

# nassgap

www.nassgap.org

Ferda Kavak  
Verio  
Director of Customer Operations

Dear Mr. Kavak:

I very much appreciated the candid conversation we had on January 7, 2001 regarding the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP) dispute with Verio's over the state of our account. I am particularly pleased that we agreed upon a fair and equitable resolution to our dispute and believe that our two organizations are on course to have a healthy business relationship for years to come. As promised, I will attempt to give you a capsulated account of NASSGAP's dealings with Verio as it relates to using Verio for web hosting services.

In April of 2000, I contacted Verio sales representative Justin at 1 800 339-4929 about NASSGAP's interest in switching web hosting services from Global Frontiers to Verio. I spoke to Justin about the process and the costs associated with switching services. I then consulted with NASSGAP's Executive Committee and opted for the Hosting NT Plan 1 two-year contract for \$1,048.95 with a one-time set-up fee for \$50. I asked Justin what I needed to do to facilitate the change. He advised me to send a letter to Verio - Attention Domain Registration - stating NASSGAP owned the domain address of nassgap.org. Below is the exact text of my April 20, 2000 letter that I faxed that day (and again on June 16, 2000) to Verio:

"The National Association for State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP) owns the domain address of nassgap.org. I understand from talking with Verio sales representative Justin, that this letter is necessary to process NASSGAP's request to use Verio's services. IF this letter is not sufficient please contact me at 317/232-2097 or at 317/631-8242 (after 5:30 PM EST.)"

The 317-631-8242 is my home number; I rarely give it out for business purposes. However, I did so in the event Verio needed to reach me so as to insure NASSGAP's web hosting transition was a success because the site is used to advertise the sale of NASSGAP's Annual publication on state-funded higher education programs. The proceeds from the sale of this publication play a significant role in funding our nonprofit organization.

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To make a very long story short, NASSGAP's web site was out of commission from late April 2000 to mid June of 2000 due to unfulfilled and, in retrospect, unfulfillable promises made by Justin. Verio did nothing with my April letter with the exception of advising me, after I called to inquire why NASSGAP's site was down, that I needed to work with Network Solutions to transfer the domain name and point nassgap.org to the correct dns (NS10.VWHI.NET209.238.9.50 & NS11.VWHI.NET209.238.9.51). Unfortunately it took two months to get this worked out.

The information redirect routine went beyond the ridiculous. I would call Verio who would direct me to Network Solutions who would direct me back to Verio who would direct me back to Network Solutions who, of course, would send me back to Verio. Verio then sent me through its internal labyrinth. I talked to Dial-Up Accounts representatives in Dallas who, after some baton twirling, directed me to Verio's Boca Raton Florida offices. Since April my concerns have been passed to and from the departments/divisions within Verio, including, but not limited to:

Sales Customer Services,  
Sales Quality Assurance,  
Domain Services,  
Technical Customer Service,  
Technical Support Quality Assurance,  
Billing Specialists,  
Accounts Receivable Administration, Account Recovery  
Chargeback Department,  
Quality Assurance Department, Quality Assurance Department Coordinator; and finally  
Yourself.

I was able to reach the accounting office by phone but was told by Verio employee George McKenzie - a nice man by the way - via a June 21, 2000 e-mail response to my initial billing appeal, that Verio has several phone numbers, but that the only way I could reach QA was via e-mail since they do not accept phone calls. He wrote saying that while accounting has the ability to adjust billing problems, the decision/authority to do so must come from the department where the problem originated (sales for sales issues, tech support for tech issues, etc). Thus I was left to battle with Sales QA and Tech Support QA. Little progress was made. On December 6, 2000 I received an e-mail from Verio's Accounts Receivable Administration, (Account Recovery), advising me that NASSGAP's outstanding balance was \$949.10. The following remit address was then given to me.

Verio Web Hosting  
5050 Blue Lake Drive  
Boca Raton Florida  
33431

I again appealed paying this invoice amount on the basis that NASSGAP's site was unnecessarily down for months due to Verio's misrepresentations and misdirection and that as a result, NASSGAP was unable to advertise the sale of its Annual State-Funded Higher Education Survey during that critical period. Consequently the site's downtime resulted in lost revenue in sales of the organization's survey. I proposed that Verio provide NASSGAP two years of web hosting service as compensation for this avoidable consequence. My appeal was denied on December 29, 2000 and I was then advised to send the "past due" amount, not to Florida (I am left to wonder would have happened if I sent a payment to Boca Raton Florida as advised on December 6?), but to the following Texas address:

Hiway Technologies, Verio Company  
PO Box 972309  
Dallas, Texas 75397-2312

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Finally my appeal made it to you. You returned my called and quickly helped put this matter to rest. For that I am grateful.

Perhaps the most frustrating part of the process was that Verio Sales representative Justin assured me that Verio would take care of matters and that my only responsibility was to send the letter referenced above. I was given complete assurances in April that Verio handled web hosting transfers all the time and that they would take care of the site's transfer. Rather, to paraphrase the authoritative prison guard in the movie Cool Hand Luke, what we had here is failure to communicate. The rest is history. If I had known that I had to assume other responsibilities so as to insure a smooth transition of web hosting services, I would have done it in short order.

As promised I will send a less detailed and more conciliatory letter to those I copied on my most recent appeal. The letter will read as follows:

Dear Mr. Kavak:

I very much appreciate the candid conversation we had on December 7 regarding the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP) dispute with Verio's over the status of our account. I am particularly pleased that we agreed upon a fair and equitable resolution to our dispute and believe that our two organizations are on course to have a healthy business relationship for years to come. Both organizations hopefully have learned from this experience and as a result will be better off for it. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely

Dennis Obergfell  
NASSGAP

I trust this letter brings this matter to a close. Thank you again for your cooperation. Please contact my with any questions you might have.

Sincerely

Dennis Obergfell  
NASSGAP