We provide fun, challenge and adventure to
over 400,000 girls and boys across the UK

Websites

A website is an incredibly useful tool for displaying organised and detailed content about Scouting. Working hand-in-hand with other communications, they help to drive people to the information signposted via email, social networking or print-based communications.

Websites are a great place to store proactive support information for existing members, and allow new members to engage with, and learn more about Scouting. The general public can also obtain information about the organisation by visiting our site.

Websites can be low cost compared to printed media. They can be updated continually, with fresh content to keep users interested. As a means of sharing the correct information as well as pictures, audio and video, websites are unparalleled. They offer two-way communication between members via comment boxes and discussion areas.

For people who are unfamiliar with technology, occasionally there can be access issues. If used exclusively, this could be a disadvantage for members without easy access to the internet. Training, support or enabling Wi-Fi access at Scout meeting places, improving internet access at schools or local libraries can all assist people to get online. Increasing numbers of digital television services also now offer internet access.

Top ten tips for websites

- Put together a team of people with communication and web development skills that can collaborate.

- Create an ongoing plan for keeping information up-to-date.

- Look at user navigation and make every page accessible within three clicks of your homepage. Include a link to the homepage on every page.

- Break up pages into reasonable chunks to avoid users having to scroll down.

- Ensure that you follow the online safeguarding guidance and parental permission advice.

- Include contact email addresses so people can find out more, but remember not to put personal email addresses online.

- Never use 'under construction' pages. Remove the page and link if it's not ready.

- Link to content on scouts.org.uk, never copy content which can become out of date.

- Promote the national online join system - scouts.org.uk/join

- Publicise your website by including it on all your communications via print, email and social media.

Organising the workload

Set your purpose and select your audience for your website. Set up collaboration between communicators and web developers. A communicator needs to think about what they want to say, why they want to say it and when they want to say it. The web developer can help to turn these ideas into a structured website using their technical expertise. Ensure that your website has a plan for future development and the ability for communicators, rather than developers, to update pages easily.

Brand

Scouting is about everyday adventure, so bring your website to life with pictures and colour, including content that showcases the exciting activities that Scouts enjoy. Keep your design and layout simple, the text easy to read and in line with guidelines laid out in The Scout Association's text style guide (http://www.scouts.org.uk/styleguide). Follow the brand guidelines (http://www.scouts.org.uk/BRand) and use the Scout tone of voice and graphic style to help members feel part of the wider organisation. A badly written and poor design will suggest poor standards in other aspects of Scouting.

Web domain names

The most common naming convention for UK Scout websites includes the word 'Scouts' alongside the location and ends in '.org.uk'. Domain names can be purchased online.

Technical advice

Search online for the latest technical advice about hosting and setting up a website. Make your choice of server or website based on access to a wide range of old as well as new technology. Website generation programmes are available online if you don't have access to a developer.

Content

Website users don't spend long online so keep information short and to the point. Your tone should be friendly but matter of fact for clarity. Ensure your navigation is well structured. Include appropriate tool bars and ensure web content is maintained, linked to relevant information and that it is regularly changed to ensure the user has a relevant experience.

Content ideas

- Image or video-based news pages.

- Background information about your Scouting.

- Diary of events.

- Add links to Scout social media sites for extra interaction.

- Gallery of images that follow the guidelines on identifying young people and parental permission.

- Local Scout information – campsites, activity centres, equipment stores, local walks and transport hire.

- Local volunteer vacancies.

Safe from harm

It is the policy of The Scout Association to safeguard the welfare of all members by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm and neglect. It is essential that anyone creating a website follows a few simple guidelines. These are designed to ensure the personal safety of young people.

Website content should not easily identify young people

- Do not use young people's full names.

- Do not give out young people's email addresses or other contact details.

- Do not label or identify photography of young people.

- Obtain parent/guardian permission for the use of a young person's image.

- If possible, avoid using names at all or shuffle the names if they coincide with photography.

For further information and online safety advice visit getsafeonline.org (http://www.getsafeonline.org/) and thinkuknow.co.uk (https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/BRowser-safety/) and link to CEOP (https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/Teachers/Thinkuknow-FAQ/Linking-to-CEOP/), which requires you to register your website and identify your audience in their database.

Adult volunteers – behaving appropriately

- Set up Scout-based email access and avoid personal email addresses.

- Never publish home addresses or phone numbers.

- Always ask adults if you can publish their full names and/or any contact details.

- Consider if your content will tell others when a leader's house may be empty.

Double check your content

Check that your photography meets the requirements of our activity and other rules. Ensure it is considered in good taste and that you own the image. Use free stock image libraries rather than gathering material from the internet.

Parent permission guidance

Parents should be given the opportunity to give their permission for their child's image to be displayed on the internet or used for other publicity purposes. Read the permission guidance (http://shop.scouts.org.uk/p-5248-photography-recording-scout-events.aspx) for photo and video recording at Scout events for further advice and for a copy of a form you could use to gain permission in advance.

Comment boxes or chat feeds

If you include a place for comment or chat, implement a filtered or moderated process to monitor use.

Securing meeting and event details

Do not publish exact details of meeting places and times. If you provide an email link to request more details, ensure that it is sent to a leader who can deal with it personally, rather than using an automatic reply.

Create a password protected area if you want to provide programme information for parents and older members. Ensure the password is changed at least once a month and don't rely on hiding the password within the downloadable pages of the site, as this can easily be viewed by opening the page source in a browser.

Whilst you may wish to publish dates and locations of future events and camps, do not go into too much detail if you feel that the young people might be put at risk without constant supervision. If in doubt, put details onto password protected pages.

Legal requirements

Privacy statement - you are responsible for any information that you collect via your website, so include a statement that tells users what you will do with any information and email addresses they supply. Limit the amount of data you collect. Also detail your server system and confirm that your statement only covers your site name.

Terms and Disclaimer – display a short statement about what your site provides and who it is for. Also include a short statement to ensure you are clear on the ownership of the content. For example you could say: 'the views expressed on this website are not necessarily those of The Scout Association.'

Copyright – add a short statement to claim your ownership of the content that says: 'the content on this website is the copyright of the 1st Somewhere Scout Group 2011.'

Using external content

Do not use content that isn't yours without obtaining permission. Website content, including text, images, video and audio, are copyrighted in the same way as a paper resource. Using someone else's material without permission infringes on their integrity and their intellectual property rights. If you have been given permission to use or share content don't forget to include a hyperlink back or give credit if this has been requested.

scouts.org.uk gives permission for any Scout website to hyperlink to any page within the site. As content is updated frequently it is best practice to link directly to content rather than 'stealing' and duplicating it on your own pages. Copied content could easily end up out of date and become potentially misleading or dangerous as outdated information. This practice of copying and pasting information can and has been used in libel and other legal proceedings, so always think before you copy information onto your website.