ASHRAE Region XIII
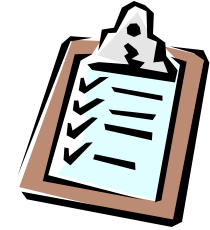# Chapter Operation Workshop
Websites

Dr. Sam C M Hui
Region XIII Webmaster
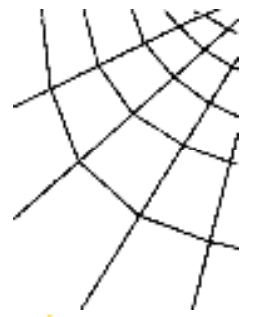E-mail: cmhui@hku.hk

May 2010

Agenda

- Importance of Website

- Website Design and Development

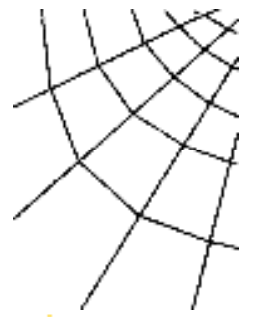- Website Maintenance

- Action Plan

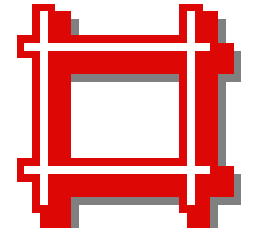# Importance of Website

- Your Chapter's website is:
  - A communication channel and service for members
  - The first impression to other non-members and visitors
  - An important part of your Chapter's image
- If the website is poorly designed & maintained,
  - Your members cannot find updated info
  - Chapter operation cannot be enhanced (e.g. reduce printing)
  - Non-members and visitors will be disappointed
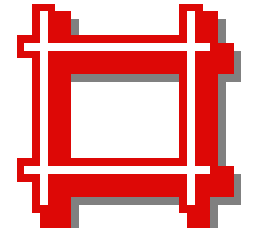
Importance of Website

- What are the key issues to consider?
  - Find a responsible and able person to be the Webmaster
  - It is NOT a one-off job, but includes continued updating and maintenance
  - Focus on "contents" and consider the users
    - Meet the purposes and be user friendly
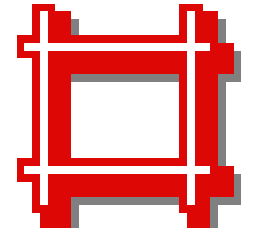
Website Design & Development

- Understand the purpose
  - What type of website do you want?
  - What types of audience and visitors your expect?
  - What are the main functions of the website?
  - How much time and resources you have?
- Know the constraints
  - The most suitable Webmaster may not be there
  - Professional web design is expensive
  - The contents require input from many committees
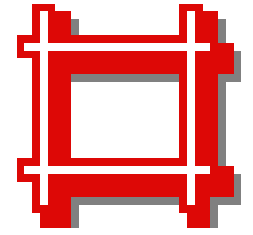
Website Design & Development

- Learn from others
  - Study the experience in other websites
    - Such as www.ashrae.org
  - Extract useful features and info
  - Follow ASHRAE Web Policy and guidelines
- Regular review & feedback
  - Keep your eyes on the website info
  - Review and update the contents
  - Receive feedback from members and visitors
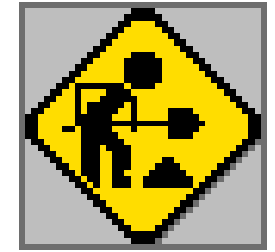
Website Design & Development

- Website design process:
  - Content development
  - Site map or structure
  - Web editing
  - Web hosting
  - Maintenance & updates
- Who should be involved?
  - Webmaster, Chapter officers, historian, newsletter editor, and someone who know your Chapter well
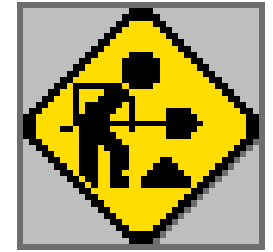
Website Design & Development

- Web site design tips:
  - Texts – clear and easy to read
  - Graphic images – avoid too much (time consuming to download)
  - Navigation – user friendly, help visitor to find what they are looking for
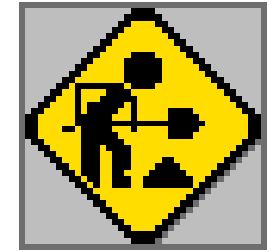 - Consistence – maintain consistent design

Website Maintenance

- It takes more time to keep the website updated than we expect
  - Must pay attention to maintain the website
- Usually the website info changes with the Chapter operation & activities, such as
  - Update Chapter governors & committee chairs
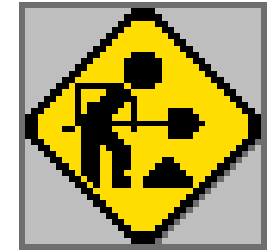 - Put up current activities & newsletters

Website Maintenance

- Two main areas:
    - Chapter websites
    - Student Branch websites
- Website content:
    - Appropriateness and timeliness
    - Copyright policies (not easy to determine)
    - Commercialism (e.g. advertising & company links)
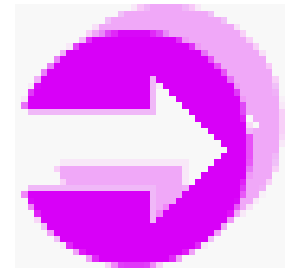
Website Maintenance

- Typical Chapter website content:
  - About Us
  - What's New
  - Board of Governors and Committees
  - Events / Activities
  - Newsletter / Publications
  - Links
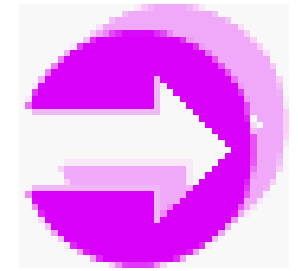 - Resources

Website Maintenance

- Critical issues to consider:
  - Webmaster & officers shall monitor the website
  - Governors & committee chairs shall be aware of the development & provide updated info
  - Student Branches shall be asked to update their websites too
- Practical tips:
  - Keep web pages simple
  - Have regular reviews (monthly, quarterly, yearly)
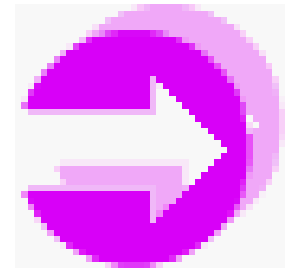
Action Plan (suggested)

- Chapter Webmaster
  - Review and check the Chapter & Student Branch websites
- Chapter Officers
  - Discuss the purpose of websites & identify their main functions for the Chapter
  - Formulate a plan to design & maintain the websites
- Governors & Committee Chairs
  - Provide info for updating the websites
  - Provide feedback & comments for enhancing the websites
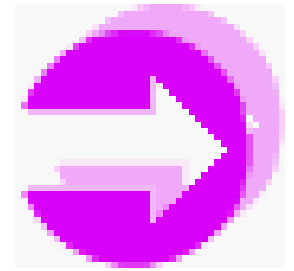
Plan for the Future

- Goals: (extracted from Roadmap for the ASHRAE Web Site)
  - Enhance ASHRAE's image
  - Improve the flow of information between ASHRAE members, staff, volunteers, customers, sponsors, and the general public
  - Attract new members and customers
  - Increase revenue
  - Reduce the costs of communication
  - Improve service to our members
  - Reduce the burden on staff and volunteers

Plan for the Future

- Good website should be:
  - Pleasing to the eye
  - Easy to navigate and find desired information
  - Designed to eliminate redundant information
  - Easy to maintain and update

Plan for the Future

- New opportunities for Web development:
  - Social community network (e.g. Facebook and Twitter)
  - Photo albums (for historical records and sharing)
  - Document management (e.g. meeting minutes and training materials)
  - Web/Net meeting and conference
  - Web seminars and education

THANK YOU