

Archives for Local Section and Division Websites

Definition of Archives:

Archives are older files (> 3-5 years) that are no longer current and may contain inaccurate or outdated information. They are not accessed regularly by site users and may have a different look and feel (and navigation) than current files. They are maintained for their historical value and business value to constituent group governance.

Archives index: An index to a set of older files is *not* an archive file and should be in the current look and feel of the site.

Issues:

1. Local Sections and Divisions desire to maintain a history of their group using an archive of their website.
2. Electronic archives may be the only historic records a group has.
3. Archive files are numerous and pose various issues in converting and maintaining to a current site:
 - a. Having a large amount of out-dated material may dilute search results of current material. A user may be searching for information (e.g. NCW) and may not get the current information but rather see entries for out-dated information. (Site search is likely to be implemented on webs.com in the next 6 months.)
 - b. Conversion and management of a large number of out-dated files may be cumbersome.
 - c. Information Architecture (i.e. the organization) of a large number of files may make it difficult for users to find the current and relevant information.
4. ACS national will be including information from constituent group websites in its site search from www.acs.org. In order to make the site search effective, it is important that old, out-dated information not be included in the search.
5. It may not be appropriate to keep some of the information. (question: Many companies have data retention policies. Do we need to make recommendation on the type of information they should not be keeping)

Possible Solutions:

1. Place archive files on an external file sharing service such as Box.net or Dropbox.com. This solution would essentially result in a separation of current website and archives.
 - a. Pros:
 - i. Box.net allows individuals to use up to 1 GB of filespace free (files must be less than 25MB). Dropbox allows up to 2 GB free.
 - ii. Files can be accessed directly via a website.
 - iii. Box.net and Dropbox.net support folder structures.
 - iv. (Box.net): When there is value in presenting archival material to general website users, a widget can be used to allow files

from box.net to be listed on website without actually being on the website.

- v. Some files can be made publicly available. On Box.net, this is through their widget. Dropbox allows direct linking to pages in the public folder.
 - vi. Both allow folders to be shared with other people.
- b. Cons:
- i. Access to this site must be managed by an administrator.
 - ii. Certain conditions may warrant paying for an account. (Box.net says their Lite version is for personal file sharing and small short-term projects. Next plan is \$9.95/month.)

See <http://webmasters.sites.acs.org> for an example of the box.net widget. There are likely other services that offer similar functionality.

2. Upload files “as is” to a folder on webs.com. (Multiple files can be uploaded with their multiple file uploader or super multi uploader.) The files should be placed in a folder separate from the current content. If it is not necessary to make them publically available, then do not link to these pages. Linking to current content makes the content findable to search engines.
 - a. Pros: All content is in one place.
 - b. Cons: Content on webs.com usually requires a template. Without the template, appropriate analytics may not be captured. In addition, search (both at the national and site level) may not be as effective if the current website links to the archive content. .
3. Capture archive files as PDFs (with active links). Possibly collect similar files into single PDFs. These PDFs could be uploaded to Webs.com or onto a different site.
 - a. Pros: Once sorted and collected, it would be much easier to manage the archives files. Old look and feel is preserved are not confused with current website documents.
 - b. Cons: There is a high level of effort to go through archive files, to sort through what needs to be kept and what should be discarded, and to collect files into PDFs. Requires use of Adobe Acrobat or similar program. PDFs are harder to reuse than HTML should that become necessary.
4. As this document is being prepared, Webs.com is working on partnering with other companies and may offer alternate archiving solutions in the future.

Recommendations:

The webmaster and group historian, and other officers, may want to decide that which content should be kept, what should be available publicly, what should be kept only for the record, and what can or should be deleted. WSO can run a PowerMapper scan of a particular site. Groups could use the resulting scan to mark off what is current, what needs to be archived, and what should be deleted.

In addition to looking for an online solution for archives, it is recommended that the website (and archive files) be captured on a CD/DVD. The website may be captured as a PDF or the native files may be zipped up or the native files may be copied onto some writeable media. WSO can ensure that all sites on the membership server will be copied onto a disk.

Because the needs of the different local sections and divisions are varied, they will have to choose which solution they may want to pursue, although ACS WSO staff may be able to lend assistance.