



Midwest Bat Working Group

Website Committee Report

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Report prepared by: Brian Heeringa

Committee Members: Brian Heeringa (brian.heeringa@gmail.com)
Jeremy Sheets (jsheets@orbisec.com)
Megan Martin (mmartin@orbisec.com)

Website Address: <https://mwbwg.org/>

Alternative website address: <https://mwbwg.wildapricot.org/>

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

Website & Facebook Status: **CURRENT**

Custom Domain Status - DreamHost (mwbwg.org): **CURRENT**

Hosting Service Status - Wild Apricot: **CURRENT**

WEBSITE

Since the 2019 annual meeting the website has undergone some large changes that have included the transition to a new hosting platform, Wild Apricot. The former website was hosted at BlueHost and was comprised of the primary website built on an out-dated version of Drupal and the web store was created using WordPress with a shopping cart extension to handle payments through the Payeezy Payment Gateway. The current website at Wild Apricot includes everything in one location along with substantial upgrades in terms of membership management, event planning, and connecting to membership. During the period of April 2019 to October/November 2020, the former MWBWG website continued to be maintained “as is” with the intent of creating a full site back up and upgrading the Drupal core to the latest and most secure version. Unfortunately, with the aid of a local website professional (donated time and expertise) it was determined that the website was so outdated that it would require a full site rebuild to get things back up and running once the Drupal core upgrade was completed. Though updates were still being applied to various aspects of the site, there were numerous critical security patches that could not be installed due to the age of the Drupal core the site was built on. These updates were necessary for the website to conform with all future security updates, new website protocols, and software updates. The timing of this large website upgrade offered the MWBWG the opportunity to explore other alternative website options and builds as well as hosting providers. Brian took the lead in coordinating with the other website committee members to research options and presented the findings to the Board of Directors for review and a final decision. During the months of November and December 2020, 8 website options, including 7 Word Press membership management plugins, were researched and trial periods were explored with the options that appeared most promising and cost effective. Considerations included completing the website rebuild and future maintenance “in-house”, hiring a contractor to complete the rebuild with “in-house” maintenance, or considering a contractor to complete the rebuild and any future updates/maintenance. In the end, Wild Apricot was chosen as the new website host and the website rebuild, including future maintenance will be completed by the MWBWG website committee. Additional details and information follow below.

Accomplishments:

1. Old Website - BlueHost

- a. Maintained periodic, optional, recommended, and critical website/ platform/ database updates. All but the one critical core update, referenced above, was completed.
- b. Domain and hosting services renewed. Current renewal dates are now as follows:
 - i. Domain: 02/21/2021 - *successfully renewed and used for new website*
 - ii. Unique IP: 01/17/2021 - *no longer needed - expired*
 - iii. Hosting: 06/15/2022 - *no longer needed - no refund available - renewal cancelled*
 - iv. Site Backup: 06/15/2022 - *no longer needed - no refund available - renewal cancelled*
- c. Maintained MWBWG Online Store to handle membership dues payments and meeting registrations. Ecwid was the shopping cart software used to connect the online store to the Payeezy payment gateway and provide itemized receipts.
- d. Created online registration form for 2020 Meeting and incorporated into MWBWG store - Meeting cancelled due to covid-19 pandemic
- e. Created 2020 Meeting webpage - Meeting cancelled due to covid-19 pandemic
- f. Created full site archive prior to transferring to the new website platform. This archive is saved in the MWBWG Corporate Files (https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Y_ml_cJdKPpOJNubBAJbyOqfBj3fTP0G?usp=sharing)
- g. Organized files related to the website committee, annual meetings, etc in Google Drive MWBWG Corporate Files.

2. New Website - Wild Apricot

- a. New website includes features such as:
 - i. Online store & direct donations
 1. Allows for automatic & recurring payments
 2. Affordable credit card readers & mobile payments
 3. Android & iOS apps
 4. Integrated payment gateway
 - ii. Membership management database and email blasts
 - iii. Individual member profiles with logins
 - iv. Ability to have member only content
 - v. Event management database and email blasts
 - vi. Online, anonymous polls
 - vii. Ability to have multiple administrators and custom groups with different permission levels and roles
- b. Rebuilt new MWBWG website, including over 30 unique pages, during December 2020 and January 2021.
- c. Working with Joe Kath and Brianne Walters, set up the new payment gateway using Wild Apricot Payments to accept online membership, event, and donation payments.
- d. Setup new online membership database, importing all current members from the existing membership spreadsheet, establishing profiles, digital membership cards, and sending out initial member profiles emails.

- e. Setup membership levels, automatic email messages for member activation, renewal, confirmation, invoicing, and payment receipt. Setup donation page and donation levels.
- f. Created a new fill-able and downloadable PDF membership form.
- g. Setup 2021 virtual meeting event page, pricing levels, and automatic emails.
- h. Coordinated membership and meeting registration troubleshooting and “customer support”. Responding to over 20 queries and requests for assistance.
- i. Monitored and responded to numerous inquires that came into the general delivery MWBWG inbox and Facebook page.
- j. Created online poll for 2021 Board of Directors election.

3. New vs Old Cost Comparison

Wild Apricot Items	Cost/Year	Blue Host Items	Cost/Year
Dreamhost Custom Domain	\$15.99	Dreamhost Custom Domain	\$15.99
Subscription - 250 contacts	\$540.00	Dreamhost Happy Hosting	\$119.40
		Dreamhost Unique IP	\$59.95
		Bluehost Plus Hosting	\$131.88
		Bluehost Site Backup	\$35.88
		Payeezy Merchant Account	\$179.40
		Clover Card Reader - Active (once per year)	\$15.00
		Clover Card Reader - Reactivate (once per year)	\$10.00
ANNUAL EXPENSE	\$555.99	ANNUAL EXPENSE	\$567.50

FACEBOOK

Jeremy and Megan are the primary contacts for updates to the Facebook page.

Generally posts are made, at a minimum, monthly.

The Facebook page is up to nearly 1,800 follwers, with a noticeable spike in the past few days.

UPCOMING TASKS

1. Continue to develop new website and membership database
2. Create a Facebook post submission “button” or page on the website to allow individuals wanting to post something to connect with Jeremy and Megan for approval/disapproval and potential posting.
3. Provide overview and training to members of the Board for key features of the website.
4. Request and set-up new credit card readers for integration with online and in-person payments.
5. Continue to monitor and respond to submissions to the general delivery MWBWG inbox, Facebook page, and website.