

Website Q & A

“I have ideas, and some questions. Who can I contact?”

Your ideas, suggestions, and questions are valuable! Send your comments to amiweb@ami.org, or contact any member of the Board of Governors, PR Committee, or Web Committee.

“Why do we need a new website? This one seems to work OK.”

Our primary mode of communication, both internally to our members and externally to our market, is through our website. Our current website has outlived its ability to efficiently serve us internally and represent us to the outside world dynamically. For example, we need to add richer content and opportunities for our members, as well as showcasing our work to potential markets. The programming and technology of the current site can't support the kinds of content our members and visitors expect.

“What kind of added features for members would a new website include?”

With an upgrade to state-of-the-art technology, a new website could support such things as:

- Online learning (including CEU opportunities)
- User groups
- Forums
- Tutorials
- Searchable archives

“What about website visitors that aren't AMI members?”

The visitors to our website are often there to see medical illustration – so the plan for the new website is to include **more art**. This can be done in many ways, but the plan will provide for protected, up-to-date, fresh images by our members – and the plan will create a process for how members can submit their art for inclusion.

The new site will also be a tool for public relations, including links, articles of interest, and of course, **more art**. An upgraded site will allow for top placement in Internet search engines, and will allow potential clients to search for illustrators easily and efficiently.

“Why do we need so much money for a redesigned website? There are lots of AMI members who could design a really nice one.”

Redesigning a website is not just about graphics. The new site will be built from the ground up, using current programming. This will allow for added features for our membership and visitors, and will allow us to use a content management system.

“Why do we need a Content Management System (CMS)?”

A CMS allows us to have a much more responsive and active website. For

example, it will add functionality such as being able to make our own changes on the fly, or support enhanced member services such as user groups and tutorials. Among other things, it would support continually active events such as calendars and announcements.

"Why do we need a professional outside vendor?"

A good web process will involve at least a project manager/creative director, different specialized designers/artists and professional programmers familiar with up-to-date tools, technologies, and trends. It will graphically represent us and our capabilities to the world – our "brand", our showroom.

An outside vendor will have responsibility, under contract, for performance, deliverables, and timelines. The time it will take a professional vendor (15-18 weeks) is far less than our own talents could deliver.

"Wouldn't our management company develop a new site? We pay them to maintain the current one, don't we?"

Our management company, Allen Marketing & Management, is under contract to provide the AMI with a comprehensive array of management services for our current website. After a website development vendor builds a new site, AM&M will continue to maintain our web presence with the same professional services, including:

- Maintaining a membership directory
- Updating and maintaining web pages
- Supporting email renewals
- Online balloting
- Regular backup of data

"What about features like online payments?"

The ability to make online payments and transactions will be built into the technology of a new website. An online store and catalog are also future possibilities. Other cool features include:

- Website advertising and management -- including support
- Trackable impressions and statistics (we will see what works for the audience, who our audience is, what is functioning, how it pays us back)
- A more visible AMI, with more direct public contact

Please email your ideas, suggestions, questions and comments to amiweb@ami.org