



# News Journal

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## **In this issue of the News Journal**

This issue of the News Journal includes four articles:

1. Checklist for the Content of a Mosque Websites.
2. eDawah.
3. Webhosting
4. 2020 Election

The first article provides guidance regarding the content of a website for a Mosque and how to organize this content. The second article provides mechanisms to use the websites for Dawah in the Cyberspace. The third article provides the mechanism to host the eDawah websites with the Muslim Planet

Project so that they are protected against whimsical things like your webhost dropping your site under some Islamophobia.

The fourth article invites you to get involved in our civic duty for the 2020 Elections.

You can read the News Journal archive at:  
<http://newsjournal.muslimplanet.org/archive.html>

We invite the community members, mosques, and other institutes to contribute articles to this News Journal.

We urge you to [DONATE](#) to help us with our operational and developmental expenses.

May you and your community be blessed in the new 2020 decade.



The Muslim Planet Project

<http://muslimplanet.org/index.html>

[iCommunity@mail.MuslimPlanet.org](mailto:iCommunity@mail.MuslimPlanet.org)



# Checklist for the Content of a Mosque Website

Article Source: Hartford Institute for Religious Research. URL:  
<http://www.hartfordinstitute.org/leadership/mosque-website-evaluation-criteria.html>

On the internet, visitors are inherently impatient. Unorganized and insufficient information further frustrate the viewers very easily. After an intensive study of the websites of 112 United States mosques, I found a number of basic flaws that could easily distract the visitors from receiving the core message of the mosque.

The simple idea of a website looking good and working properly appears like an intimidating challenge. In order to simplify the strife of setting up a mosque website, a detailed checklist has been developed that will enhance any mosque website.

## **Finding the site:**



1. Is the URL logical (mosquename.org)?
2. Does it have a logical mosque name without dashes or other special symbols? Many mosques choose their URL name with dashes, underscores, special symbols, hard to spell words, long phrases and other characteristics which make it difficult for users to find the mosque or to remember the website address.
3. Is the website listed high in the search engines while searching with keywords that a visitor might use such as “Detroit mosque” or “Islamic Center at Herndon, VA” etc?
4. Are there several links to the site provided by the major search engines and local Islamic organizations?

## **Home Page:**



1. Does the home page have the mosque name and address displayed prominently?
2. Is the home page welcoming, interesting and inviting to visitors?
3. Does the banner image intensify the welcome message? (banner image should NOT be too big, too small, flashy or irrelevant i.e. contains mosque picture of different country instead of the actual mosque and the local community pictures)

4. Does the home page contain attractive tabs with catchy phrases like “Get Involved,” “Log in for God” and so forth? Such tabs are more effective than the traditional tabs like “Home”, “About Us”, “Service”, “Program”, and “Contact Us”.
5. Does the home page publish and archive the press releases for the community?

### **About Us:**



1. Does the site contain the history of the mosque for the younger generation and new comers?
2. Does the site have a list of the committee members and their brief information to increase their acquaintance and reduce the distance between the leadership and community?
3. Does the site have the Imam/s information and credential details to foster the community consent regarding their spiritual leadership?
4. Is the annual report of the mosque published to enhance the transparency?
5. Are there mission and vision statements published to share and reflect the possible future direction?
6. Is there an official constitution of the organization posted to clarify the mosque’s policies?

### **Contact Us:**



1. Is there any common/general contact information available for curious visitors?
2. Does the site have contact information for key leaders of different departments and programs for specific requesters/parties?
3. Is there a dynamic map with location/s for the main center and its branches for visitors’ convenience? A written driving instruction can be very helpful too.
4. Is there a link (or a section describing) for email distribution listing to be a part of the congregation and to receive periodic updates?
5. Is there any 3D tour of the physical building of the center for a real-time look and feel?

### **Program:**



1. Does the site have a separate section for the followings constituencies so that no one will feel left out:

- a. Content for youth?
- b. Content for young brothers?
- c. Content for young sisters?
- d. Content for men?
- e. Content for women?
- f. Content for interfaith interactions or involvements?

### **Education:**



1. Is there a link for local Islamic Schools within/nearby the mosque facility to reinforce the need for formal faith education?
2. Is there a list of traditional Islamic classes to spread the religious lessons among lay participants?
3. Are there list of other education programs and/or guest speaker sessions to stop diminish institution isolation?

### **Services:**



1. Is the daily prayer service schedule easy to locate and view without any additional download of pdf or going deeper into the site? Providing prayer arrangement is the main purpose of any mosque; so this information has to be instantly available without unnecessary obstacle.
2. Is there any description of special prayer services (Friday Prayers, Tarawee payers, Eid prayers etc.)? These are the best opportunities to draw in visitors as praying in the congregation is obligatory for such prayers.
3. Does the site describe the mosque's membership benefits to encourage new visitors?
4. Does the site document the process of becoming a member for interested visitors?
5. Are there any social outreach services available to get actively engaged with the community?
6. Does the site offer information about the following social services?
  - a. Wedding Service
  - b. Funeral Service
  - c. Family counseling

d. Community Service

e. Sports for Kids/Youths/Adults/Sister

7. Is there any programs listed that are held in collaboration with or coordinated by other Muslim organizations/Masjid locally to foster a faith-based friendship among the religious entities?
8. Is there any information for non-Muslim visitors such as what Islam is, an invitation to visit and the etiquette when visiting the mosque to help them feel welcome?
9. Does the site have a page for new Muslims or recent converts to embrace the essential rituals and culture?
10. Does the site post regular lectures or Halaqa information for those interested in education?
11. Are there any other extra curriculum services available within the congregation to enhance the options for participation?

### **Design:**



1. Does the home page load quickly?
2. Is there a mobile version available for the site given the growing trend of smart phone users?
3. Does the site offer updated event calendar cataloging the past and the future events?
4. Does the site have a Dua/Hadith of the day to encourage the congregants to visit the website daily?
5. Are there links to the mosque's social media sites to enhance the feeling of connectedness within the community?
6. Does the site provide intuitive and easy navigation?

### **Technical Items:**



1. Are there any broken links that may sway the visitors away?
2. Are there any quick links to reach webmaster in case of technical difficulties?
3. Does the site provide web admin group's contact information to share any concerns about the website?
4. Does the site provide a means to report errors, ask questions or provide feedback?
5. Is there any indication of when the site was last updated?
6. Is there any "page under construction" that may annoy a visitor?
7. Does the site stream the Friday sermon (*kuthba*) live for congregants unable to attend?

8. Does the site have any other technical flaws in its navigation?
9. On long sections of text, are there "up" buttons to ensure convenient user navigation?

**If the site offer an Interactive Portion (requiring a Member login):**



1. Is the registration or sign up process quick and easy to entice all the visitors?
2. Is there an easy password retrieval process for returning visitors?
3. Does the interactive portion have online donation tracking to offer an easy acknowledgement of members' contribution?
4. Does the site offer other services for members like classified posting to increase their regular participation?

**Others Content:**



2. Information about Islam. Assume that Non Muslims will be viewing the website. While basic information about the faith is not a necessity, but may be important if community education is part of the mosque vision. It is also very effective in case the mosque is prominent or the only mosque within the area. This might include major Islamic organizational sites or sites with additional information about Islam.
3. Is there a search feature on the website to locate and retrieve information easily?
4. Does the website have copyright information?

**Overall:**



1. Does the overall site comply with the mosque Mission/Vision/Goals?
2. Are the font size and the font colors easy to read and understand without straining on our eyes or mind?
3. Are there spelling and grammar errors to impair the conveyed information or diminish the overall web impression?
4. Does the site ensure flawless native English presentation with appropriate grammar? In addition, it may include translation into other languages?
5. Is there a proper balance between the graphics and the texts among the pages?

This comprehensive list may seem excessive for a new mosque. Especially when compiling everything beforehand, the task could often seem overwhelming. But that

should not hinder our endeavor to establishing an effective mosque website. Rather every mosque needs to consider their contextual dynamics to determine feasible list of the site needs to ground the initial cyber presence possible. Over time the site content will grow gradually and become a mature one.

In order to deepen and broaden the understanding of the mosque *dawah*, a continuous strife for competently crafted cyber presence is compulsory. In this day and age, no mosque in the United States is a physical mosque; every mosque has a virtual presence.

contact Rasheed Rabbi at [rasheed\\_rabbi@hotmail.com](mailto:rasheed_rabbi@hotmail.com)



## eDawah

Article Source: <http://edawah.net/>

It stands for electronic dawah or digital faith propagation. If your mosque or community is yet to be online, allow us to equip your first cyber footprint. Let not the technicality obscure your objectivity. eDawah has the tools and people to best represent your community digitally.

Today creating websites is very trivial than ever, but most of them are incomplete and unmethodical that forfeit communities' true potential. Therefore, eDawah combines contemporary trends and academic thoughts together to represent the faith movement comprehensively but cohesively, as one integrated story. We provides both resources and training to represent communities' maturity and inner dynamics vibrantly through the technology. Our service is free, but the goal is firm – portraying complete picture of American Muslim communities and connecting them digitally. Be a part of that larger vision and reclaim your digital brochure.



eDawah offers the following services for your Mosque Websites.

**Request a review on your mosque website**

Request a New Website

**Help on improving existing website**

**Join with the greater mosque network**



## Webhosting

Article Source: <http://muslimplanet.org/icommunity.html>

iCommunity is a technology platform that hosts the web services. It is self-sufficient within itself needing nothing from tech giants like Google and Yahoo. It is a technology power house by itself. It is designed with the Muslim Community requirements in mind, and it provides specialized hosting services to the Muslim Community to promote the values and interests of the community in the Cyberspace.

iCommunity platform has three main components. First is the technology platform. Second is the set of services that the platform provides to the community. Third is a sociological

transformation within the community that is sought through the use of the services that the platform provides.

## **Technology Platform**

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The platform embodies the following technologies.

1. Computer hardware and software systems with C2 Security.
2. Web server technology adapted for the community.
3. Secure inter node and intra node communications.
4. Blogging services enabled by our content management system.
5. Secure file transfer server.
6. Database management server embedded in the content management server.
7. Hypertext preprocessor (PHP) scripting.
8. Python language including the beautifulsoup.
9. Tools for the community to develop their own websites.
10. email server and SMTP services.
11. Mailmerge technology for personalized mailing.
12. Sending bulk email campaigns in hundreds of thousands.

These technologies for the platform have already been designed and built. They are now operational; ready in the service of the community. More services will be added and the technology will be expanded in capabilities, performance, security, and scope.

## **Platform Services**

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Currently, following services are available on the iCommunity platform. These services are offered for the community members to reach out to the community at personal, business, and organizational levels. We emphasize to promote intra community networking, exploring

synergetic connections, business cooperation, organizational outreach, and strength and prosperity that arise from strong community foundations and bonding.

**First**, we have web technology. It allows us to provide you with websites. We can even give this service away because we host the websites ourselves. We will provide you with generous amount of storage space, and speedy Internet connectivity to this storage. You can use your website to introduce yourself to the Muslim Community in USA, or to the entire world. If you are a business or a service provider, you can market your products and services using this website. For example, the mosques and institutions can host their websites on the iCommunity platform to reach out to the community. We offer the service to the mosques and organizations free of charge. We hope to achieve a strong network of mosques interacting among themselves and gradually expanding their scope nationally. Additionally, we have databases of mosques and organizations, etc. This enables us to send out email campaigns on the national level. All this is offered free of charge.

**Second**, we have content management technology which allows us to provide you with your own Blogging space in the Internet Cloud. You can share your ideas and activities using your own Blog; you can even market your business capabilities and services on this Blog. Mosques and institutions can use their Blogs for community outreach. We provide the services free of charge to the mosques and the community institutes.

**Third**, we have our own email servers. In addition, we have working arrangements to use a reputed SMTP server in order to send out bulk emails. That means two things. First, we can provide the community members opportunity to run their own email server domains like user@MyMosque.org. Having your own email server on iCommunity platform is a very privileged capability. It is far bigger than just having your own email addresses like myID@muslimplanet.org or myID@gmail.com. Second, we can send bulk emails. This means that we can send hundreds of thousands emails. These emails can even be

customized, like addressing personally to Dear Mr. Smith or to My\_Islamic\_Center. For example, we can send email announcements, brochures, or newsletters to all the Mosques in USA, or all the Muslim Businesses in USA, or all the Muslim Organizations in USA.

**Fourth**, we have document management capability. This allows us to electronically publish materials from the members of the community. This material can be a book that you have written or want to write. It could also be your recent article, your collected essays, collection of your poems, your novel, your biography, your analysis of social and political events, or whatever is dear to your heart. We will publish your material electronically and make it globally available on our iCommunity platform.

**Fifth**, we intend to establish The Muslim Planet Publishing House for hardcopy book publishing. Members of the community can choose to publish their works in hardcopy.

These services are offered to the community members free or at cost.

## **Sociological Transformation**

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The overarching principle for providing these services is to bring the community on one platform, and to encourage an open intra-community dialogue. The dialogue is towards a unified stance to commit to a forward looking proactive action plan.

The action plan has the objectives to empower the community within the context of the US mainstream geopolitics, have its own representatives in the House and the Senate, to capitalize on Islamic oriented businesses, to establish a mutual support system of welfare within the community, and to spread prosperity within the community and beyond.

The process is two pronged: thought oriented and mobilization oriented. For the thought orientation we establish a "Think Tank" of the community, by the community, and for the

community. This think tank analyses the community needs, resources, possibilities, and opportunities. We mobilize the community for actualizing the opportunities by analyzing the community membership and bringing them to a platform.



## 2020 Elections

We urge the Muslim Community in USA to play their civic duty in order to protect and promote the values and interests of the Community. Each one of us can determine the position of the candidates on the issues of concern. Then you can help their campaigns. You can volunteer your time and effort for their election or reelection campaigns. You can also donate to their fund raising.

At the Federal level we provide the following information if you want to make a contribution.

Bernie Sanders (<https://act.berniesanders.com/go/election-night>).

Nabila running for Congress in Georgia 7<sup>th</sup> District.

<https://www.facebook.com/NabilahForCongress/videos/2209114252716256/>

Ilhan Omar (<https://www.ilhanomar.com/>),

Rasheeda Talaib (<https://www.rashidaforcongress.com/>),

Andre Carson ([https://secure.actblue.com/donate/dw\\_ino7](https://secure.actblue.com/donate/dw_ino7)),

Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez (<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/ablog-alexandria-ocasio-cortez>).



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