respond to sweeping changes in logos, banners, mastheads?

Grace Darling advised me of a site just for those moments: Bay Area Editors’ Forum (3). It’s fun. It’s informative. And it addresses that occasional nagging thought, “Does anyone else care about this issue?”

**Mirror Sites — Reliable?**

The world is a big place, and it does take time (sometimes a seemingly long time) for Web content to travel from its server to a user halfway around the world. That is what is happening when the computer seems to be doing nothing after you have entered a URL.

Mirror sites provide a local server for a site created thousands of miles away. In intent, the mirror site is like a booster station that makes the content, exactly as it appears on the original Web site, available at a more local site.

To many people, having someone request to mirror a site is an honor. It implies that your site is considered worthwhile by your peers. Or at least that is the up side.

The down side, we recently learned at BrighamRad, is that mirror sites do not always stay current and are able to alter the original site (even though neither is considered good etiquette).

So, what can the Webmaster do? Because we didn’t want to eliminate our mirror sites, we decided to add a few lines at the end of our own screens. They explain what our official mirror sites are and also note our home URL. Users are thus reminded that if the information is somehow questionable (out of date, for example), they can compare the URL on the site with our home URL and know whether they are on a mirror site. Furthermore, our URL in the footnote is a link to the original site.

In general, a user can check whether a site is a mirror site by scrutinizing the URL. It does not always work, but it is a good test for institutional and commercial sites. In both instances, the URL usually indicates in some way the source of the site. For example, our home page says “Harvard Medical School”, and our URL contains the word “harvard”. If it were a mirror site, the URL would have the name of the entity mirroring the site.

Reliable? Yes, most mirror sites reflect the original site just as the term “mirror” implies. So if you have a reason to doubt, check the URL.

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**References**


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**Editors at the Pearly Gates**

The Editor

The editor stood ‘fore the heavenly gate, his features pinched and cold. He bowed before the Man of Fate, seeking admission to the fold. “What have you done?”

St. Peter asked, “To gain admission here?”

“I was the journal’s editor, sir, for many a weary year.”

The pearly gates swung open wide as Peter pressed the bell. “Come in and choose your harp,” he cried: “You’ve had your share of hell!”

— Anonymous

Editor’s Note: It’s nice to know there’s a future reward!