

**Internet Publishing Policy
Town of Bolton, Vermont**

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Submitted June 4, 2001

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Draft Internet Publishing Policy

Town of Bolton, Vermont

1. Purpose:

The Town of Bolton recognizes the Internet as a powerful medium that should be used to communicate with community members and others interested in the town. The Town believes that, to be effective, Internet communication via the Web must be planned and implemented in a deliberate, coordinated and controlled manner. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that official town communication, through WWW publishing, represents the town in an effective, fair and error-free manner.

2. Scope of this document

This policy covers all Internet Web publishing of official Town of Bolton business or information. This policy does not extend to the schools that serve Bolton children.

3. Procedures

3.1 Who Publishes: Publishing to the Town of Bolton's website is restricted to authorized personnel only. The Internet Services Coordinator, hereafter known as the ISC, will have global access to alter pages on the Town's website. Other authorized publishers will be given access only to those areas that contain pages that these people need to change. To become an authorized publisher, an individual must demonstrate the ability to create functional webpages, and agree to work within this policy.

3.2 What may be published: The following types of documents are considered appropriate for publication to the Town's webserver:

- 3.2.1. Official town communication, such as letters and notices.
- 3.2.2. Official town documents, such as agendas, minutes, policies, ordinances and plans.
- 3.2.3. Official town forms. Some forms must be filed in person with the Town Clerk. When posted to the Web, such forms will be rendered unprintable, or will clearly be labeled "Must be filed in person."
- 3.2.4. News of interest to the general community.
- 3.2.5. Photos of events and descriptive photos that illustrate life in Bolton.
- 3.2.6. Notice of meetings.
- 3.2.7. Contact information for town personnel, as deemed appropriate by the Selectboard.
- 3.2.8. Other information upon approval of the ISC and/or the Selectboard.

3.3 What may not be published: In general, anything not specifically allowed will not be considered appropriate for publishing on the Town's web server, without the prior approval of the ISC and/or the Selectboard. As illustration, the following types of resources would not be considered appropriate:

- 3.3.1. Information about clubs or organizations not sanctioned by the Town, except for announcements of interest to the general community. An exception would be announcements concerning meeting times, when said meetings are open to the public or to prospective members.

- 3.3.2. Any personal information, or personal or private information. The Town may decide to implement a For Free, Sale or Swap section of the website where community members may list personal items.
- 3.3.3. Commercial advertising, except as included in Town newsletters, which may be republished in their entirety. The Town may choose to list businesses in an online business directory, and may link to business websites.
- 3.3.4. Pornography in any form.

3.4 Publishing process

3.4.1. Proposals: Community members, town administrators and employees may suggest expansion to the Town's website at any time. The ISC will acknowledge receipt of the proposal within 7 days, and will consider the value of the proposed expansion, the difficulty and costs of creating the expansion, and the resources available to complete the expansion, and will reply back the person or persons who initiated the proposal within 30 days. The reply will include either:

- a. A request for additional information,
- b. Notice of rejection of proposal with reference to the specific section of this policy that restricts the proposal,
- c. Acceptance of the proposal as an unscheduled future expansion of the Town's website, along with a description of the expected requirements for the expansion to take place, or
- d. Acceptance of the proposal as a scheduled expansion. In this final case, the ISC will also provide a schedule for the expansion.

3.4.2. Offers of assistance & designated publishers: Community members, Town administrators and employees who have, or are willing to develop Internet publishing skills may be given responsibility for creating and/or maintaining sections of the Town's website. The ISC will contact the person offering services to determine any additional support required and to establish a schedule for resource development and publishing. Upon completion of initial development of the resource, the new publisher will submit completed work to the ISC for review. Once approved, the ISC will either publish the resource to the Town's website, or will establish electronic publishing privileges to the appropriate sections of the website so that the volunteer may publish work directly.

A person with Internet publishing skills may request status as a designated publisher. The ISC will acknowledge such a request within seven days of receipt, and will either approve or deny the request within 30 days. The ISC may ask for examples of previous publishing experience, or may request an interview with the person making the request. The ISC will decide the level of access that the designated publisher will receive, and will establish this access level and areas to which the designated publisher will have control. The ISC must provide reasons for denial of a request for designated publisher status, along with remedial steps the applicant may take to achieve said status.

All resources published to the Town's website must conform to the Style Guide, as established in Section 4 of this policy. The ISC will review the entire website periodically, to ensure that the Internet Publishing Policy is being applied. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the revocation or suspension of direct publishing access by a designated publisher. All creation and maintenance of the Town's website

will be done on a volunteer basis, except in such cases where the Selectboard, after consultation with the ISC, decides to enter into a contract for specific services.

3.4.3. Document submission: Any community member, town administrator or employee may submit a document for inclusion in the Town's website. Persons preparing a document for submission should consult with the ISC to ensure that the document is delivered in a convertible format. All documents submitted should be accompanied with the following metadata:

- a. **Title:** A descriptive title that can be used for indexing.
- b. **Keywords:** Words or short phrases that describe the document for indexing, searching and retrieval.
- c. **Short description or executive summary**
- d. **Document Owner:** Including contact information, such as telephone or email address.
- e. **Person responsible for accuracy:** If such person is not the document owner. Include contact information, such as telephone or email address.
- f. **Document creation or approval date.**
- g. **Deadline for publication**
- h. **Expiration date:** Date the document is to be removed from the website or updated.
- i. **Link info:** Internet resources that should be linked to from the document, and pages on the Town's website that should contain links to the document.

3.4.4. Document responsibility: The document owner is responsible for monitoring a document's expiration date and links and notifying the ISC about links that are no longer valid. The document owner is also responsible for informing the ISC when a document's expiration date has been reached. The ISC is responsible for modifying the website as necessary to incorporate the document, converting the document, updating the document, and establishing links. The ISC's responsibility for the document may be shared with a designated publisher. The ISC will proofread all documents before posting to the website, but responsibility for accuracy remains with the document owner.

3.4.5. ISC responsibilities: The ISC reports to the Selectboard, and has the following responsibilities:

- a. Determine strategic direction of the website
- b. Serve as a liaison between web publishers and the business and service units of the Town.
- c. Serve as a liaison between the ISP and the Town, negotiating terms of usage and pricing. Manage the Town's account with the ISP.
- d. Maintain domain name registration.
- e. Establish site structure and standards for page design, layout and enhancements.
- f. Perform regular reviews of the website to ensure adequate performance, timely elimination of errors, currency of information, and adherence to Town policies.
- g. Perform site auditing.

- h. Assess publishing proposals and offers of service.
- i. Promote use of the website. Register website with major search engines and indexes.
- j. Monitor website traffic.
- k. Develop web-based applications as appropriate to meet the needs of the Town, or coordinate the development of such applications.
- l. Provide guidance and recommendations to document creators.
- m. Provide professional development to designated publishers.

3.4.6. Offsite publishing: All official webpages for the Town of Bolton will be made to the Town's website, <http://boltonvt.com>.

4. Style Guide

4.1 Purpose & applicability: The Town of Bolton recognizes that the Town's website is a publication that reaches a worldwide audience and reflects on the status and character of the town. As such, the Town seeks to ensure that its website is easy to navigate, consistent in its appearance, accurate, and free of errors. To aid in the achievement of these goals, all resources published to the Town's website must adhere to this style guide.

4.2 Format: Webpages will have a consistent look and feel across the entire website. All pages are to have the same general appearance as established pages at the same level in other areas of the website, including fonts, backgrounds, stylistic elements, and general layout. Alterations to the look and feel of sections of the site need to be coordinated with the ISC to ensure that such changes are made simultaneously across the entire site.

4.3 Navigation: Each webpage will contain a link to its parent page, to enable a person entering the website through the page to navigate the rest of the site.

4.5 Corporate banner: Each webpage will include the corporate banner, which will contain a navigation link to the website's homepage. The location and appearance of the corporate banner on the page will be consistent throughout the website. Designated publishers may not alter the corporate banner in any way.

4.6 Site structure: All sections of the website will have a similar structure, to improve navigation and usability.

4.7 Use of frames: HTML frames will not be used in any part of the website.

4.8 Underlining: Since underlining indicates a hyperlink, no text, other than hyperlinks, may be underlined on a webpage.

4.9 ALL CAPS: All caps may only be used in top-level headings. All caps may not be used in HTML title tags or in standard text, except as previously established in a reproduced document, such as a newsletter.

4.10 Non-graphical browser compatibility: All HTML pages must be designed so that they will be functional within non-graphical browsers. It will be acceptable to provide a link on a page to another page that provides non-graphical browser compatibility for the same information.

4.11 Handicapped accessibility: All HTML pages will be designed to be accessible by the handicapped. It will be acceptable to provide a link to a page that provides the same information in a handicapped accessible format.

4.12 ALT tags: Where supported, all images will include ALT parameters that will include a caption or description of the graphic.

4.13 Plug-ins: Only approved browser plug-ins may be required to view pages on the Town's website. These approved plug-ins, along with associated download links, will be published on a plug-ins page on the website. The ISC will be responsible for approving browser plug-ins. Only plug-ins that add necessary functionality and are widely used on the Internet will be approved. In general, the use of browser plug-ins is discouraged where resources may be effectively presented through standard HTML.

4.14 Graphic formats: Except where supported by approved browser plug-ins, all graphics are to be encoded as GIF, JPEG or PNG formats. The most appropriate format is to be used, with priority given to the GIF and JPEG formats to ensure proper display in the greatest number of browser versions.

4.15 Resolution: All HTML pages are to be designed in such a way that horizontal scrolling is not required when viewed in a 640 x 480 pixel browser window.

4.16 Color depth: All graphics must display correctly when viewed at a color depth of 256 (8-bit) colors. Higher color depths are acceptable, provided such graphics are not difficult to view at 8-bit color.

4.17 Browser compatibility: All webpages will be designed to be compatible with type 3 browsers. Additional features may be incorporated, provided that type 3 browser compatibility is maintained. All webpages are to be tested in multiple browsers to ensure that proper viewing is not dependent on the browser being used. At minimum, pages need to display correctly on both Internet Explorer and Netscape. Wherever possible, pages should also display correctly in America Online's and WebTV's proprietary browsers.

4.18 Page length: In general, no webpage should require over ten 8 ½" x 11" pages when printed. Longer documents should be broken up into multiple pages, or converted to PDF.

4.19 Document size: Document size has a direct relationship with download time. Documents published to the website need to be optimized for download over 28.8 Kbps modem connections. The following requirements apply to all published resources:

- a. Webpages should be designed to download within 30 seconds over a 28.8 modem connection. This correlates to 105 KB for the page and associated resources. Maximum acceptable download time is 60 seconds, or 210 KB.
- b. PDF files should be no larger than 200 KB. Larger PDF files may be posted, but a version broken up into multiple sections should also be made available for users connecting over modem connections. File size and/or approximate download time should be indicated where size exceeds 200 KB.

4.20 Fonts: Standard browser fonts, specifically Times Roman and Ariel, should be used on all pages. Font colors should contrast with the background, for readability purposes.

4.21 Colors: Color should only be used where it enhances readability and usefulness of the website. Font, link, and background colors must be consistent throughout the website.

4.22 Templates: Templates will be established for pages at each level. To maintain a consistent look and feel, these templates are to be used throughout the website. Template changes will be made in such a way as to ensure that the changes are put in place simultaneously on all pages that use the same template, across the entire website.

4.23 Java: Java applets and scripts are permitted, but any page containing Java enhancements must view correctly in non-Java enabled browsers. Special web applications may be exempted from this requirement at the discretion of the ISC.

4.24 CGI: No third-party CGI scripts are to be used.

4.25 Copyright: Written permission will be required for all non-original work except clip-art. Archives of written permission forms are to be kept by the ISC. Copyrighted work will be indicated as such with a note, as in the example: "Copyright 2001, Paul Shutterbug." The word Copyright will be spelled out, except when included in PDF files or other specially formatted files, where the word Copyright or the symbol © will be acceptable. Document owners and designated publishers should note that work does not need to be registered with the US Copyright Office in order to be protected by copyright law.

4.26 Releases: Releases will be obtained for all published work not created by Town employees, administrators or committees. Releases will also be obtained before publishing any photograph in which an individual's face is recognizable. Archives of release forms will be maintained by the ISC.

4.27 Dates: Each page will contain the date it was created and/or the date last edited. To avoid confusion with different date formats, the four-digit year format will be used, and the month will be abbreviated or spelled out, as March 11, 2001 or Nov. 20, 2001.

4.28 Links: All links will be tested prior to publication, and periodically thereafter, to ensure functionality. A link to an external website will require approval of that website's manager.

4.29 Email address: Each page will contain a contact email address. This may be a link to the document owner's email address, the ISC's email address, or the website contact page. It is acceptable to protect the email address from address harvesting robots by replacing the @ symbol with the word "at", as in "rcrusoe at island.net".

4.30 Imagemaps: Imagemaps will be client-side rather than server-side format.

4.31 Unlinked pages: A page may be published without being linked only for testing or review purposes. Wherever possible, pending pages will be published to password-protected directories. Designated publishers are not to post unlinked pages in an attempt to hide them from the general public without the express approval of the ISC. The Town's website is not to be used to distribute private files, documents or software.

5. Definitions & Acronyms

Browser: A program that manages the request for and display of Internet resources, primarily webpages. The two most popular graphical browsers are Microsoft's Internet Explorer, and America Online's Netscape. Non-graphical browsers display only text.

Designated publisher: A person given responsibility for the maintenance and/or creation of new resources in a specific area of the Town's website.

Flash: Macromedia Corporation's Internet file format that supports animation and interactivity. Flash filenames typically end with the extension .SWF.

HTML: Hypertext Markup Language. HTML is the underlying code for webpages.

Internet Services Coordinator: The individual charged with implementing this policy, and acting as a liaison between the Selectboard and Web publishers. The ISC is responsible for managing the Town's website, negotiating with the ISP, developing Internet applications, and ensuring that the website functions as intended.

ISP: Internet Service Provider. The company paid to host the Town's website.

PDF: Portable Document Format. A proprietary format of Adobe Corporation that allows documents to be displayed electronically in the same format as a published printed version. HTML documents will display differently, depending on browser, computer platform and screen resolution. PDF document display is independent of these variables, making it a good choice for printed documents and forms.

Plug-in: Software that interacts with a browser to allow the display or functionality of a proprietary file format.

Publishing: the preparation and posting of information to publicly accessible Internet servers. May include HTML, downloadable files, audio and video. Electronic mail and posting to listserves and newsgroups are not covered by this document, except as explicitly detailed.

Web, WWW: The World Wide Web. A term loosely applied to web servers and the resources they contain. The WWW is a key Internet application.

Webpage: A single HTML file, and the linked resources that appear within the page when displayed in a browser.

Town of Bolton, Vermont

Internet Publishing Release

I hereby give permission to the Town of Bolton to publish the following material to the Town's Internet website.

Description: _____

Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____

Note: Signature of parent or guardian is required if under age 18.

Parent/guardian name (printed): _____

Parent/guardian signature: _____

Attach copies of permitted photos or graphics to this form and forward to Stephen Barner, 3573 Stage Road, Jericho 05465 when completed.