

Annual Report 08/09 - Debenham web site

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1. Introduction

This report is a brief summary of highlights and changes made to the Debenham web site.

2. Progress on Quality Improvement

On first taking over, the Editor proposed a three phase quality improvement plan. Phase 1 (increase content providers) and Phase 2 (increase visitors) have been completed and are showing positive returns. Phase 3 (increase advertising revenue) has been delayed primarily due to:

- The success of Phases 1 and 2 meaning more time is required to maintain the web site
- A technical problem (still ongoing) whereby the web site is being targeted by spammers. This has required time to be spent removing the typically 20-40 spam messages received per day

These were in addition to the business as usual activities e.g. invoicing, new advertisers, maintaining good standards, day-to-day content updates etc.

3. Revenue

The table below shows the month-on-month revenues received, gained, lost and forecast

Revenue (£)												
YTD received	45	45	165	325	325	395	462	462	462	482	482	552
YTD gained	0	0	0	60	60	130	130	134	134	134	134	149
YTD lost	3	7	12	18	38	47	47	47	52	319	319	640
08/09 forecast	1081	1077	1072	1126	1106	1161	1161	1161	1165	898	898	583

In summary:

- The Editor has failed to meet the target outturn of **£1,100**. Outturn is confirmed at just **£583**. Primary cause was the loss of the two main sponsors (amounting to **£550**) who have only recently pulled out leaving insufficient time to find replacement sponsors before end fiscal. However, 10 invitations to sponsor have so far been sent out albeit the silence is deafening. This revenue shortfall could be offset against exceeding the target forecast in 07/08 by **£289**.
- Google revenue is showing a steady decline from around **£12pm** at year start to around **£5pm** at year end. Google revenue is gained by visitors using the Google search bar and then visiting one of the sponsored links. The Editor will look at ways whereby this might be increased.
- The number of advertisers has remained relatively static – **5** have been lost but **5** have been gained. Phase 3 will target news advertisers in early 09/10.

4. Traffic indicators

4.1. Overall Traffic

Average change over the year = +123%

Item	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
08/09	29K	27K	28K	31K	31K	35K	41K	49K	60K	63K	48K	150K
07/08	18K	19K	21K	26K	20K	21K	24K	25K	26K	23K	21K	22K
% change	+61	+42	+33	+19	+55	+67	+70	+96	+130	+174	+128	+582

4.2. Ave session time (secs)

Average change over the year = +140%

Item	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
08/09	1620	1829	2554	2832	2882	2420	3615	4912	4187	5476	4057	2601
07/08	1098	1104	1253	1422	1108	1351	1366	1459	1690	1660	1362	1383
% change	+48	+66	+104	+99	+160	+79	+165	+237	+148	+230	+198	+88

4.3. Web site updates

Average change over the year = +29%

Item	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
08/09	28	16	19	11	9	43	24	19	18	32	28	38
07/08					35	25	24	21	9	10	18	22
% change					-74	+72	0	-10	+100	+220	+56	+73

Overall Traffic and **Session Time** growth shows a steady increase albeit with some fluctuations month on month. These figures equate to approximately **3-4%** growth month on month.

Web site updates is a new indicator and measures the number of updates which are made to the web site per month.

5. Interface with UK Hosts

Overall, UK Hosts have been quite good and cooperative. However, they are not showing the same signs of due diligence as in previous years. A single outstanding technical problem has been ongoing for many months still without resolution. And progress (or lack of) is only reported if the Editor chases them.

However, their response when something goes badly wrong e.g. the Local Services database getting corrupted, is commendable – and they get it fixed very quickly.

6. Summary of web site activities

- Continual spamming of the News Item feature still remains a problem. ‘Dodgy’ comments can only be removed by manual intervention by the Editor until UK Hosts come up with a solution. This is time consuming as the number of such comments has increased to around 20-40 per day. A brief note on the front page advising visitors of the problem was well received but the perpetrators have taken no notice – so the problem is ongoing.
- A new sub-site bringing together all the worldwide interest in Family History relating to Debenham was launched by Suzie Morley who has taken on the job of sub-editor maintaining the site. This site has grown week on week and now includes a wealth of information of interest to visitors tracing their family history roots in Debenham. Suzie is to be congratulated on a job well done.
- The web site used to have a feature – Email Notification – which enabled the Editor to send out an alert email each time the web site was updated. This was fine when the number of monthly updates was quite small, but we are now doing around 30-40 updates per month which makes this feature a bit pointless.

- A new feature – Laugh or You’ll Cry – was added during the time of economic doom and gloom. It aims to spread a few good jokes to a wider audience and encourage everyone to laugh a little more! Obviously, such jokes are screened by the Editor to ensure they conform to standards of good taste and decency.
- Specific pages have been created under a heading of ‘Hot Topics’ to bring together various strands of popular topics. It has been used very effectively with recent topics e.g. The Future of DLC, The Need for an Arts Centre etc.
- The previous advertising options for the web site consisted of basically two options – a bargain basement text only advert at £10pa and an all-singing, all-dancing option at £45pa. The Editor has expanded this into 6 different options to provide a much wider range of options – and prices. It is still early days to assess the impact.
- The format of the Parish Council meeting minute’s page has been changed to reflect more recent requirements. Basically, Parish Council meetings have been split out into a number of different parts e.g. agenda, minutes, MSDC, SCC, Police and web site reports. This makes them more easily accessible rather than being buried within the minutes. In this respect, the web site Google search facility provides direct access to any specific topic since these are indexed in their own right.
- A ‘spoof’ item on Parish Council decisions was published on 1st April – and was a highlight of discussion at the following Parish Council surgery!!
- As a result of failing to meet the 08/09 revenue target, the Editor has offered his resignation to Council – outcome not yet known. If accepted, the Editor will continue until such time as a new editor is found – and then provide every assistance for a smooth changeover.

7. Outlook for 08/09

- Achieve revenue target – not set by Council as yet.
- Complete Phase 3 of the Quality Improvement Plan - increase number of advertisers and sponsors.
- Maintain business as usual activities e.g. invoicing, new advertisers, maintaining good standards, day-to-day content updates etc
- Continue to increase the number of content provides.
- Introduce a permanent Public Services page which brings together all the public service type news items e.g. virus alerts, scams, local council initiatives etc.
- Seek wider buy-in to the Have your Say poll from other local organisations.
- Seek ways to increase Google revenue from click-throughs. Might not be easy to do as the Editor has been advised that directly advertising this feature on the web site would contravene the agreement we have with Google. Not sure how true this is so may warrant investigation.

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