

Website Report for the 2015 Winter Assembly

This is a slightly expanded version of the report I gave at the Winter Committee meeting. I hope it contains pertinent information that GSRs can bring back to their groups. With their support I attended the NAATW workshop in October. We'll see the results of that event continue to develop and evolve for some time to come. I believe they will have a profound effect on at least the web-related technology in Area 20 and eventually be quite far reaching. An interesting trend came to light early in the workshop: in response to rapidly advancing technology many districts, areas and intergroups have created technology service committees under which they have placed their website operations.

81 people from nearly 20 states attended the workshop in St. Louis. Some presenters couldn't be there due to nationwide air traffic issues created by a hurricane, but most of the content was quite good. In my opinion, the incredible networking and brainstorming opportunities were even more valuable.

One of the earliest presentations gave us a few statistics. As of 2014 the total number of mobile computing devices in use (phone and tablets) surpassed the number of desktops and laptops in use, and mobile users spent more time on their devices than the others. Local internet searches on mobile devices far surpass local searches on non-mobiles. From that we know that more and more people will look for meetings and other AA information on mobile devices, especially smartphones. So that statistical envelope describes the new environment in which we will carry our message.

The following items emerged during or shortly after the conference.

- We have formed an unofficial website administration service committee consisting of webmasters Ben M. (alternate website administrator from district 61), Jeane M. (district 41), Magic M. (district 43), Earl N. (district 10) and Jeff S. (district 90). One goal of that committee is to form an area-wide webmaster support group so that we can collaborate effectively and help support each other. That effort will be in full swing after we identify any new webmasters from the upcoming rotation.
- Before considering changes to the current Area 20 website we checked its functions against its mission as described in our service handbook. We decided to convert the website to the WordPress format, which among other things will make it responsive, i.e. automatically adaptable to smartphones, tablets and computer screens alike. Earl M's terrific work on the District 10 site will be a factor in the new design approach. The WordPress conversion will also make our site more sustainable, i.e. more easily passed along to future trusted servants without requiring high level skills. You can expect to see the revised site go live during the first half of 2016. We will observe Dr. Bob's admonition to keep it simple.
- Jeff S. is developing a "Keep it Simple" website package available for easy adoption by any district, and Ben M's district 61 site will be the first test bed.
- Area 20 may be an early participant in a 12 Step Meeting Finder project destined to be available on any CMS-based website as well as a free standing smartphone app. Jeff S. is helping develop

and refine that project, which has already shown significant growth. Eventually you will be able to nearly automatically find meetings near you no matter what device you are using.

- We will discuss plans to hold our own one day workshop to disseminate the above information to area 20 members.

In a deeply moving presentation a small group of deaf AAs illustrated the need for making ASL interpretation more widely available by turning the audience into recipients of the translation while they told parts of their stories. Part of their message was that AA websites need to pay more attention to displaying updated listings of meetings that meet special needs such as theirs and others. A leader of that group told of being accommodated very well by our own Urbano after getting no assistance from an adjoining area.

The AA traditions were faithfully observed throughout the conference. With all the emphasis on new technology at the conference the obligation to not leave the non-technical members behind was a continuous thread. That commitment has been underscored repeatedly in post-conference communications.

In summary, as an annual event I believe the workshop will be instrumental in improving our ability to carry the traditional and proven AA message in an ever-changing technological environment. In my opinion Area 20 should participate in future NAATW workshops. Thank you for your support.

In Service,

John C.

Area 20 website administrator