After selecting a topic (based on a "need" for the information for your target organization) for the entire major project, you will research the topic and clarify the focus and purpose of the web site portion. Web site content and purpose should be significantly different from the brochure content and purpose (web site fills another niche in the information system of the organization). Remember that your topic should be one that can be effectively and/or best communicated via a web site format rather than some other media.

WEB SITE ASSESSMENT -- OVERVIEW

WEB SITE ASSESSMENT

DUE DATE: ______________

First, each team members will assess at least two web sites (having as much complexity as required in this assignment, to include at least a homepage for the site, at least five Level 2 linked pages, and at least 10 Level 3 pages linked from any combination of the Level 2 pages).

Use of computers across all professions, including the recreation/parks/leisure/tourism field, is increasing at a remarkable pace. No longer are we simply using computers for word processing, data analysis, graphic layout, inventory, programming, registration, etc. The computer, via the "information super highway," is becoming a way to research information, share ideas, transmit graphic images, and much more. CD ROMs greatly expand the amount and type of information that can be called up on a computer; programs can incorporate sophisticated graphics, video and sound. The World Wide Web is another system which allows exchange of a great deal of information in multi-media forms. Both CDs and WWW let "users" or "visitors" access massive amounts of information in a way that is user-directed and multi-directional. (However, neither totally replaces all other media formats, nor are appropriate for all target audiences.) In the table below is described a brief comparison of the two formats (summarized by Mr. Tom Vaughan, personal communication).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTIC</th>
<th>CD ROM</th>
<th>WWW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>Limited; fixed at publication</td>
<td>Dynamic, internally &amp; by linkages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images</td>
<td>Already on disc; load instantly</td>
<td>Transmitted individually; loading speed related to size, complexity of image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpus</td>
<td>Pre-determined, self-contained</td>
<td>Through links, literally infinite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>Limited by nature of medium (CD player, specific operating platform, RAM, etc.)</td>
<td>Should be accessible by modern from any platform &amp; any of several browsers (some without graphics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Intentional; one doesn't &quot;happen&quot; on to a CD's contents</td>
<td>Not necessarily intentional; one may be researching a specific topic and happen on to your site; how long they stay or how fast they surf on is one measure of site attractiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>Readily available on CD; need right equipment to access</td>
<td>Available and improving all the time; need right equipment &amp; software</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For this part of the assignment, each team member will explore and critically evaluate a minimum of two
web sites.

There are several ways to find specific homepages or topics on the Web:
• type in a specific address (you need to know the address)
• clicking on a colored "link" word to get to a related homepage or site
• click on one of the Search buttons (then follow instructions of individual search engines)
• using one of the available "search engines" available on Netscape or Explorer, use either provided key
  words or create some of your own; be patient -- you may have to try several words to find topics of
  interest to you. Use the "help" sections to help refine your searches.

1. Go to a computer lab of your choice on campus or connect through your own computer.

2. Find the Netscape or Explorer application icon (probably located in the Communications file folder
  on the desktop, although some computers may have a Netscape icon sitting on the desktop
  independently.

3. Open the application program. Wait for the system to be connected. Then, under one of the menu
bars, find the command either for identifying a URL or Location. Either type in a known web
address or use any of the search functions to find sites related to topics or organizations related to
your group's topic or major/emphasis area.

5. For each of the sites you explore, write a summary description about what you have found. (Details
for the actual assignment are described at the end of this section.) You can use the Web to do
research, to find logos, etc. Be creative with your use of the system. (BUT DO NOT download and
use text information or graphics directly. This is plagiarism, just as it is for any other reference
materials. If you use information or graphics found on the Web, you must cite it in bibliographies or
reference lists just as you would any other source; be sure to credit photos. Don't forget to record
WWW address, author, and any other pertinent information while you are using the site so you don't
have to go back later and try to retrace your steps.)

6. If you have your own computer connected to the Internet and loaded with Netscape or other browser
software, you can use other functions (such as "Bookmarks" to mark web sites you use often).

Kinds of information you may find on the Web:

Write Place Interesting Information

Sometimes just interesting information is available via a homepage, such as information about the
raising of the Edmund Fitzgerald bell in the summer of 1995. An example of an "address"
(URL/location) is:

http://web.msu.edu/bell

Some sites (such as the above) provide opportunities to "write to" some of the people involved with
the topic about which you are reading, or to join "chat rooms" to discuss topics of common interest.

Academic Department and Program Information

Most universities provide information about the community, university, the departments and programs
offered. Usually you can find descriptions of the geographic area, information about how to apply,
and detailed degree information as well as how to contact specific people and units. Most recreation-
related academic programs have their own homepages. An example of an address is:

http://www.indiana.edu/~bradwood/
Almost all professional organizations use web sites to disseminate information about their services, to distribute articles, and to provide information about current activities. An example in the park, recreation, tourism and leisure services field is:

http://www.geog.ualberta.ca/als/als1.html

Many businesses have begun to advertise products and services or provide other information helpful to consumers. Some even have ways to order things (however, it is important to NOT give any credit card numbers or other personal information on the Web unless you are sure the site uses special encryption to "hide" and protect such information).

Many tourist destinations promote their sites and services. Some even have response boxes in which to order brochures or other types of printed information, register for camp sites, make lodging reservations, but tickets, etc. Some have photos or video clips that can be downloaded as well. Others have pages on which visitors can post notes about their experiences.

Educational programs for use by students (especially for K-12) are available on the Web. Students may be able to "Follow" an expedition (such as an expedition to the Arctic, or an underwater dive) and "talk with" some of the explorers.

In other cases, information is provided about sites that you may want to visit (e.g., museums) but don't have the opportunity. As an alternative, you can "visit" via cyberspace. Some homepages even "display" some of their art, artifacts, buildings, or other attractions. Some even provide "virtual" experiences and interactive learning modules.

WEB SITE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY -- ASSIGNMENT

1. Keep a log of the three sites you visit (and how you find them--where you started, where you went, where you ended, types of search engine functions used, etc.). This includes keeping a list of the site addresses (at least the addresses for primary homepages).

2. Make a map (diagram showing each page, and the linkages between the pages) of each web site.

3. Evaluate the site, paying particular attention to the kinds of content, design, navigation, downloading time, special features, and other issues that you should consider in developing your own web site. What things did you like, dislike? What things did you find fascinating, frustrating? Why? How might you "fix" or improve those functions?

END OF WEB ASSESSMENT INFORMATION/INSTRUCTIONS
WEB SITE PLANNING & PRODUCTION – General Process

Now you will develop a concept map of your web site, then write a draft of the actual text to be used on each of the pages. This should include the structure, indicate the heading/subheading level hierarchy within each page, and indicate linkages from concept to concept, from page to page throughout the site.

Next you will write, and ultimately revise, your actual text (to fill in content and meet the expectations of the structure you established in the "map"). Write for clarity, ease of meaning, completeness. Break text into appropriate text blocks and organize (within and between pages) in a logical manner. Check your writing for proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, and appropriateness to target audience. (Research about content and audience should be evident not only in the overall planning document for the major project, but incorporated into developmental components of the web site.)

Next you will begin to actually design your entire site, which includes:

- select and find appropriate graphics (logos, photos, drawings, other graphics -- still or moving/animated) to enhance each page of the web site;
- decide on an appropriate color scheme (all components of the site, including fonts, link words, regular text, wallpaper, banners, graphics, etc.);
- determine how to use font size and colors to indicate hierarchy;
- determine which words will be the linking words, and make sure that you can incorporate them smoothly in the running text;
- determine what other kind of link buttons and systems you will use;
- develop an effective navigation system that allows users to move back and forth through parts of the web site without getting lost or frustrated or unable to find their way back to the homepage;
- decide if you will use any "special effects" or features (such as video clips, audio clips, response forms or registration forms, chat rooms, etc.)
- determine how you will accommodate persons with various types of disabilities, or address their concerns.

Next, you will begin actual production of the web site:

- take/find needed photographs (you may check out a digital camera from GVS) or scan other photos (keep a record of the process you used, and the sources for all photos/graphics);
- select and/or develop graphics you will use;
- revise the text;
- construct the web site in one of the team's AFS space.

Finally, have several people (not members of the class) try out your web site to check for accuracy, ease of use, download time, etc.

Then be prepared to show the site during the final class period (__________________________).
Based on the process described above, you will turn in parts of the project at various times during the semester. See below.

**PHASE II-W:** Your group will write a draft text (including headings, subheadings, and an indication of where they appear on the web site, based on your web site map, first for peer review; then you will revise and submit them (web site map plus text) for instructor critique (turn-around time is short, so plan ahead!)

**PHASE III-W:** Your group will revise your overall planning document, to be turned in by ___________; and you will revise your site map and text prior to entry onto actual web site. If you choose to make additional changes or edits as you construct the site, you may do so.

Your group will construct your web site and complete a group web site critique (see instructions) as well as individual self- and peer-critiques:

**Production:** Your group will "show" your web site to the rest of the class during the last class period (__________)_. Afterwards your group will discuss the planning and construction processes (including mistakes, hang-ups and successes) with the rest of the class. Remember, you must complete written self- and peer-critiques for the project and your group.

**Group Critique of Web Site:**
After completing the web site, your group will write an evaluation about the completed site--what you think are the best and most effective parts (and WHY), and what you would do differently if you were to plan and produce the web site again. See critique form for specific instructions.
Due: ________________

**Self- and Peer-Critiques for Web Site Project:**
After completing the web site, each group member will photocopy enough critique sheets for each group member (including themselves), then complete one for each person in the group.
EVALUATIONS:

- Peers will evaluate your group's map and text in class (Phase II-W).
- Peers will verbally evaluate your actual web site during class.
- Your group will evaluate (in writing) your web site production.
- Each group member will evaluate each group member's (including their own) participation and involvement in the project.
- Instructor will evaluate all phases of the web site planning and production, including critiques.

NOTE re Self, Peer and Group Critiques: Make sure these evaluations are filled out completely and that each item is well justified. Points will be deducted for incomplete, inadequate critiques.

Criteria for evaluation will include:

PLANNING DOCUMENT (included in overall Major Project Planning Document)
Thoroughness, appropriateness, clarity, effectiveness at addressing all required items, neatness, consistency among elements

REVISED NARRATIVE/TEXT
Interesting homepage/title
Clear concept and/or structure
Detailed text
Links to other pages clearly identified, make sense to user
Logical organization of information, especially as relates to levels
Clear identification of font size to indicate information levels within individual page
Description of use of special effects (frames, forms, interactive components, video clips, etc.)

WEB SITE MAP
Clear, logical organization
Meets project requirements
Match between map and text

ACTUAL PRODUCTION
Title included on homepage of site

Homepage
Does the homepage adequately and clearly set up a logical, understandable order for site?
Is overall topic clearly identified?

Entire Site
Is information presented in organized and logical fashion, w/ clear links between various pages of the entire site?
Are linkages clearly identified, and do they make sense? Is there more than one way to get to a link?
Are major points of web site easily identifiable, understandable?
Does web site hold interest and encourage exploration? Is it approp. for target audience?
Do visual components support and enhance the messages? Does text match the visuals?
Is there variety (visual, audio)?

QUALITY OF PRODUCTION
Navigation (type used?):
Is web site easily navigable?
Do the "back" buttons work (return to immediately previous page)?
Are there regular opportunities to return to site homepage?
QUALITY OF PRODUCTION (cont)........................

Graphics, Photos, Other Visuals
   Appropriateness, quality, variety
   Is the "style" of graphics consistent throughout the site?
   For those not taken (photos) or drawn by team, are sources credited?

Visual Design
   Are appropriate colors used (to match, enhance topic)?
   Is color contrast adequate, easy to read (even for people with color-blindness)?
   Are links "active" through both text and graphical cues?
   If "wallpaper" is used, is it subtle & appropriate (not distracting of main information)?
   Are photos or other graphics appropriately cropped so main image is apparent?

Text
   Do font sizes and colors appropriately indicate levels of hierarchy of information importance? And are
   the colors different enough to have good visual contrast on the monitor?
   Is proper grammar, spelling, punctuation used?
   Is writing itself clear, organized, understandable, appropriate to target audience?
   Are all font sizes large enough to be easily readable on the monitor?
   Are font styles easy to read on the monitor?

Other
   Creativity of presentation style, theme or concept
   Use of interesting, innovative techniques (music, sound effects, wallpaper, banners, video clips,
   interactive components, moving graphics, etc.) do they support and enhance the web site
   messages?

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
   Evidence in content re: program?
   Evidence in media format?

TEAM WEB SITE CRITIQUE
   Included?
   Quality of comments, justification

GROUP VIDEO CRITIQUE; SELF- AND PEER-CRITIQUES
   Included?
   Quality of comments, justification

OTHER COMMENTS