

WDANZ

(Web Developers Association of New Zealand)

Report to the Web Development Industry 6 June 2006

***MEDIA EMBARGOED
UNTIL 3 JULY 2006***

Prepared for the major Web Developers in New Zealand
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Thank you

First of all, a big THANK YOU, to the many Web Developers, programmers, business people, professionals, friends and industry consultants who have given their time and thought to the WDANZ concept and shared with us throughout the month of May.

Your ideas and suggestions have moulded what was initially a relatively raw idea from just a few Auckland developers into a well thought-out national organisation whose time has well and truly come, and which we believe is poised to make a real difference to the Web Development industry in New Zealand!

To those of you who could not attend the meetings, or who may have missed out on participating thus far, all is not lost – you are welcome to contact us at any time with your questions, suggestions and feedback, particularly prior to 3 July when we launch publicly.

The Consultation Process

Following initial discussions with several other Web Developers in April 2006, Dennis Smith developed a Discussion Document and circulated it to major New Zealand Web Developers in early May 2006. A questionnaire was included and industry leaders feedback and suggestions have been noted, and in most cases incorporated into the WDANZ concept.

Throughout May 2006, Dennis held face-to-face meetings throughout the country to discuss the concept of WDANZ with industry leaders. Phone interviews were also held with people unable to attend the meetings.

As feedback was received, the concepts and suggestions within the Discussion Document were modified, tweaked, enhanced or simply abandoned to meet the needs of the majority of the Web Development industry. This evolving process occurred throughout May 2006, changes occurring sometimes daily, as constructive criticism, new ideas and feedback was received and incorporated into the WDANZ concept.

The shape and form of WDANZ has now been finalised and this is a result of this consultation process.

The Key Results

There were three outstanding considerations that emerged from our consultations with you:

1. You gave unanimous and often enthusiastic support for the concept of a commercially based industry organisation such as WDANZ. True, we did not actually seek your membership sign-ups at the time we spoke to you, and we presented only ideas and concepts (that are always easy for us to all just talk about) but there was unanimous agreement that the time was right for something like WDANZ in New Zealand.
2. You gave us a very wide range of opinion on matters relating to membership acceptance (i.e. what the entry criteria for membership

should be). Opinions were clearly polarised however around the size of your business – generally the larger your business the tighter the entry criteria you desired, and your smaller the business the more open the entry criteria you desired.

3. You also gave us a wide range of reasons why Web Developers like yourself actually wanted an industry organisation like WDANZ – however this feedback was not easily classifiable into any geographical, size or type of business, nor industry discipline. Basically you all wanted WDANZ but for different reasons unique to your own business needs, circumstances and niche.

The Feedback by Subject

Subject: 1. The WDANZ Concept

Results: Your responses were all supportive of the WDANZ concept, many of you expressing the sentiments “It’s about time somebody did this”, “It will be good for the industry”, or “I’ve been thinking we should do this for a while”.

Some of you were a little more conservative in your responses, and some of you, while supportive of the idea in principle, were understandably a little more guarded until the actual format was agreed upon.

In general the further North your business was, the more enthusiastic and responsive you were to the idea, and the further South the more conservative and cautious you were!

WDANZ Comments & Action:

We believe that WDANZ is a viable commercial operation, and have recently incorporated. We have commenced the business development, structure and third party supplier relationships ready to commence operations 3 July 2006, basically as planned in the Discussion Document, albeit enhanced and modified as per your suggestions.

Subject: 2. Organisational Name

Results: Your responses were almost all supportive of the name WDANZ.

WDANZ Comments & Action:

Web Developers Association of New Zealand it is.

Subject: 3. Organisational Structure

Results: Your responses were almost all along the lines of “Make it a commercial venture” but you also wanted WDANZ to return real value for money to your businesses. Generally you were happy to pay for something if it represented value for money to you.

Some of you were more industry minded saying “It’s good for the industry, we’re major players, so we’re in”. Most of you were a little more direct . . . “If I

can see value to me and my company, then I'll do it" echoing the "What's in it for me?" principle.

You also felt that it was important to have industry "buy in" and for WDANZ to actually DO something. Several of you suggested that other industry organisations were good at talking, but that you never heard from them after you had paid your fees!

WDANZ Comments & Action:

WDANZ has been established as a commercial operation and we have been working behind the scenes to DO a lot even before we incorporated. You could even say tongue-in-cheek that "DO" is our middle name!

In the early days of the Internet in New Zealand, some of the people we have spoken to were involved in a voluntary organisation "Web Designers of New Zealand" www.wdnz.org.nz which, for various reasons, ceased effective operations a short time later.

One of the key players of this early initiative made it clear to us from the outset of our consultations that the only way WDANZ could do the job properly in 2006 was to make it a commercial venture, or to certainly have very strong and decisive leadership.

The Web Development industry has matured enormously since 1996 and WDANZ goals are to develop increasing commercial value and benefit to our members so that there are strong commercial reasons for Web Developers to want to be, and to stay a member of WDANZ.

To that end WDANZ strategy is to work with the industry to develop a plethora of Joint Ventures to bring real value to our members. Our approach is that the more we can do to create business opportunity and benefit for Web Developers, the more you will participate in and value your WDANZ membership. Our client base, income stream and therefore primary focus is our membership, i.e. the Web Developers of New Zealand.

WDANZ already has working relationships with several sponsors, industry Advisors and regional representatives, and will continue to develop working relationships with key people in each discipline, and geographical region. WDANZ will continue to invite anyone with an area of particular interest or an area of expertise to contact us.

We seek relationships with potential sponsors and people wishing to be part of the Advisory team up until the date of public launch (3 July 2006), and beyond that with businesses wanting to establish Joint Ventures with us.

Subject: 4. Criteria for Membership

Results: Your feedback on this subject was generally the most intense, and most passionate of all the subjects we addressed. You generally expressed

the most concerns and demonstrated the most caution when considering the matter of how tight, or how loose membership should be.

Comparisons with the Master Builders Association, HTML Writers Guild and other similar industry bodies were often made, and good points raised and discussed with you, sometimes at length.

Underlying your concerns were generally the thoughts, "I want to be careful about who I associate myself with." or "There is no way that I want to be part of an organisation that XYZ company belongs to, because we are in a different league to them (or they are incompetent/cowboys/hillbillies or whatever)".

Some of you approached this matter at an industry level and were more concerned at how WDANZ presented itself to the public.

In general, the larger the business you have, or the longer you have been around, the tighter you wanted to see entry criteria, and the reverse obviously applied for the smaller or newer organisations.

WDANZ Comments & Action:

Within days of starting to receive your feedback it became perfectly clear to us that the only way to develop a commercially based organisation was to set PROFESSIONALISM as the criteria for membership and that QUALITY issues had to be dealt with in another way.

In other words, in order for WDANZ to obtain the critical mass of membership that we needed to be commercially viable, we had to break away from the Master Builders Association concept that simply belonging to WDANZ would be an assurance of a certain QUALITY of work.

As we developed the new concept (separating issues of PROFESSIONALISM from issues of the QUALITY of our members' work) we established that our membership entry criteria would be first, an acceptance of a simple Code of Ethics (based on simple professionalism in business), and secondly a mixture of two easily measurable factors;

- i) The number of years in business and/or
- ii) The number of commercial websites developed.

From the time that we established this, the quality aspect of WDANZ members' work became no longer a criteria for WDANZ membership (although a serious lack of quality that affects a member's professionalism is of course, a reason for eviction of WDANZ membership).

Three membership levels have been set: Affiliate (no logo use), Professional (mid sized Web Developers) and Corporate (major players). These three levels will cater for all interested parties from newbies and part-time web developers through to the larger established Web Development businesses, while protecting the more established businesses reputation from being

tarnished by association.

Subject: 5. Required or Suggested Services & Benefits

Results: When it came to measuring the services and benefits that you required from or suggested to WDANZ, you covered a very wide range of needs and ideas, which will no doubt keep us busy for years!

As mentioned in the summary above, your wishes were not always commensurate with your geographical positioning within New Zealand, nor to the size of your business, nor how long you were in business, nor the actual discipline(s) in which you have expertise.

From this feedback we have now developed a business plan to provide a comprehensive range of services.

Addressing some of your suggestions one by one . . .

a) Strong Branding (like the Master Builders Association)

Your feedback along these lines was usually suggested in the context of differentiating yourselves from what you variously called hillbillies, amateurs, fly-by-nighters, cowboys and worse!

As discussed previously, while the Master Builders' concept for WDANZ may be attractive at first glance . . . "come to us, we are the best" . . . the reality is that in the Web Development industry, we are different to the building industry in several critical aspects.

The primary differences are . .

- i) Most Web Developers have not had any formal training, and are not likely to want to undergo such training when they already have a good reputation and a solid business.
- ii) There are many different disciplines (sometimes crossing over) within the Web Development industry – Graphics & Design, Macromedia Flash, Standards/Accessibility/Compliance, Database/Script Programming, SEO, SEM, Project Design & Management, and so on. A Web Developer may legitimately call himself/herself a professional Web Developer, specialise in one discipline and be totally unable to provide services in one or more of the other disciplines.
- iii) There are legitimate Web Development companies that have only been in business for a year or two, but who provide a professional commercial service
- iv) Some part-time Web Developers can and do produce commercially acceptable work and provide a professional service (some of these people may focus on other core business but do still provide a limited and legitimate professional commercial service)

It is therefore impossible to use the MBA model as a blueprint for WDANZ.

WDANZ Action:

WDANZ will promote the WDANZ brand and therefore WDANZ members as PROFESSIONALS basing this assumption on the ability of WDANZ members to provide a professional business service. This one word concept (“professionals”) will be the keyword used in the public marketing of the WDANZ organisation, leaving the issue of quality of work to a separate and independent certification process.

WDANZ members will agree to a simple Code of Ethics that requires them to act “professionally” in regards to business, without actually trying to legislate the details of *what* this entails.

b) CONFERENCES

You suggested strong support for and likely attendance of annual conferences in your home town/nearest centre. Only approximately half of you suggested that you would be likely to travel to an out-of-town event.

WDANZ Action:

On the basis of your feedback, WDANZ confirms the proposed cycle of three smaller annual conferences per year:

Auckland – October
Christchurch – February
Wellington – June

Conference subjects will be established in consultation with the WDANZ Regional Representative.

c) LIST SERVERS, MEMBER WIKI, FORUMS

Your responses to these suggestions generally supported the development of various forms of communication between WDANZ members, like ListServers, a wiki, and/or Forums, although some of you highlighted different topics for discussion, and some of you indicated that you did not intend to participate.

WDANZ Action:

WDANZ is likely to establish several forms of member communication on first launch, and will likely provide various List Servers, a wiki and perhaps Forums for member use as a mid-term objective.

d) TRAINING SEMINARS

Many of you either suggested or agreed that industry led Training Seminars would be valuable to you or your staff.

WDANZ Action:

WDANZ will provide regular Regional Training Seminars on topics of the

members' choice following completion of the Auckland Conference, October 2006. Training Seminars will be provided on a user-pays basis.

e) SALES SEMINARS/LEAD GENERATION/NEW BUSINESS

Your responses to the questions of lead generation, new business, referrals and so on varied.

In summary, not all of you need or want new business, however many of you DO see value in WDANZ creating new business opportunities for you and some of you are enthusiastic in that regard. Some of you even go as far as to say that this may be THE most valuable service that WDANZ could provide you.

WDANZ Action:

WDANZ proposes to establish WDANZ Sales Seminars, WDANZ Advertisements and strategic partnerships with other industry bodies and organisations that will channel new business enquiries to participating members. This will be done as a mid-term priority and will likely commence after the Auckland conference in October, or perhaps in early 2007.

Participation in such Sales Events will be voluntary, and will be sponsored only by those who choose to participate and who will in return be the only ones to receive the benefit of new business opportunities.

f) AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Ideas relating to the possibility that WDANZ could provide Scholarships to young Web Developers with potential were discussed with potential sponsors. Suggestions have been made to encourage or support them into formal internships within the industry, or to Web Development training organisations for formal training.

WDANZ Action:

WDANZ proposes to build relationships with potential Sponsors, WDANZ members, and training organisations to provide Scholarships, targeting implementation in the first quarter 2007, subject to satisfactory support from Sponsors and the Training Industry.

WDANZ will also consider the possibility of developing Industry backed, WDANZ Awards in the mid-term.

g) JOB OPPORTUNITIES/ADVERTISEMENTS

Several of you have suggested that the ability to advertise positions for employees, and to be able to obtain good employees – either from WDANZ advertisements, from word of mouth through other WDANZ members, or from training institutions would be of real benefit.

You have also suggested that employment industry commissions may be exorbitant in some cases, and that the ability to list job opportunities and

quickly short list applicants may be of benefit to you (e.g. English speaking applicants and other basic employment criteria).

WDANZ Action:

WDANZ proposes to make such job opportunities and employment services available and will explore ways to provide such services to members at minimal rates. Providing this service will be a priority to WDANZ.

h) BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN MEMBERS

Obtaining subcontractors and being able to communicate with and work with others in the industry was a strong factor in your responses. Value was perceived at both horizontal and vertical directions, with some of you saying that you want to find others in the SAME disciplines as yourself in order to share work loads, and others of you highlighting the value in being able to find and work with professionals in ANOTHER discipline from your own expertise in order to complement your existing business capabilities.

WDANZ Action:

WDANZ proposes to make cross-pollination and networking opportunities between WDANZ members a top priority. Structured and non-structured opportunities will be made for networking at all WDANZ events, and through the members section of the WDANZ website.

i) SHARED RESOURCES

Suggestions have been made for sharing resources like templates, systems and legal documents. Some suggestions have been quotation layouts and examples, legal documents like software agreements, or management systems.

There has been suggestion that there is value in a standardised industry-wide quotation format, perhaps along the lines of a Residential Rental Contract, or the Government's online Employment Contract Wizard.

WDANZ Action:

WDANZ proposes to make available opportunity for members to share and pool such resources, and will facilitate the process should members wish to develop an industry standard quotation form, or online process.

j) DISPUTE RESOLUTION/MEDIATION SERVICES

A few brave souls have indicated a desire for mediation and dispute resolution services, and given the nature of the Web Development business, it is highly probable that this aspect of the business is one that could prove very valuable to most members at some stage in their career!

WDANZ Action:

WDANZ will provide two levels of mediation services as a priority:

i) AN ONLINE REPORT

A simple online complaint reporting service will be made available

in which any customer of a WDANZ member can submit a complaint on the WDANZ website in return for a small fee. WDANZ would then appoint a WDANZ Advisor or expert to enquire as to the circumstances surrounding the case from the WDANZ member and then provide a report to both the member AND the complainant. Such a report will be non-binding but could be used as evidence in further litigation or Small Claims hearing between the WDANZ and their client, or as a means to facilitate amicable settlement between the parties.

Note: This service will be an assessment and information service only in which WDANZ members are only obliged to “respond to professionally”, and any WDANZ Adjudicator’s report will NOT be binding on either party

ii) **PROFESSIONAL MEDIATORS**

WDANZ will establish a pool of trained professional mediators with industry knowledge available for paid mediation and/or other ADR services.

k) ADVOCACY/INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION

A few of you indicated that industry representation should be a part of WDANZ work, although there was no clear consensus on what or to whom such role would be appropriate.

It was clear from discussions with you however that any such role would need to have clear indications from the members on how they felt about any matter prior to undertaking advocacy or representation on behalf of the members.

WDANZ Action:

WDANZ does not currently see a strong demand for such services but will work with any member(s) who wish to undertake such a role, should it be necessary, or appropriate in the future.

We do however see a working relationship developed naturally over time with other industry groups.

l) 0900 SALES/SUPPORT SERVICE

One suggestion is that an (0900) telephone support service to the public may be valuable to members. Such a service may be developed in which customers can obtain technical information related to Web Development, new sales enquiries or other web related services.

WDANZ Action:

WDANZ has obtained an (0900) number for this future service and will work with the WDANZ Advisors and WDANZ members to promote and enhance this service over time.

m) OUTBOUND COMMUNICATIONS

While you haven't actually asked for or actually suggested that WDANZ communicate with you, outbound communications are obviously a natural part of any national organisation.

WDANZ Action:

WDANZ proposes to communicate with members exclusively by E-Mail. The frequency and content of such communications will be decided and developed according to need, and are likely to include the subjects:

- i) WDANZ Administrative Communications
- ii) WDANZ News & Events
- iii) Promotional Offers from sponsors or industry partners
- iv) Paid advertising for goods or services related to the Web Development industry

Subject: 6. Certification

Results: Certification issues were the thorniest in all of your responses. Many of you saw a Master Builders approach of keeping the membership small and tight and only the "big boys" being allowed in, as the answer when dealing with the issue of QUALITY.

In the discussions we have had with you, most of you recognised that differentiating MEMBERSHIP and QUALITY was the only practical step to creating a commercially viable organisation.

For some of you this then required you to consider Corporate Membership of WDANZ without promoting your membership of WDANZ, as a tidy compromise and to get the best of both worlds.

Others of you saw real value in being able to have your skills judged "EXPERT" or "PROFESSIONAL" by your industry peers, and to be able to show this certification to the public.

A great deal of discussion was had relating to HOW one would actually assess or adjudicate differing levels of skill in certain areas of business, and many suggested that it was "better you than me" that was attempting to do it!

WDANZ Comments & Action:

The requirement to certify or judge a particular WDANZ members work is outside of the scope of WDANZ as an organisation.

WDANZ has deliberately distanced the QUALITY issue from membership, and are we are in the process of contracting this certification work to a small team of specialists, who will likely produce an international certification programme, perhaps ready for launch at the Auckland Conference in October.

Moving Forward

Again, a big THANK YOU for your support thus far.

WDANZ will continue to build relationships and partnerships with sponsors and the industry throughout June ready for a public launch on 3 July 2006. Please note that the WDANZ development is MEDIA EMBARGOED until this date, however please feel free to share this report within the industry as you so wish.

WDANZ Memberships will be available from 3 July 2006 on the website www.wdanz.org.nz. Web Developers who are in first will have several special offers including:

- Inaugural Memberships with numerous additional benefits
- Three-year memberships for the price of two
- Fee Freezes for 5 years
- and more

We look forward to sharing more with you at the time of the public launch, 3 July 2006.

If we do not have your correct contact details, or if you do not wish to receive communications from WDANZ please drop us a note by e-mail (admin@wdanz.org.nz) and we will be pleased to oblige your wishes.

On behalf of the WDANZ team

Kind regards
Dennis Smith
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WDANZ