Informatics Committee

Committee Members: M. E. Hopton (Chair), C. A. Iudica, S. P. Maher, S. B. McLaren, D. K. Odell, I. M. Ortega, B. A. Roberts, B. J. Shaw.

Mission:

The Informatics Committee is responsible for addressing issues that arise with continuing changes in technology and information processing, retrieval, etc. as they relate to mammalogy. In recent years, the committee has been primarily involved with maintaining and further developing the Society's web site.

At the 87th Annual Meeting (2007) in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the Board of Directors of the American Society of Mammalogists charged the newly redefined Informatics Committee to explore improvements including a redesign of the Society's web site and to maintain the existing web site during this period.

Information Items:

(1) The new ASM web site (www.mammalsociety.org and www.mammalogy.org) went live on 17 March 2011.

(2) The redesigned ASM web site is hosted on a new server and with a new web hosting company (InMotion Hosting) to meet better the requirements of the new web site. Annual web hosting fees are $468 per year.

(3) In September 2011, the servers at InMotion Hosting were hacked and more than 11,000 web sites were defaced. The ASM web site was offline for approximately four days (25-28 September). Informatics and InMotion Hosting worked to resolve the problem and restore our web site.

(4) Informatics paid design firm Acro Media to implement additional changes and fixes to the web site. This included an analysis of how the web site is used by visitors. This information will be used to tweak the current layout of the web site.

(5) For the past ~13 years, AIBS was the official registrar of both ASM web site domain names. As of February 2012, American Society of Mammalogists is the official registrant (i.e., owner) of both domain names (mammalsociety.org and mammalogy.org.)

(6) After receiving input from ASM membership, the next phase of the web site redesign is ongoing at an estimated cost of $15,660.

(7) ASM has a presence on a number of social media including:

FaceBook

(https://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Society-of-Mammalogists#!/pages/American-Society-of-Mammalogists/217529044996521)
Google+
(https://plus.google.com/#s/american%20society%20of%20mammalogists67)
Twitter
(@Mammalogists)

Integration of these social media into the ASM web site will occur after ASM leadership determines the appropriate level of monitoring necessary.

(**8**) Routine maintenance and updates were performed on an as-needed basis, including posting of Open Access articles published in the *Journal of Mammalogy* and *Mammalian Species*. Committee pages and membership listings were updated, as requested by President Mares. Leadership pages, including changes in Editors, Officers, and Elected Directors, were updated following the 2011 Annual Meeting.

(**9**) Online submission of fellowships administered by the Honoraria and Grants-in-Aid committees was conducted using the new web site.

(**10**) Requests for information, job postings, and announcements submitted to the web site were received by Dan Odell and routed accordingly. Odell received 60% more contacts during the past 12 months (288) compared to the previous year (174) through the old web site. Based on the contents of submissions, Odell thinks the increase was due to the redesign and increased visibility of the site.

(**11**) President Mares requested Informatics to identify potential functionality and estimated cost to implement. Working with Acro Media, Informatics identified a number of items that could interest ASM Membership (see below).

Options/Suggestions for Phase 4 of ASM web site redesign provided by Acro Media, Inc.

(**1**) Social Media Integration:
With the rise of social media as a method to share information, the use of outlets like Twitter, FaceBook, and Google+ could be ripe opportunities for generating more interest in the organization and attracting new Members. As well, with the development of ASM training videos and their subsequent posting on an ASM YouTube page, there is a prime opportunity to use several outlets to post information that will not only spark more interest in the organization as a whole, but also open discussion topics that heretofore have not been approached.

The solution for American Society of Mammalogists could include the following:
Twitter, YouTube skinning
- ASM branded creative content for Twitter and YouTube pages
- Consistent branding to drive exposure and recognition.
Integrated Twitter feed to ASM Web site.
- Twitter posts automatically updated to ASM site.
Media Page development within the site to share video and audio media straight from YouTube.

Cost
Full Social Media Integration would require the following estimated budget:
Twitter, YouTube skinning
- $600—$800 each
Integrated Social Media Feed
- $750—$1,500
Media Page Development & Integrated YouTube Player
- $1,500—$3,000

(2) User-Generated Content:
One of the largest challenges can be keeping individual Members engaged and included in relevant discussions. The use of user-generated content can be a key method to bring Members together, allowing individuals to express their points of view in an informal discussion with other like-minded Members.

The key to the success of Social Media is its ability to reach people across the world in a quick and efficient fashion, while giving individuals the opportunity to comment and join the debate. More user-generated content on the ASM Web site could provide an outlet and medium for ASM Members to engage in these discussions in a more familiar atmosphere among people that share their interest and passion for the study of mammals (Note that we suggest social media may serve this function).

The solution for American Society of Mammalogists could include the following:
Forum Integration
- Specific forums for Members to create topics, post comments, share information
User-submitted blog entries
- Blog page on the ASM site, specifically for Member article submission and posting

Cost
User-generated content options would require the following estimated budget:
Integrated Forum
- $2,000—$4,000 (depending on Forum Software)
  - Drupal Forum
  - vBulletin
  - phpBB
Blog Pages for User Submission
- $1,500 for page creation
- $1,000—$3,000 for submission functionality and approval process.

(3) Mobile Device Apps:
Technology has continued to move forward at a blistering pace. Desktop computers gave way to laptops, and the mobility of laptops has graduated into the convenience of hand-held devices with amazing connectivity and browsing capability. With the wealth of information on the ASM Web site, there exists the opportunity to create Mobile Apps that Members may find interesting and useful.

While creating a separate Mobile version of the ASM Web site may not be appropriate, there could be use for a mobile app to search through the image gallery. Other options could be Members-only content fed through a mobile app, or even a publication library. With Mobile technology, and the wealth of information on the ASM site, there is no shortage of appropriate options for an ASM Mobile app. As well, dependant on the goals of the organization, pricing and download of the app could generate some residual revenue for the ASM.

The solution for American Society of Mammalogists could include the following:
Mobile App Development
Submission to App Stores

Cost
Mobile App Development would require the following estimated budget:
Planning, Strategy & Layout
- $5,000—$7,500
Development, packaging, submission to App Stores
- $10,000—TBA

(4) Micro-Site Development
Micro-site development can be used to promote a variety of topics that may not get appropriate attention as part of the larger ASM site. Potential ideas for micro-site use could be innumerable, as any significant event or research finding, or publication may be worthy of the added attention.

From an SEO standpoint, the use of Micro-sites can provide another entry point into the main ASM site – a benefit that can be used to attract potential Members whose areas of focus may be too specific to have browsed the ASM site directly, but who may find it interesting after having viewed a topic-specific micro site.

The solution for American Society of Mammalogists could include the following:
Micro Site Development

Cost
Micro Site Development would require the following estimated budget:
Site Construction & Design
- $6,000—$9,000

(5) Offline Designs for Print & Promotion
Aside from the serious nature of the discussions and events surrounding the ASM, sometimes nothing works as well to foster a sense of membership and belonging like simple promotional items. Mouse pads, t-shirts, coffee and travel mugs, screensavers and hats, can all be items that Members can wear and use on a daily basis that reinforces their sense of belonging and membership. Despite the simple and transitory nature of many promotional items, the use of well-designed memorabilia can make a huge difference.

As well, with the introduction of various pieces, there exists the opportunity for the ASM to generate additional revenue through the sale of items through the site.

The solution for American Society of Mammalogists could include the following:
Promotional item design
Ecommerce Shopping Cart integration

<u>Cost</u>
Design of items and Ecommerce integration would require the following estimated budget:
Promotional Item Design
 ● $1,000—TBD (Dependant on items)
Ecommerce Integration
 ● $3,000—$5,000
Secure Certificate
 ● $300—$500/year
PCI Compliancy
 ● $30—$75/month

(6) HTML Newsletter Development
Newsletter blasts are an easy way to keep Members up to date on developments and progress of the organization. It can also serve as a great way to generate a contact list of potential Members and provide them with an easy invitation to join. The appropriate use of a branded, HTML newsletter can help promote the ASM and maintain contact with current, new, and potential Members in a professional manner.

The solution for American Society of Mammalogists could include the following:
HTML Newsletter Design
MailChimp Account Setup

<u>Cost</u>
HTML Newsletter Development would require the following estimated budget:
Newsletter Design
 ● $1,000—$1,500
MailChimp Account Setup
 ● $750—$1,000
Newsletter blast
 ● $.04 per email (MailChimp rate)

(7) Support & Maintenance
After the warranty – Acro Media offers a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to ensure your Web site continues running as good as the day it was born.
 ● Web site will be reviewed each month to ensure the site continues to work as expected as new content and functionality are added. The SLA also will ensure issues are caught as new versions of Web browsers are released and become popular.

<u>Cost</u>

$100-$300 per hour

Action Items:

(1) A budget request of $10,468 is requested from the 2012 budget. Hosting the ASM web site on a virtual private server currently costs $468. This is an annual expense, but provides use of a server with sufficient resources to meet the demands of the new web site. The $10,000 cost is a placeholder for potential expenses related to the Society's web site upkeep and added functionality. These funds would be used only if the remaining funds from the 2011 budget are used up and it is decided that additional functionality proposed by the design firm would benefit the ASM membership.

Respectfully submitted,
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