

# Fresh Content!

get your Fresh Content here!



**F**reshness. We all like to experience our favorite things over and over, but in a new way. We wouldn't go for that ballpark hot dog that is cold and has been sitting around, no matter how much we love hot dogs! Information, especially served up online, is much the same way. And as a water system or small city, your customers want – and deserve – fresh content from your website. In this article, we'll explore first why this is important for your system, and secondly, how to accomplish it.

## Why is fresh content so important?

Maintaining a website is much different than building one. In order to communicate easily with your water customers, you must establish the idea that you have something to say and make sure they want to hear it. You

cannot wait to establish this communication avenue until there's something urgent, such as a water boil order or street closing. Educating your customers on where to find important information starts much earlier.

Fortunately, your system's website does not have to compete for its audience. Your customers are usually looking for you in particular. But, can they find your site through a Google search? Having good search engine visibility requires scoring high on their algorithm so that your site can appear on the first page of results, if not the top result. This means, if someone types in the name of your system or location, your site should appear readily. Search engines love sites with fresh content and are likely to index your site more often, ranking it higher for those search terms.

Also, having a return audience can support excellent public relations to

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your community. When you drive regular traffic to your website, search engines will give it higher rankings, which in turn allows customers to find your site even more easily. It's a self-feeding cycle: the more you drive traffic, the more visible your site. Your audience will not return to your site very often if they do not see value. Having fresh and useful content will entice your customers to visit more often. More and more, if users can find what they need on your site, are likely to prefer to use it rather than call or visit in person.

By addressing current happenings, you can position your system as an authority in the water industry. Being relevant and educational not only informs and educates your constituents, it also promotes your system as an expert, supporting positive public relations. Let's face it. The water industry is mostly invisible until customers want to complain. We all take clean water for granted, but educating your customers can help gain loyalty and appreciation.

**How can we make this happen?**

It's easy to see why having fresh, relevant content that is consistently updated is important for your system and your customers. But, you're busy enough as it is. How can you take advantage of these benefits without adding even more items to your to-do list?

Tailoring this practice to your system is a matter of choosing activities that will generate fresh content with minimal work. This means, you should reflect on what you are already doing that, with a small amount of effort, can be funneled into your existing website. You may be surprised at how simple it can be to see a big change. Use the following ideas to connect what might work for your system. You don't have to implement all of these in order to generate fresh content.

- ❖ Have a news articles module and update it when something noteworthy occurs
- ❖ Keep your news archives to show your customers how often you update
- ❖ Put a reminder on your calendar to post something new on a consistent schedule
- ❖ Keep your news posts short but more frequent
- ❖ Put a link to your latest news article on this month's water bill
- ❖ Put a link to an interesting article or newly updated page in your email signature, and rotate it out monthly

- ❖ Update frequently visited, critical or even older pages on your site to reflect changes or just to reword what is there, especially your homepage where customers are likely to land first
- ❖ Remove older posts or pages that have content that is inaccurate or no longer useful
- ❖ Combine content that is similar and reword
- ❖ Use a calendar module on your site with recurring events to show what's coming up (such as council meetings)
- ❖ Stay informed yourself with water industry news, and generate posts about items that might be useful or interesting to your customers
- ❖ Add helpful links for your users to explore more on their own to other sites, such as KRWA or KDHE
- ❖ Periodically visit all the pages in your site, including "other" static pages you set and forget (such as rates or FAQs)
- ❖ Encourage prominent members in your community—or perhaps council members—to write guest posts (edited by you before publication of course)
- ❖ Conduct interviews of interesting people or inspiring stories related to water and post in your news module
- ❖ Capture your readers' attention by writing strong headlines enticing them to read more
- ❖ Build out a page or extend your FAQ section to include how-to's or explanations your customers need (such as "What do I do if I think I have a water leak?")
- ❖ Become the go-to site for information by writing articles that are timeless and universal (such as explaining how clean water gets to them)
- ❖ Add photos or even videos by having a photo gallery of projects, events, or even links to YouTube videos of normal day-to-day work
- ❖ Tell your own story by relating what you do and your perspective; you may not realize how interesting the behind the scenes can be to users who don't know

Keeping your site fresh means committing to changing how you communicate to your water customers. By taking a few easy ideas and implementing them, you can enjoy the benefits of improving your site and your relationship with your users. Laying the groundwork may take some time, but building in the habit to keep your content fresh will eventually seem effortless.

Fresh content on your website can be as refreshing as that glass of fresh water on a hot Kansas summer day!

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