

January 21, 2010 Annual Report of Northfield Citizens Online

2009 Board members

David Gonnerman, Adam Gurno, Rob Hardy, Ellen Iverson (secretary), Jeff McLaughlin (treasurer), Jane McWilliams (vice chair), Nathan White (chair).

Treasurer's Report

Northfield.org runs with very little financial support. We may look at expanding our resource base in 2010 as we spend more money on student interns and experience higher hosting costs. As of December 17, 2009, NCO had \$673.85.

Annual Achievements

In addition to our core business of providing a platform for the community to share news, information, and events, we would like to highlight special efforts in the areas of **content development, outreach and collaboration, and technical improvements.**

Content Development

We hosted an intern in January of 2009, Amy Sack, from St. Olaf College. Amy wrote a variety of well-trafficked stories on local issues.

-  [Getting to Know the Mayor \(Better\): An Interview with Mary Rossing](#)
-  [The Northfield Public Library in 2009](#)
-  [War Kids Relief: Creating Peace by Connecting Kids](#)
-  [Breaking "the Bubble"](#)

Building on the success of our internship with Amy, we collaborated with Diana Dargen, who coordinates community work study programs for St. Olaf and Carleton. With Diana's help, we hired Maia Rodriguez to work on content production. Maia posts several stories and events each week, and has recently been working on a three part series about Professional Learning Communities' (PLCs) in Northfield:

-  [A School Board Member Addressess PLCs](#)
-  [A Parent's Dissatisfaction with PLCs](#)
-  [PLCs from One Teacher's Perspective](#)

We've also introduced a "featured stories" area on the right hand sidebar of the site where we highlight original content written for Northfield.org, including the items written by Amy and Maia.

Outreach and Collaboration

Northfield.org provides a great vehicle for individuals, community organizations, and businesses to reach out to the Northfield community. The NCO board seeks to share our knowledge of community blogging within and outside the community - we'd like to highlight some of these outreach and collaboration efforts:

- ☒ The board has been working with the Northfield Grassroots Transit Initiative towards the goal of providing an online centralized hub for transportation information.
- ☒ Adam Gurno, in November 2009, spoke about Northfield.org to a community journalism practicum on the topic: "Internet, Interactive Community News."
- ☒ Representatives from Northfield.org visited Doug McGill and his students, who produced a community blog called Pressville, which Northfield.org syndicated.
- ☒ Nathan White spoke with students about Northfield.org at St. Olaf's Northfield Connect - Serve and Learn in the Local Community event.

Technical Improvements

Northfield.org has long been hosted for free at Dreamhost, which offers free hosting to non-profit organizations. While this free hosting has been sufficient in the past, 2009 was the year we outgrew shared hosting. The site became unacceptably slow, and Dreamhost began complaining about the bandwidth and processing resources required by Northfield.org. We have switched to a Dreamhost private server, which increases our costs, but provides a much faster, more stable hosting environment for Northfield.org. We have also made some additional changes that you may or may not have noticed:

- ☒ KYMN streaming radio is available as a pull out bar in the lower left corner of the site.
- ☒ The data model for events have been upgraded to facilitate better calendaring tools we hope to roll out in the future.
- ☒ We rely less on caching which should speed up when new stories appear and minimize "Page not found" errors.
- ☒ We have introduced a "share this" tool that makes it simple to share stories with social networks and aggregation sites.

Statistics!!!

Statistics reported are for the period January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009. No statistics were available from July 25, 2009 - September 17, 2009 (54 days). This report provides actual numbers from the 311 days we have statistics for, and we also provide a projection for a full set of statistics based upon the averages on days for which we have statistics. On any given day, there are 557 visits to the site and an average of 1,130 pages are viewed.

Statistic	Actual Number (311 days)	Projected Number (365 days)	Comments
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Visits	173,322	203,416	Visits are browsing sessions lasting up to 30 minutes.
Absolute Unique Visitors	79,666	93,499	
Page views	351,279	412,273	