Guidelines for Sai Organization Websites

David Gries. 04 January 2004 (updated Dec 2006)

This document gives guidelines for websites of units of the US Sai Organization. The guidelines are designed to:

1. Follow the policies set by the Central Advisors and by the US Council.

2. Make the set of Sai Organization websites look like one, unified but diverse, site. No Sai unit website lives in isolation; it is part of the whole.

3. Provide easy navigation for people to find what they want. From any Sai Org site, with just a *few obvious* mouse clicks one should be able to find another Sai Org site, a discourse, information about Prasanthi Nilayam, a Sai bookstore website, or any almost any other info regarding Swami and the Sai Organization.

4. Ensure that Sai Organization sites are tastefully and appropriately designed.

5. Help protect Swami's Name, by making it just about impossible to get from a Sai Organization site to a site that has inappropriate or inauthentic information on it.

We give the guidelines. After that, we mention some other points that can make the Sai Org sites more helpful to people browsing the web and can also help avoid duplication of effort. We end with a list of websites in the U.S.

1. **Guideline**. On the first page of a site mention the zone and region, and the name of the Sai Org. unit, e.g.:

   Zone 1 Region 1, US Sai Organization

   Region 1: Northeast region

2. **Guideline**. Do *not* have links to websites that are not part of the Sai Organization, e.g. to personal Sai sites, yoga sites, and sites of various religions.

3. **Guideline**. Do have links that reflect the organization of the Sai Org. By this we mean:

   a. Have a link to "Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust" (http://www.srisathyasai.org.in)

   b. Have a link to the "Intl Sai Org" (http://www.sathyasai.org)

   c. Have a link to "Intl Sai Org sites" (http://www.sathyasai.org/organize/content.htm)

   d. Have a link to "US Sai Org" (http://www.sathyasai.us).

   e. Have links to Radio Sai Global Harmony (http://www.radiosai.org/), Sai streaming videos (http://www.saicast.org/), and Prasanthi Books & Pubs (http://www.sssbpt.org/Home.asp)

These links should be reachable in an obvious way with one or two mouse clicks from any subpage of the website for a Sai unit. The Intl Sai Org website www.sathyasai.org exemplifies this, with a left-column of links that appears on almost every page. Most websites have such a column of links or a horizontal navigation bar. Place the above-described links in this column or navigation bar. If that is not possible (or not wanted), then at the least put an item "links" in the column or navigation bar, which, when clicked, will open a page with the above-mentioned links. If all sites use the same title, "links", people will find it easy to navigate in a consistent way.

4. **Guideline**. Do not have advertisements and popup windows on the website. They are inappropriate on a site that concerns Sathya Sai Baba.

5. **Guideline**. Do make it quick to "get into the site". If it takes more than 2-3 seconds to see real information on the site (rather than just a quote or a picture), people will get impatient. Avoid lots of flashy features; remember that what you have on your site may influence people's impression of Swami.

6. **Guideline**. If a site has music, make *off* the default. Music that starts when a site first opens can be startling and even embarrassing, depending on who is in the neighborhood when one is looking at a site.

US regional sites

Each US region has a subpage on the US site, http://www.sathyasai.org/organize/z1reg01/contents.html . E.g. here is the URL for the northeast region: http://www.sathyasai.org/organize/z1reg01/region1/content.htm. The site contains a map of the region, which shows where the centers are, a place to email for information, a place for meeting schedules, and a place for regional announcements.

To make changes to this site, please contact Steve Alderson (stalders at aol.com). region may maintain their own site on a different server. Just follow the guidelines in this document. Contact Steve Alderson to put a link on the US regional page to it. See the region 7 site (Northern Cal.) for an example.

There is no need for discourses, a thought for the day, bhajans, a gallery of pictures, etc., on any regional site, for they already exist on the Intl Sai Organization and Central Trust sites. Avoid duplication of effort. Use the regional site for communication among Sai Centers and devotees in the region. If the site will contain a lot of contact information, lists of officers, email addresses, phone numbers, etc., then password-protect it.

Retreat sites

From time to time regions or subregions have set up retreat sites for an upcoming retreat, including applications, etc. This is fine. However, the site should follow all the guidelines listed in this document. Contact Steve Alderson Alderson (stalders at aol.com) and ask him to place a link to the site on your regional page. Remove the site after the retreat.

Password protected sites
Some centers and young-adult groups have found it useful to have a web page. The policy of the US Sai Org. is that such sites must be password protected (with one password for all devotees). Further, the site should follow all the guidelines in this document. Please contact Gries (dgries at twcny.rr.com) or Steve Alderson Alderson (stalders at aol.com). so that the site can be linked to from the US website.

As with regional sites, avoid duplication of effort and omit a thought for the day, bhajans, a gallery of pictures, links to other centers, etc. Instead, link to appropriate places on the Intl Sai Org and Central Trust sites.

Glossary of people, places, and Sanskrit words

Subsite www.sathyasai/org/refs/vahiniglossary/entries.htm of www.sathyasai.org contains a hypertext list of all people, places, and Sanskrit words that appear in the Vahinis. Printed out, this glossary takes aver 90 pages. Link to it from your website, if you wish.

Referencing the US and International Sai Organization sites

These two sites have a wealth of information on them, that you may not know about. Feel free to link to them. Here are some of them.

- www.sssbpt.info: All Swami's discourses (except the later onces) and writings, with a search engine

- www.sathyasai.org/discour/content.htm: Swami's discourses

- www.radiosai.org/pages/Thought.asp: Thought for the day

- www.sathyasai.org/pictureinfo/content.htm: photos

- www.sathyasai.org/songs/content.html: Devotional singing —text, sheet music, mp3 files, etc.

- www.sathyasai.org/inform/content.htm: List of Sai bookstores, including the new American bookstore site , www.sathyasaibooks.com. You can order online, with a credit card, from the American site.

- www.sathyasai.org/ashrams/content.html: info about the ashrams

- http://www.sathyasai.org/organize/ya/content.htm: Young adults. Here is the US site: http://www.saiyausa.net/ and www.sathyasai.org/organize/z1reg01/ya/yacontent.htm

- www.sathyasai.org/calendar/fest.html: Calendar of events

- www.sathyasai.org/organize/z1reg01/resources.html: US Sai Center resources (e.g. study guidelines)

Domain name for US Sai Organization site
Use the domain name www.sathyasai.us for the American Sai Organization site. It resolves to www.sathyasai.org/organize/z1reg01/contents.html. At some point, it will be an independent site.