

Guidelines for Section Websites

Introduction

SPE section websites play an important role in communicating with SPE members. These guidelines are intended to assist sections in the effective operation of their websites and to make members aware of relevant SPE policies and practices.

A section planning to develop a section website for the first time or to revise a current website may find it helpful to examine the websites of other sections to develop ideas about the kind of information to include. Links to these websites can be found from the [section list](#) or [section maps](#) on SPE.org. In addition, assistance can be obtained from the Sections Manager, email sections@spe.org (P.O. Box 833836, Richardson, TX 75083 3836, USA).

Content

At a minimum, section websites should include:

- The SPE section logo with the section name prominently displayed according to the criteria set forth in the [SPE Graphics Standard](#)
- A link to the SPE home page at <http://www.spe.org>
- Section goals and/or the [Mission Statement](#) of SPE
- A calendar or listing of events detailing upcoming section programs, speakers or events
- Names and contact information for section officers.

Depending on the size and needs of the section, other types of content that sections may want to include on their website include:

- Information about key SPE regional and international activities (awards programs, meetings, etc.)
- Information on section study group activities
- News about section members
- Information from section-sponsored student chapter information
- Fundraising events or upcoming social events
- Reports and summaries of technical presentations or section workshops
- Links to key pages on www.spe.org (e.g., Membership Directory, meetings calendar) or other SPE products and services on SPE.org, as appropriate
- Links to other websites that may be of interest to members
- Local directories (e.g., consultants)
- Contact details for the section webmaster
- Banner advertising
- Logos of local section sponsors
- SPE news and meeting information

Section websites should not include general technical material not related to activity in the section area or promotional information for specific products unless it is paid advertising that is readily identifiable as advertising or appropriately labeled. Most importantly, sections should not post any member identification numbers or personal details of their section members to protect member privacy.

If a lot of time-sensitive information is included, then it is essential that the website be kept up to date. An out of date website does not provide an impression of quality to members or website visitors. Sections may find it useful to establish a set schedule for website updates to avoid having content become outdated.

Logins on Section Websites

Section websites are *strongly discouraged* from requiring members to log in to access content on the section website or to maintain their contact information, including email address. Because it currently is not possible for this login to interface with SPE.org's login or membership system, considerable member confusion could exist. If a member updates contact information on the section website, he or she may expect it to be updated on their SPE record, but since the two systems are wholly independent, members would have to update information in both places, leading to frustration and confusion. Members would also have two "SPE" logins (one for SPE.org and one for the section site), another potential source of frustration and confusion.

SPE acknowledges that there may be good reason for having a login on certain section sites. In such cases, sections should maintain only necessary information, and any pages for updating that information should clearly state that this information applies to the section website only and will not be updated in the SPE membership database. A link for updating member information on SPE.org (<http://www.spe.org/mbrservices/index.cfm>) should be provided.

Website Hosting, Management and URL

Sections have a wide range of options and technology available to them. The right choice depends on the section size, needs, and capabilities. In determining what technology to use, sections are encouraged to think about future needs. Just because the section has one member able to develop html pages this year does not mean that a similar resource will be available in future years. The ability to maintain the website on an ongoing basis is an important consideration.

SPE-Hosted Section Websites

SPE offers software and hosting to make it easy for sections to set up and maintain a website. [More information on SPE's section websites program.](#)

Independent (Non-SPE Hosted) Section Websites

Some sections, especially those with significant financial and volunteer resources, choose to develop and maintain a website hosted elsewhere. Sometimes sections even select a contractor to maintain the website for them. SPE will provide a link from SPE.org to independent section websites upon notification by email of the URL, or web address, of the site. Send link requests for section websites to sections@spe.org.

Domain name. If a section chooses to develop an independent website, it will need to purchase an appropriate domain name for the website. The domain name/universal resource locator (URL) should include the section name or acronym/abbreviation, and should not include the name of any non-SPE entities, including the hosting service. This domain name should include the initials spe, with some indicator for the section name, with a preferred ending of .org, or .org.country abbreviation. Examples of current domain names for independent section websites:

www.spe-uk.org
www.spegcs.org
www.spe-delta.org
www.spe.no
www.laspe.org
www.spe-chk.dk

Sections will need to let their website provider know that the section domain should be used throughout the site, not just on the homepage. Website provider names should not appear in the URL of interior pages of the website. If a section that has purchased a domain name elects to use the SPE section websites software at a later date, the chosen domain name can be retained and transferred to the new site.

Quality and Standards for Section Websites

SPE has a reputation as a respected association for oil and gas professionals and the industry's most reliable provider of technical information. All SPE publications, including websites, should protect and enhance that reputation for the benefit of all members and sections. Sections should ensure that their website presents a professional image and maintains SPE's reputation for impartiality.

Section Responsibility for Oversight of Content

Where a section works with a contractor on their website, it is the responsibility of the section officers to ensure that website content complies with SPE policies and these guidelines. Questions, complaints, or comments about the *content* of a section website should be directed to and responded to by the section officers, not a contractor.

Editorial Policy

All SPE publications, including section websites, must comply with the following Editorial Policy:

The Society of Petroleum Engineers encourages open and objective discussion of technical and professional subjects pertinent to the interests of the Society in its publications. Society publications shall contain no judgmental remarks or opinions as to the technical competence, personal character, or motivations of any individual, company, or group. Any material which, in the publisher's opinion, does not meet the standards for objectivity, pertinence, and professional tone will be returned to the contributor with a request for revision before publication.

It is recommended that this Editorial Policy statement be included somewhere on section websites.

Impartiality

To protect the Society's reputation as a respected association for oil and gas professionals and the industry's most reliable provider of technical information, editorial material published on section websites should not promote the use of a specific product or service and should present an impartial, balanced view of technology.

Professionalism

Sections are responsible for ensuring that their websites present a professional image, avoiding inappropriate or potentially offensive content. Sections should be mindful of the highly diverse nature of SPE's international membership and avoid materials of a sexual, racial, religious, or political nature. SPE is a technical organization, and while sections may engage in a wide range of non-technical activities (e.g., charitable, educational, social), these are nonetheless activities sponsored by a professional society and the overall tone should be professional.

Copyright Protection

Sections should confirm the copyright status of any material included on their websites and ensure that all appropriate permissions for reproducing material have been obtained, in writing, before publication. This includes photos, text, presentations, videos, podcasts, and other materials. Posting material on a website constitutes publication of that material. Thus, copyright laws that pertain to reproducing material in print also apply to material on a website. Copyright remains with the originator (e.g., author, artist, photographer) until it is transferred to another person or organization. Sections should be aware that taking material from one website, including graphics, and posting that material on its website without permission is likely to be a violation of copyright.

If SPE members or the general public are allowed to post materials on a section website without prior approval by a section officer, it is the responsibility of the officers or their contractor to periodically check the website for possible copyright violations and remove any materials that may represent a copyright violation. The liability for copyright violations rests with SPE, and it is important that sections ensure they are not in violation of a third party's copyright.

Because it is easy to copy material from a website, a section may want to include a copyright notice on material that it does not want to be freely copied. The easiest way to do this is by including a copyright notice in the footer of the website.

Liability

Section websites should include a disclaimer of responsibility for contributed content. Example: "The SPE ____ Section is not responsible for any statements made or opinions expressed in its publications."

The liability of a website publisher for comments made in online forums, chat rooms, and threaded discussions is not definitive, but it is clear that the potential for liability exists. It is therefore wise to include disclaimers of website responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed by participants. An example of such a disclaimer is, "Any opinions expressed here are strictly those of the individual posting the message and not necessarily those of SPE, the ____ Section, or the organization with which the individual is affiliated."

Advertising Policy

In general, advertising accepted for SPE section websites should be pertinent to the oil and gas industry and the readers of the publication. Sections should follow the SPE advertising policy, which should be stated on the section website: "SPE publications accept advertising for goods and services which, in the publisher's judgment, address the technical or professional interests of the journal's readers." This gives a section the option of refusing to run advertising it does not believe is appropriate to the professional reputation of the Society.

Promoting Non-SPE Events and Training Courses

In general, SPE would prefer that its sections promote SPE events and training courses. SPE recognizes, however, that there may be a variety of good reasons why a particular section may want to promote the events of another organization, particularly where sections work closely with the local affiliate of another professional society.

For events or training courses offered by for-profit or commercial organizations, it seems appropriate to require these organizations to purchase banner ads or other paid advertising. For the events and/or courses of another not-for-profit or professional society, it is suggested that the section consider whether it receives like treatment from the other organization. Do they promote your activities to their members? If the answer is no, then the section may want to consider whether it is appropriate to require them to advertise (perhaps at a reduced rate for not-for-profit organizations).

Clearly Identifying Section Activities and Publications

Inquiries about section activities are often mistakenly directed to one of the SPE offices because the activity has been promoted or publicized only as an “SPE” event – that is, not identified as the sponsoring section’s. To avoid this confusion and to ensure your audience reaches you, clearly designate section events as such. Information on section events and activities should include a section contact name, telephone number, or email. The section’s name should appear prominently in the title or on the masthead of all section publications and websites. If the SPE logo is used, the section name should be emphasized by appending it to the logo as described in the Policy on the Use of SPE Name and Logo, its associated FAQs, and the SPE Graphics Standard.



Reporting Income from Section Websites [US-based Sections Only]

SPE International (SPEI) is registered as a not-for-profit corporation with the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS). As a not-for-profit organization, SPEI must report to the IRS any profits derived from sources not related to its not-for-profit mission of disseminating technical information. If a section sells advertising in its publications or on its website, the publications or website are considered by the IRS to be unrelated business activities. Advertising revenues received must be reported to SPE so that it can be reported to the IRS. Expenses must also be reported.

Each section’s Treasurer is responsible for submitting the annual Section Financial Statement to SPE by 1 June. Revenue from the sale of advertising in section publications (newsletters and/or websites) should be reported on the line “Unrelated business income” under Income. Expenses for publications and/or websites should be reported on the line “Unrelated business expense” under Expenses.