IEEE IT Society Online Committee Report
(Chicago 2015 BoG edition)

Anand D. Sarwate

Update on Redesign progress

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Committee composition

Current committee composition\(^1\) consists of 5 people: Anand Sarwate, Matthieu Bloch, Adriaan J. de Lind van Wijngaarden, Stefan Moser, J. Nicholas Laneman

\(^1\)Currently adding some others who volunteered via survey.
Activities since ISIT BoG meeting

1. Onboarded Matt LaFleur to assist in maintenance.
2. Consulted with SPS and others on website redesign.
3. Requested and obtained funds from IEEE for major site redesign.
4. Surveyed ITSOC membership about site needs/desires.
5. Initiated redesign and upgrade process with Six Feet Up.
6. Transferred ISIT Plenary and Shannon Lectures to hosting on Vimeo.
Major tasks for the next few months

We are focusing on a mix of improving internal and end-user performance:

- Working with Matt LaFleur to make a master checklist of updates and deadlines to ensure more timely posting and updating of content.
- Major overhaul of site including the site redesign
- Soliciting volunteers to assist in curating/organizing/generating content for the site: fixing what is there, archiving old stuff, adding new stuff.
- Reaching out to existing initiatives to offer online support (more on that later).
On best practices/other societies

Other societies (SPS, Comm, etc.) have external hosting and site design from outside of IEEE. SPS has a dedicated IEEE staff webmaster who handles light maintenance.

- current site 9 years old, runs on an old CMS
- working with a new developer to transition to Drupal
- will use existing templates with mild customization
- they have a separate hosting service and do their own bug fixes
- big push is to figure out how to monetize content
Response rate: 6.2% (202 out of 3260). Respondents:

- 18.32% student members
- 46% have accounts on the site
- 53% visit site more than once a month
- 67% are not currently volunteering time for the Society but 33% would like to (in some capacity)
Problems with current site

From the end-user perspective, the issues were

- technical issues (slow page loads, etc)
- not consistent/comprehensive
- site doesn't encourage exploration
- less information about IT, more about ITSOC
Features desired by respondents

In order of popularity:

- more videos (by a landslide)
- archiving old conference sites
- hosting existing conference sites
- outreach material
- self-organizing into interest groups
- runners-up: app, custom themes, social media

Mobile responsive design was not deemed as important by the survey respondents, although slightly more than 50% wanted it.
Desired content

- more videos
- links to social media, blogs, twitter, etc.
- talks/slides for general audiences (c.f. TEDtalk/Khan Academy)
- free technical materials or surveys
- fora for people to ask questions (technical and general)
- regular updates and new content
- methods to organize more global audience
Site upgrade proposed work

1. **(Content)** Provide more content: static html exports of old conferences, overhaul of news items

2. **(Connection)** Mailman list Create mailing lists for each committee (“PeopleList”): run a mailman instance to create mailing lists and allow users to create mailing lists as well. Edit permissions through lists.

3. **(UI)** Redesign the main navigation to reduce clicks, modernize look and feel, help promote Shannon Centenary

4. **(Performance)** Upgrade user management system, sub-site system, and fix load times/DB issues
Budget and timeline

- Requested and received $45k from IEEE to defray costs.
- Pushing more expensive upgrades (back-end) to front of schedule to make sure money is spent soon.
- Total expense: $47,000 to $78,000 depending on complexity. This is a downrevision from $51,300-$85,500 from ISIT.
Request: authorization to spend additional $15,000

- We have $65k between IEEE and existing budget
- Likely we will not need to full amount, but avoids delay
- Remaining funds will come out of the existing Online Committee budget first.
Social media/auxiliary sites

We have started a nascent social media presence:

- ITSOC Twitter account: @ieee_itsoct
- 26 videos from ISIT are up on our Vimeo page, around 100 plays so far with minimal advertisement
- Coordinating with Shannon Centenary initiatives around the web
Shannon’s Channel: video initiative

Subject to approval, will work with Salim El Rouayheb’s “Shannon’s Channel” YouTube/videocast talk series:

- Like TCS+ in theoretical computer science
- http://www.ece.iit.edu/~salim/Shannon.html
- “Talks are announced ahead on the webpage and are given using the Google+ Hangout platform. Anyone can watch the talks live and ask questions. The talks are recorded and made available on YouTube and can be watched at anytime.”
Conference apps?

Started working with Elza Erkip on investigating possibilities for conference app development:

- ISIT 2015 app was very successful: requires working with CMS
- Lots of existing companies offer conference app services (maybe less feature-ful and more expensive)
- Suggestion: find someone who can take this on as a special project since the tradeoffs are complicated
Summary

- Major push at the moment is the site redesign/upgrade.
- A little more money could help make things go smoothly.
- Hoping to get more user-generated content (or bring some existing efforts under the itsoc.org umbrella).
Thank you!