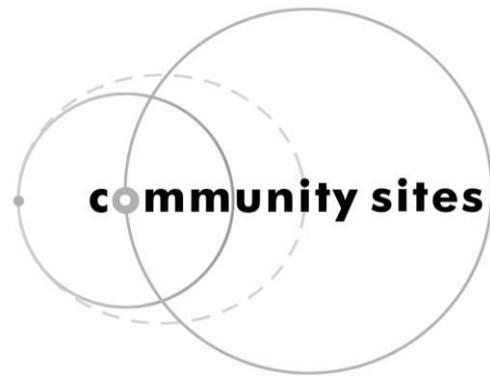


BEFORE LAUNCH



WHAT'S COVERED IN THESE GUIDELINES?

These guidelines cover the final steps involved in the launch of your CommunitySites website. The topics are:

1. Final editorial checks
2. E-mail addresses
3. Taking off password protection
4. Search
5. Website statistics
6. Technical support after launch

1: FINAL EDITORIAL CHECKS

Here are a few points to look out for as you review your site before launch. They're only suggestions – you can ignore them if you wish!

Home page

Check the banner on the home page. There should be a sequence of about 3-5 images rotating, which are selected as described in the hand-out for webmasters on 'Editing the home page'.

Make sure you've chosen good-quality banner images that are in focus and have been properly cropped. The banner is the most dominant element of the site so a beautiful image makes a lot of difference. We're very happy to crop and prepare the images for you if you send us the high-resolution originals.

The banner might just display sample pages or catalogue items. If you select a page for the banner, then clicking on the banner image will automatically link to that page. However, it can also be used to introduce visitors to what the site is about. For example, see the three banner images and accompanying captions at:

<http://www.knolestories.org.uk/>

In this case, each banner image links to a section of the site (i.e. a category rather than a page). To link to a category of the site instead, you use 'Promos'. See the handout on *Creating Promos*.

Categories:

1. Have all categories got both a title and a short description? Ideally, you want to be consistent – so that on any particular menu either **all** the categories have both a title and short introduction or **all** the categories only have a title.
2. Have all categories got an introduction (i.e. a couple of sentences above the list of pages in the category)? This helps lead readers into the subject-matter of the category.

Posts:

1. Have all pages got both a title and a subtitle? (On your site, you might have an 'excerpt' instead of a subtitle.) Ideally, you want to be consistent – so that on any particular menu either **all** the pages have both a title and a subtitle/excerpt or **all** the pages only have a title. Try and have some consistency in the length (number of words) in titles and subtitles/excerpts as well.
2. Have all images got both a credit and a caption?
3. Have all the pages got the right layout? Choose the right layout on the Preview tab to suit the balance of text and images on the page. For example, if there are only two sentences on the pages, and the rest is images, use the layout which has text at the top and images underneath, so that the images can appear full-width.
4. Check that any links in the page work by clicking on them.
5. For links, try and avoid using the phrase 'click here' as a link, as in '[Click here](#) to find out about our next meeting'. It's better to put the link on a meaningful phrase such as 'Find out about [our next meeting](#)'.

Text formatting on pages:

1. Make sure that there isn't any additional spacing between paragraphs. All spacing should be managed by a central style sheet, not by having extra paragraph returns.
2. Do you need to add more sub-headings? Break up long blocks of text with lots of sub-headings (just use a phrase from the paragraph that follows for the sub-heading if editorial inspiration deserts you).
3. Make sure that all sub-headings and sub-sub-headings are properly styled (i.e. they're marked as sub-headings, not just put into bold or capital letters). Watch out for individual editors writing subheadings in capital letters.
4. Avoid bold, underlining or capital letters in the body text – if you need a new style to emphasise text, this can be created for you as part of the design.

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5. Look out for body text which appears to be in a different font from the rest of the content of the site. That is probably because the text has been pasted from another document or website and the editor didn't use the 'Paste as plain text' button (see the handout on 'Contributing to the site'). You can clean up the text by selecting it and then using the button that looks like an eraser above the text editing area. You may then need to re-format the text.

2: E-MAIL ADDRESSES

The visitors to your site will want a way of contacting you, so there should be a 'Contact us' page, which is clearly sign-posted.

It's possible to set up as many forwarding addresses as you like. Send support@communitysites.co.uk a list of the website e-mail addresses you want to set up, plus the personal e-mail addresses you want them to forward to.

Examples are:

editors@yourwebsitename.org.uk
enquiries@yourwebsitename.org.uk

Please include an admin@yourwebsitename.org.uk address which forwards to the website administrator and deputy administrator.

Forwarding to a Gmail account:

Consider setting up a Gmail account for your group (e.g. yourwebsitename@gmail.com) and forwarding all e-mail to that. The benefit is that all the mail will then be archived in one place. You can also forward e-mail from the Gmail account to whatever personal addresses you choose.

3: TAKING OFF PASSWORD PROTECTION

At least two weeks before your website is ready to go live, send an e-mail to support@communitysites.co.uk and ask us to take off the password protection on the website. We have a series of processes to work through before launch of the site, which is why we need two weeks' notice.

After this, anyone will be able to see the site, but until it appears on Google search results (see below), to find it they will need to know the web address of the site.

4: SEARCH

Making your site appear in Google search results

In order for your website to appear on Google, Google needs to index your site.

Google will do this automatically as soon as there is a link to your website from any other website on the internet. Google will discover that link and follow it – and when it finds your site it will index it so it starts appearing on the Google search results. This process can take a few days.

From your point of view this means that about a week before you want your site to start appearing on Google, you must make sure that you have asked us to remove password protection from the site, and there is a link to the site from any other website on the internet

About the search box on your website

The search facility on your website may be powered by Google, depending on the search needs of the site. If this is the case, it means that:

1. The search facility on your website will not work until the site is launched and has been indexed by Google
2. Whenever you add or change some text on the site, it will take a few days for Google to index the new text, and for the search results on the website to catch up with the change.

5: WEBSITE STATISTICS

We have already added Google visitor tracking code to your site, so you don't need to do this.

After your website is live, you will be able to see statistics about your visitors by going to the following address:

<http://www.google.com/analytics/>

In order to access the statistics, you will need a Gmail log-in. This can be the same as the one you've created for the Gmail account mentioned above. You need to let CommunitySites know at support@communitiesites.co.uk what this Gmail log-in is, so that we can assign it to the right statistics report. We only need to know the username and Gmail address, not the password.

6: TECHNICAL SUPPORT AFTER LAUNCH

If you have any technical difficulties after launch, in the first instance you should talk to the member of your project team who is the webmaster of your website.

If that person can't resolve the problem, then he or she should contact support@communitysites.co.uk.

If your site is part of a network of partner sites (and you are paying the reduced maintenance fee for network sites), then your website administrator should contact the overall network administrator initially. If the network administrator can't resolve the problem, then he or she should contact support@communitysites.co.uk