



CAPITAL AREA COMMUNITY MEDIA CENTER

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Workshop 3:: Database Design and Development

DEFINITION:: Database is something that allows you to organize and edit data. Databases should be used for data that your organization wants to have easily tracked and reported. This might be donor and volunteer information, data that might be relevant for grant proposals. Databases differ from other organization tools, like Excel spreadsheets, in that they organize “relationally.” What this means is that your organization can use databases to create relationships between multiple types and levels of information.

Useful resources *before* you set up your database

Determining database needs

- Ideal ware’s common mistakes when choosing databases:

http://www.idealware.org/articles/ten_common_mistakes_in_selecting_donor_databases.php

This includes discussions of budgeting, decision-making, and needs analyses.

For determining the software needed to meet those needs

- Tech Soup’s comparison of donor management software:

<http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/databases/page5961.cfm>

Tech soup (www.techsoup.org) created a comparison chart* of eleven donor management software options, comparing features such as records administration capabilities, queries and reports, and gift management.

*Note: The comparisons have not been updated since Nov. 2006 but most of the information is still applicable.

- Tool kit for selecting donor management software:

http://www.npowerseattle.org/education/resources/donor_toolkit.htm

A free downloadable donor management toolkit book. Includes step by step discussion on determining needs in connection with mapping your organization’s work processes. Also includes blank functional requirements maps, features checklists, and links to other online resources.

Tools you may already have

- Spreadsheets:: can be used for simple organization (cannot create relationships between different data sets). Can use Google spreadsheets, which allows you to share spreadsheets with people using different computers.
- Database software:: Two most common databases non-profits use: Filemaker Pro and Microsoft Access. Access and Filemaker Pro are easy to learn and come with helpful templates already installed. These templates can be altered to fit your organization’s needs.

Compassion Capital Fund:: Media Capacity Building Workshop

This handout will be available online at:

www.cacvoices.org/compassioncapitalfund/workshopmaterials/



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Specific tips for Access database design

- Relational database design tips: http://www.databasedev.co.uk/design_tips.html
- S'more access: <http://lists.compasspoint.org/lists/info/smore-access>
 - a listserv and forum for members of the nonprofit community who are using and/or designing Access databases. Members are invited to post questions and share solutions to technical issues dealing with Access database development.

*Sample of Low Cost Packaged Tools**

- GiftWorks (www.missionresearch.com)
- Democracy in Action (www.democracyinaction.org)
- eTapestry (www.etapestry.com)

Sample of Free Databases

These are for organizations with fairly tech savvy staff

- Organizer's Database (www.organizersdb.org)
- CiviCRM (www.civicrm.org)

*from: Idealware's: "A Few Good Tools: Low Cost Constituent Databases"

http://www.idealware.org/articles/fgt_low_cost_dbs.php

Useful resources for *creating* your database...

Do's and Don'ts of general database design

CompassPoint's Nonprofit Genie's FAQ's about databases

<http://www.compasspoint.org/askgenie/printAll.php?tpid=2>

- Discusses tips for creating databases such as creating consistent rules for entering data; creating the right kinds of data fields. proper searching, to name a few.
- Also has a feature by feature comparison of Microsoft Access versus Filemaker Pro

Usability and Maintenance of databases

<http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/databases/page5213.cfm>

- Includes tips for development and design to ensure usable and easily maintainable databases.

Comprehensive resource on database design

<http://metrix.fcny.org/wiki/display/docs/Introduction%20to%20Databases>

- A collection of resources and articles on databases for organizations under the following headings: A primer on databases, readiness assessment, requirements gathering stage, evaluation stage, and decision stage.

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