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# Campaign Webmasters' Short Lives

What happens to all of the Webmasters and volunteers who run presidential campaign Web sites after their candidate decides to drop out of the race? In many cases, not much. By Lindsey Arent.

IS THERE LIFE on the Web after a political death?

In the case of this year's fallen Republican Oval Office hopefuls, the answer is maybe, but not likely.

The day after Senator John McCain's stunning win over Texas Governor George W. Bush in the Michigan and Arizona primaries, the two campaign Web sites were alive with updated news items, pictures, donation pleas, and negative assaults lobbed at each other.

But the original campaign Web sites of withdrawn Republican candidates Gary Bauer and Steve Forbes lay dormant, unmanned, and largely unchanged since their namesakes dropped out of the race in January.

That's what happens to an ex-candidate's Web site -- but what of the people who run them?

Marie Woolf was one of the few Webmasters who parlayed her stint as chief Internet strategist for the [Orrin Hatch](#) campaign into an extended gig with the Utah Senator.

"When we saw the end of the campaign coming, [Hatch] asked me to stay on in the same role for his senate re-election campaign," Woolf said. "The interesting thing is that I was the only woman at the center of the campaign and the only one who from the beginning lasted the entire time."

The afternoon Hatch dropped out, Woolf -- who also works as a cartoonist -- shut down the official Hatch for President Web site, did a major overhaul, and reopened for business a month later with a revamped Senate re-election campaign site.

The redone site features a kids' section with interactive games, Hatch campaign news, Utah trivia, pictures, and links to articles about Hatch.

The Hatch stint has proven very lucrative for Woolf who now designs Web sites for other clients, including a bank and an e-commerce company.

"Nice things came out of it," she said. "It turned out to be a good career move."

For Ryan Quick -- the 22-year-old Webmaster for the Alan Keyes campaign -- maintaining a national political Internet site has been a great opportunity, but a mixed blessing.

"I really don't know what will happen if [Keyes] drops out, if they'll keep the site up or what," he said. "I wish I did know.... Right now it is a pretty nice source of income."

Keyes spokesman George Cecala said Keyes has no plans to cancel the Web site. "We really haven't thought about it because the idea is that we're going to keep going," Cecala said.

Quick, who runs the site and a small Net design business from his home in Ely, Minnesota, hasn't made any contingency plans if Keyes, whose poll numbers are low, does drop out of the race.

"I guess I'll have to make money elsewhere," he said.

But, he added, he doesn't see too many more political Web sites in his future.

One reason could be their short life expectancy.

In fact, for some campaigns, like Gary Bauer's presidential camp, the Web site was the first thing to go.

"Gary's not involved with the site any further," said Bauer spokesman Matt Smith. "Right now he's committed to seeing John McCain in the White House."

Bauer's campaign hired an outside company, DC-based Coded Solutions, to design and

maintain the site, but from the looks of the front door release announcing Bauer's third-place standing in the Iowa and New Hampshire polls, it hasn't been touched since their man stepped down in early February.

Smith said the site is stale due to [Federal Election Commission](#) rules. "Once you withdraw from the race you cannot incur any further costs -- so we left the Web site as is for a while," Smith said.

The campaign Web site, though helpful in spreading Bauer's daily email updates and election news to supporters, was never really the center of the campaign, Smith said. "It wasn't our primary focus."

Mike Barlous, sales and marketing director at Coded Solutions, said he has no idea what will become of the site. "We designed the Web site and we followed their direction. Our agreement was on an as-needed basis," he said.

As for the future of the site, Smith said there was no plan as of yet to recycle or refresh the site.

The [Steve Forbes](#) campaign could not be reached for this story.



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