
MEMORANDUM

January 29, 2010

TO: Brenda Decker
FROM: Pam Hunzeker
President/Administration

RE: Nebraska Website Domains

We are currently in the development stage of a website for Nebraska Health and Human Services which is funded through a Federal Grant. It has come to my attention that there is an effort to get all state websites under one domain – ne.gov or nebraska.gov. I can appreciate the reasons behind that effort. However, there occasionally may be special situations when using a government domain can affect the success of a project. In the case of tunemylife.org, we are quite certain that it would significantly reduce web traffic and have a detrimental impact on the outcome we believe is possible.

For this website, it is our intent to identify the State agency and federal funding of this project within the website. We intend to be transparent once people visit the site. The domain name needs to resonate with the audience and be easy to promote. We have secured tunemylife.org for that purpose and would like to proceed with this URL.

As an outside consultant, I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on what might be considered “special situations.” Perhaps these filters might be used to determine when a website might be exempt from using nebraska.gov as the domain address:

1. Target Audience

Our research and client experience tells us that teens and young adults are much less likely to visit a government website. They would be skeptical, possibly turned off by that. They may feel the website is not relevant to their primary interests and some would be concerned about confidentiality – is this “big brother?”

2. Purpose

The website is not strictly an educational site. First and foremost, it is a social community that will encourage interaction and use music to engage and inspire. In the case of our project, we are attempting to create a grassroots movement, a campaign that would be perpetuated by youth. It is important for users to believe this movement began with youth and we will use the voice of peers and young musicians to achieve this goal.

3. Geographic Reach

We hope that our messages are embraced and spread by teens and young adults to others throughout the county. In fact, our songwriting contest selected two musicians from Texas and we had artists submitting songs from other countries as far away as Australia. A Nebraska domain would put boundaries on this effort. Because this is funded through a federal grant, we want this site to be accessible to other states and other organizations without restrictions.

4. Future Funding

The federal grant ends in 2010. It is certainly everyone's hope that the project will continue for many years. To facilitate that, we will need to find sponsors or underwriters. For example, one possible prospect is an organization of retired Nashville musicians and songwriters. As an identified government website, we are likely to find it more difficult to secure ongoing, outside funding.