Using Capwiz for Advocacy

About CLA
The California Library Association (CLA) has approximately 3,000 personal, organizational and business members. CLA also manages the California Association of Library Trustees and Commissioners (CALTAC), which has 800 members. We have three full-time staff members serving both organizations. CLA uses a lobbying firm that works with direction from our Legislative Committee. The firm provides legislative updates throughout the year.

How CLA Uses Capwiz
Prior to using Capwiz, CLA posted legislative updates on our weblog and to our main list serv. Members subscribe to the list serv voluntarily. A recent evaluation determined that only 25% of CLA members belonged to the list serv. In January of this year, CLA began using Capwiz’s online “legislative action center.” In February, we sent our first broadcast email to members using Capwiz. By using Capwiz, we are able to send legislative updates to nearly 100% of our members. Just as important, staff time spent posting the updates has been reduced.

CLA’s Concerns about Capwiz

- How will Capwiz be incorporated into our website? How will it look?
  ➣ Capwiz uses your website’s exact colors and styles. Your members won’t even notice that they’re on a different website. When you update your website’s sidebars, headers and footers, Capwiz will update your Capwiz pages in less than 24 hours.

- How difficult is Capwiz to use and will it burden our small staff?
  ➣ If your staff can use Microsoft Word, they can use Capwiz. It is really that easy. On the other hand, if you’re a seasoned techie, Capwiz lets you use html to define your styles as you like.

- Will our members be upset about receiving broadcast email alerts?
  ➣ At the bottom of each broadcast email, members can “unsubscribe” instantly. CLA has had a handful of members unsubscribe, but since it’s so easy to unsubscribe, we have not had a single complaint about being added to the list. (That may be a first!)

- Will ALA use our member list that’s uploaded to Capwiz?
  ➣ Since CLA uploaded our member list in January, ALA has only sent a couple messages to our members. ALA will not abuse your member list with excessive messages.
Features We Did Not Expect, but Really Like!

- With our section and round table list servs, when a member unsubscribes, their record is completely removed from the list. Unfortunately, if we upload the member list to the list serv again, they will be re-subscribed. With Capwiz, however, a member's record remains when they unsubscribe. The benefit to our members is that our office cannot accidently re-subscribe them to the Capwiz email list.

- We can track legislative action by our members. With Capwiz, we now know how many members read each legislative update. We also know how many have followed through with letters to their legislators. In addition, we automatically receive copies of all letters and emails sent.

- We have access to all ALA members in California. When you upload your member list to Capwiz, you'll see that many of them already were enrolled in Capwiz through ALA. You will also likely discover that there are a lot of ALA members in your state who do not belong to your state chapter. We do not send legislative updates to non-members. However, with permission from ALA, we sent non-members an invitation to our annual Library Legislative Day. This attracted both first-time attendees and new members.

CLA “Tips” for Using Capwiz

- Take the workshops! Capwiz offers several online workshops. Even if you’re an html pro, the tips will be invaluable. And if you’re a computer novice, they’ll answer your questions in plain English, not “techie talk.”

- If you’re struggling with something, contact Capwiz support. EVERY computer program will have challenges and bugs. However, not every service provider is responsive. Capwiz’s customer support is excellent. When you join Capwiz, you are assigned one person who knows you and your technical skill level. This person can usually help you right away. If not, they’ll send your request to the experts and get a reply to you the next day.

- Personalize your member list. When you upload your members, Capwiz will require you to submit certain fields for each record: name, address, email address, etc. But you can also request that Capwiz create fields that are particular for your own organization. CLA has set up a field titled "committee." This allows us to group members based on committees. The benefit of this is that we can send alerts to a small group, such as the Legislative Committee. We also use this field to differentiate between our CLA members and our CALTAC members.

- Use the “plain text” option when pasting from Microsoft Word. If you’ve ever posted a message into a blog or onto a website, you know that Word is not completely compatible with html. This can lead to the tedious task of “cleaning up” all quote marks, apostrophes and dashes. Capwiz solves this by offering a “plain text” option. If you use this option, you’ll prevent headaches and save time.
Capwiz on Your Website

The experts at Capwiz will create a template that seamlessly fits into your website. If you don't like the content or the layout, choose among several templates and edit text as necessary. If you know HTML, and wish to customize the layout, Capwiz allows that. When you add pages, your website sidebar, header and boarders will stay the same, as will the colors and styles.

CLA's Home Page (http://cla-net.org)

CLA's Capwiz Landing Page (http://capwiz.com/ala/ca/home/)

Legislative Action Center

Library Advocacy

Anyone who cares about California's libraries!

Librarian advocates play a key role in educating our communities about why libraries and librarians are essential to our information society. While the California Library Association is fully represented in Sacramento by professional lobbyists, the voice heard from around California makes the difference in the success of legislation.

Here are some ways to become a library advocate:

- If you are not already a member, join CLA. The list is strength in numbers and your voice will help make our voice heard.

- Check CLA's legislative updates webpage to stay up to date on legislative issues. CLA updates regularly with legislative updates and alerts throughout the year.

- Visit the CLA website for the CLA legislative website, which provides updates on legislative activities, legislative alerts and updates, and information about important legislative initiatives such as those in the OCLC and library抗战.
Posting an Alert

MESSAGE: Type or paste your alert message. Just like with Microsoft Word, Capwiz offers style options to create bullets, italics or bold text.

GRAPHIC: Capwiz has preset graphics that you can insert into your message. You can also upload your own graphics.
END RESULT: After you submit your alert, it is posted on your Capwiz webpage. Older alerts will automatically be made available via links.

Additional Options

MESSAGES: If you are requesting that members call, email or write to their legislators, Capwiz gives you the option of writing the exact message they should use or simply providing guidelines. The first time members use this process, they will enter their address. Capwiz will then list their representatives and members can choose who to send the message to. If they are emailing a legislator, their email address is provided. If they are mailing a letter, Capwiz opens up their message in Word and lets them edit the message to fit their letterhead. Proper titles and salutations are automatically created by Capwiz.

TELL-A-FRIEND: Encourage your members to “spread the word” by using the “Tell-A-Friend” option.

WEB STICKERS: Through your Capwiz website, members can get “web stickers” for their library website. Among the stickers they can choose from is a list, with links, of your association’s legislative alerts! CLA has put the “sticker” on our own home page so that our most current alerts are quickly accessible.
Broadcast Email

Capwiz offers the option of writing a new message, sending a message already posted to your Capwiz webpage or copying an old message. You can send messages to your entire list or to select members. Capwiz offers a variety of graphics but you can also upload your own. After you've sent a message, you can check to see how many members opened your message by clicking on "message stats."

Time Saving Hint: If you send regular messages to members, use the "recreate" option. You will need to change the message, but graphics and list selections will be preset!

Additional Features

- The Media Guide provides a listing of all major media outlets in your state and allows members to contact their local media directly from your Capwiz web pages.
- The Elected Officials page provides a list of your state's elected leaders. When members enter their zip code, they'll have instant access to their local, state and federal legislators.