

Municipal Web Sites

A Primer for a Great Municipal Clerk's Office Web Site

Dr. Morris Enyeart

City Connections LLC

1414 Carlisle Road, North Brunswick, NJ 08902, 732-247-9405, Fax: 732-828-0129

Copyright 2001

Is the Web just a fad?

Who is on the Web?

Should I be on the Web?

What are the elements of a good municipal clerk web site?

- Think Navigation
- Design Elements
- Interactive vs. Printable forms
- Site Registration
- Search Facility & Site Maps
- Content – Content – Content
- Current and Future Issues

Think Navigation

- Menus – Table of Contents
- Scrolling – up & down vs. left & right
- How long is too long for one page?
- Return buttons on each page.
- Access by the disabled.

Design Elements

- Design for Repeated Use
- Backgrounds – Be careful not to distract.
- Font Color – Contrast and print.
- Type Style – They may not see what you see.
- Video, Music & Animation – Is it needed?

Interactive vs. Printable Forms

- Are original signatures required?
- Is it a multi-part form?
- Avoid creating a mail- matching problem?
- Check the width of the form.
- What about page breaks?
- Should I use Adobe PDF or Word documents?
- Be sure to date or add the form number.

Site Registration

- Why have a registration facility?
- Should you have categories?
- Update notices for page changes.
- Deadline notices.
- Reminders.
- Surveys.

Search Facilities

- Keyword vs. Concept Searches.
- Don't forget to INDEX when new materials are added to your web site.
- Titles on pages.
- Meta Tags – Keyword and Description.
They are invisible but they are important.

Site Maps

- List all pages or just the gateway pages?
- Organization list.
- Alphabetical list.
- Frequently asked questions list.

Content is King

- Responsibilities of the Clerk
- Records (note what is & isn't official)
 - Agendas
 - Minutes
 - Ordinances
 - Public Bids

Content is King

- Elections
 - Voting Districts
 - Polling Places
 - Voter Registration
 - Absentee Ballot Application
 - Important Dates
 - What about candidate profiles & statements

Content is King

- Forms & Permits
 - Pet licenses
 - Vendor licenses
 - Raffles
 - Marriage, Birth, Death Certificate Request
- Separate page for information and form.

Content is King

- Fees
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Contact Information – Use interactive form.

Current & Future Issues

- What about E-Commerce?
- Build in-house or outsource?
- Practicality of updating your site.
- Advertising – have a municipal policy.
- Links to non-governmental web sites.