

xtrinsic

The Grey Bruce Cultural Network

A WEB SITE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL CULTURE COMMUNITY

Prepared by: Emma Jane Hogbin, xtrinsic

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Section One: Evaluation of Existing Web Sites and Capabilities.....	4
Internet Use by the Creative Sector: An On-line Survey.....	4
Methodology.....	4
Key Findings.....	5
“Best Practices” Community Culture Web Site.....	6
Criteria: What Makes a Good Web Site?.....	6
Relevant Sites.....	7
Common Features.....	8
Categories and Key Words.....	8
Directory Components.....	9
Section Two: A Plan to Create a Rural Culture Network.....	11
Basic Web Site.....	11
Culture Directory.....	12
Culture Calendar.....	13
Announcement and Discussion Mailing Lists.....	14
Types of Visitors and Levels of Interaction.....	15
“Anonymous” Web site visitor.....	16
Network Member.....	16
Community Moderator.....	18
Appendix 1: Request for Survey Participation.....	19
Request to Individuals (sent November 24, 2006).....	19
Email to Media.....	20
Appendix 2: Survey Results.....	21
Appendix 3: Request for Expressions of Interest – Branding Guide	30

Introduction

The Grey Bruce Cultural Network (GBCN) is a new, developing regional arts-and-culture service organization in Grey Bruce, organized by regional artists and arts-and-culture professionals. Its purpose is to encourage and support arts-and-culture people, projects and enterprises throughout the region, with a heavy emphasis on the technical, marketing, business and community development aspects of the sector. For more information about the Network please visit www.gbcn.ca. In 2006 the GBCN was successful in its grant application to the Trillium Foundation to create a new local culture Web site. Emma Jane Hogbin (xtrinsic) was contracted to complete the evaluation and plan for the new site. Ms. Hogbin specializes in community knowledge management, open source software and Web development. Additional information is available from: www.xtrinsic.com.

In order to understand the abilities and concerns of the GBCN members (and future members) Ms. Hogbin has attended regular GBCN meetings and the GBCN media announcement of Trillium funding at the Bruce County Museum; she has also participated in GBCN's on-line discussion forum, the cultural mapping workshop in Hagersville, Ontario, the information session hosted by the Mississauga Arts Council for the newly formed Arts Councils' Network and the City of Owen Sound's public meeting for its Master Cultural Plan.

This report summarizes the exploration of local and culture and attempts to synthesize the rural experience with the best practices offered by urban culture organizations. Contained in the report is an evaluation of current culture Web site best practices, a survey on *Internet Use by the Creative Sector* and a proposed development plan for the new GBCN Web site.

Section One: Evaluation of Existing Web Sites and Capabilities

This report is based on both a critical look at other community arts Web sites and an on-line survey: *Internet Use by the Creative Sector*. Unfortunately no rural arts-specific Web sites came to the forefront in the search for a “best practices” community culture Web site. The experience presented by each of the five sites evaluated relies either on a high speed Internet connection or a dial-up Internet connection and incredible patience.

Studying best practices to find commonalities is important in the evaluation and planning stages of a new Web site. It will often uncover what a Web site visitor is used to seeing. In addition to studying what already exists it is critical to ask the end user what they hope the Web site will enable them to do.¹ Stakeholder engagement extends beyond Web site development and culture-specific industries: it is also very common in Canadian resource-dependent industries.²

In order to understand the abilities and concerns of the GBCN members (and future members) Ms. Hogbin attended GBCN meetings, the GBCN media announcement of Trillium funding at the Bruce County Museum, a cultural mapping workshop in Hagersville, Ontario, the City of Owen Sound’s public meeting for its Master Cultural Plan, and a information session hosted by the Mississauga Arts Council for the newly formed Arts Councils’ Network.

Internet Use by the Creative Sector: An On-line Survey

Methodology

The survey was developed by xtrinsic and vetted by the GBCN Steering Committee and current members of the GBCN discussion mailing list. The questions were designed to capture the current technical capabilities of culture workers in the Grey-Bruce region.

Xtrinsic drafted a media release for the Steering Committee and created version of the same for individual artists and culture organizations. These two notices are attached as an appendix to this document. The same mailing list from the December 2005 survey was used. This included approximately 200 email addresses (222 with duplications and 26 bounced email addresses). In addition to these email addresses Ms. Hogbin added her own culture-specific personal contacts. These included: bookshops, arts educators in the public school system, a tattoo shop and other professional and hobby artists. The email

1 Back to the User: Creating User-Focused Websites http://www.digital-web.com/articles/creating_user_focused_websites/

2 Stakeholder Engagement: A Canadian Perspective http://www.sfu.ca/cscd/cli/resources_stakeholder.htm

included a request to forward the message to all potentially interested individuals. Andrew Goss forwarded the email to the Art Town mailing list—some of whom were a duplicate from the original mailing and some of whom were new. A need for a comprehensive listing and definition of what constitutes a “culture organization” became apparent during this process. (Is a custom-painted Harley a work of art? Is a tattoo? Does something need to be “art” to be included in our community culture?) Two media appearances resulted from the media release that was distributed. Emma Hogbin and Judith Glover were interviewed by Channel 6; and Joan Chandler was interviewed for radio.

The survey opened to the GBCN discussion mailing list November 2, 2006. The public request for participation was emailed November 24, 2006. The survey was closed to additional responses on December 31, 2006. No incentive was offered to complete the 2006 survey. In the December 2005 survey, however, all respondents were entered in a random draw for a bundle of prizes donated by area arts, cultural and heritage groups. Response rates for the 2006 survey with no incentive were lower (only 30 responses were received for the two months of November and December 2006) than the 2005 survey (157 responses). Although the response rate was much lower than last year’s survey, this group does represent a significant number of culture workers who are active and interested in the development of the new Web site.

Key Findings

- 55% of respondents do not live in a town or city and self-identified as living in “the country” as opposed to being “a townie.” 38% of respondents are limited to dial-up Internet connections for their primary Internet connection.
- Respondents have limited experience with Internet-based discussion tools such as discussion mailing lists (10%) and discussion boards (0%); however, over half have used the Internet for on-line purchasing (52%) and Web sites that require a login (38%).
- Even though more asynchronous communication tools did not rate high in the “have you used the following” question, 24% of respondents said they have used some form of synchronous on-line chat or telephone system or that they “live on-line.”
- About half of the respondents have committed to keeping their hardware up-to-date; and just over half (62%) are committed to keeping their software up-to-date. Care should be taken to create a Web site which is usable to the remaining 38% who do not keep their software up-to-date.
- In the written comments nearly all respondents addressed concerns with some kind of usability or

accessibility (cognitive or visual) issue as a reason to *not* return to a Web site.

- A Culture Calendar (with links) and Culture Directory (with links) were the two most requested Web site features. Additional feature requests included: discussion and networking; barter and advertising opportunities; and support materials for marketing.
- 38% of respondents have used some kind of Web-based system where a login was required and personalization was permitted. These are likely related to the use of e-commerce sites such as Chapters or eBay. 51% of respondents have purchased something on-line and many e-commerce sites force you to create a password-protected account to make a purchase.

“Best Practices” Community Culture Web Site

The Web sites selected were chosen for three reasons. Each of the Web sites:

1. is “new” Web sites and/or have a dedicated IT team who are responsible for adding new and in-demand features;
2. is a Canadian Web site focused on promoting local culture;
3. contains components that were considered “desirable” in the 2005 GBCN survey.

The URLs were obtained through conversation with GBCN members and Arts Council representatives from other regions. The *Internet Use by the Creative Sector* survey also requested URLs of interest.

Criteria: What Makes a Good Web Site?

As part of the survey, individuals were asked if there were any other Web sites they liked and felt were relevant to the design of the GBCN Web site. Few of the Web sites selected included arts-specific. Ebay.com and Chapters.ca were both mentioned twice. In general the sites selected were fast to load, information-rich, and low in graphic embellishments. This is not surprising considering the two most common complaints were that Web sites are (1) too slow to load, and (2) are too cluttered. When making the decisions to *not* return to a Web site most said that it was related to usability, clarity of information or legibility (50% of responses). As an interesting note: two responses specifically mentioned the *lack of clarity with on-site instructions* as being a reason to *not* return.

To be a successful Web site the GBCN must be easy-to-use. The current GBCN Web site uses minimal to no graphics and relies almost entirely on large blocks of background colours. All responses to the survey indicated the survey page loaded as fast (44%) or faster (55%) than sites typically visited. Graphics should be used intentionally so as not to inappropriately increase download times. A speed test performed

through the third-party software available at [WebSiteOptimization.com](http://www.websiteoptimization.com) shows the survey page requires the following download times:

Connection Type	Connection Rate	Download Time	Download+30%
Dial-up	14.4K to 56K	70.0 seconds to 18.30 seconds	91.0 seconds to 23 seconds
Residential or small business “high speed”	ISDN 128K	5.88 seconds	7.64 seconds
Commercial Network	T1 1.44Mbps	0.88 seconds	1.14 seconds

Source³: <http://www.websiteoptimization.com/services/analyze/wso.php?url=http://gbcn.ca/node/4>

The GBCN Web site should aim to stay within 30% of these times for its slowest/largest pages (using the same testing suite).

Relevant Sites

A list of arts-related Web sites with community features was sought out. The following represent current and best practices. Although all five are Canadian they are all situated in large urban centres. It is expected that most of these sites are created with the broadband Internet visitor in mind. They should be used with caution as a model for development due to prohibitively large download times for Web site visitors using a dial-up Internet connection.

1. GuelphArts (www.guelpharts.ca)
2. LondonArts (www.londonarts.ca)
3. Markham Arts Council (www.markhamartscouncil.com)
4. Terminus1525 (www.terminus1525.ca)
5. The Loop (www.theloop.ca)

These sites are specifically identified as they are known to xtrinsic as having been recently created; include rich community involvement; and/or have been highlighted by GBCN members as being sites of interest. There are many additional Arts Councils with active Web sites including (but not limited to) Arts Ottawa East (www.artsoe.ca), the Council for the Arts in Ottawa (www.arts-ottawa.on.ca), and the Toronto Arts Council (www.torontoartscouncil.org).

³ Source page is no longer a valid URL as the survey page has been taken off-line to prevent further submissions.

Common Features

At their core the first four Web sites have similar features. The Loop, being a commercial community calendar, does *not* include all of the features but does have the most sophisticated calendar layout and search options out of all five of the Web sites selected.

- calendar of events (may include: exhibits, call for entries and other date-based items)
- news system (may include: upcoming exhibits, call for entries, other date-based items and a summary of past events)
- bright and attractive design
- directory of artists and organizations

In each of the sites with a culture directory the information is available without having to log in. In the case of the three arts councils full contact information for both individuals and organizations is included. Although it was not clear if individuals had granted permission for this information to be listed there were “login” or “edit my information” options on each of the London Arts, Guelph Arts and Terminus1525 Web sites. Each of these three sites also had a privacy policy. The Markham Arts Council Web site appeared to have neither a privacy policy nor a way for individuals to edit their personal contact information.

Categories and Key Words

Each of the three arts council Web site uses categories to sort its directory. Terminus1525 does not restrict its participants to predetermined categories. Instead they allow their artists to choose key words (“tags”) to describe themselves and their work. There are advantages to both approaches.

- London Arts: Arts Education, Cinemas, Commercial Galleries, Crafts, Dance, Design, Educational Institutions, Electronic/Digital Arts, Foundations, Libraries, Literature, Multi-Cultural, Museums/Galleries, Music, Other, Resources, Suppliers, Theatre, and Visual Arts
- Markham Arts Council: Visual/Crafts, Performing, Festivals and Events, Heritage, Literary, Friends and Corporate. Each of these categories is further divided by its related disciplines.
 - Visual/Crafts: Artists, Crafts, Photographers, Sculptors
 - Performing: Dance, Drama, Multi-discipline, Music
 - Festivals and Events: Events, Festivals
 - Literary: Poets, Writers
 - Friends: Associations and Friends
 - Heritage and Corporate are not divided into subcategories

- Guelph Arts: Music, Dance, Theatre, Visual Arts, Literary Arts, Media Arts, Heritage. Each of these categories is further divided into its related disciplines. The music category contains 29 different subcategories from Kindermusik to Opera! Dance contains 11 subcategories (from belly to tap). Theatre contains 14 subcategories (from busking to ventriloquism). Visual Arts contains 26 subcategories (book arts to wood working). Literary Arts contains 11 subcategories (editing to storytelling). Media Arts contains 11 subcategories (cinematography to radio). Heritage contains 14 subcategories (agriculture to religious heritage).
- Terminus1525 does not have preset categories. Instead they sort their directory by Web site activity. Those who have contributed most recently to the Web site appear at the beginning of the list. Terminus1525 also allows its artists to enter their own “tags” or key words. Unlike categories these key words are not restricted or prescriptive. The artist may choose the words they feel best represent themselves and their art. Of course it does mean that “painter” and “watercolour artist” end up in two different lists. The advantage of this level of specificity is when a local potter is looking for a raku fire pit and not all potters.

In addition to their prescribed categories the London Arts Web site also uses three main types to sort its directory: organizations, venues and artists. The GBCN may wish to add a fourth type of entry based on “community.” Additional information on how a “community” type could be implemented is included in Building a Culture Directory for the GBCN Web site (page 12).

Directory Components

Each of the Web sites gave a slightly different set of options for what could be included in its directory. The three arts council Web sites had similar contact-based information (address, email, phone, URL) whereas Terminus1525 did not have contact-based information.

For each person, organization or venue in the directory the following contact information was available:

- Guelph Arts: Contact Information (address, email, phone, fax, URL), artist’s statement, photo/media gallery (multiple images) and privacy policy.
- London Arts: Bio, contact information (address, email, telephone, web), one image, last updated date, related categories, map and the artist’s events (clicking on the link typically leads to a blank page: only showing the link if there were a related event would be easier for dial-up Internet connections).
- Markham Arts Council: Address, contact, phone, email, Web site, description, logo or image.
- Terminus1525, being an on-line art-sharing community, allows its members to upload a large selection of images. However, it is very limited in terms of the contact information listed. The

public version of the directory allows: a personal icon, age, location, member-since (date the person joined), uploaded artwork, blog (on-line journal), bio, and an off-site link to the artist's Web site.

Section Two: A Plan to Create a Rural Culture Network

The steps below identify the requirements to creating a rural culture network. In addition to these technical steps the branding guide will need to be applied to the Web site; as well as training Community Moderators and Network Members. The focus for training will be on the Community Moderators; however, interested Network Members will be encouraged to participate in the training as well. Wherever possible an effort will be made to create a Web site which is accessible, usable *and* machine readable. This last option recognizes the valuable work that is done by other projects and seeks to incorporate existing data wherever possible.

Basic Web Site

Based on the December 2005 survey, it was estimated that most features required by the GBCN could be met by Drupal (an open source software package). To complete the November-December 2006 survey the gbcn.ca domain name was registered and the Drupal software package was installed and configured. The Web site currently contains four pages: About, Document Library (for digital documents that are commonly referenced by the group), Initiatives and Mailing List information. There has also been some time-sensitive information included (specifically the *Internet Use by the Creative Sector* survey and the RFP for Branding Guide).

Drupal is an *open source content management* system. “Open source” means that the software does not have a licensing fee for each installation and the underlying code can be legally changed and manipulated by Web developers. This is unlike a proprietary system where you must pay a per-install licensing fee and are not permitted to customize the software code to suit your needs. By using an open source system GBCN can focus its budget on training Network Members and Community Monitors to use the system effectively. The alternative to open source software is proprietary software which is developed specifically for the client. Typically the copyright for a proprietary software package belongs either to its developers or to the company who commissioned the software. If the commissioning company owns the software it means the software developers cannot reuse any portion of their work; and if software developers own the copyright it means the purchaser is paying a licensing fee to duplicate a system which already exists. In many cases neither option is either ideal or appropriate. In addition to the question of ownership proprietary software packages are typically more expensive to implement as there is both the licensing (or development fee) as well as the configuration and training fee. When using an open source software package the fees are typically restricted to configuration/customization and training.

“Content management system” is typically shortened to “CMS” and refers to a software package which is

used to add, edit and delete text and images from a Web site. A mature CMS will include a user management system whereby each individual using the system has their own unique password, instead of a simple group password. This is more secure for organizations with a rotating roster of volunteers and/or organizations where the staff is not completely stable (for example: contract workers or seasonal employees). A full content management system will also have a number of other add-on features which improve work flow and communication. Typical add-on features include a group calendar, messaging/contact system, search engine and e-commerce packages.

Drupal has a track record of being secure and easy-to-use. It uses common Web technologies which are available on most Web servers. All of the features that are needed for the GBCN Web site are available as extension modules on the core Drupal system (currently there are over 370 modules available for the Drupal system). More information about Drupal is available from www.drupal.org.

Culture Directory

It is not surprising the Culture Directory ranked high in this year's survey. A Culture Directory was identified by 77% of respondents as "very important" in the 2005 survey. There are two approaches to creating a Culture Directory: create a directory of all known organizations and individuals based on existing resources such as public business directories and the yellow pages; or allow interested individuals, organizations and venues to place themselves into the directory. A combination of the two is also possible. The first option will take time to research and compile and some businesses may not want their information presented in a directory without their consent. An opt-in model (the second option) is more likely to create a resource that is up to date and which represents our active community of artists, businesses and organizations.

With both a researched culture directory and an opt-in culture directory the problem of stale data will arise. A "last updated" date stamp should be placed on all directory entries so that Web site visitors can be made aware of potentially out of date information. In addition to the technology commitment made by the London Arts Web site they have also made a commitment to updated content through regular, automated notifications to all directory participants. If there is no response to the automated notification the London Arts Council confirms the information is up-to-date with a phone call. If the phone number is invalid and there is no response to the email the directory item is removed. This model should be considered by the GBCN only if sufficient staff or volunteer resources can be dedicated to making the follow-up phone calls that are often necessary.

To achieve greater participation in an opt-in directory careful attention must be paid to the usability of the site and to provide templates or detailed forms to complete wherever possible. Small incentives, such as a

more prominent placement in the directory, may also help to improve the number of listings in the directory.⁴ It may also make sense to allow individuals using the directory to suggest new template options. For example: potters may be interested in plotting kiln locations and firing schedules onto a map for visiting summer artists.

The London Arts directory offers three types of directory entries: artists, organizations and venues. To this list the GBCN may wish to add “community” as a fourth type of entry. It could allow Web site visitors to browse the directory through a map or an index of community names. Some communities, such as Port Elgin and Southampton, are so close they are virtually the same (and some cases are considered the same community through the new, amalgamated Saugeen Shores). A good map-based navigation system would need to consider both “here” and “close to here.” Directory items should include the name of the community with a static map for reference. GBCN should consider incorporating an artist map of Grey and Bruce on its Web site. Future development map-based navigation development may include integration with OpenStreetMap (cultural mapping potential), GoogleMaps (point-to-point driving directions) or Geocaching points of interest (especially for local “tourists”).

Culture Calendar

A Culture Calendar was identified in the 2005 survey and 88% of respondents to the 2005 survey felt that a Culture Calendar was “very important.” Without being prompted with possible solutions in answer to “What could the Grey Bruce Cultural Network Web site do for you when it is finished?” 52% of those who entered an answer in the 2006 survey included a request for some form of calendar or news-based system. There are already several community calendars in the Grey Bruce region that are not meeting the needs of the local culture community. These Web sites include, but are not limited to:

- The City of Owen Sound’s Events: <http://www.osaic.com/index.cfm?member=events>
- Bruce County Tourism: <http://www.naturalretreat.com/events.cfm>
- Events at Grey Roots: <http://www.greyroots.com/programs-events/events/>
- Summerfolk: <http://summerfolk.org/announcements.html>
- Tom Thomson Memorial Art Gallery: <http://www.tomthomson.org/whatson.cfm>
- Bruce County Museum: <http://www.brucemuseum.ca/news.php>

Each of these calendars represents a different software package. None of which offer an obvious way to share events with other systems (bulk import or bulk export). These options may be available at the administrative level. Each of the four arts-specific calendars from London Arts, Guelph Arts, Markham Arts Council and The Loop appear to have the same limitations. Each of these systems attempts to

⁴http://www.useit.com/alertbox/participation_inequality.html

capture the local culture and yet is limited to a person's time to input the data into each calendar individually and remember to check back on a regular basis for new events.

Events in the GBCN must be download-able to personal calendars so that individuals can better plan their time without the possibility of transcription errors from the GBCN Web site to their own calendar system. The GBCN Culture Calendar must also provide some kind of monitoring feature so that interested individuals are notified of new events. At this time there are built options to allow Web site visitors to download a version of the GBCN Culture Calendar that can be imported into MSOutlook or iCal (Mac-only). Web site visitors may also use a Web-based or desktop news feed reader to be notified of new events.

The GBCN's Culture Calendar will need to offer several levels of customization including: location of event, type of culture activity, date range, sponsoring organization and venue. For example: visitors to the Web site might want to be able to limit their list of events to, "theatre in Owen Sound in December" This would retrieve any events within the Theatre category that were taking place at any of the schools (college, high school or elementary school) or professional venues such as the Roxy and the Bayshore, or churches, or It would exclude choral performances in Meaford in January.

In addition to these personal event planning tools GBCN must consider how it can be a resource to other community calendars and how it may benefit from other existing calendars. Drupal offers its calendar events in two different machine-readable formats: iCal and RSS (Really Simple Syndication—a machine readable and sharing-friendly file format). Drupal is currently able to provide a summary of titles and dates for any other calendar that offers an RSS version of its events. Planning to fully merge events from an outside Web site with different software applications would require a significant amount of additional programming time. Considering current local culture calendars have no known data export options, and there is no confirmed willingness to re-program existing software packages for existing community calendars to provide events in a machine-readable format, the GBCN would be wise to not invest in creating a bulk importing tool at this time. GBCN should, however, encourage other related Web sites with calendar features to at least offer an RSS version of their events. These events could be summarized beside the main GBCN Culture Calendar with very little additional work and could provide a revenue stream if the other calendars were interested in paying a small fee to attract visitors to their site for further information about the events featured in their calendar.

Announcement and Discussion Mailing Lists

Spam email has become an increasingly large problem especially over the last year. Internet Service Providers (ISP) are doing their best to stay on top of the current flood of junk email; however, email

communication is realistically more difficult than it was a year ago. Out of all of the communication tools listed in the survey, mailing lists still ranked the highest out of each of the forms of community communication (10% for discussion mailing lists; and 17% for announcement mailing lists). Although it is not a perfect solution it appears mailing lists are still the best Internet-based solution to keep people connected.

To date the focus on GBCN email-based communication has been exclusively on the discussion mailing list. The announcement mailing list will need to have a single (or very select) group of individuals who determine whether or not each piece of mail ought to be sent to the whole group. This task could be assigned to the Community Moderators. Creating a newsletter with a set publication schedule (e.g. monthly or quarterly) might help to increase subscriptions as individuals signing up would know exactly how much additional mail to expect from the mailing list before joining.

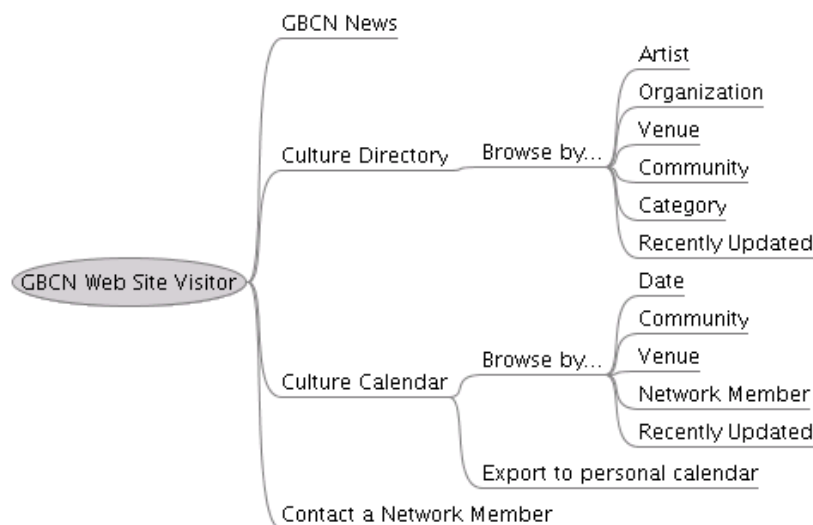
Types of Visitors and Levels of Interaction

The potential for three main types of visitors was identified during this process: network member, community moderator and “anonymous” Web site visitor. In addition to these three roles an additional “Web site administrator” will be necessary to perform routine security system upgrades and ensure all functions are running as designed.

The responses to the survey appeared to be from individuals acting on their own behalf (as opposed to on behalf of an organization). There has been some discussion around Organization members and how the GBCN would extend its membership to the individuals in the Organization. If this type of membership did develop it might be necessary to flag “Network Members” as either “Group” or “Individual” for accounting (grant or otherwise) purposes. The survey also raised one concern around cost and that this site would hopefully *not* be “asking for ad money” *and* two other respondents expressed an interest in being able to advertise their business on the new Web site (they did not mention whether or not they would be willing to pay for ad space). This survey did not ask any specific questions about advertising or membership fees. Future surveys should address the question of advertising and Web site fees.

“Anonymous” Web site visitor

At this point any visitor to the Web site may *choose* to create an account. There are no benefits to creating an account and no additional information is visible when registered. However, as the group continues to grow and features are added to the site there may be additional information accessible to Network Members that is not accessible to “Anonymous” Web site visitors.

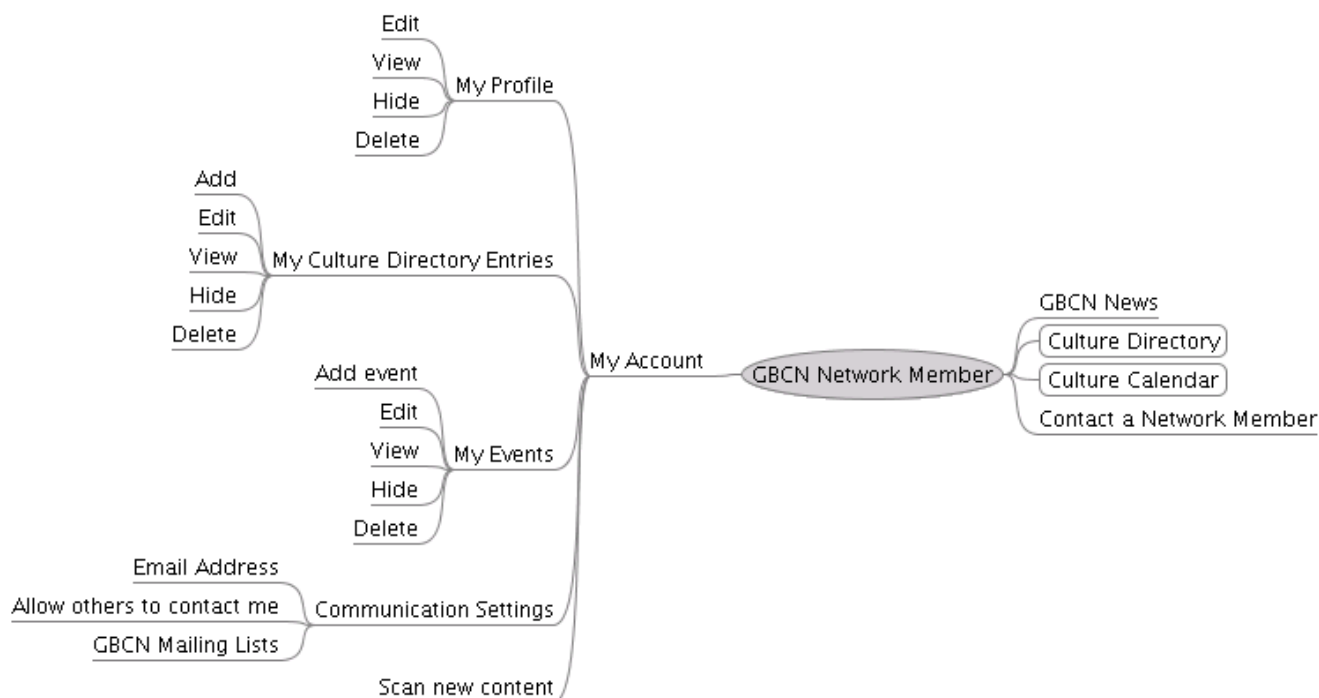


Network Member

The Network Members will be the core of the new Web site. They will have the ability to personalize their own information for inclusion in the site’s Culture Directory (including at least one photo, a brief description or biography and links to their own Web site) and post upcoming events in a Culture Calendar. Network Member activity will be connected to their profile. Network Members will have the ability to view items according to who has added them to the site. For example: visitors to the Web site could select “more events added by Susan.” When visiting the site Network Members will be able to use the tracker tool to scan new content. In addition to the on-site tracker, Network Members will be able to subscribe to various parts of the Web site using a Web-based or desktop RSS news feed reader (described on page 14) to be notified of new content. It is not recommended that the GBCN use an automated email-based notification system to notify Network Members new Web site content. This is due to the potentially overwhelming network traffic that could be created by sending out individual emails every time content is added. Instead it is recommended that Community Moderators prepare a summary of new events and

send it to either the discussion mailing list or the announcement mailing list as appropriate.

The ability to interact with other members was highlighted by several survey respondents; however, experience with communication tools was very low (discussion boards 0%; and email discussion lists 10%). It is recommended that the discussion mailing list be continued but that additional interactive communication features *not* be added to the Web site until after Network Members have demonstrated active and consistent use of the Culture Calendar and Culture Directory.

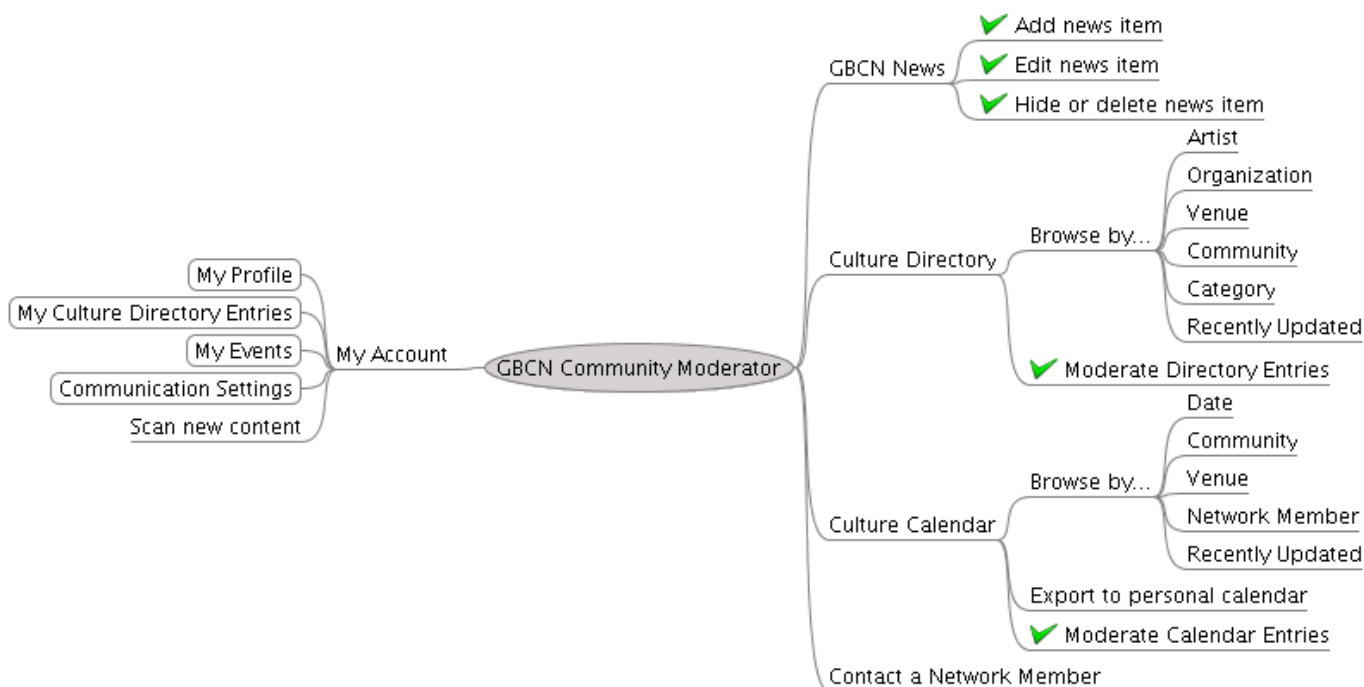


In addition to all of the viewing options a Web Site Visitor has, a GBCN Network Member can also create new content (outlined on the left side of the flow chart). Most Network Members are expected to have only their own Profile in the Culture Directory; however, some Network Members may represent a second (or third) group as well. Network Members should be encouraged to *only* add additional Culture Directory entries if they are the primary contact person for the organization.

Community Moderator

Community Moderators are essentially Network Members with additional capabilities and responsibilities. These individuals will be trained by the GBCN on appropriate community interaction (including how to define, identify and moderate “questionable” content) and minor technical support issues (for example: lost passwords, new account creation). At the December 2006 GBCN meeting it was suggested that high schools be approached to see if students are interested in being Community Moderators as part of their community service requirements.

In addition to all of the functions that a Network Member can perform, a Community Moderator can also perform the tasks represented by a green check mark.



Appendix 1: Request for Survey Participation

Request to Individuals (sent November 24, 2006)

----- please distribute this email far and wide! -----

G'day!

The Grey Bruce Cultural Network (GBCN) wants to hear from YOU about what's important to YOU! The Grey Bruce Cultural Network is designing a new Web site which allow creative people to network and share ideas.

THE WEB SITE: <http://www.gbcn.ca>

The goal is to make a Web site that is accessible, usable and useful for its members. We have launched the new site with a survey. Instead of the GBCN telling you what will be useful to you, we want you to tell us about yourself and how you use the Internet. This will help the GBCN to see what community features should be built into the site, and what options are inappropriate. The survey is easy and should take fewer than 10 minutes to complete!

THE SURVEY: <http://gbcn.ca/node/4>

In December 2005 the GBCN released the results from its first survey. In the report the culture community was clear that a Web site was needed. You can read the report on-line at:

http://gbcn.ca/files/Brooks-Joiner_SurveyOfGreyBruce.pdf

We've got the Web site started now we need YOU to tell us what is important. We look forward to your feedback.

The Grey-Bruce Cultural Network (GBCN) is a new, developing regional arts-and-culture service organization in Grey Bruce, organized by regional artists and arts-and-culture professionals. Its purpose is to encourage and support arts-and-culture people, projects and enterprises throughout the region, with a heavy emphasis on the technical, marketing, business and community development aspects of the sector.

----- please distribute this request far and wide! -----



Email to Media

NEW GREY-BRUCE CULTURAL WEBSITE WANTS YOUR SAY

The GREY BRUCE CULTURAL NETWORK announces the launch of its new web site at www.gbcn.ca. The site aims to build new connections and spread the word about the vibrant culture and heritage sector across the entire bi-county region. It's being created using an interactive ³stone soup² approach to web site building. Instead of telling people what they need, the web site asks for feedback through a tech-usage survey.

Demand has started to pour in for a web site that's easy-to-use, fast for dial-up Internet connections, rich with content and that will ease social networking in the upcoming winter months. So far replies have come in from advocates, artists, businesses and organizations that work in the field. All feedback is welcome.

“Our challenges for a rural organization are very different than those tackled by urban communities,” says web developer Emma Hogbin. “In order to work together, we have to deal with long distance phone calls and snow in the winter. Sharing large, digital documents can also be frustrating for those limited to dial-up Internet connections.”

This is the second survey conducted by the GBCN. A survey completed in 2005 showed that 93% of local arts workers wanted a local service organization for their sector, and 83% of the local cultural community wanted a web site to help connect its constituents. Based on that finding, the GBCN, with the support of Sheatre, obtained funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for the website project which is now under way.

The Grey-Bruce Cultural Network (GBCN) is a new, developing regional arts-and-culture service organization in Grey Bruce, organized by regional artists and arts-and-culture professionals. Its purpose is to encourage and support arts-and-culture people, projects and enterprises throughout the region, with an emphasis on the technical, marketing, business and community development aspects of the sector.

For more information, contact sheatre@sheatre.com.

- 30 -

Anne Frost, 519 372 1870

Joan Chandler, 519 534 3039

Appendix 2: Survey Results

1. Do you live within the Grey-Bruce region?	Responses	
Yes	28	96.55%
No	1	3.45%

2. How do you spend your time on the Internet each week (choose the best fit)	Responses	
I only check my emails	0	0.00%
I check my emails and read a little bit of news (e.g. The Sun Times, the Globe and Mail or other news sites)	0	0.00%
I also use the Internet to do a little research (e.g. upcoming events or comparison shopping or vacation planning)	19	65.52%
I do all of the above and chat with friends on-line and/or I have used Web cams and VoIP	5	17.24%
Realistically? I live on-line.	5	17.24%

3. How quickly did this page load for you?	Responses	
Faster than most pages I visit	16	55.17%
About the same as most pages I visit	13	44.83%
Slower than most pages I visit	0	0.00%

4. How fast is your main Internet connection?	Responses	
High speed	18	62.07%
Dial-up	11	37.93%
I also have access to a "high speed" Internet connection.	4	13.79%

5. Are you a "townie" or do you live in a rural area?	Responses	
I am a townie.	13	44.83%
I live in the country	16	55.17%

6. How old is your computer?	Responses	
less than a year old	3	10.34%
1-2 years old	12	41.38%
3-5 years old	11	37.93%
my computer is a dinosaur	3	10.34%

7. Has the software on your computer ever been upgraded?	Responses	
No (or not sure)	4	13.79%
Yes, but it's been more than a year.	7	24.14%
Yes, software on my computer is updated at least once a year.	18	62.07%

8. Have you ever used any of the following on-line tools	Responses	
Email Announcement newsletter (read-only)	5	17.24%
Email-based Discussion List (for this system you only need your email program)	3	10.34%
Web-based discussion board or BBS (sometimes called a "Forum" or "Bulletin Board"--for this system you have to log into a Web site)	0	0.00%
Internet "chat" (such as MSN or ICQ)	0	0.00%
On-line events calendar	9	31.03%
Gallery or photo sharing Web site	9	31.03%
Search engines	16	55.17%
Personalization (registration and login)	11	37.93%
Survey and voting tools	10	34.48%
E-commerce (purchased something on-line)	15	51.72%

9. What are your favourite Web sites and why?

These are my most commonly visited sites:

http://weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca/city/pages/on-7_metric_e.html

(yes it's weather, but it's fast and concise)

<http://news.google.ca/>

(again, fast and concise for a good overview of what's happening, but links to in depth)

<https://www.cibconline.cibc.com/>

(easy to navigate, interactive, secure, so I do most of my banking here)

<http://www.metacritic.com>

(nice graphics, fast source for reviews of movies, DVDs etc., but linked to the in-depth source)

two less frequently visited that fill a real need:

<http://www.flickr.com/> (true interactivity, public and private accesses)

<http://www.fabprefab.com/fabfiles/home.htm> (simple first page but a huge site)

artists and writers magazines - tips and competitions

At home: fan fiction reading sites, amazon.ca or chapters.ca, futureshop, web banking, sites for fav authors etc.

At Work: our website, other museum sites, research, ebay, generalogy sites, municipal sites, chamber site

at this point I don't use the internet enough to have favs

Chapters- e commerce..easy to use

Expedia same reason

CPUsed because it's so darned functional and straightforward. Am temporarily on dial-up so I don't use the net much.

Will do so more with wireless, which is coming soon.

Depends on the day and what i'm looking for

I like educational web sites such as health and wildlife sites.

I use it for recipies and to get creative ideas.

I like sites that load quickly without flash-and-dash, and with the choice to use in text-only format. Because my work involves on-line research, I need efficiency rather than embelleishments.

makersgallery.com because I am on it

woodsight.net because i run it

my favourites are content-based

mechanically, the Palestine Chronicle has the fastest Print page call-up which I like

Our website: www.osartistsco-op.com because it is very well done, there are no annoying pop-ups or spam attached, we have lots of interesting links, we receive lots of positive feedback and it is done in-house.

simple, elegant, soft backgrounds - easy on the eyes

uncluttered

quick to load

sites that have games...and sites for kids as I have an 8 year old.

I also am an avid fan of e-bay

9. What are your favourite Web sites and why?

Sorry -- can't comment on this one -- having a brain cramp as I type!!!!

Toronto Star - news.
C-Net - downloads and info.

VVORK great images, survey of contemporary art
[Report Note: Web searches reveal several potential URLs for this site. It is unclear which site they are referring to.
Probably: www.vvork.com]

wikipedia - quick source of useable info on ANYTHING and links

www.tobermory.org - nicely done
www.castlebluff.com (my group's web site)

www.voyageurstorytelling.ca for its wit and keen insight, (also it's ours)
CBC news
the weather

www.wadadameanslove.com because i designed it and it's my own website that bring me a income.
www.brownswoodrecordings.com another site i designed
myspace.com/wadadameanslove because its easy to use. you meet people and can keep up todote.
apple.com because it's clear and easy to use
habitat.net it's simple and fun
ikea.com so much info thats clear / creativereview.co.uk new talent

10. What could the Grey Bruce Cultural Network Web site do for you when it is finished?
A resource for services, materials, arts workers and (must have) event / information postings. Barter possibilities (Would be nice if)? Another must have is an on-line forum to share information and seek answers to technical questions.
A resource for what's going on in the area culturally. A place to put information about an event -- and a place to find that information. A listing of current contacts for various cultural organizations with phone numbers, emails etc. (Limited access) Links to web sites: Must have: for all organizations Would be nice: for all individuals who have sites.
ability to share stories with images and maps, updating them will parallel discussion groups good links matrix by categories and themes cross-indexed; links to all cultural creators and conservers We need "Common Purpose" pages such as "Cultural Policy" and "Municipal Cultural Planning in Grey Bruce" We need dedicated pages for each discipline as well as "Common Ground" multi-disciplinary and cross disciplinary pages including a grouping "Telling Our Stories"
BBS other folks Check for upcoming events (and podding -pod casts - too)
Be a centralized portal for culture and arts news and events.
be THE SOURCE for information about local artists and arts/cultural/heritage events as well as information about arts-related municipal, provincial and federal policy development and events, initiatives, etc.
It could provide a forum for artists to interact and network, it could provide an events calendar for cultural events, it could provide cultural business related information
events calendar; features on happenings; critical blog
hopefully let me know what is going on in the Grey Bruce Cultural Community
I am looking for promote my craft. I make one-of-a-kind and photo handbags and currently work out of my home. I need away to promote my bags and connect with other artists in the community. I am creating my own web site but think that it would be great to be part of a collective creative voice for the grey bruce area.
information, promotion, communication
link me to up and coming art shows and links.
link to current creative events
link to events of interest, provide data on others working in my field, promote works and events involving cultural sector
list events and activities occurring in the region (events-calendar) option for residents to suggest cultural and art events option for artists to advertise option for local businesses to advertise - arts and culture can be a reason for people to visit the area and while here they need other service - present the area collectively as a full-service area
list my name and websites
list my name and websites with maybe a couple of images of my work

10. What could the Grey Bruce Cultural Network Web site do for you when it is finished?
Promote artistic and cultural enterprises in Grey-Bruce; a marketing tool Provide a detailed profile of who's out there and what they are doing, also contact information; a research tool Forums & lists are good, if people use them, but mostly they don't
Promote local art, co ops and galleries
provide a good information platform for local interest that I can access without having to search for hours on the internet
Provide a link to our website - must have Provide a list of art events including all the studio tours - must have Advertise our events - would be nice Ask us for ad money - I really hope this site isn't
provide comprehensive current information on what's happening locally and the opportunity for dialogue on common issues
Provide visitors information on the museum and our programs, make it easier to find the answers to their questions and make our area more inviting to visit.
put me in touch with LOTS of people in my region who have common interests; resource; marketing tool
tell me who does what, where and when

11. What are your complaints?
- i dislike snazzy features that take forever to download and are irrelevant to the information i'm looking for on the website - out of date information on events
Art supplies locally. I miss Jim's shop.
hard to follow instructions complicated log-ins
I'm a designer and artist from London UK so my eye looks for a little more cutting edge or creative design. I probably would not return just from the the layout and the way it looks. Not saying its bad design just not what I'm trained to look for.
it would be nice if this website was maintained for accuracy and that I could consistently rely upon it for up-to-date information
my feet ache
none
none -- you are doing great kid
not sure at this point
out of date info
also- big beef about bad grammar or misuse of language and punctuation [same as I feel about wandering apostrophes in print].
Sites a little 'uninspiring' visually at this point. You might want to have a mention of how this information is going to be used for "privacy issues".
slow cumbersome sites
slow loading on any site ,lack of pertinent info no links to galleries or artists or suppliers
some web sites redirect you and can be time consuming and aggravating..sites that don't answer your original search...and sites that slam you with pop-up ads CONSTANTLY
Spam; Inability to open some sites (our computers fault)
Splash pages, flash pages. I want the basic information in a simple format first. Then it can get deeper and slower.
Too many graphics up front.
Tedious/difficult/confusing navigation.
The whole internet world is getting very cluttered: The forum idea is proving an illusion: most people whose views we want don't participate. It takes time of course. But it's a good idea. Maybe it will catch on.
too complex and therefore too slow to load through dial-up; too much on one page and/or poor site mapping
too much information

12. When you find a Web site that you hope you never have to use again, what is it about that Web site that you dislike?
- stupid backgrounds that take forever to load and don't add to the message - irrelevant pop-ups - confusing organization of information - can't find the answer i know should be there
download is too slow
instructions complicated - the site did not do what it said it would do - too many hoops to jump through to find the information I was looking for.
Its difficult to find what I want, the links aren't easy to see, it's too busy, there's music that I can't turn off, it takes too long to load, it doesn't have what I'm looking for when it should, the font is difficult to read
Links don't work; Difficult to read – graphically; Inadequate information; Advertising covers some of the website info.
mainly the pop-up advertisement, or most likely not enough information provided to satisfy my request.
not intuitive; difficult to use; slow to load
search engines -- nough said!!!! poor internal highways; crappy graphics
slow; not user friendly; not creative; not useful info
slow to load; disorganized; flashing/blinking text or images
slow, cryptic instructions, too many layers
slowness of loading and ads
too busy...too much text on one page or you have too many hoops to jump just to enter. Ones that don't make contact information easy to find.
too cumbersome, lots of ads, too many words, no WOW factor or relevant information
too difficult to navigate.
too long to load, contact information is buried, has music on it that plays automatically when you load it - if I want to hear let me chose to listen, is not up todate
too many graphics and gadgets that take too long to load
too much of too much: animation, distracting graphics, popup ads, after-links
Use of JavaScript/Flash/plugins Cluttered pages/difficult to read text
Usually too many visuals. I read web sites for content, not pictures.
Vague verbosity avoiding substance and clarity of direction to the desired goal

13. What did we forget to ask?
We are a little peace (sp on purpose) of heaven!!! how can I help spread the word to educators!!!!
The first panel of the Title/Photo panorama (which is great!!!) doesn't load. I get "ce Cultural Network"... This is on a Mac using Safari browser.
nothing I can think of...good job. Short and sweet
Mac or PC? We use Mac. I use PC at home. Do we sell on-line - NO.
Is this site for locals or for people from out of town looking for information?
In question re: internet use, a category for those who use the Web research as part of their work, e.g. writers and editors whose research goes way beyond shopping or vacation plans.
if there is 1 area that will make more people revisit what would that be?
How do you use the internet in your 'creative' pUrsuits?

14. Please add me to the _____ mailing list	Responses	
Discussion	13	44.83%
Announcement	17	58.62%

15. Your Community	Responses	
Annan	1	3.45%
Owen Sound (includes counts of Owen Sound and another region)	9	31.03%
Durham (Varney)	1	3.45%
Elmwood	1	3.45%
Georgian Bluffs	2	6.90%
Hanover	1	3.45%
Kemble	1	3.45%
Lake Charles, Wiarton, Oxenden and/or Big Bay region	2	6.90%
Meaford	2	6.90%
Northern Bruce Peninsula (Miller Lake area)	2	6.90%
The Highlands	1	3.45%
Saugeen Shores	1	3.45%
Southampton	2	6.90%
Tobermory	2	6.90%

Appendix 3: Request for Expressions of Interest – Branding Guide

Issued November 24, 2006

The Grey Bruce Cultural Network (GBCN) is seeking a graphic designer to develop a branding guide for its new organization.

The work is to be done during the first quarter of 2007, with deadlines to be negotiated between the Network and the successful candidate.

The deadline for receiving responses to this request for expressions of interest is Friday, January 5th, 2007.

Please respond to this request for expressions of interest by providing the Grey Bruce Cultural Network with:

- samples of your previous work, illustrating how you have met this sort of challenge before;
- your estimate of time you would need to do this work;
- and the fee you would be prepared to accept for the work, if you were the successful candidate.

The guide will include the following:

- logo
- colours and fonts
- graphic treatment for letterhead, press releases, business cards etc.
- suggestions on how to incorporate imagery from local artists into print documents released by the GBCN
- suggestions on Web site layout and incorporating imagery from local artists into Web pages

The successful candidate will work with appointed members of the GBCN. The branding guide will be applied to the GBCN's new Web site. The successful candidate will not be responsible for working directly on the Web site but will, however, be responsible for providing the logo, etc. to the Network in formats which can then be applied to the various functions noted in this document, including the Web site.

Please mail, courier or drop off your submission on or before Friday, January 5th, 2007 to:

Attention: Judith Glover, Roxy Theatre, Owen Sound ON