	26
Audio and podcasts.....	28
TUTORIAL: How to prepare an audio file for the web.....	28
Part 4: Online petitions	32
What is an online petition?.....	32
TUTORIAL: How to set up an online petition.....	32
Part 5: Building relationships online	34
Using email for campaigning	34
E-newsletters.....	34
Part 6: Monitoring success	38
Maintaining your site	38
TUTORIAL: Top tips for improving your SEO.....	39
Part 7: Sharing campaigning resources online.....	41
Glossary of Key Terms.....	43

About this Manual

This training manual is part of the *Minority Voices* programme run by Minority Rights Group (MRG). This is an EU-funded project designed to increase the inclusion of minority voices in media coverage.

This manual will be used as the basis for training minority and indigenous activists, and their advocates, to undertake their own online campaigning and media work. It explains what online tools are available, how to plan an online activity and how to use those relevant tools to build a campaign or project.

Please visit <http://www.minorityvoices.org>

Part 1: Planning Your Online Project

Planning is everything! If you plan you will succeed.

Planning Checklist

- What do you want to achieve?
- Who do you need to reach or influence?
- How you can best achieve your objectives and evaluate your success with the resources available to you?
- Defining a brand and message.

Objectives (what?)

Before you do anything, think about your objectives: **what do you want to achieve?** It is important that your objectives are **SMART**: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. This will help ensure that you can evaluate the success of the campaign.

* Exercise *

Write one or two sentences that describe your key objective. For example: "To lobby support for an indigenous community that is being evicted from their land".

Target Audience (who?)

Think about who you're trying to reach through your campaign – both in terms of supporters and also people you might be trying to influence. Once you have determined your target audience, think about whether the Internet is an appropriate medium to use for this part of your campaign.

* Exercise *

List the people you are trying to reach. These might include Government leaders, business executives, representatives on international bodies and so on. You might have one target audience or several. What is the best method for contacting all of them? Can you categorise them? I.e. Policy-makers, journalists, activists and so on?

Resources, Planning and Evaluation (how?)

The first and most crucial part of the planning phase is: **resources**. Before you start planning how you are going to develop your campaign, you need to understand your resources and capacity. For example, if you want to set up a moderated discussion forum you will need to have someone available who can commit to moderating it on a regular (daily) basis. Similarly, if you want to set up a blog or news page you need to be able to update it regularly (at least once a month) with news stories and new content. An out-of-date blog or news page reflects badly on your campaign and will deter people from participating. **The best campaigns deliver what they promise.**

Tip: manage your audience's expectations by being clear about what they can expect. For example, if you don't have the resources to send out regular emails, tell your audience that your website will be updated regularly and ask them to bookmark the page and return there to check for new developments. Most people will happily put up with this, even if it is not ideal.

Key Planning Questions

Resources

How many staff do you have available and how much time do they have?
What are the key skills and strengths of those staff?
How much funding do you have available?
How much time can you commit when the campaign is up and running?

Planning

What is my budget?
What is the best way to approach the project (What tools will I use, eg. a website, petition, email, newsletters, Twitter, Facebook etc)

Evaluation

How am I going to **evaluate** the campaign?
What systems need to be in place to track our progress and success?
Do we already have a way of doing this or do I need to create something new?

Things to consider

As powerful as the Internet can be, there are some potential obstacles that you must consider.

Access

Does your audience have **access to the Internet**? Do they have a **slow (dial-up) connection or a fast (broadband) connection**? **Do you have good internet access**? If either you or your audience has a slow internet connection you should avoid using too much multimedia content (films, audio, photographs) as it slows down the loading time of web pages. (See Section 4 on Multimedia for more information). If someone can't see the content on your website or email, they will give up!

Information overload

Some people feel so overwhelmed by the large amount of electronic information they receive that they either don't read much of it or pay it little attention.

For example, a political representative deluged with identical emails on a particular issue may ignore them, shutting down the mailbox, deleting the emails without reading them or scanning only the first few sentences before deciding whether to delete the message or not. You need to **make sure your emails are as personal and individual as possible** and that they are appropriately phrased and polite. Your emails should get straight to the point, making your requests right at the start and giving background information or further detail later in the message. Keeping them brief will also increase their chances of being read.

Tip: if part of your campaign is to encourage large numbers of people to email a political representative, provide them with the main points you want to convey but ask them to draft their own messages so that they sound as though they come from individuals.

Spamming

Spamming is sending an unsolicited message or *spam* (email) over the Internet to a large number of recipients. In some countries it is illegal to send spam email so you must be aware of the legislation in your country or region. Some useful resources for finding out about more about spam legislation are:

Online Legal, South Africa: <http://www.michalsons.com/the-law-vs-the-scourge-of-spam/1019>

Articles on internet law and legislation, North Africa:
[http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/browse?type=lcsb&key=Internet + Law and legislation -- Africa, North](http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/browse?type=lcsb&key=Internet+Law+and+legislation+Africa+North)

For information about anti-spam legislation around the world, including the USA, the EU, Australia, New Zealand, Asia and Canada. <http://www.email-marketing-reports.com/canspam/>

For a global listing of anti-spam legislation worldwide (not all countries are listed)
<http://www.itu.int/osg/spu/spam/law.html>

Top tip for a successful campaign

Make sure that your campaign is recognisable wherever it appears. This is called “**brand reinforcement**”. Whenever and wherever you publicize your campaign you should use your logo, strapline and a key message you are trying to convey.

Logo: A visual symbol for your campaign



Strapline: A short, succinct message that accompanies the logo, for example:

Help the Endorois protect their ancestral land

A key message: MRG believes that we all have a responsibility to practice not just eco-tourism, but ethical tourism – so that minorities and indigenous people are not displaced to make way for holiday-makers on game reserves or pristine beaches.

Join our Trouble in Paradise campaign and sign the online petition in support of the Endorois, a pastoralist community from Kenya, evicted from their ancestral lands to make way for a game reserve in the 1970s.

Helpful Resources

Successful Campaign Planning - a PDF from Friends of the Earth

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/event_presentations/ne_campaign_planning.pdf

Planning your campaign - a PDF from the University and College Union

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/f/7/plan_campaign_1.pdf

ECF Campaigning Forum is an excellent resource

<http://fairsay.com/networks>

Part 2: Websites and Blogs

A website can be a real asset to any campaign. It helps you get your message to large numbers of people quickly and cheaply, as well as to update the information you publicize quickly and cheaply too.

It isn't hard to create a good website, even if you don't have much money or technical know how. This section explains how to build a website with a small budget.

Website Checklist

- Choosing the right tool (Website vs. Blog)
- Budgeting
- Registering a domain name
- Finding a host
- Planning your site
- Building your site
- TUTORIAL: Creating a site using Wordpress
- Publishing your site
- Monitoring your site

Choosing the right tool (Website vs. Blog?)

A blog (web log) is an online journal, allowing its creator to update information frequently as well as allowing visitors to post comments. Traditionally blogs were created by individuals and display as a series of posts, with the most recent at the top.

A website is a group of interconnected web pages where content is published. Traditionally, website creators needed quite a bit of technical knowhow, but the development of Content Management Systems (CMSs) has transformed this. The structure of a website is carefully planned, so that the visitor can move through the site using navigation that is provided.

These days, websites and blogs share many characteristics and can look very similar.

Budgeting

Creating a website does not have to be expensive. You can scale the project according to your resources and budget. The expenses that you should consider budgeting for include:

Item	Range of cost (in Rand)
A computer	R3000 + (one-off cost to buy one)
Internet access (ideally broadband)	From R44 per month (see http://www.broadbanddeals.co.za/ or http://gridhost.co.za/adsl.php)
Hosting (& support)	Prices start at R30+ per month (see http://www.definitehosting.co.za/).
Domain registration	Around R1000 for 1 year (you can renew after 1 year)
Site design (look and	R0 if you can do it yourselves - or anything from R750 to

structure)	thousands (one-off cost but web developers will also charge to host your site)
Multimedia - obtaining & editing images, videos, audio	R0 if you can create and edit it yourselves using free software or software you already have - or anything from hundreds to thousands of pounds if you have to buy the media and software (one-off cost for software)
Relationship building - emails, social networks etc	R0 if you already have the means to do this yourselves - or about R1000 for e-communications tools plus small ongoing costs per email

Registering a domain name

The domain name (or URL) is the name that appears in the thin box at the top of a web browser, usually starting with *www* (for example, *www.minorityrights.org*).



Choosing a name

As well as choosing the name (for example, *minorityrights*), you also need to decide which suffix you would like to use. Most non-profit organizations use *.org* or *.org.bw/za* (or whichever national variant applies in your country - see <http://www.computerhope.com/jargon/num/domains.htm> for a full list of suffixes). It can be a good idea to register both if you can afford to do so, to increase the chance of your site being found through a guessed search (see Section 7 on Search engine optimization for more information about searches).

Tip: read this helpful article: How to Register a Domain Name in Botswana: <http://www.thapelothong.com/registering-bw-domain-name-botswana/>

Check availability

Decide what name you would ideally like. You need to see if it is available and you can easily do this by visiting a domain registrar such as 101 Domain: <http://www.101domain.com> and searching by clicking the 'African Domains' box. If the name you would like is not available, try variations - such as hyphenating your words (for example, *www.minority-rights*). Try to find a name that is as close as possible to the name of your campaign - it will increase the chances of your site being found by anybody trying to find it and make sure the name is easy to spell and easy to remember!

Tip: Shop around! International companies can (like 101 Domain) can be very expensive so try to find a local company that can sell you a domain name)

Register the domain

Once you have found a domain name that is available and that you like, you can now register the domain name. You can do this using a registrar - there are hundreds or thousands of these online and many of them also offer hosting (see next sub-section). You can usually register a domain name for a 1- or 2-year period with an option to

renew automatically at that point. The cost usually starts from around R1000 per year, depending on the suffix that you want and the registrar that you use.

Keep track of any domain names you register and hold on to them for as long as you need/can afford to do so. Once you let them go, they could be snapped up by someone else who might use them for less scrupulous purposes, which might cause your campaign problems.

Wikipedia keeps a list of 30 top domain registrars internationally (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_domain_name_registrars).

You can find out more about any of these hosts and their current rates by putting their names into a search engine such as <http://www.google.com>, <http://www.yahoo.com> or <http://www.ask.com>. (See Section 7 for more about search engines.)

Finding a host

An ISP (Internet Service Provider) is responsible for “hosting” your website. That is, making your website available on the internet. They will ‘host’ your website files on their server so that it can be found and viewed by other people’s web browsers. When choosing a host try to find one that will enable you to look at your web stats and see how your site is being visited. This will give you very valuable information for evaluating your campaign (see Section 7 for more information about monitoring the success of your campaign).

Tip: Ask around as there might be a free option. Someone involved in your campaign may already have some web space as part of an email account, so you may be able to get this free of charge. This could work well if you are planning a very simple website.

There are thousands of ISPs around the world - and you don’t have to use one in your country. Be aware, though, that if you choose an ISP based in a different time zone, there may be a time lag if ever you need any support from the ISP (for example, if your site goes down - ie stops being visible - during your working day, your ISP may not be working at that point if they are in a different time zone, so your site may not be visible for a number of hours). Prices start at R30 per month.

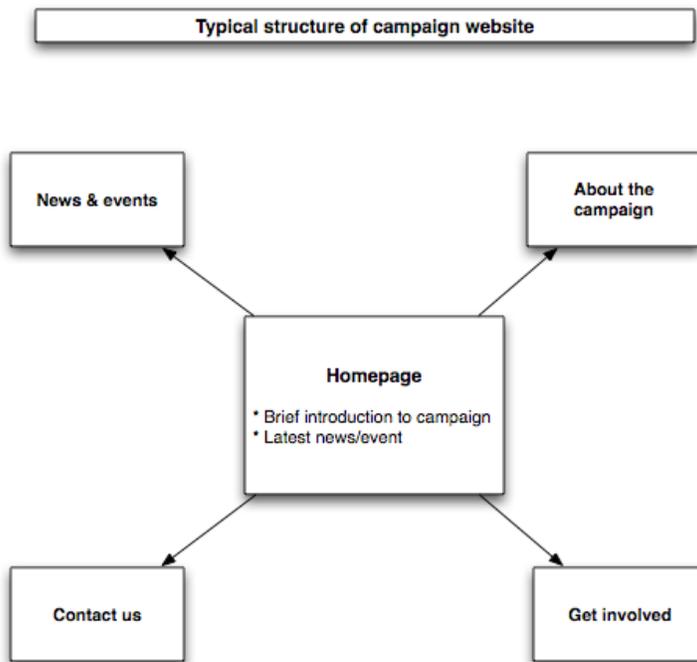
Planning your site (design)

Many of the features that make a campaigning website successful are much the same as those that can be found in any good website. They include:

- Clarity
- Simplicity
- Ease of navigation and general usability
- Accessibility
- An obvious means of contact (you will need to make sure that you are able to respond within 24-48 hours)
- Ease of action (whatever that action might be)
- (Optional but worthwhile extra) A good, interactive members’ area in which resources, information and ideas can easily be shared.

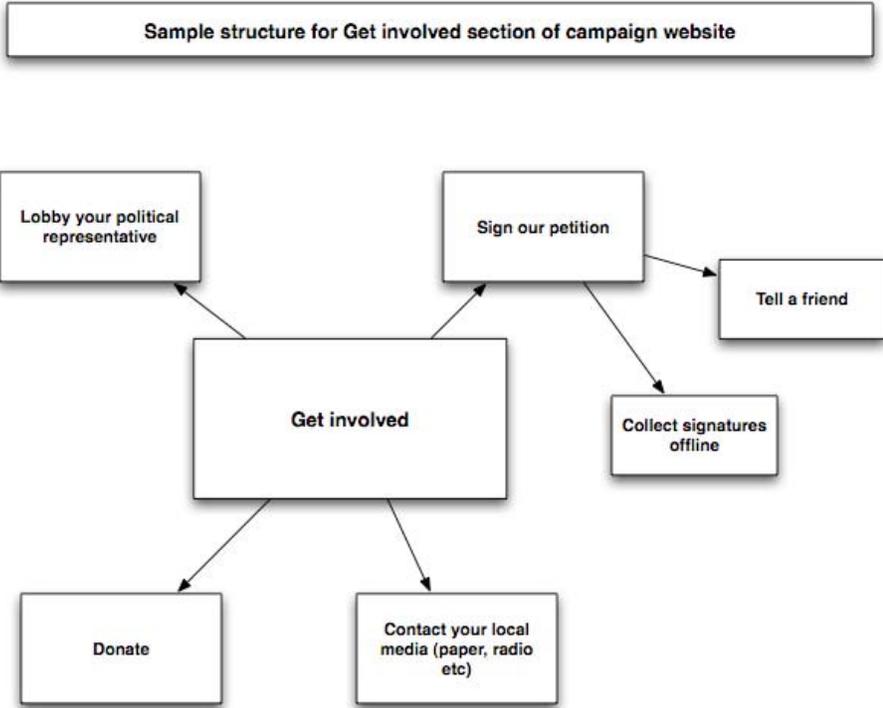
Think about the information that your site needs to contain. Then try to gather it together into chunks of related information. Most campaign sites are basically similar in structure

and contain a small number of main pages:



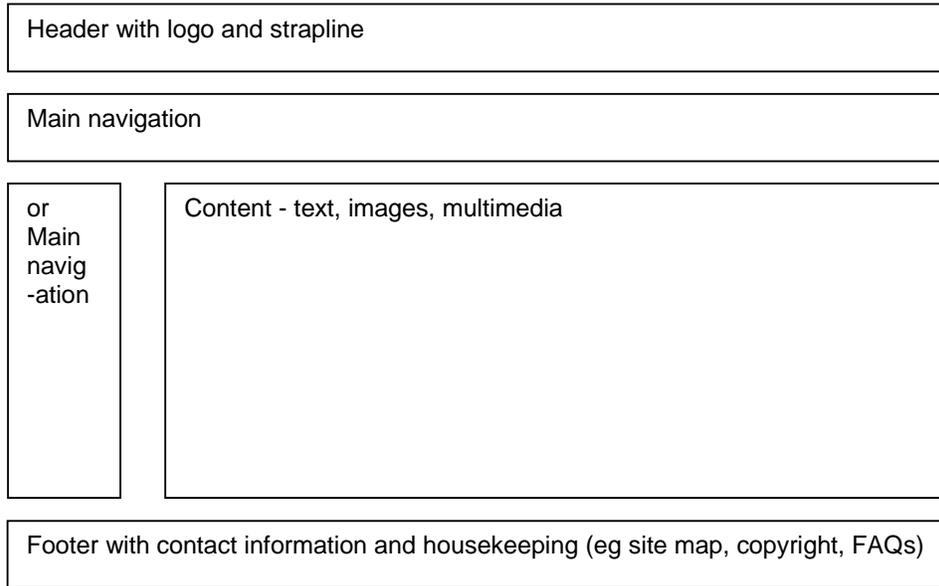
Each of the main pages will be part of the main navigation of your site. So for the example shown above, the main navigation would be: Home - About the campaign - Get involved - News & events - Contact us. This should appear consistently, in the same position on every page of your site. Keep the number of pages in the main navigation small - ideally no more than 6 including the Homepage.

The site could have any number of sub-pages coming off any one of these main areas. *Get involved* could lead to various types of action that people could take, for example:



As well as designing a structure for your website, you need to design a look for it. Your campaign may already have a logo and brand colours. If so, you should use these on the site. If you don't already have a logo and brand colours, this is the time to consider them. You may know someone who can design a logo for free or cheaply. Whoever you use, make sure the logo is simple and avoid small script, which may not be visible on the web. Avoid wallpaper (the coloured backgrounds that used to be so popular) on your website: it will not help your site to be accessible and accessibility should be one of your top priorities.

The basic layout of your webpages can be very simple. Certain elements should be consistent on every page. You may use a particular web-building tool that will organize this for you. If not, here is a wire frame diagram that suggests a best practice webpage layout:



Building your site

How you choose to build your site, once you have designed it, depends on the resources and funding available. You may know someone who is able and willing to build a website for you either free of charge or very cheaply. This is great and can save you a great deal of money and time. It's sensible to plan the site thoroughly (see Sections 1 & the earlier part of this Section) first. You should also make sure you know the answers to the following questions:

- Who will be hosting the site and how much will this cost you?
- Will you be able to make changes to the site once it has launched (if, for example, text needs to be updated or a new image or page added)?
- How will you do this? Will there be a cost involved? Or will you need particular skills and information (eg a password) to do this?
- You may decide - especially if the campaign is likely to last a number of years and you are likely to need to update your site frequently but don't have anybody technical involved - to invest in a simple CMS (Content Management System). This will enable you to keep the site updated without needing any more technical skills than those you would need to edit a document in Microsoft Word.

If you have a small budget you may choose to buy a simple CMS (or you can create one if you have some technical know-how) using one of the open source (free of charge) systems. (See Section 9 for links to CMS providers.) The advantage of these is that they can provide functionality beyond simple web pages, including discussion forums, password protected areas (ideal for sharing resources with your supporters - see Section 8 for more about this) and even shopping carts.

- If you don't have anybody with technical skills and don't have a budget for your site, you can create a site yourself using simple programs such as Wordpress (<http://www.wordpress.com> or <http://www.wordpress.org>), Blogger (<http://www.blogger.com>) or iWeb (for Macs - see <http://www.apple.com/ilife/iweb/>).
- If an online presence is enough for you (ie a web page rather than a whole web site) you may be able to create a page on Wikipedia about your campaign (see below for instructions about this).

TUTORIAL: Creating a website using Wordpress

There are two ways to create a Wordpress website:

1. Free and simple

The easiest way is to use Wordpress.com. It is **free of charge** but it does have limitations: using this option, you won't be able to customize the appearance of your site, though you will be able to pick a *theme*. For this option, go to <http://www.wordpress.com> and set up a site as part of their network. Your address will be www.mywebsite.wordpress.com (*mywebsite* will be replaced with whatever wording you choose).

Tip: Wordpress.com blogs are very easy to set up and manage so they are a good option if you do not have a high level of technical skills.

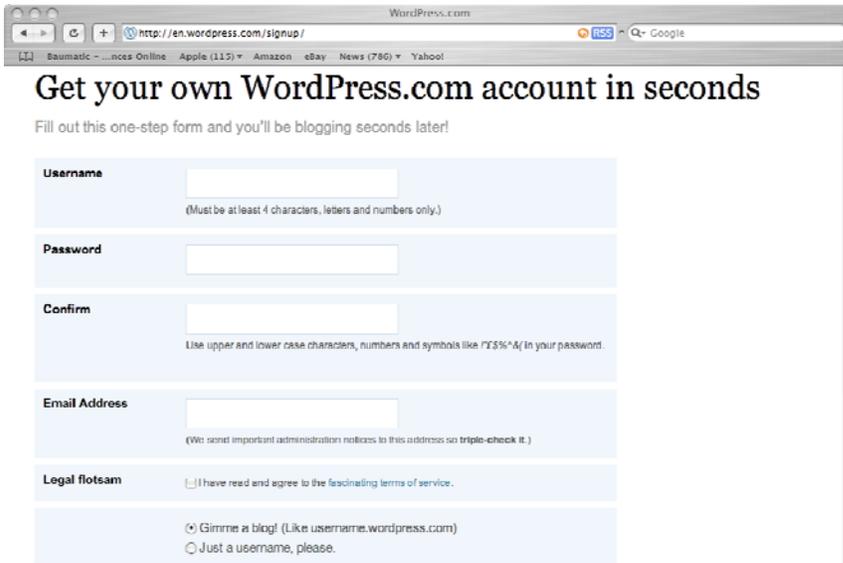
2. Low cost and moderately technical

If you can afford a small amount of money - enough for a domain name and hosting (see above for prices and where you can get these), you can use Wordpress.org, which will give you more opportunities to customize your site. If you choose this option, you will need to install Wordpress before you can start building our site. Installation procedures will vary according to your hosting provider. Wordpress.org provides installation instructions (a 5-minute version or a lengthier version in case this isn't enough with your particular hosting provision). Some hosting providers have a system to help you with installation.

In this **tutorial** we will cover option 1: creating a free Wordpress site/blog the free and simple way.

Tip: The wordpress.com site is easy-to-use and self-explanatory with helpful suggestions available at: <http://support.wordpress.com/getting-started/>).

Go to Wordpress.com and click on *Sign up now*.

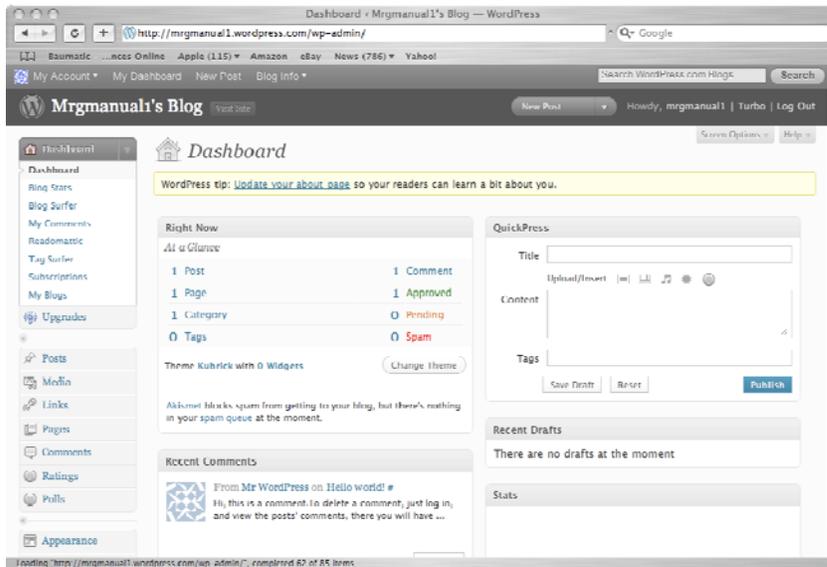


Create a Wordpress account. Whatever you choose as your username is what will appear in your site address (in this example it will be mrgmanual1 and therefore our web address will be mrgmanual1.wordpress.com), so choose carefully as this will be seen.

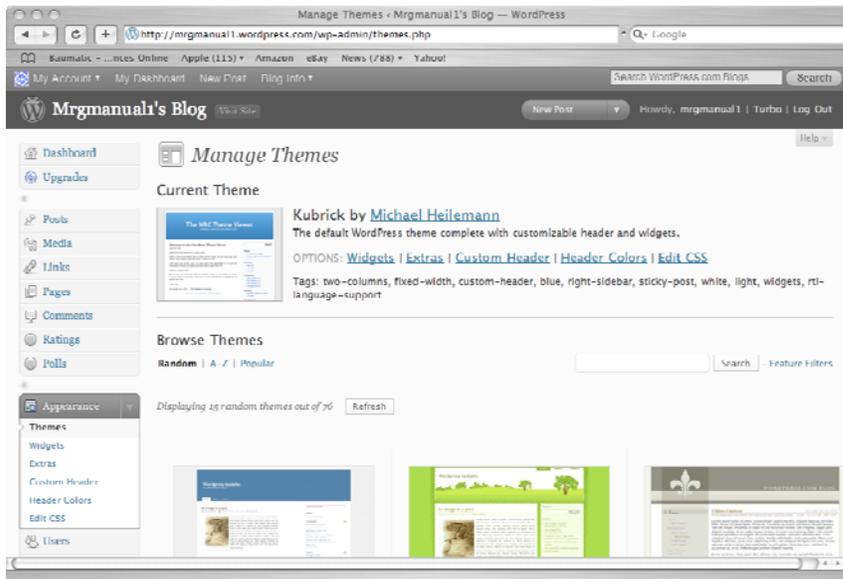


Log in to your Wordpress account.

Your “dashboard” will appear – this is the screen where you can edit and manage your website. You can choose whether to add it as a post (in which case it will move as more posts are added) or a page (in which case it will be static). The left-hand side of the screen is where you can select how you will add it and contains other useful links.

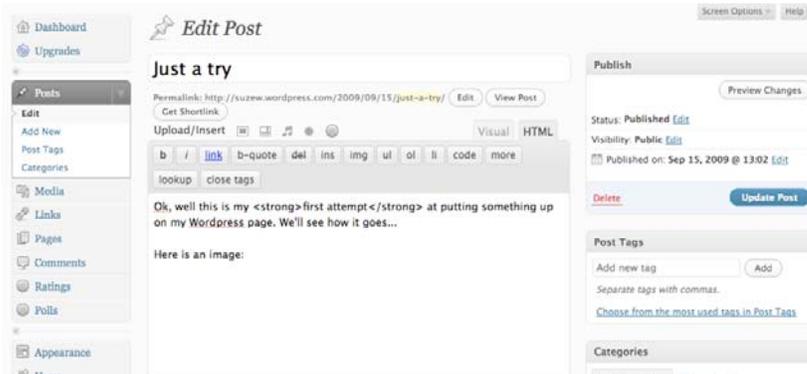


You can alter your site's appearance by selecting a theme (visual design for your pages) using the Appearance link on the left-hand side. You will be asked to choose from a wide range of themes.

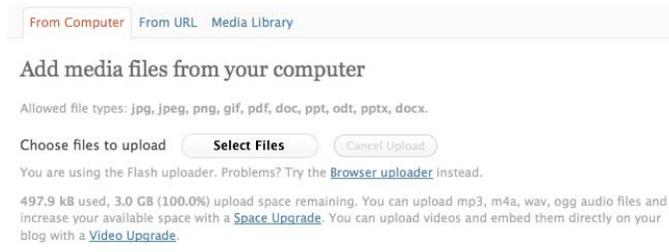


Click on Posts or Pages to start adding content to your site (both links are on the left-hand side of your dashboard). Clicking on either one of these leads to an option to add a new post /page. Click on this option and you will be given a box where you can add your content.

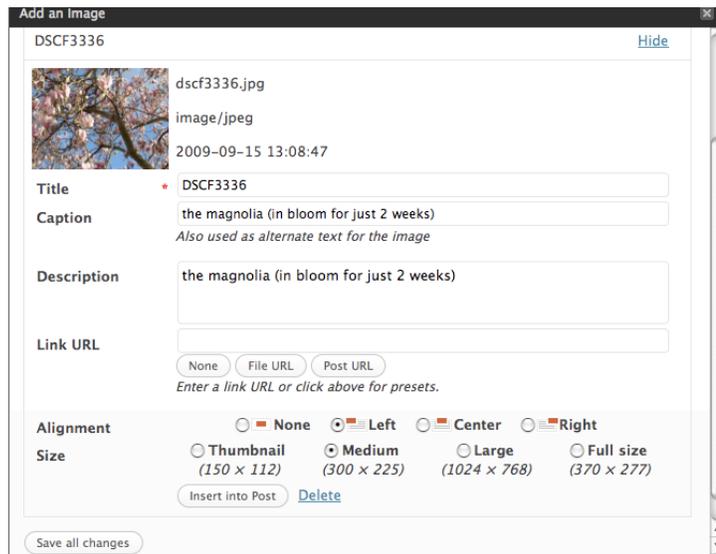
Type any text straight into the box. You can choose to highlight important text in bold or italics using the familiar B or *i* tags.



Add multimedia (images, video and so on) by clicking the 'Upload/insert' icons in the toolbar. The first of these is for images. Click on it and a new screen appears.

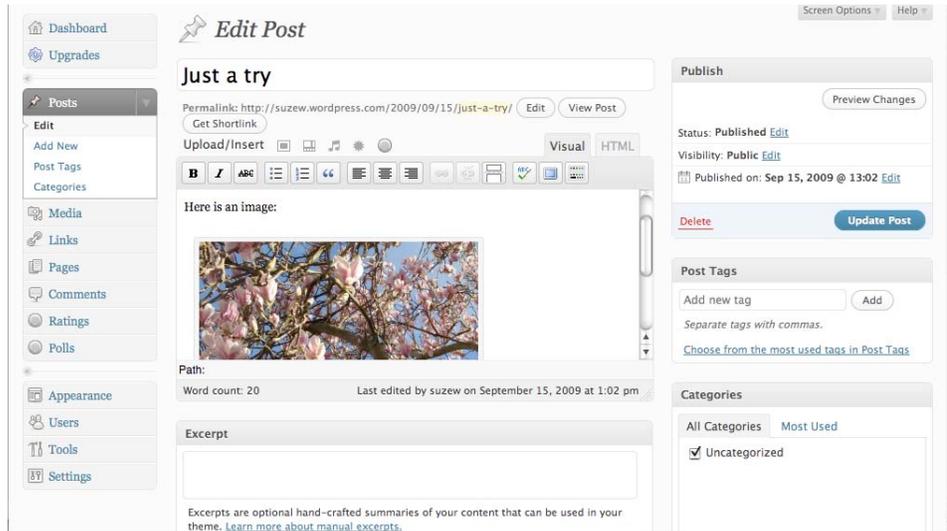


At the top of the new screen, choose the location from which you would like to upload the image. From the images available, select the image you want and click on 'Show' to the right of the image thumbnail. This will open a new screen, where you can determine the size, position and other important aspects of the image as you would like it to appear on your post/page.



Once you are happy with the image, click on the 'Insert into post' button towards the bottom of the page. Back on your post/page screen, you will be able to see the image in position (you will need to select Visual rather than HTML - you can do this just above the box of text).

Click on Update post (on the right-hand side of the screen) and then take a look at what you have done by previewing (this button is on the top-right of this screen).



Tip: Always preview your page before publishing it. On any page that allows you to edit or change your site you will see a 'PREVIEW' button. Click it and your site will preview in a new window. If you are happy with the preview, go back to your dashboard and click 'PUBLISH'.

Publishing your site

Depending on the tool you use to build your website, you may need to go through one final stage to publish it (ie to make sure it can be seen on the web). This is known as FTP (File Transfer Protocol). FTP tools are easy to use and generally come with clear instructions.

You will not need to use FTP with the free web publishing tools like Wordpress.com or iWeb or with most CMS-based sites - they should publish the site automatically for you. However, if you create a site yourself, you are likely to need to use FTP.

A list of free FTP software is available at:

http://www.thefreesite.com/Free_Software/FTP_freeware/

Useful Resources

Domain Check for Africa

<http://www.afridns.org>

<http://www.africaregistry.com>

<http://www.afridns.org/#.za>

Domain check global with Africa specification

http://www.marcaria.com/domains/domain_registration_Africa.asp

Webhoster national

<http://www.info.bw/services/index.shtml>

Broadband

<http://bbi.co.bw>

<http://www.btcbbroadband.co.bw>

Joomla and Wordpress

Are available in Africa, there is an African version of Joomla

<http://www.joomla-africa.com>

ISPs

BTC (Botswana Telecommunications Corporation) <http://www.btc.bw/index.html>

Brobe, <http://www.brobe.co.bw/about.html>

Botsnet (BTC) <http://www.botsnet.biz/group.php>

Grants and Sources of Funding

(First National Bank Botswana) FNB Botswana Foundation

<https://www.fnbbotswana.co.bw/aboutus/responsibility/foundation.html>

Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency

<http://www.ceda.co.bw/>

Government website > Ministries and Authorities section and write grant on the browser

Here are some examples of grants:

Youth development grant

<http://www.gov.bw/en/Ministries--Authorities/Ministries/Ministry-of-Youth-Sport-and-Culture-MYSC/Department-of-Youth/Youth-Development-Grant/>

Application for Small Grants Livestock Management Infrastructure

<http://www.gov.bw/en/Ministries--Authorities/Ministries/MinistryofAgriculture-MOA/Tools--Services/Services--Forms/Application-for-Small-Grants-Livestock-Management-Infrastructure/>

Creating images and multimedia for the web

<http://www.messageinbox.tacticaltech.org>

Search Engines and Directories

<http://www.google.co.bw>

<http://www.info.bw>

<http://www.gobatla.com> (yellow pages)

<http://www.ndparking.com/pu-la.com>

<http://www.bezab.biz/>

<http://www.webdesign.co.bw/>

Social networking websites

<http://www.edumela.com/>

<http://gabsmail.com/>

<http://www.feelgoodbotswana.net/help.php?t=6>

Blog/simple website platforms

Wordpress

<http://www.wordpress.com> or <http://www.wordpress.org>

Blogger

<http://www.blogger.com>

FTP software

A list of free FTP software is available at:

http://www.thefreesite.com/Free_Software/FTP_freeware/

Includes the following (all downloadable via the above site):

FTP Surfer

FTP Commander

BitTorrent

AceFTP

FileZilla

Articles

Interesting features about web design, web hosting about Botswana:

<http://www.thapelotlhong.com>

How to block some countries with wordpress:

<http://www.jasonlitka.com/2007/04/16/wordpress-plugin-block-countries/>

The Internet and the Law

<http://www.laws.gov.bw>

Part 3: Creating content for your website

Now that you have planned and built the structure of your campaign website, it is time to start filling it with content. This includes:

- Text
- Multimedia such as video, audio and podcasts
- Photos, images and icons

Text

On the web, people tend to scan rather than read. You need to make scanning as easy as possible for people who visit your site and write your content accordingly.

Always keep in mind *why* people come to your site and *what* they need to find there, and then work out how you can make it easiest for them to find it. The following general principles will help you.

General principles of good web writing

Keep it short. This applies to sentences, paragraphs & pages

- Online readers are impatient and will rarely read past the first few sentences.
- Keep sentences to 15-20 words maximum.
- Cut out any unnecessary words. In general, less is more.
- Keep paragraphs to 3-5 sentences maximum.
- Minimize the need to scroll down the page - people rarely bother. (See also part 3. below)

Make it easy to scan/"skim read"

- Start with the conclusion (like newspapers).
- Have just one main idea per paragraph.

Break up the page

- Use sub-headings.
- Use bullet points instead of lists within a sentence.
- Use bold text occasionally, to highlight important points.
- If you do need to create a longer page, include a content list at the top of the page and use anchor links to help people move around the page with ease.

Create descriptive links

For example, use 'find out more about our meetings' (rather than 'click here'). This will increase the accessibility of your website.

Create alt tags for your images

Alt tags are text descriptions of your images. Use these so that people know what your images are. For example, 'Some of the people involved in MRG's recent Minority Voices project'. Again this will increase the accessibility of your site.

Use active language rather than passive

For example, 'We have developed a project' rather than 'A project has been developed'.

Layer your website

- Keep text simple and brief at the top levels of your site (that is the homepage and main navigation pages - see the section on **Websites and Blogs** for more information).
- If you need to include lengthier detail on your site, create a new page for it. You can link through to the new page so that anyone interested can read more.
- Limit the number of times people need to click to other pages for information they need, ideally to a maximum of 3 clicks. Otherwise you'll probably lose them.

Position your content well

Put your most vital content at the top-left of the page. It is viewed more than any other part of the page. (This is true of sites in languages using the Roman alphabet but will not be true of all other language types.)

Legal issues regarding web content

Publishing content on the web makes you and your site users subject to particular aspects of the law. The aspects that you need to think about most carefully are copyright, defamation and privacy (data protection). You should research the law in your country or region if you are at all uncertain.

Copyright

Copyright is the protection given by law to a person who has created a piece of work (writers, artists, photographers, composers, architects, software designers, filmmakers etc).

- Respecting others' copyright
You need to make sure that you have the right to use the content that you want to put up on your website - whether text, images or multimedia.
- Protecting your own copyright
You should also make sure you explicitly assert copyright for your own material on the site. An easy way to do this is to include a copyright statement on the site (generally by creating a page for it and including a link to it in the footer of every page). A typical copyright statement will explain who owns the copyright for material used on the site and how someone can ask to reproduce material from the site. You could also include a warning about what action you will take if you discover that people are infringing your copyright.

For example, Minority Rights Group's copyright statement from its website:

"Copyright, trademarks and all other intellectual property rights on this website are either owned or licensed to Minority Rights Group International, unless otherwise stated. Compliance with copyright law is your liability.

No copying or distribution for any commercial or business use is permitted without prior written consent from Minority Rights Group International. Contact us on minority.rights@mrgmail.org

You may reproduce Minority Rights Group International's copyright material appearing on this website free of charge without specific permission for private personal use only, as long as the copyright and source indications are also copied; the document is not amended in any way, is copied in its entirety and is not reproduced in a derogatory or misleading manner or context.

Our permission to reproduce copyright material does not extend to any material on this website that is the copyright material of any other person."

Defamation or Internet libel

You must be careful about what you write about other people on your website. Your website is a public publishing tool and could potentially be read by many thousands of people. Consequently, you are subject to the libel laws just as any print publisher would be. You must take care not to damage the reputation of any individual or organization by expressing an opinion as if it were fact.

Many campaigns will involve criticism of individuals, companies, organizations or governmental bodies: you must be sure of any facts that you include and must avoid publishing hearsay and supposition in the guise of fact. If in doubt, leave it out - or get a second opinion from someone knowledgeable about legal matters.

Privacy

People have the right to privacy. You should be careful not to infringe the privacy of people who visit your website or whom you email (more information about this is included in Section 6).

On the web, some people find the use of cookies to be an invasion of their privacy and therefore unacceptable. Cookies are small bits of code which can be used to store user preferences, shopping cart contents and other information about a website visitor. It is possible for users to disable cookies on their computers, so think hard about what cookies you need to include on your site. There are some web users who particularly object to non-profit organizations using cookies, which they believe to be unnecessary.

However, please note that if your site includes any shopping or detailed registration elements, you will have to have cookies - the site won't work without them.

What is multimedia content?

Multimedia content is a great way to make your website interesting and exciting. This will encourage people to spend more time on your site and to return there in the future, which is exactly what you're aiming at. Multimedia content includes:

- Images (including photos)
- Videos
- Audio files and podcasts.

Multimedia content can, however, also lessen the appeal of your site if it is badly prepared. Not only can it make the site look bad, it can also cause the site to load

slowly - and people don't wait for slow sites to load, they leave them. This section of the manual explains how to create multimedia so that it works positively for your campaign.

Images

Websites benefit hugely from the inclusion of images, including photographs. Use good quality images and prepare them properly for the web, making sure it is the right file type (eg. Gif, jpeg, png) and the right size (eg. 100kb, 200kb etc).

Important note: You must have permission to use images. If you have not taken them yourself, makes sure the copyright holder (usually the photographer) has given you written permission.

Free image editing software

Once you have your image, you need to make sure it is ready for the web and is the right size for your site. If it isn't, you will need to convert it using image-editing software.

Image editing software can be costly. Photoshop is the best known program but unless you already have it, it is expensive. If you don't have the funds for Photoshop, try one of these free image editing packages:

- Photoscape
- GIMP for Windows
- Paint.NET
- Serif PhotoPlus
- Pixia

You can find out more about any of these by putting their names into a search engine.

Choosing the right image file type

There are three types of image files that are most commonly used on the web: JPEG, GIF or PNG.

- JPEG (pronounced *Jay-Peg*) or JPG compresses the information in an image file, making it smaller and easier to download. Most of the photographs you see on the Web are in JPEG format.
- GIF stands for *Graphic Interchange Format*. It has been the most commonly used graphic file type on the Web. It limits the number of colors in an image so the file can download faster. It's particularly good for text, art, cartoons, and line drawings.
- PNG is a newer open source alternative to GIF.

The table on the following page explains which file type is suitable for particular types of images on the web.

Image file type	Pros	Cons
JPEG	Great for photos and complex art. Best at compression (reducing to 10-25% of original size while retaining quality; or to 2-4% if quality less important). Can be used for zoomable or streamable images.	Compression is irreversible. Compression can affect image quality if taken too far.
GIF	Low file size. Lossless compression (ie no image data is lost and the image can be retrieved in its original form). Great for graphic logos, banners or simple art. Great for black and white images. Can be used for animation.	Only works with images that have less than 256 colours. Not good for photos.
PNG	Great image quality for all image types. Offers lossless compression for full colour images (unlike other file types).	Not supported by all web browsers. Not as good at compression as JPEG (approximately 60% of original size).

Files Sizes

Image size covers two things: the dimensions (height/width) of the image on the screen and the size of the file (usually expressed in kilobytes/kb or megabytes/mb).

Dimensions

This is the width and height of an image and is generally measured in pixels. Web graphics should be no wider than 500 pixels and no higher than 300 pixels (around half of the basic 800 x 600 screen size that some people still use). However, you are more likely to want to include a smaller image, so you should decide what size you would like your images to be and stick to that. Your site will look far better if you use a consistent image height and width. You can use the DPI equation below to help work out the size you want.

DPI Equation:

(Width of image in inches x DPI) x (Height of image in inches x DPI) = Image size on screen.
Example: (2 inches x 72 dpi) x (1.5 inches x 72 dpi) = 144 x 108 pixels

Note: If you only want to use part of the image, you can crop it before resizing it. You can do this with your image editing software.

The size of the file

This means the amount of memory the image takes up on your computer in kilobytes (kb). Your aim is to prepare your image so that it retains as much clarity as possible but

'weighs' as few kilobytes as possible. If you use images that are too large, your webpage will take too long to load and could cause problems for anybody with slow Internet access (eg dial up).

File type	Size
Header/footer	1-10kb
Photos/featured images	Less than 30kb
Whole web page	Less than 45k

Image resolution

Images are made up of dots called pixels that combine to create the shapes and colors of an image. Resolution means the number of these dots, or pixels, appearing in the space of one inch. The lower the resolution, the grainier an image will appear. However, higher resolution means a larger file size (and slower loading time for your page), so you will need to make a balanced decision about the resolution you choose. Images for the Web are normally set at 72 DPI (dots per inch), or 72 pixels per inch. You can change the image resolution size in your image-editing program (usually in Image > Size or Image > Information).

Video

This part of the multimedia section imagines that you have already created or obtained video footage that you now want to include on your website. If you haven't, there is a wealth of information available on the Internet to advise you on how best to do that (see Section 9 for a list of online resources).

As with images, you must first make sure that you have the right to include the video on your website (see the information about Copyright in Section 3).

Again as with images, you will need to make sure that the video has been properly prepared for the web. The list of resources in Section 9 can help with this. A particularly useful resource is the Tactical Technology Collective's Video Message-in-a-Box project, which has a dedicated video section:

<http://www.messageinabox.tacticaltech.org/section/10>.

File formats

It isn't possible to give definitive instructions about ideal file formats as these depend on where you are publishing the video. Each platform or website has its own requirements. For example, YouTube accepts only the following formats:

- Windows Media Video (.WMV)
- .3GP (cell phones)
- .AVI (Windows)
- .MOV (Mac)
- .MP4 (iPod/psp)
- .MPEG
- .FLV (adobe flash)
- .MKV (h.264)

YouTube recommends that if your video is not currently in one of these formats, you should convert it to MPEG4 video with MP3 audio for the best results. It also recommends that you use FFMPEG to do this (which comes as part of most video converter software, free and paid-for).

If you do need to alter the format of your video in order to upload it to a particular website, you should be able to do that with your video editing software. Most video editing software such as Windows Movie Maker or iMovie will offer the option of saving your video in different formats using the *Save to my computer* or *Save as* option, at which point you should be able to select the file format you want.

File sizes

As with file formats for online video, the file size requirements of different websites and their video players can be varied. They can be affected by many different issues, including the depth of colour in the video, the resolution (frame size), the frame rate and the codec chosen to compress the video for use on the Web.

Most players need files to be compressed (reduced in size) to around 2 MB, including Flash, the most popularly used player. However, Windows Media Player can handle up to 7 MB and QuickTime a huge 53 MB. YouTube stipulates a maximum of 2 GB max for YouTube. Again, you need to check your chosen destination and prepare your video accordingly.

The longer and/or higher quality your video is, the more you will need to compress it to fit it into a smaller file size.

You can compress your video using movie editors, like Windows MovieMaker or Apple iMovie. (Your digital camera or camcorder may also have come with a video-editing package as part of its installation CD.)

Remember that, as with the process of photocopying, there will be a reduction in quality each time you compress a video. It is best to go back to the original version with your video editing software when exporting in the file size and format you want.

Inserting (embedding) video

On each website, there will be a different method to insert video. Basically, though, you will need to choose where you want to position your video by placing the cursor at the insertion point in the document window, and then go to *Insert*. From here each program will have a slightly different method. Some will allow you to select the term *video*; others will use the term *media*. Once you have clicked the correct description, you will need to browse (search for your video) in your files for the video before selecting it.

The program you use may also offer other options to customize your video online. It is worth exploring them, as they should improve your viewers' experience. Some examples include:

- You may be invited to select an alternate image. If you are given the option of an alternate image, click *Browse* to find an image file that can substitute for the video if the viewer's browser doesn't support videos or the user turns off video display.
- You may be allowed to choose how you would like your video to play. For example, you may want your video to start playing when the page opens, or you may prefer it to start after a mouse-over or mouse-click.

- You may be allowed to set your video to replay (*loop*) as many times as you would like and to choose the number of times.

Audio and podcasts

Audio files and podcasts are closely related but are not accessed by the listener (or viewer) in the same way.

Audio files are only for listening to. If you want to include audio files on your website, you need to upload them to the web page, where they can either be downloaded or listened to from the website (if they have been embedded on the page). Whenever you upload a new file, listeners have to return to the site to listen or to download.

Podcasts are delivered differently. They are a series of digital media (audio or video) files, which are offered for download by web syndication. It is this particular mode of delivery that differentiates podcasts from other ways of accessing media files over the Internet (such as simple download or streamed webcasts).

People use special client software applications known as *podcatchers* (like [iTunes](#), Microsoft Zune, Juice or Winamp) to automatically identify and download new files in the series when the files are released. The podcatcher does this by accessing a centrally maintained web feed that lists all files currently associated with that particular series. The podcatcher automatically downloads new files and stores them on the user's computer (or on an offline device such as an iPod or MP3 player).

When you upload a podcast, feeds are sent out automatically. Listeners can subscribe from many websites as long as they have a free Podcast or RSS reader or suitable aggregation software (eg iTunes or Juice). The benefit of a podcast web feed over a standard web feed is that once the user subscribes the feed their podcast reader will automatically download any new media that is offered by the distributor.

TUTORIAL: How to prepare an audio file for the web

There is a wide range of audio formats available, falling into 3 main groups.

Uncompressed audio formats	WAV, AIFF, AU
Formats with lossless compression	FLAC, APE, WV, TAK, TTA, Shorten, ATRAC Advanced Lossless, Apple Lossless, WMA Lossless
Formats with lossy compression	MP3, Vorbis, Musepack, AAC, ATRAC, WMA

Start by finding out what file formats are supported by the website on which you want to place your audio file. For example, the [minorityvoices.org](#) website accepts: AI, AIF, AU, MIDI, MP2, MP3, WAV

You may find that you need to convert your audio file from the format in which it was created in order for it to be usable on the intended website. To do this, you will need to use an audio conversion program. There are many free audio conversion programs available, including: FormatFactory, Quick Media Converter, Pazera Video Converters Suite, XMedia Recode. (Each of these may target particular formats or devices so check what you need before you start - you can find out more about them by searching on the web.)

Once you have a suitable audio conversion program open it, select the file you want to convert and choose the type of file you want to create. (Please note: The file formats that are likely to be handled by your browser without a plug-in application are .midi and .wav but many computers have plug-ins already loaded to handle .au, .mp3 and .wma. You need to select which you want to present on your website and convert the audio file into those formats.)

Once the file is ready, you are ready to attach your new audio content to the place you want it to sit within your site. If you have a CMS or are using a simple program such as Wordpress, this will be made very easy for you (for Wordpress, follow the instructions given above for inserting images, just selecting audio files instead - the icon with musical notes). If not, you may need to amend the site's coding to ensure that the file is properly attached; you will need someone technologically skilled for this.

How to create a podcast

The main syndication protocols for podcasts (ie the way you disseminate your podcast) are RSS, ATOM and OPML.

You will start with an audio file (which you could make using a free audio recorder and editor like Audacity, which is available for Mac, Windows and Linux:

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>).

As the platform you use (Mac or Windows) will affect the exact process of creating a podcast, please use the list (below) of free online tutorials to learn how to podcast.

Basically the process is this:

- The file then needs to be uploaded to a server (if you don't have a website, you could use the free, unlimited media storage space Our Media).
- The file then needs to be publicized on (and linked to from) your website or blog.
- You may need to enhance the web feed into a podcast (if you do, you could use a free service such as Feedburner).

Free online podcasting tutorials

- How to podcast with your Mac:
<http://www.engadget.com/entry/5843952395227141/>
- How to podcast for free: <http://www.podcasttools.com/>
- How to podcast with Windows using free software:
<http://www.zefhemel.com/archives/2004/10/11/how-to-create-your-own-podcasting-show>

Useful Resources

Writing for the web

Writing for the web - written by leading usability expert, Jakob Nielsen

<http://www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/>

The internet and the law

An introduction to the Internet and the law - aimed at companies but some useful content

http://www.lloydstsbbusiness.com/support/businessguides/internet_law.asp

Image-editing software

Includes:

Photoscape

<http://www.photoscape.org>

GIMP for Windows

<http://www.gimp.org/windows/>

Paint.NET

<http://www.getpaint.net/>

Serif PhotoPlus

<http://www.freerisefoftware.com/software/photoplus/>

Pixia

<http://www.snapfiles.com/get/pixia.html>

VCW VicMan's Photo Editor

<http://www.vicman.net/vcwphoto/index.htm>

Photofiltre

<http://photofiltre.en.softonic.com/>

Ultimate Paint

<http://www.ultimatepaint.com/>

Image Forge

http://www.cursorarts.com/ca_imfw.html

Video

A website featuring a wide range of video advice and tutorials, including about compression, file sizes and adding videos to web pages

<http://victoria.astonishingportal.com/electronicportfolio/addingvideo/videowebsite/introductionaddingvideotowebpages.html>

Free video editing software

<http://labnol.blogspot.com/2007/01/free-video-editing-software-for.html>

How to reduce video file sizes

http://www.deskshare.com/resources/articles/dmc_ReduceFileSize.aspx

Tactical Tech's Message-in-a-box on Video - extensive advice about preparing video for the web, including tutorials and links

<http://www.messageinabox.tacticaltech.org/section/10>

Podcatchers

Include:

iTunes

<http://www.apple.com/itunes/>

Microsoft Zune

<http://social.zune.net/>

Juice

<http://juicereceiver.sourceforge.net/>

Winamp

<http://www.winamp.com/>

Audio conversion software

Includes:

FormatFactory

Quick Media Converter

Pazera Video Converters Suite

XMedia Recode

Audio recorder/editor (free)

Audacity, which is available for Mac, Windows and Linux:

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

Free online podcasting tutorials

How to podcast with a Mac

<http://www.engadget.com/entry/5843952395227141/>

How to podcast for free

<http://www.podcasttools.com/>

How to podcast with Windows using free software

<http://www.zefhemel.com/archives/2004/10/11/how-to-create-your-own-podcasting-show>

Part 4: Online petitions

Petitions are a very good way of collecting proven support for your campaign. They can do a great deal to help put increased pressure on those in power to take notice of your campaign and make the changes you are calling for. They can also add weight to your media coverage by demonstrating the extent of support for the campaign.

What is an online petition?

A petition is a document requesting a change, addressed to an official and signed by a number of individuals. An online petition is hosted on a website: visitors to the website are encouraged to add their email addresses or names, and when enough signatures have been collected, the document is delivered to the official, usually - but not exclusively - by e-mail.

By registering with an online petition hosting site, you can quickly and easily - and without cost - set up an online petition. An online petition will help you promote your message and provide a focal action for people to join in with, again quickly and easily. Your petition could become the focal point for your community of supporters.

You will make your campaign even more powerful by combining your online petition with offline petitioning. Encourage people to tell their friends and contacts about the campaign and to collect additional signatures.

TUTORIAL: How to set up an online petition

Identify your target. It could be the government, particular politicians whether local or national, the EU, the UN, prime ministers, presidents, senators, ambassadors, institutions, organizations or corporations.

Research the shape that a petition to your target needs to take. For some targets - for example, a local government official - petitions need to be phrased and submitted in a certain way for them to be considered. Make sure you are aware of these constraints and that you organize your petition accordingly.

Draft your petition. Start with a request. Follow with well-researched reasons for making this request: describe the background situation and say what is needed and why. Provide links to factual information that supports your request and the reasoning behind it.

Keep the language clear and concise. Make sure the petition concentrates on the main message. Cut out anything that doesn't support the message.

Make sure it is clear on the petition that you are behaving responsibly with regard to people's privacy when they sign the petition. Do not use their personal details to send unsolicited email and never sell this data to any third party.

Once you have drafted and planned your petition, go to one of the many free petition hosting sites, register and create your petition. Petition hosting sites include:

GoPetition UK

Care2

Change.org

Thepetitionsite.com

Tip: Facebook also has a petition function

Publicize your petition as widely as possible. You could publicize the petition by email, on your website and blogs and on a variety of forums and social networks. (See Section 6 for further information on Building relationships).

Useful Resources

Petition hosting sites

Include:

GoPetition UK

<http://www.gopetition.co.uk>

Care2

<http://www.care2.com>

Change.org

<http://www.change.org>

Thepetitionsite.com

<http://www.thepetitionsite.com>

(Facebook also has a petition function that is currently very popular)

Part 5: Building relationships online

One of the biggest strengths of the Internet for campaigning is its ability to help you build strong relationships with your campaign's supporters.

Using email, discussion forums and social networks combined with offline coalition and partnership, you can increase the amount of support for the campaign and build a strong support base with which you have an ongoing interactive relationship.

Using email for campaigning

Email is an excellent and cheap tool for developing ongoing relationships with your campaign's supporters.

To start with, you will need to collect email addresses from anyone interested and hold them in mailing lists. With this, you will be able to send targeted emails and e-newsletters, either whenever you have something new to say (emails) or on a more regular basis (e-newsletters).

Some parts of the world have strict laws governing this type of email communication. Your jurisdiction may not but it is worth following best practice: your country's laws may change and are likely only to become stricter. Best practice regarding mailing lists is as follows:

- **Use double opt-in subscriber lists:** This will help to ensure that you have the express permission of each of your recipients. You can create a customized system so that anyone who subscribes to a list you have set up will automatically be sent an email with a confirmation link. When clicked, the subscriber will be added to the list, confirming they have given their consent for you to contact them in this way.
- **Process all unsubscribe requests within one week:** You should ensure that an unsubcriber is removed from your list within 7 days of an unsubscribe request being made. This means you need to keep track of such requests on a regular basis.
- **Use a legitimate from name and email address:** The *from* name and *from* email address you use must be a legitimate company or staff member name and the email address must be valid.
- **Use accurate and descriptive subject headings:** You should ensure that the subject line of your email relates to the content of your campaign so that you don't mislead your recipients.
- **Use a valid reply-to address that can function as an unsubscribe mechanism:** You should either have a *reply-to* address that someone can use to unsubscribe or another Internet-based mechanism, clearly and conspicuously displayed. You need to check the reply-to mailbox regularly (at least once a week) in case someone does use this to unsubscribe.
- **Always include your street address:** You should include in your email a valid physical postal address for the sender (individual or organization) of your campaign emails.

E-newsletters

E-newsletters are usually sent out to subscribers on a regular basis. They can be a very effective way of reminding and updating your supporters about the campaign. However, you need to do them well or they will be ignored or deleted.

Best practice for e-newsletters includes:

- Make sure they are well written. They should have a brief and enticing subject line to encourage people to open them. Be brief and set out your information clearly (Section 3's advice on Writing for the web will be relevant). Introduce each point succinctly and link to further online information (for example, on your website) for those who would like to know more. Be consistent in style - but try, too, to keep it fresh and interesting.
- Decide how often they will be sent out - and stick to it. This will maintain your campaign's place in the minds of your supporters.
- Do not send them as attachments - they should be html or plain text emails (ideally offer both).
- Follow the recommendations for emails (see above). It is vital that you always include an option to unsubscribe.
- Encourage subscribers to forward your email to a friend. This will help to increase your support base. Make it easy to subscribe by including a link for this in each e-newsletter.
- Personalize your e-newsletter. Send to the recipient by name if you can.
- Encourage interaction by including quick polls and surveys - you can include the results in the next newsletter.
- Monitor how your e-newsletter is used. How many times is it opened? How many times do people click through to the links included? Which links (stories) are most popular? How many unsubscribes are you getting? How many forward-to-a-friends? Use this information to modify future newsletters to make them as effective as possible for the campaign.

Email and e-newsletter tools

If you don't want to use your own email account - and you need to be careful as it is easy to become blocked as being a spammer - there are many email marketing tools available, all relatively cheap. They include the following - put them into a search engine to find out more:

- CTT Mail
- CharityMail
- Mailchimp
- Campaign monitor
- Email Ladder
- EMS Bulk Email Sender
- Newsletter Sender
- Group Mail Manager

Discussion forums, chat rooms and social networks

Discussion forums, chat rooms and social networks are places where people can gather together virtually with like-minded people to chat online about particular topics. They provide great opportunities to increase the number of supporters for your campaign, to spread the word and to encourage people to take part in actions and events.

If you are hosting a discussion forum, be aware that you have a responsibility to monitor the discussion and to take action should there be problems. You could, for example, be held responsible for defamatory remarks made against someone if you don't remove them promptly.

These days it is probably easiest not to host a public discussion forum: social networks cover this ground really well. However, you may want to create a members', password protected discussion area where supporters can exchange ideas. You will still need to monitor this but the responsibility may be easier. Many CMS systems come with a password protected discussion forum option, so it is easy to set one up from a website created in this way.

The number of social networks is growing all the time. Different social networks have different demographics, so it is worth researching to see which are most likely to have the types of members who will be interested in your campaign. Within most of these social networks, there is the potential to run surveys and petitions, to publicize events and to gather together around a cause.

The top 5 most popular social networks currently (Autumn 2009) are:

- **Facebook** - international, multilingual, 64% of users aged 18+, offers most standard networking features except chat rooms and commercial videos. Currently the most popular social network in existence.
- **MySpace** - international, multilingual, 67% of users aged 18+, offers all standard networking features. Strong for multimedia material.
- **Bebo** - international, 46% of users aged 18+, offers many standard networking features (but not chat rooms, groups, forums, bulletins, classifieds, events and books). Particularly popular in the UK, increasingly popular in USA. High number of teenage members.
- **Friendster** - international, multilingual, 97% of users aged 18+ (have to be 18 to join), offers a few standard networking features. Particularly popular in Asia, becoming increasingly popular in USA.
- **hi5** - international, multilingual, 76% of users aged 18+, no ads, offers very few standard networking features.

(Go to <http://social-networking-websites-review.toptenreviews.com/> to read this review in more detail)

Working in partnership

The most successful online campaigns are run in partnership with other organizations or campaigns. Working together maximizes the impact you can have, reaching larger numbers of people. Sharing resources, contacts and expertise - both on-and offline - will make your campaign stronger and more successful.

Examples of online partnership include:

- Linking between your websites
- Sharing rather than duplicating (for example, you can set up one petition and link to it from all the partners' websites, instead of each campaign setting up its own petition)
- Recommending one another's campaigns to your own supporters and asking them to consider joining and spreading the word.

Useful Resources

Email and e-newsletter tools

Include:

CTT Mail

http://www.ctt.org/products_services/ctt_mail/default.asp

CharityMail

<http://www.charityemail.co.uk>

Mailchimp

<http://www.mailchimp.com>

Campaign Monitor

<http://www.campaignmonitor.com>

Email Ladder

<http://email-ladder.co.uk>

Social networks

An extensive review of the top 10 most popular social networks currently (Autumn 2009)

<http://social-networking-websites-review.toptenreviews.com/>

Part 6: Monitoring success

Once you have created your website, it is important that you continue to keep it up-to-date and monitor its use and its presence on the web. This will give you valuable information to use when evaluating the success of your site.

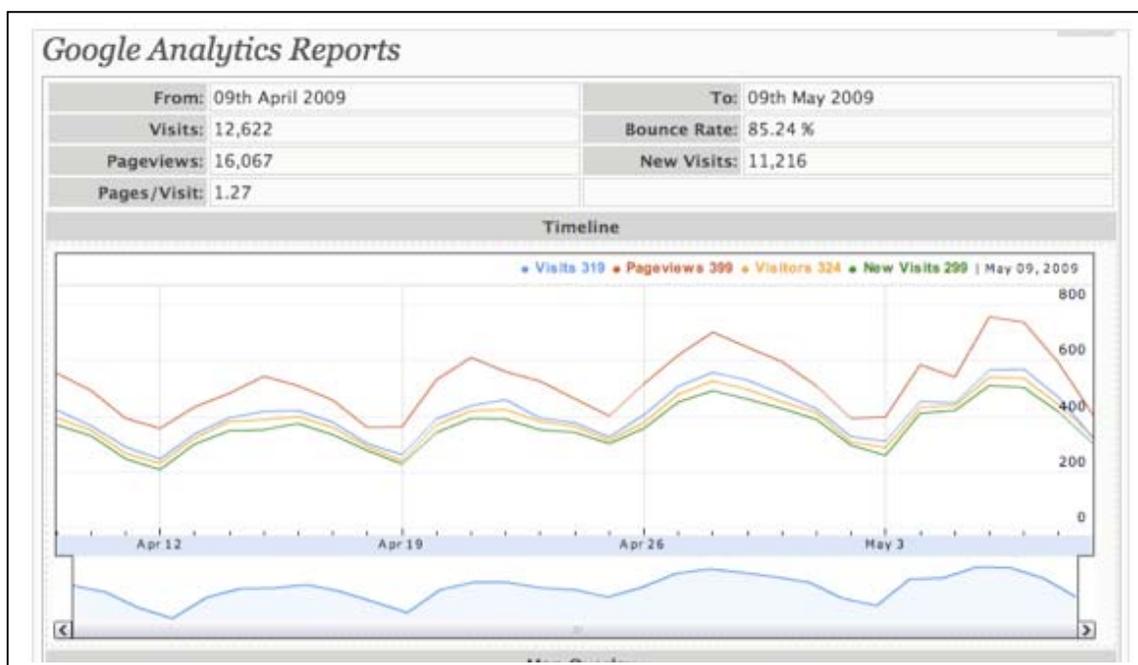
Maintaining your site

Keeping your website up-to-date and accurate will help to maintain the credibility of your campaign. If you have carried out the initial planning (recommended in Section 1), you will have clarified your capacity and resources and built your website accordingly. As a result, you should have been able to maintain your site as a positive demonstration of your campaign, its aims and its successes, including:

- Accurate spellings and grammar
- Prompt removal (or archiving) of out-of-date material
- Regular news updates
- Clear reporting of successes and progress
- Clear, fresh requests for action/help.

Using your web stats

Hopefully you will have been able to set up a website where you are able to access regular statistics about the usage of your website.



Most useful to you will be information such as:

- Monthly history – unique visitors, number of visits, particular spikes in visit numbers (perhaps coinciding with press coverage etc)
- Visitors domains – where they're accessing the site from (eg workplaces, particular countries)

- Robots/spiders (which search engines are checking your site)
- Visit duration (how long people are spending on your site)
- Pages URL (Top 10 most popular pages on your site)
- Connect to site from (direct/links from ...) (how people are coming to your site)
- Search keyphrases (the phrases/words that people put into search engines to find the site).

It is well worth tracking this on a monthly basis to see what is working and what might benefit from some tweaking.

Search engine optimization

Getting listed high on a search engine's pages is the aim of most websites. With around 50% of web users finding their sought for material via search engines, it can be a huge boost to your visibility to be ranked highly on a major search engine.

However, it is not easy to achieve. As it can be time consuming, it is best to conserve your efforts.

There are many search engines across the world. Find out which are the most popular in the country you are targeting - you should be able to do this through a search engine with an enquiry such as 'most popular search engines in Africa'.

With this information, you can then investigate how to get listed by those most popular search engines and how to increase your chances of a high rating. The search engines are generally very helpful with published advice about how to increase your chance of ranking well in their listings.

Relevance, discoverability, and crawlability.

Relevance means keeping to a topic and helping the search engine understand what your site is about (ideally it's about one thing in particular). Discoverability means telling the world about your site. The technical details and environment may have changed, but search marketing is still just marketing. Get your website out there, communicate with the online world and your users. And finally, crawlability means making the site accessible. Search engines regularly send out automated programs called web crawlers, and it's these crawlers that will visit your site and try to understand your content. Help the search engine crawlers find every page on your site and make sure they can understand what they're seeing.

TUTORIAL: Top tips for improving your SEO

Make sure that your website is clear and consistent: the search engines -and the world in general - need to be able to understand easily and quickly what your site is all about.

Decide which search engines you are going to target (see above).

Visit Search Engine Watch, a long-established, useful site about search engines to find out more about what you need to do to get listed by the search engines that you want to target: <http://searchenginewatch.com/2156221>

Think about the search terms people are likely to use when looking for your website.

Ensure that your page title (which appears at the top of the browser when it opens your webpage) and description (which you should include in your metadata - the

coding that sits behind your site) match your page content as closely as possible. All of these should relate to the search terms that you came up with (see tip 3).

Make sure your site is as accessible as possible: for example, include a site map, use consistent navigation and add ALT tags to all your images.

Register your site with your chosen search engines.

Watch your site analytics - eg Google Analytics (see Resources below) - to see which search terms bring people to your site. If necessary and appropriate (you can't cater for everybody's needs, after all), use this to tweak your site content

Promote your site wherever you can. The more sites that link to your site, the better. And remember about offline promotion too: for example, include your URL on all your printed materials.

Please note that adding keywords to your metadata (traditionally a major way of ranking highly) is now considered far less useful for improving the ranking of your site.

Publicising your site

Make sure you publicize **your** site as widely as possible. Search engines are part of this but there are many other ways of making sure your site stays in people's minds including:

- Making sure the site URL (web address) is included on all your printed and electronic materials (leaflets, posters, emails, press releases etc).
- Asking the media to include the URL whenever they cover the campaign.
- Including links to the site when posting in forums and on social networks.

Useful Resources

Search Engine Watch: a well established website dedicated to information about search engines and search engine optimization

<http://searchenginewatch.com> (<http://searchenginewatch.com/search-engine-optimization> for search engine optimization)

Google Analytics: a popular, free of charge stats package:

<http://www.google.com/analytics/>

Article

10 Fundamental Tips to Improve Your SEO - an online article from Search Engine Land

<http://searchengineland.com/10-fundamental-tips-to-improve-your-seo-14024>

Part 7: Sharing campaigning resources online

The Internet is a perfect cost-saving environment. It makes it possible for you to share resources with your supporters and partners quickly, easily and cheaply. Not only does it save money, it also helps save time and effort.

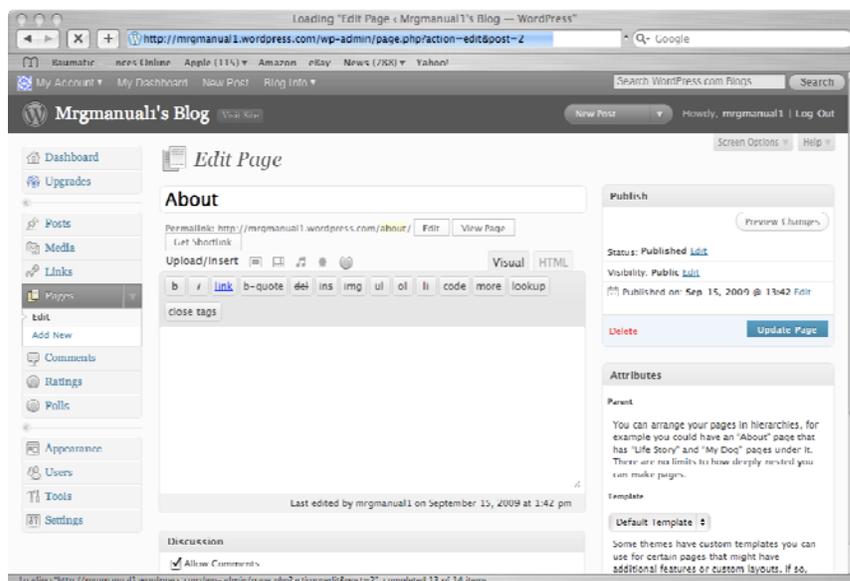
Removing the need for printing reduces costs. In addition, if a mistake has been made, waste is minimized, as it is generally quick and easy to amend an electronic resource and reattach it online.

Examples of resources that can be shared in this way:

- Letterheads
- Posters
- Flyers
- Petitions
- Style guide
- Training manuals
- Sample letters
- Logos
- Photos

How to share your campaign resources online

Most simple websites contain an easy-to-use facility for attaching a resource. With sites built using systems like Wordpress or a CMS, it is usually as easy as uploading the resource to the server, clicking on the part of the particular page where you would like it to appear and selecting the resource from your website resource list, usually using a *Browse* command.



If you need to maintain the integrity of your resource (that is, you don't want people to be able to modify the way it is laid out, designed or written), it is best to save it as a read-only PDF (some versions of Word include this facility; if not, you will need to obtain Acrobat from Adobe: <http://www.adobe.com>) and attach it to your website for download.

If you need supporters and partners to be able to modify the resource (for example, a sample letter which you are encouraging your supporters to personalize), it is better to attach it as a Word document.

Useful Resources

Download Adobe Acrobat to create PDFs

<http://www.adobe.com>

Glossary of Key Terms

Access

The right or ability to log onto a computer system or use a computer program.

Alt tag

A text description of an image that will display with or without the image. Important for web accessibility.

Audio conversion program

A computer program that converts audio files (see Audio file below) into different formats

Audio file

A sound recording that can be listened to on a computer or mobile device.

Blog

Short for weblog, a diary on the web. Usually populated by an individual with text and/or multimedia. Entries are generally displayed in reverse chronological order (most recent at the top).

Bookmark

To bookmark a website is to save its URL electronically for easy access. Usually done with favourite or useful sites.

Broadband

A signalling method capable of transferring large amounts of data at high speed. The preferable access type and speed for web use.

Chat room

A facility for participants, generally on the Internet, to exchange comments or information in real time.

Compression

The reduction in size of a data file, usually desirable with multimedia files on the Internet in order for them to load and become visible/audible as quickly as possible.

Content Management System (CMS)

A web content management system is designed to simplify the publication of Web content to Web sites, in particular, allowing content creators to submit content without requiring technical knowledge of HTML or the uploading of files (see FTP below).

CSS (Cascading Style Sheets)

A style sheet language used to describe the look and formatting of a web page. It enables presentation (including layout, colours and fonts) to be separated from content (written in a markup language such as HTML).

Dial-up

A slow form of access to the Internet using telephone lines.

Discussion forum

An online discussion site, usually focusing on a particular topic or group of topics.

Domain name

The name (words, phrases or characters) by which a website is known and which serves as its address - usually preceded by www. and ending in a suffix (see below).

DPI

Dots per inch, a measurement of image density. The standard resolution used on the web is 72 DPI, whereas the standard resolution for print is 300DPI.

E-newsletter

A regularly distributed publication about a particular topic of interest to its subscribers and sent electronically in an email. Usually includes links to websites for further information.

FTP

File Transfer Protocol, the means by which information is uploaded onto (published on) the web.

GIF

An image file format, Up to now, the most commonly used graphic file type on the web. It limits the number of colors in an image so the file can download faster. Particularly good for text, art, cartoons, and line drawings.

Hardware

Computers, printers, computer screens etc. The equipment and devices used in computing (rather than the programs used on it - see Software below).

Homepage

The main page of a website, often used as a welcome and/or introduction. Sometimes indicated by a URL (see below) ending in /index.

Host/Hosting

Holding a website on a web server (see Server below) in such a way that it can be seen by other computers. Hosting providers are companies who do this for payment and are also known as ISPs.

HTML

The coding language used to build websites.

Internet

A global system of interconnected computer networks. The Internet includes a vast array of information resources and services, most notably the World Wide Web. It also provides the infrastructure that supports e-mail, online chat, file transfer, file sharing, gaming, commerce, social networking, publishing, video on demand, teleconferencing and telecommunications.

ISPs

Internet Service Providers (see Hosting above)

JPEG/JPG

An image file format, generally used on the web for photos and complex full colour images.

Link

A piece of text on a webpage which, when clicked on using the mouse, leads to another webpage on either the same or a different website. An internal link leads to a piece of information on the same page.

Mac

One of the two main computer platforms (types, the other is PC, see below), created by Apple. Traditionally popular with designers and web developers.

Mailing list

A list of names and email addresses held for sending the same piece of information in one go to all those included in it. Vital for e-newsletters.

Moderation

Reading the contributions to a discussion forum with the power and responsibility for responding/dealing with/commenting on contributions when necessary.

Mouse-click

The method by which a web user moves from one web page to another.

Multimedia

This includes images, video, audio and podcasts, used to enhance the appeal of websites.

Navigation

The process created to help a user move around a website. Well-designed websites have consistent main navigation, found in the same position on every page. This makes movement around the site as easy as possible for the user.

Open source

Usually used to describe software (see below) developed for sharing and without charging. Often developed over time through collaboration.

PC

Personal computer. The other main web platform apart from the Mac (see above).

PDF

Portable Document Format. A document format capable of maintaining a document's design and layout on different computers, therefore used extensively on the web.

Pixel

An individual dot of light, the basic unit from which images on a computer or television screen are made. Used as a measurement of screen dimensions for the computer (eg 800 x 600, which means 800 pixels wide by 600 pixels high) and to measure the size of web content such as images. Important for image preparation for the web.

PNG

An image file format, developed as an open source (see above) alternative to GIF. Considered an improvement on GIF.

Podcast

A series of digital media (audio or video) files offered for download by web syndication.

Proprietary

Created by or owned by an individual or company and sold for money. For example, a proprietary CMS is a Content Management System (see above) sold for money. The alternative is open source (see above).

Registrar (Domain name registrar)

A company that will register a domain name on your behalf for a fee.

Resolution

The level of reproduction of detail offered by a computer screen or an image.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Carrying out the necessary work to ensure that a website ranks as highly as possible in the search engines (eg Google, Yahoo).

Server

A computer that stores application programs and data files accessed by other computers. A web server is used to store the data accessed on a website.

Social network

Or social network service. Builds online communities of people who share interests and/or activities. Usually web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as email and instant messaging. Has become a very popular method of communication in the last years, used by millions of people all over the world.

Software

A computer program or application.

Spamming (spam)

Sending an unsolicited message or spam (email) over the Internet as a mass mailing to a large number of recipients.

Suffix

The final part of a domain name (see above) that indicates either the country where a website is based (eg .uk, .ca, .us) or the type of company or organisation that has created the site (eg .com for commercial companies, .org for non-profits, .edu or .ac.uk for higher education).

Unique visitor

One individual who visits a website and an important gauge of web activity. The number of unique visitors in a given period is used as a key measure of a site's success.

URL

Uniform Resource Locator, another name for a web address (similar to a Domain name, see above). Generally starts http:// (or https:// for a secure site).

Web stats

Web statistics, metrics used to gauge the success of a website.

Wizard

An automatic tool for guiding a user through a web program or application.