COG On-line to Make Major Changes

Long talked about needs of the future are addressed with new look and feel and on-line payment system

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Cogmos (COG Members Online System)

I am both privileged and excited, not only to be writing my first article for the Concourier after being a member for one year, but more importantly, to be the bearer of some terrific and long awaited good news for everyone!

COG membership payment and administration is going ONLINE!

*** With a NEW LOOK & FEATURES Website ****

The topic of COG providing payments online has been in lively debate for some time and the formation of a committee late last year following an Executive Board resolution provided the impetus and research needed to choose the best system. Before any of those amongst us that don't have internet access or are uncomfortable making payments online get their respective knickers in a twist, there will still be an option to pay by check via snail-mail for the foreseeable future.

The committees first order of business was to choose a name for the system and after a surprisingly short gestation period, Cogmos was born. The second order of business was to poll the membership about the demand to take payments and registration online. The results were as follows:

Membership Survey Summary:

Total COG Membership	2,065	
Emails sent	1,874	
Emails successfully delivered	1,640	
Bad Email %	12.5%	234/1874
Total number of responses	722	
Response Rate	44%	722/1640
% of Membership surveyed	79%	1640/2065

-94% of the respondents wanted or were willing to register and renew their membership online
-91% of the respondents wanted to or were likely to pay online
-Even if all the members that were not reached by email had voted NOT to go online, there would still have been a 2/3 super majority voting for an online payment and registration service.

We looked at 3 different online payment options:

- Adding a payment form to the current website
- A new custom built website
- Using a 3rd party 'hosted' Web service provider (SaaS)

The 3rd option was chosen as it provided the most secure and reliable online payment service, and providing several additional benefits not initially requested in the Executive Board resolution. It was also the option fastest to implement.
We then looked at eight different companies that provided online membership systems to clubs similar to COG, and two came to the top of the list very quickly Memberize and ClubExpress. Between the two, ClubExpress (a younger more agile company) had more features and benefits, but it was twice as expensive as Memberize and was missing the online shopping cart for COG merchandise, a service we really wanted!

A final report was submitted to the Executive Board who voted to approve the committee's recommendation of using the Memberize system (www.memberize.com) for Cogmos. They further approved the budget to cover the 2008 costs for the system with no increase in membership fees. It is anticipated Cogmos will increase membership, merchandising, and sponsorship opportunities while reducing postage and administration costs which will offset the cost of the system.

Here are the details

Online Payment	You can pay membership dues and event fees online by Credit or Debit Card. No more mailing checks or money orders unless you want to.
Membership Database	You will be able to enter and update your own membership details directly into the database, ensuring its accuracy. And you are in control of what information you show to members (none is shown to the public!).
Signup & Renewals	You will be able to join and renew your membership in a matter of minutes.
Event Registration	Members, guests[1], and the public[1] will be able to view, register, and pay for certain COG events online. The Area Directors (AD's) and Assistant Area Directors (AAD's)

will be able to collect and communicate with all registries by email.

[1]*When the event is open to them*

Shopping Cart	At lastly! We will have a COG on-line store! Instant access to the COG merchandise you want! Order and pay for COG goods and gear online! How cool is that!
Forum	The new forum will have access for members, guests, and the general public. Members will also have access to a "COG Member Only" area.
Security	All sensitive data i.e. Credit Card information, is encrypted and transmitted over a secure link to the server and our merchant bank account. Your Credit Card information is not kept on the Cogmos server.
Document Library	An archive of COG documents including: Area Newsletters, Concourier, Chalkdust, and Kawasaki Brochures, and exciting new content such as GPS waypoint files and video clips will be accessible and restricted to COG Members.
Surveys	We will have a tool to survey the membership on their satisfaction and views to make sure COG continues to meet the memberships needs.
Photo Album	Each Area will be able to post pictures of events and gatherings to share with the whole club for years to come.
Classifieds	Members and guests of Cogmos will be able to post FOR SALE advertisements without going through an administrator.
FAQ / Tech Library	We are actively working on placing Chalkdust online with search capabilities, links, and interactive media. (A very big project folks, so please be patient!).
News Letters	A full-featured newsletter server is built-in to Cogmos, so AD's and the Board will be able to have better communication with the membership.
Member Profile	You can edit and post your very own profile and interests, including your photograph. (Viewer discretion advised! ☺)
Area Pages	Each Area will have their own web pages that can be edited by non-web-savvy members, making it easier to keep Area content fresh.
Future Feature rollout	New Cogmos features and functions will roll out on a quarterly basis as Memberize continues to enhance its product based on the feedback they receive from the hundreds of clubs they support.
Membership Support	The system is designed to be user friendly However, there is an excellent online user guide and Memberize will provide direct support to all members.

"That's great! But when are we gonna get it?

The Northwest Area was chosen as the test 'guinea pigs' (they spend most of their time being confused anyway, so they seemed the logical choice!). By the time you read this announcement, we hope testing will be well underway. After four to six weeks of tests and tuning to work out the bugs, we will roll the system out to the entire membership in the spring.

We will be providing updates on our progress from time to time on the current www.concours.org forum, and I will be posting some demo video clips on how the system works to further whet your appetite!

I would like to take this opportunity to give a big thanks to the Cogmos roll-out team for rolling up their sleeves, and for their dedication and time to make this new website and member system one of, if not The Best Motorcycle Group Website in the world!

"They don't hardly make 'em like him any more - but just to be on the safe side, he should be castrated anyway."
-- Hunter S. Thompson