Developing Websites and Social Media to Promote Ruritan Clubs

Presentation by Linda Bradshaw, Rapidan District Ruritan

The Internet Is Not A Passing Fad

- The Internet has been in use commercially since the 1980's.

- The Internet's popularity has had a significant impact on the downsizing of newspapers and other printed media.

- Websites are a growing source of news and communication on the Internet.

Creating Websites Have Gotten Easier

- When the Internet first began, creating a website was complicated

- In recent years, software programs have been created that enable novices to create effective websites

- You can start out using free services, and when you become more confident you can transfer the files to paid services if you choose

Where to begin?

- Start by collecting photographs of your club's meetings and events and scan them into your computer. Crop them, resize them, save them in a special file folder for the website with file names that describe what is in the photo.

Write Content

- Write a few articles about the club in a Word Processing program such as MS Word so that when you are ready to create the website, you already have articles you can copy and paste into the website. Information about the club's location, meeting times, contact information, upcoming events, etc. Save these articles in the same special file folder for the website

Weigh Your Choices

- You can start out with free websites, or paid websites, or a combination. Decide whether you want to start with a free website, or a paid website. Remember you can move content from one to the other later on.

- You can have more than one website. (Facebook is a type of website called a micro-blog.)
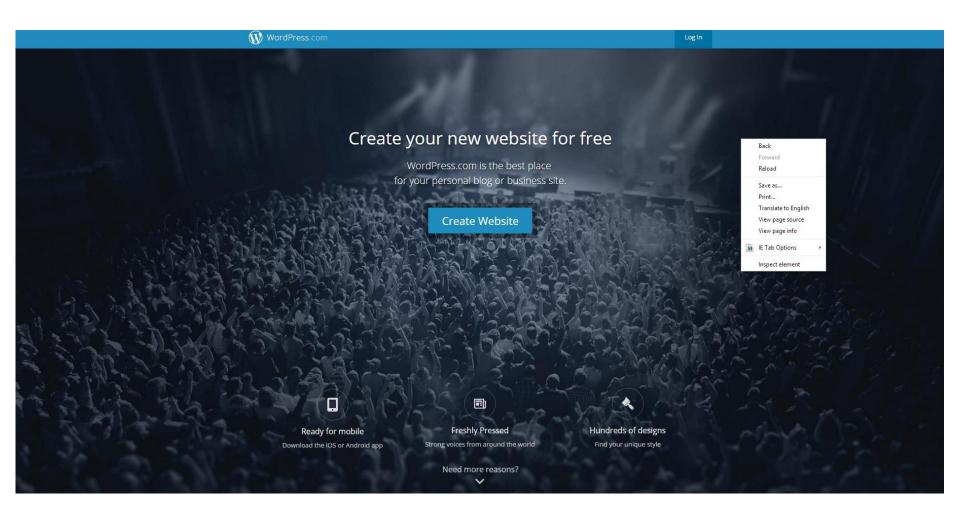
Static or Dynamic?

- You can have a static website (page never changes) or you can have a dynamic website (frequent updates – this type is called a blog-style.)
- Decide who your target market is, and remember that static websites appeal to older generations, and dynamic websites appeal to younger generations.

Baby Steps - Not Ready To Commit?

- Think of a temporary name of a website you will want to use for practice and learning purposes. Then start out with the free websites offered by www.wordpress.com.

- Let's use the example townandcountryruritan as the website name we want to use.

- The free website from wordpress.com will read townandcountryruritan.wordpress.com

Free Website From Wordpess.com

Wordpress.com notes

- As soon as you arrive at the Wordpress.com website, you are prompted to create a new website. A very user-friendly program walks you through every step, with lots of tutorials. There are also many free tutorials available online through YouTube.

- You are given the option to pay $18 per year to have the "wordpress.com" removed from the domain name.

Try Everything – It Is Free!

- Use this opportunity to try everything and get comfortable with the program. You can create links, add images, create pages and posts. If you make a mistake, you can delete it! You can make it public or private, so no one else can see it until you are comfortable with it. Learn the "lingo" – what themes, widgets, keywords, tags, categories, etc are, and how to use them.

- You can use it to make a blog-style website, or a static website.

Link to other websites

- Create a Facebook Page (free) and link the website to the Facebook Page through the "Sharing" features. Facebook Pages are user-friendly and easy to edit if you make a mistake. (You can also create and link to other social media programs such as Twitter, Pinterest, Google + if you want to.)

- You can create a free Google Calendar and link the calendar to the page for an "upcoming events" widget in the sidebar.
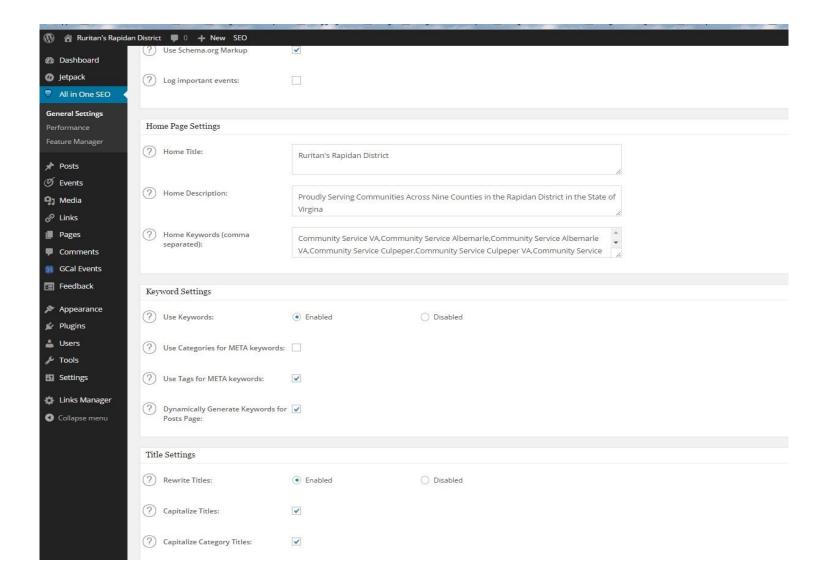
Drawbacks to Wordpress.com

- SEO techniques are limited with the Wordpress.com website – You cannot add keywords to the Main Page, which are an important SEO tool.

- Wordpress.com websites often have advertisements added to them, and you have no control over them.

Getting Serious

- When you are ready to take the plunge into a "paid" website, you can transfer most of the information from the "free" website to the "paid" website.

- When you purchase your domain and pay for web hosting, you have more control over the website. You can add home keywords, have more template options, have a better calendar of events, and you are not subjected to having ads on your website that you cannot control.

All In One SEO Plug-in Keywords

Paid domain name and web hosting

- Purchase your domain name of choice (example: townandcountryruritan.com or townandcountryruritan.org) and web hosting service from a broker, such as "GoDaddy.com" or "HostGator.com." (I recommend GoDaddy – they will give you one free domain with the purchase of a webhosting contract, and they have excellent customer service.) You can do this while sitting in front of your computer and talking to them on the phone. Tell them you are new to this, and you want to use the Wordpress platform and they will walk you through the entire process and help you set it up.

GoDaddy.com prices as of 1-13-15

Economy
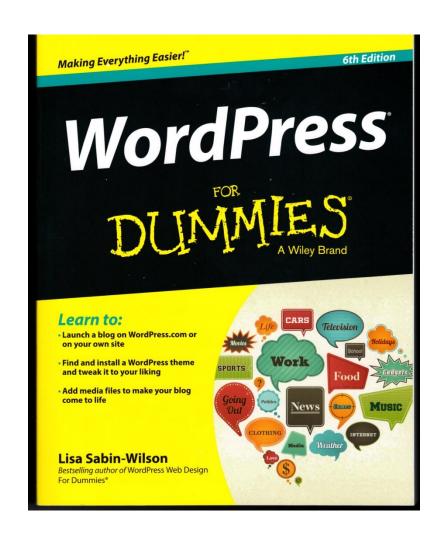Perfect to get started with a basic site

Starting at
$3.99/month
ON SALE - SAVE 42%
$6.99/month when you renew[4]

| 12 months | $3.99/month | ON SALE ∨ |

Add to Cart

1 Website

100 GB Storage

Unlimited bandwidth

100 Email Addresses

Free Domain with annual plan

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Deluxe
Ideal for building and managing multiple sites

Starting at
$4.49/month
ON SALE - SAVE 50%
$8.99/month when you renew[4]

| 12 months | $4.49/month | ON SALE ∨ |

Add to Cart

Unlimited Websites

Unlimited Storage

Unlimited bandwidth

500 Email Addresses

Free Domain with annual plan

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Ultimate

More Power and Security

Good for higher traffic. Twice the power, memory, email and more

Starting at
$7.49/month
ON SALE - SAVE 50%
$14.99/month when you renew[4]

| 12 months | $7.49/month | ON SALE ∨ |

Add to Cart

Unlimited Websites

Unlimited Storage

Unlimited bandwidth

1000 Email Addresses

Free Domain with annual plan

2X Processing Power & Memory
(Available for Linux/cPanel only)

Premium DNS Management Tool

1 year SSL Certificate - Secures customer data & increases search rankings
Restrictions apply

Hostgator.com web hosting

Recommended Reading

Miscellaneous Tips

- Back up your work frequently, using the "export" feature in the "tools" section.
- Recruit youth members to be the volunteer webmaster.
- You can set up the website to accept emails as the posts. (Use Jetpack Plug-in and configure post by email.)
- Consider setting up the website as a blog-style website that is updated frequently with stories – the frequent updates will be more attractive to the younger generations that Ruritan Clubs need to attract. A website with frequent updates will be seen as more "relevant" than one that never changes.
- Be open-minded as to whether to use the ".com" or ".org" suffix. Consider buying both domains and using a "redirect" on one of them. (GoDaddy can set that up.)
- Approach other clubs (perhaps approach your District) about sharing a webhosting plan – you can save a lot of money that way.

Questions?

This concludes today's presentation. Thank you for attending. Good luck!