USMS Convention—Dearborn, Michigan
2006

Committee Name:	Workshop #3 - Communications	**Session #:**	N/A	**Report #:**	N/A
Minutes recorded by:	Allen Highnote			**Date/time of meeting:**	Sept 14, 2006 7pm

Facilitator: Bill Volckening   **Co-Facilitator:** None

Number of attendees: 30

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm.

Website Discussion:

1. USMS provides free web hosting to all USMS clubs, LMSCs and zones. Site development tools can be used but none are specifically recommended. There have been some issues with some development tools, so check with Jim Matysek before buying your software if you plan to use USMS's servers. Currently there are 47 sites hosted on USMS servers.
2. Browser capability was discussed and clubs should not assume that everyone is using the same browser. All browsers are free and can be downloaded from their respective company's websites.
3. To help in site development the book *Prioritizing Web Usability* was recommended. A good site for learning how to best present something on the web is www.websitesthatsuck.com.
4. Suggestions on what works best on sites: be careful of color selection (background and font), font size and selection. Things to avoid were splash screens such as "Click here to enter site," background sounds, animation, especially in excess.
5. Remember that dialup is still used and that site needs to load very quickly. If a visitor is not presented with the information quickly, they will move on to another site and never return to yours.
6. Make sure that the links and menus are clear and up to do.
7. Meet Results pages are usually the most popular on most sites.
8. Update your main page often with fresh information. Having information about upcoming competitions and record holders may scare off new swimmers that have never experienced Masters. This information should be on other pages.

Newsletter Discussion:
1. Many teams and LMSCs have monthly newsletters. Some are even weekly. Things to include are upcoming meets and socials, practice schedules, meetings, training tips, etc. Keep in contact with your swimmers/members often.
2. Most newsletters are now delivered by email or at least a link to a website to download a pdf. If the newsletter is large, send a link instead of the entire file.
3. Many teams find a lot of benefit in email lists and it has cut down on the cost of mailing. There are lots of tools on the Internet that help manage email lists. Many web hosting providers provide email list capabilities.
4. Listserves and forum boards are also used to get information out to members. These can be public or private.
5. In many instances, clubs and LMSCs have found shorter newsletters work better.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Tasks for the Upcoming Year

1.
2.