

Future of the Information Theory Society

BoG meeting – June 21, 2020

Presented by Matthieu Bloch and Aylin Yener

Executive summary:

- Need for a **unified** and **long-term** online presence of ITSoc
 - The world has changed: less travels, more online meetings
 - We need to provide **support** for our activities
 - We need to provide **value** for our members
- **Future of the ITSoc:** unified portal for all our online activities
 - Support for remotely attended events
 - Archival of broadly accessible media resources
- Calls for renewed investment in web technologies
- **Ad Hoc Committee members:** Erik Agrell, Matthieu Bloch, Salim El Rouhayeb, Brian Kurkoski, Henry Pfister, Anand Sarwate, Aylin Yener, and Wei Yu
- Report results from 2 online meetings and email exchanges over the past couple of months.

Current situation and vision

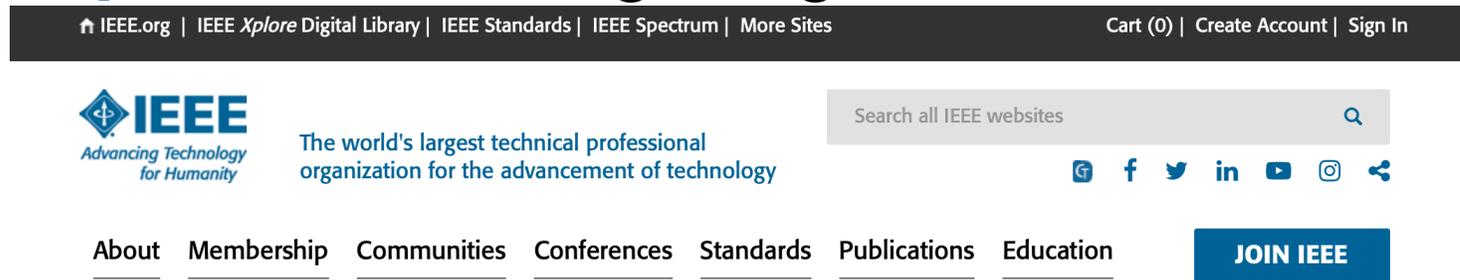
- **We will not go back to business as usual**
 - We have had to reassess our means of interactions
 - **Concrete consequences:** Online ISIT, postponed schools, online BoG
 - Transition to online meeting is likely to be the new normal
 - Numerous challenges to organize online events
- **Unique opportunity to think forward:**
 - Re-think ITSoc web's presence
 - Re-invent how ITSoc can serve (and increase) its membership online
- **FITS vision: One ITSoc**
 - Provide unified portal for ITSoc resources (videos, seminars)
 - Increase social media presence
 - Provide clear and useful member benefits
 - Support events, including live remote attendance

Realizing the vision

- We can make **concrete** step towards realizing the vision
- **Four short term goals identified**
 - IEEE authentication
 - Hosting multimedia resources
 - Video conferencing integration
 - Support for events
- Objectives tightly connected to the Online Committee

IEEE authentication

- **Current situation:** itsoc.org login not tied to IEEE membership
 - Yet another username/password to remember
 - Lost of membership value
 - No integration with other IEEE benefits
- **Proposal:** IEEE Single Sign On



- Membership status tracked by IEEE
- Natural authentication mechanisms for member benefits
- **Feasibility:** Single-Sign On now a common feature of CMS

Hosting of Multimedia Resources

- **Current situation:** YouTube
 - Ease of use, no need to support infrastructure
 - Gives away control (no member benefits) and not universally accessible
- **Proposal:** alternative hosting solutions
 - Storage cost are low, delivery is where costs
 - Retain “control” of multimedia resources (does not necessarily means behind a paywall)
 - Better chance of serving our entire constituency
 - Unified portal for lectures, seminars, plenaries, etc.
 - **Feasibility:** Many providers for content delivery networks (Amazon, etc.)

Video Conferencing Integration

- **Current situation:** ad-hoc solutions
 - IEEE uses webex
 - One-time solutions for conferences
 - Recently, we as ITSoc bough a professional zoom license which can easily be upgraded to run much larger meetings.
- **Proposal:** integrate into our website
 - Embraces that all on-site meetings are not the norm anymore
 - Enables our membership to remain engaged remotely
 - **Example: Salim's Shannon Seminar series (grassroots effort!)**
 - **Example: Online distinguished lectures on zoom (see MC report)**
 - Offer archiving of resources (see previous point on hosting)
 - **Feasibility:** Top providers (Zoom, BlueJeans, Webex) now offer APIs

Support for events

- **Current situation:** distributed operation
 - Event organizers run their own website (ISIT, ITW, Schools)
 - Archiving difficult in the long run
 - Reproduction of efforts, burden on volunteers
 - Multiple companies involved (3 for this ISIT)
 - Each entity pays for services each year from scratch
- **Proposal:** easy and user-friendly hosting within unified portal
 - Easy archiving
 - Reduced burden for organizers
 - Consistent look over time
 - Invest now, when we have the means
 - Larger cost upfront + smaller maintenance later based on labor (as opposed to a negotiated (potentially large) amount in each meeting)

Estimated costs

- IEEE Single Sign-On: \$5k
- Hosting videos on website: \$25k for integration + cost of CDN
- Video conferencing integration: \$10k + cost of license
- DL professional editing: \$10k
- Social media Ad campaigns: \$1k

Motion

We request the BoG to support the activities of the FITS initiative with a budget of USD \$51k

- The budget will cover the FITS efforts as outlined in the proposal and extend the current web efforts
- Additional quotes will be requested to obtain competitive pricing
- Some of the (lower) recurring costs will have to become part of the operational budget