

# Web sites becoming attractive proposition for non-profit groups, Ottawa study finds

Non-profit associations are eager to embrace the Internet as a tool to further their goals, but money and technology can slow down deployment. A new survey on associations and the Internet is generally positive about the progress of migration to online services.

Ottawa web design company Leverus released a report this month entitled *Leveraging the Net: Association Internet Benchmarking Survey*. It sought out the opinions of more than 1,000 organizations using a web-based survey, web site analysis, and a review of appropriate literature.

Authors Chris LeClair and Chung Ming Tam found that 87 per cent of respondents had their web sites in operation for more than three years. They observed changes in the way the sites have been used.

“What is useful to note is that many associations are now moving to what Leverus has termed a ‘second generation’ web site,” the study reports. “While their first generation web site consisted mainly of an online brochure, many associations are seeking to embrace a greater degree of functionality. Associations are recognizing the value of leveraging the web to provide better services to their members.”

Organizations are putting time and money into the web sites. Close to 70 per cent spend more than six hours each month updating and reviewing the sites. Thirty-six per cent spend over 20 hours monthly on such maintenance.

Nearly half, 46 per cent, spend more than \$10,000 on their web sites each year,

with 22 per cent doling out over \$30,000 annually. That outlay, combined with the costs that must be maintained for traditional communications methods like printing and postage, can put a strain on a non-profit’s budget.

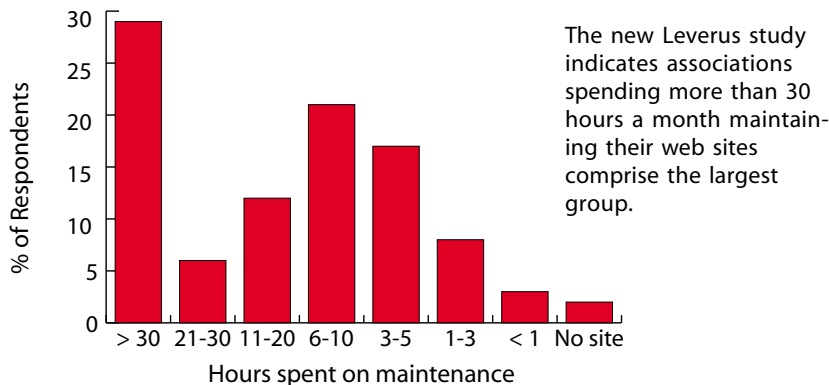
“This is one reason why 26 per cent of respondents identify the lack of resources as another hurdle in using the Internet to communicate with their members and to execute their strategic plan,” LeClair and Tam write.

Some non-profit associations are inching toward revenue growth from sources other than membership dues. Forty-five per cent use their web sites to promote trade shows. Other promotional tools are seminars, directories, and magazines. While only 11 per cent of organizations surveyed currently permit members or suppliers to advertise on their sites, another 46 per cent are mulling over the idea.

Many are cautious, the study finds. “They are concerned about the potential for over commercialization of their web presence – too many flash banner ads might offend members or be conceived as an improper bias,” the survey notes. “While associations are correct in being concerned about going too far, there are subtler, yet equally financially beneficial advertising opportunities.”

The report concludes that non-profit groups can utilize the web for online education and training, supplier directories, statistics gathering, and jobs boards.

CNM



Source: Leverus, December 2001

## Canada Council, researchers pair science and arts

The Canada Council for the Arts has formed two new partnerships to advance collaborations between scientists, engineers and artists. In the first, the council has paired with the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) on a *New Media Initiative* directed at new media artists and scientists who want to collaborate on projects involving both an artistic and scientific or engineering component. Projects submitted to either the Canada Council or NSERC will be assessed through the *Grants to New Media and Audio Artists* program of the Canada Council, and NSERC’s *Research Partnerships Program*. Projects must involve the creation of original, independent new media art. Artistic productions intended for the cultural industry of commercial new media industry are not eligible. Successful projects must also demonstrate the use of a new technology, or use of an existing technology in an innovative way. The first application deadline is March 1, 2002.

In a second partnership, the Canada Council will team with the National Research Council on a new *Artist-in-Residence for Research Fellowships* (AIRes) program to support independent established artists who wish to undertake research within one of the NRC institutes in Ottawa or elsewhere in Canada. The program is intended to encourage collaboration and knowledge transfer between artists and researchers. Fellowships in the amount of \$75,000 per year will be awarded for a two-year period, the first of which will be awarded in the fall of 2002. Details, including participating NRC institutes and application procedures, will be available in January 2002.

## CANARIE announces new fund

CANARIE Inc., Canada’s broadband research consortium, announced a new \$6-million advanced e-content fund Dec. 20. The initiative will be funded through Canadian Heritage’s *Canadian Culture Online* program. *Canadian NEW MEDIA* will carry full details in the new year, but it’s clear the fund is the culmination of lobbying by CANARIE since early last year to implement a program to encourage web-based entertainment and cultural content (CNM, Mar. 8/01, Oct. 3/01). The new fund is also likely to pick up where a study for CANARIE by Delvinia Inc. on advanced content left off. (CNM, June 28/01).