

# Maritime Heritage Network



Two-Year Review &  
Expansion Concepts

## Purpose of Discussion

- Review of MHN's success since launch
- Ideas for growing the project

## MHN 2005 → 2007

- 2005
  - 4Culture's MHI with help from NPS, NTHP
  - Launched as King/Kitsap online collaboration
  - Startup budget of \$10,000
  - Initial list of 70 organizations and 100 attractions
- 2007
  - Lists 82 organizations and 109 attractions in 14 counties
  - \$10,000 in "capital" improvements
  - MHN/Music, Gift Shop, Maps, improved Calendar
  - Generating revenue with Google Ads, affiliate relationships (music, gift shop), and first paid advertiser (Tom Hoffmann)

## Current Status, Maintenance

- 500 sessions per day, 1,000 page views per day
- Frequent additions to Calendar
- Occasional updates to org and attraction listings
- Weekly update to MHN/Music listing on home page
- Annual maintenance budget of \$5,000

## Achievements

- MHN demonstrates the need for a thematically based, collaborative marketing effort among like-minded heritage organizations in a fragmented, geographically dispersed environment.

## Past, Present, Future Goals

- Grow the maritime heritage audience by connecting visitors and residents to attractions and activities, thereby raising the visibility of organizations and improving potential for increased revenue.
- Audiences: Heritage tourists, families, funders
- 50% earned income; 50% unearned income
- MHN to “graduate” from 4Culture in 2008

## Current Scope Challenges

- Geography: Most successful stand-alone websites have a national footprint
- Theme: Does not make local historic connections to larger national trends
- Organizational: Does not address potential for collaboration among/between regions
- Traffic: Because of limited scope, does not attract a large enough audience to interest national-level funders and advertisers, which hobbles opportunities to raise operating revenue

## Expansion Concepts I

- Extend proven MHN concepts to attract a national audience (already doing this with Music)
- List all maritime heritage attractions, organizations, and activities in U.S.
- Divide listings into regions, e.g. Pacific Northwest or New England, to maintain geographic identity, but under national umbrella

## Expansion Concepts II

- Website redesign to reflect new scope and technologies
- Strengthen features to solidify core audience, e.g. user-generated content, e-mail newsletter, “how to research your boat”
- Approach national funders and advertisers with new scope
- Estimate redesign budget of \$20,000 to \$25,000
- Estimate annual maintenance budget of \$10,000

## Organizational Challenges

- MHN must “graduate” from 4Culture in 2008
- Options for structure
  - Adopted by existing 501(c)3
  - Adopted by government agency
  - Create new 501(c)3 to operate MHN
  - Convert to a private business

## Some Advantages/Disadvantages

- Adopt by existing not-for-profit
  - Organizational structure already in place
  - Mission may not include a national presence
- Adopt by government agency
  - Matches MHN's national scope
  - Flexibility, responsiveness may be an issue
- New 501(c)3
  - Custom fit on mission, scope
  - Normal challenges of running a small not-for-profit
- Private business
  - Most flexible and responsive
  - Unclear whether enough revenue to operate and service debt for improvements

## Where do we go from here?

- Maintain MHN with current scope or “go national”?
- What is the best organizational structure post-4Culture?
- What are the intermediate steps, if any?