

# U.S Coast Guard Auxiliary Information Technology Group

User Support & Services Directorate



## WOW: Pushbutton Website Platform, Version II USER'S GUIDE

*Revision 3.2*

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## Update Record

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Kevin Redden	18 November 2011	Abandoning an AIRS site; server storage limits; borders on images; minor errors.	
Steve Johnson	25 December 2011	Cloning a PE Course; ADSOs to Table 2. Canonical URL warning.	Requested feature; Clarifications.
Steve Johnson	6 February 2012 Version 2.3	Re-titled "Adding an Image" section to "Adding or Deleting"; Added "National Help Desk" Clarified configuration rights	
Steve Johnson	18 April 2012 Version 2.4	Removed WOW-I references; Pulled out "Migrating Conventional Site" to App Note Improved "Adding an Image"	
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Kevin Redden	6 May 2014 Version 2.6	Added web site security requirements	
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John Bigrow	23 July 2021 Version 3.2	Updated Security requirements to exclude Adobe Flash	Security Exploits

## Overview

WOW is a “pushbutton” website development platform that permits units of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary to develop and maintain modern, attractive websites with absolutely no programming required. Creating a website with WOW is no more difficult than ordering a book online, and requires nothing beyond your favorite web browser. A basic unit website can be generated in less than 25 seconds – even by the flotilla commander or vice commander! For this reason, units without webmasters (“WOW”), without a CS officer, or without anyone with “classical” web programming can nonetheless have an immediate web presence with the “push of a button”.

The WOW platform is a class of software called a “Content Management System”, which permits users to concentrate on the *content* of their website, rather than the *programming*. WOW has been specially developed for Auxiliary flotillas, divisions, and even districts to automatically provide current, up-to-date unit information – such as staff officers, meeting locations, or public education courses, in the context of a familiar, branded U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary look and feel. The unit may then add additional content – whatever they desire – with a simple point, click and type paradigm that even permits the inclusion of photos and graphics!

But if the unit *also* has members with classical web design experience, the WOW platform gives them complete freedom to focus on page content, using a powerful, built-in editor, and let the system attend to the nasty details such as a turnkey, database-driven menu navigation system. In short, WOW is for *every* Auxiliary unit!

## The WOW Website Model

WOW websites are comprised of several *web pages*, which are linked together by a configurable *navigation system*. The navigation system takes the form of familiar “left menu” items, which contains *on-site links* (links to pages on the same website), *offsite links* (links to pages on other websites), and member login and search panels. Security information from the National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) and the U.S. Coast Guard’s Maritime Security System (MARSEC) complete the navigation system. An example can be seen in Figure 1, above.



Figure 1: Default WOW Home Page

Each WOW web page includes the navigation system; a national *top banner* that is common to all WOW websites, many classical or “template” based unit websites, and the Auxiliary’s *National Website*; a *top pulldown menu system* that contains links to pages principally on the National Website; and a content area. The layout of the page, the top banner, top pulldown menu system, and a *page footer* with standardized links to legal disclaimers, etc., are all determined by the platform, and are consistent from WOW site to WOW site. The left navigation system, excepting a few *built-in menu items*, and the main *content area*, are completely configurable by ordinary, non-technical members in the unit.

WOW web pages may contain pure text, text and images, and content – including live feeds – from other sites (such as calendars, video feeds, weather feeds, etc.).

### **Built-In Menu Items**

Every WOW page comes by default with *built-in menu items*. The exact configuration varies depending on whether the unit is a flotilla, division, or district, but consists of the following items, starting from the top:

The USCG Auxiliary Logo and the Unit Identifier (here “Flotilla 2-1 Sayreville”). Clicking in this area is equivalent to “home”, and returns the site to the Home Page.

A link to the Division (here “Division 2”) that the flotilla is a member of. Clicking on the Division link will open that division’s site in another browser window or tab.

A link to the District (here “Division 1SR”) that the flotilla is a member of. Clicking on the District link will open that district’s site in another browser window or tab.

If the WOW site is for a division, then the Division link will be replaced with “Flotillas”, which will open a local page with a list of flotillas in this division, with links to their respective websites. If the site is for a district, then the Division link will be replaced with “Division & Flotillas”, which will open a complete list of the district’s flotillas, sorted by division.

About the Flotilla (or Division or District). This yields a page describing the unit’s geographical area, meeting location, and names its two elected leaders and the Human Resources officer. Optional phone and email addresses (via an opt-in/opt-out methodology) shows for one or more of these officers.

Staff List (Shows only when “About Flotilla xx-yy” is selected). Displays a list of elected and appointed officers. If an Auxiliary member is logged onto the WOW site, then the staff list also displays two telephone numbers and an email address for each staff member.

National Help Desk. Provides a link to the National Help Desk system.

A “Member Zone” login panel. Auxiliary members may log in with their member zone credentials to gain access to “protected pages” and “protected announcements”, as well as staff contact information. In addition, if the logged-on member has the authority to configure this WOW site, then an additional menu item “Configure Site” will appear directly above the Member Zone login panel.



Figure 2: Built-in Left Menu System



## Configurable Menu Items

In addition to the built-in menu items, WOW features configurable menu items. That is, you may add links in the left menu that bring up custom pages on the WOW site (“internal links”) or links to offsite pages (“external links”). WOW offers nine (9) different types of “default” pages, which yield configurable pages that have specific titles, and an unlimited number of “custom” internal pages, each with their own user-defined custom menu item. Thus, for common page types, WOW gently enforces a commonality of usage between different units on page-naming conventions, but gives you complete flexibility to make the site as unique and custom as necessary.

Table 1: Configurable Menu Types

- Unit Announcements
- Calendar
- Member Training
- Members Only
- Meeting Schedule
- Public Boating Courses
- Uniforms
- What’s New

The nine default page types are shown in Table 1. Of these, all but one – Public Boating Courses – yields an empty page where content of any type may be easily added. Public Boating Courses, by contrast, generates a standardized page that lists all of the courses taught by the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and includes a Zip Code course finder that brings up a list of courses being offered by the unit, or by other units in the vicinity of an entered Zip Code.

Menu items, when created, can be marked “Protected”. A protected menu item will show in the navigation area, but the page it links to will not display unless the member has logged in. Protected pages show a special symbol “∅” to the right of the menu item.

## The Content Area

The majority of the web page is taken up by the content area. Units may use the content area, as described above, for text, text plus photographs or artwork, or content fed from other applications, such as Google Calendar, which would generally be placed on the built-in calendar page.

When you create an internal menu item, an empty page is simultaneously created that is now reachable from that menu item in the left menu, and is ready to receive your content.

## The Default Home Page

A basic WOW site features a default home page that contains canned content about the Coast Guard Auxiliary, as shown in Figure 1, above. However, you may insert the same variety of content that you can insert on any other page into the home page, thereby customizing it. Any content added to the home page whatsoever, even just a space, causes the default home page content to disappear.

## Announcements

Announcements are the fundamental WOW construct that allows you to add content to your pages, and they correspond directly to the concept of “posts” on other websites such as blogs. Announcements can be thought of as one or more paragraphs of text, preceded by an optional caption or “headline”, the name of the person who posted the content, also optional, and a posting date, also optional. Moreover, an announcement can be marked “Protected”, which means that the announcement – and its caption, posting date, and contributor if displayed – will remain hidden from view unless the visitor is a member logged in. This is described further, below.

Each announcement can be given a start date and a stop date, and will only appear between those dates. This enables you to prepare content long in advance, post it, and have it “run”, and then disappear on cue, thus automatically keeping your site current.

Finally, photographs or other images may be inserted into an announcement at any point, to add “color” and interest to a page.

A page of WOW content may consist of a single, multi-paragraph announcement, with the caption, contributor name, and posting date turned off. The main title of the page is provided by the menu system (or by you when you created a custom menu item), and the content is text and artwork that you added by typing it onto the page, or pasted from some other document.

### *Multiple Announcements on a Single Page*

As described above, the simplest page has a single announcement that contains all the user content for a page (i.e., all the content other than the top banner, footer and navigation system provided by WOW). The default home page shown in Figure 1, although containing many paragraphs, is an example of a page created with a single announcement.

So, why does WOW proved for multiple announcements on a single web page? There are several reasons:

You may actually wish to use the page as a true blog – a series of dated or undated, signed or unsigned “articles” that run in succession down a page, in the order posted. An example of such a blog is the “What’s New” page on the National Website ([blogs-it.cgaux.org/member\\_news.php](http://blogs-it.cgaux.org/member_news.php)). WOW features a built-in What’s New page type that could be used for an identical purpose.

Marking individual announcements with expiration dates allows the system to automatically expire and remove sections of a page after the entered end date. This permits a specific part of the page to be deleted automatically, without affecting the rest of the page, which will automatically “close up” over the expired announcement. The What’s New page of the National Website exhibits this behavior, with posts (announcements) that disappear on their end date.

Marking individual announcements as protected or unprotected permits you to add unprotected announcements on a page that the public can see, while protecting some content for view only to Auxiliary members who have logged in. Again, if the site visitor has not logged in, the page will close up over the hidden, or protected, content.

### *Protected Pages versus Protected Announcements*

As described above, WOW has the ability to protect individual announcements as well as complete pages. A protected announcement or page will not be displayed to a visitor unless that visitor is an Auxiliary member who had logged in with their Member Zone password.

On a WOW web site, the home page is always an unprotected page, although one or more announcements on that page may be protected at your discretion. With the exception of the Member’s Only page type, which is always protected, all other pages may be set as protected or unprotected, and each announcement on an unprotected page may also be designated as either protected or unprotected.

These protection features are useful, for example, if posting non-sensitive personally identifiable information (PII) such as member phone numbers or e-mail addresses, or announcements that might, for example, state that a particular Coast Guard senior officer will be present at a specific flotilla meeting.

Auxiliary policy generally prohibits public posting of PII, but by putting this information in a protected announcement or fully protected page, you would not be disclosing the private information to the public, and would therefore be meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act.

Note that you cannot secure documents that you have uploaded to your WOW site simply by putting the links to those documents on a protected page or in a protected announcement. The document itself is still “on the Internet”, and is easily (and almost certainly) discovered by search engines. To protect content, that content has to actually be *in* the protected announcement or page.

### WARNING

While the text on a protected page or announcement is not visible to the public, the same is not true for any documents stored on the server and linked to from the protected page/announcement. All uploaded documents on the server are visible on the Internet. See Appendix A regarding web site security requirements.

### External Links

WOW provides for both external navigation links (menu items on the left side navigation menu that directly link to outside web pages), as well as for hyperlinks on words or pictures in the WOW content area that then link to outside sites. External links added by you to the left menu (navigation area) will always open in a new window. However, if you add an external link inside your content area, you will have to specifically assure that the link opens up in a new window, by using advanced features of the WOW content editor, described below.

### Public Education Calendar

WOW will display entries in the National Public Calendar for upcoming courses being offered by your unit, and/or courses offered by nearby units, when the Zip Code course finder is used on the built-in Public Boating Courses Page. In order for your unit's courses to show up, your PE officer, or any elected officer, must log into your WOW website (if it exists) and navigate to the Public Boating Courses page, or into a special PE Calendar Website ([http://wow.uscgaux.info/PE\\_signin.php](http://wow.uscgaux.info/PE_signin.php)), and click to add the course to the database. Upon completing the entry, an electronic 7023 "Notice of Intent to Teach a Public Education Course" is automatically sent to the DSO-PE in your district, thus satisfying Auxiliary Manual requirements.

Expired PE courses automatically disappear from the public calendar available through any WOW site, but remain visible to the PE officer when maintaining the calendar from the WOW PE Dashboard (described below).

### Logging In and Out – The Member Zone

While read-only access to the public pages of WOW sites is available to anyone on the Internet, access to protected pages or announcements is restricted to Coast Guard Auxiliary or active-duty Coast Guard members who have "logged in". Log in credentials, called "Member Zone" credentials, give the member access to a variety of Auxiliary applications such as the AuxDirectory ("AuxOfficer"), Webforms, the CGAuxCen National Materials Center, the National Test Center, and of course WOW sites.

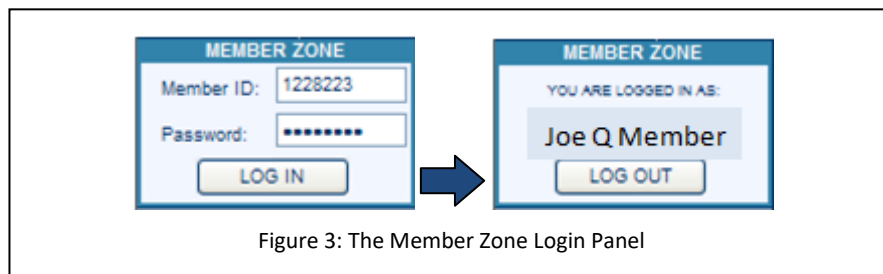


Figure 3: The Member Zone Login Panel

You must also log onto a WOW site in order to modify, or otherwise "configure" it, assuming you have the proper privileges (described below).

Members who have not yet set up a Member Zone password can visit <https://AuxDirectory.cgaux.org>, and click on “Add or Reactivate a Password”. A confirmation email will be sent to their *primary* email address in AuxData (from their membership application, or later change of member information form) which must be acknowledged within 15 minutes for the password to become valid. If the password issuance process fails, you are remembering your primary email address wrong, or it is not in AuxData. Ask your IS officer to check.

To log on to a WOW site, simply enter your 7-digit member ID, and your Member Zone password, into the Member Zone Panel in the left navigation area (see Figure 1), and click “Log In”. If you are successfully logged in, the Member Zone Panel will confirm that you are logged in (see Figure 3).

### The Configuration Process

WOW is a breakthrough for the Coast Guard Auxiliary because it allows “ordinary mortals” to create and modify a modern, basic unit website with “the push of a button”.

The process of creating and modifying a WOW site is called “configuration”. The system permits any officer with configuration privileges *in that unit* to create or modify the unit’s site.

Configuration privileges are automatically granted to the unit’s elected officers, including the “immediate past”, and the three officers concerned with the unit’s “public image” – the communications services officer, the publications officer, and the public affairs officer. The configuration privilege extends “up the chains” (elected and parallel-staffing) to the division and district level, so that officers at these levels can configure WOW sites in the units below them. Although this is not typically done, it provides a simple means of rendering assistance and oversight to the lower-level unit.

Table 2 below shows the standard set of configuration privileges. In order to configure a WOW II site, you *must* be listed as one of these officers in [AuxDirectory](#) (aka *AuxOfficer*), and you must be “logged in” (above). If *AuxDirectory* shows you have the proper privileges, a “Configure Site” menu item will appear in the left navigation area, directly above the Search Panel (see “Building Your Website in WOW”, below). If you do not get the “Configure Site” menu, do *not* turn in a trouble ticket, but check the *AuxDirectory* first. If you are not shown as holding one of these offices, check with your IS officer to confirm your appointments shows in *AuxData*. *Recent changes to AuxData are copied to AuxDirectory four (4) times per day (every six hours).*

### Your WOW Website’s Standard Web Address (Canonical URL)

All units in the Auxiliary, whether or not they have created a WOW website, have a predefined WOW address (“URL”) on the Web. That address consists of the unit’s “canonical” unit number (e.g., 015-14-04), *without dashes*, constructed into a standard URL, as follows (“DDD” is the 3-digit district number, “dd” is the two-digit division number, and “ff” is the two-digit flotilla number).

Standardized WOW Site URLs:

Table 2: WOW Configuration Privileges
<p>MAY CONFIGURE OWN DISTRICT AND SUBORDINATE DIVISION, AND FLOTILLA SITES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DCO</li> <li>• DCOS</li> <li>• IPDCO</li> <li>• DSO-CS, ADSO-CS</li> <li>• DSO-PA, ADSO-PA</li> <li>• DSO-PB, ADSO-PB</li> <li>• DSO-PE<sup>‡</sup>, ADSO-PE</li> </ul>
<p>MAY CONFIGURE OWN DIVISION, AND SUBORDINATE FLOTILLA SITES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DCDR</li> <li>• VCDR</li> <li>• IPDCDR</li> <li>• SO-CS</li> <li>• SO-PA</li> <li>• SO-PB</li> <li>• SO-PE<sup>‡</sup></li> </ul>
<p>MAY CONFIGURE FLOTILLA SITES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FC</li> <li>• VFC</li> <li>• IPFC</li> <li>• FSO-CS</li> <li>• FSO-PA</li> <li>• FSO-PB</li> <li>• FSO-PE<sup>‡</sup></li> </ul>
<p><sup>‡</sup> PE Officers may configure Public Education Calendars Only</p>

Flotillas: aDDDDdff.wow.uscgaux.info (e.g. a1141204.wow.uscgaux.info)  
Divisions: aDDDDd.wow.uscgaux.info (e.g. a01504.wow.uscgaux.info)  
Districts: aDDD.wow.uscgaux.info (e.g. a113.wow.uscgaux.info)

Thus, entering the canonical WOW URL <http://a1141204.wow.uscgaux.info> into a web browser will take you to the WOW site for flotilla 12-4, in District 11SR (“114”).

In order to log onto your WOW II site, you simply log directly onto the WOW II platform at its main address, and provide your unit number during logon.

*Your canonical URL is the only “official” URL of your WOW II site!* Never post, submit to National, or provide to the public via brochures or flyers any other address, particularly ones that are constructed of the form <http://wow.uscgaux.info?unit=114-12-08> or <http://dev02.cgaux.org...> followed by anything!

### Logging Onto the WOW II Platform Directly

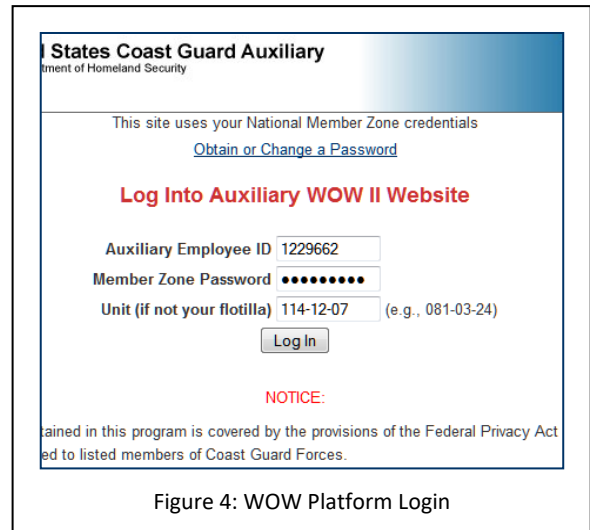
The WOW II platform is located at:

<http://wow.uscgaux.info>

Point your web browser at the above URL and you will be confronted with the WOW II sign-in page, shown at the right. Enter your Member ID, password, and the canonical unit number of the unit whose WOW site you wish to configure, and click the “Log In” button.

WOW II sites are either *disabled* or *enabled* for public view. For new WOW-II sites, the default is “disabled”. The *best practice* is to *keep the WOW II site disabled* while working on it (as described below), except for brief periods of time when you wish to see exactly what the public will see, in which case you would *enable the site* (according to procedures below), browse to it, and *log out*. You then can step through the site and confirm that protected pages or announcement are hidden, etc.

After such a review, log back in, using the login panel on the actual WOW website, and again *disable* the site. This prevents the public from viewing the partially-complete or not-yet-approved site. Remember that disabled sites may only be visited by logging on to the main WOW sign-in panel.





## Building Your Website in WOW II

The actual process of building a WOW II website is discussed in the sections below.

### First-time Visit to Your WOW II Site

When you access your unit's WOW II website for the first time, a default Home Page is automatically displayed (see Figure 1 above). This default, which is the same for all units in the Auxiliary, will remain until a custom announcement is added by the unit specifically to the Home Page. If all announcements are ever removed from the Home Page in the future, the default text will again be displayed. This ensures that all unit home pages will always have a welcome message for visitors.

In addition, your site will have three (3) other default pages, two of which are *built in*, and cannot be changed by you. These are the "About [this Unit]" page, which will be accessed by a left menu link such as "About Flotilla 10-2" or "About Division 7", A "Staff List page", showing your unit's elected and appointed officers by name, and the "Public Boating Courses" page. If the unit teaches no public boating courses, this page and the link to it can be removed. The "About" and "Staff List" page cannot be moved, changed, or removed. Additionally, the "Staff List" menu item appears only when its "parent menu" "About" is selected. Figure 5 shows this default page set.

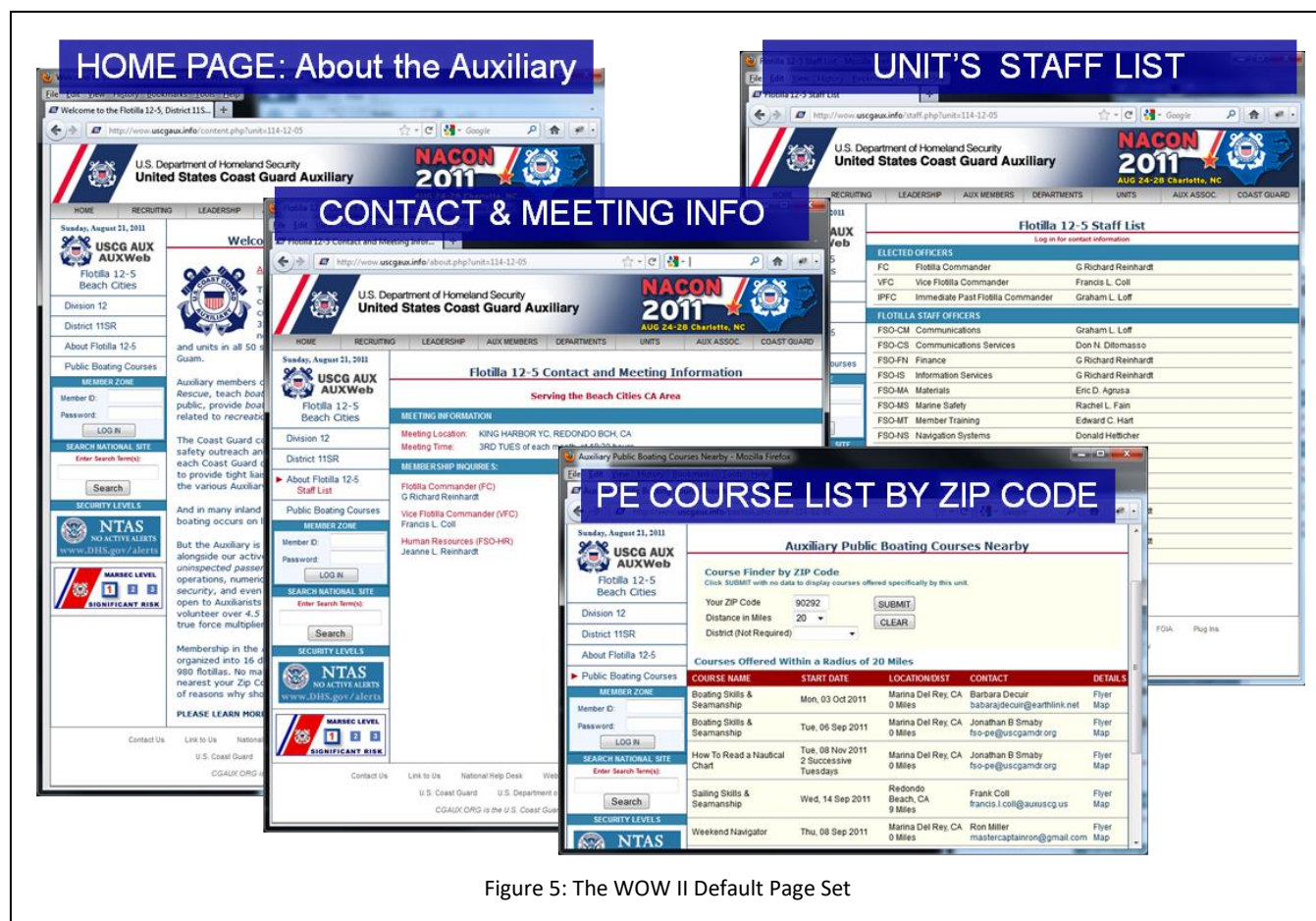


Figure 5: The WOW II Default Page Set

Many small units may stop right at this point, enable this site for public view, without ever needing to add additional content. The WOW system will keep the site up to date, with the latest staff list and contact information – as well as local public education information – without any further interaction with you or your unit. However, with the simplicity of WOW's pushbutton website model, most units will wish to add additional content, and external links, as time goes on.

## Adding Content to Your WOW II Site

To add additional links, pages and to edit content, WOW provides a *Configuration Dashboard*, from which all WOW “editing” (configuring or programming) is done.

After logging in, if you have the proper privileges according to Table 2, “Configure Site” will appear in the menu, just above the Member Zone login panel (see Figure 6, right). Simply click on “Configure Site” to access the Configuration Dashboard.

When the WOW Dashboard appears (see Figure 7, below), you will note that it consists of a “menu area” on the left, below the dark blue box, and a “working area”, to the right. When the dashboard first appears, the working area contains WOW II’s “What’s New” blog, which every person using the system should either subscribe to, using the provided subscription buttons, or should read each visit

The menu area is divided into three sections, set off by light blue boxes: “Edit Active Items”, “Add New Menu Item”, and “WOW Utilities”.

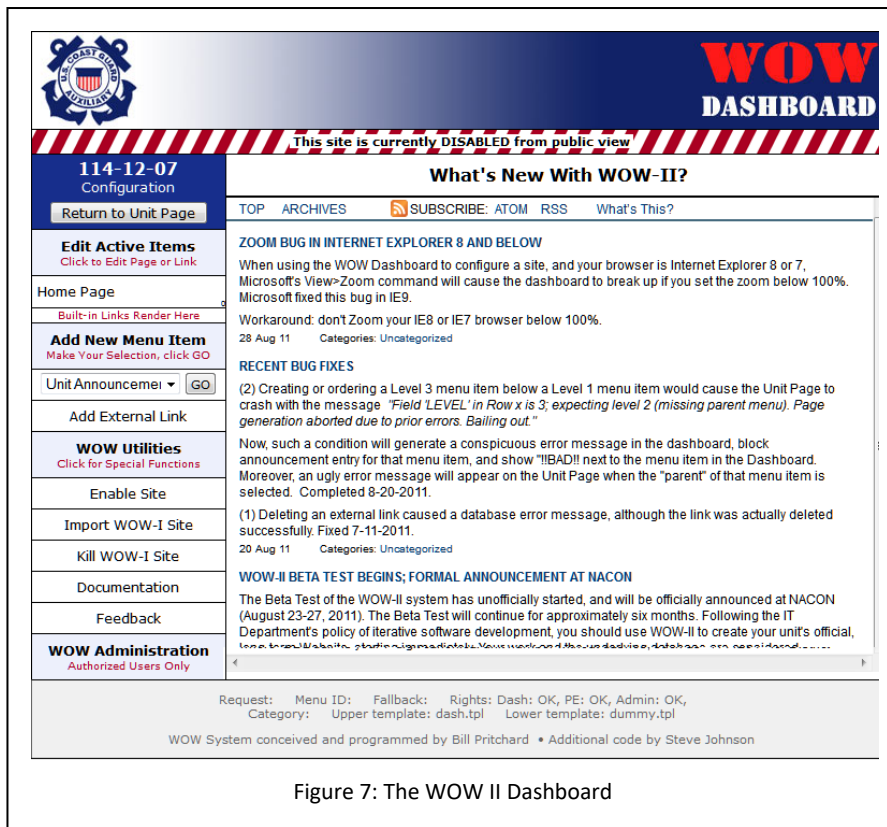


Figure 7: The WOW II Dashboard

links, while “Add External” permits you to add “offsite links” to the left menu system.

*Return to Unit Page*, the button in the dark blue area at the top of the Dashboard Menu will return you to your WOW website so that you may view the effects of your changes. **WARNING:** this action will discard any unsaved menu or content changes you might be making, so be sure to **SAVE** whatever you are doing first (see below).

*Configuration*, a stealthy link which shows immediately above the Return to Unit Page button, will always bring you back to the “home” view of the dashboard, as shown in Figure 7. It will also discard any editing in progress, and its use is unnecessary, unless you wish to check the “What’s New” blog on the Dashboard home page.

*WOW Utilities* are special functions whose purpose, while obvious, will be explained below.

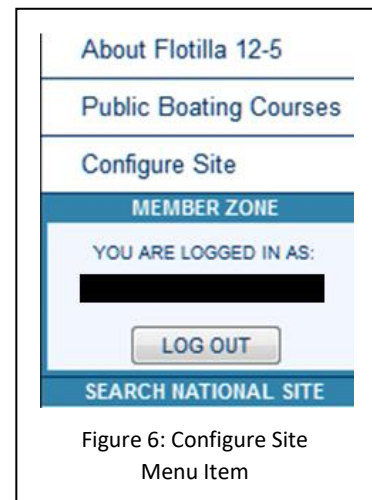


Figure 6: Configure Site Menu Item

and “WOW Utilities”. At the top is the unit’s canonical unit number, and a button “Return to Unit Page” which will exit the dashboard and display the WOW site. Refer to Figure 7, below.

*Active Items* refers to pages that are *already* in your site. As this site is a first-time “default” site, the only active menu item consists of the Home Page. However, if you had previously added a half-dozen new pages or external links to the site, then those menu items would appear, in order, below the Home Page button, and above “New Menu Items”.

*New Menu Items* refers to pages or external links that have not yet been added to your WOW site’s left menu system. A *pull-down menu* with an adjacent “GO” button allows the creation of new *internal* pages and

## Adding New Pages - General

New pages are added to a WOW site in the “Add New Menu Item” section on the Configuration Dashboard, via the pulldown menu immediately below that text. In Figure 8, to the right, that pulldown menu is shown with the red arrow. *WOW creates the new page and its matching link in the left menu simultaneously.*

The pulldown menu offers up to nine (9) basic page types, as shown in Table 1 on Page 3.

As each basic page type is chosen and added to the site, it disappears from the pulldown menu, and appears as an Active Item in the upper list (ref. “Public Boating Courses” to the right).

With the exception of “Public Boating Courses”, which brings in a special Boating Courses Calendar module that is not configurable, all of the other page types are identical, except for the built-in caption that appears automatically at the top of each page, and the actual menu entry in the left navigation area.

The expectation is, however, that you will find these built-in page types convenient for certain recurring themes across Auxiliary websites, for example:

**Unit Announcements:** May be used for a sequential set of brief, dated or undated announcements;

**Calendar:** Create an “agenda” based calendar (sequential items), or display a Google Calendar feed (or other provider) right on the page;

**Member Training:** May be used for a sequential set of brief, dated or undated announcements related specifically to member training;

**Members Only:** Use for announcement or content that is protected from public view. Note: *any* page and *any* announcement may similarly be protected. Content on the Members Only page cannot be *unprotected*. A Member Zone (MZ) warning appears if the visitor is not logged on (Figure 9).

**Meeting Schedule:** A basic meeting location and day, for use by the general public, automatically appears on the built-in “About [Unit xx-xx]” page; you may use the Meeting Schedule page to post agenda items for *specific meetings*, or otherwise supplement the public information;

**Uniforms:** You may wish to consolidate uniform wearing and acquisition information in one place, with posts and external links to resources;

**What’s New:** This can be running blog of what’s new in the flotilla, or what’s new with the website, or both.

To add an “empty” page of the chosen type to the Website, choose the type in the pulldown menu, shown in Figure 10 to the left, and click “GO”. In the

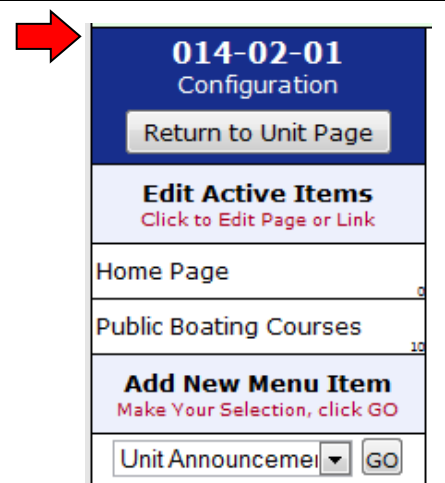


Figure 9: Member Zone Warning For Protected Pages Such as “Members Only”

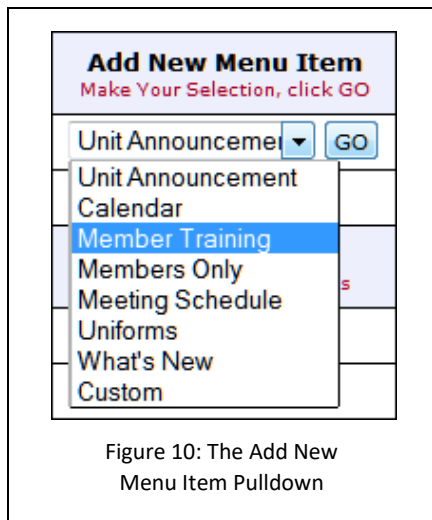


Figure 10: The Add New Menu Item Pulldown



dashboard, the following “Add Built-in Menu Item” dialog box shown below in Figure 11 will immediately appear. In this dialog box, there are four (4) configurable items: Menu Tip, Menu Order, Menu Level, and Protected. The Menu Tip is the text you are used to seeing when you mouse over a link on a web page. If you would like your menu tip to be more descriptive than the default shown, change the text, paying attention to spelling and grammar, and hit SAVE MENU.

Menu Order and Menu Level will be explained below. Protected determines whether or not you want to protect the *entire* page. Click “Yes” or “No”. (Note: on a “Members Only” page, “No” will automatically be forced to “Yes”.)

After you click SAVE MENU, the menu item will move to the Active Items portion of the Dashboard Menu, and you will be confronted with a blank “Add New Announcement” message and button below the Menu Area pictured above. The procedure for posting announcements is below.

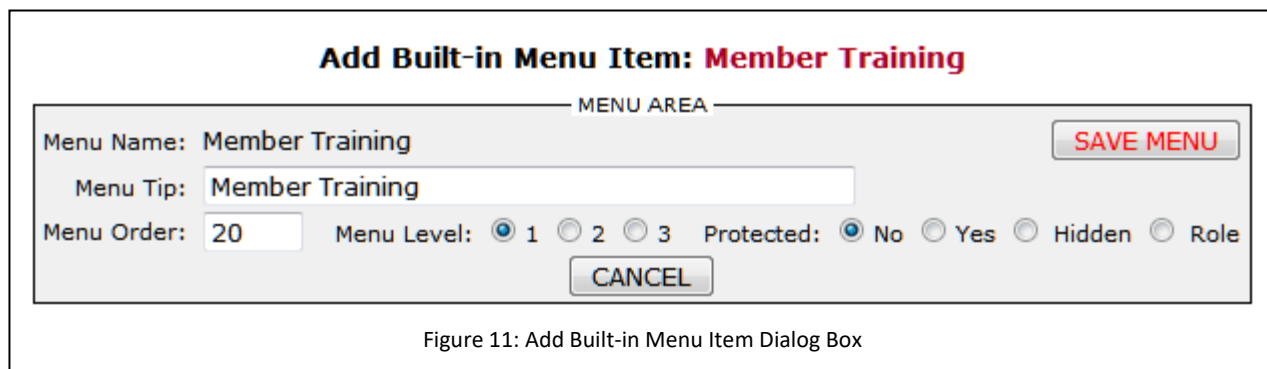


Figure 11: Add Built-in Menu Item Dialog Box

### Adding Custom Pages

If none of these built-in page types appeal to you, or you need a link in the left menu that is not one of the pre-configured types, then you simply choose “Custom” as the Menu Item.

Custom pages differ from the standard page types in that you may determine both the text that shows in the left menu, as well as the caption (title) on the page. Thus, if you want a page titled “Job Aids for Vessel Examiners”, and a left menu link entitled “VE Job Aid Kit”, you would select the “Custom” menu item type from the pulldown menu under “Add New Menu Item”.

Custom menu items display a slightly different dialog box, shown in Figure 12; you must supply, in title case (capitalize words), where it says “Menu Name”, a *brief, descriptive set of text* that will appear in the left menu. *Keep it short; if it wraps to two lines on the website, it looks terrible, so rephrase it if necessary.*

For example, if you are putting in a link and page to display the Southern California AIS Site, you will probably make your menu item read “SoCal AIS” or “SoCal AIS Feed”, whatever fits *and does not wrap*.

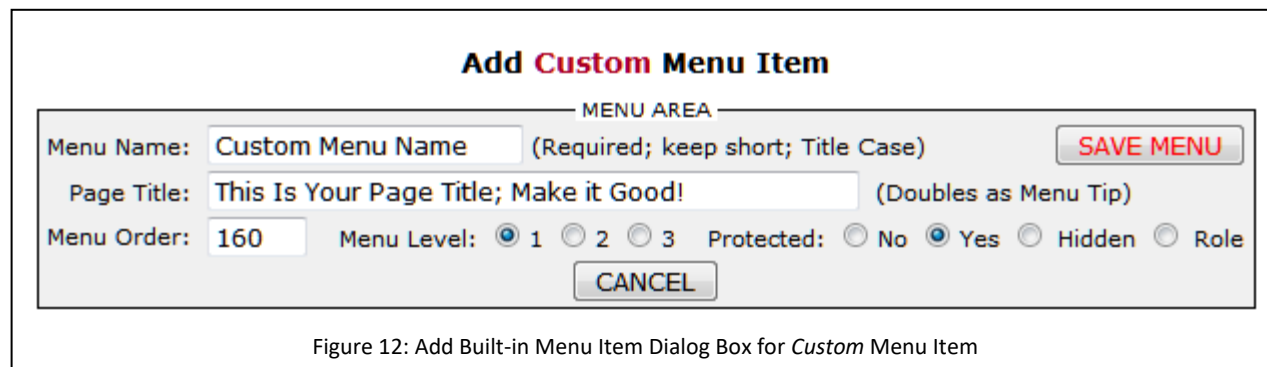


Figure 12: Add Built-in Menu Item Dialog Box for Custom Menu Item

Finally, in addition to control over the actual “menu name”, with custom menu items you also have control over the main caption on the page, which you supply in the text box labeled “Page Title”. As before, use Title Case, and

create a brief, one-line page title that is harmonious with the Menu Item name. For example, in the previous AIS example, you might write “Southern California Live AIS Targets”, or some such. Again, you must SAVE MENU to insert this custom menu item and page into your site. Note that the Page Title also doubles as the menu tip in this case.

### Protecting a Page; Hidden Pages; Role-based Pages

WOW pages are normally visible to the general public. Pages that contain information intended for members only should be “protected”, by clicking “Protected: Yes” in the Menu Area (see Figure 12, above). Protected pages require members to log onto the WOW site with their Member Zone credentials.

“Hidden” protection allows the creation of a page that has no corresponding left menu entry. Its use for page development, form confirmation, and more is further described in the Application Note “Using Hidden Pages”.

“Role” protection prevents both the page *and the left menu link to the page* from being visible unless the Member is both logged on *and has a specific role in the Auxiliary* (office or qualification). For example, the Operations Training Officer (OTO) may wish to have a page on a District WOW site visible *only* to Qualification Examiners (QE’s).

Role-based pages are described in the Application Note “Creating Roles-based Pages”.

### Posting Content to a Page – The “Announcement”

After adding a new page, WOW creates the entire page – top banner, top menu, left menu and footer, content area and page title – automatically. The page title is predetermined if a standard page type was used, or is the title (caption) that you supplied in the “menu area” dashboard, when you first created the page.

For all new pages, including the Home page, the main content area is initially blank, until you post one or more announcements to the page (default Home page content does not appear).

When you have created the page, using Add New Menu Item, and you have saved the entry with the SAVE MENU button, you will be presented with the dashboard shown in Figure 13 to the right.

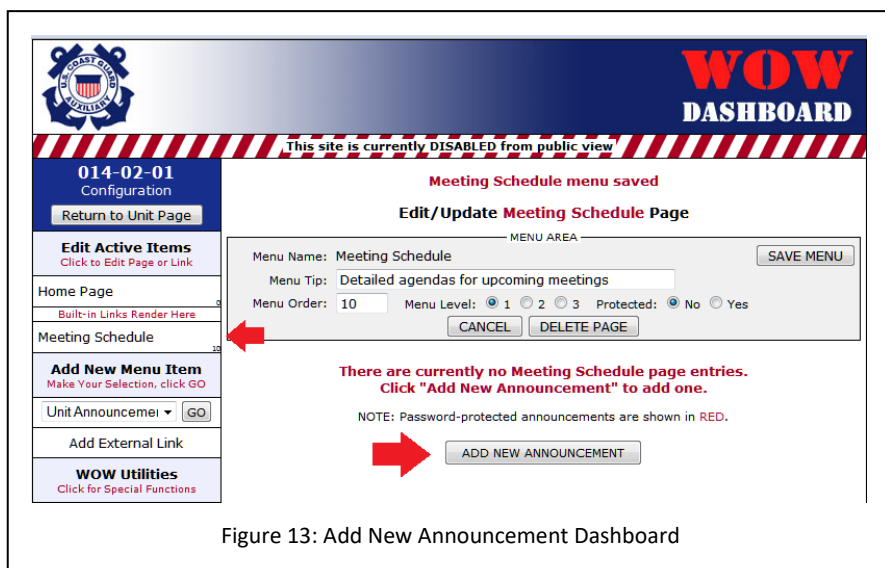


Figure 13: Add New Announcement Dashboard

Note how “Meeting Schedule”, the item just added, has appeared in the “Active Items” list (smaller red arrow). If you returned to the Unit Page at this point, you would see “Meeting Schedule” in the left menu, below the built-in menu items, and clicking it would display a page empty of content.

To post a new announcement, simply click ADD NEW ANNOUNCEMENT, shown in Figure 13 by the large red arrow, and the Announcement Entry Page, shown in Figure 14, will appear.

On this page, you will note the following text entry fields and controls:

- **Caption:** An optional caption or *headline* for the announcement. The field includes a check box “Show on Page”. Checking the box causes the caption to appear in a heading font on the web page. Show captions when you are interested in creating a blog-like page with headlines for each successive “post”. Default is OFF.
- **Posted By:** The name of the person posting the announcement. This is pre-loaded with your name (if you are the person logged on), but like Caption, its “Show on Page” defaults to OFF. If you are using captions to create a series of blog-like articles or announcements, and you wish to identify the “author”, then show this field also. Note that if you are not the originator of the content, you may replace your name with that of any other, or even simply a title, like “Flotilla Commander”.
- **Posted Date:** This field, which you may change, is typically only used when the Caption and Posted By options are also ON.
- **Protected:** Check “No” or “Yes” to determine if this announcement will or will not display if the site visitor is not logged on. If “Yes”, and the visitor is not logged on, the page will “close up” over this hidden announcement, with visible content below it moving up.
- **Start Date:** Automatically set by WOW to “today”. If you change this to a date in the future, the announcement will not appear until 12:01 AM on that date. This feature is useful for editing content for future display, but not actually having it appear until a desired date is reached. Times are referenced to GMT.
- **Sequence:** On pages with multiple announcements, this number will allow you to force the order each announcement will be displayed on the page. Lower numbers display before higher numbers. The system automatically sequences new announcements by “10”, so that you may easily move items around later, and you

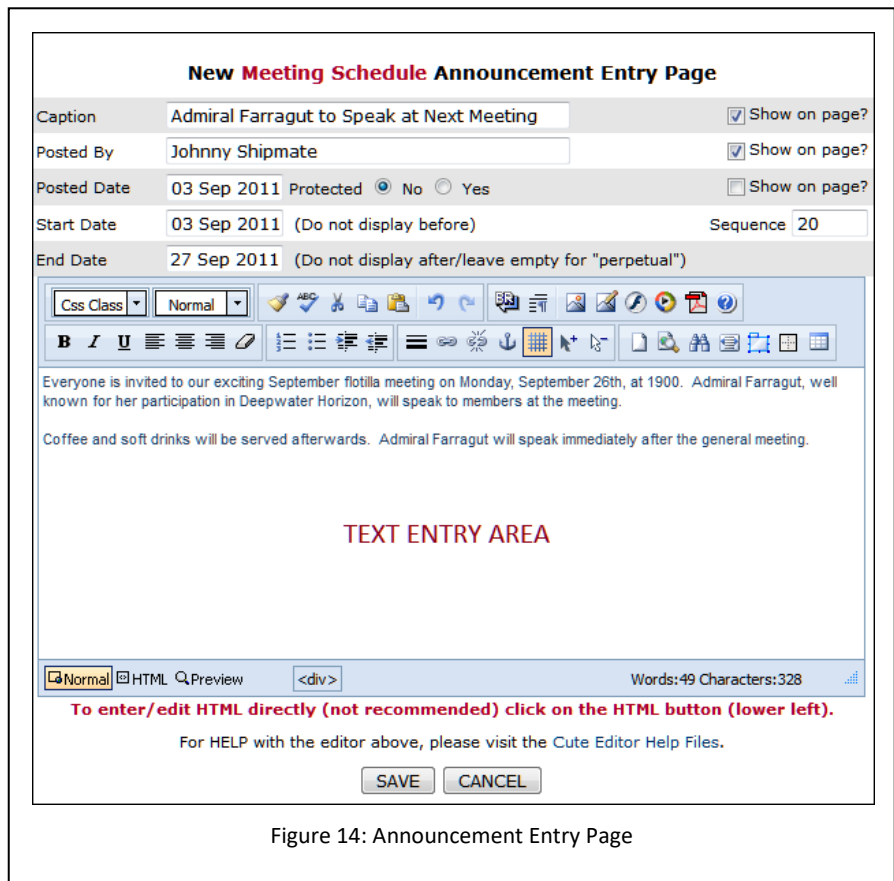


Figure 14: Announcement Entry Page

**Edit/Update Sample Custom Page Page**

— MENU AREA —

Menu Name:  (Required; keep short; Title Case)

Page Title:  (Doubles as Menu Tip)

Menu Order:  Menu Level:  1  2  3 Protected:  No  Yes

EDIT	ORDER	START DATE	END DATE	CAPTION	POSTED BY	POSTED DATE
<input type="button" value="EDIT"/>	20	24 Aug 2011		Sample Announcement 1	Joe Q Member	24 Aug 2011
<input type="button" value="EDIT"/>	40	24 Aug 2011		Sample Announcement 2	Joe Q Member	24 Aug 2011

NOTE: Password-protected announcements are shown in RED.

Figure 15: Edit/Update Announcement Dashboard

should keep the same discipline, if you manually set the field. Note: “Sequence” is ignored on “What’s New” pages, which automatically display in reverse order of posted date – that is, with newest on top.

- End Date: If this field is blank, the announcement will always be displayed. If you enter a date, the announcement will only be displayed until that date has passed (i.e., it “expires” at midnight). By default, WOW assumes “perpetual”, and initially sets this field blank; change it as you require. NOTE: Although expired announcements do not show on the WOW

website, they remain visible in the dashboard for future reuse.

- Text Area: The Text Area is where you type or paste the “body” of your announcement. For classic, perpetual, narrative-type web pages (with text and optional images), you can dispense with everything above (captions, etc.) and simply enter all your content here, in multiple paragraphs, if desired. For blog-like pages, use the text area for the content introduced by your headline (caption).

The Text Area is actually a sophisticated “What You See is What You Get” (WYSIWYG) editor with numerous options, including the ability to work in HTML, the underlying “language” of the World Wide Web. Additional usage details are outlined in the “Advanced WOW Usage” chapter, in the section titled “Using the Announcement Text Editor”.

Utilizing the fields and controls above, create your announcement and click the SAVE button. If you click CANCEL, or any item in the left menu before you click SAVE, your work will be discarded.

**Editing and Deleting an Existing Announcement**

To edit an existing announcement, log in and navigate to the WOW Dashboard, and choose the page containing the announcement from the list under “Edit Active Items”. Once there, all current announcements for that page are listed in sort order. You can then select an announcement for editing by clicking on the EDIT button for that announcement, or you can click on ADD NEW ANNOUNCEMENT to add a new announcement to the page, as described above.

When you click on EDIT, you are presented with the identical dashboard as you were with “Add New Announcement”, except that the caption reads “Edit/Update xyz Page”. Otherwise, the functionality is the same as adding a new announcement, with the exception of a “DELETE THIS ANNOUNCEMENT” button at the bottom of the panel.

To *delete* any announcement, simply click the DELETE... button. It will immediately be replaced with a button entitled “CONFIRM DELETION”. You may either *cancel* at this point, with the CANCEL button, or confirm deletion. At that point, your announcement is not recoverable.

WARNING: Remember to SAVE any new announcement or edited announcement before navigating away from the Add/Edit/Update Page panels. If you click on any menu item in the dashboard, particularly “Return to Unit Page” (which takes you back to your website and closes the dashboard), any edits that you made will be lost.

### Determining the Order of Announcements on the Page

If a page has more than one announcement, the announcements are sorted into a predictable order depending upon the page type.

- What’s New announcements – automatically sorted in newest posted date order (newest on top). Cannot be altered by unit CS team. What’s New announcements will always be shown with the newest on top, with those announcements that have passed their Stop Dates not being displayed.
- Calendar page announcements – automatically sorted in start date order. As with any other page, any calendar announcements with a stop date entered (i.e., the Stop Date field is not blank) are no longer displayed after the stop date has passed.
- All other announcements – Automatically sorted in order of the *Sequence Number* you may enter on an Announcement Entry Page. Lower sequence numbers sort to the top.

### Adding External Links (Navigation Menu Items)

Links to other websites may be created and displayed in the left menu.

These are called “external links”. You may find it convenient to provide links to other Coast Guard Units, on-line forms (such as the Webform 7029), your unit’s social media site, or any other website that may be beneficial to your members or the public visiting your site.

An External Link is simply a “New Menu Item” that does not simultaneously create a new page on your WOW website.

Since you are in effect taking the visitor away from your site, an external link should nearly always open in a new window – which is the default behavior unless you override it (see below). We say “nearly always” because you might be linking to your own non-WOW site and want the visitor to have a seamless experience, in which case you could override the default.

To create an External Link, click on the “Add External Link” in the WOW Dashboard, located as shown by the red arrow in Figure 16. The following panel will open up:

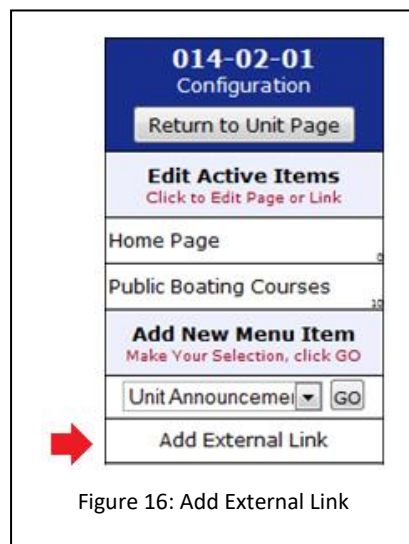


Figure 16: Add External Link

**Add External-Link Menu Item**

MENU AREA

Menu Category **EXTERNAL** SAVE MENU

Menu Name:  Keep short; allow no wrapping.

Menu Tip:

Menu URL:

Menu Order:  Menu Level  1  2  3 New Window  Yes  No

CANCEL

Figure 17: Add External Link

The fields and controls are as follows:

- Menu Name is the text that you want to show up in the left menu, identical to a “Custom” menu item. *Keep the item short; do not allow it to wrap, which makes your site look unprofessional.* Also, use “Title Case”, explained above.
- Menu Tip is the text that you want to pop up when the visitor mouses over the link. This should be descriptive, and can be a *label*, such as “Coast Guard Tall Ship Eagle”, as shown in the example, or can be a sentence, for example “Visit the US Coast Guard Cutter Eagle’s own website!”
- Menu URL is the actual address on the Web of the web page you are linking to. Usually, you can simply visit that site, copy the link out of the address bar of your browser, and paste it here.
- Menu Order sets the order in which this link displays in your site’s left menu area.
- Menu Level is explained under *Hierarchical Menus*, below.
- New Window determines whether or not the link forces the browser to open a new window for the linked website or page. Default (and recommended practice ) is “Yes”.

After you enter the above information, click SAVE MENU to save your work. You will get a confirmation page, and the External Link will appear by name in the Active Items list in the Dashboard. Next, click the “Return to Unit Page” button to see your link in the WOW site’s menu, *and be sure to test it!*

### ***Controlling the Order of Menu Item Display***

Other than the Home page, and the About and Staff List pages that are always shown as the top items in the left menu of your WOW website, you have full control of the order in which pages are displayed in the menu. As shown in Figure 18, you may specify Menu Order when editing a page in the Dashboard, and the number determines the location of that page in the menu. Pages will always display from low numbers to high. 35 is (circled), and Members Only is 40. If you wish to move Members Only *above* Unit Announcement but *below* Public Boating Courses, then you must set its Menu Order between 10 and 35. In the example, we are changing it to “30”, which will cause it to trade places with Unit Announcement. To assist you in moving pages around, for each Active Item in the menu, the WOW Dashboard shows you the current Menu Order for each item, with a tiny number in the lower-right corner of the menu button. In the example in Figure 18, the Home page is zero, Public Boating Courses is 10, Unit Announcement. Note that the location of the two built-in menu items that you cannot edit, the “About this [Unit]” page, and the “Staff List” page, is shown in the Dashboard menu as “Built-in Links Render Here”, immediately below the Home Page “button”.



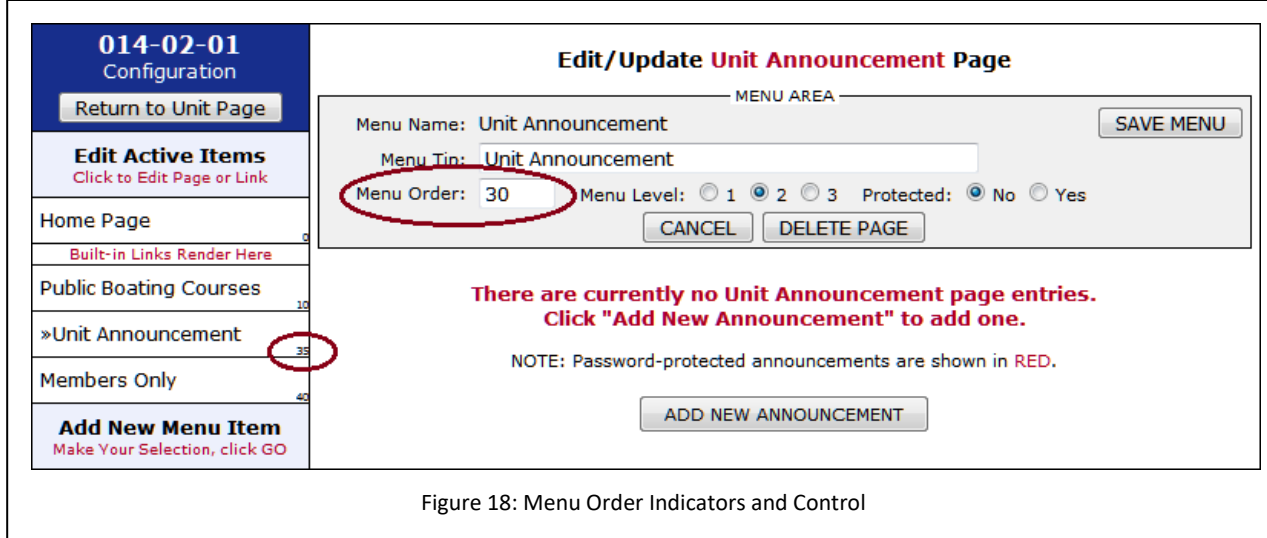


Figure 18: Menu Order Indicators and Control

## Deleting Entire Pages

If you wish to delete an entire page and its left menu entry, simply navigate to that page in the Dashboard. In the MENU AREA, click the DELETE PAGE button (see Figure 19).

### No Announcements

If the page has no announcements (the one in Figure 19 has two (2) announcements), you will receive the dialog box shown in Figure 20 for an *empty* page. Simply click the PROCEED button (red arrow) and the page will be deleted from the website, as well as its left menu entry.

### One or More Announcements

In the event that the page you wish to delete has one or more announcements, the system forces you to think about what you are doing. It is possible you are accidentally about to delete a page with a significant amount of carefully-created content, and were you to do so, the content would be irreparably lost.

As a consequence, you must take three (3) specific actions:

1. You must check the checkbox to confirm deletion of the named page;
2. You must enter the Member Number you logged in with, and
3. You must click the PROCEED button.

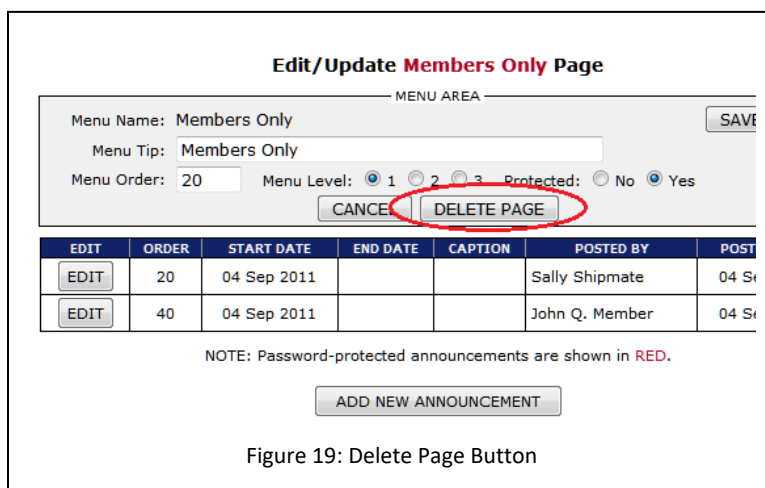


Figure 19: Delete Page Button

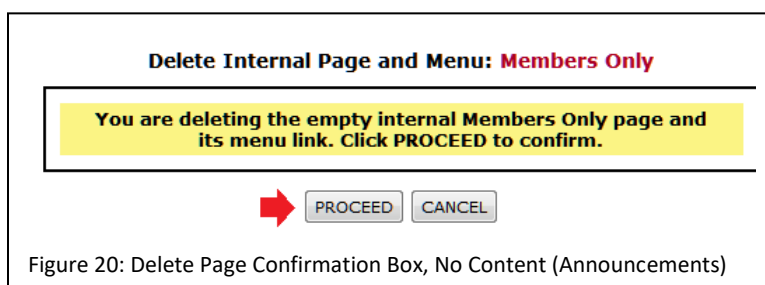
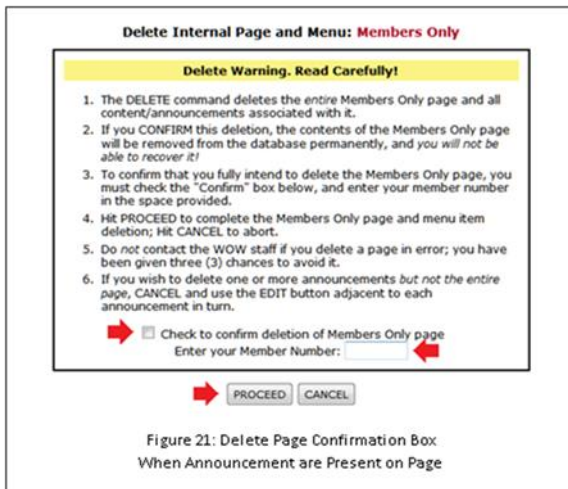


Figure 20: Delete Page Confirmation Box, No Content (Announcements)



In theory, this process has been idiot-proofed. Therefore, if you still manage to accidentally delete a page with important content, please do not contact the IT support group to “get your content back”. We can’t.

As an alternative to this three step process, you may individually delete the announcements on this page, and then hit the DELETE PAGE button, to get the simple confirmation box in Figure 20.

## Public Boating Courses Page – Zip Code Course

### Finder

One of the best features of the WOW system is that you can automatically include a Public Boating Courses page in your WOW site, and give prospective students access to the *National Public Education Database*. Any WOW site showing a Public Boating Courses page offers students a Zip Code Course Finder; they simply type in their Zip Code, a search radius in miles, and click SUBMIT. In return, they instantly get a list of courses being offered within that distance.

In Figure 22, a visitor in Marina Del Rey, CA, entered her Zip Code of 90292, and a 20-mile search radius. The course finder listed six (6) upcoming courses within that radius that are being taught by three (3) different flotillas. (If she had omitted the Zip Code, and simply clicked “SUBMIT”, only this unit’s courses would have displayed).

**Auxiliary Public Boating Courses Nearby**

**Course Finder by ZIP Code**  
Click SUBMIT with no data to display courses offered specifically by this unit.

Your ZIP Code:    
 Distance in Miles:    
 District (Not Required):

**Courses Offered Within a Radius of 20 Miles**

COURSE NAME	START DATE	LOCATION/DIST	CONTACT	DETAILS
Boating Skills & Seamanship	Mon, 03 Oct 2011	Marina Del Rey, CA 0 Miles	Barbara Decuir babarajdecuir@earthlink.net	Flyer Map
Boating Skills & Seamanship	Tue, 06 Sep 2011	Marina Del Rey, CA 0 Miles	Jonathan B Smaby fso-pe@uscgamdr.org	Flyer Map
How To Read a Nautical Chart	Tue, 08 Nov 2011 2 Successive Tuesdays	Marina Del Rey, CA 0 Miles	Jonathan B Smaby fso-pe@uscgamdr.org	Flyer Map
Sailing Skills & Seamanship	Wed, 14 Sep 2011	Redondo Beach, CA 9 Miles	Frank Coll francis.i.coll@auxuscg.us	Flyer Map
Weekend Navigator	Thu, 08 Sep 2011	Marina Del Rey, CA 0 Miles	Ron Miller mastercaptainron@gmail.com	Flyer Map
Weekend Navigator	Thu, 01 Dec 2011 1 Day	Marina Del Rey, CA 0 Miles	Dobinston Cumskaves co-op@basin-c.net	Flyer Map

Figure 22: Zip Code Course Finder on WOW Public Boating Courses Page

### Online 7023 Form

Data in the database for *your* unit is entered by *your* Public Education (PE) officer (or Flotilla Commander or Flotilla Vice Commander) using an online *Form 7023: Notice of Intent to Teach a Public Education Course*. That online Form 7023 is built right into your WOW website, and when completed, automatically emails an electronic 7023 to your



district’s DSO-PE, satisfying notification requirements. (If you don’t yet have a WOW website, a separate dashboard is provided for the PE officer at [http://wow.uscgaux.info/PE\\_signin.php](http://wow.uscgaux.info/PE_signin.php)).

### Course Flyers and Google Maps

On the course finder in Figure 22, you will note “Flyer” and “Map” (red circle) for each course listed.

“Map” brings up a Google Map of the location of your course, based upon the address that your PE officer entered in the Online 7023. A bad address will yield a bad map.

“Flyer” generates, on the fly, a complete, one-page *course flyer* for the selected course that can be printed by the prospective student on his or her printer. The flyer includes a copy of the course syllabus, an interactive map that can be zoomed before printing, and a complete description of the course location, time, dates, costs, contact information, and other information from the Online 7023.

A copy of the flyer is shown on the second page following.

It is also possible, in the Zip Code Course Finder, to see all courses being offered in an Auxiliary district. This feature is most useful to DSO-PEs, who can quickly find out *which* flotillas are entering their courses online, and which ones aren’t.

### Entering a PE Course in the Online 7023 Form

In Figure 22 on the previous page, an “Add/Edit Courses” button displayed at the bottom of the Zip Code Course Finder. This button only appears if the member is logged in, *and has the rights to enter a course* into the Online 7023 Notice of Intent to Teach form. Currently, those rights are extended to the elected leaders, the PE officer, and the CS officer. Note that similar to the regular WOW configuration model, division and district officers may make entries in behalf of units below them.

To bring up the Online 7023, click on the “Add/Edit Courses” button, and the “Add/Edit Public Boating Courses” Dashboard will appear, listing all courses currently being offered (or were offered in the past), by the unit you logged on from, *and all units below*. (I.E., if you logged on at the division level, your dashboard will list all courses taught by

Figure 24: Online Form 7023 Notice of Intent to Teach a Public Education Course

Add/Edit Public Boating Courses						
114-12-04						
EDIT DETAILS	CODE	DESCRIPTION	CITY	START DATE	CONTACT/EMAIL	PREVIEW FLYER
<input type="button" value="EDIT"/>	BS&S	Boating Skills & Seamanship	Marina Del Rey	Tue, 06 Sep 2011	Jonathan B Smaby	<a href="#">Preview Flyer</a>
<input type="button" value="EDIT"/>	HRNC	How To Read a Nautical Chart	Marina Del Rey	Tue, 08 Nov 2011	Jonathan B Smaby	<a href="#">Preview Flyer</a>

Figure 23: The Add/Edit Public Boating Courses Dashboard

your *division* (unlikely), as well as courses being taught by the flotillas in your division.) Figure 23 shows this dashboard.

## Add New Course

To add a new course, simply click the ADD NEW COURSE button, and the form at the right will appear.

If you are a flotilla, your unit number will automatically be entered in "Choose Unit". If, however, you are editing from a higher unit (division or district), then you must select the unit offering the course from the Choose Unit pulldown menu. *Only courses that are in your "chain" will be shown.*

Simply complete all required items, and click the SAVE button. If you make any errors, you will be so informed. Hints about coding of each of the fields are shown on the form.

## Be Accurate

The interactive map and the flyer will only be as accurate as the address you specify. *Do not guess!* Make sure you have the exact legal address of the location of your course, and that you spell it correctly. WOW uses web services from Google and Yahoo! to "geocode" the address that you enter, and if you enter "Bakker St." when the address is "Baker Ave." (two errors) the geocoding may indicate a location on the map far from your venue (WOW defaults to the center of the Zip Code with a bad address). Fortunately, as soon as you have successfully entered your course, you can "Preview Flyer", directly from the dashboard (see the extreme right of each course record in Figure 23).

If the map shows the course in the wrong location, then you have likely made a typo of some sort. (If you entered the address perfectly, both Google and Yahoo have online services to correct the location of a geocoded address. That is beyond the scope of this User's Guide.)

## Address Entry Tricks for the PE Course Database

An Application Note entitled "Address Entry Tricks for the Public Education Database" is available that includes a special section for units in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well. Prior to 2015, the PE database sometimes had trouble resolving some addresses outside the 50 states. The code was updated in 2015 to address this issue.

The application note explains in detail how the PE Dashboard validates the addresses you enter, and gives you tips and tricks for getting validation almost every time, with the markers on the automatically generated PE Course Flyer and Google Maps link, to the degree possible, accurately reflecting the true location of your course's meeting place.

The latest copy of this application note can always be found online at:

[http://wow.uscgaux.info/user\\_docs/PE\\_Database\\_Address\\_Entry\\_Tricks.pdf](http://wow.uscgaux.info/user_docs/PE_Database_Address_Entry_Tricks.pdf)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

9/11 Ten Years Since  
September 11, 2001

Public Education Course Flyer: About Boating Safety

**Presented by Flotilla 114-04-08 Westlake, CA**

<b>Course:</b>	About Boating Safety
<b>Start Date:</b>	Sat, 10 Sep 2011
<b>End Date:</b>	Sat, 10 Sep 2011
<b>Start Time:</b>	8:00 AM
<b>Location:</b>	Ventura Sheriff's East Valley Station 2101 E Olson Road Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
<b>Contact:</b>	Jerry B Hendrix jerrybhendrix@gmail.com (805) 526-3765
<b>Course Cost:</b>	\$30.00

Posted: Wed, 30 Nov -0001

**Introduction to Boating** - Types of power boats; sailboats; outboards; paddle boats; houseboats; different uses of boats; various power boating engines; jet drives; family boating basics.

**Boating Law** - Boat registration; boating regulation; hull identification number; required boat safety equipment; operating safely and reporting accidents; protecting the marine environment; Federal boat law; state boating laws; personal watercraft requirements.

**Boat Safety Equipment** - Personal flotation devices ("life jackets"); fire extinguishers; sound-producing devices; visual-distress signals; dock lines and rope; first aid kit; anchors and anchor lines; other boating safety equipment. About Boating Safety

**Safe Boating** - Bow riding; alcohol and drug abuse; entering, loading, and trimming a boat; fueling portable and permanent tanks; steering with a tiller and a wheel; docking, undocking and mooring; knots; filling a float plan, checking equipment, fuel, weather and tides; using charts; choosing and using an anchor, safe PWC handling; general water safety.

**Navigation** - The U.S. Aids to Navigation system; types of buoys and beacons; navigation rules (sometimes referred to as right-of-way rules); avoiding collisions; sound signals; PWC "tunnel vision."

**Boating Problems** - Hypothermia; boating accidents and rescues; man overboard recovery; capsizing; running aground; river hazards; strainers; emergency radio calls; engine problems; equipment failures; carbon monoxide (CO); other boating and PWC problems.

**Trailering, Storing and Protecting Your Boat** - Types of trailers; trailer brakes, lights, hitches, tires, and bearings; loading, balancing, and towing a trailer; towing (and backing) a trailer; boat launching and retrieving; boat storage and theft protection; launching, retrieving and storing a PWC.

**Hunting and Fishing, Water-skiing and River Boating** - Carrying hunting gear and weapons in a boat; fishing from a boat; water-skiing safety guidelines and hand signals; water-skiing with a PWC; navigating rivers, and other boating tips.

Marker location may be approximate; verify location before travel.

Figure 25: An "Instant" Public Education Flyer

### Edit a Course/Copy a Course

To make corrections to a course, or to reuse the same information for a future course by editing the dates, simply locate the course in the PE Dashboard, and click EDIT. The same form as shown in Figure 24, only re-titled “Edit Public Education Course”, will appear.

Make the appropriate changes, and click “SAVE”, if you wish to make a change to an *existing* course, or “SAVE AS NEW” if you are re-using the information – with slight changes such as date – for a new course. A notice of a “Change to a 7023 Form” will be emailed to the DSO-PE in the former (SAVE) case, and a new online 7023 in the latter (SAVE AS NEW).

### Delete a Course

To *delete* a course from the database, use the same procedure, except click “Delete This Course”, a button at the bottom of the form. The DSO-PE will be notified of the deletion.

NOTE: courses that have come and gone remain visible in the dashboard, but do *not* display in the Zip Code course finder on the WOW website, once their end date has passed.

### Non-Participation is Costly

Although participation is voluntary, if your unit *does not* enter its PE courses in the National Database, *you will lose students to nearby flotillas that do*. This is because when prospective students do a course search by Zip Code in your area, *your courses will not show up, but theirs will!* Even if you do not have a WOW site, or are not using the “PE Webkit” to display the Online PE Calendar on your unit’s conventional website, it is potentially devastating to the financial health of your flotilla to not at least complete all your 7023s *online*, and thus be automatically entered in the database.

### *Accessing the PE Database From Outside the WOW Configuration Dashboard*

The previous section described how to access and edit the PE database from inside the WOW II configuration dashboard. The PE database can also be accessed directly with a web browser at the following addresses:

- [http://wow.uscgaux.info/PE\\_signin.php](http://wow.uscgaux.info/PE_signin.php) This is the URL of the WOW PE Dashboard. It is an access point for PE officers to see all courses in their unit (or units below them if they log in to the Division or District), including expired courses that are still in the database.
- [http://cgaux.org/boatinged/class\\_finder/index.php](http://cgaux.org/boatinged/class_finder/index.php) PE Class Finder This URL presents the class finder window to allow entry of a zip code and the distance
- <http://BoatingCourses.us> This domain is maintained by the Auxiliary to provide an easy, short-form URL for use on advertising material. It takes the user directly to the PE Class Finder described in the bullet item above. It looks good on advertising brochures, and is easy to remember when dealing with the public.
- PE Webkit – This is the documentation available from the IT Group to HTML webmasters (i.e., it is for non-WOW web sites) that describes how they can add the PE Course database to their HTML web site.

## Advanced WOW Editing

The basics in the foregoing sections will give you a credible site, and as long as you follow some reasonable best practices in creating your content in the Announcement Editor, one that looks professional and modern. However, it might be a little staid.

This section covers advanced WOW editing techniques, including:

- Hierarchical or “Nested” Menus – Menu items that appear only when their “parent” menu item is clicked;
- Inserting photographs and other images on your pages – adding “color” to your site;
- Using HTML editing in your announcements – The full power of HTML inside a pushbutton framework;
- Adding Feeds – Content from external sites that appears right on your Web page

Using any of these techniques will greatly enhance your site, if you use them sensibly. Some guidelines on how to do so can be found elsewhere in this User’s Guide.

### About Hierarchical (Nested) Menus

Nested or “hierarchical” menus are those where any menu item may have a “submenu” item that only appears when the “parent” menu item is selected. These submenu items can in turn have sub-submenus.

Nested menus are very popular because they permit you to provide navigation to a large number of pages, without your menus becoming painfully long. They also tell you automatically “where you are” without the use of breadcrumbs, because the menu system remains “open”, showing you the exact path you followed to the current page.

For example, if your site had 64 pages and you only had one level of menus, but you wanted a menu item for every page, you’d need 64 links in the left menu – a painfully long (and very user-unfriendly) list.

By contrast, if you used *two* levels of menus, you could restrict yourself to eight (8) top level menu items (the ones that show when your site first opens), with each of those top level items having eight “daughter” menu items. This would give you access to 72 total pages (8x8+8) without your navigation system looking like the New York City phone directory.

A site that makes extensive use of hierarchical menus is the District 11 Southern site at <http://d11s.org>. That site has over 180 pages that are served with only three levels of menu items. Visit the site as a training exercise. A sample from that site is shown in Figure 26, on the previous page.



Figure 26: Hierarchical Menus in Use at District 11SR.

Visible are eight high-level links, with one, *Public Information*, expanded to 9 children, including *Marine Safety*. A click on *Marine Safety* brings up the *Marine Safety* page, and exposes two related subpages – *Waterway Watch* and *Marine Safety Links*.



The only challenge with a hierarchical menu system is that any page that has submenus needs to be logically related to those submenus (and sub-pages), and oftentimes should actually refer to them in the content.

WOW has three (3) layers of submenus. A top-level menu items is called “Level 1”, submenus of any Level 1 menu items are called “Level 2”, and submenus of any Level 2 items are called “Level 3”.

A default WOW site actually has one built-in nested item. The “About [Unit XX-XX]” menu item has a submenu “Staff List” that only appears when you click on the “About” link.

Using WOW II’s nested menus, it is possible for the enterprising site designer to “tuck” more related information *under* their unit’s staff page, as did Division 7, Tampa Bay, Florida. In addition to “Staff List”,

Their “About Division 7” menu item has four additional submenus: History, AOR, Calendar, and Photo Gallery (Figure 27, right).

For example, if your site had 64 pages and you only had one level of menus, but you wanted a menu item for every page, you’d need 64 links in the left menu – a painfully long (and very user-unfriendly) list.

By contrast, if you used *two* levels of menus, you could restrict yourself to eight (8) top level menus items (the ones that show when your site first opens), with each of those top level items having eight “daughter” menu items. This would give you access to 72 total pages (8x8+8) without your navigation system looking like the New York City phone directory.

A Grouping all of your information about your unit under the “About” page is a best practice.

### Creating Hierarchical Menus

Creating hierarchical menus and nested pages is easy. Proceed as follows:

1. Make sure *all* your pages sort into the correct order, top to bottom, *ignoring any indenting you plan to do*. That is, any planned “daughter” pages must fall correctly beneath their parents, and *above* the next unrelated “parent” in the menu list.
2. Now, edit the first item you wish to indent into a submenu (the first daughter), change its Menu Level from 1 to 2 and SAVE MENU.
3. If you have any other daughters of the same parent, set their menu levels to 2 as well, saving each time.
4. If any of these daughters are destined to be granddaughters (nested to Level 3), under a Level 2 daughter, for now, just set them to Level 2.
5. Return to Unit Page to check your work.
6. Now, identify the granddaughter menu items, and set them to Menu Level 3; SAVE and check.

You can tell from the Dashboard the nesting level of each menu item in the Active Items list; Level 2 items are preceded with “>>”, and Level 3 with “>> >>”.

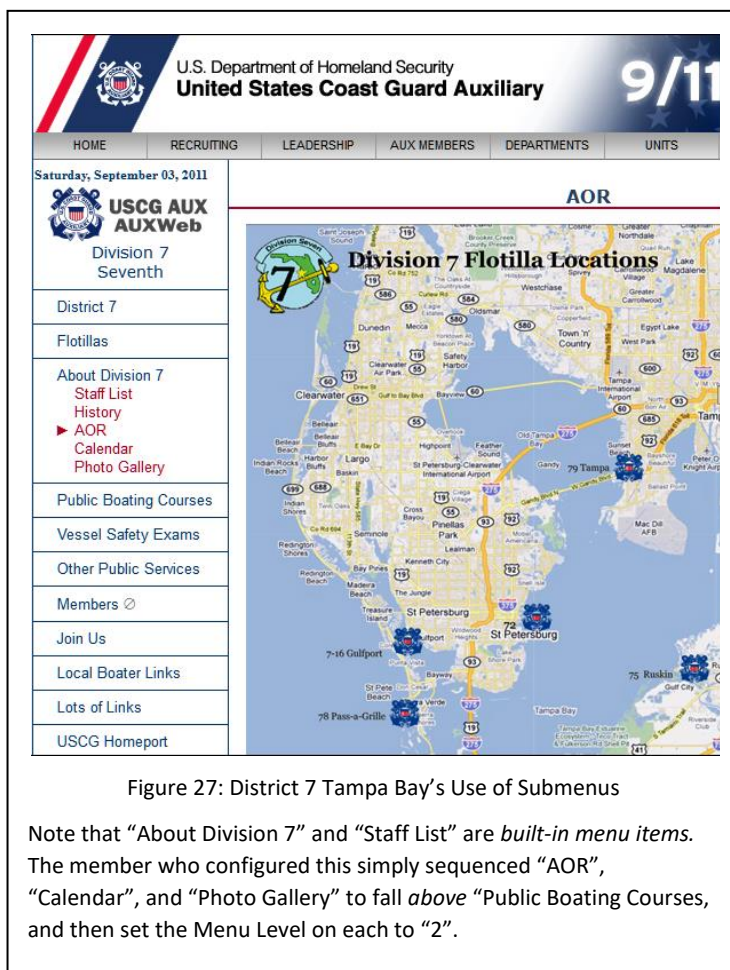


Figure 27: District 7 Tampa Bay’s Use of Submenus

Note that “About Division 7” and “Staff List” are *built-in menu items*. The member who configured this simply sequenced “AOR”, “Calendar”, and “Photo Gallery” to fall *above* “Public Boating Courses”, and then set the Menu Level on each to “2”.

WARNING: Never nest a Level 3 menu item under a Level 1 item; you will get a nasty error message (Figure 28). In addition, your visitors will see an equally embarrassing error message on the WOW site itself.

Finally, nested Level 2 and Level 3 menus do not have as many characters to work with as the main Level 1 menus. Use short menu names that *do not wrap*. If you cannot think of an alternative name for a menu item that is wrapping, then rethink your overall menu hierarchy so as to move the wrapping item to a higher level.

### Images on WOW Web Pages

WOW pages can both display images on a page (photographs, artwork), as well as present links to download documents uploaded and stored on the site. A few photographs, even significantly reduced in size, can help to “tell your story” and keep any page from being “flat”.

You have the option to upload documents and images via the Dashboard that you would like to incorporate into specific announcements. These items will be stored in a unique directory for your unit that is automatically created by the WOW system; you cannot get your content mixed with other units. However, there is a limit to the amount of storage available (documents plus images), depending on what level unit is involved:

- Flotillas: 10 Megabytes (MB)
- Divisions: 15 Megabytes (MB)
- Districts: 20 Megabytes (MB)

Since one photograph from a modern digital camera can eat up 3-4 megabytes or more, *it is crucial that you “bit reduce” (scale, downres, etc.) your images before you attempt to upload them.* In fact, WOW II enforces a 300 kilobyte upload limit on any one image or document.

Photoshop, many other graphics applications, including a lot of shareware, Paint on the PC, and several Mac imaging applications can all scale your photographs to their final display size. *A photograph that came out of the camera at 3 megabytes, when rescaled to its final display size of 200 x 160 pixels, only occupies 30 kilobytes – 1% of the original.* This photograph takes virtually no storage, and your page will display significantly faster if you pay attention to this critical detail

The content area of a WOW page is 599 pixels wide, with about 560 being usable, due to side padding. An uploaded photograph 550 pixels wide would appear gargantuan, and would overwhelm a page. If you are using a well-cropped photo for “spot color”, or to help tell your story (such as a VE photo in a VE article), a good rule of thumb is to hold the final width of the photo to a range of 150 to 250 pixels wide, erring towards the smaller size. At 250 px, the photo is *still* nearly 45% of the width of the page, which is *huge!*

Finally, do not use your WOW site for photo galleries for your unit, unless you store those photos on another non-Auxiliary server, and store them at final display size (as opposed to the camera original). The WOW announcement editor is quite capable of allowing you to link to external images and documents. Better yet, use a photo sharing site like Flickr, and feed your image gallery to the WOW page, or simply provide users an External Link to the gallery. This way, you don’t have to do anything to

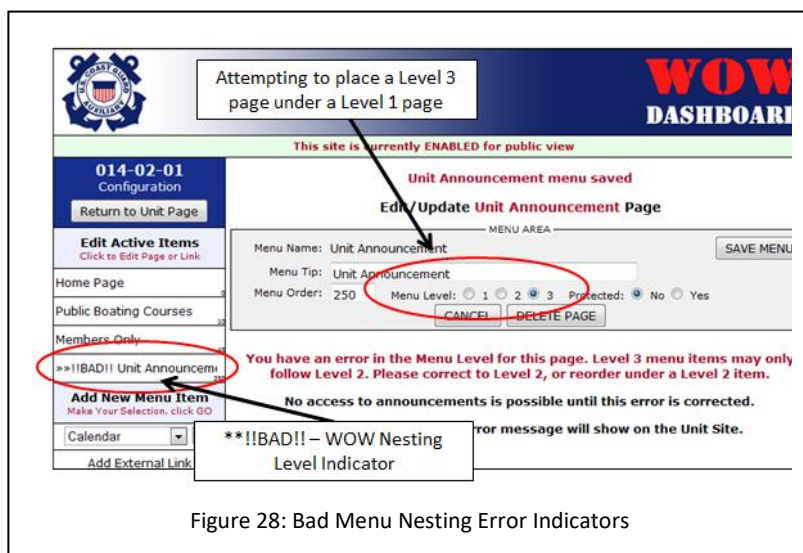


Figure 28: Bad Menu Nesting Error Indicators


the photos, and can display them in all their glory. You also do not have to worry about “dead links” from your WOW site to offsite images that have moved or been deleted. Dead links make you look bad.

### Adding or Deleting Images to A WOW Page

The process of *adding* an image to a WOW page is straightforward. You will simply edit your image(s) into an announcement. The source of your images, which you will upload to WOW, will be files on your own computer – files that you have prepared in advance to be at the final display resolution.

In the Dashboard, browse to the page to receive the image, and ADD or EDIT the announcement in which your image will be displayed.

Then, in the page editing window:

1. Click to the right of the paragraph *after* where you want your image to appear, and press ENTER to generate a new line.
2. Click on the Insert Image Icon shown here.  This will bring up the *Insert Image* dialog box shown in Figure 29.
3. Use the “Browse for Files” button (not shown here) to browse to the image on your computer that you want to add to the page.
4. Fill in the Alternative text field so that web page readers can “read” the picture to the visually impaired. This creates the famous “alt” tags that we are required by Federal regulation to include on *every* image.
5. Decide if you want text from the *following* paragraph to “flow” alongside your image, the way the text in this section is flowing past Figure 29. If *yes*, pull down the “Alignment” menu (currently “Not Set” in Figure 29), and choose “Right” or “Left”, to place the image at the right or left margin.)
6. Click on the Insert button to actually upload the image file to the server, and insert the photo into the announcement.

Note that you can tweak the width and the height of the image in the Insert Image dialog box, but based upon the foregoing discussion, you should be uploading images that have been correctly scaled to final size, rather than scaling them here. This latter method causes the *unscaled image* to be served up by the web server, consuming vast amounts of bandwidth and server time, and forces the end user’s browser to download the unscaled image, and then scale it locally.

*Deleting* an image: Also note in the Insert Image dialog box shown above that on the left there is a gallery of images that you have already uploaded (the left panel). From this dialog, you are able to delete images that you do not need any more (the Trash Can icon) or rename an image (the Pencil icon).

*It is recommended that you use the Insert Image dialog box when you need to remove images from the library, rather than the provided Image Gallery function. After you have done your file maintenance, simply CANCEL from the Insert Image dialog.*

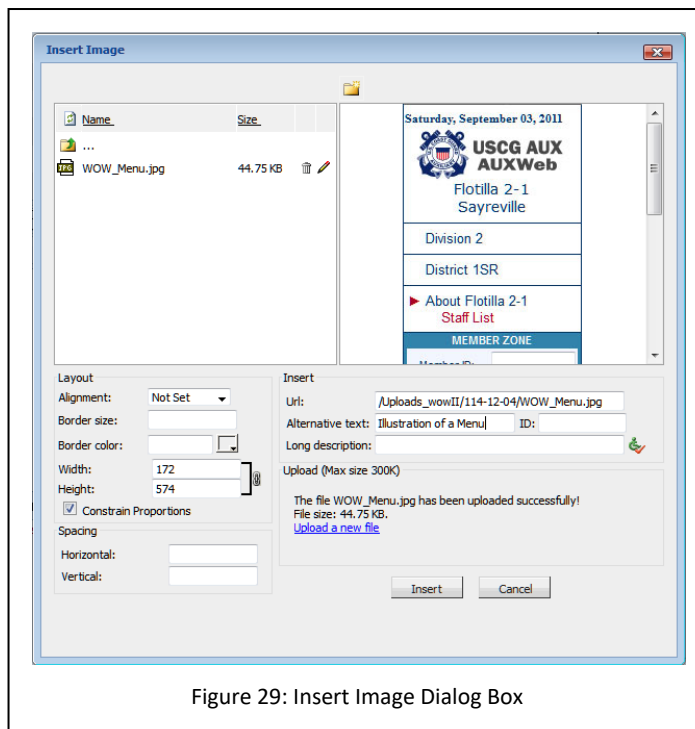


Figure 29: Insert Image Dialog Box

### Adding Borders to Images

To add borders to images in an announcement, proceed as follows (refer to Figure 30):

1. Open the announcement editor and double-click on the image you wish to edit;
2. In the Image dialog box that appears, CLEAR any border size value. You *can*, however, set a border color here or in the next step;
3. Click on the “Style Builder” tab (dialog box shown below); you are about to build a style for this image.
4. Click the Border button.
5. Under Borders, right panel:
  - a. Choose “All” borders
  - b. Set the Border value to 1 px (pixel); 2 px maximum; any larger looks amateurish.
  - c. Set the Style to “solid” (if you don’t do this, the border will not appear)
  - d. Set the color as you see fit. Avoid bright or saturated colors.
  - e. Click OK to dismiss the dialog, and then SAVE the announcement.

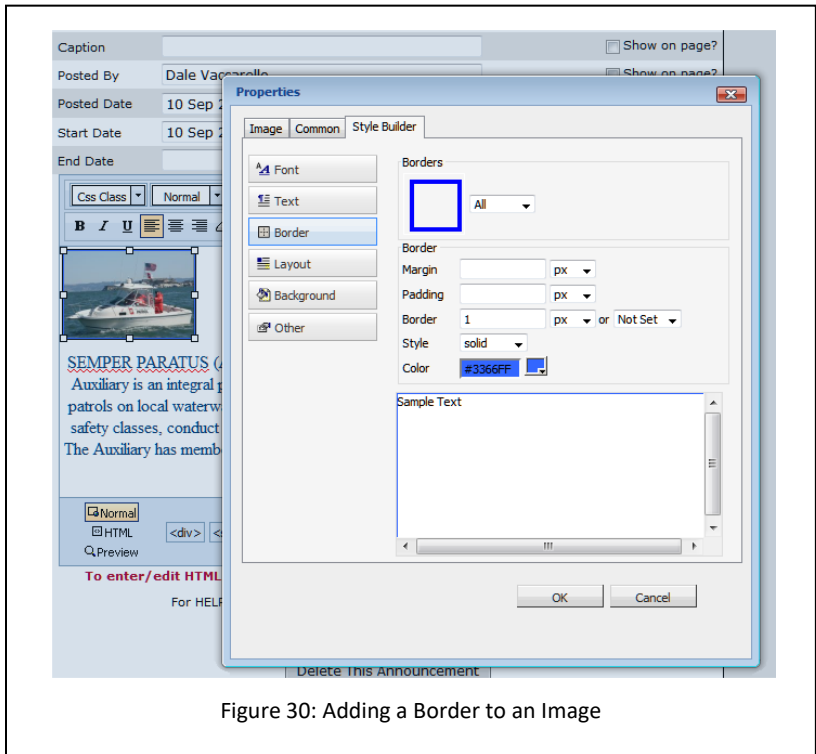


Figure 30: Adding a Border to an Image

### Adding Space Between an Image and Flowing Text

When you allow your text to flow alongside an image, it will butt right to the edge of the image, which looks unprofessional. To put some “air” between the image and the text, you follow the same process as adding borders (previous section), except that step 5 will read as follows:

5. Under Borders, right panel:
  - a. Choose “Left” border if your image is on the right, or “Right” border if your image is on the left;
  - b. Set the Margin value to 10 px (pixels); smaller looks crowded; larger looks like a mistake.
  - c. Click OK to dismiss the dialog, and then SAVE the announcement.

### Inserting, Uploading, and Linking Documents on Pages

You may upload documents such as PDF files to the server, and simultaneously insert a link to them in an announcement. To do so, follow this procedure:

1. Make sure the document you wish to upload is somewhere on your computer;
2. In the Announcement editor, type the appropriate content that references the link to the document you are about to upload, and then position your cursor where you want the link inserted.

For example, if in your announcement, you wish to reference the NACON workshop schedule, which you have in PDF and are prepared to upload, you might type “Click to download NACON Workshop Schedule”. Since what you really want is “Click here to download NACON Workshop Schedule” with the link on “here”, simply position your cursor to the right of “Click”, and continue with the next step;



3. In Announcement Editor, click on the PDF file icon (which can be used for any downloadable files). A “Downloadable Files” dialog box opens;
4. Browse to the file on your own computer that you wish to upload and link, and click OPEN.
5. As soon as you select a file, it will provisionally upload, and the URL for the link will appear in the URL text box. You must then type the *visible* text for the link (that which appears on you web page) in the “Title” text box (in this case, the word “here”), and then click the INSERT button.
6. Review the finished product in the Announcement Editor window, and adjust the spacing as required.
7. Click SAVE to save the announcement, and Return to Unit Page to test the link and the download.

### Controlling the Size and Color of Body and Headline Fonts

Modern best practices in website design call for a “minimalist” approach to different fonts and sizes. It is rare that you see more than two font “faces” (for example, Arial and Times New Roman) mixed on the same site, and, except for headlines or captions, more than two or three sizes of fonts. *Italics* are preferred to **bold**, except perhaps for captions, and color palettes are typically subdued, and rarely saturated.

The Announcement editor provides you with three sizes of body text. The default is a sans serif Arial/Helvetica faces in 12 pixel type size (about 9 point), to match the sans serif type faces of the WOW and National templates.

In addition, under the CSS Class pulldown menu in the Announcement Editor, you are offered 11px text and 10px text. These smaller sizes are rarely used, but can be effective for sidebars, or for footnotes or headnotes. *95% of your content, excepting captions or headlines, should be using the default font.* And, as a best practice, except for headings, you should never increase the size of your body copy *above* the size text used for the left menu system in WOW. It’s right there, so you can see immediately if you have violated this best practice.

If you want something to stand out in body copy, italicize it, or set it to WOW red or WOW blue. Never use a heading font for body copy to try to make a point. It simply looks unprofessional, and never “center” body copy (except for single line to highlight, for example, a URL).

Paragraph or section captions should not be more than 110% to 120% of the body copy, and as an absolute limit should not exceed the size of font used for the titles on WOW pages (above the WOW red horizontal bar or “stinger”). To assist you in maintaining these standards, WOW II provides standardized Heading sizes that are consistent with National usage. The choices are shown in Table 2.

In the Announcement editor, to change body copy into a heading, select and use the Heading pulldown menu. To change any body copy into one of the standardized WOW colors, or to access the smaller body fonts, select the text to be changed, and choose a style from the “CSS Class” pulldown menu.

### Pasting Content from External Documents

Pasting content from external documents, such as Microsoft Word documents or other websites is fraught with potential formatting problems. Microsoft Word is particularly problematic, in that it brings in vast numbers of formatting tags that clutter up your content, and will frequently force your web page to take the formatting of the

Table 2: WOW II Body and Heading Fonts
<b>Heading 1 is 16 pixel Bold (WOW Page Titles)</b>
<b>Heading 2 is 14 Pixel Bold</b>
<b>Heading 3 is 13 Pixel Bold</b>
Heading 4 is 13 Pixel Normal
<u>Heading 5 is 13 Pixel Normal Underlined</u>
<b>Heading 6 is 9 Pixel Bold WOW Red Centered</b>
Left Menu is 13 Pixel Normal
Default Body Copy is 12 Pixel
Available 11px Text CSS Style – Good for Sidebars, Photo Credits (CSS)
Available 10px Text CSS Style – Good for footnotes, disclaimers, “fine print”. (CSS)
<b>Heading 3 in WOW Red (CSS)</b>
<b>Heading 3 in WOW Blue (CSS)</b>
<b>Heading 3 in Aqua Banner</b>

original document, making your page (or just one announcement) look at odds with the rest of your site, and the branded look and feel of Auxiliary Websites.

For this reason, it is always a best practice to “cleanse” external content by pasting it from the original source into a pure text editor, and then copying it from the text editor into the WOW Announcement editor. Then, in the WOW editor, you restore any lost formatting (such as paragraph breaks, or italics) that you might have wanted.

On the PC, paste from your source into Notepad. On the Macintosh, paste from your source into TextEdit. Then, select all and paste into WOW.

### Using HTML on Pages

If you are experienced in HTML, you may work in HTML in the WOW Announcement Editor. Simply click the HTML button on the bottom of the Announcement editor, and the text editing window will be in HTML mode.

In part, this enables those who are able to prepare content using HTML and WYSIWYG editors. Be careful, however, to not destroy the branded look and feel of a WOW site. And pay particular attention to the use of tags which have been deprecated in HTML 4, such as “font”. Allow WOW to determine the font and heading styles. But when you insist upon more latitude, try to embed CSS in your HTML, rather than using deprecated tags.

### Adding Feeds to Pages (Calendar, Video, PayPal, Other)

Many Web services offer feeds that you can display in an IFRAME tag in an announcement, or use HTML code provided online by the feed provider. Some available feeds include:

- Calendars, e.g. from Google Calendar – useful on a unit calendar page
- Video clips, from Vimeo or YouTube
- Weather Feeds, such as AccuWeater.com’s netWeather
- AIS Feeds
- PayPal – useful to collect dues, conference registrations, etc.
- Many more...

The general case means of including these feeds is to copy the feed HTML code from the provider, and then create a new page, or a new announcement on a compatible page, switch the Announcement editor to HTML mode, and then paste in the provided HTML code.

Be aware that many feeds offer you a choice of styles of output. You should pick a style that is compatible with the WOW content area, and where the width will not exceed 560 pixels.

If the feed is provided with code for an IFRAME, you may need to edit the IFRAME parameters in the <iframe> tag to hold the width to 560 pixels (599 pixels maximum). The same goes for JavaScript. Look for parameters to set the width.

### WOW Dashboard Utilities

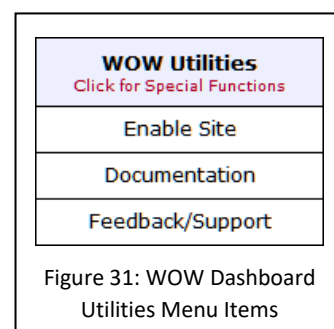
WOW II comes equipped with several “utilities” in the dashboard left menu. They are:

- Enable Site/ Disable Site
- Documentation
- Feedback/Support

The use of each of these utilities is explained below.

#### Enable Site/Disable Site

The “canonical” (official) URL of a WOW site is:



<http://aDDDDdff.wow.uscgauX.info>

For example (for District 11SR Flotilla 12-4):

<http://a1141204.wow.uscgauX.info>

WOW II uses a different model. A WOW II site is unpublished, or “disabled”, by default. That means that the general public can neither stumble upon it, nor gain access to it, without logging onto it through the WOW central sign in location <http://wow.uscgauX.info>.

Even if an Internet user were to type in the unit’s canonical WOW URL, they would not get to the unit’s WOW II site.

When you first start work on your WOW II, site, the WOW Utilities dashboard (Figure 31) will say “Enable Site”.



Figure 32: “Site Disabled” Barber Pole

Also, there will be a red and white “barber pole” across the top of the WOW dashboard signifying that the site is disabled from public view (Figure 32).

If you click “Enable Site”, the barber pole will be replaced by a green bar, and your site is now visible to any visitor (Figure 33).

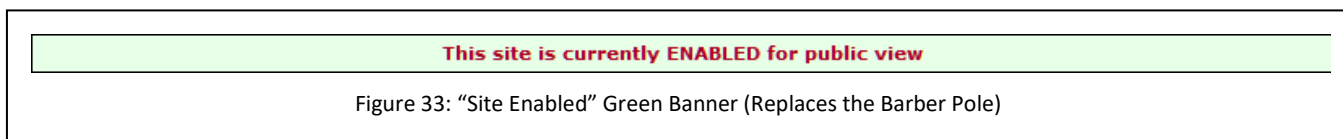


Figure 33: “Site Enabled” Green Banner (Replaces the Barber Pole)

There is normally no reason to enable your site while you are developing it, except for brief intervals when you want to test the behavior of protected pages or announcements, which appear and disappear depending upon whether or not you are “logged on”. For such a test, you would “Return to Unit Page”, and LOG OFF, and confirm that your protected material performs as expected. You would then LOG ON, click “Configure Site”, and *Disable Site*.

#### Enable Your Site After Board Approval

You should *only* leave your site enabled after you have received board approval to display your site on the Internet.

#### *Switching From AIRS to WOW*

For those units that migrate from a conventional AIRS site to a WOW site, it is important after the migration to let the national IT Group know you no longer need your AIRS site so that it may be deleted and the space on the server recovered. If you have historical images or documents on your old site that your unit wishes to preserve, use SFTP<sup>1</sup> or some similar utility to recover the specific items of interest to your own computer, save them to a DVD-ROM, and give it to your unit commander. Then, (as FC, VFC, or CS officer), submit a ticket to the National Help Desk requesting that your AIRS site “a1112233.uscgauX.info” be deleted in favor of your new WOW II website.

<sup>1</sup> SFTP is the familiar FTP protocol in “secure” mode. Virtually all FTP clients support SFTP mode, required for AIRS sites.

The “a1112233.uscgaux.info” is your actual AIRS website URL, such as a0853401.uscgaux.info for Flotilla 34-01 in District 085. Please note that your new WOW II website must be submitted and approved by the National IT Group before deleting your legacy AIRS site.

### Feedback/Support

The “Feedback/Support” button in the WOW II dashboard is the *only* acceptable method of reporting bugs in the WOW platform, or requesting new features. Routine support is requested via the [National Help Desk](#).

When you select the Feedback/Support button, the form shown in Figure 34 opens up. Simply enter your comments, and then click SUBMIT. An email with your feedback is automatically sent to the WOW team, via the help-desk trouble ticketing system.

### Documentation

The documentation link in the Dashboard menu gives you access to available documentation on WOW II, such as this manual, as well as the WOW “Application Note Series” (see “Application Notes” on page 42, below).

**Feedback and Bug Report Form**

**Your Name:** STEPHEN C JOHNSON    **Member ID:** 1229662    **Unit:** 114-12-04

**Report type:**

- Bug Report (broken link, etc.)
- Feature Request
- Confused About Dashboard
- Other (Describe)

**Enter your comments below:**

**If documentation is available, have you read it thoroughly?**     Yes     No

Menu ID:    Category:

*Thank you in advance for your feedback, and for using WOW-III! When you successfully submit your comments you will automatically be returned to the main Dashboard panel. You will receive an email copy of your feedback.*

Figure 34: Feedback & Bug Report Form

## Migrating Legacy Web Sites to WOW

A *legacy* unit website is one that is programmed using classical techniques such as HTML and is physically stored on a web server under your unit's control.

Legacy websites typically are hosted by the Auxiliary's AIRS (Auxiliary Internet Resource System), or on a commercial hosting service for which your unit typically pays a monthly or annual fee.

When migrating an existing web site to WOW, you must move all needed content from the old site to the WOW site (including images). Perform the following steps:

1. Decide which content on the old site to migrate to WOW.
2. Copy or reproduce the content from the old site on the new WOW site. See comments below.
3. Obtain the approval of your site from your unit's board, and then enable the site.
4. Submit your site for National approval. This gets your site's Internet address (URL) listed in the National Flotilla Finder, and in AuxDirectory/AuxOfficer.
5. Optionally, put in a "redirect" at your old site location that automatically redirects visitors to your new WOW site. *This is extremely important*, as it assists visitors and search engines to cleanse themselves of obsolete links. The redirect should always include a 10 second message telling the user of the site move, and asking them to update their bookmark. If you don't include that, the visitors will never update their bookmarks/favorites.
6. Redirects should not be permanent, but rather should only be used for three months before decommissioning the old site completely. At the end of the 90 day period, take down the old site and, if on an outside web host, cancel the web hosting contract to stop paying for the hosting service that is no longer needed.

The simple and fast procedure for migrating your conventional website to WOW II in about an hour is described in the IT Group Application Note Series: *The 1-Hour Conversion: Conventional Website to WOW*, located at:

[http://wow.uscgaux.info/user\\_docs/AuxiliaryWOW\\_II\\_One-hour\\_Conversion.pdf](http://wow.uscgaux.info/user_docs/AuxiliaryWOW_II_One-hour_Conversion.pdf)

### Redirecting Visitors From Old Site to New

You have several strategies for redirecting browsers from your old site to your new one. Fundamentally they fall into two categories: a *silent* redirect, and an *announced* redirect.

In a silent redirect, when the user types your old address into a browser, the address in the browser automatically changes to the new address, and your new page opens. Silent redirects are strongly discouraged since users will not be told to update their bookmark/favorite.

The best silent redirect is one that tells browsers and search engines that you have *permanently moved*. This preserves page rankings, etc. in search engines such as Google. To do this, use the "301 Redirect", below.

If you don't care about search engines automatically pointing visitors to your new site, then you can write either an HTML redirect, or a PHP redirect.

Finally, if you want a page displayed to the user announcing that your site has moved, with the familiar "This page will open in xx seconds", use the HTML redirect with countdown.

#### 301 Redirect

Determine whether the index page on your old site (the home page) is *index.htm*, *index.html*, *index.php*, or some other file (rare).

Determine whether or not there is a file in the root directory of your old site (where the above home page is), called ".htaccess". If yes, copy it to your desktop as *htaccess.txt*, and open with a text editor. If no, open a new file on your desktop with a text editor, and save it as *htaccess.txt*.

In *htaccess.txt*, add a line at the top that says:

```
redirect 301 /index.htm http://aDDDDdfff.wow.uscgaux.info
```

and save the file. If your index file was *index.html*, or *index.php*, then use those filenames instead of *index.htm*.

Obviously, the "aDDDDdfff.wow.uscgaux.info" should be replaced with the canonical URL of your new site.

Rename the file ".htaccess" (with the leading period, but without the quotes), and upload it back to the root directory of your old site. If you are asked to overwrite the old file (if any), say yes.

Test your redirect by trying to browse to your old address. Your new WOW site should open automatically.

TIP: If your operating system (e.g., Windows) will *not* allow you to rename the file from ".htaccess.txt" to just plain ".htaccess" (Windows won't), then go ahead and upload it as ".htaccess.txt". However, after you upload it, you must rename it to just plain ".htaccess". If you used an SFTP client to do the upload, it will allow you to rename it. If you accessed the site with cPanel and used the File Manager for the upload, then simply use the File Manager to rename it (which you can also do if you earlier uploaded it with SFTP and any name other than .htaccess).

### HTML Redirect

The strategy with the HTML redirect is to *replace* your index page (home page) with a *new* page that contains the redirect.

First, *rename* your old index page from *index.html* (*index.htm*, *index.php*) to *index.old*.

Then using a text editor, create a file and paste in the following code, and save it as the name of your old home page.

```
<!DOCTYPE html public "-//W3C//DTD html 4.0 Transitional//EN">
<html><head>
<title>Re-direct To New Site</title>
<meta http-equiv="REFRESH" content="10;url=http://aDDDDdfff.wow.uscgaux.info">
</head>
<body>
<h2 >This site has moved. Please update your bookmark to point to
http://aDDDDdfff.wow.uscgaux.info</a> </h2>
<h2 >Redirecting in 10 seconds...</h2>
</body></html>
```

Change the two occurrences of "aDDDDdfff.wow.uscgaux.info" to your site's WOW canonical URL. Finally, upload this new index page to your old website. Test as above.

### PHP Redirect

The PHP redirect is the simplest to code, and you can make it a permanent (i.e. "301") redirect forcing search engines to substitute your new URL for your old, preserving page rankings.

To use it, simply rename your old home page (*index.htm*, *index.html*, or *index.php*) to *index.old*. Then, create a file with the following lines of code:

```
<?php
header("HTTP/1.1 301 Moved Permanently");
header(Location:"http://aDDDDdfff.wow.uscgaux.info");
exit();
```

and save it as *index.php*. Upload it to your site, and test. Obviously, put your own WOW site URL in there.

Please also make sure that you have informed your SO-CS and DSO-CS of your new WOW site URL, in case they need to change links to you on the division and district sites.

Any type of redirect should only be used for 90 days to let visitors know your site has moved. At the end of the period, the old HTML pages should be taken down permanently.

### *Keeping Your Original Site and Using WOW as a Secondary Site*

Units with an existing web site that want to keep the existing site as their primary public site may still benefit from WOW's protected pages and protected announcements. This is very useful for member's only pages. While Auxiliary policy prohibits publishing member personal information on a public page, WOW's protected pages and announcements allow Auxiliary webmaster's to publish personal information, but protect it from being viewable by the public.

The most common way to do this is to have the Member's Only link of the old public site forward to the Member's Only page of the WOW site. On the WOW site, add an External Link labeled "Main Web Site", that points back to the home page of the main web site. In that way, visitors to the main site can link to the WOW site with the protected pages, and once there, can return to the main site.

### *Updating the Auxiliary Directory (AuxDirectory) Unit Information*

The Auxiliary Directory, AKA "AuxOfficer", contains a "unit record" for every unit in the Auxiliary. In that unit record is the name of the unit, which is used by WOW on the "About this Unit" page, the name of the unit, used on the same page, and the address of the unit's website, which is used by the national flotilla finder. Also found there are the unit's monthly meeting time and day, and an optional Contact Phone and Contact Email address.

When you are setting up your WOW site, you should check WOW's "About" page, to make sure that your unit's information is showing up correctly and makes sense. Typically, WOW expects the unit's name to be the name of the town or region it serves, rather than some cute name like "Kings of the River", or "5<sup>th</sup> Division", etc.

This is important because WOW takes the unit's name and puts it in a banner on the "About" page, that reads:

#### **Serving the <unit name><unit State> Area**

Example: **Serving the Santa Monica Bay, CA Area**

Clearly, if this reads: "Serving the 7<sup>th</sup> Division, CA Area", or "Serving the Kings of the River, CA Area", your visitors would be baffled.

Your Flotilla Commander, Flotilla Vice Commander, and FSO-CS (and equivalent offices at the division and district) all have the ability to edit this unit record in AuxDirectory. Simply browse to:

<http://AuxDirectory.cgaux.org>

and proceed as follows:

1. Log in as one of the three officers above;
2. On the main AuxDirectory screen, scroll down and click on your district name.
3. On the resulting district unit listing, find your unit, and click on your unit number in the "Unit Info" column.
4. On the bottom of the screen showing your unit's information, click on "Click to Edit".
5. On this page you can update the unit's street address and the meeting date/time information. The Website URL may only be updated pursuant to the National Site Approval Process, by the DVC-UC.

6. Change your unit name to one that describes the town or region you are in. Avoid numbers, such as “New York 2”, as they will baffle the public (“Serving the New York 2 NY Area”). Instead, enter something like “New York (West Side)”. Consider *officially* changing your name in AuxData (via the DSO-IS).
7. If you absolutely, positively cannot change your unit name to one that describes the area that you serve, instead fill in the field “Service Area”, normally blank. For example, in the previous example, leave your unit name “New York 2”, but in the Service Area field, type “New York (West Side)”. WOW II will use Service Area preferentially over Unit Name on the “About this Flotilla/Division/District” page.

Note: If the Service Area field does not appear in your version of AuxDirectory/AuxOfficer, use the Feedback/Support button *only* in the WOW dashboard, from your WOW site, and request the change be made for you by the WOW team. Be sure to include the service area text in your feedback.



## ***Privacy Act Compliance***

All Coast Guard Auxiliary units displaying a website are required to comply with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974, as described in the Auxiliary Manual. Among the requirements of the Privacy Act are that a member's phone number, mail address, e-mail address or other private information may not be published on public web pages without the member's permission.

If you *do* want to publish private information to the public, such as a member's contact information for the Public Boating Course Finder and Flyer, or on the "About this Unit" page, for prospective new members, then the written permission of the member must be obtained prior to publishing. An exception to this is when the member "opts in" in AuxDirectory, to permit either his or her phone number and/or primary email address to be displayed on a public Website.

To opt in or out, as a member you should:

1. Log into AuxDirectory/AuxOfficer at <http://AuxDirectory.cgaux.org>;
2. Click on "Search by Last Name, member # or eMail", enter your own member ID, and click "Find";
3. Select your own name in the popup dialog box and your member record will appear;
4. Opt in/Opt out of the four items just below your phone numbers, by checking the EDIT button adjacent to each one, changing your options, and the clicking SAVE.

Normally, the Flotilla Commander, Flotilla Vice Commander, and HR officer would opt in to *at least* their email addresses.

## ***Application Notes***

This user manual is not the only WOW documentation. The WOW team publishes "Application Notes" that describe features, procedures, tricks, and more that are not described in this manual. The application notes may be accessed from any WOW website in the "Configure" mode, by clicking on "Documentation" in the "WOW Utilities" section. Watch WOW's "What's New" page in the Configure mode for announcements of new Application notes.

As of March 2015, the following application notes were available:

- [WOW II Quick Start Guide](#)
- [The 1-Hour Conversion: Conventional Site to WOW](#)
- [Creating Roles-based Pages](#)
- [Using Hidden Pages](#)
- [Creating Email Forms](#)
- [WOW Smart Tags](#)
- [PE Database Address Entry Tricks](#)

In addition to the above, there is a controlled application note entitled "WOW PHP Hook", which is only available to National Directorate webmasters and DSOs-CS, by written request to the DIR-C or ANACO-IT, along with a written description of the project being contemplated. The PHP hook permits the creation of complex controllers such as the "I Want a VSC" system in PHP that are "activated" by a custom WOW page.

## ***National IT Help Desk***

While this User Guide and the WOW Application Note series should be your primary source of information on how to use the WOW platform, if you are stumped after carefully researching those materials, or believe that you have found a "bug", your recourse is the National Help Desk.

The National Help Desk provides users with the opportunity to ask Auxiliary-related questions which are not easily answered using available resources. These could be any Auxiliary-related questions, including computer-related issues.

Each Help Desk question is reviewed by a knowledgeable facilitator who may refer specific questions to an Auxiliarist who is the “subject matter expert” in that particular area. Such experts, called “contributors” by the IT staff, typically respond directly to the member. Other questions, particularly those that are asked often, or fall under the specific expertise of a facilitator, will be answered by the facilitator him or herself, often within a matter of minutes or hours.

While the Help Desk cannot be considered an official source of information on Auxiliary policy, our responses are usually generated from official sources and citations are provided where appropriate. However, for WOW questions and bugs, the help desk *is* the official source.

The National Help Desk can be reached on the main page of the National Website or at:

<http://help.cgaux.org>

In addition, a link to the National Help Desk automatically appears at the bottom of the left navigation menu on every WOW site.

## APPENDIX A – WEB SITE SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

### *General Auxiliary Web Site Rules*

Personally Identifiable Information (PII), such as addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses, may only be displayed on WOW sites using WOW's protected pages or protected announcements, or on pages protected via the Member Zone login, unless the member has given specific permission to publish such information.

No patrol schedules or radio frequencies may be shown on any Auxiliary web page, including on WOW protected pages or announcements.

No Auxiliary web site may implement its own password protection system. The only password system authorized for use on an Auxiliary web site is the Member Zone password that is used by WOW, or accessible via the AuxDirectory API.

Unencrypted documents (i.e., documents that are not password protected) that contain patrol schedules, Coast Guard radio frequencies or FOUO Information (For Official Use Only) may not be accessed on any web server. Any documents of this type can only be accessed on a web server if it is encrypted with a password that is changed periodically, and that password is sent to the intended reader separately (e-mail delivery acceptable).

The use of Adobe Flash is not allowed on any Auxiliary website. Since December 2021 Adobe has deprecated the product. Additionally, there have been several exploits targeting this multimedia application.

### *WOW site Specific Rules*

**Documents stored on a WOW site** - Documents that are linked to from a WOW protected page or protected announcement are not themselves protected and are therefore reachable on the Internet. Just because the link is on a protected page does not give any protection to linked documents stored on the server.

#### **Protected Pages & Protected Announcements**

- Password protection of WOW protected pages is only to protect PII type info (e.g., e-mail addresses or phone numbers), or non-sensitive information not of interest to the public.
- No FOUO information can be displayed on any web site, including on WOW protected pages/announcements.
- Patrol schedules or CG radio frequencies may not be displayed on WOW protected pages or announcements.
- No links to unencrypted documents containing FOUO or patrol information.

## APPENDIX B – Application Notes and Miscellaneous Documentation

### Additional WOW documentation

#### ADDRESS ENTRY TRICKS FOR THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DATABASE

Steve Johnson and the IT Group has prepared a new Application Note entitled "Address Entry Tricks for the Public Education Database" that includes a special section for units in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well. As you are entering your 2015 courses into the database, you may find this application note of particular value.

The application note explains in detail how the PE Dashboard validates the addresses you enter, and gives you tips and tricks for getting validation almost every time, with the markers on the automatically generated PE Course Flyer and Google Maps link, to the degree possible, accurately reflecting the true location of your course's meeting place.

The latest copy of this application note can always be found online at the following permalink:

[http://wow.uscgaux.info/user\\_docs/PE\\_Database\\_Address\\_Entry\\_Tricks.pdf](http://wow.uscgaux.info/user_docs/PE_Database_Address_Entry_Tricks.pdf)

As always, if you have difficulty entering any address, after consulting with and following this new Application Note, please use the provided "Feedback/Bug Report" button at the bottom of the PE Dashboard.

25 Feb 15 Categories: [Programming Tricks](#), [Documentation](#)

#### CUTE EDITOR DOESN'T DISPLAY PROPERLY IN IE11

Internet Explorer 11 (which comes with Windows 8.1) does not display the Cute editor properly when trying to edit a WOW announcement. To cause it to function properly you have to set it into compatibility Mode.

[Read more »](#)

10 Dec 13 Categories: [Programming Tricks](#)

#### YOUR UNIT MEETS IRREGULARLY BUT YOUR WOW WEBSITE ASSUMES YOU MEET MONTHLY: THE FIX...

WOW gets its information about the meeting place, day, and time of you flotilla, division or district from the "Unit Record" in AuxDirectory (AuxOfficer). Your flotilla commander, when logged onto AuxDirectory can change this, and other information, which will then show up in WOW the next time you open a fresh Web browser and go to your site.

WOW expects you unit to meet monthly, and on the "About this Unit" page, automatically tacks on "of each month" after the meeting day that you enter. For example, if your meeting day in AuxDirectory is "3rd Monday", then WOW displays "3rd Monday of each month".

What do you do if your unit meets irregularly, and you want to suppress that "of each month" text? Easy: simply enter a pound sign ("#") at the end of the meeting day field, and WOW will suppress the extra text.

For example, Division 095-45 meets every other month, from January. When the SO-CS entered "3rd Thurs in Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, and Nov" she got "3rd Thurs in Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, and Nov of each month" -- a nonsensical result.

However, when she entered "3rd Thurs in Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, and Nov#" (note the #-sign after "Nov") WOW displayed "3rd Thurs in Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, and Nov".

This can be useful for Districts, for example, that have four (4) meetings a year on specific dates: "Jan 23, Apr 15, July 23, Nov 1. Other times by announcement.#" entered into AuxDirectory will reproduce only that text (minus the #-sign).

If your meeting times are also irregular, leave the meeting time field blank. You *can* add the time in the meeting day field, if desperate, as in "Jan 23 (0900), Apr 15 (1300), July 23 (0900), Nov 1 (1030). Other times by announcement.#".

26 Apr 13 Categories: [New Feature](#), [Documentation](#)

#### PE COURSE ADDRESS WON'T TAKE? TRY THIS

Occasionally, PE officers trying to enter a course into WOW's National Public Education Course Database get an error message that they have a bad address, which they KNOW (wink, wink) is correct.

The first line of defense is to check the address with the U.S. Postal Service, at their "[Look Up a ZIP Code](#)" page. Then, use the resulting address for entering into the PE Course Dashboard, letter for letter, copying the same abbreviations (ST for Street, FT for Fort, etc.). This will usually do the trick.

However, some addresses resist even this. WOW uses Yahoo!'s geocoding Web service to validate addresses and get the meeting location's latitude and longitude for the marker on the map found on the course flyer. The reason WOW will not accept a questionable address is to avoid producing a map that shows the location of the course in, say, the Canary Islands. But Yahoo! is actually more discriminating than the Post Office, and on occasion will find an address that it believes exists in more two or more places, the Zip Code notwithstanding

In such a case the PE Dashboard will reject the address and say that it is ambiguous. What you can do then is to give it a little help: simply tack on the county name after the city, in the city field.

For example, if the address "322 Huff Street, Aransas Pass, TX, 78336" comes back ambiguous (it does), simply tack on the county name (San Patricio) right after the city name, in the "City" field:

Before: "Aransas Pass"

After: "Aransas Pass, San Patricio County"

You can also use the IT Directorates Geotest Utility to experiment with addresses (or find the geodesic coordinates -- i.e., latitude and longitude -- of your flotilla's meeting location for entry into AuxDirectory, etc.) and see how Yahoo's geocoder acts with a specific address. Sometimes, with a little experimentation, you can find the right "tweak" on the address (such as changing "Fort" to "FT" or Harbor to "Hbr") that does the trick.

The WOW Geotest Utility is at: [wow.uscgaux.info/geotest.php](http://wow.uscgaux.info/geotest.php).

Finally, note that if your course is being held on a military base, the official USPS address of that location is that of that base, such as "McClellan AFB, CA" rather than the surrounding city.

26 Apr 13 Categories: [Programming Tricks](#), [Documentation](#)

## NEW: ROLES-BASED PAGES

Roles-based Pages allow a webmaster to create protected pages that only appear in the left navigation menu when a "Member Zone" user is both "logged on" and has either a specific qualification (INT, AIROBS, etc.) and/or a specific office (FSO-CS, DSO-CS, etc.).

Role-based pages can be used whenever you want to share information with a select group of individuals or if you need to share sensitive information with a select group. For instance, you might create a page about auxiliary patrols that you want to share only with the boat crew. A DSO-CS folks may want to share specific instructions for updating flotilla websites that is only of interest to FSO-CS or SO-CS. Interpreters (INT) may want to share information on deployments that would be applicable to fellow interpreters and the DIR-I. The list is endless.

All of this is explained in a new Application Note entitled: [WOW II Pushbutton Website Platform: Using Role-based Pages](#). A copy of this application note may be downloaded from the documentation page in this dashboard.

10 Nov 12 Categories: [Programming Tricks](#), [New Feature](#)

## TEXT AND HEADING CENTERING BUG HAS BEEN ELIMINATED

WOW users who have had difficulty in centering text or headings with the "center" icon will be pleased to know that a bug was found in the custom CSS styles that are part of WOW. That bug is now splattered on the windshield of progress. Centering works now on all tags, both in the Cute Editor, and on the rendered web page. You may have to flush your browser's cache to drive out the old CSS.

08 Sep 12 Categories: [Bug Fix](#)

## FINALLY! WOW DOES EMAIL FORMS

Have you been wanting to create a form on your WOW site that visitors can fill out and submit to you? Now it is possible using WOW Email Forms. Although this is an advanced technique, it is not difficult to quickly create a response form that automatically is emailed by WOW to one or more persons of your choosing. The feature comes with enhancements to the Cute Editor for forms and tables.

Read all about it by clicking [Documentation](#) to the left, and downloading the Application Note. Be sure the also read up on [Hidden Pages](#), a technique you will use for a confirmation page for your form.

25 Jul 12 Categories: [Programming Tricks](#), [New Feature](#)

## NEW: "SMART TAGS" FOR MAINTENANCE-FREE PAGES

"Smart Tags" in a WOW website are pieces of text that you can put into your Web page, on any announcement (post), that are replaced when the page is displayed with "dynamic" information. Examples include unit staff members, contact information, and even personalization information for the member logged on -- all drawn in real time from AuxDirectory. Make any page with personnel information "maintenance free." Download the Application Note under "Documentation", to the left.

25 Jul 12 Categories: [Programming Tricks](#), [New Feature](#)

## HIDDEN PAGES REVEALED

WOW II now has the ability to support *hidden pages*. Hidden pages are regular WOW pages that do not show up in the left menu, but are otherwise part of your site, and can be linked to.

Hidden pages are particularly useful as confirmation pages for WOW Forms, which prefer to have a page for the user to land on after entering a form, saying something like "Your form has been emailed. Thank you for your <whatever...>". However, you may also use a hidden page like any other page. You just have to arrange links to the hidden page from visible or protected pages.

All of this is explained in a new Application Note entitled: [WOW II Pushbutton Website Platform: Using Hidden Pages](#). A copy of this application note may be downloaded from the documentation page in this dashboard. While you are there, pick up any other documentation that you have not read in a while. Click on [Documentation](#) to the left.

## CUSTOM PAGES NOW FEATURE HUMAN-READABLE SLUGS; PUSH BUTTON UPDATE

Since its introduction, WOW II has featured unlimited Custom pages. You may have noticed that the generated link to these pages is always a unique, ten-digit number(\*) as follows:

```
http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=115-12-05&category=1324573457
```

This number is then associated with the menu entry and all of the content (announcement) entries in the WOW database, enabling the correct page to be constructed dynamically. Unfortunately, a ten-digit number is not particularly intuitive or memorable.

WOW has now been upgraded to use slugs - human-readable phrases based upon the actual menu entry - instead of the ten-digit number. For example, if you create a custom menu item "Get a VSC Today!", the slug will be "get-a-vsc-today", and page's URL will be:

```
http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=115-12-05&category=get-a-vsc-today
```

Slugs are popular because they enable search engines -- which treat the words in the slug as keywords -- to find the page.

All custom pages created after May 30, 2012 will have slugs in their URL. Custom pages bearing the old ten-digit category code may be converted with a new push button utility that appears in the WOW Dashboard, called "Rewrite Custom Slugs". Look for it under "WOW Utilities" in the Dashboard's left menu. Simply click this "link" and all of the custom page URLs in your unit's site will be converted. In addition, all links to converted pages *anywhere in the entire WOW II system* will be converted as well. This means, for example, if a flotilla website contained a link to a custom WOW page on a district site -- as an external menu item or coded into an announcement -- this link will be converted in the database so that it will continue to point to the correct page.

Webmasters, however, should be cautioned that if you published a link to a custom page *outside* the WOW system, for example on an AIRS website, on a third-party site, or even in a brochure or flyer, that link will be broken after you click "Rewrite Custom Slugs". To aid you in manually converting these, the Dashboard produces a cross-reference report in the "Rewrite Custom Slugs" utility.

All units are asked to use the "Rewrite Custom Slugs" utility to update their site as soon as possible.

-----

(\*) Geeks among you might be interested to know that the ten-digit number is actually the number of seconds since the beginning of the UNIX epoch (0000 GMT on January 1, 1970) at the instant that you created the custom menu item. For further reading, see [Unix Time](#) in Wikipedia. For more about slugs, read "[Slug \(Web Publishing\)](#)" from the same source.

30 May 12 Categories: Programming Tricks, New Feature

## SORT ORDER ON CALENDAR PAGES; BEST PRACTICES

We recommend that you use a calendar like Google Calendar for your unit, and simply embed the calendar link right in the page. We recommend the "Agenda" view, which displays events in a list, ordered from earliest date to latest date, rather than a classical "tabular" calendar. But it's your choice.

However, if you insist on creating an agenda-style calendar using the Announcement Editor, you must be aware of the following strategies and best practices, in order to get your calendar to appear professional, and sorted in the right order:

1. Use one (1) announcement per event.
2. Put the date and information about the event in the "CaptionField", like this: "04 APR: This is my event".
3. Check the "Show on Page" checkbox to force this caption to be displayed on the page as your calendar entry.
4. Set the "Start Date" to the *date of the event*. WOW sorts calendar pages by *Start Date*, not by Sequence (Sequence is ignored).
5. Set the "End Date" to the day after the event, if you want the event to *disappear* automatically after it is over. If, instead, you want all events, future *and* past, to remain in the calendar all year, then *set the End Date to "December 31, <current year>"*.

The formatting in #2 is very important; if you want the events to more or less line up vertically, they you should assure that all dates are written with two digits (i.e., leading zero) and all months are abbreviated with three (3) characters.

The body of the announcement will normally be left empty, unless you have additional information to add. Be sure to keep the font sizes in the additional information at the default sizes. If you go larger, your page will look amateurish. And avoid brightly-colored fonts. Stick to the WOW palette.

04 May 12 Categories: Programming Tricks

## THE MEMBER ID AND PASSWORD TEXT BOXES DISAPPEAR FROM THE MEMBER ZONE LOGIN WINDOW.

A problem unique to the Cute editor used in WOW can result in the Member ID and Password fields disappearing in the Login window, so that members cannot login to a WOW web page. This occurs in rare cases when the Import WOW-I button resulted in some bad html code being inserted into the top of a WOW II page. This also results in a ¼" deep white bar showing to both sides at the very top of the page.

1. The fix is to remove the bad lines of html code by editing the page(s) involved:



2. Login by gaining access to your site by using the generic WOW login at <http://wow.uscgauz.info>.
3. Go to the Configuration Dashboard, and edit the page in question. This will bring up the page in WOW's Cute editor.
4. Switch to HTML view in the editor instead of Normal view (select HTML on the lower left of the editor window).
5. At the top of the page in HTML view, look for and delete all code between successive sets of `<style type=>.....</style>` tags. Do this until you get to a tag `<.....>` that is not `<style>`. These problem lines at the top of the page will look something like the following examples:

```
<style type="text/css" isprelink="true">@import
url(http://wow.uscgauz.info/cuteeditor_files/Style/SyntaxHighlighter.css);</style>
<style type="text/css">@import url(../content_cute.css);</style>
<style type="text/css">@import url(phi.css);</style>
```

6. Note that each of the problem code lines always begins with "`<style type="`", and end with "`</style>`". There could be anywhere from one to more than thirty of these lines that need to be stripped.
7. Go to the bottom of the page, look for and delete any lines that also say the same as #4 above, starting at the last line, and working backwards to the first non-style tag.
8. Save the page.
9. View the unit page, and confirm that the white bar is gone, and the member login boxes appear again.

04 May 12 Categories: [Bug Fix](#)

## ADDRESSES AND MAPS IN THE PE CALENDAR: HAVING PROBLEMS?

Updated April 27, 2012

The PE Calendar uses a geocoder service from Yahoo! to double-check the addresses and Zip Codes you enter. 99% of the time, it works fabulously, and prevents numerous errors from being made. Occasionally, however, it can be temperamental. When it is, try the following:

1. Enter your address *without* the Zip Code, and then use the 5-digit Zip Code that shows up in the error message.
2. Use our raw geocoding test utility to check out how the address wishes to be represented. It's at <http://wow.uscgauz.info/geotest.php>. Simply type in your address freeform, with commas, and leave out the Zip Code (it will be provided). The address that you get is the one that will work in the PE calendar.
3. Check with the U.S. Postal Service [here](#). Enter your address without a Zip Code to start. If the USPS reports "*The address you provided is not recognized by the US Postal Service as an address we serve*", then you have the address wrong, whatever you think. See "Common Errors", next section.

### Common Errors

Here are the most common address errors made during address data, in decreasing order of frequency:

1. You are putting an address (e.g., 1234 Main St.) in the "Location" field. The location field, required, is the name of the building or meeting place, such as "Fire Station Room 235". *It may not be a street address*. The field immediately below "Location" is called "Address", and it is called that for a reason. That is where you put the first line of the street address.
2. You are attempting to enter a Location in the Address field (opposite of #1).
3. You are omitting North, South, East, or West (or N, S, E, or W) from a street address. Even though you've lived there for over 40 years and think of City Hall as 100 Main Street, the Post Office (and our geocoder) *insist* you enter it "100 N. Main St." if that is the legal address.
4. You are attempting to enter a street address on a military base using the city that the base is in. For example, you enter "Location" as "Travis AFB Youth Center" and the full address as "310 Fairchild Drive, Fairfield, CA 94535". *This will fail*; the use of the city "Fairfield" in which Travis AFB is located is incorrect. Instead, for "City", you must enter either "Travis AFB", or "Travis Air Force Base". This is consistent across the country; the "city" for any military base is the name of the base itself.

### Maps in the Flyer

The marker showing the course location in the PE flyer is also from Yahoo's geocoding service. It, however, takes the latitude and longitude provided based upon the address, and then tells Google Maps (which actually renders the map insert on the flyer) where to place the marker. For some reason, Yahoo's geocoding of addresses to lat/lon is sometimes a little off.

We are working on switching the map marker over to Google's geocoder, but due to higher-priority projects, that might not get done as soon as you would like.

27 Apr 12 Categories: [Programming Tricks](#)

## CUSTOM ICONS NOW POSSIBLE AT TOP OF LEFT MENU

If you would like to emulate some of the national departments that have their department seal at the top of the left menu system (for example, the IT group at <http://itgroup.cgaux.org>), you can now do it.

Take your official district, department or flotilla seal -- high quality, of course -- and make it *exactly* 130x130 pixels. If your seal is not round, then crop to the widest dimension, resize to 130px along that dimension, and then crop the other dimension to 130px as well. Your background can be white (#FFFFFF) or transparent. Save it as a JPEG file, with the file extension ".jpg".

Next, rename the file based upon your canonical unit number, except without the dashes. For example, if your unit is 114-12-04, then rename the file:

1141204\_icon.jpg

So, the file name is your canonical unit number *without the dashes*, with "\_icon.jpg" tacked on. If you name this image anything else, this won't work.

Finally, you need to upload the image to WOW. Simply enter the configuration dashboard, edit *any* announcement on *any* page, and click on the "image upload" icon (the mountain with pencil). Browse to the file wherever you left it on your computer, and upload it. *Do not insert the image into the announcement you have opened!* Just cancel out of the image upload dialog, and click on the "Return to Unit Site" button. If you did everything correctly, the custom icon will appear at the top of the left menu, in place of the AuxWeb icon.

27 Apr 12 Categories: [Programming Tricks](#), [New Feature](#)

## YOUR AUXILIARY EMAIL ADDRESS IS "USCG.MIL"? YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO CONFIGURE WOW

If the Member Zone password you set up was validated using a uscg.mil email address (that is, your *primary* email address listed in AuxDirectory/AuxOfficer is *your.own.name@uscg.mil*), then you may not be able to configure either WOW or the Public Education Database. Currently, 0.37% of Auxiliary members have uscg.mil email addresses.

The reason is that AuxOfficer categorized you as an active duty member when you applied for the password, even though you are a member, starting fall of 2011.

If you fall into this category, simply revisit the AuxDirectory/AuxOfficer [sign-in page](#), and from there request a new password (it can be the same one) using "Obtain/Change Password". Or, just click this [link](#).

04 Apr 12 Categories: [Bug Fix](#)

## SAFARI BROWSER (MACINTOSH OR PC): DON'T USE FOR WOW EDITING!

There is a problem with the Safari browser on both Macs and PCs: images inserted into your WOW page cannot be edited after insertion in the WOW announcement editor. This is a problem specific to Safari, and does not occur with other browsers.

If you are a Safari user (usually only Macintosh users), please download and use Firefox as your default browser for working with your WOW site. [www.firefox.com](http://www.firefox.com)

The guts of the editor are licensed from a 3rd party, and it may not be possible to fix this Safari limitation in the near future.

17 Mar 12 Categories: [Bug Fix](#)

## LICENSE ERROR (1) HOST NOT MATCH!

If you get the error "Licensee Error (1) Host Not Match!<some URL>" when trying to enter data into the Announcement editor (Cute Editor), it is because you accessed the page via a corrupted URL -- usually from a bookmark -- that combines portion of a correct URL with additional incorrect pieces. The only correct URL for accessing your site is its "canonical" address (see the User's Guide). For example, if your unit number is 115-03-07, then your site's canonical URL is "a1150307.wow.uscgaux.info". That is the address you should bookmark, and that is the address that you should share.

If this happens, throw away any bookmarks that you have saved to access your site, close your browser (all copies), and revisit the site with the canonical address. If you persist in getting the problem, take a screen shot, save the image file, and use the "Feedback/Support" button in the Dashboard to ask where to email the screen shot.

26 Jan 12 Categories: [Bug Fix](#)

## BUG FIX: FUTURE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The expectation is that announcements with a future start date will not appear until that date. This was not occurring, and future-dated announcements were showing up now. This has been fixed. Note that if you have any content that has mysteriously "disappeared", check to see if it mistakenly had a future start date.

01 Jan 12 Categories: [Bug Fix](#)

## PE CALENDAR: ENTERING THE SAME COURSE WITH DIFFERENT DATES (CLONE)

If you are offering the same Public Boating Course several times during the year, you or your PE officer may enter it one time, and then "clone" it repeatedly, changing the dates, etc. for each additional copy, as required.

To do so, in the PE Dashboard, simply EDIT the course you want to clone, change the necessary information, and use the 'SAVE AS NEW' button.



This technique may also be used after a course has concluded, and you wish to re-use the information for a future course. In such a case, do *not* simply change the dates and use SAVE, for this does not send a *new* "Notice of Intent to Teach" to the DSP-PE, but use the SAVE AS NEW button.

25 Dec 11 Categories: [Programming Tricks](#)

## ADDING YOUR OWN CONTENT TO THE DEFAULT HOME PAGE

Many of you have expressed interest in "hacking" the default home page to add you own photographs, or additional content.

The default home page is built-in, and cannot be edited per se. However, there is nothing preventing you from creating your own home page *with exactly the same underlying code as is used on the default home page*. All you need is the code. Well, here it is:

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/documents/story.zip>

Here is how you use it:

1. Go to the configuration dashboard, and start with a default home page (no announcements);
2. Click on the link above, and download the story.zip file to your desktop;
3. Double-click open the zip file, and either drag the story.txt file to your desktop, and open it, or simply click it open right in the zip window, if your version of zip allows that.
4. Copy all the code in story.txt. For safety, use CTRL-A (PC) or CMD-A (Mac), and do an Edit > Copy from the menu, or a CTRL-C (PC) or CMD-C (Mac);
5. In WOW, on the home page dashboard, create a new announcement; In the editor window, click on "HTML" at the bottom;
6. Click your mouse in the editor window, and use CTRL-V (PC) or CMD-V (Mac) to paste the text you copied from story.txt.
7. SAVE the announcement, and Return to Unit Page.

If you did it right, the home page will look identical to the default home page. However, now you may go back and either edit that announcement, or add additional announcements on the home page to customize it as you see fit.

17 Oct 11 Categories: [Programming Tricks](#)

## I OPTED IN TO EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBERS ON THE ABOUT PAGE, AND THEY ARE NOT THERE!

The documentation for WOW II informs you that if you are the unit commander, vice commander, or HR officer, you may opt in to showing your email address or phone number, or both, on the "About this Unit" page. The opt-in/opt-out procedure calls for the respective member to log into AuxOfficer, and then navigate to his/her own page. Halfway down, below the phone numbers, are four EDIT buttons that allow the member to edit their own settings.

Here's the secret handshake: Regardless of what the settings say in AuxOfficer, *if you have never changed these settings before, they are not stored in the AuxOfficer database (where WOW finds them) until you change one of the settings for the first time, and hit SAVE*. Then, and only then, is the information written to the database for WOW. In particular, if you wish to opt IN, come to your AuxOfficer page for the first time, and the setting are already what you want, *you still must change something, hit SAVE, and then if necessary, change it back and hit SAVE again*. Then, your choices will be reflected in WOW.

NB: WOW II "caches" all of the unit's information when you open the site for the first time, so as not to keep going back to the database over the internet. In order to see the results of a settings change like this, it is necessary to close your browser AND ALL OTHER WINDOWS OPEN from the SAME browser, and then re-visit the site. This causes the system to read the parameters again from the database.

19 Sep 11 Categories: [Uncategorized](#)

## ZOOM BUG IN INTERNET EXPLORER 8 AND BELOW

When using the WOW Dashboard to configure a site, and your browser is Internet Explorer 8 or 7, Microsoft's View>Zoom command will cause the dashboard to break up if you set the zoom below 100%. Microsoft fixed this bug in IE9.

Workaround: don't Zoom your IE8 or IE7 browser below 100%.

28 Aug 11 Categories: [Uncategorized](#)

# APPLICATION NOTE SERIES

Information Technology Group  
Computer Software & Systems  
U.S Coast Guard Auxiliary

## Address Entry Tricks for the Public Education Database\*

\*Includes special information for Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Island addresses

### Background

The Coast Guard Auxiliary’s Public Education Database is the official repository of public education courses being offered by the Flotillas to the general public. The database may be searched (by zip code) by members of the public, at any Auxiliary WOW website, at the National Website “cgaux.org”, and at the U.S. Power Squadron’s national website (through a data-sharing agreement).

All of the relevant information about an upcoming Public Education course may be entered in the “Configure” mode at any WOW website, or from the central PE Database dashboard at:

[http://wow.uscgaux.info/PE\\_signin.php](http://wow.uscgaux.info/PE_signin.php)

Addresses entered into the PE Dashboard by the PE officer, instructor, or unit commander, are *verified* as to accuracy, according to the U.S. Postal Service’s standards. The reason for this verification is two-fold:

- To avoid inconveniencing a student with an erroneous address, and additionally making the Auxiliary look bad; and
- To have an address accurate enough to *geocode* it into the exact latitude and longitude of the location the course is being taught, for the purposes of the Course Flyer. Showing an online map to the course location in the flyer with the *wrong* location is unfair to the student.

In general, the PE Dashboard will not accept (save) a course record with an address that cannot be identified and geocoded. This Application Note explains how the geocode process works behind the scenes, describes where errors come from, and offers suggestions as to researching and entering addresses that will verify and geocode the first time. In addition, special procedures for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are discussed.

### Printable Course Flyer

One of the most significant features of the system, in addition to being able to find a course by entering a zip code and distance (radius), is that the potential student may request a printable “flyer” describing the course, and the details about where and when it is meeting, the price, contact information, and especially a *map showing the course location*.

### Google Map Showing Course Location

In addition to the course flyer with included map, the potential student may also click on a “Map” link, and get a Google Map showing the location of the course.

Clearly, it is in *everyone’s best interest* that the location depicted on the two maps *actually be the exact location of the course!* It is also in everyone’s best interest for the address of the course shown in the flyer to be accurate. An accurate address reduces confusion with the students, and makes the Auxiliary look more professional.

## Address Entry Tricks for the Public Education Database\*

### Revision 1.0

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### Address Verification and Geocoding by the System

At the time the PE officer or Instructor enters the course information into the PE Dashboard, the “location” and

“address” that he/she enters is checked for validity, as follows:

1. The entered address is sent to Yahoo!’s online geocoding service for verification. If the address is a valid (known) address, Yahoo will return to the PE dashboard program a “normalized” version of the address (i.e., in the U.S. Postal Services “official” style), the true zip code, and a quality factor (a number from 0 to 87, where 87 is “perfect match”). Yahoo! also sends back the actual latitude and longitude of that address, *which the PE database will use as the location for the map marker on the Course Flyer*, and for the Google map link.
2. The normalized version of the address that is returned is validated by the Dashboard as follows; any mismatch will cause an error message:
  - a. The zip code the PE officer entered must match the zip code as returned by Yahoo!.
  - b. The city entered by the PE officer must match the city (or neighborhood in Puerto Rico) returned by Yahoo!.

Errors that can occur are as follows:

1. A city or zip code mismatch will generate an error message;
  2. An address not found will generate an error message;
  3. Two (or more) “records” found by Yahoo with the same address will generate an “ambiguous” error.
- In the event of an error, the Dashboard will *not* accept the PE database entry until address errors are resolved. Resolving them is the main purpose of this Application Note.

### Typical Reasons for Address Errors

Here are the main reason for address errors:

1. The address you are trying to enter is simply *wrong*. All addresses should be verified by independent means *before* attempting to enter them into a PE course record. (More on independent verification, below).
2. You are entering the correct data in the *wrong* fields. *Part of this comes from confusion about the differences between the “Location” field, and the “Address 1” field*. This is covered in detail under “Entering Addresses”, below.
3. The “official” address at that location is actually in an adjacent town or adjacent zip code. This situation is more frequent than one would think, and catches even PE officers who have lived in the area their entire lives. It also is found on occasions for locations or institutions that deliberately (and occasionally through poor assumptions) publish their address in official literature (including websites) “in the next town over” (such as “Little Rock” versus “Podunk”).
4. The address is in Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands, which have so many issues they are covered in a special section below.

### Address Entry Tricks for the Public Education Database\* Revision 1.0

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### Incorrect Flyer Map Marker Locations

All PE Officers or instructors entering their courses into the PE Database should *always* check both the Flyer and the Google Map link, to make sure that the Map Marker is in the correct location. The online version of the Flyer, which can be called up directly from the Dashboard (rightmost column of each course record) features an *interactive map*, which you can zoom in to make sure the marker is right on, or right next to, your meeting location’s building or parking lot.

Occasionally, the location of the map marker will be off somewhat. Here are some reasons:

1. The “official” location of that address as reported by the Yahoo! geocoder differs slightly from where *you* would have put it. Except in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, there is no solution for this (other than contacting Yahoo!’s geoservices group, which *is* possible). The Flyer’s interactive map *does* have a disclaimer about accuracy, on it. Fortunately, in the 50 U.S. states, this occurs rarely.
2. You forgot to enter the “house number” for a street address. In an address like “113 N. Main St.”, the

“house number” is the “113”. The Yahoo! geocoder (and the PE dashboard) will often accept such an address, but simply notes that that the quality is less than perfect. The *latitude* and *longitude* returned by the geocoder will be the “average” location for that street in that town. For a miles-long street, the map marker may be a long way from where your course is being taught. Fortunately, this is easy to fix – simply put in the correct street number.

If the geocoder does *not* accept an address missing the house number, the most common error message will be “ambiguous”.

3. You put in the wrong address.

### Entering Addresses Correctly

Here is how to enter an address correctly.

#### *Research the Address Before Using the PE Dashboard*

Incomplete research is probably the number one reason PE officers and instructors have difficulty getting addresses to verify (or to have the correct map marker location). The following is recommended for any *new* course location, or any *existing* course location (e.g., from last year) where *the map marker is not exact*.

1. Obtain the *de facto* address by visiting the location, recording the street name, and verifying the house number from signage on the building or curb markings.
2. Confirm through research (online, see below) that the *official* street name is what you think it is. For example, the main drag on the San Francisco peninsula is the historical “El Camino Real”. However, in some of the Peninsula cities, it is actually called “El Camino”. Most locals call it the latter, but the missing “Real” might frustrate the geocoder.
3. Read any published materials about the location (flyers, websites, etc.) to see what the owners or tenants of the building think that their address is. Note, from above, they can be wrong, but not often.
4. Visit the U.S. Postal Service site at <http://zip4.usps.com/zip4>, and *test the address*. Try your test first *without* a zip code, as the USPS website will provide you with the correct zip code if the address is known. 99% of the time, if you can get the address to verify at the USPS site, it will geocode without problem in the PE Dashboard.

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5. Test the PE’s geocoder directly (i.e., outside of WOW or the PE Dashboard) at the following address:

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/geotest.php>

The IT Group’s geotest program uses the identical software as does the PE dashboard and WOW, so if an address verifies in geotest.php, it will work in the PE Dashboard. But there are some bonuses for testing your address first in geotest.php, before you try to enter it into a PE course record:

- a. The test program actually returns the *entire* location record generated by Yahoo!, including the quality factor (0 – 87). If you get a quality factor below “perfect”, i.e. “87” or “address and street match”, your Flyer map marker will probably be somewhat off.
- b. You may discover that the *official* city or zip code of the address you entered is different than you think it is. If this is the case, *use the looked up values returned by geotest for making your entry in the PE dashboard*. Also, you might have entered “St. Thomas” or “Saint Thomas”, when the geocoder wants “St Thomas” (no period).

This is especially important in Puerto Rico, where the Spanish alphabet is used. Although, for example, you can type the city “Bayamon” into the geotest program, and get a potentially perfect address match, the test program will return the actual spelling of the city, “Bayamón”, with an accented “ó”. *The PE Dashboard will only accept the address if you enter the city with its correct Spanish spelling!*

- c. If you get an ambiguous result (i.e., more than one unique location record), examining each record in detail may give you a clue as to how to resolve the ambiguity. Note: The version of geocode.php

as of the original publication date of this Application Note does not return the ambiguous records in this situation. A future version may.

To enter an address into geotest.php, simply write it in one line, as in  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington DC 20500

Separate the address and city with a comma, to help the geocoder.

### Put Your Address Information in the Correct Field

The PE dashboard course input record has the following address fields; starred "\*" fields are required:

- Location\* = Description of the location of the course – not an address – such as “City Hall, Room 5” or “Sandia’s Restaurant, Banquet Room”. This location (and “Address 2”) below tells your student where to go *once they get to the address, below*.
- Address\* – Official Post Office mailing address, in terms of “Street Number and “Street”, such as “29 Main St”. It is *this* field that you must research carefully to get correct street address entered. *Under no circumstances enter information other than the so-called street address in this field, always composed of a “house number” and a street name*. Otherwise, the PE dashboard will never accept your course entry. *Post Office boxes are not acceptable*.
- Address 2 – This is extra information that is *not used for the address geocode test*. Rather, it can elaborate on the location field, or refine the address for the student, such as “Second Floor, Room 235”, “Rear Entry”, “Next to McDonalds”, etc. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, where the Post Office often uses the

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name of the Island as the official “city” in an address (i.e., St Thomas), you can put the neighborhood (or town) such as “Charlotte Amalie”) to clarify the address for the student. This field may be left empty.

- City\* – City/Town/Neighborhood in which this address is *officially* located. Returned as “city” or “neighborhood” (if city is returned empty) by the IT Group’s geotest.php program, and as “city” by the USPS’s zip code finder.
- State\* – Two uppercase characters such as “CA”, “PR”, “VI”, “AK” etc. designating the state, territory, protectorate, etc, in the U.S. Postal Service’s official parlance.
- Zip Code\* – the 5-digit postal code of the address.

#### Address Field Workarounds

In rare circumstances, after significant research, you are unable to find a specific house number to use in the Address field. In such cases, here are some other things to try:

1. **Intersections.** If your course location is at or near the intersection of two streets, try entering that intersection as “Martinique Drive & Marlin Drive” as the entire Address field (without quotes). You may also enter “N Moore St at West St”, substituting “at” for the ampersand “&”. You can always use “Address 2” for clarification for the student. For example, “Northwest Corner”, or “Adjacent to McDonalds”, or “Pier 25” could be put into Address 2.
2. **“Walk In” the Address.** If you are not near an intersection, but can find addresses with House Numbers on either side of your location, you can try making up an interpolated address between two known addresses. If the geocoder accepts your phony address, check the location of the map marker. You may be able to “walk the marker in” to an acceptable location by tweaking the house number up and down. *Note that this is a desperation move, and will probably fail.* If it fails, choose a nearby intersection (per the previous paragraph) and provide additional instructions in Address 2, or in the Comment field.

### Special Information for Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands

#### Direct Entry of Course Location in Latitude and Longitude

*This information applies only to Divisions 070-01, and 070-16 and their respective flotillas.*

There are some locations in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands where there is no “official” mailing address that either the Post Office Zip Code website or the Yahoo! geocoder service will accept. Or, the address is

accepted, but the location of the course marker in the Flyer map is not exact.

In such circumstances, the PE Dashboard offers a simple workaround – direct entry of the latitude and longitude of the course location.

How it works:

1. The PE Dashboard opens up an *extra* data entry field, below Zip Code, entitled “Course Location Lat/Lon Override”).
2. The PE officer or instructor types in the *decimal* latitude and longitude, separated by commas in that field. Example: “18.339940,-64.930123” is the lat/lon of the USCG MSD base in Charlotte Amalie. You would enter the data *without* the quote marks, of course.
3. The geocoder will then *ignore* the “Address field” (see above), and only validate the address as to correct city spelling and correct Zip Code.

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4. The map marker on the Course Flyer and in the Google Maps link will be placed exactly at those coordinates.

This capability places *additional responsibility* on the member entering the course into the PE database:

1. You must independently verify that the latitude and longitude are exact, and
2. You must continue to use the Location, Address, and Address 2 fields (described above) to provide *as accurate a description for the student* as you can. The gold standard would be if you could address a letter to the address you entered, or provide it to a taxi driver, and the letter – or you – would end up there with no difficulties.

#### *Accurately Determining the Course Location Lat/Lon*

To accurately determine the geodetic coordinates (lat/lon) of where your training will be held, try one of the following:

1. Visit the course location, stand in front of the correct entrance, and acquire the coordinates with a handheld GPS, or an appropriate GPS application on your smartphone. *Put the GPS/app in “Decimal GPS” mode; do not attempt to do the conversion yourself from degrees, minutes, seconds, or degrees, decimal minutes, even if you are a math wizard.* If you get it wrong, we all look bad.
2. Find the location in Google Earth (not Google Maps) using your tablet or personal computer. Zoom into the spot where you would stand in “1” with your handheld, and move your cursor to that point. Google Earth continuously reads out the decimal latitude and longitude of the cursor location. Copy it down, and enter it into the override field.

Option #2 is what Auxiliary IT engineers use for testing the PE geocoding capability, as it is so easy to open a Google Earth window at the same time that one is entering a course into the PE Dashboard.

#### *Validation of the Lat/Lon: Check the Flyer Map Immediately!*

After you have successfully determined and entered the latitude and longitude of a course meeting location, you should *immediately* open up the Course Flyer for that course, and *verify that the map marker location is correct.*

#### *Other Data Entry Requirements – Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands*

##### *Highway (carretera) Addresses*

A typical Puerto Rico highway address might be:

Carretera 113 Km 5 (or) #1200 Carretera 113

Instead of “carretera”, you must use “PR-”, so these addresses would be written:

PR-113 Km 5 (and) #1200 PR-113

##### *Mileposts (Kilometer markers)*

Many course locations will need to be specified by the name of the road, and a milepost marker, such as Calle Los Corderos Km 11

entered into the “Address” field. There are several things to observe:

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1. If you can research and discover a valid “House Number” (numerical address) such as “12415 Calle Los Corderos” for that milepost location, use it;
2. Always write the milepost “Km 11” *after* the address, *never before*, or if you are having verification problems, in “Address 2”.
3. The geocoder will *never* use the milepost location to provide an accurate location, so an address like “Calle Los Cordero Km 111” will yield a map marker location which may be *many kilometers distant* from where you are holding the course. In such a case, you will discover that the map marker and Google Maps link are *wrong*, and you must determine and enter the correct decimal latitude and longitude of the course location in the “Override field”, as described above.

##### *House Number Position in Street Addresses (Address Field)*

When you are lucky enough to have an address with a house number, like “213 Camino Los Torres” (the “213” is the house number), always enter it *before the street name, not after*. That is, “Camino Los Torres #213”, with the house number *after* the street name, may not verify.

##### *Accented versus Unaccented Characters in Puerto Rico Names*

For Puerto Rico locations, city names must *always* be entered in the “City” field with correct Spanish characters, for example:

Bayamón, instead of Bayamon

Mayagüez, instead of Mayaguez

Street names *should* be entered with their correct spellings in Spanish, but if they don’t verify, and everything else looks good, try replace the accented characters with their unaccented equivalents.

For example, if “225 Calle Lucas Fernández” fails to verify, try spelling Fernández without the accented “á”, e.g. “Fernandez”.

##### *Island Names in the U.S. Virgin Islands*

The geocoder is more comfortable with using the island name as the “City”, whereupon you could place the town name, such as “Charlotte Amalie”, in Address 2, which is not checked. However, our recommendation is that you use the town name as “City”, and *always* put in an override Latitude and Longitude for the course location. This way, you can have your cake and eat it too: A very readable address for the Flyer, and a deadly accurate Flyer Map and Google Map Link.

If you *don’t* use the lat/lon override, and have difficulty with validation, try writing the island name out fully, and abbreviated, with and without a period. For example: “Saint Thomas”, “St. Thomas”, and “St Thomas”. You can also experiment with entering the “City” field with a structure like this:

“Charlotte Amalie, St Thomas”

“Christiansted, St Croix”

With the lat/lon override, however, none of this is necessary.

#### Address Entry Tricks for the Public Education Database\*

## Revision 1.0

### APPLICATION NOTE SERIES

#### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY GROUP UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

##### Other Tips and Tricks – All Users

1. **Offering a course that you offered last year?** Just open up the PE dashboard, find the old course, open it up, and *change any information necessary* to update the record to this year. Then, do a “SAVE AS” and a new course record will be created for this year’s course. This save a lot of typing. NOTE: You can also do a SAVE instead of a SAVE AS, and the old record will be *reused* for this year’s course. (This is the preferred method, as it keeps the database small, saving the Auxiliary data processing storage and



backup costs).

**2. You've spent 45 minutes typing in a new P.E. course into the Dashboard, and the address won't verify.**

Don't panic; you can save your work. Just change the start date of the course to year 2000, and put in your own mailing address as the course address. This should verify, and allow you to save the record. Then, go research the correct form of the address per the instructions in the pages above, and *test the address* in the geotest.php utility program. Once you have it right, go back to the dashboard, put in the good address, and change the date back to this year. (Setting the date back prevents the course from showing up in the Course Finder, until you can fix the data).

**3. Researching a Course Address from your living room.** You can do as IT does when fielding complaints about "addresses not working": do a Google search on the institution where you are holding the course, and find their website, and look for their address. If their address is a PO Box (or anything else without a house number and street), call them on the telephone, and say "I need your correct street address for a UPS (or FedEx, etc.) delivery." This usually works unless they come back with "Loading Dock, Back Street, Bad Neighborhood, CA" or some such.

You can also do the same search in Google Earth, if you have installed it (free) on your computer or tablet. Google Earth has proven quite good at finding *places*, such as "Joe's Bar and Grill, Sweetwater, GA", though going from there to a street address may require additional address research.

### Feedback

If you have comments on this Application Note, or have found situations or addresses not covered, please open the PE Dashboard and click on "FEEDBACK/BUG REPORT" at the bottom of the "Add/Edit Pubic Boating Courses" page and submit your comments. If you have an address that has failed to validate, after you have followed all the suggestions above, *you must include the location and address information that you tried to enter*, in the bug report.

SCJ: February 2015

Initial Release

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## APPLICATION NOTE SERIES

Information Technology Group  
Computer Software & Systems  
U.S Coast Guard Auxiliary

### WOW II Pushbutton Website Platform: Using Hidden Pages

#### Hidden Pages Exposed

In typical use, WOW webmasters normally create two types of pages in WOW: "unprotected" and "protected". Unprotected pages are those which are visible at all times, while protected pages are only visible in the "Member Zone" – that is, to users who have "logged on". Both types of pages are automatically shown in the left navigation menu, with protected pages identified with a special "Do Not Enter" icon "⊘".

Hidden Pages allow webmasters to create unprotected pages that *do not appear in the left navigation menu*. Such pages can *only* be reached via a link, and the left menu will render fully "closed" (a la the Home Page).

#### Uses for Hidden Pages

Typical uses for hidden pages are as follows:

- Landing pages for forms completion (see Application Note *WOW II Platform: Creating Email Response Forms*);

- “Seasonal” pages that were painstakingly created, but are only used a few months each year. In the “off season”, they can be marked “hidden”. Note: the pages will still be reachable by direct link, and discoverable by search engines.
- Content that merits its own page, but does not merit a direct link from the left menu.
- Other: submit your creative use via the Feedback button in the WOW Dashboard, and it could be added here.

## Creating a Hidden Page

The “visibility” of a WOW page (protected or unprotected) is controlled by radio buttons in the MENU AREA of the WOW Dashboard. Any page can be turned into a hidden page simply by clicking a new, third radio button captioned “Hidden”, followed by “SAVE MENU”. See the following figure. A “Menu Name” is still required, and the text you enter for “Page Title” will be the title and caption of your hidden page.

**Add Custom Menu Item**

MENU AREA

Menu Name:  (Required; keep short; Title Case)

Page Title:  (Doubles as Menu Tip)

Menu Order:     Menu Level:  1    2    3    Protected:  No    Yes    Hidden

**Figure 1: Menu Area Showing “Hidden” Radio Button**

You may change the visibility of a page as often as you want.

Since the only way to reach a hidden page is via a direct link, you need to know how to capture the URL for *internal* use (i.e., from another WOW page in your unit or others) and for *external* use (for posting on a third-party website or publishing in a flyer, brochure, or documentation).

Here are the steps:

1. If the page does not already exist, create a new “CUSTOM” page, set the menu visibility to “Protected: Yes” (not “Hidden”).
2. Click the “Return to Unit Page” button to exit the Dashboard;
3. Navigate to your new page, using the left menu (if not already there);
4. Highlight and copy the page’s entire URL from the navigation area of your browser (see Figure #2);
5. Paste this URL into a temporary text document (e.g., Notepad on PC, Text Edit on Mac) and save.
6. Return to the Dashboard, change the page visibility to “Hidden”, and SAVE MENU.



**Figure 2: Copying the Page URL From the Browser**

If you are going to publish this URL on a third-party website, or in a printed document, then the URL that you just copied and saved is the correct “external” link. Use it as is.

If however, you wish to put a link to your hidden page on another page in your (or any) WOW website, you may *either* use the URL you just saved, or just the parameters from the URL (the “?” mark and everything to the right).

For example, if the URL you copied was:

`http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=114-12-04&category=form-confirmation`

then the portion of the link that you will need for *internal* use – the parameters – is as follows:

`?unit=114-12-04&category=form-confirmation`

Do not forget the leading question mark. Again, this short form is optional.

To actually use this link in an announcement (post) on your WOW website, proceed as follows:

1. In the WOW Dashboard, navigate to the page and announcement where you wish to put the link;
2. Type in the text that you wish to appear in the link, and clean up your page formatting;
3. Select only the link text you just entered, and click on the Link Tool (the chain link icon) in the Cute Editor;
4. In the Link Properties box that appears, paste either the entire URL, or the abbreviated version, into the “Url:” field;
5. Leave “Target:” “Not Set” to have the page open in the same window, or change to “New Window”;
6. Type any “Menu Tip” (pop-up text) in the “Title:” box, and,
7. Click OK to dismiss the dialog box, and SAVE to save your announcement changes.
8. Return to Unit Page to test your link.

## Left Menu Color Coding

To assist you in readily determining the visibility of your left menu items while you are in the Dashboard, WOW now color codes the menu entries, as follows:

- Normal visibility, not protected: Black text, same as before;
- Protected page: **Dark red text**;
- Hidden page: **Dark green text** with strikethrough like this.

## “Do’s” and “Don’ts”

- DO use this feature for “internal” pages that do not merit a left menu item;
- DO use this feature for form confirmation pages (when available);
- DO use this feature for seasonal pages that you don’t want to archive outside WOW (see below), which otherwise have a lot of work in them, but,
- DON’T use hidden pages to archive content you may never display again. It bloats the database, costs real money to back up, and slows the system down. Also, hidden pages are still “on” the Internet, and can be discovered by Google and other search engines.

## Mini Application Note: Archiving WOW Content

If you have some WOW content that you wish to save for possible future use, but don't want to lose all the work that went into creating it, you have two options, as follows. Both options require saving the underlying HTML content of an announcement (or page) into a text file, using a text editor. Here is the process:

1. Open your favorite text editor (e.g., *Notebook* on Windows, *Text Edit* on Mac) and create a new, empty page. Do *not* use Microsoft Word, or any equivalent word processing software.
2. To save a single announcement, navigate to it, and EDIT the announcement. In the Cute Editor, click the HTML icon, click inside the editing window, "Select All", and "Copy" the entire contents of the window. Paste what you copied into the open text document, and jump to step 6.
3. To save an entire page (comprised of multiple announcements) as a single announcement, return to the unit page, and view the page normally. RIGHT-click (PC) in the content area of the page and choose "View Page Source" (or equivalent; varies by browser). Select All, then copy the entire page to your open text file.
4. In the text editor, *remove all HTML* from the top of the page through and including: "`<div class="wow_content">`"
5. In the text editor, remove all HTML from the *bottom* of the page starting with "`</div><!-- End of ID wow_content -->`" and continuing to the end of the page.
6. In the text editor, "Save as New" to a filename that describes the announcement, such as "Upcoming\_Events\_Page-Natl\_Safe\_Boating\_Week.txt", and move the file to an archive directory on your computer.

To resurrect content that you archived, simply create an announcement to hold the content on the desired page, edit the announcement, click on the HTML button, paste the archived HTML content into the editor window, and SAVE. If you referenced any photos or artwork on your WOW site that you subsequently removed, you will have to re-upload those images with the same name they had before. Otherwise, the page should display normally.

####

Revision 1.0 July 17, 2012

## WOW II Pushbutton Website Platform: Using Role-based Pages

### Introduction to Role-based Pages

In typical use, WOW webmasters normally create three types of pages in WOW: “unprotected”, “protected”, and “hidden”. The characteristics of these three types of pages are as follows:

- ☑ Unprotected pages are those which are visible to all viewers,
- ☑ Protected pages are only visible in the “Member Zone”, that is, to Auxiliary users who have “logged on”.
- ☑ Hidden Pages are unprotected pages that *do not appear in the left navigation menu*.

Unprotected and protected pages are automatically shown in the left navigation menu, with protected pages identified with a special “Do Not Enter” icon “⊘”. As mentioned above, hidden pages do not appear in the left navigation menu.

Role-based Pages allow webmasters to create protected pages that only appear in the left navigation menu when a user is both “logged on” and *has either a specific qualification (INT, AIROBS, etc.) and/or a specific office (FSO-CS, DSO-CS, etc.)*. This information is captured when the Auxiliary user logs on. Like other protected pages, role-based pages are identified with a special “Do Not Enter” icon “⊘”.

### Uses for Role-based Pages

Role-based pages can be used whenever you want to share information with only a select group of individuals or if you need to share sensitive information with a select group. Some examples might include:

- ☑ A page about auxiliary patrols that you want to share only with boat crew.
- ☑ Team creating a training session for FSO’s in a division.
- Pages for special interest groups, or
- Leadership group such as EXCOM that needs to limit access to certain material.

### Creating a Role-based Page

The “visibility” of a WOW page (protected or unprotected) is controlled by radio buttons in the MENU AREA of the WOW Dashboard. Any page can be turned into a role-based page simply by clicking a new fourth radio button captioned “Role”.

**Add Custom Menu Item**

— MENU AREA —

Menu Name:	<input type="text" value="Custom"/>	(Required; keep short; Title Case)	<input type="button" value="SAVE MENU"/>
Page Title:	<input type="text" value="Custom"/>	(Doubles as Menu Tip)	
Menu Order:	<input type="text" value="50"/>	Menu Level: <input checked="" type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3	Protected: <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Hidden <input type="radio"/> Role
<input type="button" value="CANCEL"/>			

Once you select the Role radio button, a new field will appear labeled “Offices/Quals” (see below). The Offices/Quals field is used to enter a list of offices and/or qualifications that are required to view this page

### Add Custom Menu Item

MENU AREA

Menu Name:	<input type="text" value="Custom"/>	(Required; keep short; Title Case)	<input type="button" value="SAVE MENU"/>
Page Title:	<input type="text" value="Custom"/>	(Doubles as Menu Tip)	
Menu Order:	<input type="text" value="50"/>	Menu Level: <input checked="" type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3	Protected: <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Hidden <input checked="" type="radio"/> Role
	<input type="button" value="CANCEL"/>	Offices/Quals:	<input type="text"/>

Simply type one or more official codes for the offices and/or qualifications into the field provided, separated by commas, spaces – or any other delimiter except the dash (-) – as shown below. Also, the entries may be in upper or lower case and any mixture of either.

### Add Custom Menu Item

MENU AREA

Menu Name:	<input type="text" value="Custom"/>	(Required; keep short; Title Case)	<input type="button" value="SAVE MENU"/>
Page Title:	<input type="text" value="Custom"/>	(Doubles as Menu Tip)	
Menu Order:	<input type="text" value="50"/>	Menu Level: <input checked="" type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3	Protected: <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Hidden <input checked="" type="radio"/> Role
	<input type="button" value="CANCEL"/>	Offices/Quals:	<input type="text" value="fso-cs, dso-cs, AIROBS SO-cs"/>

Click on  after you have completed your entry. The program will check to ensure that all qualifications and offices that were entered are valid and if so, the list will be alphabetized and cleaned up when the page is refreshed (see example below).

1  2  3 Protected:  No  Yes  Hidden  Role  
Offices/Quals:

If you enter an office or a qualification that does not exist, the menu will still be saved. However, the entry or entries that were in error (in this case, YSO-MT) will not be included in the list of roles, and an error message will appear at the top of the Dashboard. To correct the error, simply re-enter the correct code and click on .

**Custom menu saved**  
**Error: Office/Quals not found: YSO-MT**

### Edit/Update Custom Page

MENU AREA

Menu Name:	<input type="text" value="Custom"/>	(Required; keep short; Title Case)	<input type="button" value="SAVE MENU"/>
Page Title:	<input type="text" value="Custom"/>	(Doubles as Menu Tip)	
Menu Order:	<input type="text" value="50"/>	Menu Level: <input checked="" type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3	Protected: <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Hidden <input checked="" type="radio"/> Role
	<input type="button" value="CANCEL"/>	<input type="button" value="DELETE PAGE"/>	Offices/Quals: <input type="text" value="DSO-MT"/>



Note that the sense of codes in the Offices/Quals list is “or”; a member who matches any code in the list will be able to see the menu entry and display the page.

## Office and Qualification Codes

Office and qualification (competency) codes are defined in AuxData, the Auxiliary’s database of record, and appear in AuxDirectory/AuxOfficer, in individual member records. In addition, most *office* codes are defined in the Auxiliary Manual.

The easiest way to find the official code for any qualification is to visit AuxDirectory at:

<http://auxofficer.cgaux.org>

and find the qualification of interest under “Qualifications” in the Power Search panel on the right side of the home page. Then, simply hover your mouse over the qualification, and the code will pop up in a “tool tip”.

### *Pseudo Office Codes USCG and NAVY*

To accommodate building pages that are viewable by active duty Coast Guard and Navy personnel, you may insert the pseudo Office codes “USCG” and/or “NAVY” in your list. Any active duty USCG or US Navy member who has Auxiliary Member Zone credentials will be able to view the page. Finer discrimination (i.e., to specific roles or ranks in the Coast Guard) is not possible.

Such active-duty individuals can obtain Member Zone credentials by visiting AuxDirectory/AuxOfficer, as above, and following the “Obtain or Change Password” link.

## Conclusion

Role-based pages should be used whenever you want to limit the viewing to “Member Zone” individuals with a specific qualification(s) or office(s). They will be particularly useful when you need to share sensitive information with a select group. Do not forget however, that any sensitive information must actually be on the WOW page (that is, entered into an announcement), and not simply uploaded documents “linked” from that page. Documents uploaded to the Internet in general, and WOW specifically, are both discoverable and visible to the entire world. 1 - Role based pages, like any collaboration space hosted outside a certified Coast Guard system may not contain OPSEC information. Examples include patrol schedules, mission details, location of Coast Guard assets, or discussions of details about Coast Guard Support activities. These pages are also not to be used for Sensitive Personal Information.

#####

Revision 1.3 November 15, 2012

## WOW II Platform: Creating Email Response Forms

### Email Response Forms – Version 1.2

*Note: This material is targeted at WOW webmasters with substantial HTML experience, particularly with forms.* One of the most requested features by advanced WOW users is an “email response form.” This is page on your WOW site where visitors can answer a questionnaire or input information, and, with the push of a button, can email the contents of the form to someone in your unit.

WOW now has the capability to accomplish this. Version 1.2 of WOW Email Response Forms allows you to create a form in HTML on any WOW page, and by providing the right “hidden” fields, will email the contents of the form to you. This version has absolutely no error checking of user input: what the user enters, for better or worse, gets emailed to you. In addition, you are expected to have a thorough understanding of HTML forms. Even though the Announcement editor has been enhanced to simplify forms entry without resorting to HTML, you still must be familiar with what is happening “under the hood” with HTML forms to make a usable form.

The new capability allows you to send your form to multiple email addresses, and using WOW’s “hidden pages” (see Application Note: *WOW II Pushbutton Website Platform: Using Hidden Pages*, July 17, 2012), you can create custom confirmation pages. All this is explained below.

Version 1.2 adds a poor man’s “CAPTCHA” – anti-SPAM capability.

### Getting Started

The WOW version 1.2 forms process can be summarized as follows:

1. Create a new CUSTOM page in the left menu, give it a descriptive, short name like “OWT Training Report”, and a descriptive page title that will serve as the title of your form.
2. Create an optional announcement that will represent all the boilerplate *above* your actual form (explanation of form, how to complete, etc.) and caption it “Form Introduction”, or some such.
3. Create an empty announcement that will be your actual form, and caption it “Email Response Form” (for ease of identification). To gain access to form editing tools in the Announcement Editor, check the new “Form” checkbox adjacent to the “ADD NEW ANNOUNCEMENT” button.
4. Create an optional empty announcement that will contain any boilerplate *after* your form, such as what to expect by way of response, etc. *Note that this latter content, and that in step 2, are entirely optional.*
5. Edit your empty form announcement (from Step 3): use the form tools that appear in the editor, or enter the HTML mode, and type in your form elements, or copy the HTML from an existing form – see below.
6. Add the special WOW “hidden” input fields that tell WOW how to process the form, and SAVE; and
7. Return to the Unit page and test your form on sample data.

### Form Structure for WOW

A WOW Form is simply an HTML form with a specific “action” that sends the posted data to a specific routine in WOW, and which contains several “hidden” input fields that tell WOW how to process the data. Here is the structure, in HTML:

```

<form action="sendform.php?unit=xxx-yy-zz" method="post">
<input name="wow_email" value="your.email@yourdomain.com" type="hidden" />
<input name="wow_confirm" value="URL_slug" type="hidden" />
<input name="wow_subject" value="This is the Subject of the Email"
type="hidden" />
<input name="wow_debug" value="0" type="hidden" />
<!--THE VISIBLE PART OF YOUR FORM GOES BELOW HERE -->
...
<input name="Email" value="" type="text" size="30" />
...
<input value="Submit Form" type="submit" />
<input value="Clear Form" type="reset" />
<!--END OF YOUR VISIBLE FORM -->
</form>

```

**Figure 1: WOW Form Structure**

As a starting point, you may actually copy the above text into a pure text editor, and then from the text editor into the WOW announcement editor (in the HTML mode), as a starting point. Be sure that you have designated this announcement as a “form” when you created it.

The following are the minimum required tags for a WOW form, as shown in the above example:

1. Form Tag – the “action” attribute of the <form> tag must be “sendform.php?unit=xxx-yy-zz”, where “xxx-yy-zz” is your canonical unit number (e.g., 114, 114-12, or 114-12-04 for districts, divisions, and flotillas, or “V-DEPT” for departments, and “IT-GROUP” for groups [ANACO directorates]). Also, the method *must* be “post”. The following form tag will submit a form for the flotilla 085-33-17’s WOW site:

```

<form action="sendform.php?unit=085-33-17" method="post">

```

Note that the final statement in the form is the closing </form> tag.

You may program these tags in directly in the HTML mode, or use the “Form” icon in the third row of the editor toolbar, in the normal mode. HINT: hover your mouse over each icon to see what it does. If you

use the Form icon, a dotted red box appears in your content, and represents the boundaries of the form. Everything described below must fall *inside* this boundary.

## 2. Hidden Input Variables (required)

You may program hidden variables directly in HTML, or use the “Hidden” icon in the Normal mode, and set the name and value properties to match those shown below.

a. wow\_email - The “value” attribute of this hidden variable is a list of email addresses that the completed form should be sent to, separated by commas, as follows:

```
<input name="wow_email" value="bill@aol.com" type="hidden" /> <input name="wow_email" value="tom@aol.com,vfc@att.com" type="hidden" />
```

The first example will cause the form to be emailed to bill@aol.com, while the second will send the form to *both* tom@aol.com *and* vfc@att.net. Additional email addresses are permitted.

BEST PRACTICE: Email your form to a generic email address such as FC@ourflotilla.com, and then forward it from there to one or more actual member email addresses.

b. wow\_confirm (optional) - The value attribute of this hidden variable is the URL slug of the form’s *confirmation* page (if any) on your WOW site. You can find the slug by navigating to your confirmation page, and copying the slug out of the URL showing in your web browser.

For example, let’s say that the URL of your confirmation page is as follows:

```
http://wow.uscgaux.info?content.php?unit=114-12-04&category=form-test
```

The slug is the text after “category=”, in this case “form-test” (shown in bold, above).

TIP: create the confirmation page *first* and don’t hide it. That way you will have the correct slug *and* you can actually *see* the page to navigate to it (to get the slug). Then hide it.

c. wow\_subject – The value attribute of this hidden variable contains the “subject” of the email that gets sent.

d. wow\_debug (optional) – For debugging your form, include this hidden field and change the value attribute to “1”. WOW will give you a debug screen that shows the variables your form is posting, sends the email, but suppresses the redirect to the confirmation page. In this way, you can be editing your form’s HTML in one browser window, and testing it in another, and seeing immediately the results of changes to the input fields (tags). After debugging is done, leave the tag in place but switch the value attribute to zero.

## 3. Visible Input Variables

a. Submit button (required) – The `<input type="submit" value="Submit" />` tag gives you the required “Submit” button. You should set the field’s value to “Submit” or “Submit This Form”, or some such. In the Normal mode, use the “Submit Button” icon.

b. Reset button (optional) – The `<input value="Clear Form" type="reset" />` tag gives your users a convenient way to clear the form with one button click and start over. In the Normal mode, use the “Reset Button” icon.

The balance of your HTML will contain the input tags required to implement the form that the user sees. You may name the fields anything you wish. However, the name “Email” (case sensitive) is reserved for the optional field where you collect the user’s email address. If you specifically name that field “Email”, then WOW will send a CC of the form to the user who completed it (assuming a valid address).

## Completing Your Form

The form email generator creates an email from the *names* of the form input fields plus the answers that the user supplies. For example, if you request the user's name with the following <input> tag:

```
<input type="text" name="fm_user_name" size="30" />
```

and the user enters his name "Dobie Gillis", then the email that gets sent will include the following line:

**fm user name:** Dobie Gillis

The *name* of the input tag is used as the *label* in the email (with underscores replaced with spaces). A better implementation would be:

```
<input type="text" name="Full_Name" size="30" />
```

and the user enters his name "Dobie Gillis, Esq.", then the email that gets sent will include the following line:

**Full Name:** Dobie Gillis, Esq .

Bottom line: name your input fields to be sensible labels in your email submission.

## Providing a Confirmation Page

Internet users expect a confirmation page after submitting a form, and you can easily provide one by creating a *hidden* page in WOW, according to available documentation. The Page Title of your page should be something like "Form Confirmation" or "Your Form Has Been Sent". You should then use the content area of the page to provide a reassuring message to the submitter, such as "Your form has been sent to our blah..blah..blah. You can expect a reply soon."

You might also use the confirmation page to provide "For further information" links to other relevant information (in the scope of the form that was just submitted) both on you WOW site, and elsewhere.

## Starting With an Existing Form

Departments or units converting to WOW from conventional sites may have been using forms already. In this case, you can steal the old form and plug it directly into WOW. Here are the steps:

1. Find the HTML source code for your original form. Copy everything between and including the <form ...> and </form> tags into a raw text editor (unless you are already using such to view the source), and then re-copy the code from the text editor into your WOW form announcement, in the HTML mode.
2. In WOW, edit the <form> tag itself to add the "sendform.php..." action described above, and method="post", if missing.
3. Add in the required hidden fields, from above, and test.

TIP: Completely remove all style information from the HTML. For example, if you see any of the following:

```
<div class="whatever">Some Text</div> <span class="something">Some Text</span>  
<font ..anything...>Some Text</font>
```

then (a) remove "class='whatever'" from the <div> tag; (b) remove the <span>...</span> tags completely and (c) remove the <font...>...</font> tags completely. *After* you get your form working perfectly, then go back in and use the features of the WOW editor to style your form *to match the rest of your WOW site*.

TIP: If your form is still online somewhere, you can navigate to the form, and tell your browser to "View Source" (or equivalent). You can then select and copy everything between and including the <form ...> and </form> tags into a raw text editor, and then proceed as above with step #1. Under no circumstances transfer any of the HTML from outside the form. For that (for example, to get a prologue or postscript to the form) instead copy the rendered text from a regular browser window (not "View Source"), "cleanse" it of HTML by pasting it into a text editor, and then

copy and paste it from the text editor into separate announcements on your form page (see “Getting Started, steps #2 and #4).

## Announcement Editor Enhancements

The “Cute Editor” (announcement editor) has been enhanced to include a comprehensive set of form-building tools, including every type of input field, as well as a complete set of table editing tools. These tools appear in the third row of Cute Editor icons if (and only if) you checked the “Form” box prior to creating the announcement with “ADD NEW ANNOUNCEMENT”. See Figure 1.

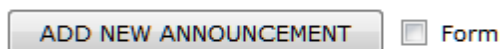


Figure 1 – Form Checkbox

In Figure 2, the additional editing tools are shown. From the left (third row) they are: Insert Form, Text Area, Text Field, Password Field, List Box, Dropdown Text Box, Radio Button, Checkbox, Submit Button, Reset Button, Plain Button. Then: Create Table, Insert Row Above, Insert Row Below, Delete Row(s), Insert Column Left, Insert Column Right, Delete Column(s) , Insert Cell, Delete Cell(s), Row Properties, Cell Properties, Merge Cells Right, Split Cells Right, Split Cells Down.



Figure 2 – Form and Table Editing Tools in Cute Editor Row 3 (Forms mode only)

### Caveats; Support

This Version 1.2 of WOW forms is being offered with absolutely no promise of support, except for true bugs. The national staff is not available to assist you with HTML programming. If you wish to use WOW Forms in its present incarnation, you must be thoroughly familiar with the programming of HTML forms, or turn the design of your form over to someone in your flotilla, division, or district who is. Report bugs via Dashboard Feedback.

### Adding CAPTCHA

CAPTCHA is an anti-SPAM scheme that prevents net-bots from completing your form with garbage that gets sent to you. All CAPTCHA schemes use a challenge-response scheme where the challenge is some string of text – often displayed with great distortion as an image – that the user must type in a nearby field. If the data that the user types matches the challenge string, the form is accepted.

Version 1.2 of WOW forms adds an optional poor-man’s CAPTCHA scheme. You simply add a hidden variable that contains your challenge text, for example “G5%Yb”, and an additional text field to capture the response. If the forms engine detects that you have included the hidden challenge field, it then *requires* the same value to have been typed into an appropriately named response field. If the values match, then the form is processed and the email is sent. If the values do not match, the user is redirected to the home page of the site *without comment!*

To implement CAPTCHA, invent a challenge string, and then add the following HTML to the form, along with the other hidden variables (order is not important):

```
<input name="wow_challenge" value="G5%Yb" type="hidden" />
```



Your challenge text goes between the quotation marks of the “value” parameter. Now, in the visible part of the form, right above the “Submit Form” button, add the following label and input field:

```
Type <b>G5%Yb</b> here (anti-SPAM): <input name="wow_response" value="" type="text" size="10" />
```

This will produce the following on your form:

Type **G5%Yb** here (anti-SPAM): [\_\_\_\_\_]

You can phrase this label (challenge) any way you want, and making the actual challenge text – which *must* match the value of your hidden input “wow\_challenge” – bold is also optional. It helps the user understand what to type without the need for quotation marks, which some users would type into the field, causing a mismatch.

Returning to the home page on error is a little abrupt, but it gets the net-bot off the form. A future version might add an additional hidden page field to catch CAPTCHA mismatches.

### Future Plans

WOW II is a “pushbutton” website platform. Ultimately, a pushbutton form generator will be implemented which will call for *no* HTML knowledge. But there are many higher priority projects with far more leverage to the organization that need to be done first. Resources are limited and we are all volunteers.

Revision 1.2 January 9, 2013

Steve Johnson Information Technology

## WOW II Pushbutton Website Platform: Smart Tags Rev 1.1

*NOTE: This Application Note described an ADVANCED WOW feature and is intended primarily for Department and District webmasters. Except as noted, however, the capabilities described are available to all WOW sites. Fluency in HTML and software coding, although not required, are highly recommended.*

### What are Smart Tags?

“Smart Tags” in a WOW website are pieces of text that you can put into your Web page, on any announcement (post), that are replaced when the page is displayed with “dynamic” information. For example let’s say that you wish to create a custom page to describe your flotilla’s Vessel Safety Check program, and at the bottom you wish to write:

To schedule a complimentary vessel safety check by Flotilla 114-12-04 at your boat, contact:  
Tom W. Smith, FSO-VE  
Cell: 650-555-1212  
Email: tom.smith@cgauxnet.us

### Example #1 – Static Content That Must Be Maintained

All WOW webmasters could create this in a heartbeat. But should they? The problem with this is that the underlying information is “dynamic”; that is, it changes. It often changes when there is a change of watch, but frequently in between times, as well, due to the volunteer nature of our forces. And it is *guaranteed* to change when the CS officer is on a six-week vacation in the Uganda rain forest. Now, WOW users know that content such as your staff list is dynamically updated by WOW from the current AuxOfficer directory, so you never have to worry about changing *that* content. Well, wouldn’t it be nice if the above contact information could be written to update itself, as well? It can. You would simply write, in place of the above text, the following:

To schedule a complimentary vessel safety check by Flotilla **{\$\_canonical\_unit}** at your boat, contact:  
**{\$\_unit\_officers.FSO\_VE.fullname}**, FSO-VE Cell: **{\$\_unit\_officers.FSO\_VE.cphone}** Email:  
**{\$\_unit\_officers.FSO\_VE.email}**

### Example #2 – Dynamic Content with WOW Smart Tags

The **{\$\_unit\_officers.FSO\_VE.fullname}**, **{\$\_unit\_officers.FSO\_VE.cphone}**, and **{\$\_unit\_officers.FSO\_VE.email}** constructs, shown bold above, are called “smart tags”. WOW replaces them with the correct information, in real time.

Let’s deconstruct the first two tags; the others then will be obvious:

1. {...} sets off (encloses) WOW smart tags. *There must absolutely be no other curly brackets anywhere in your Web page’s text or HTML* (see footnote).
2. {\$\_canonical\_unit} is replaced by WOW with your unit’s canonical unit number, here 114-12-04.
3. {\$\_unit\_officers.FSO\_VE.fullname} is replaced with the full name of the FSO-VE of your unit. Note that in the tag, the dash “-” is replaced with an underscore “\_”.

This latter tag is a species know as a “list” (or array). The actual tag is “`$_unit_officers`”, which is a list of *all* relevant information about *all* officers in your unit. However, you don’t want a list; you want a specific *officer* and a specific *fact* about that officer, in this case his full name.

To drill down to this specific fact, you simply add a dot “.” after the tag name, and list the office you want, and a second dot followed by the *identifier* for the fact that you want. In this case, “fullname” is the identifier for the officer’s full name, which WOW looks up in `AuxOfficer`, just before displaying the page.

Here are some examples of pulling data out of lists:

```
{$_unit_officers.FSO_CS.hphone} The home phone number of the FSO-CS  
{$_unit_officers.VFC.lname} The last name of the Vice Flotilla Commander  
{_dso_list.DSO_PE.085.fullname} The full name of the DSO-PE from District 085
```

A complete list of smart tags, including lists and available “fields” (facts), is given in Appendix I.

## Control Tags

The observant reader will realize that although Example #1 *looks* dynamic, it is not. What happens if your FSO-VE resigns, and nobody replaces her (or him, in this example). What if the *next* FSO-VE doesn’t have a cell phone? To be truly maintenance-free, your content will have to be able to modify itself as conditions change. This is what control smart tags are for.

There are *two* type of control tags supported by WOW: “if” tags, and “foreach” tags. “If” tags allow you to display content *if* something is true, and (optionally), alternative content if it is not. “Foreach” tags allow you to repeat content “for each” item in a list, while extracting information about each item in turn for display.

### *If Tags*

The “FSO-VE-who-has-resigned-and-there-is-no-replacement” case is handled easily with “if” tags. Let’s say you decide that if the FSO-VE resigns, you’d like to have the VFC listed in her place. Moreover, if there is no VFC, then the Flotilla Commander (or interim flotilla commander, when elected), represents your final fallback position.

Example #3 shows you what to put into your announcement. The basic structure is:

```
{if <something true>} <content if true> {elseif <something true>} <content if  
true> {else} <content otherwise> {/if}
```

The `{elseif}` and `{else}` tags are optional. (The “< and >” are not used; they are show here to set off the explanations.) The closing `{/if}` is always required. Using the “if” tags, you could have content that displays *if* something is true, and *have nothing display if it is not*.

To schedule a complimentary vessel safety check by Flotilla `{$_canonical_unit}` at your boat, contact:

```
{if $_unit_officers.FSO_VE}
{$_unit_officers.FSO_VE.fullname}, FSO-VE Cell: {$_unit_officers.FSO_VE.cphone}
Email: {$_unit_officers.FSO_VE.email}
{elseif $_unit_officers.VFC}
{$_unit_officers.VFC.fullname}, Vice Flotilla Commander
Cell: {$_unit_officers.VFC.cphone}
Email: {$_unit_officers.VFC.email}
{else $_unit_officers.FC}
{$_unit_officers.FC.fullname}, Flotilla Commander
Cell: {$_unit_officers.FC.cphone}
Email: {$_unit_officers.FC.email}
{/if}
```

### Example #3 – Controlling Content Display with “If” Tags

```
{if $_unit_officers.FSO_VE}
{$_unit_officers.FSO_VE.fullname}, FSO-VE
{if $_unit_officers.FSO_VE.cphone}
Cell: $_unit_officers.FSO_VE.cphone}
{else if $_unit_officers.FSO_VE.hphone}
Home: $_unit_officers.FSO_VE.hphone}
{elseif $_unit_officers.FSO_VE.wphone}
Work: $_unit_officers.FSO_VE.hphone}
{/if}
{$_unit_officers.FSO_VE.email} Email: {$_unit_officers.FSO_VE.email}
{/if}
{elseif $_unit_officers.VFC} ...
<more of the same>
{/if}
```

### Example #4 – Making Phone Numbers and Email Dynamic

For example, to display a block of content if the person who is logged on to the Member Zone is actually an auxiliarist (as opposed to active duty or authorized contractors), write:

```
{if $_is_member} Sign up for member training this week.{/if}
```

The “`$_is_member`” smart tag is TRUE if someone is logged on *and* is an Auxiliary member, and FALSE otherwise.

The “true conditions” in Example #3 are a little subtle, and bear some explanation. If you write:

```
{if $_unit_officers.FSO_VE}
```

the tag is actually interpreted “if in the list of unit officers there is actually an FSO-VE, then ‘TRUE’”. This interpretation is a wonderful characteristic of lists in WOW (well, if you are a geeky programmer...); in an “if” tag, if a member of the list is actually *missing*, then WOW reads the test as FALSE, and if the list item is *not missing* (and actually has some data associated with it), then WOW reads it as TRUE. In this case, the list is “`$_unit_officers`”, and the specific *members* of the list are items such as “`$_unit_officer.FC`, `$_unit_officer.VFC`,... `$_unit_officer.FSO_SR`”, etc.

**Figure 1 – Snippet from V-Department WOW Site Showing Part of National DSO List**

Note that each of the above list items, such as `$_unit_officer.FSO_SR`, are themselves lists, and contain *facts* (or fields) such as `fname`, `lname`, `cphone`, `hphone`, `member_id` (see PII warning), and so forth. So, if you are really maniacal (as we are), you would treat items like home, work, and cell phone numbers as dynamic content, as well. In fact, we would have never written the code in Example #3, but instead, would have written (for each of the officers) the code shown in Example 4. *This* code is truly dynamic. It displays the first phone number that exists for the officer, in order from cell to home to work – or else omits the phone number entirely – and displays the word “Email” only if there is an email address to be rendered. And obviously, the same code would be repeated for the VFC and FC from Example 3.

In fact, there is only one case where this would all fall apart. We leave it to you to figure out, and ask, “Why, then was this person appointed to this position?”

As a final note, Example 4 demonstrates that `{if}...{/if}` tags can be “nested” inside one another, like Russian Matryoshka dolls. There is no limit to the nesting. Indenting the code as was done in these examples makes the structure more obvious, and is a best practice.

### ***Foreach Tags***

Often, you want to present a list. Two lists are built into WOW: a list of officers in the unit (flotillas, divisions, districts, departments, and groups), and a list of DSOs in the entire organization, organized by office (CS, IS, OP, etc.) and then by District.

The “Staff” page which is automatically added to all WOW sites creates a list of staff officers, so the staff list smart tags are more useful as sources of information about individual offices, as in the above example. However, many department websites show a list of DSOs around the country that service their discipline, and for these sites being able to print out a dynamic list is very useful.

You can see an example of such a list on the V-Department’s WOW site, at:

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=V-DEPT&category=FIND-YOUR-DSOS>

It is worthwhile visiting this page before continuing here, to get some context. The page in question consists of three (3) announcements: one containing the map, once containing a list of DSO-VEs for the country, and one containing a list of DSO-PVs. Try logging on, and note that the display changes to include email and phone information about each officer.

DISTRICT STAFF OFFICERS FOR VESSEL EXAMINATION	
District 1NR	James E. Mello
District 1SR	Frederick B. Furnell
District 5NR	Norman L. Fehr
District 7	Chuck Kelemen
District 8CR	Duke W. Stevens
District 8ER	William G. Husfield
District 8WR	Neil D. Mc Millin
District 9CR	Daniel A. Delise

**Figure 1 – Snippet from V-Department WOW Site Showing Part of National DSO List**

The formatting of the two lists was tricky, and is not a subject of this Application Note. However, the dynamic lists were each produced with a single pair of “foreach” tags, and some “if” tags, used as demonstrated above, to conditionally display content if it was actually available.

The foreach tag works like this: if you have a list, you can “loop” through the list and write a single block of code that gets repeatedly applied to each item in the list. So, if, for example, I have a list of all DSO-VEs, WOW can loop through them one at a time, and use the same WOW content with smart tags to display each one.

Here’s the basic structure: if the smart tag “\$ \_dso\_list” is a list of all DSOs in the country, organized by office, then the smart tag “\$ \_dso\_list.VE” is a list of all DSOs-VE, organized by District.

The foreach tag is written:

```
{foreach $ _dso_list.VE as $dso}
... <content that is repeated each row>
{/foreach}
```

Anything you put between {foreach...} and {/foreach} will be displayed repeatedly, as the list of DSO-VEs is stepped through (or “looped over”), district by district. And the magic is that the foreach creates a *new* smart tag on the fly representing the list of information available about each DSO. That’s what the “...as \$dso” is all about. The \$dso is a smart tag – named as you see fit – that, each time the loop is repeated, takes the value of that item in the list – in this case, a list of facts about each DSO by district. This special tag we’ll call the “list element”.

So, *inside* the foreach “loop”, we can write:

```
{ $dso.fname} to get the DSO’s first name
{ $dso.unit} to get the DSO’s unit (district)
{ $dso.email} for the DSO’ email address, etc.
```

Note that if we had written the foreach loop as {foreach \$dso\_list as \$greeble}, then to pull out the email address for each DSO, we would write:

```
{ $greeble.email}
```

which would have produced the *identical* output as the third statement in the preceding example.

Putting this all together, Example #5 shows what you would put into the WOW announcement to render this entire list. All formatting has been omitted. The tag “\$dso@last” becomes TRUE only if the foreach is executing the *last* item in the list. Compare this to what you see on the screen, at the above link, and it all will become clear!

```
{foreach $ _dso_list.VE as $dso}
District { $dso.district} { $dso.fullname}
{if $ _logged_on}
{ $dso.email}
{/if}
{if $ _logged_on}
{if $dso.cphone}C: { $dso.cphone}{/if}
{if $dso.hphone}H: { $dso.hphone}{/if}
{if $dso.wphone}W: { $dso.wphone}{/if}
{/if}
```

```
{if $dso@last}
<put in extra blank lines after the last iteration>
{/if}
{/foreach}
```

### Example #5 – Using Foreach to Output a List of DSOs-VE (Formatting Omitted)

The formatting of all of this into the columns shown on the actual WOW page is done with judicious (and advanced) use of WOW’s Cute editor, or by simply switching to HTML mode (if you know HTML) and formatting manually. For the sake of completeness, the HTML that makes up the VE list on that page is shown in its entirety in Appendix #2.

## Using Smart Tags in Practice

To create a page using smart tags, you must proceed as follows:

1. Create an announcement on the desired page, in the HTML mode, that consists *solely* of the following XML tag:

```
<wow:smart_tag>
```

This announcement should be captioned “Smart Tag Flag”, and should be Order 0. That is, it should be set to be the *first* announcement on the page. This tells WOW to look for smart tags in all announcement on the page.

2. Create and format your entire page using *real* data (that is real or dummy names, email addresses, etc.) and tweak the page formatting until it displays exactly as you desire. Note that if you are outputting any lists, you only need to dummy up one “row” of that list (e.g., one DSO in the above example). If you have any “conditional” content, include it.

3. Now, put “if” tags around any conditional content, and code in the control tag that you need to test for “true”, such as `{if $_logged_on} ... {/if}`. NB: if you want to test for FALSE, simply put an exclamation point in front of the tag, as in `{if ! $_logged_on}`. This is read “if NOT logged on”.

4. Finally, put `{foreach...} ... {/foreach}` tags around any content that must repeat (usually in rows), and choose a name for the “list element” tag you will use inside your foreach loop (such as `$dso` in the above examples)

5. Now, go through your entire page, and *replace* the dummy “real” data with the smart tags that will render the same information dynamically.

For example, if you dummied up the following (dummy material in **bold**):

```
District 017 DSO-CS Dobie Gillis dobie@paradise.island.com
```

then you would carefully swap out the dummy data for smart tags as follows:

```
District {$dso.unit} DSO-CS {$dso.fullname} {$dso.$email}
```

6. SAVE your announcement, and “Return to Unit Page” to test the page.

## Coding Errors

When you are writing content with smart tags, you are writing code. If you make a single mistake, such as leaving out a curly bracket, forgetting the \$-sign that starts the tag name, omitting the “closing” `{/if}` for any `{if}` tag, or the closing `{/foreach}` to match an opening `{foreach...}`, you will get a *voluminous, intimidating* error message.

Don’t be frightened by it. It simply means you have a typo in one of your smart tags. Look at the first part of the error message for a clue like “No closing `{/if}`” and then use that insight while scrutinizing your code. You’ll eventually find the character you mistyped or left out, and suddenly your page will render in all its glory.



## Other Best Practices

### *Making “Legacy” Pages Dynamic*

If you are intending to make dynamic a page that was originally created in HTML using a tool like FrontPage or Expression Web, and you imported the HTML directly into WOW when you ditched your AIRS or other conventional site, you may have legacy HTML code in there that contains curly brackets, and it will clobber the smart tag engine. The way to tell is to simply follow step 1, above, putting in the Smart Tag Flag in the first announcement, and then “Return to Unit Page” to see what happens. If you get a ghastly error message, you’ll have to rebuild the page using the trick of cleaning out all HTML (use the “broom” icon in the Cute Editor, and select the “Remove all HTML tags” option), and then formatting your page from scratch. That’s OK, you shouldn’t have copied that ancient HTML over in the first place because your page, frankly, probably looks like a ransom note.

### *Tables and Foreach Loops*

Because of a bug in the licensed Cute Editor used in WOW, you cannot create a table, and then use a foreach tag set to control the contents of each row, even though this would be a best practice. The Cute Editor inexplicably rewrites the code and renders the foreach tag useless. This bug was reported to the software vendor. You will have to use nested <div> blocks, as is shown in Appendix 2, which is what all the cool programmers are doing these days, anyways ☺.

### *Meta Tags in Foreach Loops*

You saw the example in the foreach tag section of “testing” for the last iteration of the foreach loop, using the list element tag plus “@last” (e.g., {if \$dso@last}).

You might want to use this, for example, to draw a thin line between each row of your output, but a *thick* line before the first and after the last iteration.

Here it is in HTML:

```
{foreach $_unit_officers as $officer}
{if $officer@first}
<div style="border-top:2px solid black;width="100%">
{else}
<div style="border-top:1px solid black;width="100%">
{/if}
</div>
<!--Content here for this row -->
{if $officer@last}
<div style="border-bottom:2px solid black;width="100%">
{else}
<div style="border-bottom:1px solid black;width="100%">
{/if}</div>
{/foreach}
```

There are other such “meta” tags available, such as the current iteration number. These will be documented in a later version of this Application Note.

### *Personally Identifiable Information (PII)*

WOW smart tags include virtually all the information about a member that can be accessed in AuxOfficer (AuxDirectory), for the *member who is logged on*. You can use these tags to “personalize” a page (e.g., Hello, Bill. Welcome back!), or to pre-fill a registration form, etc. Since these tags are NULL (empty) when the member is not

logged on, be sure any such personalization code checks the `$_if_logged_on` tag, so you don't get awkward, broken content like: "Hello, . Welcome back!"

The logged-on-member tags do not present a problem with Personally Identifiable Information, since the member is seeing his or her own information, and only when logged on. However, there is PII available on other members in the DSO lists, and in the unit officer lists.

Without the specific permission of any member, you may *not* display the following items on any page unless it is protected in the Member Zone, or the content is revealed using smart tags only if the site visitor is logged on as a member: email address, telephone numbers, home address, spouse's name, and member ID.

## **Support**

No technical support will be provided for the use of WOW Smart Tags. If you have a real need to use them, and are struggling, find someone in your unit or division who is or was a programmer, and ask for help. In contrast, if you have been successful using them, then provide a writeup to the DVC-UC or DVC-CN, and we'll make it an Application Note.

7/23/2021

WOW II Pushbutton Website Platform: Smart Tags Rev 1.1

## Appendix 1 – WOW Smart Tag List

### Tags About The Person Logged On

\$_member_fname	First Name
\$_member_middle	Middle Name or Initial
\$_member_lname	Last Name
\$_member_name	Full Name (Title Case)
\$_member_email	Email Address (email1)
\$_member_dist	District
\$_member_div	Division
\$_member_flot	Flotilla
\$_member_hphone	Home Phone
\$_member_cphone	Cell Phone
\$_member_wphone	Work Phone
\$_member_addr1	Address Line 1
\$_member_addr2	Address Line 2
\$_member_city	City
\$_member_state	State
\$_member_zipcode	ZipCode
\$_member_id	Member ID
\$_member_offices	Member's Offices
\$_member_qual	Qualifications List
\$_status	Member Status (BQ, AX, etc.)
\$_is_member	True or False

### Tags About the Site's

\$page_title
\$category
\$_unit_level
\$_canonical_unit
\$_fullname
\$_formalname
\$_unit_city
\$_unit_state
\$_service_area
\$_unit_officers
\$_is_department

### Global Tags (Departn

\$_dso_list
-------------

### Unit Officers List Breakdown

Structure: \$\_unit\_officers.<office>

Examples:    \$\_unit\_officers.FSO\_VE  
               \$\_unit\_officers.SO\_OP  
               \$\_unit\_officers.DSO\_CS

Underscore replaces dash in office codes.

Each of the above is a list itself, structured as follows:

      \$\_unit\_officers.XXX\_YY.<fact>

Examples:    \$\_unit\_officers.DSO\_HR.fullname  
               \$\_unit\_officers.SO\_OP.email1  
               \$\_unit\_officers.FSO\_MT.cphone

Allowable values for the <fact> fields are shown on the following page.

### Website Meta Tags

\$META_title
\$META_description
\$META_abstract
\$META_unit_name
\$META_author
\$META_webmaster_name
\$META_webmaster_email
\$META_revised_date

Meta tags hold the HTML in the <head> area. They can tell your browser to "Vi