

North Shore Choral Society Web Site – Long Range Plan

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A paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of
TS5504 (formerly TS7000) Technical Communications
Capella University

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August 24, 2003

Abstract

This is a research paper about the North Shore Choral Society Web Site and how it compares to Web Sites of similar Chicago area organizations. The paper documents the decisions that must be made in order to complete a long range plan for the Web Site.

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North Shore Choral Society Web Site – Long Range Plan

Proposal

Summary

The North Shore Choral Society (NSCS) maintains a Web Site that informs the public about the nature of our organization, and provides information about upcoming performances. The site also contains information about past performances and a short page of information for organization members. The site address is www.northshorechoral.org and the North Suburban Library Network hosts it at no charge to the North Shore Choral Society.

Opportunity for Improvement

A volunteer maintains the site. The format of the site has not changed since 1998 although information for the upcoming concert season is posted each summer. Minor updates are made infrequently during the year as concert details and program notes become available. Very primitive tools (Microsoft Notepad and Microsoft Word) are used to maintain the site.

There are opportunities to improve the format and navigation on our Web Site. The sites of other music organizations in the Chicago area such as Music of the Baroque (www.baroque.org) and the Evanston Symphony (www.evanstonsymphony.org) are more attractive. The Chicago Symphony site (www.cso.org) is very professionally done and supports ticket sales on line.

There are also opportunities to include additional information on our Web Site and to update it more frequently. For example, we could include information of interest to NSCS members such as detailed plans for each rehearsal, summaries of board meetings and electronic versions of various member newsletters and documents. We could include more information of interest to general public and potential members such as more audio excerpts from our past concerts, mission statements,

Finally, we could consider using the site to sell our concert recordings, sell concert tickets or maintain our membership databases. These last items have security implications and could require us to pay monthly web hosting fees as well as transaction fees.

Alternative 1 – Continue “as is”

We can continue to maintain the site “as is” with some minor formatting improvements. This can continue to be done by a single volunteer.

Alternative 2 – Enter the world of e-commerce (sell tickets)

We can make major changes so that we can sell tickets and conduct other electronic commerce. The North Shore Suburban Library Network prohibits electronic commerce so we would have to relocate our site to a commercial Internet Service Provider.

Alternative 3 – Plan future projects

Produce a long range planning report that will detail potential projects and any major decisions or investments that would be required to implement each project. This report could be used by the North Shore Choral Society Board so that the future direction of the Web Site can be included as part of the NSCS long range plan.

Recommendation

I recommend that we pursue Alternative 3. I am working on a Masters in Information Technology at Capella University and have approval to produce this report as part of my coursework. Since this will be an academic paper, the analysis will be supported by references as shown at the end of this report.

Progress Report

Introduction

The North Shore Choral Society (NSCS) maintains a Web Site that informs the public about the nature of our organization, and provides information about upcoming performances. The site also contains information about past performances and a short page of information for organization members. The site address is www.northshorechoral.org and it is hosted at no charge to the North Shore Choral Society by the North Suburban Library Network.

The paper that I am writing will produce a long range planning report that will detail potential projects and any major decisions or investments that would be required to implement each project.

Work Completed as of August 3, 2003

I have:

- Located and taken detailed notes from a number of references. These references are listed in the last section of this status report.
- Produced an outline for the paper.
- Performed a detailed analysis of the existing North Shore Choral Society Web Site
- Analyzed site of other Chicago area community music groups.
- Experimented with Adobe Acrobat 6.0 to determine how to capture reduced versions of Web Site pages

Work Remaining as of August 3, 2003

The following tasks remain to be done:

- Visit several e-commerce hosting sites and calculate what they would charge the North Shore Choral Society to host ticket and CD sales.
- Collect and reduce selected pages Web Sites of other Chicago area community music groups.
- Write the rough draft of the paper including the Table of Contents and the References.
- Merge in other required material (Proposal and Status).
- Make corrections and submit the paper.

Adjustments and conclusion

It took longer than expected to learn how to use Adobe 6.0 to capture and reduce the size of Web Pages. This problem was encountered and overcome early enough that it will not threaten the completion date. The paper will be completed and submitted as required by August 24, 2003.

References planned as of August 3, 2003

1. Ahuja, Vijay. (1997). *Secure commerce on the internet*. Boston: AP Professional.
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6. Kinkoph, Sherry Willard and Wooldridge. (2002). *Master visually dreamweaver mx and flash mx*. New York: Wiley
7. McComb, Gordon. (1997). *Web commerce cookbook*. New York: Wiley Computer Publishing.
8. Siebel, Thomas and House, Pat. (1999). *Cyber rules: strategies for excelling at e-business*. New York: Doubleday.
9. Tiernan, Bernadette. (2000). *E-tailing*. Chicago: Dearborn.

Final Report

Executive Summary

The Web Site informs the public about the nature of our organization and provides information about upcoming performances. It is currently free to the North Shore Choral Society. Our Internet Service Provider is a public library that does not charge us. The Web Site is maintained by a volunteer.

The content on our Web Site compares favorably to the other volunteer organizations in our area. We have more information on our Web Site about each performance than the Evanston Symphony and the Music of the Baroque and we keep more information about past performances.

A glance at the Home Pages of the other sites shown later in this paper shows that the other sites have made better use of layout, graphics, and pictures. These other sites also provide navigation information on each page and allow the site visitor to navigate the site without using the "Back" button in the user's browser software.

The North Shore Choral Society is neither ahead of nor behind similar musical organizations in its approach to E-Commerce. However, Music of the Baroque has recently started to sell tickets through their Web Site through a partnership with Velvelseat.com.

Projects to improve the Web Site can be undertaken in the areas of Look and Feel, Content, Sales and Marketing, Internal Operations and Site Effectiveness. The Board may want to add to the list of projects prioritize the list. The Board may also want to make decisions concerning the organizational and technical implications of some of the projects on the list.

As the volunteer Web Master for the North Shore Choral Society, I look forward to working with the Board to complete the long range plan that this paper starts and to begin work on the first selected project.

Comments on Current Web Site

The North Shore Choral Society (NSCS) maintains a Web Site that informs the public about the nature of our organization and provides information about upcoming performances. The site also contains information about past performances and a short page of information for organization members. The Wilmette Public Library hosts our Web Site free of charge through its membership in the North Suburban Library System. The rules of that system allow us to present information to the public, but they do not allow us to solicit donations or to ask people to buy tickets to our concerts (North Suburban Library System, 2003). We are allowed, however, to provide information links to other sites where these activities could take place. We would need

to make contractual and financial arrangements with an additional or an alternative Internet Service Provider if we wanted to do this.

Figure 1: North Shore Choral Society Home Page

North Shore Choral Society

Page 1 of 1



Our Sixty-eighth Season

The North Shore Choral Society explores, studies, and performs a wide range of choral music for the enrichment and enjoyment of its singers and audiences.

The NSCS is a community chorus which has served this area for over sixty years, giving many hundreds of nonprofessional singers the opportunity to perform choral masterworks, both old and new. The chorus has performed at Ravinia with the Ravinia Festival Orchestra. The Society features outstanding soloists, and some of the area's finest musicians play in the orchestras engaged for the performances. We are listed on the [Classical Studio Web Site](#).

[2003-2004 Concert Season](#) | [Ravinia Information](#) | [Tickets](#) | [Past Performances](#)
[About NSCS](#) | [Sponsors](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [For NSCS Members and Auditions for New Members](#)



© 1999-2003 - North Shore Choral Society
P.O. Box 103
Evanston IL 60204-0103
(847) 328-5158

August 12, 2003

Figure 1: North Shore Choral Society Home Page (North Shore Choral Society, 2003)

The Home Page on our Web Site fulfills the required basic functions of linking to other areas on our site meeting the requirement of the Illinois Arts Council that we link to their site in recognition for the funding that they provide. However, this page is a very

simple and does not have an impressive look and feel. The importance of the home page is emphasized in the book *Cyber Rules*. “The look and feel of a Web Site is a company’s electronic lobby. If you don’t feel good being there, neither will your customers” (Siebel and House, 1999, p. 253).

A brief scan of the literature points out other problems we should correct:

- The book *Web Bloopers: Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them* states, “some pages lack not only an indication of the current page but any navigation links at all” (Johnson, 2003, p. 116). Our site has this problem. The only navigation link on the

detailed pages is the image in the upper left hand corner of the page and it is not obvious that this is a link. The user generally has to use the “back” feature in the browser to navigate back to our Home Page instead of clicking on a link provided by us. Also, there is no text on the page identifying where the page fits in the site.

- *Web Bloopers* also states “Everything is centered making it hard to scan. Centering bulleted lists makes the bullets useless” (Jackson, 2003, p. 258). We center all the information in the summary pages the describe the concerts for the current season.
- *Clicking Through: A Survival Guide for Brining your Company On-Line* identifies the use of frames as a risk (Ezor, 1999, p. 87). The risk is that our frame with our name on it could wind up framing content from another site. This content could be undesirable or even illegal. We use frames to display our performances from past seasons.

On the other hand, there are other references that point out some of the things we are doing right:

- *Striking it Rich.com* documents several very successful Web Sites. This book approves of keeping Web Pages as simple as possible. “You will also note that most of the profiles took advantage of the Web without getting caught up in the novelty. These sites rarely if ever us Java, Shockwave, frames – anything that clutters the interface or requires extra speed” (Easton, 1998, p. 20).
- *Web Commerce Cookbook* approves of our decision to obtain our own domain name (northshorechoral.org) instead of just using the North Shore Suburban Library domain name. “Users reach your site by using your domain name and not someone else’s. This helps add a professional touch to the site because it gives potential customers the feeling the the site is more permanent” (Jackson, 2003, p. 11)
- *Cyber Rules* approves of our organization structure where the Webmaster reports to the VP in charge of Publicity. “The Webmaster may well report to the VP of Marketing. Again, technology is important, but it’s not about technology. It’s about communicating with your customers and securing your markets” (Siebel and House, 1999, p. 256).

The Web Site is currently free to the North Shore Choral Society. As mentioned previously, our Internet Service Provider is a public library that does not charge us. The Web Site is maintained by a volunteer. NSCS has not licensed any Web Site development tools. Currently, only Microsoft Notepad and Microsoft Word are used to maintain the site and these are licensed to the volunteer. This is not an unusual arrangement considering that the North Shore Choral Society is an organization of volunteers. The chorus members are not compensated and they buy their own music.

A Brief Vist to Web Sites of Similar Organizations

There are other music organizations in the Chicago area that have Web Sites. I have selected five organizations and visited their Web Sites in order to compare the look and feel and the contents of those Web Sites with that of the North Shore Choral Society. The sites are presented in increasing order of technical complexity.


Bach Week Evanston 2003

Page 1 of 1

BachWeek
Festival in Evanston

[Concert Schedule](#) [Order Tickets](#) [History of Bach Week Evanston](#) [Be a Backer](#)

The 30th season of
BachWeek Festival in Evanston



Welcome to the Bach Week Festival 2003! Each concert will open with Johann Sebastian Bach's organ music, played on the towering St. Luke's Skinner organ. Chicago's finest instrumental and vocal soloists will perform the incomparable music of J.S. Bach and his contemporaries. The Candlelight series in the Lady Chapel returns with unusual and intimate offerings. Along with the St. Luke's choirs performing Bach's cantatas, you, the audience, will participate in a sing-along of one of Bach's most beloved chorales. As you can see, there's nothing anywhere quite like Bach Week. We invite you to join us for all these wonderful concerts.

Richard Webster
Music Director

BachWeek
Festival in Evanston

P.O. Box 603
Evanston, IL 60204-0603

Performances held at Parish Church of St. Luke
939 Hinman Avenue
Evanston, Illinois


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This project is partially supported by a grant
from the **Illinois Arts Council**, a state agency.

Page last updated: December 25, 2002


Bach Week performs four concerts per year. The North Shore Choral Society performs three. Both Web Sites contain similar information about current performances and organization history. The NSCS Web Site contains more information on historical performances. Neither site is rich in graphic images or “clips” from concert recordings. The Bach Week Web Site has a better navigation approach. It provides a navigation context at the bottom of each page. Finally, the Bach Week Web Site has a better layout with attractive navigation image at the top of each page.

Figure 2: Bach Week Home Page (Bach Week, 2003)



Evanston Symphony Orchestra
Lawrence Eckerling, Music Director

Concerts
Tickets
Transportation
History
Meet the Orchestra
For ESO Members
Recognition and Support
Contact the ESO



Community Orchestra of the Year!

The Evanston Symphony Orchestra has been named Community Orchestra of the Year for 2003 by the Illinois Council of Orchestras.

"We are absolutely delighted," said ESO Board President Kelly Brest van Kempen. "While the ESO has previously received awards from the Council for our conductor, our marketing and our community outreach programs, this is the first time that we have been given the ICO's highest award. It is especially gratifying that it comes in the midst of our rebuilding efforts."

The award was formally presented to the orchestra at the March 16, 2003, concert.

Meet Lawrence Eckerling, the ESO's New Music Director

It is with great pleasure that the Evanston Symphony Orchestra proudly presents our new music director and conductor, Lawrence Eckerling. Music became his passion at age 6 and has remained so throughout his life. For Lawrence, the natural expression of this passion was to become a music director and conductor. And, the rest is history.

"I am thrilled to have been invited to lead Evanston's very own symphony as they enter a new era. I look forward to working with ESO's dedicated musicians and board members and to presenting enjoyable and rewarding concerts for their audience."

Interested in Joining the ESO?

Are you an amateur musician who wants to perform

2003-2004 Subscription Series

November 9, 2003
"Gala Opening Concert"

Wagner
Prelude to "Die Meistersinger"

Grieg
Piano Concerto in A Minor
Graham Scott, Piano

Beethoven
Symphony No. 5 in C Minor

January 18, 2004
"Play Me a Picture, Paint Me a Tune"

Falla
Three Dances from "The Three Cornered Hat"

Mendelssohn
Violin Concerto in E Minor
Nicola Kendall, Violin

Shostakovich
Symphony No. 5 in D Minor

March 28, 2004
"Something Old, Something New"

Mozart
Symphony No. 38, "Prague"


Foss
Renaissance Concerto for Flute and Orchestra
Linda Chatterton, Flute

Rimsky-Korsakov
Scheherazade


Like the NSCS Web Site, the Evanston Symphony Orchestra Web Site contains information about current concerts and tickets. In general, this site contains less detailed information than the NSCS Web Site. The Evanston Symphony Orchestra Site contains much more information on the home page. Most Web Sites would link to other pages instead of putting so much information on the home page. In fact, the figure at the left shows only 25% of the home page. Each page on the Evanston Symphony site contains the navigation context at the left and a list of scheduled performances on the right. This means that whatever information is to be displayed on the page is confined to the center third of the page. Having a fixed navigation area on each page is a good technique. This site was built with Microsoft Front Page.

Figure 3: Evanston Symphony Home Page (Evanston Symphony, 2003)

Savoy-aire -- Home Page 1 of 2



Savoy-aire!
Bringing Gilbert & Sullivan to the North Shore since




From the Savoy-aire 2000 Production of *The Mikado*
2003 Production

H.M.S. Pinafore

Friday and Saturday, October 17-18, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, October 19, 3 p.m.
Friday and Saturday, October 24-25, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, October 26, 3 p.m.

Stage Director: Martha Adrienne
Music Director: Daniel Robinson
Choreographer: Pamela Sue Fox
Executive Producer: Lillias Circle

The Savoy-aire
P.O. Box 126
Evanston, IL 60204
E-mail: savoyaire@northshore.org
Phone: (847) 328-1042



<http://www.savoyaires.org/> 8/16/2003

Figure 4: Savoy-Aires Home Page (Savoy-Aires, 2003)

The Music of the Baroque Web Site is not particularly unique in appearance so no Home Page image is included. Like the Savoy-Aires site, Music of the Baroque uses JavaScript to react to the position of the user's mouse. When the mouse is over a possible navigation choice, the site instantly displays further information about that choice (Music of the Baroque, 2003). When I visited this site on June 10, 2003, it had a ticket selling approach similar to the preceding sites. However, when I visited the site on August 16, 2003, it was possible to order Music of the Baroque tickets and CDs over the Web. The major change is that links for purchasing tickets and individual CDs that used to point to internal pages at www.baroque.org now point to <http://secure.velvetseat.com/clients/default.asp?clientId=236029>. This shows that Music of the Baroque has recently arranged a partnership with Velvetseat in order to sell merchandise and tickets over the Web.

This new partnership is not seamless because in most cases, the user is forced to enter the same information twice. Once on the Music of the Baroque site itself and once on the Velvetseat site. For example, the user can navigate through the Music of the Baroque site and reach a point where he or she clicks on a specific CD expecting to buy it. When this happens, the user is transferred to the one-and-only Music of the Baroque entry point to Velvetseat. The user must then specify the action to be taken (buy a CD and not a ticket) and then the user must select the

The Savoy-Aires organization differs from the other organizations in this comparison in that it stages musicals as opposed to just presenting concerts. Their Web Site is much richer in pictures and contains an artistic drawing on every page. Like the previous two sites, it also contains a fixed navigation area. The navigation area appears at the left. This is the first Web Site in this comparison to use JavaScript. On this site, JavaScript is used to highlight a possible navigation selection as the mouse passes over it. This approach is a sign that the Dreamweaver development tool was likely used in the development of this site.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

contact us • search & site map • your account • view order

2003-2004 SEASON

TICKETS NOW ON SALE

DISCOVER CLASSICAL MUSIC
MEET THE PERFORMERS
SEASON AND TICKETS
SHOP SYMPHONY STORE
PLAN YOUR EXPERIENCE
HOW TO GET INVOLVED
ABOUT THE CSO
E-MAILING LIST

featured events

Saturday
August 23, 2003 at 8:00
Poetry of Voice: Kurt Elling and Andy Bey

Rare opportunity to hear Kurt Elling with the brilliant Andy Bey!

[Tickets and more info](#)

Thursday
August 28, 2003 at 8:00
The Message Lives: A Tribute to Art Blakey

Jazz Messenger alumni tribute concert with Branford Marsalis, Terence Blanchard, and more!

[Tickets and more info](#)

Sunday
Sept. 21, 2003 at 3:00
Chicago Symphony Orchestra

The CSO opens its 2003-04 season with a program featuring Morton Gould's *Tap Dance Concerto*.

[Tickets and more info](#)

season calendar

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1 2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August >

[View Full Calendar](#)

Next Event
Saturday
August 23, 2003
08:00 PM
Poetry of Voice: Kurt Elling and Andy Bey

Kurt Elling
Andy Bey
Stefon Harris
Laurence Hobgood

[Tickets and more info](#)

Roll-over dates to view concert events

audio/video player
Requires Quicktime and Flash plug-ins

[Experience the CSO](#) ▶
[Mr. Zykerman on the learning process of conducting](#) ▶
[Pierre Boulez compares music and poetry](#) ▶

[Kurt Elling performs Never My Love](#) ▶
[Kurt Elling performs Mrouano](#) ▶
[Schoenberg's Transfigured Night](#) ▶
[Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2](#) ▶
[Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4](#) ▶
[Stravinsky's The Firebird Suite](#) ▶

new & noteworthy
Alternative Subscriptions
Symphony Center offers a variety of alternative subscriptions to fit your personal tastes and schedules.

2003 Summer Season
From Kurt Elling to a tribute to Art Blakey, come in for a cool night with hot sounds.

Japan Tour 2003
Visit our new flash kiosk to learn about the orchestra's upcoming tour to Japan!

concert finder
Choose the type of music that you enjoy most.

Make a Selection

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Figure 5: Chicago Symphony Home Page (Chicago Symphony, 2003)

From the user's point of view, purchasing tickets and CDs is an integral part of the Chicago Symphony Web Site. There is no re-entry of information as there is on the Music of the Baroque site (Chicago Symphony, 2003).

Where do we stand?

Where do we stand technically compared to all Web Sites?

Based on my experience is developing and working with Web Sites, I have prepared a table showing six levels of Web Site development. Each level requires additional investment and additional development sophistication compared to the previous level.

specific CD. Forcing the user to enter the same information more than once is one of the "bloopers" identified in the book *Web Bloopers* (Johnson, 2003).

The Chicago Symphony Web Site is professionally designed and highly interactive. For example, when you pass your mouse over a date on the calendar on the Home Page, information about Chicago Symphony events on that date appears immediately. When you are looking at event details, you can click on a button to purchase tickets for that event. Once you select a price range, you sell all the available ticket options for the specific event and price range.

Level	Description	Example	Major Development Issues	North Shore Choral Society Example
1	Create and display static pages.	Bach Week Web Site displays a description of the Bach Week Festival (Bach Week, 2003).	Create pages in HTML format. Determine which pages have changed and update those pages on the Web Server at the Internet Service Provider.	NSCS creates a ticket information page in HTML format using Microsoft Notepad and uploads it to our Internet Service Provider
2	Display dynamic data (from a database) as well as static data	Superpages.com displays a listing of bookstores in the City of Evanston, IL based on a user request (Verizon, 2003).	Create and maintain a database using database management software. Connect the HTML pages to the database using Application Server software such as Microsoft ASP, Cold Fusion, or JSP.	Concert information could be updated through a simple fill-in-the-blanks form. Member mailing labels could be produced through the Web Site.
3	Allow site visitors to customize their use of the site through stored data	Yahoo allows users to customize their own personal home page (Yahoo, 2003).	Create a system that manages user registration and keeps a database of users and their data. Create privacy policies.	No real need to do this.
4	Allow users to maintain their own data on the site.	Superpages.com allows users to store their home address and build their own private address directory (Superpages, 2003)	Buy and configure the hardware necessary to support increased activity due to database updating. Implement additional backup procedures.	Users could store their name, address, ticket preferences and other information to facilitate purchases.
5	Allow users to place orders through the Web Site	Chicago Symphony allows purchase of tickets (Chicago Symphony, 2003).	Internal procedures must handle Web orders. Web Site must not over-commit inventory.	The NSCS Web Site has an email link on the tickets page.
6	Allow users to complete an entire business transaction including secure payment	Many sites allow complete business transactions such as amazon.com (books) and orbitz.com (travel).	Install a shopping cart system. Establish a secure server. Protect valuable financial information such as credit card numbers	The NSCS could sell tickets and CDs over the Web.

Table 1: Levels of Web Site Development

The North Shore Choral Society Web Site is currently at Level 1 of 6. A very significant investment of time and money would be required to move to Level 3. For example, according to *A Survival Guide for Bringing Your Company On-Line* the “simple” step of creating and implementing a privacy policy would require at least the following steps:

1. Specify the identity of the information collector.
2. Disclose what we would collect.
3. Specify the purpose of the collection of data.
4. Implement procedures to allow the user to obtain copies of the information that we collect about him or her.
5. Implement procedures to allow the user to correct information that we collect
6. Protect the information (Ezor, 1999, p. 155).

A less significant but still noticeable investment would be required to advance to level 2 where we could generate some of our pages from a database instead of manually creating each page in HTML.

There is some good news. It is possible for us to make many valuable improvements to our site while still remaining at Level 1 and therefore postponing or avoiding the significant investments required in moving to higher levels.

Where do we stand compared to other Chicago Musical Organizations?

Where do we stand on content?

The content on our Web Site compares favorably to the other volunteer organizations in our area. We have more information on our Web Site about each performance than the Evanston Symphony and the Music of the Baroque and we keep more information about past performances. Our Web Site has information for our members including the latest newsletter. The Evanston Symphony members’ area is currently under construction. Our tickets information is comparable to that for Evanston Symphony and Music of the Baroque. Music of the Baroque has more links to general information about baroque music and composers.

Where do we stand on look-and-feel?

Our site is useable. A site visitor can locate desired information fairly quickly. However, a glance at the Home Pages of the other sites shown previously in this paper indicates that the other sites have made better use of layout, graphics, and pictures. The other sites also provide navigation information on each page and allow the site visitor to navigate the site without using the “Back” button in the user’s browser software.

Where do we stand on E-Commerce (selling tickets and CDs)?

This table shows that the current approach to E-Commerce among the organizations we have discussed. It should come as no surprise that the professional organizations with the largest budgets have the most sophisticated Web Sites and are already engaged in E-Commerce. The volunteer organizations are not currently engaged in E-Commerce. Therefore, we can conclude that the North Shore Choral Society is neither ahead of nor behind similar musical organizations in its approach to E-Commerce.

ORGANIZATION	VOLUNTEER/PROFESSIONAL	E-COMMERCE. HOW CAN CUSTOMERS BUY TICKETS AND CDS ON THE WEB?
North Shore Choral Society	Volunteer Chorus, Professional Orchestra hired for some performances	Customer must use telephone or email.
Bach Week	Volunteer Chorus, Professional Orchestra	Customer must use telephone or print adobe PDF form from Web Site and mail the form.
Evanston Symphony	Volunteer Orchestra	Customer must use telephone or email.
Savoy Aires	Mostly Volunteer	There are no directions on how to buy tickets ("Tickets go on sale in August").
Music of the Baroque	Professional	Customer is sent to a third party Web Site to order tickets and CDs.
Chicago Symphony	Professional	Customer orders tickets directly on the Chicago Symphony Web Site.

Table 2: E-Commerce Comparison

Conclusion on the current status of NSCS Web Site

We have good content on the site. There are some navigation and formatting improvements that should be made in the short term. We should also take steps to measure the effectiveness of the site (Seibel and House, 1999, p. 228). At a minimum, we should monitor and report the number of visitors to our site.

There are no emergency steps that must be taken to keep our Web Site running successfully. We could continue to do nothing more than performing the routine maintenance of adding new concert information as it becomes available. However, we have the opportunity to develop a long range plan for the Web Site. The rest of this paper takes a “first cut” at such a plan by providing initial details for the major steps. These steps are:

- List the major projects.
- Prioritize the projects.
- Make any required organizational decisions.
- Make any required major technology and hosting decisions.
- Start the first project.

Long Range Plan: List the Major Projects

Based on comments from NSCS members and looking at the Web Sites of other area music organizations, I have developed a list of projects and grouped them into five areas. This is not a complete list of all possible projects. The main purposes of this list are to stimulate discussion about project priorities and to generate ideas of possible additional projects. Each area is discussed below.

Project area 1 - Look and Feel Projects

- Plan and implement a new navigation strategy. We could use the Savoy-Aires site as a model.
- Select a set of development tools. Development tools such as Front Page and Dreamweaver make implementing site navigation much easier and they produce more professional looking sites. (*Creating web pages all-in-one desk reference for dummies*, 2003, p.191)

- Improve the look of the site by adding formatting and graphics. This may involve finding people with a different skill set than the current volunteer. These people could provide consulting or they could perform some of the site maintenance themselves.

Project area 2 - Content Projects

- Decide whether additional content will be targeted to members of the North Shore Choral Society or to the concert-going public or both.
- Provide more details on each concert.
- Provide links to other sites that contain detailed information on each work and composer for all future concerts.
- Increase depth of member information. For example, provide weekly comments from the Music Director about the plans for the next rehearsal(s) and the progress made in the previous rehearsal.
- Post brochures in the members section.
- Provide history on each of our performance locations.

Project area 3 - Sales and Marketing Projects

- Sell tickets. The book *E-tailing* estimates that it costs from \$10,000 to \$300,000 to build a customized e-commerce site (Tiernan, 2000, p. 221). I calculated the cost of selling tickets and CDs in a Yahoo store to be about \$700 per year based on selling 1000 items per year. Most of this cost is the fixed hosting charge of \$49.95 per month. We could also consider using the same company that Music of the Baroque uses.
- Place sound clips from some of our past concerts on the site.
- Provide Maps and Directions to our performance sites. We can do this by linking to an external mapping service.
- Sell NSCS CDs. This involves the same issues as selling tickets.
- Provide links to Amazon.com or other sites to make it easy for site visitors to purchase CDs of music that we will perform in future concerts.
- Promote other local classical music groups such as the Naperville Chorus in return for those groups providing a link to our site.
- Consider explicitly registering with search engines or a search engine service to direct more visitors to our site.

Project area 4 - Internal Operations Projects

- Convert internal systems such as the Member List, the Donor List, the Auction System, and the Mailing application to be accessible through the Web Site. This would involve moving the Web Site to a higher technical level. Since the current systems are working, this does not appear to be worth doing. All of the systems would have to be rebuilt using a different technical architecture. This would be expensive and potentially disruptive.

Project area 5 Evaluate Site Effectiveness

- Summarize the statistics files that have accumulated on our server for internal NSCS use.
- Establish a monthly reporting system.

Long Range Plan: Prioritize the projects

The Board of the North Shore Choral Society should review the list of projects, add new projects to the list and provide guidance on which projects should be undertaken first.

Long Range Plan: Make required organizational decisions

As indicated in the project list, it may be desirable to obtain a person with the skills required to improve the format of the current site. Based on the projects chosen, it may also be useful to add others to the team of people that currently contribute to the Web Site. For example, a NSCS member interested in the history of music might want to provide additional links from concert performance information to relevant papers or other Web Pages.

Long Range Plan: Make required technology and hosting decisions

Our current Internet Service Provider hosts our site for free on the condition that we do not solicit donations, solicit business or conduct business their server. If we decide to sell tickets or CDs, we would need to select an additional or an alternative service provider. For example, we could setup a store on Yahoo and link to it from our current site.

We are able to operate our current site a very low level of technology (technology level 1 in Table 2). As long as we don't decide to move any of our internal systems to our Web Site, we should be able to remain at this level.

In order to improve navigation and look and feel, we should select a Web Site development tool. Either Front Page or Dreamweaver would meet our needs. Appendix A has some more details on these tools.

Long Range Plan: Start the first project

Once projects are prioritized and technical and organizational decisions have been made, work can begin work on the first project. Until then, routine maintenance on the existing site will continue as it has for the past several years.

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Appendix A – Web Site Development Tools.

The following information is from *Creating Web Pages All-In-One Desk Reference for Dummies* (Creating web pages, 2003).

These points apply to Microsoft Front Page:

- Page 191 states “By using Front Page you can join the ranks of Web Page designers. Front Page is an all-in-one publishing tool for big-time web companies (such as Yahoo! or ESPN) and personal users.”
- Page 194 shows that you can find unlinked pages in the Navigation View. This would be useful in finding linking problems the NSCS Web Site.
- Pages 212-214 show that you can import an existing Web. This is useful because our Web Site already exists.
- Pages 215-220 cover themes and other features easily make pages look more professional.
- Pages 221-232 show that Front Page handles formatting and tables in the same manner as Microsoft Word. This minimizes the learning curve.
- Page 253 shows that the latest version of Front Page can be used even with Internet Service Providers that do not support the Front Page Extensions on their server.

These points apply to Dreamweaver:

- Page 263 states: “Dreamweaver 4 is the Industry Standard for Web Site Design and Production. If you’re looking for a Web Design tool that is both easy enough for beginners and sophisticated enough for web design gurus, you’ve come to the right place.”
- Page 268 states: “A property inspector is unique to the individual object. It represents and contains detail on the attributes of the object.” From this statement, you can draw a conclusion that while Front Page feels like Word, Dreamweaver feels closer to an object oriented programming environment.

These points apply to Dreamweaver and are from the book *Master Visually Dreamweaver MX and Flash MX* (Kinkoph, Sherry, Willard and Wooldridge, 2002).

- Page 38 indicates that Dreamweaver has a special feature to clean up the HTML that is generated by Microsoft Word. This will be useful because many of the pages on the NSCS Web Site were created by Microsoft Word and these pages contain many HTML and XML tags that are not necessary and should be removed from the pages.

- Dreamweaver does not require any special extensions on the server to upload pages using ftp (file transfer protocol).