# Tips for Effective Chapter Web Page Design
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**Plan** your content to be reflective of your chapter and membership.  Get buy-in from the membership either by presenting to the Board for approval or before the entire membership.

Try to conceptualize your content so that initial viewing of the page can be seen **with minimal or no scrolling.**  Keep your page sizes relatively small.  The user doesn't want to scroll down through a lot of material, so it is better to break content into shorter pages.

Once your chapter page is built, **notify Headquarters** so that your page can be linked from the main web server at Headquarters.  This will streamline viewing of chapter pages without having to do web searching.

**Link** (or return) your chapter page to Sigma's main homepage.  Some users may have found your page in a web search, but are really interested in finding out about the international organization.

**Link** (or return) your chapter page to your sponsoring college or school.  Users may want to know more about the local environment in which you exist.  Some users my have searched on your home institution name but found your page instead.

Set a **baseline browser configuration** to view your site and make that information known.

**Avoid dead-ends.**  The viewer needs to be able to navigate the site without resorting to the back key.

Make your page **come "alive"** by showcasing unique chapter features while spotlighting various members.

**Update** your page monthly.  Actually assign a member to do this task on a monthly basis.  Check any links to make sure they are still located where you are sending the users.  The "dreaded 404 error" (file not found) gives the message to your users that you don't value this method of communication.

Check around your own school for **expertise in web design.**  Many students are coming with this skill set and are quite willing to take on this role as their contribution of service.  Some chapters have made this a group effort.

Choose **colors** wisely.  "More" may not necessarily mean "better."  Keep it simple.  Avoid multiple fonts.  This is your office in cyberspace;  decorate it accordingly.

View your finished product on **several different platforms** to determine consistency of presentation.  Check the screens on multiple sized monitors, systems with different color depth, different operating systems (different versions of Windows and the Apple OS), different versions of the same browser, and different browsers.

Be sure to check your **spelling**.  Typographical errors can be very distracting.  Make sure your pages are **readable**.  Avoid high contrast backgrounds (subtle is better), fonts that are too small, and frames which use up too much screen geography.

Include **photos/graphics** if they add tot he topic, but beware of the load time.  Learn how to use a good graphics program, since graphics are important in attracting viewers to your site.

Avoid bells and whistles that the typical user may not have.  If you require a **plug-in** (additional software), provide a link to the plug-in's source so that the viewer may download and install it.

Use **animation** sparingly.  These animation sequences may look "cute" to you, but can be annoying to the viewer.

You may prefer to program directly using **HTML**, but there are some good **web editing packages** (such as Microsoft's Front Page or Macromedia's Dreamweaver) that have a shorter learning curve.  Some editors may not give you the results you want, particularly across platforms.

Avoid **large files** such as sound files and full motion video.  At the very least put, in parentheses, the length of the file so that the viewer can make an intelligent choice as to whether to download the file or load the page.

Put **contact information** on the page.  E-mail addresses (hot) are the minimum.  Also include date last revised.  Theses are usually placed at the bottom of the page.

Be willing to try **new ideas**:
　　　Chapter suggestion box via e-mail
　　　Announcements with monthly deadlines
　　　Historical section; electronic image repository
　　　Real Audio – consider its use because of decreased file size
　　　Web based form surveys