

ANALYSIS OF TOASTMASTER CLUB WEBSITES

DISTRICT 72 VIRTUAL AWARD

by Dale Hartle, District 72 Webmaster
25 April 2006

Eden-Epsom Toastmasters Club
<http://www.eden-epsom.gen.nz/>
Club Webmaster: David Hatchuel

Likes:

- Club meeting roster was up to date, with explanation of roles
- Meeting roles information as pdf files with instructions and guidelines
- Social page with a list of recent member achievements and recognition
- Photo gallery of latest Club event - Xmas BBQ 2005
- Resources and Links page had plenty of links and asked for feedback - Suggest a site? Found a broken link? [email](#) the webmaster.
- Bookmark link - but it should say "Bookmark us"

Errors:

Home page

The word "Welcome" was found twice on the home page which is unnecessary. Quality of photo of meeting venue was very pixellated - this should be a properly optimised thumbnail.

Avoid repeating information on different pages as there was an inconsistency with statistics on two page:

History of Toastmasters:

Today, Toastmasters International comprises of over 200,000 members from over 70 nations representing in excess of 9,000 clubs.

Our Mission:

Currently, Toastmasters International has more than **200,000 members** in more than **10,000 clubs** in over **90 countries**.

Benefits:

Click [here](#) for more information

Need to state what the information is so visitors know what the destination is.

Meeting Rosters

Links to meeting roles opened in pdf format without warning. Always note that the link is a pdf file.

Club Meeting types did not have a published theme.

Distinguished Club Program

Read more about our club [here](#).

Need to indicate that visitors are switching to Toastmasters International website by incorporating this in the text link. eg "Read more about our club on the Toastmasters International website."

The Ranter

I would remove these newsletters as they are now so out of date they are irrelevant. If there were any useful notes, convert them to a web page.

How it works

This navigational heading is not descriptive enough of what "it" is

Click [here](#) for more information

Should specify where the visitor is going and what they will see at the destination

Resources and Links

Links:

"Links open in new windows."

Change text to say: "Links open in a new window"

*The Icebreaker link was broken: <http://www.toastmasters.org/pdfs/IceBreaker.pdf>
(A WHQ website error)*

Need to state that documents open as pdf files where necessary

Contact Us

Should place (09) in front of all local phone numbers.

 **Toastmasters International Club Listing:**

Phone: 649 520 0330

mailto:eden_epsom@toastmasters.org.nz

 <http://www.eden-epsom.gen.nz/>

Email address is incorrect

Phone number is not the same as any on the club's website

Toastmasters NZ Club Finder:

Phone number and club postal address is not the same as on the club's website

SUMMARY - EDEN-EPSOM

Overall this site is well designed and laid out, is easy to read and follow the navigation structure. The colour scheme is easy on the eyes, with blue text and red links.

The tone of the content is friendly and easy to understand, and quick to read. There were no innovative features on the site, and particularly noticeable was the lack of photos of current members in action, except at a Social Event. There were a number of errors and corrections that would make the site even better, as noted in the analysis above.

The site ranked 7th in Google when "eden-epsom toastmasters" was typed in the search box.

The site complied with all the "must have" requirements of the Toastmasters International Club Website Guidelines except for "membership promotion ideas for club members".

Maungakiekie Toastmasters Club

<http://www.toastmasters.net.nz/>

Club Webmaster: Mike Diggins

Likes:

- Cursor pointer message on home page - good but distracting, although it did turn off after a few seconds of inactivity, but when you returned to the home page, it was back.
- Manugakiekie Mouthpiece - online meeting reports - very interesting and an enjoyable read, and obviously a lot of work put in by the reporter, but who is the target audience? And are these reports archived for reference?
- Club member progress chart was useful for all club members

Errors:

Navigation structure:

Lack of consistency in layout and fonts for some pages, eg "Previous meeting report" page lost the navigation structure and I had to return to Home and drill down again to find where I was last at.

Link to the 2004 Convention website

This should be removed as it is no longer relevant.

Toastmasters International Club Listing:

Club contact phone number is not the same as on the club's website.

Toastmasters NZ Club Finder listing:

Details were inconsistent with information on club's website.

SUMMARY - MAUNGAKIEKIE

The home page has a lot of information on it, which takes a few seconds to orientate yourself with, and needs better organisation. The navigation structure is clear and easy to follow although it is lost on some subpages.

The content is written in a friendly easy to read manner directed at club members and visitors/potential members.

The site ranks number one in Google when "maungakiekie toastmasters" is typed in the search box and the link goes to the home page.

The site complied with all the "must have" requirements of the Toastmasters International Club Website Guidelines except for "membership promotion ideas for club members" and there was also a lack of links to useful web resources for speech writing.

There were no photos of club members in action.

RANGITOTO TOASTMASTERS CLUB

<http://www.publicspeaking.org.nz/>

Club Webmasters: Claire Forster and Roger Woodroffe (shared)

Likes:

- Meeting venue description, photo, map and driving instructions - very useful in Auckland
- Members area is password protected - compliant
- Comprehensive list of links to resources, including most club websites in New Zealand - could be a problem keeping them up to date

Errors:

Home Page

List of forward meeting dates was one month out of date, displaying March and April meetings when checked on 25 April

Logo

Toastmasters logo appears twice, one in the navigation bar and once at the top of the home page content area. This is unnecessary - the one on the content page could be removed and the space utilised.

Last updated

There was no last updated note on the home page.

About this website

Information about history of website is unnecessary. This is for the webmaster's use only.

About this club

Noted that the page was last modified in September 2004. This should be updated, even though there may not be any corrections to the content.

SUMMARY - RANGITOTO

The home page has a lot of information on it, some repetitive and confusing. This needs to be streamlined and consolidated into one area.

The members area was password-protected as required by TMI. Therefore it was impossible to find out if the "membership promotion ideas for club members" and "distinguished club programme goals and progress" and "calendar of club events" was available. While this is compliant with the rules, this was a little off-putting for a visitor when you are excluded from a section of a website.

The latest club newsletter opened as an 8 page pdf file but much of the information on the newsletter could have been included on the site.

The content was a little disjointed, and needs streamlining. Two links on the navigation bar went straight to external websites which was unnecessary as they were already included on the Links page.

The website ranks number one in Google when "rangitoto toastmasters" typed in search box.

All contact details appeared to be accurate between Toastmasters International, and TMNZ club finder.

ONEHUNGA TOASTMASTERS

<http://www.onehunga.gen.nz/>

Webmaster: David Hatchuel

Likes

- Meeting roles information as pdf files with instructions and guidelines

Errors

Newsletters

There were two newsletters which were out of date: September 2004 and February 2005. These should be removed and any useful content placed on the site as a web page.

Photo Gallery

The photo gallery had too many images, and the quality of the full size image was very poor, with the thumbnails being very blurry. Images should be optimised correctly as thumbnails and full size at 72 dpi. Images of previous events should be removed after a suitable time. Photos of events could be placed in a Powerpoint Show, or selected photos only used.

Links to Resources

These were broken up over two pages, whereas on the Eden-Epsom site they were all on one page.

SUMMARY - ONEHUNGA

This website is similar in design and layout as Eden-Epsom as it is managed by the same person, David Hatchuel, although the colour scheme is different, and the navigation bar has some extra items on it.

Much of the content is identical or similar to Eden-Epsom, although the meeting calendar was out of date, with March and April listings still showing when the site was checked on 25 April.

There was no sign of "membership promotion ideas for club members" and "distinguished club programme goals and progress" as required in the TMI Guidelines.

Some links do not indicate the destination, eg "Click here for a map" jumped to the Wises website. The meeting calendar page had not been updated and had two meetings out of date.

The Icebreaker link downloaded the pdf file correctly, as this was stored on the site, not on the TMI website (which appears to have been removed).

It appears that the effort put into the Eden-Epsom website has not been repeated with Onehunga, and there are a few corrections which would make the site even more useful to club members and visitors.

TURBINE TALKERS TOASTMASTERS CLUB

<http://turbine.wellington.net.nz/>

Webmaster: Joji Jacob

Likes

- Fresh design, images reflect name and location of club, eg turbine, wellington
- Speaking Tip of the week on the home page
- Summary of minutes of last committee meeting for members
- Recognition of club and member achievements
- Most downloadable file links indicate a pdf file with the size
- Link to map and local bus timetable
- Core Values and Club Aims page
- Text of speeches from club members - need to keep this up to date with newer speech scripts
- Site Map - very useful for navigating quickly to find things
- Changing colour scheme with each section
- Members progress chart was a downloadable pdf - this involves keeping the master file up to date and then converting to a pdf, which involves work. Could be made into a web page for easier maintenance.

Errors

Spelling error:

[Benifits of Toastmasters](#) - New Zealand Toastmasters Website
Programe should be Programme

Events

Information at Division E Conference on 8 April - now out of date when site checked on 25 April

Newsletter

This was a "coming soon" page! It shouldn't be there until the content has been prepared - but it was an intriguing teaser.

Meeting Schedule

Downloaded as a pdf file, seemed a complicated document which uses a lot of colour ink!

SUMMARY - TURBINE TALKERS

The Turbine Talkers website has a fresh professional design and colour scheme, with an image of the Wellington turbine which immediately identifies the name of the club with its location and name. This gives an element of "branding" to the club and the website and was the most outstanding site design of all those analysed.

Innovative content on the site includes a site map, minutes of committee meetings, text of speeches, and an audio clip. The content is easy to read, friendly and well laid out.

There was a lack of links to external resources for speakers, the Visitors Guide outlining the benefits of Toastmasters was very brief, and there were no "membership promotion ideas for club members". There was one spelling mistake found on the site in link text, and one photo of a group was really too small to see any detail.

The club's contact details were correct in the TMI and TMNZ club finders. The last updated note was at the top of the home page hidden in the navigation bar; this is not the usual location for this item, it should be at the bottom of the home page.

The site appeared in Google when "turbine toastmasters" was typed in the search box, but the page went to a links page which generated an error because it didn't exist. The link in Google's indexes must be old.

NORTHRISE TOASTMASTERS

<http://www.northrise-toastmasters.org>

Webmaster Ian Hall-Kenny

Likes

- **Couldn't find anything to like on this website, it was too disorganised, wordy and boring!**

Errors

Meeting location and dates

This page had a map and directions, but the meeting calendar was for 2005. I was checking the page on 25 April 2006. Say no more!

Search site

The search site feature utilises Atomz Search and Gigablast Search, two free web search engines which can look into a site. When I searched on "meeting dates" I received a very long page of results which were too hard to understand and many seemed to be the same. I clicked on the first result and was sent to the Contact Us form page. I would not advise this type of search on a Toastmasters club website as it is too confusing to users.

Speaker Links

The Speaker Links page had a Google external search link which could be useful if the visitor couldn't find anything relevant on the links page. However although the Links page was categorised into sections, the link text gave no indication of what the destination was or what could be found there. As a visitor I would be reluctant to choose a link not knowing what was going to happen next. Some of the links didn't look particularly relevant or useful either.

Members Section

When I clicked on the Members section, the layout of the page changed and the navigation bar was presented at the top of the page instead of down the left where it was previously. This was quite disconcerting initially and the page had a lot of content which was poorly arranged, with two photos and a cartoon image. There was a "printer friendly version" of the page which was identical to the original web page but without the images. This page needs better structure, with headings and subheadings, and the content organising for easier reading. I took one look at it and left.

Competitions

This page also had a layout change, and some errors: "New Zealand has 6 Divisions" - it now has 7 Divisions. The image on the page did not reflect the

content at all, and I was left wondering where I was. It also had a mixture of photo and 2 clip art items.

Membership Fees

The details on this page were out of date quoting incorrect TMI fees.

SUMMARY - NORTHRISE

When you first open this website, the Toastmasters logo slowly appears on the page, and every time you return to the home page, the logo slooowwwly appears again. There is a lot of content on the home page, which takes a few minutes to read, and it is peppered with links which could distract a reader. The navigation bar changes location on different pages, and actually scrolls down the page on some longer pages.

There is also a very poor quality image which is an imitation of a dictionary entry with Northrise which I felt was unnecessary.

The site was found in Google as number one with the keywords "northrise toastmasters".

The club's contact details as listed on the site were not the same as in the TMNZ club finder and this needs correcting.

This site needs a total revamp to reorganise and streamline the information, improve the quality of images and content, and remove unnecessary functions and features which distract and confuse the reader.

KAIAPOI TOASTMASTERS

<http://www.ktm.org.nz/>

Webmaster Richard Moffat

Likes

- Home page - ANZAC Day notice - I checked the site on ANZAC Day and was pleased to see the club notice that there would be no meeting.
- The home page had a bullet point list of the benefits of Toastmasters
- The content for a potential member was arranged in a "vital questions" format guiding a visitor through a sequence of questions and answers
- Resources links were useful
- Members Only link was password protected which is TM compliant
- About These Pages included the authorisation to publish and a description of how they were made - useful for other clubs wishing to produce a website

Errors

Contact Details

TMI Club finder details for website need updating to show club's own website now it has one, not District 72 website address as shown below.



Phone: 64 33 276076

<mailto:kaiapoi@toastmasters.org.nz>



<http://www.toastmasters.org.nz/>

Club meeting times

Club website and TMNZ Club Finder states different times for club meeting finishing time - is it 9 pm or 9.30 pm?

Navigation links

Three links jump straight to an external website without warning. These links should be placed on a Links page with descriptive text telling readers what to expect.

SUMMARY - KAIAPOI TOASTMASTERS

The Kaiapoi Toastmasters website had an unusual navigation structure targeted at a potential member by guiding them through the What - Who - Why - How - When and Where concept. This was useful, easy and quite fun to follow.

The members section was password-protected, so I was unable to see what other information was available there specifically for members.

The site ranked number one in Google when "kaiapoi toastmasters" was typed in the search box with an accurate description of the contents of the site, which jumped to the home page.

The details on TMI and TMNZ club finder pages were correct except for a discrepancy in the meeting finishing time, and the website address on the TMI website needs updating.

VARSITY TOASTMASTERS CLUB

<http://www.varsitytm.org>

Webmasters: Jasvir Nagra and Hari Kumar

Likes

- Home page opened with this week's agenda (26 April) - site viewed on 25 April

Errors

RSVP

RSVP feature on home page was for the meeting of 19 April (site viewed on 25 April) - this had not been updated

News

News and Events on the home page were unnecessary as they were repeated on separate pages. The News page content fell out of the template. There was a lot of old news going right back to January 2005, with poorly optimised photos of various sizes, which helped to break the template. The old news should be removed, or summarised in another format if it wishes to be retained.

This Week's Agenda

This page had agenda roles going back to January 2005 which is unnecessary, with the latest agenda at the bottom of the very long page. You expect "this week" to be THIS WEEK, and that's all!

New members page

The link to the Icebreaker pdf file on the TMI website is broken (I think the file has been moved or removed from their website).

Contact

The location maps are too small to be useful, and unreadable. These could be enlarged for the site, and inserted on a downloadable printable page with parking and contact details so people can print and take with them when heading to the meeting.

Email contact

The contact email address was in the form of an image, which helps prevent spammers harvesting the address. However it is unusable by a visitor as they have to type the address into their email To: box, so I would think not many would do this. Also the email address was not the generic Toastmasters NZ club email address which is recommended.

Mailing List

The site utilises the Google Groups subscription service to be notified of updates to the site. I would like to know how many people have subscribed to this service and how they find it. Also how they are notified of changes to the site by the webmaster

Compliance

The Toastmasters trademark acknowledgement statement was missing from the site.

SUMMARY - VARSITY

The Varsity Toastmasters website is fairly simple in its design and organisation and the content is written in a fairly easy to read and understand manner.

However there is a lot of out of date content, particularly in the news and events sections, and poorly optimised images which have broken the site template on one page.

The site seemed targeted at current members rather than new members and was not fully compliant with Toastmasters International Guidelines. The site could really show the personalities of the current members and their achievements, and what they can offer to potential members, being a university-based club.

The site navigation and content needs to be analysed and streamlined for easier use, and out of date content removed. This would give the site more relevancy and the compliance issues need to be addressed.

KAPI-MANA TOASTMASTERS CLUB

<http://www.kmtoastmasters.wellington.net.nz>

Webmaster: Jon Hollingsworth and Rachael Short

Likes

- Simple colour scheme, easy navigation links

Errors

Links

Links to Toastmasters International and Toastmasters New Zealand just give the website address. They should give the name of the site and what visitors might expect to find there which is relevant and useful. Deep linking to specific pages would also be useful.

Navigation Images

The navigation panel gives a mix of photos and clip art. These should be consistent - either one or the other.

Out of date content

Joining Fee

"... joining fee of \$35 and a subscription fee of \$50 every 6 months to renew your membership. (Prices quoted are for 2004 / 2005)"

This should be updated to the current prices, or not state any price at all.

Other content

The content on the site does not cover "membership promotion ideas", the DCP progress or give a calendar of events.

Contact details

The club email should use the generic Toastmasters email

kapimana@toastmasters.org.nz not personal emails. The club's location, number, area etc are not apparent from the home page. The home page does not have a "last updated" note so a visitor does not know the relevancy of the information. The club site does not register in Google so it may not have been submitted.

SUMMARY - KAPI-MANA TOASTMASTERS

The Kapi-Mana Toastmasters club website is a very simple site consisting of 6 web pages with a pleasing colour scheme.

The content is not fully compliant with Toastmasters International guidelines, and has some out of date information. The site also lacks depth of content which could be useful to visitors and club members.

PIONEERS TOASTMASTERS

<http://groups.msn.com/pioneerstoastmasters>

Webmaster: Julie Parsons

Comment

- I would not recommend using XtraMSN Groups for a club website.

Errors

Fees

This page had content dated July 2005.

Events and Meetings pages

These pages had out of date content (January and February). The Future Events page had a broken link to the Conferences page on the District 72 website. The forward meeting schedule was out of date.

SUMMARY - PIONEERS TOASTMASTERS

This website was the only site using XtraMSN Groups, a preformatted template system for personal sites. Therefore the club url is <http://groups.msn.com/pioneerstoastmasters> which makes it difficult to find and remember.

The home page has a lot of information which falls out of the screen and you have to scroll to the right to see it all. The font used makes the content difficult to read because of the type and size, and there were a mix of fonts and background colours across the various pages.

There were a number of spelling mistakes on various pages, and some pages had not been updated for several months or over a year, especially notable being the Fees page. One page was empty as it was awaiting content.

This club's website needs a total revamp, and I would recommend it be removed from XtraMSN groups to its own webspace if the club can afford the domain and hosting fees.

TELECOM TALKERS TOASTMASTERS CLUB

<http://www.ttalkers.co.nz>

Webmaster: Philip Oliver

Comments

- There were too many design faults, inaccurate or copyright content, and poor navigation on this website.

Errors

Site design and layout

Was not user friendly with poor colour choice, non-resizable font, broken links, missing images, in-page links to external sites which opened in the page's panel and did not display correctly

News and Roster

Content on these pages were out of date.

Content on other pages was copyright from other sites.

Contact Us

Font changed on this page

SUMMARY - TELECOM TALKERS

When you first open the home page, you notice the unusual arrangement of the content. It is in a scrollable panel in the centre of the page, with an image of the shoulders of 3 people on one side and 2 people working on a whiteboard which could lead you to believe this was a clothing retailer website or a business site. The background colour of the main panel is orange with black text with the Toastmasters logo in the background, and is in a very small font which is non-resizable using the browser controls. This combination makes the content very hard to read and the logo partially obscures the text. You cannot get a sense of what is on the page (a very small panel) without scrolling as there is no table of contents. Because the text was so hard to read, I did not read any of it at all!

The site does not have the Toastmasters Trademark acknowledgement statement or "last updated" note on the home page, which is a compliancy requirement.

The navigation bar is a vertical list in the centre of the image panel in the middle of the page, which is an unusual location. Because of this the site does not utilise the space available on a webpage to layout the content well.

The Programmes section had a change in navigation sequence, and the link to the Icebreaker file on the Toastmasters International site was broken.

Much of the content appeared to be copied from the District 72 website, which did not display correctly in the content panel, with missing images and incorrect links. The club really needs to compose its own content with its own flavour and tone.

The website ranked number one in Google when "telecom talkers toastmasters" was typed in the search box, but the link took you to an incorrectly formatted version of the home page which had lost the navigation links to the rest of the site - a dead end in one click!

This club's website is not compliant with Toastmasters International Guidelines, and needs a total redesign and content review.

Other club sites entered for contest:
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Johnsonville

<http://jvilletoastmasters.wellington.net.nz/links.html>

This site was too simple and plain with very little content to be considered for this award at this time.

Karori

<http://www.karori.wellington.net.nz/index.html>

Home page fails to load correctly - unable to continue.

Ohariu

<http://www.ohariu.wellington.net.nz>

A one page site with table of contents link at the top.

Has very little information of use to be considered for this award at this time.

Te Aro

<http://www.tearo.wellington.net.nz/>

Identical to Ohariu website.

A one page site with table of contents link at the top.

Has very little information of use to be considered for this award at this time.

Gourmet

<http://gourmet.wellington.net.nz>

This site was too simple and plain with very little content to be considered for this award at this time.

Public Service

<http://www.publicservice.wellington.net.nz>

This site was too simple and plain with very little content to be considered for this award at this time.

Note: The above sites are operated by Andrew Smith or Tony Green using the Wellington Community Net templates. They need more professional design and layout to differentiate the clubs and much more content for potential and current club members.

Wellington

<http://www.wellingtontoastmasters.co.nz>

This link goes to the E^Sys website, the company the club webmaster works for.

A correct link needs to be provided. Unable to continue analysing site.

WOW TOASTMASTERS

<http://www.wairarapatoastmasters.org.nz>

Webmaster: Dale Hartle

The President entered this club website into the Virtual Club Award not realising that the Club Webmaster was the District Webmaster who would be judging the Virtual Club Website contest. Therefore in fairness to everyone, this website will not be included in the contest.

For those interested, the website is a joint site for Masterton and WOW Toastmasters Clubs based in the Wairarapa. The WOW club's content is updated after every meeting by Dale Hartle, with photos and a meeting report. However the Masterton club has not provided any content for their page on the site recently.

The website is fully compliant to web standards and Toastmasters Guidelines and is found as number one in Google when "wairarapa toastmasters" is typed in the search box.

THE WINNER!

TURBINE TALKERS TOASTMASTERS CLUB

<http://turbine.wellington.net.nz/>

Webmaster: Joji Jacob

HIGHLY COMMENDED!

EDEN-EPSOM TOASTMASTERS CLUB

<http://www.eden-epsom.gen.nz/>

Webmaster: David Hatchuel

KAIAPOI TOASTMASTERS

<http://www.ktm.org.nz/>

Webmaster Richard Moffat

Overall Comments

The winner of the inaugural District 72 Virtual Website Award is Turbine Talkers Toastmasters Club, webmaster Joji Jacob.

This site had the most professional design and a pleasing colour scheme, the site identifying with the club's name and its physical location of being situated near the wind Turbine in Wellington by having an image of the turbine in its banner.

The site had a number of innovative features not found on other club websites, and the least number of errors, while being compliant with Toastmasters International Internet Guidelines.

There is scope to add speaker resources and links to external websites of interest for the benefit of members and visitors, and it is essential to get the Google link correct.

The two "Highly Commended" sites - Eden-Epsom and Kaiapoi were both comprehensive sites with plenty of information for current and potential members, with few mistakes, although there was scope to improve in a number of ways. I particularly liked Kaiapoi's innovative navigation structure for potential members, and Eden-Epsom's up-to-date Meeting Roster page with links to the Roles Guidelines.