

EMWA news

Diarmuid De Faoite

EMWA Web Manager

Correspondence to:

webmanager@emwa.org

Word of mouse

News from the EMWA Website Manager

New role

At the recent EMWA conference held in Cyprus, I assumed the position of EMWA Website Manager. While this is a daunting task, it is a challenge I am pleased to take on.

To ensure that I was in a position to take over the reins as seamlessly as possible, prior to my official appointment, I worked closely with Shanida Nataraja, EMWA's very capable Website Manager of the past 6 years. I also previously worked full-time for 3 years as a website editor so I had some idea of what awaited me (famous last words).

Vision for the EMWA website

I would like to have a sharper focus on two main elements – news and resources – to make the website more dynamic and valuable to our members. To this end, I will be trying to extract more out of the information currently available from EMWA. I am also looking at other websites for inspiration on what new features might be added to EMWA's site.

But this cannot be a one-man show, so as much as possible, I plan to delegate responsibilities, for example, by creating a Social Media Team. There is more information on this team later in this article.

When EMWA members have had time to try out and get used to the updated and improved website, we will conduct a survey of user opinions to measure satisfaction and also to determine what other features they would like to see.

What is happening now?

I am currently conducting a root-and-branch examination of the website to update, edit, delete, or merge the content so that the information presented is accurate and up to date. However, this will take me many months to complete. In the meantime, if you spot something while browsing, please send me a quick email (webmanager@emwa.org) and I will then correct the problem as soon as possible.

It is sometimes difficult as a user to pinpoint what changes have been made to a website. Since assuming the role, I have done the following:

- Kept news and newsflashes rolling
- Added a new 'Future Conferences' section
- Worked with the Executive Committee to completely update the FAQ section
- Tweaked many small issues, such as moving the 'Share-a-Room Scheme' into the conferences section.

Updating and refining the website will be a marathon and not a sprint, but we are moving forward.

Final thought

We would all love to have a perfect, highly professional website, but please keep in mind that EMWA is a volunteer organization and maintaining and ensuring that a website is up to date is a Sisyphean task. In addition, we must live within our means, which means that some very good ideas may not be possible because of technical or budgetary reasons.

However, with additional help, we can achieve even more. So I would love to hear from you if you'd like to get involved in any capacity – whether that be writing an online article, volunteering to edit a section of the website, becoming a regular blogger, joining the social media team, etc.

A short guide for EMWA members who use our official Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter accounts

Social media are changing the way we are communicating, interacting, and doing business – with EMWA members, sponsors, and other stakeholders.

Although social media tools and platforms are new and evolving quickly, their function is similar to traditional ways of communication. Because of social media's high speed, levels of interactivity, and global access to any information you publish, there are particular considerations that must be taken into account.

The best advice is to approach the online world and the physical world in the same way: by using sound judgement and common sense. It is important to try to understand *netiquette* (a contraction of 'network etiquette' or 'Internet etiquette'),

which is a set of social conventions for interacting in the modern digital age.

To aid you, we have put together some suggested guidelines (culled from a variety of online sources) for you to consider as you pick your way through the path of EMWA's social media offerings. Why are we doing this now you might ask? People posting on EMWA's social media are not members of a closed community. Many of you know that cyberspace is a communal place full of interesting (and some not so interesting!) characters. But it is a place where a throwaway comment can spark a frenzy of worried postings. Cyberspace is also the home of malicious posters (known as trolls) who deliberately try to interrupt interesting and constructive debate.

Therefore, to make posting and reading online a more pleasurable experience for everyone, please consider the following suggestions:

1. Take your time before responding on social media networks. Remember that the Internet is permanent and never forgets.
2. Don't pick a fight. Understand that you'll encounter a wide range of individuals on social media platforms. If someone is contentious and wants to pick a fight, be polite and minimize contact.
3. Be the first to respond to your own mistakes. If you make an error, be up front about the mistake and correct it quickly, as this can help to restore trust. If you choose to modify content that was previously posted, such as editing a blog post, make it clear that you have done so.
4. Adopt a warm, open, and approachable tone.
5. Use your best judgement. Remember that there may be consequences to what you publish. If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, it is probably best not to publish it or at least seek further advice before publishing.
6. Be conscious about mixing your personal and business lives.

If you have personal accounts on social media make sure they are kept separate from any 'professional' channels. Although you might have a deep emotional connection to EMWA, please keep in mind that only the EMWA PR Officer is authorised to speak publically in the organisation's name.

7. Take account of the European/global audience. Be mindful that different cultures have different values, and statements that are deemed acceptable

or even funny in one culture may be considered offensive in others. Keep this 'European/global view' in mind when you are participating in online conversations.

8. Only share publicly available information. Make sure to share only information that is publicly available unless you have a clear mandate to do otherwise.

9. Be a 'scout' for critical issues affecting EMWA. EMWA members are our most vital assets for monitoring the social media landscape. If you come across positive or negative remarks about EMWA that you believe are important, please share them by forwarding them to EMWA Head Office (info@emwa.org) or any member of the EMWA Executive Committee. We would like to address legitimate concerns raised as soon as possible and can only do so when we know about them.

EMWA Social Media Team

Social media is an area we at EMWA are very interested in beefing up. We have a lively LinkedIn discussion group of over 1000 members, a Facebook group, and a Twitter account. If you use any of these platforms, please join our groups and add to the discussion!

The Web is ever-expanding, yet our number of eyes unfortunately not, so we have recently put together an EMWA Social Media Team to help us spread the word about EMWA. We thank Leyna Prince who for a long time has looked after our LinkedIn group, Laura C Collada Ali who is active on Twitter, and the EMWA Webscout Editor, Karin Eichele, who assists with both Twitter and Facebook. The EMWA PR Officer and Web Manager also help to oversee the team and offer support wherever possible.

Would you like to contribute to EMWA social media?

We are looking to double the size of this team to ensure that we have enough people to cover all areas. Are you the kind of person who is very active on one or more of these platforms and could spare some time to post on and to check the official EMWA pages? Maybe you use a different social media and would be prepared to launch an official EMWA channel there? Either way, please get in touch with us if you'd like get involved in EMWA's social media.

Contact us by mail - pr@emwa.org or webmanager@emwa.org.

Thanks to all those of you who are already interacting with us online. This is *your* organisation, so please do get involved!