

## New Look Website

Contributed by WebManager  
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Since you are reading this, you will have noticed that we have a new look club website. It is not just a new look, but there are new features as well.

The changes to our website began late last year. We changed web hosting provider and since then our web pages have been coming from a new server. Our old hosting service had very limited facilities and did not allow us to utilise new web publishing software, it was also not very cost effective.

But wait, there's more!

The new site has been designed so that we can bring you new features that will enable better communication between the committee/support staff and the members as well as between you, the club members. There are a large range of new features we can enable with the new site. We will start with just a few and see how we go from there. Initially we should have:

- New article publishing features. The software running the site gives us the freedom to let multiple authors (committee/support staff and even club members) write articles directly to the site (no HTML, no fancy publishing software, just your web browser). But this doesn't mean a free for all since we can control the ability to edit and publish these articles and have a review process in place to approve new articles before they are published.
- New calendar. A new online calendar with an upcoming event listing for the web site front page. This also has auto-expiry of past events to keep the calendar current without continual manual maintenance.
- New Classifieds. A new classified ad service with recent ad listings for the web site front page and auto-expiry of ads after a preset time (currently set to 45 days).
- A members forum. A place for club members to discuss upcoming and past club rides, old and new BMWs and any other club and BMW related stuff.
- A photo gallery which could be used for a photo album for each ride or event where members can upload photos taken on the ride.

And in the (hopefully near) future we could also have:

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Past and upcoming ride descriptions and route maps.

These features will also require the addition of member logins so that we can limit access for club members only.

## Really Simple Syndication

Most of the new features can also provide RSS (Really Simple Syndication) news feeds. RSS provides a convenient way to syndicate information from a variety of sources, including news stories and updates to a web site.

With RSS you will be able to get instant notification to your computer desktop of new articles, ride listings, classified adds and posts to our forums. Initially onlynews will be available on RSS, look for the orange RSS symbol on the left of the page. I will hopefully get it working for events, buy/sell classifieds and forum posts in the near future.

RSS requires a bit of software on your computer that can monitor the news feed. These programs often present a scrolling list of the latest headlines at the bottom of your screen. You can find a list of some of the clients available at "[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_news\\_aggregators](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_news_aggregators)".

If you are interested to find out more about RSS, see the description at "[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS\\_\(file\\_format\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_(file_format))" (the brackets are part of the link). The latest buzz word on the Internet, Podcasting, is another variant of RSS and you can have a look at "<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting>" for more info about podcasting. (and in general, "<http://www.wikipedia.org/>" is a great online encyclopedia, you will even find a great short history of BMW there)

Finally, why update the site when it is not broken? The real reason? Once it is done it will make my job as webmanager easier! And if I have less to do and can give other people the ability to update the content of the site without the risk of breaking it then our website will have more to offer to you the members.

I hope that the new site will give us all another avenue to enjoy our BMWs, riding them, and let us get to know each other and the club better.

Any questions or problems with the current or new website? Feel free to contact me.

