
INTRODUCTION

The City of Chico Web Site: How To Develop an Online Community Resource

The City of Chico is interested in creating a Web site. We are interested in providing the solution, an Online Community Resource that will grow as connectivity grows in the local area. The Write Thing offers a unique viewpoint of how a Web site should be created, based on the interactive participation of the audience. We will show how this approach will both promote the Web site and ease the burden of production.

Opening a Web site should be like adding a reception area to the new municipal building. Someone should be there to greet people and find out what they need, then develop the site according to those needs. Instead of hype and myths of the information superhighway, we present a proposal aimed at creating a useful and effective site, which can grow with the emerging online needs of the local area.

Over 100 Chico residents are on AOL; several hundred are on each of the two local servers, not to mention a large online community at the university. Our goal is to provide access to the on-line audience, with the City of Chico as a focal point of the developing local online community.

The World Wide Web is more than just a publishing medium. The Web represents the first true move beyond a paper-driven office., leading us into challenges of design that are currently being overrun by too much hype and too little substance. Our approach will build this site from a local angle, by using a tested model which promotes itself while creating materials. Such sites are cost-effective and focused on contacting the target audience.

The benefits of our model are:

- A Web site customized to the needs of the City of Chico;
- The use of both email and a Web site to develop publicity;
- An innovative approach focused on building the site slowly, with cost savings built on a customized template design.

Some Advice from the Project Manager

Many people are selling snake oil on the Web, pure and simple. I wrote an article about it recently, from my experience judging an international Web competition. Many big companies threw up too many graphics, selling the hype of the information superhighway and some mythical view of what the Web could be. They didn't reach their target audience because they focused too heavily on the graphics. The most successful sites benefit from a simple design.

Many Web developers can't see the forest for the trees. Read this proposal and we'll share some free tips on how the City of Chico can create its own unique Web Site.

How We Will Approach The City of Chico Web Site

What You Need

The City needs a Web Site and a way to become an online community resource. We propose a simple approach to mix elegant Web design with the maintenance and a newsletter which will be the focal point of promotion, giving a local flavor to the administrative-driven Web needs of the City of Chico.

What We Provide

We will create:

1. Three primary Web pages, commonly know as the "Front End" on the Web. These will be a main home page introducing the Web site, or Home page; an Administrative Page, for the variety of departments in the City; and The Chico Online Newsletter, a Web page highlighting special attractions in the area, news, meetings, and items of interest to the Chico community. We will create the newsletter monthly on the Web, as well as offering a means to subscribe so that the page may be received via email. This will create a cost-effective, community presence because the publishing is based on a special template, where the primary change month to month is the text.

Design for these three pages will include graphics, HTML programming, interface design, and market research to identify relevant sites.

2. Five templates which will be designed for the City of Chico project; these can be used to put future materials online, including:

1. Text-based documents and information template;
 2. Online Form templates for people to fill in;
 3. A multimedia template for audio and video experiments;
 4. A Departmental home page template for the larger departments moving online, with 5 choices per page; and
 5. A page listing larger photographs shown as thumbnail pictures, which when selected will lead to larger (and more time-consuming) graphics. Graphics for the templates will be created. Pages created from the templates will use scanned or images already in use by the City. Original artwork for the templates would be an added expense.
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The concept is simple:

The Web site, mixed with a developed presence using email as a primary communication tool, will create a successful site based on content and ease of use by the audience.

The Value We Will Provide

The City of Chico will benefit from this approach, because a template-driven design will provide the value of an original site with an automated publishing system. You can choose to produce:

- Only the first three pages as outlined in the proposal. We will provide an outline which the City can further develop. This would be a one-month proposition; the two weeks outlined by the City would create a rushed job. It is advised to use the extra two weeks to clean up what has been created.
- The additional five templates as offered in this proposal. By customizing templates, further production is merely a case of adapting the content to the structure already decided on. This will remove the need to start from scratch on each page, creating a cohesive package that benefits from a simple design. Each template page provides a 75% savings over a custom-designed page.

With this option, the City of Chico can choose to produce as many or as few pages per year as it wishes. These pages can be developed quickly, showing change in the site month by month as well as providing time for the City to decide what is offered. Each page must be submitted two weeks prior to printing to allow time to fit them to the template.

- The maintenance person for this project, Gudrun Fehrer, is experienced in maintaining Web sites. She would be the email voice of the site, responding to forms on the Home Page and newsletter. She would take materials already being created and put them in the newsletter, as well as creating a mailing list. The advantage is in reaching people who aren't on the Web. Anyone with an email address could be located and gain access to this newsletter, along with it being on the Web.

The advantage is in public relations and publicity. Fehrer would make sure the site is registered with all the major search engines, post to relevant newsgroups and mailing lists, and work each month to develop links with other sites. She would subject these links to the approval of a supervisor representing the City each month. The value she would provide would enhance the city's image as well as being cost-effective.

Quality Assurance: Five Steps to Creating the City of Chico Web Site

Many companies have computers, networks, and access to the Internet, but few have the organizational approach and experience of The Write Thing. A Quality Assurance Program for Web Development has been created, insuring the successful completion of projects. Our personnel draw on a history of educational and business expertise. We have incorporated these procedures into our own in-house review and coordination process. The Quality Assurance program works through email and reporting, while meeting with the clients each step of the way to insure success. There are five basic steps over six weeks:

Quality develops by:

- *Five one-hour meetings between the Project Manager and the City;*
- *A plan to develop a publishing system which the city can grow with;*
- *The creation of an active site through promotion and community outreach online.*

1. Project Evaluation

At the beginning of the project the staff evaluates the requirements, discusses the design of the three main pages, and consults on the eventual design of five templates for future development.

2. 25% Review: Two Weeks

We meet to review the initial home page design; suggestions are made for final completion. Template design is begun.

3. 50% Review: Four Weeks

The three main pages are delivered for final review; we also review the five templates and receive suggestions. The maintenance of the project begins, with an online presence maintained on major search engines, within the local community, and in newsgroups.

4. 75% Review: Six Weeks

The five templates are reviewed and approved. We will deliver them in the final session.

5. Final Review: Eight Weeks

The City meets and approves the templates. Further pages may be developed subject to the needs of the city and the cost-effective templates, allowing the site to develop at its own pace.

Benefits of the Proposed City of Chico Web Site

- Fine Line Communications will act as the Creative Directors for this project, bringing a diverse sense of design and programming capabilities to the development of the Web site.
 - A chance to work with experienced Web developers to create a local site, which may be used to help build the online community in Chico.
 - The creation of an online monthly newsletter which could be used to promote the area, allowing access to people who aren't on the Web but would be interested. This simple newsletter could build community interest and be simply part of the maintenance cost, saving the cost of printing. Materials currently being created could be used for this newsletter by the City. These materials would be made available on the Web site and through direct email; people who visit would register to receive this by email. This way a greater portion of the audience may be reached, because more are on email than the Web.
 - The opportunity to gain access to technology funding by setting standards based on performance.
 - Cost savings of moving certain phases of city paperwork, such as planning proposals or licensing, to online-based service.
 - A Web site that grows from active participation of the audience without creating a burden for the city.
 - A slow but sure design model that will allow the City to accurately define what it needs and how to develop it.
 - The use of customized templates, which will allow the city to develop its own style and then apply this style to numerous pages that are later put on the Web.
 - The use of an online newsletter and monthly maintenance, which is cost-effective and would promote the City both through the Web and word of mouth.
 - The opportunity to work with a seasoned veteran of the Internet and Web who also teaches special workshops nationwide to help people develop Web sites as a business opportunity.
 - A design that focuses on simplicity and elegance, providing a rich online resource that is easy to use.
 - A long term goal of forming an online identity that will help as Chico develops into the 21st century.
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The Write Thing

World Wide Web Site and Marketing Development

City of Chico Web Site Project Development Cost Estimate

	Write Thing			Multimedia Industry	
	Hours Per Page	Per Hour	Cost Per Page	Total Pages	Total
Initial Three Page Design					
Interface Design	10	\$30	\$300	3	\$900
Editing Copy	5	\$20	\$100	3	\$300
Graphic Artist	10	\$40	\$400	3	\$1,200
HTML Coding	10	\$30	\$300	3	\$900
Testing	5	\$20	\$100	3	\$300
Total	40	NA	\$1,200	3	\$3,600
Template Design: 5 pages					
Interface Design	10	\$30	\$300	5	\$1,500
Graphic Artist	10	\$40	\$400	5	\$2,000
HTML Coding	10	\$30	\$300	5	\$1,500
Total	30	NA	\$1,000	5	\$5,000
Maintenance of Newsletter, Site, and Publicity Per Month	80	\$10	\$800	12	\$9,600
Total	80	\$10	\$800	12	\$9,600
Template Price Per Page	NA	NA	\$250	1	\$250
Normal Price Per Page	NA	NA	\$1,200	1	\$1,200
Total Savings Per Page	NA	NA	\$950	1	\$950
Total For Entire Project Plus Added Cost of Pages per month to be determined	350	NA	NA	8	\$18,200
Total W/O Maintenance	270	NA	NA	8	\$8,600

City of Chico is free to use templates to produce as many pages as needed; this becomes a fixed cost of \$250 per page, including scanning of graphics. Creation of original graphics not included in this price. Most of the graphics should be included in the templates, with headers taken by graphics already used by the city and photographs which may be scanned in.

Model is based on two month development of Initial 3 Pages and 5 page template; thereafter subject to optional maintenance fee and needs of the city to create pages. Maintenance fee is based on upgrading newsletter, promoting site to search engines, newsgroups, and establishing links, as well as responding to email from newsletter and Home Page. All other pages are beyond the scope of proposed maintenance fee.

Project Team

The Write Thing

The Write Thing is a Web publishing and marketing company. Formed in 1986 as a desktop publishing firm, we have evolved into multimedia, CD-ROMs, and now the Web. Michael Dunn will be the project manager for the City of Chico online, providing expertise in Instructional Design, multimedia, HTML, graphics, and management. Gudrun Fehrer will be the Instructional Designer for the project, in charge of maintaining the site and developing value by creating an active online community via the newsletter and home page.

The proposed design will save the City of Chico by focusing initial expenditures on the look and feel of the Web site, then gradually adapting existent materials within this accepted platform.

Fine Line Communications

Fine Line Communications is a growing and diversified company that has specialized in producing electronic communications packages for our clients since 1993. Our extensive in-house experience with programming, software development, interface design, and computer graphics and design has enabled us to produce a wide variety of promotional and educational packages for corporate use. Extremely small complete DOS and Windows demos, designed and optimized for easy transmission over modems and the Internet, are among our primary products. Our Internet programming and development services draw on our years of industry experience, and offer the same professional commitment to excellence.

Online Samples of our Work

A Cybrary of the Holocaust
<http://www.best.com/~mddunn/cybrary/>

The Web Letter
An Online Web Development Resource
<http://www.writething.com/>

Telecare Long Distance Network
<http://www.longdistance.com/>

The IICS Virtual Chapter
<http://www.intac.com/~virtual/>

Appraiser Access
<http://www.sierra.net/~appraz/>

CyberWave Media
marketing page
<http://www.cyberwave.com/top/>

The Wolf Dunn, Gudrun Fehrer's site
<http://www.ecst.csuchico.edu/~gfehrer/>
