

2016 Semi-Annual MWDG Meeting

Meeting Minutes

9/14/2016 @ 10:00 am

Dover Public Library, 35 East Loockerman Street, Dover, DE 19901

Municipality/ Town/ City Representative:

Lorraine Gorman, Townsend, DE
Kelly Blanchies, Harrington, DE
James Frazier, Magnolia, DE
Ashley Walls, Bridgeville, DE
Annie Miller, Bethel, DE
Suzanne Morris, Hartly, DE
Pamela Patone, New Castle, DE (MSC)
Patricia Malloy, New Castle, DE (MSC)
Janis LaRochelle, Bowers Beach, DE
Sarah Pragg, University of Delaware

Others:

Dana Rohrbough, Delaware Department of State (DOS) / Government Information Center (GIC), Division Director
Julianne Solum, DOS / GIC
Matt Campbell, DOS /GIC
Sheila Hunton, DOS / GIC
Sarah Pragg, University of Delaware – Institute for Public Administration
Rhonda Lehman, Delaware Dept. of Technology (DTI)

Introductions and Light Refreshments:

Presentations from Government Information Center (GIC) –

by Julianne Solum & Matt Campbell

Thunderstone Search Implementation -

- Matt Campbell of GIC gave a brief overview of the Thunderstone, a robust search engine, which makes all PDF's and documents on the sites searchable.
 - To optimize the search engines results it is suggested that Municipalities use the following practices:
 - Use file naming conventions for Minutes, Meetings and other documents which best describe the content to make it easier for visitors to the sites to find items
 - Avoid spaces and periods in the naming conventions (It was noted that some screen readers might yield undesirable results)
 - Add short descriptions and related topic keywords within the documents
-

2016 Semi-Annual MWDG Meeting

- www.Delaware.gov and municipality sites through the GIC currently use Thunderstone Search on their sites.
- An inquiry was made about the current way Thunderstone currently returns results by oldest to newest content
 - Solution: Thunderstone's search parameters can be modified to display newest to oldest items along with other specific search criteria.

Municipality Analytics -

- Julianne Solum of the GIC provided an overview of how Google Analytics. Analytics are being used on over 10 million websites and can be used to show how different pages are being accessed/viewed by visitors on various sites.
- Key features include:
 - Discovering which pages visitors spend the most time
 - Devices used to access each page
 - Compare where visitors access each page from by countries, states, regions, cities/towns, etc.
 - Compare page traffic, frequent visits to a page, "bounce rates" and how long visitors remain viewing each page
- Municipalities must create a Google email account to view their Analytics.
- GIC will offer training on Google Analytics
- A video on how Google Analytics can be used to optimize traffic was also shown.

"Coming Soon" – Yoast SEO -

- Matt Campbell of the GIC gave a presentation on the benefits of the WordPress plugin Yoast SEO that will soon be implemented on the Municipalities sites that are through the GIC.
- Yoast provides metrics / ratings for each page to enhance search engine results and yields recommendations to boost traffic based on the content of each individual page using four (4) different colors:
 - Gray – Neutral rating (or more content needed)
 - Green – Optimal / sufficient use of keywords and phrases within content a page
 - Yellow – Some content and keywords may need fine-tuning
 - Red – Least optimal rating
- Yoast offers ease of reading measures for content
- Municipalities are encouraged to add keywords, tags and alternative descriptions for pictures, maps and other page components to make best use of this tool
- It is also a best practice that content for each page be 165 words or less

Municipality Accessibility Inquiry / Discussion - Municipality inquiry/discussion about how to make sites user-friendly for visually impaired website visitors and others

2016 Semi-Annual MWDG Meeting

- A member of a municipality made an inquiry about how to make their site more friendlier to visitors with disabilities
- GIC staff noted that we currently use ReadSpeaker, paid tool on the Delaware.gov portal pages however they also recommend using WAVE a free website/plug-in for the Google Chrome web browser to test accessibility

Municipality Portal Spotlight – The City of New Castle, DE

Presentation by Julianne Solum

- The City of New Castle, Delaware is the current Municipality spotlighted on the Delaware.gov portal.
- New Castle's website has been selected based on the abundance of content available for visitors and frequent users of the site.
- New Castle's portal site has very detailed information for items such as meeting minutes, FAQ's, forms, fees and local events.
- New Castle has listed on its site items such as Pokémon Go etiquette and safety guidelines for gamers. New Castle has various historical and other frequently visited sites by gamers playing Pokémon Go, a popular GPS location-based game played on mobile phones and devices which lets gamers "capture" virtual monsters. New Castle's Battery Park is a popular hotspot for Pokémon Go gamers to encounter many water Pokémon.
- They are using their website in creative ways to publicize events, such as Pokémon Go etiquette & safety along with other events that have driven more tourism to the city.

Short Break

Presentation: The Delaware Open Data Council Website Preview:

by Dana Rohrbough of GIC / DOS & Rhonda Lehman of the State of Delaware's Department of Technology & Information, Chairperson

- Dana & Rhonda provided information on the upcoming Delaware Open Data Portal Website launch which will be in October 2016 and an overview of what GIC does.
 - The Delaware Open Data Council was created by Governor Jack Markell's executive order no.# 57 to encourage greater transparency in DE's State Government.
 - The purpose of the Governor's executive order is to create a council lead by DTI, 2 offices, 8 cabinet agencies to align data policy and set priorities on how Delaware's Open Data Portal is to be created and maintained.
 - The Delaware Open Data Portal is built to:
 - Make Delaware's public data freely available to all without any restrictions on use, need for licenses, copyrights or warranties and the data may be re-published however the user sees fit.
 - No payment ever is required to obtain the data
-

2016 Semi-Annual MWDG Meeting

- Anticipate the type of public information a visitor would like to obtain from the State
 - Provide a way for website visitors and / or application / web developers to obtain demographic, business and other information in various “machine readable” file formats such as: .CSV, .RDF, RSS and JSON (mapping / Geospatial data)
 - Creates a way for citizens and businesses to collaborate
 - Web / application developers and businesses can use the data to create programs and/ or mobile apps to sell without restrictions
 - The data within the portal must not personally identify individuals with the exceptions of businesses, publically registered agents with government, government issued license holders
 - *These items are considered public data because they are already made public*
 - *No social security numbers or other type of data is made public*
 - The federal government currently publishes information on its public data Website which can be found at: **www.data.gov**
 - Visitors to the Delaware Open Data Portal to search for data on Delaware:
 - Issued business licenses,
 - Contracts and bids,
 - The State’s checkbook (purchases made using State credit cards), restaurant inspections,
 - Live birth and mortality,
 - Crime,
 - Public wells groundwater data, etc.
 - The portal will contain data from Delaware’s **FirstMap Portal**, a GIS / geospatial portal which includes mapping data
 - An inquiry was made by a representative if this is an effort to prevent the need for FOIA Freedom of Information Act) requests
 - Response: Not, necessarily, the purpose of the Open Data Portal is to initially try and anticipate what data requests user may have and make the information publically available.
 - Users of the portal, (the public and government), may also suggest a dataset as well
 - Municipalities may find use of demographic information and combine it with other datasets to post to their sites or use for their own internal purposes to target and identify areas in which services are needed or may need expansion
 - Rhonda Lehman provided a visual presentation on the soon to be public Delaware Open Portal and discussed the process to determine the how the initial datasets /groupings of data and categories are currently set-up
 - Other suggested resources for currently public Delaware data can be found at:
 - **Checkbook.delaware.gov**
 - **Bids.delaware.gov**
 - **FOIA.delaware.gov**
-

2016 Semi-Annual MWDG Meeting

Open Discussion.

One Hour “One-on-One” Consulting Sessions.

Next Meeting date: TBA

