Getting the Most out of Your Chapter Website

A website is essential in the 21st century, and is often the first place people look when they want to know more about an organization. If your chapter is small, or just starting out, or if you don't have leaders or members who are web savvy, setting up a website can seem intimidating. But if you start simple and build from there, you can secure a web presence for your chapter and thereby gain greater visibility and reach a wider audience.

Below are some ideas for effective chapter websites.

- Look into **free web hosting software**, such as [Blogger](#), [Go Daddy](#), [Tumblr](#), [Webs](#), [Wix](#), or [WordPress](#). Options such as these often have page infrastructure that you can use and quickly customize, making set-up easy even if you don't have access to or the budget for a web designer or programmer.
- Once your website is up and running, one of the most important things you can do is **keep it up to date**! Remove references to events that have passed, post at least once a week if you have a blog or news section—make a commitment to regular maintenance—and be sure all contact and leadership information is accurate. An outdated website is almost worse than no website at all, as it can give the impression the chapter is defunct.
- Put **contact information** or a link to contact information front and center on your website—you want to invite engagement and interaction.
- Similarly, put information about **upcoming events** in a spot on your homepage that can't be missed.
- Collect links to your **social media** sites such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#) in one spot and display them prominently. (And remember to keep your Facebook and LinkedIn pages updated and to Tweet at least once a week too!)
- **Review your website periodically**, just as you would your membership numbers or event program; put it on the agenda for your annual meeting.
- Check out the [websites of ABAI's other chapters](#); if you see something you like, **contact that chapter** to ask how they did it.
- Similarly, **pay attention to the websites you visit frequently**. Can you identify what works well and why?
- **Curate the photos and other images you use on your site.** A few carefully chosen event photos, for example, may be more enticing than an unedited collection of pictures of people standing around or of the backs of heads. Be careful about how you use stock photos, as many of them are plainly fake-looking.