

Tech Tools for Leaders

2006 Wisconsin Community Leadership Summit
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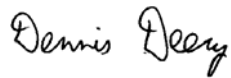
Non-profit organizations, governmental agencies and rural organizations all suffer from a common fate - lack of financial resources and access to technology. This workshop will present a number of free and low-cost technology resources that leaders can utilize to make the most of their time and people. Attendees will learn the process of developing a web site, and then look at other online tools that can enhance communications and collaboration for any organization. Participants will learn how to assess their technology needs and how to engage educational strategies to help people work with new technology.

This seminar will present a lot of information in a very short time. To help with your implementation of these ideas, I've created a web page that participants can use as a resource when you return home and work to put this information to use. All links and web sites mentioned in this seminar can be accessed from the site below, along with the PowerPoint presentation and notes.

Complete materials for this seminar can be downloaded from:

<http://www.irose.com/cls2006>

If you have any questions, or would like additional information, please don't hesitate to get in touch!



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The links listed in each section below are providers of the services discussed. Most of these are services that I have used or recommended to clients. Your mileage may vary, products may have settled during shipment, objects in mirror are closer than they appear, etc, all the standard disclaimers apply.

Domain Names

Your domain name is your web address, or the part of your email address following the @ sign. I make this recommendation first because I believe it's important to own your address online. Most people use the email address provided by their internet provider. The problem with this is if you change internet providers, or move, or your internet provider changes names, your email address and perhaps your web address will have to change. This can be an incredible hassle, and unlike the phone system there is no good way to leave forwarding information on your old email address. Since purchasing a domain name can be done for less than \$10 per year, it's something worth doing if email or a web site is important to your communication strategy. Some domain registrars, such as GoDaddy (listed below) will even provide reduced-rate or free email hosting with a domain purchase. Please note that domain purchases must be paid each year - you really rent a domain rather than purchasing it.

- <http://www.godaddy.com>
- <http://smallbusiness.yahoo.com>

Email and Mailing Lists

Email and mailing lists are the most common forms of collaboration online. Paired with a domain purchase mentioned in the previous section, you can create your own email address that will not change as long as you choose to keep it. Non-profit organizations are finding that increasing use of email can cut their costs for marketing, planning and other activities. Use of discussion lists (where all subscribers can send to the list) can allow workgroups spread across a large geographic area to continue communication with ease. Announcement lists (where only one person can send to the list) allow you to communicate event announcements and perform other marketing. For only a few dollars a month the providers below can fulfill all your email hosting needs.

- <http://www.godaddy.com>
- <http://www.dreamhost.com>
- <http://www.listbox.com/listbox/>

Web Sites

Creating a web site can range from buying a pre-packaged site to designing your own from the ground up to hiring a full staff to handle it for you. We'll cover the basics of the lower-cost methods here.

First up are web hosts that provide online site-builders. These site-builders allow you to choose from some pre-designed site layouts, then add your own content and photos. Generally the site-

builders work using just a browser, so you don't need any special software. This can be the easiest way to get a web site up and running with a minimum of fuss. Anyone with a little experience working with word processing can handle this approach. One drawback of this method is that there are usually a minimum of site designs to choose from, so your site may very well end up looking the same as several other sites.

- <http://geocities.yahoo.com>
- <http://www.godaddy.com>

Next up on the ladder of difficulty is creating your own site from a pre-designed template. This will generally give you a little more flexibility in design, but will require more work on your part. There are a wide variety of templates available, so you shouldn't worry too much about duplicating a common design for your site. The sites below are two that offer some very high-quality templates. You'll need some software, mentioned below, to do this kind of work.

- <http://www.oswd.org>
- <http://www.thetemplatestore.com>

And finally, you can design your own site from the ground up. This is going to take some work! You can find a lot of guidance online as to how to get this done, and you can hire someone to help if needed. If you do want to design your own site, two books I'd recommend starting with are listed below.

- [Robin Williams' Web Design Workshop](#) by Robin Williams
- [The Non-Designer's Design Book](#) by Robin Williams

Once you have a site design, you'll need a place to host it. To do this you rent space on a server that's connected to the internet full-time. You can run your own web host, but I strongly recommend against it. You can rent hosting space for less than \$10 per month, and you can't possibly run your own server for that price. The following two hosts are reasonably priced hosts that can handle all of your site needs, whether you build your own, have it built, or use a pre-designed template. DreamHost in particular provides some add-ons such as discussion forums, blog publishing and other software that are relatively easy to install and run.

- <http://www.dreamhost.com>
- <http://www.site5.com>

If you decide to design your own site or work from a template, you'll need some software to edit your site with. I'm a big fan of Macromedia's products (recently acquired by Adobe). Their low-end tool is called Contribute, and is designed for novice users to edit web content. Users with more experience may choose to go with DreamWeaver, Macromedia's professional-level tool. The only drawback to these two packages is price - Contribute will cost around \$150 and DreamWeaver goes for \$400+. However, Macromedia does have a good purchase program for non-profit organizations. You can learn more about that below. One other package you may hear of is Microsoft's FrontPage. I'm not a big fan of FrontPage, I find it difficult for novices to configure and use. You may have a copy of FrontPage included with your Microsoft Office software. It can do the job of web editing, but if you find yourself struggling with it consider using something else.

- <http://www.macromedia.com>
- <http://www.microsoft.com/frontpage/>

And finally, once you have a web site up and running, you should work to track usage of the site. Most web hosts provide some easy-to-use tracking pages that can show you how many people are using your site. You can use this to monitor site areas that aren't being used and re-structure them or eliminate them. You can also determine if the site is being used enough to warrant further investment. The site below can give you a good introduction into web traffic analysis.

- <http://www.analog.cx/docs/meaning.html>

Find and Manage Images

If you're going to create a web site, you're going to need images. Good quality images can really punch up a site and make the difference between a successful site and a site nobody visits. If you're having trouble getting your own images, check out the Stock Exchange below for some free or low-cost stock photos. (Be sure to check out the licensing on any images you decide to use - more below.)

- <http://www.sxc.hu/>

You probably have a digital camera, and if so, you're buried in images. The free software package Picasa can help you manage the images on your hard-drive. To share images on the web, Flickr provides free storage space and some good tools to help organize images.

- <http://picasa.google.com/>
- <http://www.flickr.com/>

Presentations

We all have to do them, but very few of us do enough to get good at it! Use the power of the web to learn from the masters. The three sites below provide a lot of great information about making presentations. I've tried to put some of it to use here, so I hope its working!

- <http://www.presentationzen.com/>
- <http://www.sociablemedia.com/>
- <http://www.sethgodin.com>

How many times have you watched a presentation where the presenter was using a remote with PowerPoint, and couldn't get the remote to work? You watch them in the front of the room doing presentation gymnastics, trying to get the remote in the right position to work, and generally they give up and stand next to the computer. If you're going to do a lot of presentations, don't suffer through this. Get yourself a good-quality radio-frequency remote. Most remotes work on an infrared signal, meaning the remote has to have line-of-site to the projector, which is what leads to the gymnastics. A radio-frequency remote doesn't need line-of-sight, and so is generally much more reliable. The link below is for the remote I use.

- <http://www.acomdata.com/rlpmp/fs.html>

Know Your Licensing!

Whenever you use an image or any content that you find online, it's important to know the copyright and licensing issues involved. Fair use doctrine may allow you to use the work of others in certain circumstances (educational use, commentary, news reporting), but it's up to you to ensure that you're legally using the work of others. It's totally unacceptable to look up an image in Google Images and use it to create your own marketing brochure or other work. When in doubt, ask the creator of a photograph or other work for permission to use it.

- <http://www.copyright.gov/>
- <http://creativecommons.org/>

Online Collaboration

There are a lot of ways to be effective online besides building your own web site. The sites listed here can help you collaborate with people online and make your work more productive. You can keep a shared calendar that multiple people can access and edit at Google Calendar. TadaList allows you to keep an online to-do list. Backpack is an online storage location for sharing files and working on documents. BaseCamp lets you create an extranet to share files and manage projects. CampFire can host your online chats using text messaging, while Skype allows you to make computer-to-computer phone calls.

- <http://calendar.google.com>
- <http://www.tadalist.com/>
- <http://www.backpackit.com>
- <http://www.basecampHQ.com/>
- <http://www.campfirenow.com/>
- <http://www.skype.com>

Cheap Software for Non-Profits

Many software companies offer purchase programs for non-profit organizations, so expensive software may not be out of your reach. The sites below are just a few places to get software deals if you have non-profit status.

- http://www.macromedia.com/buy/volume_license/nonprofit/
- <http://www.techsoup.org/>
- <http://www.openoffice.org/>

Protect Your Computer!

If you're online, your computer is at risk. At a minimum you should run firewall software and anti-virus software. ZoneLabs ZoneAlarm software and Grisoft's AVG Anti-virus are two programs that offer free editions (for certain uses, check the license!). Don't go online without proper protection! You also may suffer from spyware, software that sneaks onto your computer. Spybot Search & Destroy and Ad-Aware are two good programs to scan for spyware and help you remove it.

- <http://www.zonelabs.com/>
- <http://www.grisoft.com/doc/289/Ing/us/tp1/tp101>
- <http://www.lavasoft.com/>
- <http://www.spybot.info/>

Training Users

The key question when using technology for any purpose is - "Does this improve what I'm doing, or take away from it?" Be sure to reserve room in your organization, on your board, etc, for people who are not advanced technology users. When you put technology to use, make sure you provide the proper training to go along with it. This could be a hands-on one-on-one lesson provided by you, or could be professional training, or perhaps just providing written lessons. The Wisconsin Technical College system provides a lot of great training in communities throughout Wisconsin. The sites below also offer some good training options.

- <http://www.witechcolleges.com/>
- <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/training/default.aspx>
- <http://www.elementk.com/>
- <http://www.dummies.com/WileyCDA/>

Stay Informed

While accomplishing all the great things above for your organization, it's not easy to stay on top of the news. If we're going to be effective leaders, though, we need to stay on top of things. Use the power of the internet sites below to gather your news into one site to make your life easier. These sites can help you to grab the headlines from a broad range of sources without visiting a bunch of web sites.

- <http://news.google.com>
- <http://www.wisopinion.com>
- <http://www.topix.net>
- <http://www.topix.net/state/wi>

Spend a little time configuring a My Yahoo page and you can get your own selection of headlines, weather, and many other things, all on one page.

- <http://my.yahoo.com>

And finally, read through the following sites to learn a little about RSS (really simple syndication) and blogging. Weblogs, or blogs, can provide a wealth of information and news analysis from a wide variety of viewpoints. By reading a selection of blogs you can learn about a lot of news items that you'd otherwise miss. Using the power of RSS and an aggregator like Bloglines, you can collect all your news reading into one site to save you time and effort. This is powerful stuff, learn more about it!

- <http://www.nytimes.com/ref/technology/circuits/03basi.html>
- <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/rss/index.html>
- <http://www.bloglines.com>
- <http://www.feedException.com>
- <http://www.blogger.com>

Other Sites Brought up during the Session

CafePress - a great spot for creating custom printed t-shirts, hats, mugs, etc.

- <http://www.cafepress.com>

SurveyMonkey and Zoomerang, two sites for creating your own web surveys

- <http://www.surveymonkey.com>
- <http://www.zoomerang.com>