



WHY PUBLIC NOTICES SHOULD BE IN PRINT AND ONLINE

1. INTERNET PUBLIC NOTICE IS HELPFUL, BUT NOT EFFECTIVE TO THE PUBLIC.

A survey conducted in 2007 shows that a majority of Floridians prefer public notice in newspapers, whereas moving ads to government websites significantly reduces access. Government web sites typically have “Unique visitors” counted in the hundreds, while newspapers provide a significantly greater reach to their communities via the printed version, their web sites and at www.floridapublicnotices.com.

2. PUBLIC NOTICE ON GOVERNMENT WEBSITES IS UNNECESSARY. NOTICES ARE PROVIDED ON THE INTERNET AT NO CHARGE TO THE GOVERNMENT OR TO THE PUBLIC.

Florida’s newspapers (provided by FPA) have operated a supplemental public notice web site, www.floridapublicnotices.com, allowing free and unlimited searchable access to public notices aggregated from Florida newspapers.

3. PUBLIC NOTICES MUST BE PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE.

Large segments of Florida’s population including elderly and minority populations cannot afford computers and monthly access fees.

- 55% of Floridian’s over 65 do not have access to the internet*
- 32% of African-Americans in Florida do not have access to the internet*
- 34% of Hispanics in Florida do not have access to the internet*

The public’s right to know cannot be abandoned in favor of favor of presumed cost savings, which are elusive.

4. GOVERNMENT POSTING OF GOVERNMENT NOTICES ON GOVERNMENT WEBSITES TAKES AWAY THIRD-PARTY NEUTRALITY.

Making government officials responsible for notifying the public on their own websites carries with it a potential for abuse. For example, it may create the temptation to change or manipulate the timing of public notices. If a scheduled public notice is not published or contains false information, the newspaper is more likely to catch the mistake.

5. PUBLIC NOTICES MUST BE ARCHIVED IN A SECURE AND ACCESSIBLE FORMAT.

The internet does not provide as reliable an archival history of public notices as newspapers due to its vulnerability in the form of hackers, viruses, and downed servers.

6. GOVERNMENTAL WEBSITES DO NOT PROVIDE LEGAL AFFIDAVITS AND WRITTEN PROOF OF PUBLICATION AND A SECURE AND VERIFIABLE PAPER TRAIL.

State and local governments, attorneys and private citizens to rely on this documentation to ensure that these notices were published timely and lawfully, as newspapers are required by law to do.

*Scarborough Research 2009