Government of India / Bharat Sarkar
Ministry of Railways / Rail Mantralaya
(Railway Board)

No.2004/RBCC/5/6/Web Policy/1 New Delhi, Dated :26/10/2004

General Managers
All Indian Railways/Production Units

Sub: Hosting of Websites on CRIS Servers.

Presently, many of the Railways/Units have hosted their Websites on servers owned by private agencies. As per the latest directive of Ministry of Home Affairs, all Government Websites should be hosted on Government owned servers. They have also advised that all Railway/ Units Websites should be hosted on servers installed in and managed by CRIS (Centre for Railway Information Systems).

A Guideline on the format of Railway websites has been issued by the C&IS Directorate which can be downloaded from the website www.indianrailways.gov.in under Railway Board Directorates/Computer and Information systems.

You are requested to prepare an action plan to shift the hosting of your website to CRIS servers by 15th December 2004. The Action Plan should be sent to Board by 30th November 2004. The attached questionnaire may kindly be filled in and sent to the undersigned at the earliest. (The questionnaire is also available on the website).

(S.S.Mathur)
Director Mech (C&IS)
Railway Board.

Annexure-11

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RAILWAY WEBSITES

1. Name of Railway Unit Zone Name/Production Unit Name/Others Name

2. Website URL - _____

3. No. of Web Servers

4. Make of Web Servers i.e. X386/R1SC etc. with current specifications in terms of CPU, RAM, Hard Disk Storage etc.

5. Operating System on the Web Servers Window/Linux/Solaris/HP-UX/other UNIX

6. Web Server Application - Apache/IIS/Netscape others (please specify)

7. Web Application Technology details. Whether it hosts plain static HTML pages or hosts dynamic contents like ASP/CG1 (In 'C' or PERL)/PHP/JSP/Servelets etc.

8. Is it connected to backend database like MS-SQL /ORACLE /SYBASE /MYSQL etc.

9. Nature of static contents - HTML/GIF images/JPEG images/PDF docs etc.

10. No. of daily views on the Website _____

11. Present IP address of the Website _____

12. Domain is registered with which agency - VSNL/NCST etc.

13. Contact No., Email of the present Web Master _____

Website Guidelines

1. Introduction

The Internet provides a very powerful means of communication with the public as well as internally within the organisation. A well-managed Internet Website can provide reliable, updated information about a variety of subjects to the public. Recognising the importance of accurate and timely information dissemination in good governance,

2. Naming convention and hosting

Each Zonal Railway or Unit headed by a General Manager or equivalent post must maintain its individual website.

2.1 The General Manager should nominate an officer of SAG level to draw up suitable procedures to manage the site and ensure that the content of the website is kept updated. The Sr EDP Manager and CPRO of the Railway should both be part of the website management team. A nominated content manager should be chosen to receive information from the different departments and upload it to the site. One officer of JAG level must be nominated as content manager from each department to keep information of their department posted and updated on the site.

2.2 A relevant name or URL must be given to the website. A URL in the domain .gov.in should be obtained. These URLs are centrally registered by C-DAC (NCST) and can be obtained on an annual fee. The URL should be descriptive e.g. "http://www.centralrailway.gov.in" or "http://www.railcoachfactory.gov.in". Similar-sounding URLs e.g. in the domain .org should also be registered and cases of cyber-squatting eliminated through legal action. The nominated SAG officer should be the technical and administrative contact for the domain names obtained.

2.3 Domain names should on no account be allowed to expire.

2.4 As per the latest directive from the Ministry of Home Affairs, all Government Websites should be hosted on the Webservers owned by Government of India. They have further recommended that all the Railways Websites should be hosted on servers located in CRIS, New Delhi.

However, management of domain names shall continue to be the responsibility of the concerned zonal Railway/unit.

3. Intended viewers of the websites

Railway websites are intended for the following categories of viewers in order of importance:

3.1 Passengers / intending passengers / relatives and friends of passengers: Needing train timings, availability status, updated timetable information, travel and ticketing rules and regulations, special trains, group and special booking, rates and charges, on-board services; special information in case of an unfortunate accident.

3.2 Freight customers: Needing goods tariff and charges, services between pairs of stations, hazardous goods, loading and unloading facilities at different locations, special rates and marketing drives.

3.3 Complainants / claimants: Needing contact information of various officers, including email addresses, procedure for lodging complaints / claims.

3.4 Employees: Needing information on new developments, circulars, vacancy notices and deputation, transfers, rules and regulations, technical information, rest houses and holiday homes.

3.5 Tourists: Needing tourist information, places to stay, attractions; information for foreign tourists, connections by air and road, special / toy trains.

3.6 Other Ministries / Government organisations: Needing information as per Government policies revised from time to time.

3.7 Other persons such as researchers and students, children etc: Needing information on Railway history, budget announcements, financial information, technical information on railway operation, fixed infrastructure and rolling stock, organisation and human resources; photographs and other illustrations; basic information on Railway working through games, illustrations, and multimedia.

Content on the website should be gradually built up to meet the needs of each category of the audience.

4. Features

The website should consist of two distinct sections: the first section should carry information for the general public; the second section should carry information of a non-confidential nature for Railwaymen.

4.1 Each website must have links to the following Railways sites along with the other Railways/ unit site.

1. "http://www.indianrailways.gov.in", the official site of the Ministry of Railways, maintained by RBCC, which contains latest information from Board.
2. "http://www.indianrail.gov.in", the passenger information website of Indian Railways, maintained by CRIS, which contains reservation status and other information of use to passengers.
3. "http://www.irctc.co.in", the reserved ticket booking website, maintained by IRCTC, which enables passengers to book reserved tickets through the Internet.
4. "http://goidirectory.nic.in", the Government of India directory of official sites.

4.2 Each website should carry a section "Press releases" in which current press releases of the Zonal Railway / Unit should be published. All tender notices should be posted in a special section on the site and tender documents shoudl be downloadable from the site.

4.3 A section for "new / changed passenger services" should be provided to carry information about trains recently introduced or proposed to be introduced; new stops / halts introduced or proposed to be introduced, or deleted from existing services; trains augmented, frequency increased / decreased, class of travel introduced / deleted; and changes in timetable.

4.4 A section for "special services" should carry information about summer / holiday special trains.

4.5 In the unfortunate event of an accident on the Zonal Railway, a special set of pages must be contructed and a prominent link given from the index page. The accident section must carry a description of the accident, an updated list of dead and injured, and a link to the page on the CRIS site where the reservation charts of the affected coaches are displayed.

4.6 A section on "disaster management" must be placed on the site, to display a list of telephone numbers of stations, an updated list of hospitals along the line along with their contact information, for the use of passengers' relatives in the case of an accident.

5. Bilingual support

The site must be bilingual. Ideally, each page in English should have a link to a counterpart page in Hindi. However, the information on the site should not be delayed on account of translation etc., and information available first in either language should be uploaded as soon as it becomes available.

6. Technical aspects

6.1 Individual pages of the site should not be larger than 150 to 200 KB to enable quick loading of pages for viewers using dial-up connections. In general pages should be in html format. PDF may be used for large documents for downloads. Unneccessary use of flash, images, or multimedia should not be made. Colours should be muted. Links to large pages should be so marked to warn dial-up users. Each page should have a home link, a back button, and a button to the site map. Each page on the Website should have the date of last update printed on its bottom.

6.2 The web hosting service must provide backup of the site on a daily basis, and should also maintain an archive of the outdated content. The web hosting service should not modify / erase any content without the consent of the Railway webmaster. A facility for loading and accessing databases should also be provided by the web hosting service provider through on-line forms so that applications can be hosted on the website.

6.3 A feature should be provided by the web hosting service to allow the webmaster to see the number of hits, pageviews and visits along with the standard analysis reports for the site.

6.4 A search engine and feedback system should also be provided on the site.

6.5 A disclaimer should be provided on the index page of the site. The disclaimer should be worded roughly as under: "Endeavour has been made to make available updated and accurate information. Errors, whenever brought to notice, will be rectified. But the Zonal Railways/Production Units/Corporations/Railway organisations will accept no responsibility and liability, of whatever nature, for the correctness of the material on this Website. In this regard, the users are advised to verify the correctness of facts from the concerned official or person."

6.6 On switching over to the CRIS webserver, the above features must be agreed upon between CRIS and the Zonal Railways/Unit.

7. Security

Comprehensive security must be provided to the website as per the latest standards. There have been many attacks on Government of India websites in the recent past. Government guidelines specify that the websites should be protected behind correctly configured firewalls and ftp and other ports should be restricted. Accordingly, FTP facility to the Railway sites must be restricted to the content manager of the site. Passwords should be confidential and changed frequently. Other precautions to secure the site should also be taken.