



## Editorial

### Club Web Sites

It's been some ten years, at least, since the web site phenomena started to wash over the world. By November 2006, there were already over 100 million sites posted on the internet. [<http://news.baluart.net/article/133/how-many-web-sites-are-in-internet/>]. Today, there are over 234 million different web sites! [<http://excapite.wordpress.com/2010/11/20/so-just-how-many-web-sites-can-the-advertising-industry-support/>]

Within that context then, it's simply amazing that the vast majority of regional clubs *still* don't have web sites of their own, especially when considering that all of these clubs are constantly looking for new members and ways to advertise their presence...and that's *exactly* what a web site does...and does it on the largest scale possible...*globally!*

Web site costs are minimal and, in many cases, free, depending on who the internet provider is. A club member can even tack the club web site onto his or her own pre-existing site, as long as there's server space for both. I have my classroom site, for example, as an extension of my personal hobby site. They're two completely different sites, but they share the same server space, and the second doesn't cost me a penny extra.

By the same token, it doesn't take an electronic genius to create a web site. Almost all internet service providers have web site building tools available to their customers. And, if you want something fancy, there are several easy-to-use web site building software programs available. I doubt that there is a single club today that doesn't have members who are perfectly capable and willing to create a web site and act as webmaster for that club.

Of course, there are some of us who have no interest at all in all of this 'techie stuff', but we're not going to be around for much longer. The future of the hobby is directly related to future collectors, and those collectors *are* going to be techies. You can already see it with the present younger generation. They're been raised on electronics. They don't read books any more; they watch movies and videos. They don't write in cursive; they text. Any of my seventh graders has more technology and information available to him on his cell phone than all of the computers on the Apollo space mission combined! And those kids are tomorrow's collectors. Meanwhile, we, the hobby in general, are still focused on the preferences of senior citizens [*I can say that; I'm a senior citizen!*] Yes, that's where membership is right now, but we can't afford to keep doing that.

Web site advertising works. It works for the government; it works for business; it already works for the hobby. The RMS site is its single biggest source of new members. And membership recruitment is certainly not the only advantage such web sites have to offer. They can act as a central database for the club—membership roster, club bulletins, auctions, collecting information, links to related resources, schedules and details for upcoming events, an available archive of photos and past club activities, a forum for member spotlighting and much-deserved recognition, etc.

Are web sites going to solve the huge membership decline that the hobby has experienced over that last 20 years? No, but they can certainly help. To dismiss such technology is an injustice to the club and to the hobby. Out of the currently existing 27 regional clubs, 7 have web sites.