



# How to Maintain a Team Website



By FIRST Team 2506

There are multiple ways to maintain your website. In this tutorial we would talk about strategies that we, Team 2506, used that helped us win the Best Website Award at Wisconsin Regional.

The following guide is based on the *FIRST* Robotics Competition Website Award Criteria.

## Start from scratch

- 1) First page to create is “About Us” talk about the team, where your team is located and your goals.
  - a. “About Us” can include submenus such as Members and Alumni, once your grows older how well you keep track of old members would play a big part in the grading of your site.
    - i. Be creative; don’t be afraid to use inside jokes on the website. They would not harm your website; they make your team seem more personable and less like the robots you are building.
    - ii. Try to answer the question “What makes your team unique?” Every team is different, and one of the goals of FIRST is to recognize those differences, the website is one of the best places to promote your team.
  - b. Make sure that new user can identify the Team name, Team number, and Physical location, of the team, and make sure to include a link to the *FIRST* website and the *FIRST* logo.
- 2) When you have established your page about the team, make a sponsor recognition page, it is one of the most valuable pages to have when it comes to judging quality of a website.
- 3) When the “About us” section is created, move on to community and goals pages.
  - a. Make sure that the information you use is the most current info available.
  - b. Don’t be afraid to interact with other teams. Many teams have helpful links and tutorials that are available to your use.
  - c. Proofread new pages with a peer or a mentor, and make sure your tenses are consistent.

## Functionality.

- 1) Coding
  - 1) Formatting your pages is the key to accessibility. Avoid any copy-paste from Microsoft Word, in order to avoid unnecessary formatting codes.
    - i. Use standard coding; don't add extra colors, fonts. Those are PERSONAL preferences. Keep in mind that major browsers, such as Firefox, Opera, Safari, Internet Explorer would view the pages differently and one of the criteria's is how compatible the website is with cross-browsers.
    - ii. If you have an easy wig bar, to create web-pages, avoid tables within a table.
    - iii. When entering url's, pictures, videos, don't forget to include a caption for them "alt" or "longdesc", it is important that you start doing it right away, since it will save you time when you test your site through Cynthia
- 2) Validators
  - i. Every time you create a page, check it for any code errors using <http://www.validator.w3.org/> - html errors
  - ii. <http://www.cynthiasays.com/> - Cynthia
- 2) Don't be afraid to split pages into smaller ones. For example, if you have community service pages for 2008/2009/2010, don't try to fit them all in one page. It is a lot easier to navigate through three different pages, then try to read disparately long page.
- 1) Include the most recent pictures in your pages.
- 3) Credibility.
  - 1) As with any research project, every used source must be credited. Even if you use information from your sponsors, you must at least link their information and logos to their webpage.

## Designing the website.

- 1) When creating your website, consult with your teammates and mentors, the more opinions you get, easier it is to create it. You want the site to be appealing to both high school students and sponsors. Try to find a balance.
  - a. Be sure that the new users could easily navigate through website and understand the content of the website.
    - i. *Even those who never heard about FIRST.*
  - b. Include entertainment materials to make the site user friendly and pleasant to return to.

- i. Make mini games, spinning logos, jokes section, crossword puzzles ect.
- c. Include some sort of a calendar or a schedule on your website.
  - i. You can make this information accessible only to members of the team.
  - ii. A forum can be really helpful to create a user-friendly community.

### **What to avoid.**

- 2) Do not make a rainbow out of your website, less formatting you have, easier it is to view your website.
  - i. Do not use more than one color on your pages.
  - ii. Do not add unrelated pictures to the website.
  - iii. Use standard fronts throughout entire website.
- 3) Do not copy-paste large pieces of information's from other websites, even if you credited them. If you want to use information from other pages, summarize it or the best option, make "helpful links" page and make one sentence statements linked to the original work.
  - i. Limit yourself to one paragraph quotes, and never forget to link information to the original work.
  - ii. If you are using media materials from another team, always include their team name and number.
  - iii. If possible, get permission to use material from another organization/team.
- 4) Do not overuse html code.
  - i. Don't make 3 table charts on one page; try to fit everything in one.
  - ii. Do not copy and paste information from Microsoft word. Major browsers love to copy Microsoft formatting on the website. Use Microsoft Word to check grammar, but then copy info into notepad before copying info on the website.
  - iii. Never experiment with unfamiliar html codes and scripts on real pages; you might end up redoing the entire page.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please contact us by sending an email to [saberrobotics@yahoo.com](mailto:saberrobotics@yahoo.com). We hope this guide was helpful.

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