

# What Can An Updated Website Do For Your Band Program?

**Gina Scheer**

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What is the first impression that students, parents and members of the community have of your band program? Is it a big half-time performance? What about your recruiting concert? For many, it is the band website. The thought of creating and managing a website seems impossible to many band directors. You may think it takes too much time and tech knowledge or it's too expensive to hire a professional. However, creating a website to represent your band is easier than you might think.

Google Blogger enables you to easily create and maintain an effective, free band website that has the appearance of being designed by a professional. A great band website is one that will help you communicate with parents, recruit new members, retain current members and bridge the gap between your students and the band world. What can an updated website do for your program?

## **Communication**

Parents and students will never be out of the loop once they subscribe to your site. They will receive an email each time you add a post. A post is an entry to the home page of your site. The most recent posts are displayed at the top of the page. Use posts to highlight student

achievements, remind the band about a rehearsal or display photos from a recent event. Add a separate page for your Google Calendar, and display the most current upcoming events on the home page. Do you teach in a diverse community? The translate function makes it easy for non-English speaking parents to stay connected. For itineraries, recordings, or any protected content, you can add a members-only page that requires a password for access.

## **Recruiting**

Potential band members and their parents might look at your website before you have a chance to send them a brochure or email. To make a great first impression, create a future band members page that has:

1. A picture of some of the friendliest faces in your band
2. A step-by-step guide on how to join
3. Videos that feature each instrument or your most recent marching shows

4. Quotes from current students about what band means to them

5. A section with frequently asked questions

The future band members page should have a positive and welcoming feel that gets potential

band members and parents excited about the possibility of being part of your program.

## **Retention**

For middle school bands, the website is a great way to promote the high school band and increase retention from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

Make frequent posts about what the high school band is doing, and focus on achievements of your middle school alumni. This will make your former students feel like celebrities, and will show your middle school students what they have to look forward to. High school bands can also help with 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> retention by keeping their website updated with awards and achievements, no matter how small. At every level, students can

**Gina Scheer along with Andy Sealy and Bryan Edwards will present "Using Technology to Recruit, Promote, Teach, Motivate and More!" on Monday, July 22 at 8:15 a.m and Wednesday, July 24 at 8:15 a.m.**

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be rewarded and encouraged by seeing themselves recognized on the website.

### Resources

Bridge the gap between your students and the band world by encouraging exploration of instrument organizations, videos of professional ensembles and online practice resources. Pinterest is a great way to organize your favorite band-related videos and links. Many of your students already use it, but the ones that do not can still access your content. Pinterest's format is more visually appealing and engaging than a list of links on your website. For an example of how to use Pinterest for your band, go to: <http://pinterest.com/killianband/>

### Pictures

The most important part of creating that first impression is the quality and quantity of photos on your website. Photos are the most visual and attention-grabbing aspect of your site. Posting many

photos often will ensure that your students and their parents will visit the website. The quality of photos on your website, however, are just as important as the quantity. The best pictures are taken when students are performing, smiling and holding their instruments, having fun with friends or posing with trophies. *Picmonkey.com* is a free online photo editor that makes it easy to add effects, text and create collages. *Flickr.com* is a great resource for creating a photo slideshow to add to any post.

Summer is the perfect time to create or revamp your band website. Visit the Killian Middle School Band website at <http://www.killianband.org/> to get an idea of how Google Blogger can be used to create a free and professional-looking band website. Be sure to come to the TBA clinic, **Using Technology to Recruit, Promote, Teach, Motivate & More!** for more tips on how to use technology in and out of the classroom. Feel free to email any questions you may have to [scheerg@lisd.net](mailto:scheerg@lisd.net).

*Gina Scheer is the Associate Director of Bands at Killian Middle School in Lewisville, TX. Killian is a proud part of the Hebron cluster band program. Mrs. Scheer's responsibilities include direction of the Symphonic Band and teaching all beginner woodwind classes. She is a member of the Killian Technology Cadre and plays an active role in the integration of technology with their 1:1 iPad program.*

*Mrs. Scheer is a third generation band director and graduate of the University of North Texas. She studied clarinet with Deborah Fabian and performed in the Symphonic Band and Wind Symphony under the direction of Dennis Fisher and Eugene Migliaro Corporon, respectively. Prior to studying music education at UNT, Mrs. Scheer was a student at Texas Christian University where she performed in the TCU Wind Symphony, TCU Symphony Orchestra and the TCU Marching Band. A graduate of Coppell High School, Mrs. Scheer was a member of the Texas 5A All-State Band for three years thanks to her band director, Scott Mason, and clarinet teacher, Clyde Jones.*

*Under her direction, the Symphonic Band received the "Best in Class" award at the Peak Music Festival in 2011 and won the "Sweepstakes" award at the U.I.L. Concert and Sight Reading Contest in 2012 and 2013. Mrs. Scheer maintains professional affiliations with the Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Bandmasters Association, International Clarinet Association and the Texas Computer Education Association. Her husband, Zach Scheer, is the Head Percussion Director at Coppell High School.*