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## Update Record

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<th>Date of Change:</th>
<th>Item Changed:</th>
<th>Reason:</th>
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<td>Steve Johnson</td>
<td>9 September 2011</td>
<td>PDF Version: added hot-linked table of contents.</td>
<td>Popular demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Redden</td>
<td>18 November 2011</td>
<td>Abandoning an AIRS site; server storage limits; borders on images; minor errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Johnson</td>
<td>25 December 2011</td>
<td>Cloning a PE Course; ADSOs to Table 2. Canonical URL warning.</td>
<td>Requested feature; Clarifications.</td>
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<td>Steve Johnson</td>
<td>6 February 2012</td>
<td>Re-titled “Adding an Image” section to “Adding or Deleting”; Added “National Help Desk” Clarified configuration rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Johnson</td>
<td>18 April 2012</td>
<td>Removed WOW-I references; Pulled out “Migrating Conventional Site” to App Note Improved “Adding an Image”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Johnson</td>
<td>12 March 2013</td>
<td>Added Application Note section Improved PHP redirect section Added Hidden and Role info</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Redden</td>
<td>6 May 2014</td>
<td>Added web site security requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Redden</td>
<td>30 June 2014</td>
<td>Web site security requirements</td>
<td>Clarified PII published with member permission.</td>
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<td>Kevin Redden</td>
<td>1 March 2015</td>
<td>PE data base – Puerto Rico addresses &amp; PE Database URLs, Migrating Legacy Web sites.</td>
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<td>John Bigrow</td>
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<td>General Review Updated policy for security</td>
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Overview

WOW is a “pushbutton” website development platform that permits units of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary to develop and maintain modern, attractive websites with absolutely no programming required. Creating a website with WOW is no more difficult than ordering a book online, and requires nothing beyond your favorite web browser. A basic unit website can be generated in less than 25 seconds – even by the flotilla commander or vice commander! For this reason, units without webmasters (“WOW”), without a CS officer, or without anyone with “classical” web programming can nonetheless have an immediate web presence with the “push of a button”.

The WOW platform is a class of software called a “Content Management System” (CMS), which permits users to concentrate on the content of their website, rather than the programming. WOW has been specially developed for Auxiliary flotillas, divisions, and even districts to automatically provide current, up-to-date unit information – such as staff officers, meeting locations, or public education courses, in the context of a familiar, branded U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary look and feel. The unit may then add additional content – whatever they desire – with a simple point, click and type paradigm that even permits the inclusion of photos and graphics!

But if the unit also has members with classical web design experience, the WOW platform gives them complete freedom to focus on page content, using a powerful, built-in editor, and let the system attend to the nasty details such as a turnkey, database-driven menu navigation system. In short, WOW is for every Auxiliary unit!

The WOW Website Model

WOW websites are comprised of several web pages, which are linked together by a configurable navigation system. The navigation system takes the form of familiar “left menu” items, which contains on-site links (links to pages on the same website), offsite links (links to pages on other websites), and member login and search panels. Security information from the National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS), and the U.S. Coast Guard’s Maritime Security System (MARSEC) complete the navigation system. An example can be seen in Figure 1, above.

Figure 1: Default WOW Home Page
Each WOW web page includes the local navigation system; a national top banner that is common to all WOW websites, many classical or “template” based unit websites, and the Auxiliary’s National Website; a top pulldown menu system that contains links to pages principally on the National Website; and a content area. The layout of the page, the top banner, top pulldown menu system, and a page footer with standardized links to legal disclaimers, etc., are all determined by the platform, and are consistent from WOW site to WOW site. The left navigation system, excepting a few built-in menu items, and the main content area, are completely configurable by ordinary, non-technical members in the unit.

WOW web pages may contain pure text, text and images, and content – including live feeds – from other sites (such as calendars, video feeds, weather feeds, etc.).

**Built-In Menu Items**

Every WOW page comes by default with built-in menu items. The exact configuration varies depending on whether the unit is a flotilla, division, or district, but consists of the following items, starting from the top:

The USCG Auxiliary Logo and the Unit Identifier (here “Flotilla 2-1 Sayreville”). Clicking in this area is equivalent to “home”, and returns the site to the Home Page.

A link to the Division (here “Division 2”) that the flotilla is a member of. Clicking on the Division link will open that division’s site in another browser window or tab.

A link to the District (here “Division 1SR”) that the flotilla is a member of. Clicking on the District link will open that district’s site in another browser window or tab.

If the WOW site is for a division, then the Division link will be replaced with “Flotillas”, which will open a local page with a list of flotillas in this division, with links to their respective websites. If the site is for a district, then the Division link will be replaced with “Division & Flotillas”, which will open a complete list of the district’s flotillas, sorted by division.

About the Flotilla (or Division or District). This yields a page describing the unit’s geographical area, meeting location, and names its two elected leaders and the Human Resources staff officer. Optional phone and email addresses (via an opt-in/opt-out methodology courtesy of the auxofficer application) shows for one or more of these officers.

The “Staff List” (Shows only when “About Flotilla xx-yy” is selected), displays a list of elected and appointed officers. If an Auxiliary member is logged onto the WOW site, then the “Staff List” also displays the telephone numbers email addresses for each staff member in the unit.

The “National Help Desk” tab provides a link to the Auxiliary “National Help Desk trouble ticketing system”.

![Figure 2: Built-in Left Menu System](image-url)
A “Member Zone” login dialogue box. Auxiliary members may log in with their member zone credentials to gain access to “protected pages” and “protected announcements”, as well as staff contact information. In addition, if the logged-on member has the authority to configure this WOW site, then an additional menu item “Configure Site” will appear directly above the Member Zone login panel.

**Configurable Menu Items**

In addition to the built-in menu items, WOW features configurable menu items. That is, you may add links in the left menu that bring up custom pages on the WOW site (“internal links”) or links to offsite pages (“external links”). WOW offers eight (8) different types of “default” pages, which yield configurable pages that have specific titles, and an unlimited number of “custom” internal pages, each with their own user-defined custom menu. Thus, for common page types, WOW gently enforces a commonality of usage between different units on page-naming conventions, but gives you complete flexibility to make the site as unique and custom as necessary.

The eight default page types are shown in Table 1. Of these, all but one – Public Boating Courses – yields an empty page where content of any type may be easily added. The “Public Boating Courses”, by contrast, generates a standardized page that lists all of the courses taught by the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and includes a “Zip Code” course finder that brings up a list of courses being offered by the unit, or by other units in the vicinity of an entered Zip Code.

Menu items, when created, can be marked “Protected”. A protected menu item will show in the navigation area, but the page it links to will not display unless the member has logged in. Protected pages show a special symbol “∅” (theta) to the right of the menu item.

**The Content Area**

The majority of the web page is taken up by the content area. Units may use the content area, as described above, for text, text plus photographs or artwork, or “content feeds” from other applications, such as Google Calendar, which would generally be placed on the built-in calendar page.

When you create an internal menu item, an empty page is simultaneously created that is now reachable from that menu item in the left menu, and is ready to receive your content.

**The Default Home Page**

A basic WOW site features a default home page that contains canned content about the Coast Guard Auxiliary, as shown in Figure 1, above. However, you may insert the same variety of content that you can insert on any other page into the home page, thereby customizing it. *Any* content added to the home page whatsoever, even just a space, causes the default home page content to disappear.

**Announcements**

Announcements are the fundamental WOW construct that allows you to add content to your pages, and they correspond directly to the concept of “posts” on other websites such as blogs. Announcements can be thought of as one or more paragraphs of text, preceded by an optional caption or “headline”, the name of the person who posted the content, also optional, and a posting date, also optional.
Additionally, an announcement can be marked “Protected”, which means that the announcement – and its caption, posting date, and contributor if displayed – will remain hidden from view unless the visitor is a logged-in member. This is described further, below.

Each announcement can be given a start date and a stop date, and will only appear between those dates. This enables you to prepare content long in advance, post it, and have it “run”, and then disappear on cue, thus automatically keeping your site current. Keep in mind that the time reference is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) not users local time.

Finally, photographs or other images may be inserted into an announcement at any point, to add “color”, “content”, and interest to a page.

A page of WOW content may consist of a single, multi-paragraph announcement, with the caption, contributor name, and posting date turned off. The main title of the page is provided by the menu system (or by you when you created a custom menu item), and the content is text and artwork that you added by typing it onto the page, or pasted from some other document.

Remember, menus create pages which can support one or more announcements.

**Multiple Announcements on a Single Page**

As described above, the simplest page has a single announcement that contains all the user content for a page (i.e., all the content other than the top banner, footer and navigation system provided by WOW). The default home page shown in Figure 1, although containing many paragraphs, is an example of a page created with a single announcement.

So, why does WOW provide for multiple announcements on a single web page? There are several reasons:

You may actually wish to use the page as a true blog – a series of dated or undated, signed or unsigned “articles” that run in succession down a page, in the order posted. An example of such a blog is the “What’s New” page on the National Website ([blogs-it.cgaux.org/member_news.php](blogs-it.cgaux.org/member_news.php)). WOW features a built-in “What’s New” page type that could be used for an identical purpose.

Marking individual announcements with expiration dates allows the system to automatically expire and remove sections of a page after the entered end date. This permits a specific part of the page to be deleted automatically, without affecting the rest of the page, which will automatically “close up” over the expired announcement. The What’s New page of the National Website exhibits this behavior, with posts (announcements) that disappear on their end date.

Marking individual announcements as protected or unprotected permits you to add unprotected announcements on a page that the public can see, while protecting some content for view only to Auxiliary members who have logged in. Again, if the site visitor has not logged in, the page will close up over the hidden, or protected, content.

**Protected Pages versus Protected Announcements**

As described above, WOW has the ability to protect individual announcements as well as complete pages. A protected announcement or page will not be displayed to a visitor unless that visitor is an Auxiliary member who has logged in with their Member Zone password.
On a WOW web site, the home page is always an unprotected page, although one or more announcements on that page may be protected at your discretion. With the exception of the “Member’s Only” page type, which is always protected, all other pages may be set as protected or unprotected, and each announcement on an unprotected page may also be designated as either protected or unprotected.

These protection features are useful, for example, if posting non-sensitive personally identifiable information (PII) such as member phone numbers or email addresses, or announcements that might, for example, state that a particular Coast Guard senior officer will be present at a specific flotilla meeting.

Auxiliary policy generally prohibits public posting of “Personal Identifiable Information” (PII), but by putting this information in a protected announcement or fully protected page, you would not be disclosing the private information to the public, and would therefore be meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act.

Note that you cannot secure documents that you have uploaded to your WOW site simply by putting the links to those documents on a protected page or in a protected announcement. The document itself is still “on the Internet”, and is easily (and almost certainly) discovered by search engines via the Uniform Reference Locator (URL) of the document. To protect that type of content, that content has to actually be in the protected announcement or page.

**WARNING**

While the text on a protected page or announcement is not visible to the public, the same is not true for any documents stored on the server and linked to from the protected page/announcement. All uploaded documents on the server are visible on the Internet via the URL which references the document. See Appendix A regarding web site security requirements.

**External Links**

WOW provides for both external navigation links (menu items on the left side navigation menu that directly link to outside web pages), as well as for hyperlinks on words or pictures in the WOW content area that can link to outside sites. External links added by you to the left menu (navigation area) will always open in a new window. However, if you add an external link inside your content area, you will have to specifically assure that the link opens up in a new window, by using advanced features of the WOW content editor, described below. It is currently considered “best practice” to open external content in a new window. This allows the visitor to return to your site when they close the window.

**Public Education Calendar**

WOW will display entries in the National Public Calendar for upcoming courses being offered by your unit, and/or courses offered by nearby units, when the Zip Code course finder is used on the built-in Public Boating Courses Page.

In order for your unit’s courses to show up, your PE officer, or any authorized officer, must log into your WOW website (if it exists) and navigate to the Public Boating Courses page, or into a special Public Education (PE) Calendar Website (http://wow.uscgaux.info/PE_signin.php), and click to add the course to the database.
Upon completing a course entry, an electronic 7023 “Notice of Intent to Teach a Public Education Course” is automatically sent to the DSO-PE in your district, thus satisfying Auxiliary Manual requirements.

Expired PE courses automatically disappear from the public calendar available through any WOW site, but remain visible to the PE officer when maintaining the calendar from the WOW PE Dashboard (described below).

**Logging In and Out – The Member Zone**

While read-only access to the public pages of WOW sites is available to anyone on the Internet, access to protected pages or announcements is restricted to Coast Guard Auxiliary or active-duty Coast Guard members who have “logged in”. Log in credentials, called “Member Zone” credentials, give the member access to a variety of Auxiliary applications such as the AuxDirectory (“AuxOfficer”), Webforms, the CGAuxCen National Materials Center, the National Test Center, and of course WOW sites.

![Figure 3: The Member Zone Login Panel](image)

You must also log onto a WOW site in order to modify, or otherwise “configure” it, assuming you have the proper privileges (described below).

Members who have not yet set up a Member Zone password can visit [https://AuxDirectory.cgaux.org](https://AuxDirectory.cgaux.org), and click on “Add or Reactivate a Password”. A confirmation email will be sent to their primary email address in AuxData (from their membership application, or later change of member information form) which must be acknowledged within 15 minutes for the password to become valid. If the password issuance process fails, you are remembering your primary email address wrong, or it is not in AuxData. Ask your IS officer to check.

To log on to a WOW site, simply enter your 7-digit member ID, and your Member Zone password, into the Member Zone Panel in the left navigation area (see Figure 1), and click “Log In”. If you are successfully logged in, the Member Zone Panel will confirm that you are logged in (see Figure 3).

**The Configuration Process**

WOW is a breakthrough for the Coast Guard Auxiliary because it allows “ordinary mortals” to create and modify a modern, basic unit website with “the push of a button”.

The process of creating and modifying a WOW site is called “configuration”. The system permits any officer with configuration privileges in that unit to create or modify the unit’s site.
Configuration privileges are automatically granted to the unit’s elected officers, including the “immediate past”, and the three officers concerned with the unit’s “public image” – the communications services officer, the publications officer, and the public affairs officer. The configuration privilege extends “up the chains” (elected and parallel-staffing) to the division and district level, so that officers at these levels can configure WOW sites in the units below them. Although this is not typically done, it provides a simple means of rendering assistance and oversight to the lower-level unit.

Table 2 above shows the standard set of configuration privileges. In order to configure a WOW II site, you must be listed as one of these officers in AuxDirectory (aka AuxOfficer), and you must be “logged in” (above). If AuxDirectory shows you have the proper privileges, a “Configure Site” menu item will appear in the left navigation area, directly above the Search Panel (see “Building Your Website in WOW”, below). If you do not get the “Configure Site” menu, do not turn in a trouble ticket, but check the AuxDirectory first. If you are not shown as holding one of these offices, check with your IS officer to confirm your appointments shows in AuxData. Recent changes to AuxData are copied to AuxDirectory four (4) times per day (every six hours).

**Your WOW Website’s Standard Web Address (Canonical URL)**

All units in the Auxiliary, whether or not they have created a WOW website, have a predefined WOW address (“URL”) on the Web. That address consists of the unit’s “canonical” unit number (e.g., 015-14-04), **without dashes**, constructed into a standard URL, as follows (“DDD” is the 3-digit district number, “dd” is the two-digit division number, and “ff” is the two-digit flotilla number).

**Standardized WOW Site URLs:**

- **Flotillas:** aDDDdff.wow.uscgaux.info (e.g. a1141204.wow.uscgaux.info)
- **Divisions:** aDDDDdf.wow.uscgaux.info (e.g. a01504.wow.uscgaux.info)
- **Districts:** aDDD.wow.uscgaux.info (e.g. a113.wow.uscgaux.info)

Thus, entering the canonical WOW URL `http://a1141204.wow.uscgaux.info` into a web browser will take you to the WOW site for flotilla 12-4, in District 11SR (“114”). **As a historical note: a similar convention was used; without the wow suffix in the URL for the older AIRS web service. We are actively encouraging all auxiliary web sites to transition from AIRS to WOW.**

In order to log onto your WOW II site, you simply log directly onto the WOW II platform at its main address, and provide your unit number during logon.

**Your canonical URL is the only “official” URL of your WOW II site!**

Never post, submit to National, or provide to the public via brochures or flyers any other address, particularly ones that are constructed of the form `http://wow.uscgaux.info?unit=114-12-08` or `http://dev02.cgaux.org...` followed by anything!

**Logging Onto the WOW II Platform Directly**

The WOW II platform is located at: `http://wow.uscgaux.info` Point your web browser at the above URL and you will be presented with the WOW II sign-in page, shown on the right.

---

**Figure 4: WOW Platform Login**

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary
Enter your Member ID, password, and the canonical unit number of the unit whose WOW site you wish to configure, and click the “Log In” button.

WOW II sites are either disabled or enabled for public view. For new WOW-II sites, the default is “disabled”. The best practice is to keep the WOW II site disabled while working on it (as described below), except for brief periods of time when you wish to see exactly what the public will see, in which case you would enable the site (according to procedures below), browse to it, and log out. You then can step through the site and confirm that protected pages or announcement are hidden, etc.

After such a review, log back in, using the login panel on the actual WOW website, and again disable the site. This prevents the public from viewing the partially-complete or not-yet-approved site. Remember that disabled sites may only be visited by logging on to the main WOW sign-in panel.

The actual process of building a WOW II website is discussed in the sections below.

Building Your Website in WOW II

First-time Visit to Your WOW II Site

When you access your unit’s WOW II website for the first time, a default Home Page is automatically displayed (Refer to Figure 1 on Page 1). This default, which is the same for all units in the Auxiliary, will remain until a custom announcement is added by the unit staff specifically to the Home Page. If all announcements are ever removed from the Home Page in the future, this default “Home Page” text will again be displayed thus preventing a totally blank page from being displayed. This ensures that all unit home pages will always have a welcome message for web visitors to see.

In addition, your site will have three (3) other default pages, two of which are built in, and cannot be changed by you. These are the “About [this Unit]” page, which will be accessed by a left menu link such as “About Flotilla 10-2” or “About Division 7”, A “Staff List page”, showing your unit’s elected and appointed officers by name, and optionally the “Public Boating Courses” page. If the unit teaches no public boating courses, this page and the link to it can be removed. The “About” and “Staff List” page cannot be moved, changed, or removed. Additionally, the “Staff List” menu item appears only when its “parent menu” “About” is selected. By having your elected offices “opt-in” for their contact information in “auxofficer”, this page will automatically be updated with the current official information. Figure 5 (below) shows this default page set.
Many small units may stop right at this point, enable this site for public view, without ever needing to add additional content. The WOW system will keep the site up to date, with the latest staff list and contact information – as well as local public education information – without any further interaction by you or your unit. However, with the simplicity of WOW’s pushbutton website model, most units will wish to add additional content, and external links, as time goes on.

**Adding Content to Your WOW II Site**

To add additional links, pages and to edit content, WOW provides a *Configuration Dashboard*, from which all WOW “editing” (configuring, or programming) is done.

After logging in, if you have the proper privileges according to Table 2 shown previously, “Configure Site” will appear in the menu, just above the Member Zone login panel (see Figure 6, right). Simply click on “Configure Site” to access the Configuration Dashboard.

When the WOW Dashboard appears (see Figure 7, below), you will note that it consists of a “menu area” on the left, below the dark blue box, and a “working area”, to the right. When the dashboard first appears, the working area contains WOW II’s “What’s New” blog, which every person using the system should either subscribe to, using the provided subscription buttons, or should read each visit.
The menu area is divided into three sections, set off by light blue boxes: “Edit Active Items”, “Add New Menu Item”, and “WOW Utilities”. At the top is the unit’s canonical unit number, and a button “Return to Unit Page” which will exit the dashboard and display the WOW site. Refer to Figure 7, below.

Active Items refers to pages that are already in your site. As this site is a first-time “default” site, the only active menu item consists of the Home Page. However, if you had previously added a half-dozen new pages or external links to the site, then those menu items would appear, in order, below the Home Page button, and above “New Menu Items”.

New Menu Items refers to pages or external links that have not yet been added to your WOW site’s left menu system. A pulldown menu with an adjacent “GO” button allows the creation of new internal pages and links, while “Add External” permits you to add “offsite links” to the left menu system.

Return to Unit Page, the button in the dark blue area at the top of the Dashboard Menu will return you to your WOW website so that you may view the effects of your changes. WARNING: this action will discard any unsaved menu or content changes you might be making, so be sure to SAVE whatever you are doing first (see below).

Configuration, a stealthy link which shows immediately above the Return to Unit Page button, will always bring you back to the “home” view of the dashboard, as shown in Figure 7. It will also discard any editing in progress, and its use is unnecessary, unless you wish to check the “What’s New” blog on the Dashboard home page.

WOW Utilities are special functions whose purpose, while obvious, will be explained below.

Adding New Pages - General

New pages are added to a WOW site in the “Add New Menu Item” section on the Configuration Dashboard, via the pulldown menu immediately below that text. In Figure 8, to the right, that pulldown menu is shown with the red arrow. WOW creates the new page and its matching link in the left menu simultaneously.
The pulldown menu offers up to eight (8) basic page types, as shown in Table 1 on Page 3.

As each basic page type is chosen and added to the site, it disappears from the pulldown menu, and appears as an Active Item in the upper list (ref. “Public Boating Courses” to the right).

With the exception of “Public Boating Courses”, which brings in a special Boating Courses Calendar module that is not configurable, all of the other page types are identical, except for the built-in caption that appears automatically at the top of each page, and the actual menu entry in the left navigation area.

The expectation is, however, that you will find these built-in page types convenient for certain recurring themes across Auxiliary websites, for example:

**Unit Announcements**: May be used for a sequential set of brief, dated or undated announcements;

**Calendar**: Create an “agenda” based calendar (sequential items), or display a Google Calendar feed (or other provider) right on the page;

**Member Training**: May be used for a sequential set of brief, dated or undated announcements related specifically to member training;

**Members Only**: Use for announcement or content that is protected from public view. Note: any page and any announcement may similarly be protected. Content on the Members Only page cannot be unprotected. A Member Zone (MZ) warning appears if the visitor is not logged on (Figure 9).

**Meeting Schedule**: A basic meeting location and day, for use by the general public, automatically appears on the built-in “About [Unit xx-xx]” page; you may use the Meeting Schedule page to post agenda items for specific meetings, or otherwise supplement the public information;

**Uniforms**: You may wish to consolidate uniform wearing and acquisition information in one place, with posts and external links to resources;

**What’s New**: This can be a running blog of what’s new in the flotilla, or what’s new with the website, or both.

To add an “empty” page of the chosen type to the Website, choose the type in the pulldown menu, shown in Figure 10 to the left, and click “GO”.

In the dashboard, the following “Add Built-in Menu Item” dialog box shown below in Figure 11 (below) will immediately appear.

In this dialog box, there are four (4) configurable items: Menu Tip, Menu Order, Menu Level, and Protected. The Menu Tip is the text you are used to seeing when you mouse over a link on a web page. If you would like
your menu tip to be more descriptive than the default shown, change the text, paying attention to spelling and grammar, and hit SAVE MENU. The Menu Tip field gets highlighted with a mouse hover over.

Menu Order and Menu Level will be explained below. Protected determines whether or not you want to protect the entire page. Click “Yes” or “No”. (Note: on a “Members Only” page, “No” will automatically be forced to “Yes”.)

After you click SAVE MENU, the menu item will move to the Active Items portion of the Dashboard Menu, and you will be confronted with a blank “Add New Announcement” message and button below the Menu Area pictured above. The procedure for posting announcements is below, in the “Posting Content to a Page – The Announcement” section.

---

**Add Built-in Menu Item: Member Training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Menu Name: Member Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Menu Tip: Member Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menu Order: 20 Table Level: 1 Protected: No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAVE MENU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANCEL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Adding Custom Pages**

If none of these built-in page types appeal to you, or you need a link in the left menu that is not one of the pre-configured types, then you simply choose “Custom” as the Menu Item.

Custom pages differ from the standard page types in that you may determine both the text that shows in the left menu, as well as the caption (title) on the page. Thus, if you want a page titled “Job Aids for Vessel Examiners”, and a left menu link entitled “VE Job Aid Kit”, you would select the “Custom” menu item type from the pulldown menu under “Add New Menu Item”.

Custom menu items display a slightly different dialog box, shown in Figure 12 (below); you must supply, in title case (capitalize words), where it says “Menu Name”, a brief, descriptive set of text that will appear in the left menu. *Keep it short; if it wraps to two lines on the website, it looks terrible, so rephrase it if necessary.*

For example, if you are putting in a link and page to display the Southern California Automatic Identification System (AIS) Site, you will probably make your menu item read “SoCal AIS” or “SoCal AIS Feed”, whatever fits and does not wrap.
Finally, in addition to control over the actual “menu name”, with custom menu items you also have control over the main caption on the page, which you supply in the text box labeled “Page Title”. As before, use Title Case, and create a brief, one-line page title that is harmonious with the Menu Item name. For example, in the previous AIS example, you might write “Southern California Live AIS Targets”, or some such. Again, you must SAVE MENU to insert this custom menu item and page into your site. Note that the Page Title also doubles as the menu tip in this case.

**Protecting a Page; Hidden Pages; Role-based Pages**

WOW pages are normally visible to the general public. Pages that contain information intended for members only should be “protected”, by clicking “Protected: Yes” in the Menu Area (see Figure 12, above). Protected pages require members to log onto the WOW site with their Member Zone credentials.

“Hidden” protection allows the creation of a page that has no corresponding left menu entry. Its use for page development, form confirmation, and more is further described in the Application Note “Using Hidden Pages”.

“Role” protection prevents both the page and the left menu link to the page from being visible unless the Member is both logged on and has a specific role in the Auxiliary (office or qualification). For example, the Operations Training Officer (OTO) may wish to have a page on a District WOW site visible only to Qualification Examiners (QE’s).

Role-based pages are described in the Application Note “Creating Roles-based Pages”.

**Posting Content to a Page – The “Announcement”**

After adding a new page, WOW creates the entire page – top banner, top menu, left menu and footer, content area and page title – automatically. The page title is predetermined if a standard page type was used, or is the title (caption) that you supplied in the “menu area” dashboard, when you first created the page.
For all new pages, including the Home page, the main content area is initially blank, until you post one or more announcements to the page (default Home page content does not appear). When you have created the page, using Add New Menu Item, and you have saved the entry with the SAVE MENU button, you will be presented with the dashboard shown in Figure 13 above.

Note how “Meeting Schedule”, the item just added, has appeared in the “Active Items” list (smaller red arrow). If you returned to the Unit Page at this point, you would see “Meeting Schedule” in the left menu, below the built-in menu items, and clicking it would display a page empty of content.

To post a new announcement, simply click ADD NEW ANNOUNCEMENT, shown in Figure 13 by the large red arrow, and the Announcement Entry Page, shown in Figure 14, will appear.

On this page, you will note the following text entry fields and controls:

- **Caption**: An optional caption or *headline* for the announcement. The field includes a check box “Show on Page”. Checking the box causes the caption to appear in a heading font on the web page. Show captions when you are interested in creating a blog-like page with headlines for each successive “post”. Default is OFF.

  **TIP**: Always put in a caption describing what the announcement is about, *even if you do not show it on the WOW page*. The caption shows up in the list of announcements for that page, reminding you which announcement are where.

- **Posted By**: The name of the person posting the announcement. This is pre-loaded with your name (if you are the person logged on), but like Caption, its “Show on Page” defaults to OFF. If you are using captions to create a series of blog-like articles or announcements, and you wish to identify the “author”, then show this field also. Note that if you are not the originator of the content, you may replace your name with that of any other, or even simply a title, like “Flotilla Commander”.

- **Posted Date**: This field, which you may change, is typically only used when the Caption and Posted By options are also ON.
• **Protected**: Check “No” or “Yes” to determine if this announcement will or will not display if the site visitor is not logged on. If “Yes”, and the visitor is not logged on, the page will “close up” over this hidden announcement, with visible content below it moving up.

• **Start Date**: Automatically set by WOW to “today”. If you change this to a date in the future, the announcement will not appear until 12:01 AM on that date. This feature is useful for editing content for future display, but not actually having it appear until a desired date is reached. Take note that time is Greenwich Mean Time (zulu) not the users local time zone.

• **Sequence**: On pages with multiple announcements, this number will allow you to force the order each announcement will be displayed on the page. Lower numbers display before higher numbers. The system automatically sequences new announcements by “10”, so that you may easily move items around later, and you should keep the same discipline, if you manually set the field. Note: “Sequence” is ignored on “What’s New” pages, which automatically display in reverse order of posted date – that is, with newest on top.

• **End Date**: If this field is blank, the announcement will always be displayed. If you enter a date, the announcement will only be displayed until that date has passed (i.e., it “expires” at midnight). By default, WOW assumes “perpetual”, and initially sets this field blank; change it as you require. NOTE: Although expired announcements do not show on the WOW website, they remain visible in the dashboard for future reuse.

• **Text Area**: The Text Area is where you type or paste the “body” of your announcement. For classic, perpetual, narrative-type web pages (with text and optional images), you can dispense with everything above (captions, etc.) and simply enter all your content here, in multiple paragraphs, if desired. For blog-like pages, use the text area for the content introduced by your headline (caption).

  The Text Area is actually a sophisticated “What You See is What You Get” (WYSIWYG) editor with numerous options, including the ability to work in HTML, the underlying “language” of the World Wide Web. Additional usage details are outlined in the “Advanced WOW Usage” chapter, in the section titled “Using the Announcement Text Editor”.

Utilizing the fields and controls above, create your announcement and click the SAVE button. If you click CANCEL, or any item in the left menu before you click SAVE, your work will be discarded.

---

**Editing and Deleting an Existing Announcement**

To edit an existing announcement, log in and navigate to the WOW Dashboard, and choose the page containing the announcement from the list under “Edit Active Items”. Once there, all current announcements for that page are listed in sort order. You can then select an announcement for editing by clicking on the EDIT button for that announcement, or you can click on ADD NEW ANNOUNCEMENT to add a new announcement to the page, as described above.
When you click on EDIT, you are presented with the identical dashboard as you were with “Add New Announcement”, except that the caption reads “Edit/Update xyz Page”. Otherwise, the functionality is the same as adding a new announcement, with the exception of a “DELETE THIS ANNOUNCEMENT” button at the bottom of the panel.

To delete any announcement, simply click the DELETE… button. It will immediately be replaced with a button entitled “CONFIRM DELETION”. You may either cancel at this point, with the CANCEL button, or confirm deletion. At that point, your announcement is not recoverable.

WARNING: Remember to SAVE any new announcement or edited announcement before navigating away from the Add/Edit/Update Page panels. If you click on any menu item in the dashboard, particularly “Return to Unit Page” (which takes you back to your website and closes the dashboard), any edits that you made will be lost.

Determining the Order of Announcements on the Page

If a page has more than one announcement, the announcements are sorted into a predictable order depending upon the page type.

- **What’s New announcements** – automatically sorted in newest posted date order (newest on top). Cannot be altered by unit CS team. What’s New announcements will always be shown with the newest on top, with those announcements that have passed their Stop Dates not being displayed.

- **Calendar page announcements** – automatically sorted in start date order. As with any other page, any calendar announcements with a stop date entered (i.e., the Stop Date field is not blank) are no longer displayed after the stop date has passed.

- **All other announcements** – Automatically sorted in order of the Sequence Number you may enter on an Announcement Entry Page. Lower sequence numbers sort to the top.

Adding External Links (Navigation Menu Items)

Links to other websites may be created and displayed in the left menu.

These are called “external links”. You may find it convenient to provide links to other Coast Guard Units, on-line forms (such as the Webform 7029), your unit’s social media site, or any other website that may be beneficial to your members or the public visiting your site.

An External Link is simply a “New Menu Item” that does not simultaneously create a new page on your WOW website.

Since you are in effect taking the visitor away from your site, an external link should nearly always open in a new window – which is the default behavior unless you override it (see below). We say “nearly always” because you might be linking to your own non-WOW site and want the visitor to have a seamless experience, in which case you could override the default.
To create an External Link, click on the “Add External Link” in the WOW Dashboard, located as shown by the red arrow as shown in Figure 16 above. The following panel will open up:

![Add External-Link Menu Item](image)

The fields and controls are as follows:

- **Menu Name** is the text that you want to show up in the left menu, identical to a “Custom” menu item. *Keep the item short; do not allow it to wrap, which makes your site look unprofessional.* Also, use “Title Case”, explained above.

- **Menu Tip** is the text that you want to pop up when the visitor mouses over the link. This should be descriptive, and can be a *label*, such as “Coast Guard Tall Ship Eagle”, as shown in the example, or can be a sentence, for example “Visit the US Coast Guard Cutter Eagle’s own website!”

- **Menu URL** is the actual address on the Web of the web page you are linking to. Usually, you can simply visit that site, copy the link out of the address bar of your browser, and paste it here.

- **Menu Order** sets the order in which this link displays in your site’s left menu area.

- **Menu Level** is explained under *Hierarchical Menus*, below.

- **New Window** determines whether or not the link forces the browser to open a new window for the linked website or page. Default (and recommended best practice) is “Yes”.

After you enter the above information, click SAVE MENU to save your work. You will get a confirmation page, and the External Link will appear by name in the Active Items list in the Dashboard. Next, click the “Return to Unit Page” button to see your link in the WOW site’s menu, *and be sure to test it!*

**Controlling the Order of Menu Item Display**

Other than the Home page, and the About and Staff List pages that are always shown as the top items in the left menu of your WOW website, you have full control of the order in which pages are displayed in the menu. As shown in Figure 18, you may specify Menu Order when editing a page in the Dashboard, and the number determines the location of that page in the menu. Pages will always display from low numbers to high. It is suggested that you sequence menu items by 100 not the default of 10. This will leave sufficient space for your content.
To assist you in moving pages around, for each Active Item in the menu, the WOW Dashboard shows you the current Menu Order for each item, with a tiny number in the lower-right corner of the menu button. In the example in Figure 18, the Home page is zero, Public Boating Courses is 10, Unit Announcement (a level 2 menu item, see below) is 35 (circled), and Members Only is 40. If you wish to move Members Only above Unit Announcement but below Public Boating Courses, then you must set its Menu Order between 10 and 35. In the example, we are changing it to “30”, which will cause it to trade places with Unit Announcement.

Note that the location of the two built-in menu items that you cannot edit, the “About this [Unit]” page, and the “Staff List” page, is shown in the Dashboard menu as “Built-in Links Render Here”, immediately below the Home Page “button”.

**Deleting Entire Pages**

If you wish to delete an entire page and its left menu entry, simply navigate to that page in the Dashboard. In the MENU AREA, click the DELETE PAGE button (see Figure 19).
No Announcements

If the page has no announcements (the one in Figure 19 has two (2) announcements), you will receive the dialog box shown in Figure 20 for an empty page. Simply click the PROCEED button (red arrow) and the page will be deleted from the website, as well as its left menu entry.

One or More Announcements

In the event that the page you wish to delete has one or more announcements, the system forces you to think about what you are doing. It is possible you are accidentally about to delete a page with a significant amount of carefully-created content, and were you to do so, the content would be irreparably lost.

As a consequence, you must take three (3) specific actions:

1. You must check the checkbox to confirm deletion of the named page;
2. You must enter the Member Number you logged in with, and
3. You must click the PROCEED button.

In theory, this process has been idiot-proofed. Therefore, if you still manage to accidentally delete a page with important content; please do not contact the IT support group to “get your content back”. We can’t.

As an alternative to this three step process, you may individually delete the announcements on this page, and then hit the DELETE PAGE button, to get the simple confirmation box in Figure 20.
Public Boating Courses Page – Zip Code Course Finder

One of the best features of the WOW system is that you can automatically include a Public Boating Courses page in your WOW site, and give prospective students access to the National Public Education Database. Any WOW site showing a Public Boating Courses page offers students a Zip Code Course Finder; they simply type in their Zip Code, a search radius in miles, and click SUBMIT. In return, they instantly get a list of courses being offered within that distance.

In Figure 22, a visitor in Marina Del Rey, CA, entered her Zip Code of 90292, and a 20-mile search radius. The course finder listed six (6) upcoming courses within that radius that are being taught by three (3) different flotillas. (If she had omitted the Zip Code, and simply clicked “SUBMIT”, only this unit’s courses would have displayed).

Online 7023 Form

Data in the database for your unit is entered by your Public Education (PE) officer (or Flotilla Commander or Flotilla Vice Commander) using an online Form 7023: Notice of Intent to Teach a Public Education Course. That online Form 7023 is built right into your WOW website, and when completed, automatically emails an electronic 7023 to your district’s DSO-PE, satisfying notification requirements. (If you don’t yet have a WOW website, a separate dashboard is provided for the PE officer at http://wow.uscgaux.info/PE_signin.php).

Course Flyers and Google Maps

On the course finder in Figure 22, you will note “Flyer” and “Map” (red circle) for each course listed. “Map” brings up a Google Map of the location of your course, based upon the address that your PE officer entered in the Online 7023. A bad address will yield a bad map.

“Flyer” generates, on the fly, a complete, one-page course flyer for the selected course that can be printed by the prospective student on his or her printer. The flyer includes a copy of the course syllabus, an interactive map that can be zoomed before printing, and a complete description of the course location, time, dates, costs, contact information, and other information from the Online 7023.
A copy of the flyer is shown on the second page following.

It is also possible, in the Zip Code Course Finder, to see all courses being offered in an Auxiliary district. This feature is most useful to DSO-PEs, who can quickly find out which flotillas are entering their courses online, and which ones aren’t.

### Entering a PE Course in the Online 7023 Form

In Figure 22 on the previous page, an “Add/Edit Courses” button is displayed at the bottom of the Zip Code Course Finder. This button only appears if the member is logged in, and has the rights to enter a course into the Online 7023 Notice of Intent to Teach form. Currently, those rights are extended to the elected leaders, the PE officer, and the CS officer. Note that similar to the regular WOW configuration model, division and district officers may make entries on behalf of units below them.

To bring up the Online 7023, click on the “Add/Edit Courses” button, and the “Add/Edit Public Boating Courses” Dashboard will appear, listing all courses currently being offered (or were offered in the past), by the unit you logged on from, and all units below. (I.E., if you logged on at the division level, your dashboard will list all courses taught by your division (unlikely), as well as courses being taught by the flotillas in your division.) Figure 23 shows this dashboard.

#### Add New Course

To add a new course, simply click the ADD NEW COURSE button, and the form at the right will appear.

If you are a flotilla, your unit number will automatically be entered in “Choose Unit”. If, however, you are editing from a higher unit (division or district), then you must select the unit offering the course from the Choose Unit pulldown menu. Only courses that are in your “chain” will be shown.
Simply complete all required items, and click the SAVE button. If you make any errors, you will be so informed. Hints about coding of each of the fields are shown on the form.

**Be Accurate**

The interactive map and the flyer will only be as accurate as the address you specify. *Do not guess!* Make sure you have the exact legal address of the location of your course, and that you spell it correctly. WOW uses web services from Google and Yahoo! to “geocode” the address that you enter, and if you enter “Bakker St.” when the address is “Baker Ave.” (two errors) the geocoding may indicate a location on the map far from your venue (WOW defaults to the center of the Zip Code with a bad address). Fortunately, as soon as you have successfully entered your course, you can “Preview Flyer”, directly from the dashboard (see the extreme right of each course record in Figure 23).

If the map shows the course in the wrong location, then you have likely made a typo of some sort. (If you entered the address perfectly, both Google and Yahoo have online services to correct the location of a geocoded address. That is beyond the scope of this User’s Guide.)

![Public Education Course Flyer: About Boating Safety](image)

Figure 25: An “Instant” Public Education Flyer

**Address Entry Tricks for the PE Course Database**

An Application Note entitled “Address Entry Tricks for the Public Education Database” is available that includes a special section for units in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well. Prior to 2015, the PE database sometimes had trouble resolving some addresses outside the 50 states. The code was updated in 2015 to address this issue.

The application note explains in detail how the PE Dashboard validates the addresses you enter, and gives you tips and tricks for getting validation almost every time, with the markers on the automatically generated PE Course Flyer and Google Maps link, to the degree possible, accurately reflecting the true location of your course’s meeting place.
Edit a Course/Copy a Course
To make corrections to a course, or to reuse the same information for a future course by editing the dates, simply locate the course in the PE Dashboard, and click EDIT. The same form as shown in Figure 24, only re-titled “Edit Public Education Course”, will appear.

Make the appropriate changes, and click “SAVE”, if you wish to make a change to an existing course, or “SAVE AS NEW” if you are re-using the information – with slight changes such as date – for a new course. A notice of a “Change to a 7023 Form” will be emailed to the DSO-PE in the former (SAVE) case, and a new online 7023 in the latter (SAVE AS NEW).

Delete a Course
To delete a course from the database, use the same procedure, except click “Delete This Course”, a button at the bottom of the form. The DSO-PE will be notified of the deletion.

NOTE: courses that have come and gone remain visible in the dashboard, but do not display in the Zip Code course finder on the WOW website, once their end date has passed.

Non-Participation is Costly
Although participation is voluntary, if your unit does not enter its PE courses in the National Database, you will lose students to nearby flotillas that do. This is because when prospective students do a course search by Zip Code in your area, your courses will not show up, but theirs will! Even if you do not have a WOW site, or are not using the “PE Webkit” to display the Online PE Calendar on your unit’s conventional website, it is potentially devastating to the financial health of your flotilla to not at least complete all your 7023s online, and thus be automatically entered in the database.

Accessing the PE Database From Outside The WOW Configuration Dashboard
The previous section described how to access and edit the PE database from inside the WOW II configuration dashboard. The PE database can also be accessed directly with a web browser at the following addresses:

- **http://wow.uscgaux.info/PE_signin.php** This is the URL of the WOW PE Dashboard. It is an access point for PE officers to see all courses in their unit (or units below them if they log in to the Division or District), including expired courses that are still in the database.

- **http://cgaux.org/boatinged/class_finder/index.php** PE Class Finder This URL presents the class finder window to allow entry of a zip code and the distance

- **http://BoatingCourses.us** This domain is maintained by the Auxiliary to provide an easy, short-form URL for use on advertising material. It takes the user directly to the PE Class Finder described in the bullet item above. It looks good on advertising brochures, and is easy to remember when dealing with the public.

- PE Webkit – This is the documentation available from the IT Group to HTML webmasters (i.e., it is for non-WOW web sites) that describes how they can add the PE Course database to their HTML web site.
Advanced WOW Editing

The basics in the foregoing sections will give you a credible site, and as long as you follow some reasonable best practices in creating your content in the Announcement Editor, one that looks professional and modern. However, it might be a little staid.

This section covers advanced WOW editing techniques, including:

- Hierarchical or “Nested” Menus – Menu items that appear only when their “parent” menu item is clicked;
- Inserting photographs and other images on your pages – adding “color” to your site;
- Using HTML editing in your announcements – The full power of HTML inside a pushbutton framework;
- Adding Feeds – Content from external sites that appears right on your Web page

Using any of these techniques will greatly enhance your site, if you use them sensibly. Some guidelines on how to do so can be found elsewhere in this User’s Guide.

About Hierarchical (Nested) Menus

Nested or “hierarchical” menus are those where any menu item may have a “submenu” item that only appears when the “parent” menu item is selected. These submenu items can in turn have sub-submenus.

Nested menus are very popular because they permit you to provide navigation to a large number of pages, without your menus becoming painfully long. They also tell you automatically “where you are” without the use of breadcrumbs, because the menu system remains “open”, showing you the exact path you followed to the current page.

A site that makes extensive use of hierarchical menus is the District 11 Southern site at http://d11s.org. That site has over 180 pages that are served with only three levels of menu items. Visit the site as a training exercise. A sample from that site is shown in Figure 26.

The only challenge with a hierarchical menu system is that any page that has submenus needs to be logically related to those submenus (and sub-pages), and oftentimes should actually refer to them in the content.
WOW has three (3) layers of submenus. A top-level menu items is called “Level 1”, submenus of any Level 1 menu items are called “Level 2”, and submenus of any Level 2 items are called “Level 3”.

A default WOW site actually has one built-in nested item. The “About [Unit XX-XX]” menu item has a submenu “Staff List” that only appears when you click on the “About” link.

Using WOW II’s nested menus, it is possible for the enterprising site designer to “tuck” more related information under their unit’s staff page, as did Division 7, Tampa Bay, Florida. In addition to “Staff List”, their “About Division 7” menu item has four additional submenus: History, AOR, Calendar, and Photo Gallery (Figure 27, right).

For example, if your site had 64 pages and you only had one level of menus, but you wanted a menu item for every page, you’d need 64 links in the left menu – a painfully long (and very user-unfriendly) list.

By contrast, if you used two levels of menus, you could restrict yourself to eight (8) top level menu items (the ones that show when your site first opens), with each of those top level items having eight “daughter” menu items. This would give you access to 72 total pages (8x8+8) without your navigation system looking like the New York City phone directory.

A Grouping all of your information about your unit under the “About” page is a best practice.

Creating Hierarchical Menus

Creating hierarchical menus and nested pages is easy. Proceed as follows:

1. Make sure all your pages sort into the correct order, top to bottom, ignoring any indenting you plan to do. That is, any planned “daughter” pages must fall correctly beneath their parents, and above the next unrelated “parent” in the menu list.

2. Now, edit the first item you wish to indent into a submenu (the first daughter), change its Menu Level from 1 to 2 and SAVE MENU.

3. If you have any other daughters of the same parent, set their menu levels to 2 as well, saving each time.

4. If any of these daughters are destined to be granddaughters (nested to Level 3), under a Level 2 daughter, for now, just set them to Level 2.

5. Return to Unit Page to check your work.

6. Now, identify the granddaughter menu items, and set them to Menu Level 3; SAVE and check.

Note that “About Division 7” and “Staff List” are built-in menu items. The member who configured this simply sequenced “AOR”, “Calendar”, and “Photo Gallery” to fall above “Public Boating Courses, and then set the Menu Level on each to “2”.

Figure 27: District 7 Tampa Bay’s Use of Submenus
You can tell from the Dashboard the nesting level of each menu item in the Active Items list; Level 2 items are preceded with “>>, and Level 3 with “>> >>”.

**WARNING:** Never nest a Level 3 menu item under a Level 1 item; you will get a nasty error message (Figure 28). In addition, your visitors will see an equally embarrassing error message on the WOW site itself.

Finally, nested Level 2 and Level 3 menus do not have as many characters to work with as the main Level 1 menus. Use short menu names that *do not wrap*. If you cannot think of an alternative name for a menu item that is wrapping, then rethink your overall menu hierarchy so as to move the wrapping item to a higher level.

### Images on WOW Web Pages

WOW pages can both display images on a page (photographs, artwork), as well as present links to download documents uploaded and stored on the site. A few photographs, even significantly reduced in size, can help to “tell your story” and keep any page from being “flat”.

You have the option to upload documents and images via the Dashboard that you would like to incorporate into specific announcements. These items will be stored in a unique directory for your unit that is automatically created by the WOW system; you cannot get your content mixed with other units. However, there is a limit to the amount of storage available (documents plus images), depending on what level unit is involved:

- **Flotillas:** 10 Megabytes (MB)
- **Divisions:** 15 Megabytes (MB)
- **Districts:** 20 Megabytes (MB)

Since one photograph from a modern digital camera can eat up 3-4 megabytes or more, it is crucial that you “bit reduce” (*scale, downres, etc.*) your images before you attempt to upload them. In fact, WOW II enforces a 300 kilobyte upload limit on any one image or document.

Photoshop, many other graphics applications, including a lot of shareware, Paint on the PC, and several Mac imaging applications can all scale your photographs to their final display size. A photograph that came out of the camera at 3 megabytes, when rescaled to its final display size of 200 x 160 pixels, only occupies 30 kilobytes – 1% of the original. This photograph takes virtually no storage, and your page will display significantly faster if you pay attention to this critical detail. Therefore always resize you images prior to uploading them to WOW.

The content area of a WOW page is 599 pixels wide, with about 560 being usable, due to side padding. An uploaded photograph 550 pixels wide would appear gargantuan, and would overwhelm a page. If you are using a well-cropped photo for “spot color”, or to help tell your story (such as a VE photo in a VE article), a good rule of thumb is to hold the final width of the photo to a range of 150 to 250 pixels wide, erring towards the smaller size. At 250 px, the photo is still nearly 45% of the width of the page, which is huge!
Finally, do not use your WOW site for photo galleries for your unit, unless you store those photos on another non-Auxiliary server, and store them at final display size (as opposed to the camera original). The WOW announcement editor is quite capable of allowing you to link to external images and documents. Better yet, use a photo sharing site like Flickr, and feed your image gallery to the WOW page, or simply provide users an External Link to the gallery. This way, you don’t have to do anything to the photos, and can display them in all their glory. You also do not have to worry about “dead links” from your WOW site to offsite images that have moved or been deleted. Dead links make you look bad.

**Adding or Deleting Images to A WOW Page**

The process of adding an image to a WOW page is straightforward. You will simply edit your image(s) into an announcement. The source of your images, which you will upload to WOW, will be files on your own computer – files that you have prepared in advance to be at the final display resolution.

In the Dashboard, browse to the page to receive the image, and ADD or EDIT the announcement in which your image will be displayed.

Then, in the page editing window:

1. Click to the right of the paragraph after where you want your image to appear, and press ENTER to generate a new line.
2. Click on the Insert Image Icon shown here.
   This will bring up the Insert Image dialog box shown in Figure 29.
3. Use the “Browse for Files” button (not shown here) to browse to the image on your computer that you want to add to the page.
4. Fill in the Alternative text field so that web page readers can “read” the picture to the visually impaired. This creates the famous “alt” tags that we are required by Federal regulation to include on every image.
5. Decide if you want text from the following paragraph to “flow” alongside your image, the way the text in this section is flowing past Figure 29. If yes, pull down the “Alignment” menu (currently “Not Set” in Figure 29), and choose “Right” or “Left”, to place the image at the right or left margin.)
6. Click on the Insert button to actually upload the image file to the server, and insert the photo into the announcement.

Note that you can tweak the width and the height of the image in the Insert Image dialog box, but based upon the foregoing discussion, you should be uploading images that have been correctly scaled to final size, rather than scaling them here. This latter method causes the unscaled image to be served up by the web server,
consuming vast amounts of bandwidth and server time, and forces the end user’s browser to download the unscaled image, and then scale it locally.

Deleting an image: Also note in the Insert Image dialog box shown above that on the left there is a gallery of images that you have already uploaded (the left panel). From this dialog, you are able to delete images that you do not need any more (the Trash Can icon) or rename an image (the Pencil icon).

*It is recommended that you use the Insert Image dialog box when you need to remove images from the library, rather than the provided Image Gallery function. After you have done your file maintenance, simply CANCEL from the Insert Image dialog.*

**Adding Borders to Images**

To add borders to images in an announcement, proceed as follows (refer to Figure 30):

1. Open the announcement editor and double-click on the image you wish to edit;
2. In the Image dialog box that appears, CLEAR any border size value. You can, however, set a border color here or in the next step;
3. Click on the “Style Builder” tab (dialog box shown at right); you are about to build a style for this image.
4. Click the Border button.
5. Under Borders, right panel:
   a. Choose “All” borders
   b. Set the Border value to 1 px (pixel); 2 px maximum; any larger looks amateurish.
   c. Set the Style to “solid” (if you don’t do this, the border will not appear)
   d. Set the color as you see fit. Avoid bright or saturated colors.
   e. Click OK to dismiss the dialog, and then SAVE the announcement.

**Adding Space Between an Image and Flowing Text**

When you allow your text to flow alongside an image, it will butt right to the edge of the image, which looks unprofessional. To put some “air” between the image and the text, you follow the same process as adding borders (previous section), except that step 5 will read as follows:

5. Under Borders, right panel:
   a. Choose “Left” border if your image is on the right, or “Right” border if your image is on the left;
   b. Set the Margin value to 10 px (pixels); smaller looks crowded; larger looks like a mistake.
   c. Click OK to dismiss the dialog, and then SAVE the announcement.
Inserting, Uploading, and Linking Documents on Pages

You may upload documents such as PDF files to the server, and simultaneously insert a link to them in an announcement. To do so, follow this procedure:

1. Make sure the document you wish to upload is somewhere on your computer;
2. In the Announcement editor, type the appropriate content that references the link to the document you are about to upload, and then position your cursor where you want the link inserted.

   For example, if in your announcement, you wish to reference the NACON workshop schedule, which you have in PDF and are prepared to upload, you might type “Click to download NACON Workshop Schedule”. Since what you really want is “Click here to download NACON Workshop Schedule” with the link on “here”, simply position your cursor to the right of “Click”, and continue with the next step;
3. In Announcement Editor, click on the PDF file icon (which can be used for any downloadable files). A “Downloadable Files” dialog box opens;
4. Browse to the file on your own computer that you wish to upload and link, and click OPEN.
5. As soon as you select a file, it will provisionally upload, and the URL for the link will appear in the URL text box. You must then type the visible text for the link (that which appears on your web page) in the “Title” text box (in this case, the word “here”), and then click the INSERT button.
6. Review the finished product in the Announcement Editor window, and adjust the spacing as required.
7. Click SAVE to save the announcement, and Return to Unit Page to test the link and the download.

Controlling the Size and Color of Body and Headline Fonts

Modern best practices in website design call for a “minimalist” approach to different fonts and sizes. It is rare that you see more than two font “faces” (for example, Arial and Times New Roman) mixed on the same site, and, except for headlines or captions, more than two or three sizes of fonts. Italics are preferred to bold, except perhaps for captions, and color palettes are typically subdued, and rarely saturated.

The Announcement editor provides you with three sizes of body text. The default is a sans serif Arial/Helvetica face in 12 pixel type size (about 9 point), to match the sans serif type face of the WOW and National templates.

In addition, under the CSS Class pulldown menu in the Announcement Editor, you are offered 11px text and 10px text. These smaller sizes are rarely used, but can be effective for sidebars, or for footnotes or headnotes. 95% of your content, excepting captions or headlines, should be using the default font. And, as a best practice, except for headings, you should never increase the size of your body copy above the size text used for the left menu system in WOW. It’s right there, so you can see immediately if you have violated this best practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: WOW II Body and Heading Fonts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heading 1</strong> is 16 pixel Bold (WOW Page Titles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heading 2</strong> is 14 Pixel Bold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heading 3</strong> is 13 Pixel Bold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heading 4</strong> is 13 Pixel Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heading 5</strong> is 13 Pixel Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heading 6</strong> is 9 Pixel Bold WOW Red Centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Menu is 13 Pixel Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Default Body Copy is 12 Pixel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available 11px Text CSS Style – Good for Sidebars, Photo Credits (CSS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available 10px Text CSS Style – Good for footnotes, disclaimers, &quot;fine print&quot;. (CSS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heading 3 in WOW Red (CSS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heading 3 in WOW Blue (CSS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heading 3 in Aqua Banner</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you want something to stand out in body copy, italicize it, or set it to WOW red or WOW blue. Never use a heading font for body copy to try to make a point. It simply looks unprofessional, and never “center” body copy (except for single line to highlight, for example, a URL).

Paragraph or section captions should not be more than 110% to 120% of the body copy, and as an absolute limit should not exceed the size of font used for the titles on WOW pages (above the WOW red horizontal bar or “stinger”). To assist you in maintaining these standards, WOW II provides standardized Heading sizes that are consistent with National usage. The choices are shown in Table 2.

In the Announcement editor, to change body copy into a heading, select and use the Heading pulldown menu. To change any body copy into one of the standardized WOW colors, or to access the smaller body fonts, select the text to be changed, and choose a style from the “CSS Class” pulldown menu.

**Pasting Content from External Documents**

Pasting content from external documents, such as Microsoft Word documents or other websites, is fraught with potential formatting problems. Microsoft Word is particularly problematic, in that it brings in vast numbers of formatting tags that clutter up your content, and will frequently force your web page to take the formatting of the original document, making your page (or just one announcement) look at odds with the rest of your site, and the branded look and feel of Auxiliary Websites.

For this reason, it is always a best practice to “cleanse” external content by pasting it from the original source into a pure text editor, and then copying it from the text editor into the WOW Announcement editor. Then, in the WOW editor, you restore any lost formatting (such as paragraph breaks, or italics) that you might have wanted.

On the PC, paste from your source into Notepad. On the Macintosh, paste from your source into TextEdit. Then, select all and paste into WOW.

**Using HTML on Pages**

If you are experienced in HTML, you may work in HTML in the WOW Announcement Editor. Simply click the HTML button on the bottom of the Announcement editor, and the text editing window will be in HTML mode.

In part, this enables those who are able to prepare content using DreamWeaver, Expression Web, FrontPage, or other HTML and WYSIWYG editors. Be careful, however, to not destroy the branded look and feel of a WOW site. And pay particular attention to the use of tags which have been deprecated in HTML 4, such as “font”. Allow WOW to determine the font and heading styles. But when you insist upon more latitude, try to embed CSS in your HTML, rather than using deprecated tags.

**Adding Feeds to Pages (Calendar, Video, PayPal, Other)**

Many Web services offer feeds that you can display in an IFRAME tag in an announcement, or use HTML code provided online by the feed provider. Some available feeds include:

- Calendars, e.g. from Google Calendar – useful on a unit calendar page
- Video clips, from Vimeo or YouTube
- Weather Feeds, such as AccuWeather.com’s netWeather
- PayPal – useful to collect dues, conference registrations, etc.
- AIS feeds and many more...
The general case means of including these feeds is to copy the feed HTML code from the provider, and then create a new page, or a new announcement on a compatible page, switch the Announcement editor to HTML mode, and then paste in the provided HTML code.

Be aware that many feeds offer you a choice of styles of output. You should pick a style that is compatible with the WOW content area, and where the width will not exceed 560 pixels.

If the feed is provided with code for an IFRAME, you may need to edit the IFRAME parameters in the `<iframe>` tag to hold the width to 560 pixels (599 pixels maximum). The same goes for javascript. Look for parameters to set the width.

**WOW Dashboard Utilities**

WOW II comes equipped with several “utilities” in the dashboard left menu. They are:

- Enable Site/ Disable Site
- Documentation
- Feedback/Support

The use of each of these utilities is explained below.

**Enable Site/Disable Site**

The “canonical” (official) URL of a WOW site is:

```
http://aDDddff.wow.uscgaux.info
```

For example (for District 11SR Flotilla 12-4):

```
http://a1141204.wow.uscgaux.info
```

WOW II uses a different model. A WOW II site is unpublished, or “disabled”, by default. That means that the general public can neither stumble upon it, nor gain access to it, without logging onto it through the WOW central signin location [http://wow.uscgaux.info](http://wow.uscgaux.info).

Even if an Internet user were to type in the unit’s canonical WOW URL, they would not get to the unit’s WOW II site.

When you first start work on your WOW II, site, the WOW Utilities dashboard (Figure 31) will say “Enable Site”.

![Figure 31: WOW Dashboard Utilities Menu Items](image)

![Figure 32: “Site Disabled” Barber Pole](image)
Also, there will be a red and white “barber pole” across the top of the WOW dashboard signifying that the site is disabled from public view (Figure 32).

If you click “Enable Site”, the barber pole will be replaced by a green bar, and your site is now visible to any visitor (Figure 33).

![This site is currently ENABLED for public view](image)

Figure 33: “Site Enabled” Green Banner (Replaces the Barber Pole)

There is normally no reason to enable your site while you are developing it, except for brief intervals when you want to test the behavior of protected pages or announcements, which appear and disappear depending upon whether or not you are “logged on”. For such a test, you would “Return to Unit Page”, and LOG OFF, and confirm that your protected material performs as expected. You would then LOG ON, click “Configure Site”, and Disable Site.

Enable Your Site After Board Approval

You should only leave your site enabled after you have received board approval to display your site on the Internet.

Switching From AIRS to WOW

For those units that migrate from a conventional AIRS site to a WOW site, it is important after the migration to let the national IT Group know you no longer need your AIRS site so that it may be deleted and the space on the server recovered. If you have historical images or documents on your old site that your unit wishes to preserve, use SFTP\(^1\) or some similar utility to recover the specific items of interest to your own computer, save them to a DVD-ROM or USB drive, and give it to your unit commander. Then, (as FC, VFC, or CS officer), submit a ticket to the National Help Desk requesting that your AIRS site “a1112233.uscgaux.info” be deleted in favor of your new WOW II website. Alternatively, you can add that your legacy AIRS site be decommissioned upon national approval of your WOW website. Simply annotate this in the comments field when your Site Notification Form (SNF) is submitted to national approval. Your DSO-CS will be able to assist with this process. Once approved, your WOW site will become active in the national flotilla finder. Unless you request its deletion (recommended), your AIRS site will still exist, however it will no longer be the default.

The “a1112233.uscgaux.info” is your actual AIRS website URL, such as a0853401.uscgaux.info for Flotilla 34-01 in District 085. Please note that your new WOW II website must be submitted and approved by the National IT Group before deleting your legacy AIRS site.

\(^{1}\) SFTP is the familiar FTP protocol in “secure” mode. Virtually all FTP clients support SFTP mode, required for AIRS sites.
**Feedback/Support**

The “Feedback/Support” button in the WOW II dashboard has been updated such that you will be redirected to the National Help Desk where you may submit a trouble ticket. The National Help Desk is the only acceptable method of reporting bugs in the WOW application or for requesting routine support. Figure 34 below shows a blank support request ticket.

![National Help Desk Support Request Form](image)

**Figure 34**
National Help Deck Support Request Form

**Documentation**

The documentation link in the Dashboard menu gives you access to available documentation on WOW II, such as this manual, as well as the WOW “Application Note Series” (see “Application Notes” on page 38, below).
Migrating Legacy Web Sites to WOW

A legacy unit website is one that is programmed using classical techniques such as HTML and is physically stored on a web server under your unit’s control.

Legacy websites typically are hosted by the Auxiliary’s AIRS (Auxiliary Internet Resource System), or on a commercial hosting service for which your unit typically pays a monthly or annual fee. Keep in mind that commercial web sites that use any type of password system for limiting member access to the sites content must use the national AuxOfficer API. This API must be tied in to the hosting web server for member access in a similar manner to WOW.

When migrating an existing web site to WOW, you must move all needed content from the old site to the WOW site (including images). Perform the following steps:

1. Decide which content on the old site to migrate to WOW.
2. Copy or reproduce the content from the old site on the new WOW site. See comments below.
3. Obtain the approval of your site from your unit’s board, and then enable the site.
4. Submit your site for National approval. This gets your site’s Internet address (URL) listed in the National Flotilla Finder, and in AuxDirectory/AuxOfficer.
5. Optionally, put in a “redirect” at your old site location that automatically redirects visitors to your new WOW site. This is extremely important, as it assists visitors and search engines to cleanse themselves of obsolete links. The redirect should always include a 10 second message telling the user of the site move, and asking them to update their bookmark. If you don’t include that, the visitors will never update their bookmarks/favorites.
6. Optionally, redirects should not be permanent, but rather should only be used for three months before decommissioning the old site completely if desired. You may want to keep your local hosting for ancillary services such as email hosting, and or as a photo repository. A short simple domain name is more user friendly to the general public.

The simple and fast procedure for migrating your conventional website to WOW II in about an hour is described in the IT Group Application Note Series: The 1-Hour Conversion: Conventional Website to WOW, located at:

http://wow.uscgaux.info/user_docs/AuxiliaryWOW_II_One-hour_Conversion.pdf

Redirecting Visitors from Old Site to New

You have several strategies for redirecting browsers from your old site to your new one. Fundamentally they fall into two categories: a silent redirect, and an announced redirect.

In a silent redirect, when the user types your old address into a browser, the address in the browser automatically changes to the new address, and your new page opens. Silent redirects are strongly discouraged since users will not be told to update their bookmark/favorite.

The best silent redirect is one that tells browsers and search engines that you have permanently moved. This preserves page rankings, etc. in search engines such as Google. To do this, use the “301 Redirect”, below.
If you don’t care about search engines automatically pointing visitors to your new site, then you can write either an HTML redirect, or a PHP redirect.

Finally, if you want a page displayed to the user announcing that your site has moved, with the familiar “This page will open in xx seconds”, use the HTML redirect with countdown.

301 Redirect

Determine whether the index page on your old site (the home page) is index.htm, index.html, index.php, or some other file (rare).

Determine whether or not there is a file in the root directory of your old site (where the above home page is), called “.htaccess”. If yes, copy it to your desktop as htaccess.txt, and open with a text editor. If no, open a new file on your desktop with a text editor, and save it as htaccess.txt.

In htaccess.txt, add a line at the top that says:

```
redirect 301 /index.htm http://aDDDddff.wow.uscgaux.info
```

and save the file. If your index file was index.html, or index.php, then use those filenames instead of index.htm.

Obviously, the “aDDDddff.wow.uscgaux.info” should be replaced with the canonical URL of your new site.

Rename the file “.htaccess” (with the leading period, but without the quotes), and upload it back to the root directory of your old site. If you are asked to overwrite the old file (if any), say yes.

Test your redirect by trying to browse to your old address. Your new WOW site should open automatically.

**TIP:** If your operating system (e.g., Windows) will not allow you to rename the file from “.htaccess.txt” to just plain “.htaccess” (Windows won’t), then go ahead and upload it as “.htaccess.txt”. However, after you upload it, you must rename it to just plain “.htaccess”. If you used an SFTP client to do the upload, it will allow you to rename it. If you accessed the site with cPanel and used the File Manager for the upload, then simply use the File Manager to rename it (which you can also do if you earlier uploaded it with SFTP and any name other than .htaccess).

HTML Redirect

The strategy with the HTML redirect is to replace your index page (home page) with a new page that contains the redirect.

First, rename your old index page from index.html (index.htm, index.php) to index.old.

Then using a text editor, create a file and paste in the following code, and save it as the name of your old home page.

```
<!DOCTYPE html public "-//W3C//DTD html 4.0 Transitional//EN">
<html>
<head>
<title>Redirect To New Site</title>
<meta http-equiv="REFRESH" content="10;url=http://aDDDddff.wow.uscgaux.info">
</head>
<body>
<h2>This site has moved. Please update your bookmark to point to http://aDDDddff.wow.uscgaux.info</a></h2>
<h2>Redirecting in 10 seconds...</h2>
</body></html>
```
Change the two occurrences of “aDDDdff.wow.uscgaux.info” to your site’s WOW canonical URL. Finally, upload this new index page to your old website. Test as above.

**PHP Redirect**

The PHP redirect is the simplest to code, and you can make it a permanent (i.e. “301”) redirect forcing search engines to substitute your new URL for your old, preserving page rankings.

To use it, simply rename your old home page (index.htm, index.html, or index.php) to index.old. Then, create a file with the following lines of code:

```php
<?php
    header("HTTP/1.1 301 Moved Permanently");
    header(Location: "http://aDDDdff.wow.uscgaux.info");
    exit();
```

and save it as `index.php`. Upload it to your site, and test. Obviously, put your own WOW site URL in there.

Please also make sure that you have informed your SO-CS and DSO-CS of your new WOW site URL, in case they need to change links to you on the division and district sites.

Any type of redirect should only be used for 90 days to let visitors know your site has moved. At the end of the period, the old HTML pages should be taken down permanently.

**Keeping Your Original Site and Using WOW as a Secondary Site**

Units with an existing web site that want to keep the existing site as their primary public site may still benefit from WOW’s protected pages and protected announcements. This is very useful for member’s only pages. While Auxiliary policy prohibits publishing member personal information on a public page, WOW’s protected pages and announcements allow Auxiliary webmaster’s to publish personal information, but protect it from being viewable by the public.

The most common way to do this is to have the Member’s Only link of the old public site forward to the Member’s Only page of the WOW site. On the WOW site, add an External Link labeled “Main Web Site”, that points back to the home page of the main web site. In that way, visitors to the main site can link to the WOW site with the protected pages, and once there, can return to the main site.

**Updating the Auxiliary Directory (AuxDirectory) Unit Information**

The Auxiliary Directory, AKA “AuxOfficer”, contains a “unit record” for every unit in the Auxiliary. In that unit record is the name of the unit, which is used by WOW on the “About this Unit” page, the name of the unit, used on the same page, and the address of the unit’s website, which is used by the national flotilla finder. Also found there are the unit’s monthly meeting time and day, and an optional Contact Phone and Contact email address.

When you are setting up your WOW site, you should check WOW’s “About” page, to make sure that your unit’s information is showing up correctly and makes sense. Typically, WOW expects the unit’s name to be the name of the town or region it serves, rather than some cute name like “Kings of the River”, or “5th Division”, etc.
This is important because WOW takes the unit’s name and puts it in a banner on the “About” page, that reads:

**Serving the <unit name><unit State> Area**

Example: **Serving the Santa Monica Bay, CA Area**

Clearly, if this reads: “Serving the 7th Division, CA Area”, or “Serving the Kings of the River, CA Area”, your visitors would be baffled.

Your Flotilla Commander, Flotilla Vice Commander, and FSO-CS (and equivalent offices at the division and district) all have the ability to edit this unit record in AuxDirectory. Simply browse to:

http://AuxDirectory.cgaux.org

and proceed as follows:

1. Log in as one of the three officers above;
2. On the main AuxDirectory screen, scroll down and click on your district name.
3. On the resulting district unit listing, find your unit, and click on your unit number in the “Unit Info” column.
4. On the bottom of the screen showing your unit’s information, click on “Click to Edit”.
5. On this page you can update the unit’s street address and the meeting date/time information. The Website URL may only be updated pursuant to the National Site Approval Process, by the DVC-UC.
6. Change your unit name to one that describes the town or region you are in. Avoid numbers, such as “New York 2”, as they will baffle the public (“Serving the New York 2 NY Area”). Instead, enter something like “New York (West Side)”. Consider officially changing your name in AuxData (via the DSO-IS).
7. If you absolutely, positively cannot change your unit name to one that describes the area that you serve, instead fill in the field “Service Area”, normally blank. For example, in the previous example, leave your unit name “New York 2”, but in the Service Area field, type “New York (West Side)”. WOW II will use Service Area preferentially over Unit Name on the “About this Flotilla/Division/District” page.

Note: If the Service Area field does not appear in your version of AuxDirectory/AuxOfficer, submit a support ticket with the National Help Desk, and request the change be made for you by the WOW team. Be sure to include the service area text in your feedback.
Privacy Act Compliance

All Coast Guard Auxiliary units displaying a website are required to comply with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974, as described in the Auxiliary Manual. Among the requirements of the Privacy Act are that a member’s phone number, mail address, email address or other private information may not be published on public web pages without the member’s permission.

If you do want to publish private information to the public, such as a member’s contact information for the Public Boating Course Finder and Flyer, or on the “About this Unit” page, for prospective new members, then the written permission of the member must be obtained prior to publishing. An exception to this is when the member “opts in” in AuxDirectory, to permit either his or her phone number and/or primary email address to be displayed on a public Website.

To opt in or out, as a member you should:

1. Log into AuxDirectory/AuxOfficer at http://AuxDirectory.cgaux.org;
2. Click on “Search by Last Name, member # or eMail”, enter your own member ID, and click “Find”;
3. Select your own name in the popup dialog box and your member record will appear;
4. Opt in/Opt out of the four items just below your phone numbers, by checking the EDIT button adjacent to each one, changing your options, and then clicking SAVE.

Normally, the Flotilla Commander, Flotilla Vice Commander, and HR officer would opt in to at least display their email addresses.

Application Notes

This user manual is not the only WOW documentation. The WOW team publishes “Application Notes” that describe features, procedures, tricks, and more that are not described in this manual. The application notes may be accessed from any WOW website in the “Configure” mode, by clicking on “Documentation” in the “WOW Utilities” section. Watch WOW’s “What’s New” page in the Configure mode for announcements of new Application notes.

As of March 2015, the following application notes were available:

- WOW II Quick Start Guide
- The 1-Hour Conversion: Conventional Site to WOW
- Creating Roles-based Pages
- Using Hidden Pages
- Creating email Forms
- WOW Smart Tags
- PE Database Address Entry Tricks

In addition to the above, there is a controlled application note entitled “WOW PHP Hook”, which is only available to National Directorate webmasters and DSOs-CS, by written request to the DIR-C or ANACO-IT, along with a written description of the project being contemplated. The PHP hook permits the creation of complex controllers such as the “I Want a VSC” system in PHP that are “activated” by a custom WOW page.
**National IT Help Desk**

While this User Guide and the WOW Application Note series should be your primary source of information on how to use the WOW platform, if you are stumped after carefully researching those materials, or believe that you have found a “bug”, your recourse is the National Help Desk.

The National Help Desk provides users with the opportunity to ask Auxiliary-related questions which are not easily answered using available resources. These could be any Auxiliary-related questions, including computer-related issues.

Each Help Desk question is reviewed by a knowledgeable facilitator who may refer specific questions to an Auxiliarist who is the “subject matter expert” in that particular area. Such experts, called “contributors” by the IT staff, typically respond directly to the member. Other questions, particularly those that are asked often, or fall under the specific expertise of a facilitator, will be answered by the facilitator him or herself, often within a matter of minutes or hours.

While the Help Desk cannot be considered an official source of information on Auxiliary policy, our responses are usually generated from official sources and citations are provided where appropriate. However, for WOW questions and bugs, the help desk is the official source.

The National Help Desk can be reached on the main page of the National Website or at:

http://help.cgaux.org

In addition, a link to the National Help Desk automatically appears at the bottom of the left navigation menu on every WOW site.

**WOW Development Team**

WOW was conceived, and developed by the Auxiliary national staff IT Group, with the majority of the conceptual programming, including the original WOW release, and preliminary documentation being done by IT Group Senior Fellow Bill Pritchard. WOW II was a complete rewrite and incorporated the Auxiliary’s custom Content Management System as the underlying “platform”, both developed by then Senior Fellow Steve Johnson.

The WOW II Users Guide was written by Kevin Redden and Steve Johnson.

Testing and additional documentation activities were supported by the IT Group’s CS Officer Support team.

**Reporting Errors or Providing Feedback on this Guide**

Please send any feedback or notice of errors found to the Division Chief, CS Officer Support (DVC-UC), as listed in AuxDirectory.

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APPENDIX A – WEB SITE REQUIREMENTS

General Auxiliary Web Site Rules

Personally Identifiable Information (PII), such as addresses, phone numbers and email addresses, may only be displayed on WOW sites using WOW’s protected pages or protected announcements, or on pages protected via the Member Zone login, unless the member has given specific permission to publish such information.

No patrol schedules or radio frequencies may be shown on any Auxiliary web page, including on WOW protected pages or announcements.

No Auxiliary web site may implement its own password protection system. The only password system authorized for use on an Auxiliary web site is the Member Zone password that is used by WOW, or accessible via the AuxDirectory API.

Unencrypted documents (i.e., documents that are not password protected) that contain patrol schedules, Coast Guard radio frequencies or FOUO Information (For Official Use Only) may not be accessed on any web server. Any documents of this type can only be accessed on a web server if it is encrypted with a password that is changed periodically, and that password is sent to the intended reader separately (email delivery acceptable).

Auxiliary web sites should convey professionalism and not bring any type of discredit or embarrassment to the Coast Guard or the Auxiliary. A good reference guide is the Website Checklist available at http://itgroup.cgaux.org/documents/website-checklist-wow.pdf

WOW site Specific Rules

Documents stored on a WOW site - Documents that are linked to from a WOW protected page or protected announcement are not themselves protected and are therefore reachable on the Internet. Just because the link is on a protected page does not give any protection to linked documents stored on the server.

Protected Pages & Protected Announcements

- Password protection of WOW protected pages is only to protect PII type info (e.g., email addresses or phone numbers), or non-sensitive information not of interest to the public.
- No FOUO information can be displayed on any web site, including on WOW protected pages/announcements.
- Patrol schedules or CG radio frequencies may not be displayed on WOW protected pages or announcements.
- No links to unencrypted documents containing FOUO or patrol information.
Photographs of Minors
- Recognizable photographs of minors must have signed consent forms to be published on a website.
- For public events where parents or guardians are not known or available, photographs from behind the audience such that individual features cannot be recognized are permitted.

Solicitation of Funds
- Open solicitation for funds or cash donations is prohibited by national policy.
- References to the Coast Guard Auxiliary Association for donations are permitted.