Getting Started: Building Your Chapter Web Site

by Kelli Gant, SWS webmaster
Date: 10/23/03

Step Summary

1. Send $36/year payment, for web site hosting only, to the SW Section treasurer. Please note on the check that the payment is for "web site hosting."
2. Determine your chapter URL—sub domain or standard domain name
3. If you want a domain name, register the name with a registration service.
4. Contact the SWS webmaster for account setup.
5. Gather the software that you will need: web page editing tool and an FTP tool.
6. Start creating your web pages on your computer's hard disk.
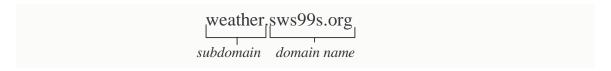7. When your account is ready, upload your files to the hosting server.

Background

There is some good fundamental background information in the Webmaster Ground School presentation www.sws99s.org/section/pdf/groundschool.pdf

Our hosting service: We are currently using TotalChoiceHosting as our hosting service. The very large computers that our Web site files sit on are in Arizona.

Your SWS hosting account: Your chapter account is part of the total disk space that the SWS pays for on a yearly basis. Each chapter gets 20MB of disk space and a password protected folder to use for their Web pages. The SWS webmaster sets up the password for your account and the user ID is automatically generated by the setup system.

On your account, you can have one or more password-protected directories for a members only area, and email forwarding.

Your URL/Address: You have two choices for your chapters Web URL or address—sub domain or standard domain name.

A sub domain URL is simply an account that uses the SWS domain name. For example: baycities.sws99s.org. There is no additional cost to your chapter for a sub domain.

A standard domain name--similar to www.baycities99s.org--must be registered with an ICANN certified Registrar. The Registrar registers your domain name in the Internet domain name system (DNS). This system consists of a directory of all domain names and their corresponding computers registered to particular companies and persons using the Internet. The cost to register a domain name ranges from $7 to $35, depending on the company that you select to do the DNS registration. I suggest, and have used several times, Cheap-Domain Registration. You can find their rates at www.cheap-domainregistration.com--currently $8.75/yr. I suggest purchasing at least a three-year package to save on billing hassle and you get a little discount.

Hint: Keep your sub domain or domain name as short as possible, nobody likes to type in long URLs.

Steps Details

1) Send a check for $36 to the Southwest Section treasurer Felicia Hoppe and write on the check that it is for "Chapter web hosting". We will rebill for web site hosting each Jan.

2) Decide what type of URL name you want your chapter to have.

3) If you are going to use a domain name,

   a. Select a registration company and follow their registration process to pay and register your chapter domain name. The instructions to register with Cheap-Domain Registration are at the end of this document.

   b. **Important!** Write down the company that you used to register your domain name, the user ID you setup, and the password to the domain registration account. You must keep this information "**forever**," well, as long as you use that registration company as handle your domain. Do not lose this information and be sure to pass the information on to each of your chapter webmasters.

   c. **Note:** After completing the registration, your domain name does not point anywhere. To point to a web site requires a *named server/DNS* specification. We will make this update in Step 8.

   d. It will take 24-48 hrs for the registration to take effect.

4) Let the SWS Webmaster know what URL type you selected and the name. She will start setting up your SWS hosting account. A temporary index.html page is placed in your account as a welcome/under construction notice.

5) Collect the software that you need to work on your web site.

   You will need a HTML editing tool to build your web pages and one tool to upload (FTP) the files to your SWS hosting account. Many HTML editing tools include FTP software.

   As a general software rule, the more money that you spend the easier and more powerful is the software. But start small. Most companies will let you download a trial version of their tools for you to test out.

   I put together some Windows software reference information, at the end of the 2003 Spring section meeting WebMaster Ground School presentation, that might be helpful--
   www.sws99s.org/section/pdf/groundschool.pdf

   If you have Macintosh, here are some suggestions:

   PageSpinner 4.5.1, by Optima System, $30, built-in ftp client
   CreativePage 3, by PineHill Products, $29.95, built-in ftp client
   WebDesign 2, by Rage Software, $30, built-in ftp client
   HTML Creator 3.5.1, by AK Software, $15
   Layout Master 1.1, by Westciv, $50
   Netscape Composer, free, part of Netscape browser

   If no built-in ftp client exists people tend to use Fetch, although I'm sure there are other ftp applications around.

6) Start creating your Web site using your HTML editing tool.

   You can create your Web pages on your local computer and test them before your SWS hosting account is ready.

7) When your hosting account is ready, the SWS webmaster will email you a notice with login information.

8) If you registered a domain name, the DNS (named servers) associated with your domain name must to be updated to point to the SWS hosting service. The SWS webmaster will email you the DNS information in Step 7, OR you can give your domain name account login information from Step 3 to the webmaster and she will do the update for you. If normally takes 24-72 hours for the DNS change to take effect and for your domain name to point to your SWS hosting account.

9) Set up your FTP tool using the login information that was emailed to you to access your SWS hosting account.

10) Upload your Web pages to your SWS hosting account and test the pages.

11) Have fun!

Registering with Cheap-Domain Registration (CDR)

You must use a credit card to register your domain name.
These instructions may vary if CDR has made web page and process changes.

1) Go to http://www.cheap-domainregistration.com/

2) Enter the domain name that you want in the Search box and check for the names availability. We suggest getting the domain extension **.org**, which stands for organization.

   If the name is available, you are taken to the Register A Domain Name page.

3) Check only the domain name that you want to purchase.

   Click the Custom Registration button at the bottom of the page.

   The Register a Domain Name page displays.

4) Select how many years of registration do you want to purchase.

   Click Continue.

   The Standard/Public/Private option pages displays.

5) Select the Standard/Public option.

   A private listing is up to you, but really costs. I have multiple domains registered to my name as a standard public domain and have had no problems in 8 years. If you provide only chapter contact information, even better.

   Click Continue.

   The Contact information page displays.

6) Complete the account information.

   Enter your chapter's contact information. **The data that you enter must be the LONG-TERM mailing address and email address for your chapter.** The Registrar needs somewhere to send the renewal information at the end of your registration period. Be sure to use your chapter name as the Company. Your chapter is the legal registrant of the domain.

   Click Continue.

The Contact Data Verification pages displays.

7) Carefully check all the data on this page. You can edit any information. For example, you may want one email address for billing and another for technical contact.

Registrant is the owner of the domain. Technical and Administrative is the contact if the company wants to contact you about changes to their registration service. Billing is the contact for future invoices.

When all is correct, click Continue.

The Hosting/DNS Information page displays.

8) Select the last option -- **I'm hosting with another ISP**

Click Continue.

The Final Registration Details page displays.

9) Select Renew Manually.

If you do not specify automatic renewal (I never do) then you are sent an email or letter prior to your domain names expiration and you can simply renew online.

Check the License Agreement box.

Click Continue.

The Verification pages displays.

10) The information on this page should just have one option "Domain Registration"

Click Continue.

The Add These Essentials page displays.

11) Leave all option unselected, unless you want to purchase one of their options.

Click Proceed to Checkout.

The Shopping Cart page displays.

12) Verify that the domain name is correct, the number of years of registration is correct, and price.

Click Checkout.

The Billing Information page displays.

13) Enter all shipping and billing information. Nothing is really shipped. Shipping is the address for future contact.

Makeup a login name and password for your CDR account. **Remember to save** this information!!!

Complete the remainder of the form.

Click Continue with Check Out.

A Privacy Statement page displays.

14) Read the privacy information and enter the access code.

The Payment Method pages displays.

15) Complete the payment information.

Click Complete Your Purchase when done.

Print out the invoice page for your records