

# Delaware Municipal Web Developers Group

## MEETING SUMMARY

**January 25, 2007**

Kent County Levy Court Building, Dover

1:00 to 3:30 p.m.

### AGENDA

#### 1. Attendees/Absentees

Attendees:

**Susan Ambridge** (IPA – University of Delaware), **Lisa Boltz** (Camden), **Jennifer Brook** (Smyrna), **Mark Callan** (Dover), **Linda Collins** (Millville), **Marian Delaney** (City of New Castle), **Mark Deshon** (IPA—University of Delaware), **John Giles** (Elsmere), **Rebecca Greene** (Felton), **Greg Hughes** (GIC), **Mark Kennedy** (Kent County), **Kristen Krenzer** (Middletown), **Tina Law** (Elsmere), **Richard Maly** (Camden), **Marta Pacheco** (Newark), **David Potter** (Middletown), **Tom Roth** (Henlopen Acres), **Charles Ruggiero** (Sussex Co.), **Pam Smith** (South Bethany), **Eddie Sparpaglione** (Sussex Co.), **Marie Thomas** (Ocean View), **Dell Tush** (Dewey), **Nelson Wiles** (Lewes); plus guests **Shirley Davis** (Dover), **April Hamilton** (CivicPlus), **Cullen Langford** (Bethany Beach), **Don Mulrine** (Camden), and **Tracy Mulligan** (Bethany Beach).

Absentees:

**Win Abbott** (Clayton), **Cathy Beaver** (Townsend), **Barbara Belli** (Wilmington), **Kathy Clifton** (Delaware City), **Cindy Fisher** (Delmar), **Ev Hall** (Greenwood), **Lisa Kail** (Bethany Beach), **Mike Mahaffie** (OSPC), **Paul Morrill** (Delaware City), **Jessica Norton** (Odessa), **Donna Schwartz** (Fenwick Island), **Rita Shade** (Newport), **Jamie Smith** (Laurel), **Angela Townsend** (Georgetown), **Amy Walls** (Seaford), **Randy Westergren** (Milford).

#### 2. Member Website Status

- **Bethany Beach** – now has a contract out to upgrade its website
- **Camden** – working on updates to website
- **Delaware City** – working with IPA to deploy a government site, which should be ready to launch within the next month
- **Dewey Beach** – completed their new site and went live approximately two weeks ago
- **Dover** – looking for third party interaction to take care of e-payments

- **Elsmere** – want to update site and just added request tracker feature through CivicPlus
- **Felton** – has a contract with local firm for its site and will be using the “.gov” domain
- **Henlopen Acres** – an “information page” is live; no change otherwise
- **Lewes** – launched redesigned site on Tuesday and still using “.us” domain
- **Middletown** – changes are ongoing
- **Millville** – currently working with a firm from Dover to develop its site
- **Newark** – launched new website in January through CivicPlus
- **New Castle** – added business licenses, variances, other downloadable forms in PDF
- **Ocean View** – actively seeking proposals for selection and approval of a developer
- **Smyrna** – no changes, continuing regular updates
- **South Bethany** – no change
  
- **Kent County** – would like to redesign site for use as a constituent tool for new and current residents
- **Sussex County** – sheriff sales and public meeting online, working on making comprehensive plan updates available, now accepting comments online
  
- **Delaware.gov** (Government Information Office) – public meeting calendar online, updated with minutes five days after a meeting. The first “delaware.gov” Podcast (the Governor’s “State of the State”) was made available last week; today there will be a budget Podcast

NOTE TO OTHER MUNICIPAL WEBMASTERS: Please help us add to this status list by sending Mark Deshon a brief status note (like the ones above). Thanks.

### **3. Guest Speaker: April Hamilton, MBA, Director of Sales, CivicPlus**

#### ***Citizen Communication Through The Generations***

Looking for ways to effectively communicate with residents of all ages?

April Hamilton gave a brief presentation on the importance of a government having a website. She cited numerous statistics of web usage to illustrate the growing percentage of the population who use the internet and gave suggestions on how to make government websites appeal to all ages.

- In 2006, 75% of adults were online, compared to 1995 when 15% of adults were online.
- Suggested using “Notify Me” links as a way to get community interaction.

- How it works: a resident signs up to receive e-mail notifications (such as meeting minutes), a listserv is created and a mass e-mail is sent out to all of those on the list.
  - A question was asked: Is the listserv open to the public due to FOIA laws?
  - Answer: Yes, so one must weigh the benefits vs. potential risks to its citizens.
- When using different languages on a site, April recommended using a real person to translate rather than literal translations.
  - Comment from Greg Hughes: Delaware.gov website uses BabelFish on certain pages and has a real person translate other pages that may contain more important information.
- 34% of households use dial up, and 62% use high speed—keep this dichotomy in mind when adding large files to websites.
- To get teens involved have teen commissions or special areas with information directed to them.
- To appeal to 18–28-year-olds, have information about four-year universities and colleges in your area.
- For 29–40-year-olds, have shopping information, things to do in your town, accommodations, online bill payment (which may not actually pay for itself).
- For 41–59-year-olds, consider allowing citizens to report on issues directly to the city. (CivicPlus offers a request tracker that will help governments manage requests.)
- For 60–69-year-olds, have an area specifically for senior citizens (information on health care, etc.).
- Statistics on what users want
  - 85% of Internet users expect up-to-date information.
  - 82% expect basic government information.
  - 81% want information related to health care.
  - 79% expect products and services.
- General tips:
  - Keep your website up to date
  - Make it easy to use—keep it “citizen-centric” (Apply a user study.)
  - Engage your site visitors (use of survey, listserv, etc.).
  - Link related items.
  - Don’t make them scroll down if they don’t have to.
  - Do an annual audit at least once per year.
  - Make sure you have your municipality phone number and address displayed on the site.
  - Keep files sizes small, so people who have dial-up connections can open them.

Comment from Greg Hughes:

Delaware.gov site allows citizens to submit photos and they are then featured on the site. This allows for citizen participation and brings people into the site. While they are looking for the picture, they can also see links to other items such as the Delaware code.

#### **4. Adobe LiveCycle Reader Extensions**

Greg Hughes of Delaware's Government Information Center introduced this new state-owned software, of which Delaware local governments can now take advantage for FREE.

- What the new software does:
  - Creates forms where users can save the information they enter into it.
  - Can add attachments to the form.
  - Has the ability to annotate forms—add a virtual sticky note (good for internal forms)
  - Ability to have a message pop up that is not part of the actual form.
- Advanced features:
  - Can export data electronically on the form.
  - Can add button on the form to be received via e-mail, HTTP, FTP.
  - Digital signatures
- An online demonstration of the new software was then given.
- If a PDF was created of a scanned page (i.e., from an image), Adobe Acrobat Professional 8 can detect it and change it from an image to a form that can use this software.
- Has the ability to make certain fields required.
- Your forms must already be in a PDF form to use this software. Adobe Acrobat Professional 8 creates PDF forms; this desktop software costs about \$300.

For further information you may contact Greg Hughes at [greg.hughes@state.de.us](mailto:greg.hughes@state.de.us).

#### **5. Policy Working Groups**

Sub-groups began discussing web issues for generic policy development:

- **E-mail policy**
- **External links policy**
- **Photographic images use policy**

It is important to remember that local government Web developers need to be watchdogs and be proactive in create policies. When going to a legal professional for help with Web policies, these policies should already be drafted.

## **E-mail policy**

This subgroup discussed the following items:

- Retention period for e-mail – Greg Hughes has talked to Jim Frazier at the Delaware Public Archives and he is willing to give a one- to two-hour lecture on this topic. He is willing to do it by county or at individual locations. His number is 302-744-5039.
- FOIA requirements for e-mail addresses saved as part of list-serv's or similar services.
- Is it worthwhile to try to get e-mail addresses exempt from FOIA requests? Delaware League of Local Governments could be a possible sponsor for this.
- Creation of a boilerplate e-mail/privacy policy. Greg Hughes is working on this now to give MWDG a starting point for discussion.
- Several towns asked for a copy of Delaware's Acceptable Use Policy (see link below).

Resources for discussion: Delaware.gov Acceptable Use Policy, Rock Island Co. (Ill.) policy

## **External links policy**

This subgroup broke down this area into the following items:

- Disclaimer (relating to user moving off-site)
- Linking policy that addresses the following:
  - businesses (profit-making entities)
  - candidates for political office (cannot infer any endorsement)
  - reciprocity/costs (reciprocal linking agreements with other entities)
- Third-party software (e.g., Adobe Reader)
- Upward links (suggestion to include state and county)

We'll continue work on trying to draft a document that addresses each of the above in a concise way.

Samples used for discussion: Hennepin Co. (Minn.) policy, New Castle Co. policy, Kent Co. policy

## Photographic images use policy

This subgroup focused on what is necessary from a legal and policy standpoint with respect to photos.

- Should a release be obtained if someone's photograph is used online?
  - Yes!
  - Should it be verbal like some newspapers do or written?
    - Probably written
- One option could be to refrain from using people in pictures and just use scenes and landscapes (though this might be a bit restrictive).
- Make sure to give credit for submission of pictures on website.
- If someone is submitting a photograph, do we assume the person who took the picture had permission to do so? Probably not.
- Should get signed release forms – this can be done when taking pictures at a community event, etc.
- What about copyright issues of pictures not involving people?
  - Is there a way to make the pictures impossible to download and copy?
- Conclusion:
  - Require written release form for any picture of a person displayed on website when the person is the central figure. If they are not the primary focus of the picture consent is not needed. For example, someone is taking a picture of a building and happens to get the people walking on the street.
  - If there is a way to make it impossible to download/copy pictures, this should be utilized.
  - Give photographer credit.

We'll continue trying to broaden usage criteria in developing photographic images use policy.

Examples for discussion: Photo releases