

WOW - Websites with Out Webmasters

A Data Driven Website Development System For the US Coast Guard Auxiliary

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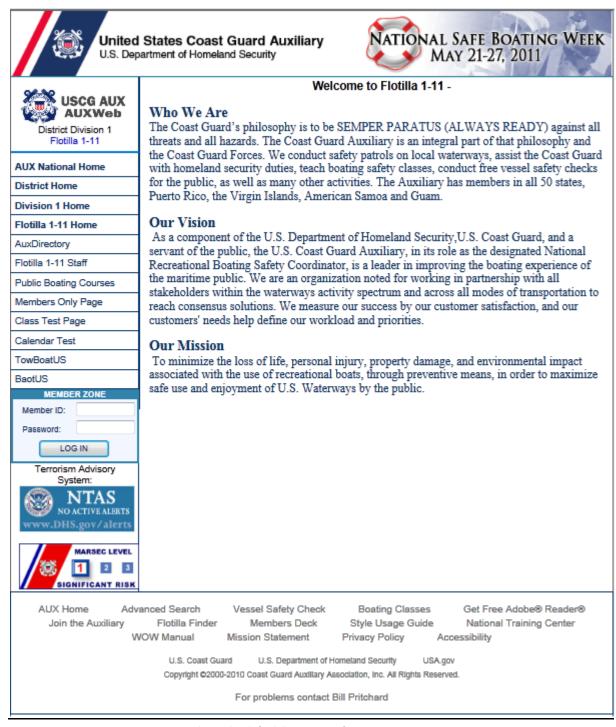
Developed by the Coast Guard Auxiliary's IT Group



Overview

WOW, **W**ebsites with**O**ut **W**ebmasters, is a data driven website development system provided by the Auxiliary IT Group that allows members with no previous web programming experience to easily develop and publish their division and flotilla web sites. No knowledge of HTML is required to get rich multi-page, graphic oriented web sites on the air.

Simply by selecting options via click selected menus, and then adding content via the included CUTE WYSIWYG editor (WYSIWYG = What You See Is What You Get), CS officers with no previous experience in web development can easily develop new flotilla or division web sites. WOW does not limit itself to novice programmers however, and experienced web developers can also use WOW and quickly enhance their sites by inserting their own HTML code using DreamWeaver, Expression Web, FrontPage or other HTML editors.



This is the default home page for any WOW site

WOW Pages, Menu Items and Announcements

WOW web sites are composed of web pages, and announcements. Each web page in a WOW web site consists of:

- A header showing the Auxiliary branding banner (automatically generated by WOW),
- The left side navigation menu (generated by WOW, but controlled by the programmer),

- The page footer (automatically generated by WOW)
- And the page content area to the right of the navigation menus. It is this content area that the web site programmer will use to insert the meat of the web page by adding one or more announcements.

Announcements are the WOW construct that allows a CS officer to add content to their pages. When you add a new page to a WOW site, WOW provides the header, footer and left side menu bar, while the main content area of the page is initially blank (except for the default home page that initially appears as shown above). It is by adding announcements that the CS officer adds content to a page.

The simplest page has a single announcement that contains all the user content for a page (i.e., all the content other than the header/footer and left side menu provided by WOW). The default home page shown above is an example of a single announcement page.

So, why would we provide for multiple announcements on one page? Announcements provide for:

- Marking individual announcements with expiration dates to allow the system to automatically expire and remove sections of a page after the expiration date specified when the announcement was added. This allows a small part of the page to be deleted automatically, without affecting the rest of the page. An example of this is the What's New page on the national web site where new information is date stamped, and old information is automatically moved off the page and into the archives.
- Marking individual announcements as protected or unprotected. This allows the webmaster to add unprotected announcement on a page that the public can see, but protecting some content for view only to members who have logged in.

Protected Pages and Protected Announcements

WOW provides for adding two pages to a web site that are totally protected, as well as optionally marking individual announcements on public pages as protected. A protected page can only be view by members who are logged in. This differs from protected announcements on public pages where the unprotected announcements on the page is still visible to the public, and only the announcement(s) that are marked by the CS officer as being protected are hidden from view unless the member is logged in. These protection features are useful if posting personal private information such as member phone numbers or e-mail addresses. The Privacy Act of 1973 prohibits public posting of private information (e.g., member's phone numbers, postal addresses or e-mail addresses), but by putting this information in a protected announcement or fully protected page, we would not be disclosing the private information to the public, and would therefore be meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act.

Three pages on a WOW site are automatically protected: The Members Only, Officers, and the Custom-9 pages.

External Links

WOW provides for both Outside Navigation Links (menu items on the left side navigation menu that directly link to outside web pages, and for hyperlinks on words or pictures in the WOW site that then link to outside sites.

USING WOW

Accessing Your WOW Web Site

To access your unit's WOW site, go to http://axxxyyzz.wow.uscgaux.info, where the bold red numbers are substituted for your unit's number (district, division, flotilla).

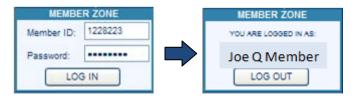
When you access your unit's WOW page for the first time, the default homepage of a unit WOW site is displayed (see the example above). This default will remain, until a custom announcement is added by the unit.

Logging In

While read only access to the public pages of WOW sites is publically accessible to anyone on the Internet, access to protected pages or announcements is restricted to CGAux members only who are logged in. To access protected pages and protected data on public pages, members must log in using their AuxOfficer login (i.e., member ID and password). Members who have not yet set up an AuxOfficer password can do so at: https://auxofficer.cgaux.org, and click on Add or Reactivate a password.

Edit access to WOW web sites is controlled by member officer information in AuxData. All flotilla WOW sites can be edited by the FC, VFC, IPFC, FSO-CS, FSO-PA, FSO-MT, FSO-OP, FSO-OE and THE FSO-PB. Division web sites can be edited by the DCDR, VCDRs, IPDCDR, SO-CSW, SO-PA and SO-PB. Additionally, SO-CSs have edit access to Flotilla websites within their division.

To access the members' only protected pages, to edit your site or to post announcements, you must first log in to WOW, using your AuxOfficer username/password.



Building Your Web Site In WOW

After logging in, click on "Config. Dashboard" to access the WOW configuration dashboard, the pages from which all WOW programming is done. The Configuration menu item is only displayed after you have logged in with your member number and password. Non-logged in visitors will never see it.

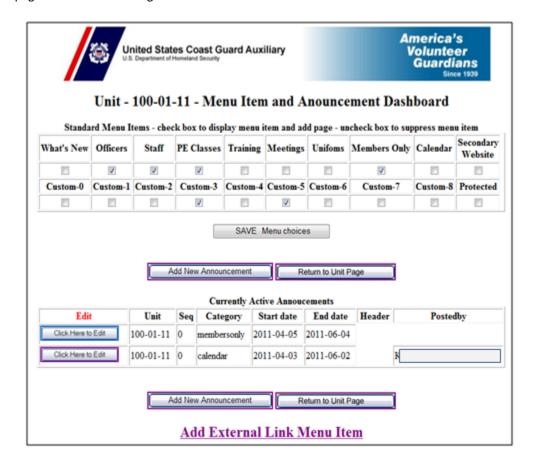


In building a web site, CS officers have two main tasks:

- 1. Adding additional pages to the site (and thereby adding the page link to the left side navigation menu), and
- 2. Adding content (i.e. announcements) to their pages

Adding Pages to a Site

New pages are added to a WOW site via the "Menu Item and Announcement Dashboard" page. By clicking a checkbox to add a page, the webmaster is not only telling WOW to include this page in the site, but also to add a link to the page in the left side navigation menu.



There are three types of menu items that you can add to your site:

- Standard Pages
- Custom Pages
- External Navigation Links.

Standard Pages

Standard pages are pre-configured pages provided by WOW that allows the webmaster to easily add special purpose pages to their site. When a webmaster adds a standard page, they automatically get the page added to the site and to the left side menu bar. They are then able to edit that page to add announcements to the page.

Standard Pages include:

What's New

 Announcements on the What's New page are always sorted newest to oldest, with the newest on top, regardless what sequence order a programmer specified. After the Stop Date for a given announcement is reached, it is automatically removed from the page.

Staff

 This page is not user programmable. It automatically imports from AuxData the units elected and appointed officers, along with their phone number and e-mail address. Since this is personal information protected by the Privacy Act, this is an protected page that requires members to login to view it..

Officers

- Automatically open AuxOfficer in a new tab, allowing the member to login to AuxOfficer. Upon successful login, the page lists officers for your unit, along with phone numbers and e-mail addresses as listed in AUX Directory (which is fed weekly by AuxData).
- Once in the AuxOfficer page, all AuxOfficer search capability is available.

PE Classes

Allows visitors to enter their zip code and find public boating courses in their area. Also has a
portal where flotilla PE staff can add/remove PE courses to the national PE course database.

Training

This is where announcements about member training get posted.

Meetings

Posts the unit's meeting information (flotilla sites only). This is filled in automatically from the information listed in AUXDATA. To update this information, see the section later in this document titled "Updating The Auxiliary Directory Unit Information".
 Also lists additional meeting announcements added by the programmer.

Uniforms

A page to list announcements about uniform related material.

Members Only

This is a password protected page that lists announcements that only members should have access to. This page and the Custom 9 page are by default the only two totally protected pages on a WOW site. If a non-member (or member who is not logged in) tries to access this page, instead of seeing the page, they are instead shown the announcement show below:



Calendar

Lists announcements about upcoming events. Many units that use external calendar sites such as
 Google Calendars import their calendar into this page.

• Secondary Website

For units that already have an existing website and wish to use the WOW site as a supplement (normally reserving the WOW site for members only use to take advantage of WOW's protected pages), the "Secondary Website" option, when checked, will direct users to your home website, when the "Home" link is clicked. Units using the WOW site as their main website should leave this box unchecked, or clicking Home will not return the visitor to the proper home page.

If this is not checked, the "Home" button on all WOW site pages will return a visitor to the WOW site's home page. If the Secondary Website is check, when visitors click the Home button, they will be returned to the home web site that is registered as the unit's main web site via the DSO-CS.

Custom Pages

Custom-0 thru Custom-8 allows the user to create, and name, up to nine additional pages that any visitor to the site can access. Custom-9 if used, is always a fully protected page. It is a user created page that requires members to log in to access it.

An example of a custom page is Flotilla 054-20-06's <u>Uniform Locker</u> page (http://aux04.auxservices.org/WOW_Examples/WOWUniform.htm), where members have the ability to view the Flotilla's supply of surplus uniform items, and request items that they may need.

External Navigation Links (Navigation Menu Items)

Links to other websites can be created and displayed on the left side menu. Links to other Coast Guard Units, online forms (such as the 7029), your Unit's social media account, or any other website that may be beneficial can be linked to from the WOW site.

Target window – this field allows the programmer to specify whether the linked page will be opened either in the current window or a new window. This is selected from the 'Target Windows' drop down field.

To set up your menu, check the boxes of the standard and custom menu items you wish to include on your site from the Dashboard, then click SAVE Menu choices. If you chose to have custom pages, after clicking SAVE, you will have the option to provide Labels for each of the additional custom pages you set up (see picture below). These are the Labels that will be displayed on the left side menu. If you fail to add a Label, the page's menu field in the left side menu will be blank – so remember to always add a label for each custom page you include in your site.



After you have entered names for each of the custom pages, click



Adding Additional Navigation Menu Items

Items in the left side navigation menu (i.e., Navigation Menu Items) are added in one of two ways:

- 1. Adding a Standard or Custom page to your web site.
- 2. Adding an External Menu item to your site.

Anytime a standard or custom page is added to your site from the Menu Item and Announcement Dashboard, that page gets automatically added to the left side navigation menu. No additional webmaster action is required (other than naming the page if it is a Custom page).

For menu items other than Standard or Custom pages, webmasters can use the Add Navigation Menu Item button on the Edit Navigation Menus page to add additional left side navigation items. These items would normally be links to outside web sites such as national, district or division web pages of special interest, your local CG station's web site, or even non-Auxiliary pages such as tide or weather pages for your local area.

To add outside navigation links to your WOW site, from the Dashboard, click on link:



On the resulting page, fill in the links information:



Unit: Automatically filled in based on the WOW site you are currently on

Menu Order: Specify in which order this link will show up on the left side menu, among any other links you may have

Menu Name: The Label of the link to be displayed in the menu

Menu Link: the URL (http://www......) of the website you are linking to

<u>Target page</u>: specify if you want the link to open in a new window (_blank) or in the current window (_self)

After entering all the information, click SAVE, and you will be returned back to the Dashboard.



Link we just created

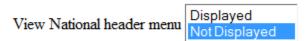


After you have set the menus up, you can either return to the homepage, by clicking

Return to Unit Page , or return to the Dashboard, by clicking Return to Announcements

Controlling The Menu Bar

As a CS officer, you have control of whether or not the national menu bar displays below the page header. On the Configuration Dashboard, the menu bar control is just above the Same Menu Choices button:



By selecting either "Displayed" or "Not Displayed" you can turn the menu bar on and off. Whichever option is selected will be applied to all pages of the site.

Adding a New Announcement

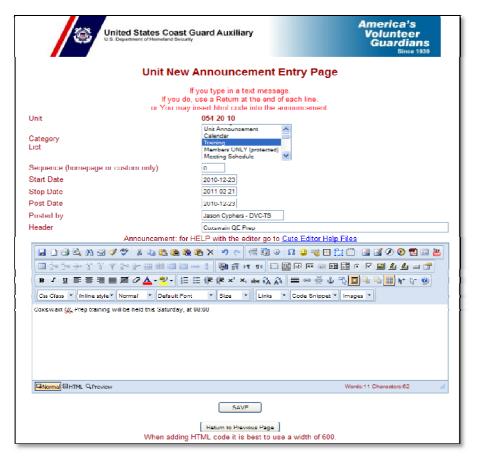
After adding a new page (other than a first time home page), WOW creates the blank page with the standard header and the left hand menu. For all new pages except for the Home Page, the main content area is initially blank as shown below, until you add one or more announcements to add content to the page. When a new home page is created, i.e., the first time a WOW web site is made, instead of the blank page show below that all other new pages get, the new home page gets the default text shown on page 2 of this document. This ensures that all new web sites have a minimum of one page of useful information. Once this default page is created, webmaster are free to alter the page as they see fit.



A new blank web page before any announcements have been added to the page.

From the Menu Item and Announcement Dashboard, click on

Add New Announcement



Fill out the information for your announcement:

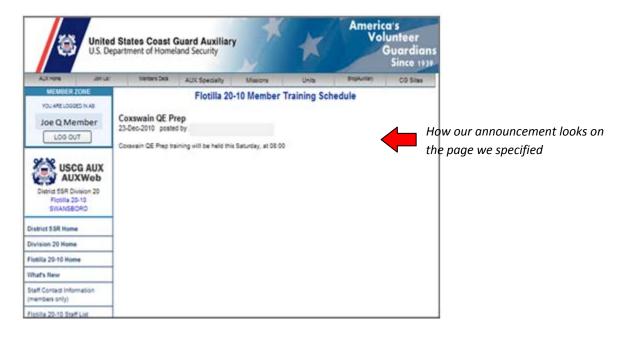
- Unit: Automatically filled out based on the site you are on
- <u>Category List</u>: this specifies what page your announcement will be displayed on. Choose from the following:
 - Homepage
 - Unit Announcement
 - Calendar
 - Training
 - Members ONLY
 - Meeting Schedule
 - Uniforms
 - What's New
 - One of the ten custom pages, Custom 0-9
- Sequence: Specify where you want your announcement to show up in relation to other announcements
 on that page. This only works on the homepage or one of the ten custom pages. On all other pages (other
 than What's New), announcements are shown with the oldest one on top. On the What's New page, the
 newest announcement is always shown on top.
- Start Date: date you want your announcement to showing up on the page automatically populated with date of announcement creation.
- Stop Date: date you want your announcement to be automatically removed from the page
 (announcement will still show up on the Announcement Listing page of the Dashboard they just won't
 be displayed to page visitors) automatically populated with 90 days from date of announcement
 creation. Change the 90 days if you want.
- Post Date: Date of the announcement automatically populated with date of announcement creation.
- Posted By: automatically populated based on your login to the site.

- Header: title of your post
- Announcement: the content of your announcement. Can be either plain text or html. You can use the built in Cute Editor to enter and format your text, insert pictures or links, as well as doing numerous other WYSIWYG editing functions. The editor even allows you to insert or edit HTML code. This is a valuable tool for both novice as well as experienced web programmers. For more information on using the built in "Cute Editor", click here

After you have completed entering or editing the details of your announcement, click SAVE, to return to the Announcement Listing page.



When you are finished with posting an announcement, click Return to Unit Page, to return to the homepage; then, navigate to the page you posted the announcement to for review



Editing & Deleting an Existing Announcement

These same steps can also be used to edit/delete an Outside Navigation Link.

Sorting Announcements

What's New announcement sorting – automatically sorted in newest posted date order (newest on top). Cannot be altered by unit CS team. What's New announcements will always be show with the newest on top, and those announcements that have past their Stop Dates being suppressed.

Calendar page announcements – automatically sorted in start date order. And are no longer displayed after the stop date

Normal mode announcements - Sorting for multiple announcement on one page – When more than one announcement is displayed on a page, WOW applies the criteria below to determine the order that the announcements will be displayed in.

All other pages:

- Sorted by sequence field specified by the web programmer (a character field may be numbers and/or letters)
- Programmer can controls sequence field from the Announcement Edit Page

Advanced Announcement Editing

Plain Text and HTML announcements

Users have the ability to incorporate HTML code into their announcements. This allows experience web programmers to customize announcements and even pages. CS officers using DreamWeaver, Expression Web, FrontPage or other HTML editors can edit their code in their favorite web editing tool, and then paste the code into the WOW editor in the html view window.

- An example of a page having multiple text announcements can be seen by <u>clicking here</u> (http://aux04.auxservices.org/WOW_Examples/WOWText.htm).
- An example of a page incorporating html code on their page, can be seen by <u>clicking here</u> (http://aux04.auxservices.org/WOW Examples/WOWPlusHTML.htm).
- An example of incorporating plain text announcements and html together on a page can be seen by
 <u>clicking here</u> (http://aux04.auxservices.org/WOW Examples/WOWTxtPlusHTML.htm) (the Google
 calendar was added by creating a new announcement, and then adding the Google supplied html code for

the calendar. Additional announcements can be added to the site, above or below the calendar, by specifying its sequence).

Using PayPal Within WOW Announcements

Some enterprising CS officers have incorporated using PayPal for flotilla dues and PE course signups within their WOW announcements. The picture below shows how Flotilla 18 in 8CR uses PayPal from their WOW site to make it easy for members to get their dues in. They use a similar page to take PE course signups from the public, collecting the course fee via PayPal as the same time.



Sample Announcement using PayPal

Uploading files to the WOW web server

Users have the option to upload documents, images, etc. that they want to incorporate into their announcements to the server. Before uploading files, your must first create a unit folder in the server's root directory, where all your units files will be stored. Never upload your files into the root directory of the server itself — only into the unit directory that you must first create! Always create a folder with your unit's name on it before proceeding to upload files. You should name your directory "xxx-yy-zz" where xxx is your district number, yy is your division number, and zz is your flotilla number (omit -zz for division web sites). Any files that are loaded into the root directory are subject to removal without notice.

The server enforces a image file size limit of 300 Kbytes per picture. Be sure that your pictures are smaller than this limit, and ensure that your pictures will properly fit within the content area of your page. You only have a width of 600 to play with, so all of your content, text and pictures, must fit within this area.

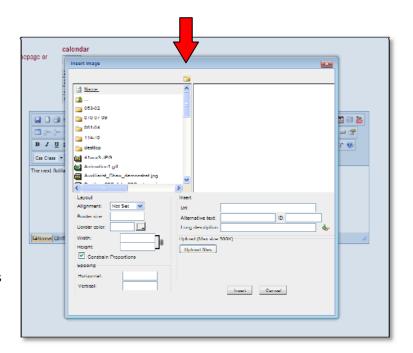
To upload a file while creating a new announcement, click on one of the insert file icons, such as image (), PDF (), media (), etc.

In the resulting pop-up window, click on the folder icon to create a new folder (or select a previously created folder), where all your unit's uploads will be placed. Name the folder the same as your unit's number (i.e. 054-20-06).

Once the folder has been created, click on it, to open it, and upload files as necessary. Do this by clicking on the

Upload files button, and browsing to the location of the file.

Alternatively, if an image file already exists on another server, use the URL section to tell WOW where to get the image.



Adding/Editing a PE Class

In addition to the standard editors, PE Officers have the ability to add or edit PE courses listed on the Public Boating Courses page. Adding a course to the course via this page will cause two actions:

- The course is added to a national database allowing the public to search for courses within selectable
 distance from the potential student. Unlike present systems that only show the courses within a single
 district, this will show any course in the database within the selected distance. This is particularly useful
 for potential students near a division or district boundary, who would not see courses in the other district
 using current course finders.
- An Intent To Teach form is sent to the SO-PE and DSO-PE.

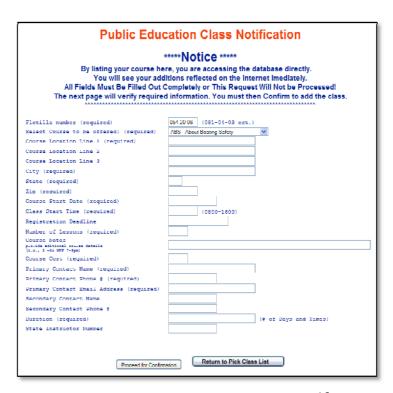
This new course finder provides for a single consolidated database of all PE courses, allows the public to search for courses within driving distance, and simplifies the work of district PE offices in maintaining course listings by allowing FSO-PEs to make one data entry that both notifies district staff of the upcoming course as well as updating the database at the same time.

To add a new course, navigate to the PE Course page, and click Add or Edit Classes

From the PE Course Listing page, click



Fill out the appropriate information for the course. All required fields must be filled out.



After filling out all fields, click on Proceed for Confirmation

The form will be processed for errors, if there are errors, it will indicate which fields need to be revised.

If there are none, you can click Proceed for email Confirmation to post the course.

WARNING: As soon as you enter and confirm a new course offering, it immediately becomes visible in the national PE course data base, and your SO-PE and DSO-PE are e-mailed an Intent To Teach form notifying them of the new course. Alsways make sure that only accurate information is entered!

Migrating Existing Web Sites to WOW

Units with existing web sites have two options when they want to use WOW:

- Using WOW as your primary site. This entails putting up their new WOW site and then closing the old site.
 In this case, it is advisable to forward any visitors to the old site automatically over to the new WOW site (see below), or
- 2. Continue using the original site, and using the WOW site as a secondary site.

Using WOW as your primary site.

To use your WOW site as your primary web site, you must move all needed content from the old site to the WOW site, and perform the following steps:

- 1. Creat your WOW site, making sure to NOT check the Secondary Site check box.
- 2. Submit your new site to your SO-CS and DSO-CS for approval.
- 3. On obtaining approval, set the old site to automatically forward any visitors to the old site over to the new site. This sends all visitors to the new site, without having to chase down and change old web links, and keeps old visitor's www bookmarks still working.

To make the old site automatically forward any requests to the new wow site, replace the html code in the present site's home page (generally named index.htm, index.html, default. htm or default.html) to the following code:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.0 Transitional//EN">
<html>
<head>
<title>Enter your flotilla, location and district here</title>
<meta http-equiv="REFRESH" content="0;url=http://axxxyyzz.wow.uscgaux.info"></head>
<body>
</body>
</html>
```

Where xxxyyzz is your WOW site district, division, flotilla address where the visitor is to be forwarded to. Be sure to put the above html code as a total replacement for the old file, i.e., do not put it in as text in the body of the old page or the code will just be displayed on the resulting web page instead of

redirecting the visitor. If using a web page editor like FrontPage, you need to go into html view instead of design view to edit the html code.

- 4. Notify your DSO-CS that your WOW site is now your unit's primary web site.
- 5. Update the AuxOfficer data for your unit to show the new WOW site's URL. The FC, VFC and FSO-CS have edit permissions to the Unit Data page for your unit in AuxOfficer.

To update the unit data:

- login to AuxOfficer, and
- on the main AuxOfficer screen, scroll down and click on your district name.
- On the resulting district unit listing, find your unit, and click on "Unit Info".
- On the bottom of the screen showing your unit's information, click on "Click to Edit".
- On this page you can update web site URL, the unit's street address and the meeting date/time information.

Keeping The Original Site & 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 the Privacy Act prohibits publising member personal information on a public page, WOW's protected pages and announcements allow Auxiliary webmaster's to publish sensitive information, but prottect 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, with the "Secondary Site" box being checked on the WOW Dashboard. Now, visitors to the original site will still see the original site, but if they click on 'Member's Only", they will be required to log in to be able to see the WOW Member's Only page. With the Scondary Site porperty selected, any click on the WOW site's unit Home button will then return the visitor to the primary site, and not to the WOW site home.

By using the fully protected Member's Only and Custom 9 pages of a WOW site, along with protected announcements on all other WOW pages, unit CS offices can publish information that the Privacy Act prohibits on public web pages.

WOW Site URLs

To access your unit's WOW site, go to http://axxxyyzz.wow.uscgaux.info, where the bold red numbers are substituted for your unit's number (district, division, flotilla). Division web sites would drop the zz, becoming http://axxxyy.wow.uscgaux.info. Once you access the site, the server will change the address to the internal address on the server, however, when bookmarking or publishing the URL for others to use, always use the for shown above, and not the temporary address the server shows in the browser address bar.

Only the address style http://axxxyy.wow.uscgaux.info (or http://axxxyy.wow.uscgaux.info) is guaranteed to remain unique.

Updating The Auxiliary Directory Unit Information

The Auxiliary Directory keeps a listing of each units web site URL, the mailing address of the unit, and the date and time of their meetings. WOW uses this meeting time information from the AuxDirectory to populate the meetings page.

FCs, VFCs and FSO-CSs all have editing rights to update this AuxDirectory information. To update the unit data:

- login to the Auxiliary Directory, and
- on the main AuxDirectory screen, scroll down and click on your district name.
- On the resulting district unit listing, find your unit, and click on "Unit Info".
- On the bottom of the screen showing your unit's information, click on "Click to Edit".
- On this page you can update web site URL, the unit's street address and the meeting date/time information.

Privacy Act Compliance

All CGAux webmasters are required to comply with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1973. This is described in Section E of Chapter 5 of the Auxiliary Manual. Among the requirements of the Privacy Act are that member's phone numbers, mail addresses, e-mail addresses 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, as would normally be the case to provide a contact number for PE class information, you must first get the member's permission to publish (preferable in writing), or else you are restricted to publishing only on web pages that are restricted to members only, using a member login and password to ensure that public disclose if not possible.

National IT Help Desk

The National Help Desk provides users with the opportunity to ask Auxiliary-related questions which could not be easily answered using the resources currently available to them. These could be any Auxiliary-related questions, including computer-related issues. With support from lost passwords to which administrative forms and systems are used to meet a myriad of instances, the Help Desk Facilitators will channel users to the proper National division, department, policies or other resource to handle their requests.

In addition to guiding users in the right direction, each Help Desk question is reviewed by a knowledgeable Facilitator who may refer specific questions to Auxiliarist who are experts (whom we call our "Contributors") in that particular area. These Contributors may respond directly to the member. Occasionally, questions may be chosen by a Help Desk Facilitator for expedited resolution and addressed immediately. 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.

Users with District, Division or Flotilla-specific questions will be advised as to the proper method of procuring an answer locally.

The National Help Disk can be reached on the main page of the National Website or at http://help-desk.cgaux.org.

WOW Development Team

WOW was conceived, and developed by Billl Pritchard of the Auxiliary national staff IT Group, additional code by Steve Johnson.

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