

# Meeting Minutes Generator

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For West Carleton Amateur Radio Club

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# Project Purpose

- To design and build a minutes generator tool for WCARC that easily prepares good HTML code, viewable by major browsers, similar in appearance to what has already been posted, and permits manual editing, if required.

# The COW Syndrome

- What a Can Of Worms!
- This project turned into something very different from what was intended
- Software is not the only part of the project

# Background - HTML

- MS products produce horrible non-standard HTML code
- MS produced HTML looks different on different browsers (IE, Firefox, Netscape, Opera)
- Code varies greatly, based on Personal Computer owner's settings
- Cryptic positional formatting makes manual editing impossible.

# Background – Secretary

- Different Secretaries interpret and record meeting information much differently
- Different attention to spelling, call signs, details, filtering
- Different timing – some people get the minutes out right after the meeting while others, just before the next meeting
- Different format/layout

# Background – Meeting Leader

- Each meeting leader has his own style and meeting agenda/flow
- Varying degrees of formality/structure

# Background – Meeting Attendees

- May have only a vague idea of meeting etiquette
- May not want meeting etiquette or formal terminology
- Rely on club web pages for the official Minutes Book (we now have 5years of on-line history)

# Other Factors

- The Web Master is NOT the Secretary and may not have authority to change content of minutes or does he?
- Editing of minutes by Web Master can be very time consuming
- What degree of change to “appearance” of minutes constitutes change to original minutes?
- Should the Web Master correct obvious spelling, formatting, call signs, names?
- Can the Web Master re-sequence the material?
- The Club web site is the official Minutes Book
- Issue: Do we want the world to see our mistakes?



# Questions that I Asked Myself

- Should the Minutes Generator conform to the meeting (difficult – too inconsistent)
- Should the Meeting conform to the Minutes Generator (seems offensive)
- Is the answer somewhere in the middle

# The Program - General

- Spec'd by me
- Written by Bob Chambers of Sykam Systems, a good friend of mine
- 3 man days of my time, 6 man days of Bob's time
- Written in Visual Basic 5 for Windows, permitting high compatibility for XP and Vista

# Program - Detail

- Tailored for WCARC, customizable
- Output is technically perfect but basic HTML
- Easy to edit manually if necessary
- Pages work well with IE, Firefox, Netscape and Opera
- Attractive and similar appearance to what we have been doing for the last 5 years.
- Easy to integrate into our web site
- Lots of free-form capability within a basic structure
- Runs under Windows XP or Vista
- Includes a nice database of attendees/members
- Has a lite Help file

# Program – Database

- Includes an open-ended database of attendees/members.
- Once you enter the data you will not have to enter it again.
- Easy to add/edit/delete entries
- Exports various forms of the database as comma separated values
- May be future applications

# Target

- They will be lining up to volunteer for the Secretary's job.
- I believe that the Web Master has to be a team member with the Secretary, as well as the Treasurer and the entire Exec.

# There is Always a Catch

- May require a little bit of meeting structure to implement.
- Are we willing to adapt a little?
- Traditionally WCARC has been a very loose and unstructured club with very friendly meetings. I do not believe that would have to change at all.

# Benefits/Questions

- Consistent, attractive web pages
- Easy to use
- A bit more structure to our meetings? Is the amount of structure objectionable?
- Easy to change Secretary/acting Secretary
- If Secretary brings a laptop, we could have instant minutes – is this of use?

# Demo

- We have a working program
- I have pre-loaded the database and updated it tonight
- Lets try to build the minutes web page LIVE based on the Secretary's notes



# Where Do We Go From Here?

- Implement
- Continue Development
- Abandon

# The End

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