

Request for Proposals
Eastern Washington State Historical Society/
Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture
Web Development and Hosting
September 2008

OBJECTIVE

The Eastern Washington State Historical Society [hereafter called "AGENCY" or "EWSHS"] seeks a Web Development / Web Hosting company to:

1. Recode and migrate current Web site (www.northwestmuseum.org) content and pages to new server,
2. Provide Web hosting for newly coded site,
3. Provide bulk email solution,
4. Provide ftp access, podcasts, and other online functions,
5. Provide content management solution,
6. Provide ongoing development and support.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) solicits proposals from firms that develop and host high-traffic, content-rich web sites with database-driven content. The successful firm will prove that its product, services, and business plan best fit the AGENCY's long-term digital-asset-management and access plan, business plan, and budgetary needs. The AGENCY seeks to ensure longevity, focus, and solvency of vendor. Vendors are asked to provide information concerning business plan, ownership, staff expertise and longevity, solvency, years of web development specialization, years of web hosting, list of other clients to serve as reference, and information about future projects and programs.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

The Vendor must be licensed to do business in the State of Washington. The Vendor must have a minimum of five years of experience in providing database-driven web development and hosting solutions for mid- to large-size companies and institutions.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The period of performance of any contract resulting from this RFP is scheduled take place in two phases. Phase 1: migration of current site to new host, to begin on or about October 20, 2008 and to be completed before December 19, 2008. Phase 2: ongoing web hosting, development, and support.

Amendments extending the period of performance, if any, shall be at the sole discretion of the AGENCY. The AGENCY will re-negotiate contract extensions and system upgrades based on the biennial budget period of Washington State. The next biennium begins July 1, 2009.

ADA

The AGENCY complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

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A: BACKGROUND

A.1 Organization

The Eastern Washington State Historical Society (EWSHS) was founded in 1916 and chartered in 1918 by the Washington State legislature. It is a non-profit 501(c)(3) membership organization and a trustee agency for the State of Washington. It employs 55 full and part-time employees and 200 volunteers. The Society's mission is to actively engage all people in the appreciation of arts and culture through collections stewardship, exhibits and programs that educate and entertain.

A.2 Facility

At present, the EWSHS consists of two facilities on one campus in a mixed residential historic neighborhood – Spokane's historic Browne's Addition. The Museum facility consists of a building constructed in 1959, expanded in 1983, and remodeled between 1999 and 2001 during which time the facility was annexed to new underground exhibit galleries that link to a four story education and public event center. The original building houses the collection storage and the reading room of the Joel E. Ferris Library and Archives. The reading room serves as the physical portal to all museum collections for researchers. The original museum building, the Amasa B. Campbell House built in 1898 sits adjacent to the modern buildings on campus. Meticulously restored, it is one of the premier historic house museums in the nation and boasts award-winning interpretative programming.

A.3 Collection Overview

Four collections comprise the permanent collection: regional history, special collections, visual art, and American Indian cultural materials. They share structural and content attributes. Each collection contains single source collector's collections, multiple source genre collections, unique objects, and unique collections. Each collection contains objects and materials that bridge collections.

A.4 Audience

EWSHS' target audience emphasizes the citizens of Washington State, especially school children and their families, teachers, and life-long learners. The EWSHS receives approximately 50,000 visitors to its galleries annually and serves another 30,000 – 50,000 people each year through varied onsite and off-site programming. The website receives 190,000 visitors each year. Currently, a small fraction of the museum's collection – 100 artworks – are available on the Web site. This exhibit and a small inventory of video and audio podcasts generate a large share of our website traffic. 33 manuscript finding aids are currently available online through the Northwest Digital Archives. 1,000 Plateau Indian photographs are available online through the University of Washington libraries. A web development and hosting solution that can, in conjunction with the museum's collections management database software (see below), facilitate introducing more of the museum's holdings (such as the 5,000 more American Indian photographs and 3,000 American Indian cultural objects now digitized) to an online audience will increase the museum's regional audience, expand our audience beyond Washington's borders, and provide a much broader benefit to the public at large.

A.5 Collection Database Status

EWSHS is currently involved in the process of replacing our Collection Data Management Software. We are focused on identifying a database solution which will provide seamless integration with our web site, to enable us to build dynamic portals such as searchable collections, database-driven event calendars and 'coming up' sections, online store, a

“wiki” section for public interaction, etc. Solutions we are reviewing are based in Microsoft SQL Server, Oracle, or other industry-standard, relational database server platforms.

Our current collections database contains 4,662 accession records, 45,834 item-level records (15,000 special collections, primarily photographs, 14,089 constituent records (people and institutions associated with collections as donors, artists, vendors, conservators, staff, etc.), 45,103 lexicon terms, and 14,206 records with associated images.

B: SCOPE

B.1 Purpose: Solicit Proposals

This Request for Proposal (RFP) by the Eastern Washington State Historical Society is meant to solicit proposals from Web development and hosting companies for: the migration and recoding of the AGENCY's current web site, a content-management solution, and hosting services.

B.2 Obtain Information

Through this RFP and related activities, the Eastern Washington State Historical Society will obtain information about the capabilities of web development and hosting companies, costs involved in migrating to new host, and ongoing costs to provide hosting and service.

B.3 Aspects of a Successful Proposal

A successful RFP may also allow for creative solutions and alternative suggestions addressing the needs of the AGENCY within the limitations of time, priorities, and financial and human resources.

For example, proposals that solve the issues of migration of the current site, provide a customizable and easy-to-use content management system, while also allowing for future database-driven sections will be most attractive to our organization. Any solutions developed for the AGENCY must be verifiable code, XHTML 1.0 or later with external CSS, portable to a new host, and must not be proprietary. Each proposed solution should be thoroughly itemized by description and cost.

C: GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

C.1 Servers

The web development / hosting company must provide:

1. Internet hosting for AGENCY's web site
2. 24-hour monitoring
3. Database backend hosting
4. Secure Server (SSL) certificate sales and hosting for encrypted data transfer.
5. Vendor hosting and management of servers
6. Regular data backups
7. Meet or exceed current industry/Federal/Washington State data security requirements and legislation.

C.2 Individual Email accounts

C.2.1 Background

Currently, the AGENCY uses pop3, with most employees down loading to individual Outlook client. Interns and some others use the web email client. Email needs to follow document retention schedules, be backed up and archived appropriately. Our current provider allows for 100 email and 100 forwarding accounts with a max total email box size of 2GB. This allows for 20MB per email account if all are used. We determine individual box size. Each mailbox is permitted to send 250 emails per day unless we buy more relays. This is to prevent mail boxes from sending spam. The GoDaddy email servers are set up to only receive emails from other providers that pass a challenge/response dialogue, preventing a lot of spam and virus activity. The added security is to our benefit even if it causes an occasional problem.

C.2.2 Proposals

For current compliance requirements we would be better to use a hosted exchange service or have our own exchange server. Please provide information about whether the agency could benefit by having email services bundled with a hosting solution, and provide specifics about email handling, account size limits, and pricing.

C.3 Bulk Email

C.3.1 Background

We currently send between 15,000 and 20,000 email every month, to mailing lists of subscribers, members, donors, etc. Currently, bulk emails are sent through web host's content management tool which creates a templated html page of the email, which then points back to images on the Web server.

C.3.2 Proposals

Proposals should outline a solution for the creation and sending of html-styled emails (including embedded images and hyperlinks), and management of email lists. Proposals should detail the web development / hosting company's delivery rates, guarantees, and address-resolution procedure. Proposals should detail procedures and solutions in the event of server blacklisting.

C.4 Online File Folders / FTP

C.4.1 Background

Currently, the AGENCY has three folders and all are used regularly. There is one for Education, Development, General use/Archives. The folders are accessed through a web browser using https and encryption is available for any file or folder added. Education – total size 2GB, 1GB currently is use. Development – 2GB, 0.5GB currently is use. General/archives – 2GB, 1.2GB currently is use. Bandwidth usage for each folder is unknown.

The Joel E. Ferris Research Library and Archives uses their FTP site to deliver high-resolution digital images to patrons. They estimate that this method of delivery is equal to that of providing patrons with CDs. Education uses their FTP site as a means of delivering large curriculum packets to educators.

C.4.2 Proposals

The AGENCY seeks a web hosting solution which would include Online File Folders / FTP as describe above, and would provide room for growth. Please provide details about bandwidth and storage capacities, pricing, backup, and service.

C.5 Audio and Video Podcasts

C.4.1 Background

Currently, the AGENCY primarily hosts its podcasts through GoDaddy, but also has podcasts listed with several museum sites and RSS feeds through iTunes. 16 individual podcasts are on GoDaddy, which has a total allowable size of 5GB of which 1GB is currently used. Current bandwidth is 2,804.75 MB. Six video podcasts have also been added to YouTube.

C.4.2 Proposals

The VENDOR shall provide information about bandwidth limitations and pricing, and propose solution to hosting of podcasts and delivery of other high-bandwidth content.

C.6 Domain Registrations

C.5.1 Background

Currently we have seven domains registered through GoDaddy. These are: northwestmuseum.org, cheneycowles.org, artfestspokane.org, artfestspokane.com, spokanearthfest.org, spokanearthfest.com, and spokanearthschool.org. All secondary domains forward to the primary – northwestmuseum.org.

C.5.2 Proposals

Please advise best practices and pricing regarding the management of domain names.

C.7 Web Site Pages

C.6.1 Background

We have a total of 856 web pages, 626 of which are inactive pages (not directly accessible from our drop-down menu bar on the home page). Many of the inactive pages are - bulk emails that have never been cleaned up and removed after sending, out-of-date pages, used pages that links embedded in active pages point to. The AGENCY's Web-migration Committee is actively working on reducing the number of pages currently on the web site, specifically in the "Education" section. We estimate that the total number of pages needing to be re-coded and migrated to a new host is expected to be less than 200.

C.6.2 Proposals

The AGENCY seeks a Web development / hosting company which will:

1. Migrate current content from existing web pages on northwestmuseum.org, including links, embedded images, and navigation.
2. Provide a solution to the fact that, with the migration to a new host and new content management system, the URLs of these pages may change.

Please note: navigation does not necessarily need to be drop-down navigation, but basic logical structure of existing pages should be maintained. In Phase 2, a reworking of the logical structure of the pages may occur as part of a larger reworking of the web site, but not during Phase 1.

C.8 Navigation

C.8.1

The AGENCY seeks a Web development / hosting company which will provide a navigation solution to provide access points between pages which closely follows the current logical structure. The new navigation must be indexable and followable by robots, must be able to function with javascript disabled, must be able to be read by a screen reader. New site must include 'site map' page for alternate navigation.

Proposals which provide a new idea for providing users alternative or better ways of finding our content without a site "redesign" will also be considered.

C.9 Search Function

C.9.1

The AGENCY requests that, during the migration, the current site be reworked to include a "search" function which would allow users to search for a page within northwestmuseum.org without looking through the navigation. Search function should allow for indexing of pages to control search results. Search function should allow for a log of searches and search terms.

C.10 Security and Encryption

C.10.1 Background

Currently, the AGENCY collects credit card and personal information through the web site using SSL and encryption. Data is exported to a spreadsheet and sensitive information is encrypted. All sensitive data is removed from the web site every month.

C.10.2 Proposals

Provide a security and encryption solution that would manage sensitive personal and financial information for AGENCY's activities, such as memberships, donations, and e-commerce.

Please provide specific information regarding data access security, specifically whether access to confidential data is limited through the content management tool or other means. Please provide information regarding storage and transmission, encryption, auditing, etc. All non-public data must be secured in a manner that meets or exceeds industry/Federal/Washington State requirements and legislation.

C.11 Statistics

C.11.1

The AGENCY seeks a solution which would provide statistics and tracking about visitors to the web site. VENDOR's Web-statistics solution must track daily, weekly, monthly, and annual page-specific statistics; browser/operating system information; IP address; must track whether visitor is first-time or returning; must track web referral pages and exit pages; and must be able to isolate AGENCY's own IP address out of statistics. Statistics reporting: must be capable of sorting information to a specific date or date range.

C.12 Content Management System

C.12.1

The content management system must:

1. Allow for multiple users
2. Allow for multiple levels of access permissions
3. Provide a log function to track users and changes
4. Provide an option for having one user function as a 'gatekeeper', with the final permissions to approve whether an edited page goes live
5. Allow for images to be added easily and allow for image sizing
6. Create verifiable code (XHTML 1.0 and external CSS preferred)
7. Be portable to a new host and not proprietary
8. Display the page as it would appear in a browser (WYSIWYG)
9. Provide optional code view
10. Enable the creation of code in which presentation is separate from content
11. Allow for external CSS

The AGENCY is willing to explore third-party Content Management Systems if VENDOR provides support at no extra cost.

C.13 Web 2.0

C.13.1 Background

The AGENCY is committed to the philosophy behind [Web2.0](#), and strives toward providing content which allows web site viewers, as much as possible, to connect with and interact with the information. We seek web hosting / development solutions which would enable us to host a wiki or forum, curator chats, or other interactive media.

C.13.2 Proposals

Outline in detail how the VENDOR's proposed coding/hosting solution would enable the AGENCY to incorporate new interactive features to its Web site in future phases of the Web project.

C.14 Accessibility

C. 14.1 Background

A primary goal of the AGENCY is to provide access to our exhibitions, programs, and other information to all visitors. A portion of the AGENCY's target audience uses dial-up connections and older browsers.

C.14.2 Proposals

New web coding must:

1. Meet accessibility standards:
<http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=11#web>
<http://www.webaim.org/standards/508/checklist.php#one>
2. Degrade gracefully:
 - a. be cross-browser and backwards-compatible
 - b. be viewable without javascript enabled
 - c. load quickly and easily on dial-up connections
 - d. be viewable with a cellular phone or alternative web viewer
3. Provide alternative content
4. Provide alternate navigation
5. Keep content separate from presentation formatting
6. Have scalable text
7. Be readable by screen-readers

C.15 Compatibility with other AGENCY systems

C.15.1

Web site must be able to be integrated with future Collections Management Database software (see A.5, pages 3-4).

C.16 Extensibility

C.16.1 Background

As an agency of the State of Washington, the EWSHS strives to foster relationships with other state agencies and institutes of higher learning. The EWSHS often provides internships and projects for students in various disciplines, including Computer Science.

C.16.2 Proposals

New Web site coding and content management system (CMS), as well as formal agreement, must allow for the AGENCY to add pages and/or sections to the Web site with or without the aid of the CMS, to allow for future online exhibits, interactives, games, or other content which may be developed by the AGENCY, by university departments of Computer Science, or other AGENCY partners.

Vendors are asked to provide information about and examples of previous projects in which client-developed Web pages or modules have been incorporated and hosted.

C.17 ADDITIONAL OFFERINGS

Please note any additional services offered and provide detailed explanation of capabilities.

D. VENDOR SUPPORT

D.1. Data Conversion

Vendor is asked to:

- D.1.1** Demonstrate experience successfully migrating data from existing sites with low percentage of lost data.
- D.1.2** Develop a project plan including timetable for data conversion/migration, training of personnel, and resources needed for conversion that includes:
 - a. All information needed for data conversion/migration, interfacing, and formatting existing Web page data to the new system and host.
 - b. Vendor testing of all custom programming features of the project for accuracy and functionality; testing of all public and private aspects of the web application using multiple browsers to determine trouble spots and fix any compatibility problems.

D.2. Vendor Support

D.2.1 Documentation, Training, Support, Responsibilities

- a. Vendor will provide a written hard-copy and electronic copy of documentation of the system, including user procedures and instructions, system administration procedures and instructions, system information, standards information, and other procedures regarding development, customization, linking and web procedures
- b. Vendor will provide training for users which will cover all information in the operation of the content management tool necessary for AGENCY staff to perform their activities.
- c. Vendor will provide system support through telephone, internet, and/or email. Vendor shall acknowledge request within two business hours and respond to request for assistance within four business hours.

E: VENDOR INFORMATION

- E.1** Vendor will describe the development and programming techniques used by the Vendor.
- E.2** Vendor will provide information about expertise of key staff (including developers/programmers), including education and training and longevity with the company.
- E.3** Vendor will provide information concerning its ownership, solvency, years of operation, list of other clients to serve as reference, and information about future projects and programs.

F: PRICING REQUIREMENTS

- F.1** Provide complete itemized and increment pricing on any and all systems recommended.

Include any and all, State, non-profit, educational, or other discounts which may be available for this potential transaction.

- F.2** Delineate all itemized and incremental costs which may be incurred for the following:

- a. Recoding of existing pages
- b. Migration of existing data
- c. Total monthly hosting/support costs
- d. Future upgrade costs
- e. Additional development costs for future needs such as additional features, templates, or technical advice.
- f. Bandwidth limits and pricing, including pricing for exceeding limitations
- g. Training, including itemized on-site or off-site training, travel and/or lodging expenses
- h. Additional costs not noted above

G: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

G.1 Deadline for proposal submission:

End of business: October 10, 2008

G.2 Please submit proposals to:

Erin Kincaid-McIntosh
Collections Data Registrar
Eastern Washington State Historical Society/Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture
2316 W. First Avenue
Spokane, Washington 99201-5906

erink@northwestmuseum.org