

Webmaster's Report

Website The Google Analytics service gives an idea of how much the website is being used. For the main BCA website, for the calendar year 2018 as a monthly average in the format 2018 (2017/2016/2015) there were 12306 (9604/5980/5986) page views, 2161 (1970/1796/2055) sessions and 1398 (1225/1154/1436) individual users. The average user viewed 5.69 (4.87/3.33/2.91) pages and stayed for 2:21 (2:42/2:41/2:19) minutes. The top pages were: Welcome, Training LCMLA Scheme, Training Downloads, Membership, Training, PL Insurance, Contact BCA, Membership DIMs, LCMLA Courses, CIC Scheme, LCMLA Workshops, Member Clubs, Documents, News & Events, National Council Meetings.

So in summary the website is being used and usage is increasing. Users are viewing more pages on average and have been improving their reading speed. It could be argued that users of the training scheme are making more use of the website than our members.

BCA Online. I must thank Wendy Williams and David Gibson for their help in running BCA Online. BCA Online allows members to login under their own membership number and amongst other things check their details are correct. The software performs many checks to make sure errors are not imported into the database. Errors that are spotted are fed back to the Membership Administrator. This neatly fulfils several obligations we have to our members under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR).

Newsletter. The BCA Online mailing list has been used to distribute the BCA Newsletter to members since 2015. As well as being emailed to those members who have signed up to receive it, the Newsletter is emailed to the clubs with a request to pass on to their members. It is also publicly available on the website. Of the 5862(5868) current members 4042(4305) have provided email addresses, 543(480) of them opted for the Newsletter and 375(337) have registered with BCA Online.

	Oct 2015	Apr 2016	Jun 2017	Jun 2018	June 2019
Provided email address	63%	68%	72%	73%	69%
Opted for Newsletter	8%	8%	10%	8%	9%
Registered with BCA Online	2%	4%	5%	6%	6%

Facebook. BCA instigated a Facebook page in 2017. It has been well received and currently has 991 likes and 1047 followers. My thanks to Mary Wilde, Gary Douthwaite and Jane Allen for helping with postings and responding to messages.

P&I Officer Resignation. The P&I Officer elected at the last AGM criticised the website, wanting some ill-defined change. The P&I Officer, like all BCA Officers are free to log in to the website and make whatever updates and changes they desire. The P&I Officer chose not to make use of that facility.

I'm willing to listen to any proposals but there are some essential steps to follow. It starts with talking to the elected Webmaster who the BCA Council has given the responsibility of looking after the website. At no point did the P&I Officer try to contact me. There needs to be a description of the changes wanted and there needs to be a meeting of the P&I Committee to discuss them. Neither of those things happened. What did happen was that the P&I Officer unilaterally commissioned a replacement website, the first of which I knew about was during the January Council meeting. I told that meeting how the P&I Officer had behaved. She was, quite rightly, embarrassed and resigned.

Voluntary organisations like BCA rely on team work and communication. I hope this time around the incoming P&I Officer will respect that.

Website Changes. The main website (british-caving.org.uk) is designed in such a way that Council members can login and update it. This is to avoid the bottleneck problem seen with many websites where only the webmaster can update it. I would like to thank those who keep their sections of the website up to date.

In order to get a handle on the aforementioned website criticism I instigated a survey of Council members. The results of this I have presented to the P&I Committee and BCA Council. There are no clear outcomes or agreement. There is a general dislike of the background image. The menu structure could be improved. The rest was mostly esthetics which of course is entirely subjective.

My main concern with the demo replacement website was the intention to delete the software that delivers the website ([Dokuwiki](#)) and replace it with an inferior home spun version, in the process losing the general ability of Council members to create or amend any of the pages themselves. I actually quite liked the new layout. I spent an evening recreating the demo replacement website using the existing website software which can be seen at <http://british-caving.org.uk/wiki4> and the original demo <http://british-caving.org.uk.77-68-41-30.cfxhosting.co.uk>. I did this to show the Dokuwiki software could be used for a new look whilst retaining all the current benefits. I think this new look with the existing software could well be the way forward.

David Cooke
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