

Digital Asset Management for Nonprofits

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It's important to know where your digital assets are, what they are and who actually owns them. Why? In case of a digital emergency, or if you need to make a change, knowing your digital assets will save you time, money, and major headaches down the road if you're prepared. In this document, we'll define some common web terms, and you'll get a checklist to make sure you have access to and ownership of everything you need!

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Hosting:** Everything on the internet takes up digital space. All of the code, pages, images and files that comprise your website are stored on a computer (server) somewhere. Usually you pay a company a monthly or annual fee for hosting.
- **Shared Hosting:** This just means that your site is on a computer (server) with other websites. This is a very common practice among web hosting companies to keep hosting affordable.
- **Email Hosting:** Every email takes up digital space—whether it's a one word reply, or a long email with a few attachments. Your email will often be stored on the same server as your website, but not always.
- **Domain Name:** This is the web address you give people so they can find your website. Usually it begins with a www. So your domain name is www.yourname.org. Domain names can end in .org, .com, .info, .edu and many other extensions.
- **Server:** A server is a computer that performs a specific function in a network. Your home computer is not usually a server, but a server is just a computer. Some organizations host their websites and email on a computer in their own office—this is a very dangerous practice.
- **“The Cloud”:** A network of servers (computers) that work to perform a service. It might be data storage (something like Dropbox) or it might be software delivery (like DonorPerfect). The important thing about the cloud is its redundancy. When your hosting company talks about redundancy, it means they have backups in place, so that if one of those computers (servers) crashes, there's another one (at least) that has the same information on it. Using software on the cloud is convenient because you can access it on more than one machine; you don't have to purchase multiple copies of software on discs and install it on each computer.
- **Traffic:** Traffic is the number of visits and page views on your website. If you have a form available to download on a page on your website, and lots of people visit that page to download it, that is going to create a lot of traffic—because the transmission of that file's data (from your server to the computer of the person downloading it) takes up space. (Sometimes that space is referred to as “bandwidth.”)
- **SSL Certificate:** SSL certificate is a snippet of code that you put into your website code in a specific place that allows the data to be transmitted securely. If your website transmits sensitive information (such as donors' credit card information), you will need to build in extra security to make sure that information is encrypted.
- **IP Address:** IP (Internet Protocol) is a unique string of numbers that is specific to a particular machine, like a computer or phone. Your website is accessible through a browser using your domain name, but also through its IP address. The IP address is not specific to your website, but to the server that hosts it. An IP address looks like this: 172.16.254.1.

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- **DNS Records:** The DNS (Domain Name Servers) records tell your browser what IP address (what server) to go to to fetch the contents of this particular website to display when someone types in your domain name. You must log in to your domain registrar account and change your DNS settings to point to your server. Your hosting company can help you do this.
- **URL:** A URL (Uniform Resource Locator) is what you type into the address bar of your web browser. It's also known as a web address, hyperlink or link.
- **Domain Registrar:** A company that buys and sells domain names. You must pay a yearly fee to a domain registrar to retain ownership of your domain. If you do not pay this fee, your domain can expire, and someone else could buy it. Keep your contact information current with your domain registrar so you will receive important renewal reminders.

CHECKLIST/BEST PRACTICES:

- ✓ **Where is your domain registered? Do you own it?**
Know under whose name and email address it is registered, when it expires and what your login is for that website.
- ✓ **Where is your website hosted?**
Make sure you know the login for your hosting billing account website as well as for your backend/control panel to manage your hosting account.
- ✓ **Where is your email hosted?**
Do you know how to create and delete email addresses? Set up forwards? Access your email via a web browser? Do you know how to set up your phone, tablet and other tools to send/receive your email?
- ✓ **Do you have an SSL certificate on your site?**
If you process any sensitive information on your site (like credit card info), you need to make sure it's secure.
- ✓ **Is your website and/or email being backed up to the cloud?**
Make sure you have measures in place to protect your content in the event of a crash.
- ✓ **How are your social media accounts set up?**
Best practice is to use a generic organizational email address, like social@yourname.org, for Twitter, Instagram, etc. so that as you change staff and volunteers, the accounts are not tied to one person's name or email address. For Facebook, keep two highly trusted individuals (say, executive director and board president) as full administrators on your page. Make all other page contributors lower-level administrators on the page, so that no volunteer or staff member can delete the page or remove people as admins.



Emily Garman has been a foster mom and animal welfare volunteer for 15 years and founded **TheSocialAnimal.com** in 2008 to teach animal advocates how to use social media to raise money, recruit volunteers and save more lives. She presents on next-generation fundraising, social media and mega-adoption events all over the world. In 2011, she traveled to Riga, Latvia to present at the Dogs Trust European Summit and to the US Virgin Islands to consult with individual shelters. She received the 2010 Advocate in Action Award from the Oklahoma Alliance for Animals for her work in using social media to pass puppy mill legislation in Oklahoma; she helped Texas organizations do the same in 2011.