

Website History

Contributed by Mike Zapolski (63) Don Grillo (72)
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Website History - Who made, and maintains the Ford Website?

Mike Zapolski, Sr. (Jan 1963) - Ford Website Creator & First Webmaster writes:

Why did I create the Ford website? Two reasons. No other Ford website existed in 2000, and I wanted to document Ford's existence for later classes. I felt that a school website would serve as a tool to help old friends find each other, communicate reunion information, and perhaps serve to stimulate a fond memory...

My original objective was to only list the earlier Ford classes (1960-1965). But I found that I was able to include the first two decades of classes and remain within my ISP's website size limit, and (above all) keep the website free. My intention was to have all senior photos available on the website. I tested this notion with the 1963 class, and soon realized that it would not be possible to add all those images unless I were to pay a somewhat sizable additional monthly fee to my ISP. In addition, including those photos would be an overwhelming task (scanning, editing, website programming, etc.), and it would have significantly increased the website's size to a point where it would no longer be free. This ultimately led to the idea of providing an alternative to having all senior photos on the website. Thus, the Galaxy CD was "born".

The idea to create this website entered my mind when I retired in August 2000. I began working on a site design in October - it changed a few times. In December 2000, I did some online testing and was able to borrow a couple of yearbooks so the the website could be placed online March 12, 2001. All but a few later yearbooks were added to the website by December 2001. The last year added was 1980 - in April 2003. During this process there were many contributions made to the Ford Website by several Fordites. Their names are listed on the Credits page.

This website was planned to be taken offline (for personal reasons) in March 2006. When notified of this intention, Fordites on the Delphi Ford Forum sought to find someone who might take-over the website - keeping it online. To this end, Don Grillo (June 1972) stepped-up and accepted the job. I, as well as many other Fordites, am pleased and thankful that he has taken on this task! Hopefully, this site transferring will continue, and a new Ford tradition will emerge. I hope that webmasters accepting this responsibility follow these precepts:

- The website continue to have no ads, or user fees
- The credit for creating and maintaining the website be properly assigned and documented (Website History).
- The outgoing webmaster help beta test the new website.
- Until no longer possible, maintain a Galaxy CD website email link to the website's creator.

UPDATE: 12/15/2004

By Don Grillo (72), current Webmaster:

Mike decided to take the website offline early (12/20/2004) so, I scrambled to secure the www.henryfordhighschool.com domain name from Ace-Net.com which is a web hosting service located in the Penobscott building in downtown Detroit. Not only is our school located in Detroit but so is our web host. I will be making some changes to the site and will keep you updated here.

UPDATE: 5/26/2005

Over the past several months we've made several changes to the site. We've added the Community Forum which is a message forum for all Fordites and friends. It requires you to register for full access to all the features it offers. We've also added a new Guest Book. It allows users to upload photos and add comments to other guest entries. The new Photo Gallery offers a hosts of new features. Users can have their own galleries for posting photos and users can leave comments about any photo in the gallery. Enjoy the site and please tell all your Ford friends about it.

If you have any comments or suggestions please feel free to send me a note.

UPDATE: 1/16/2006

A new updated website went live today. An email to over 1200 alumni was sent announcing the newly designed site. The new site is using the Mambo CMS software with a number of third party components. The new site allows for personal profiles, pictures, blogs and bios. Built in security keeps email addresses private and profile information behind a firewall that only registered members can view. All functions of the site are integrated so only one username and password is needed for the entire site.

UPDATE: 11/20/2008

We migrated from Mambo software to Joomla software today. This change will allow us to stay up to date with the latest web technologies and also brings new security to the site. We also upgraded our Community Builder (CB) software to the latest version as well. CB allows our registered alumni to build personal profiles.

Don Grillo (Class of 72)

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