

# Best Practices

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## General Content

Written and visual content is the beating heart of a web site, it is what brings it alive. The benefit of a CMS is that it makes it easier for staff to update the site on a regular basis. These updates make the site fresh and more desirable to viewers and search engines.

Getting organized is the best way to make sure updating the site does not be time consuming. For example, saving content updates in one place until a designated time of the month and then dedicating an hour or two at that time to make several updates at once. Another idea is to keep a file on your desktop for items that could be added to the site, testimonials or photos emailed to you, pertinent community announcements or articles where the business is mentioned. Once you start to collect things, it's amazing how things will stack up.

## Image Resolution

Low resolution images on a website is fine, images should not be too or they will slow down the performance of the site and cause longer load times. When preparing photos for the site it is best to crop them to your desired size and to 72 pixels per inch. This is the correct. screen resolution.

## Media Library

When images are added to the Media Library or added to a page or post it is important to correctly label the image with a clear title (not "IMG\_0001") and clear Alternative Text. Having clear image descriptors will allow easier searching of the Media Library as it grows over time and make the site more search engine friendly. It is also important for images to be of good quality and proper size. Images that are too large will slow the loading speed of the page, and blurry or unattractive images will make the site feel less presentable and professional.

## Media File Names

Use lowercase letter in file names. Never use spaces or extra periods in a file name, spaces should be designated with a dash ( - ) or underscore ( \_ ) and a period should only appear just before the file extension. Avoid long file names and the use of character symbols and punctuation marks, such as !@#\$%^&\*()<>?";+=~.

## Passwords

It is the recommendation of the site's developer that the client utilize secure passwords on all web services (domain, host, CMS) and change those passwords on a regular basis to avoid system hacking. Secure passwords include uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numbers and punctuation or some complex variation. Managing, changing and storing all passwords is the responsibility of the Client.

## Users

For security reasons the administrator login should not be used on a regular basis. Each person responsible to maintaining content on the site should have their own login, with regular access rather than administrative. This way when an someone alters content the system will show their username and changes can be tracked easier.

## Linking to Other Sites

One of the most frustrating things that a viewer can experience are links that don't lead to anywhere. These dead-ends disrupt the user experience and force them to search out alternate routes to the information they are seeking, or cause them to leave the site entirely.

The most common reason for broken links is because the URL becomes out-of-date. The internet is fluid; and while domains often stay the same, pages within a particular site can change names or locations. The easiest way to protect your site from broken external links is to always use a simple domain like <http://www.site.com> rather than <http://www.site.com/page1/page2/page3.html>.