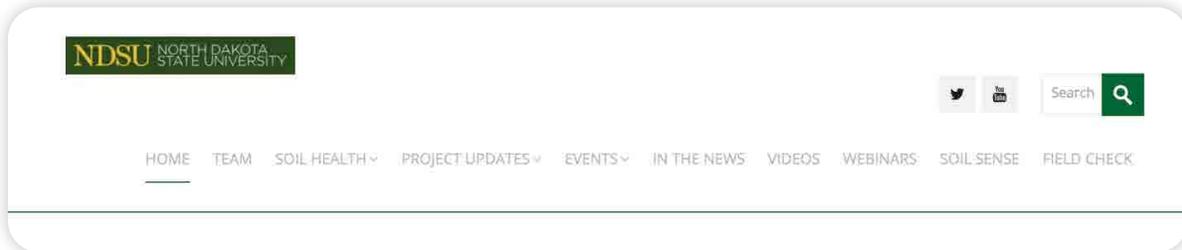


GET A WEBSITE AND KEEP IT CURRENT

BY ABBEY WICK, NDSU EXTENSION SOIL HEALTH SPECIALIST

A current website can serve as a hub for all of your information – the key to this sentence is “current”. There is nothing more frustrating to our clients than an out of date webpage or one that is difficult to navigate. With NDSU, there is the option to use a template. You can make the most of that framework by making sure that all the information is up to date.



Here's an example of from the NDSU Soil Health webpage (nds.edu/soilhealth) of content that could be included on a webpage and how it's organized:

HOME PAGE

This page is used to post information about timely topics. For example, the agenda and registration for this Communication Workshop were listed at the top of the home page. After this event, this content will move over to the “Events” tab under communication workshop.

There are also links to the most popular, soil health publications on this home page (the soil health, cover crops and grazing booklets). You can post popular publications on the home page so they are easy to find.

TEAM

All of the contact information and photos of each team member are posted under team. Photos should be current and recognizable because sometimes people don't remember a name, but they remember a face. Short bios on this page could help those visiting the site decide which person to contact.

SOIL HEALTH

This tab is used to house general information about soil health. Short, concise information and photos that are easily viewed on both a desktop and smartphone are posted on this tab. Information on this tab doesn't change often.

PROJECT UPDATES

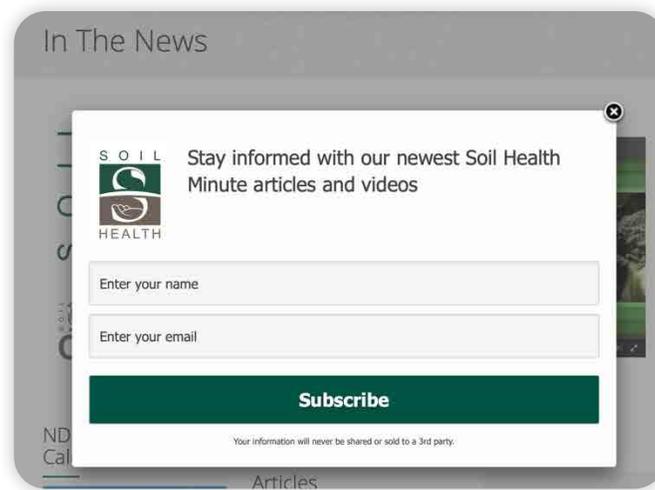
You'll find a series of pdf documents with short research summaries. This page could be more useful and is not in compliance with NDSU guidelines (for html format), so there's room for improvement here.

EVENTS

All the information for upcoming workshops that are more complex or detailed, like the DIRT Workshop are posted on this tab. This is also where information from this Communication Workshop will be housed permanently. Oftentimes, an easy link to remember (for example, DIRTworkshopND.com) is used to redirect people back to this tab. Then the phrase, “go to the NDSU Soil Health webpage, click on the events tab and look for the DIRT workshop to register” is shortened for radio and television interviews. A short, catchy URL also looks better for social media posts. For this workshop the like is commworkshopnd.com.

IN THE NEWS

This tab is really useful because it is linked to a RSS feed where people can subscribe to receive alerts when new content is posted on this tab. Soil Health Minute articles for AgWeek Magazine get posted here and those registered receive an alert that there is new content.



VIDEOS

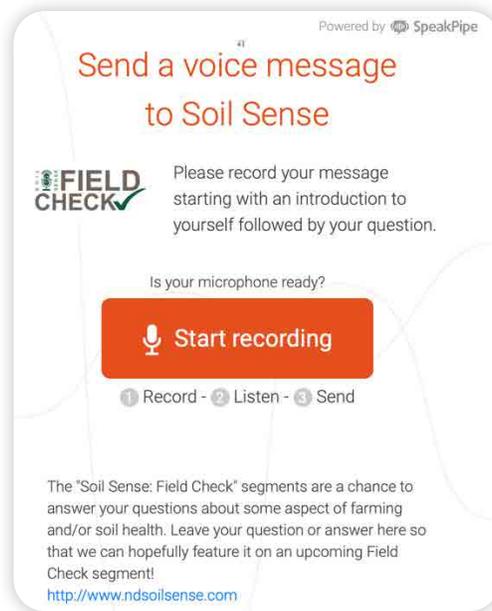
This tab takes you directly to the NDSU Soil Health YouTube channel, where you can also subscribe to receive alerts when new content posts.

WEBINARS

In times of COVID, it can be helpful to have screen shots of title slides for each webinar and then links to take visitors directly to the webinar which is posted on the Soil Health YouTube channel. Webinars can get lost in the video content if they aren't separated with their own tab. We categorized webinars by topic or series also to make them easy to find.

SOIL SENSE AND FIELD CHECK

These two tabs also have simplified weblinks to find them because of our promotion of these podcasts on social media, radio and TV. NDsoilsense.com and NDfieldcheck.com. You can check out how content is posted, including photos, show notes, links and supplemental information. One unique aspect for the Field Check podcast is that there is a “Voicemail” button where people can leave questions. This is done through a program called SpeakPipe and is helpful for getting future content for the podcasts.



SIDE BAR

This is a great place to put an event calendar and blog because it will be shown across all your tabs. Those visiting your website can easily see the different online and in-person events you're hosting and details about each event.

If you choose to do a blog for your outreach efforts, this is where you can provide the content. Not only does it make sense to host it on your website, but it draws additional traffic to your page and maybe they'll click around and look at other content while they are there.

Websites can be a lot to manage – if you don't have time to manage that aspect, considering hiring someone if you have the funds. But you can do this on your own if you keep the content to the level you can handle managing and keep it current. "Simple and current" will be much better than "complex and out of date".

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