



# Midwest Bat Working Group

## Website Committee Report

27 March 2019

Report prepared by: Brian Heeringa

Committee Members: Brian Heeringa (lead)  
Jeremy Sheets  
Megan Martin

Website Address: [www.mwbwg.org](http://www.mwbwg.org)

Facebook Address: <https://www.facebook.com/MWBWG?fref=ts>

Website & Facebook Status: **CURRENT**

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### WEBSITE

Upon taking over the lead on the website committee last March (2018), acquiring the necessary login and administrative privileges was the first priority. After the separation from the former Organization for Bat Conservation (OBC) there were numerous items associated with our website that were left unattended to or were not known at the time. Over the next several months the following list of items were either resolved or are currently in-progress or pending.

1. Changes associated with the 2018 BOD elections and committee assignments were collected by the website committee and given to Vanessa Rojas for making updates to the website. Additionally, the 2019 Annual Meeting page was created and other pages were moved to make the site more streamlined. Links and references to OBC were removed. Announcement for the WI Bat Festival was added. – **COMPLETE**

*A big thank you goes out to Vanessa for helping the website committee make these important changes to the website as we were finding our bearings and learning how the website platform worked. Without her help we would not have gotten up and running as quickly as we did. Also, a big thank you to the following individuals that also had a hand in helping us to figure out the website and the status of logins, hosting and domain services, updates, and access: Brienne Walters, Joy O'Keefe, Michael Narlock, and Paul White.*

2. Brian worked on refreshing his website management and technical knowledge and is now capable of making website changes directly. All website updates, additions, questions, etc. can now be requested through him ([brian.heeringa@gmail.com](mailto:brian.heeringa@gmail.com)).

Over the last 6-8 months he has worked to update the website and reorganize certain pages to make the site a little easier to navigate in addition to learning the behind the scenes mechanics in order to make critical security updates.

- a. Numerous pending non-critical web platform and database updates - **COMPLETE**
- b. Drupal, the platform our website is built on, is in need of a critical update that effects website security. This update will require the site to be backed up and

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taken down for maintenance. This update requires access to the site's host servers, which were unknown and inaccessible until mid-February 2019 (see below for specifics). Brian is working directly with a person familiar with the Drupal environment to learn about and make these updates – **IN PROGRESS**

- c. Verified that our MWBWG website domain is purchased and maintained through *Dreamhost* along with ISU's websites. Our website domain is current through 02/08/2020. - **COMPLETE**
  - d. Determined that our website is not hosted at Dreamhost, but rather through a different hosting service, *Bluehost*, that was purchased and maintained by OBC. These host site servers are needed to make the critical site updates and upgrades, as well as add software/apps such as a shopping cart and storefront to allow itemized purchasing of things such as membership dues, meeting registration, t-shirts, etc. Through some searching, calling, emailing, and tech support calls we were finally able to gain access to our servers at Bluehost in mid-February 2019. User access, billing, and administrative server permissions have successfully been transferred to MWBWG (i.e., Brianne Walters, Brian Heeringa, and Joe Kath). Our website hosting is current through 06/15/2019 - **COMPLETE**
  - e. The website has been updated to now accept online payments through the *Payeezy* gateway powered by *First Data*. This payment gateway provides a safe, easy, and secure way for MWBWG to accept online credit card payments, as well as onsite purchases, that are linked to our bank and credit card accounts. - **COMPLETE**
  - f. As part of establishing our online payment capabilities we also had to add a few key features to our website homepage. - **COMPLETE**  
Working with Joe Kath, the following items were drafted and posted:
    - i. Terms of Use (<http://mwbwg.org/terms-use>)
    - ii. Privacy Policy (<http://www.mwbwg.org/privacy-policy>)
    - iii. Refund Policy (<http://www.mwbwg.org/refund-policy>)
    - iv. Proof/statement of 501(c)3 non-profit status ([http://mwbwg.org/sites/default/files/501c3\\_certification\\_R.pdf](http://mwbwg.org/sites/default/files/501c3_certification_R.pdf))
    - v. Contact Us link
  - g. Install shopping cart software to allow itemized purchases for things such as membership dues, meeting registration, t-shirts, or anything else we would like to eventually offer. This would integrate directly with our *Payeezy* payment gateway. I am currently looking at using *X-cart* as our program as they offer a free edition for "small newcomers" and our payment gateway is one of the companies this program accepts. – **IN PROGRESS/PENDING**
  - h. Our site does not currently meet security protocols and accept SSL/TLS certificates. These are important for protecting information passed between a website and its visitors. Sites that have these certificates installed often start with https://... This is especially important as we begin developing the capability of accepting on-line registration information in conjunction with online payments. The good news is that our payment gateway, *Payeezy*, redirects individuals to a secure (https) site for transferring payment information. The creation and installation of these certificates for our website is currently **PENDING**.
3. Discovering that our website domain and hosting are through different providers, a comparison of cost and services should be conducted for each. It is not uncommon for websites to have hosting through a different company than the domain was purchased. It

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might make things easier to have both “under the same roof”, but there are also potential benefits of keeping the current arrangement. Now that we have access to both accounts this will be easy to manage as a decision is made. **PENDING**

### **FACEBOOK**

All three members of the website committee have access to the Facebook account. If anything needs to be added to the page please let one of us know.

Posts are sporadic and only 4-5 have happened in the last several months in regard to the upcoming annual meeting.

A discussion on managing and encouraging Facebook posts occurred back in June 2018. This discussion also included coming up with potential simple Facebook posting guidelines. Jeremy shared those that Orbis uses and we shared those with the group to start a conversation. The following “draft” guidelines resulted from the email discussion:

1. The goal is to post something, at a minimum, MONTHLY.
2. For external links, try to link through our website, when possible.
3. This helps in several ways:
  - a. Inspires us to create something and share important information.
  - b. Creates a more regular spread (i.e., if we have something that is not time sensitive it can be posted over the course of several months, or more frequently, to maintain engagement).
  - c. Helps encourage more frequent Facebook and website visits as information is consistently shared.

Discussion Item: Several Facebook messages have been received over the last few months. The Website Committee has responded to these individuals on behalf of MWBWG, but a process for handling future messages/inquiries should be considered. Obvious questions regarding topics specific to a committee could be directed to one of the respective committee members, but how should we handle others of a more general scope or non-specific issue? A suggestion could be:

1. Have auto-reply message generated to the message sender.
2. Develop a list of MWBWG BOD that could respond to a given subject
3. This list would be used to direct the question to the appropriate person for follow-up
4. BOD establishes a “reply due” date for making this response to the individual, example 10 business days.