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MPLA Webmaster Report  
23 July 2005

### Website Redesign

As you probably (hopefully) have noticed by now, the MPLA website has a new look. I'd been working on converting the old site to the new look since October 2004, with some holiday breaks and vacation in between. During that time, I tried my best to keep the Executive Officers (Beth, Carol, Sharon), Joe, and the rest of the Board updated on the process, including soliciting opinions on the redesign from them. On Tuesday, 05 July 2005 at 10:30am, I completed that revamp by copying the new version of the website over the old. The uploading/copying over process took about 45 minutes, during which time, some visitors to the website likely experienced some momentary "file not found" errors, which probably went away moments later.

If you're interested in the content analysis of the website, I can break down files as follows:

- 559 HTML files (these are unique HTML files)
- 523 Image files (these include all the graphic links, conference photos, etc.)
- 42 PDF files (MPLA Newsletter issues and Manual of Procedure documents)
- 86 MS Word/Excel/PowerPoint files (largely 2003 Conference handouts)
- 1 Other files (this is the cascading style sheet I'm using for text formatting)
- 1,211 Total files (total file storage space = approx. 113MB)

Of these files, the Board Reports Archive is the largest part:

- 426 HTML files (76.2% of all HTML files are Board Reports)
- 2 Image files
- 5 PDF files
- 20 MS Word/Excel files
- 463 Total files (approx. 38% of the total website files are Executive Board Report)

### Problems Solved/Problems Created

The first, most basic, was my being forced to learn a new html editor on the fly, along with learning to use a new graphics software package.

While engaged in the revamp, there were several problems that I (hopefully) solved, and several things I did in the interest of long-term simplicity. These problems were largely behind the scenes, quick solutions done on the fly which were not apparent to the visitor. They were mostly problems such as dumping html files at the root level of the website for quick links. There was some inconsistency in naming files in the Board Report Archive versus similar files named elsewhere. For example, I named meeting minute files in a format of year/month/day (20050305) in the Board Reports, while in the Reports Archive, I named files month/day/year (03052005) and it got to be confusing to me when it came time to link reports without looking it up in the folders. Another minor problem created was my decision to simplify folder names – for example,

originally, I named states in full (northdakota, newmexico, etc.) and in the revamp, I went to state abbreviations in the folder names. This meant I had to change the pathing throughout the Archive to make sure links were correct. Fortunately, my new HTML Editor software made that somewhat easier.

Another interesting challenge was maintaining two websites, in parallel, at the same time. By this, I mean that every time I made a change on the old website, I needed to make sure I made the same change to the new website – at least to the files I had already converted. That was tricky.

#### New Enhancements/New Features

I've added a new Calendar to the website – my intent is to include all state conferences every year, as well as any MPLA deadlines, dates, etc. I went through and tried to find out when state ALA conferences were scheduled – I believe I have 2005 planned out correctly, but if state reps (and the rest of you) could take a look (at <http://www.usd.edu/mpla/calendar.html>) and let me know when your 2006 conferences are scheduled, it would make maintaining the calendar easier for me.

I've put all MPLA conference information on a Conferences page. You'll see listings of all upcoming and previous conferences, and my plan on that page is to use it as a clearinghouse for information and updates on the current year conference (although I have not gotten around to putting much there on the 2005 WLA/MPLA Conference as yet.)

In the Board Reports Archive, you might notice that I've streamlined those pages to simplify printing – there are no links down the side of the pages for Board Reports, and the links across the top are absent. What's new is a "breadcrumb" navigation resource, which lists out a series of steps into the Archive, so you can click to go back out (or you can still use the "Back" button on your browser.) If you look at the top of this page, you'll see these "breadcrumbs."

There is a relatively new Google MPLA website search option on the bottom of every page, so visitors can find things. I have heard no complaints about the search function, so I assume it is working. The cool thing about this search function is that Google can report on the number of times the search function is used. I added the search function on 25 October 2004, and since that date, it has been queried 361 times. I can view queries by month, day, etc., and can view the keywords used – which I can use to perhaps make the information more apparent or cross-referenced better.

Finally, the website is running behind the scenes much more smoothly. I have started using a cascading style sheet to simplify style across the site (so I won't have to "touch" over 550 html files to effect a change.) I've also set up a series of templates so that I won't have to "touch" those html files one at a time. For example, my email address changed the other day. In the past, I'd have tried to effect a "find and replace" in my old html editor, which more often than not, didn't work. With my new html editor, this process was much quicker and easier. I make the change on my templates, and the html editor "pushes" the change out to each page which is based on that template.

## Other Tidbits

I'm not doing a listing of website file activity this time, as most of the activity was converting files to the new look and I did so much of that, that I didn't bother keeping track. I did track updates to the old look site, but there wasn't much, save for Jobline updates and relatively minor updates.

If anyone has any opinions, good or bad, on the new version of our MPLA website, do not hesitate to pass them along to me.

Respectfully Submitted,

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