IEEE Information Theory Society
Online Committee Report

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ISIT 2019 (Paris, France)
Brian Kurkoski became Online Editor in February 2019

Upgrade of itsoc.org from Plone 4 to Plone 5 CMS:
- Developer has spent $77k without completing upgrade
- Developer estimates $33k required to finish upgrade
- Now negotiating to lower from $33k to $27k
- Due to high costs and cost overrun, we should consider alternatives

itsoc.org subsites:
- About $4k to give new JSAIT and WITHITS subsites a distinctive look.

Create archives of past ISIT and ITW web sites. $0 cost for now.

The Online Committee can do more with more people. Surely you can recommend someone to join our committee.
“ITSOC Recent News and Events” is our announcement mailing list

- News and events members post to itsoc.org automatically distributed on mailing list
- 670 subscribers, open rate around 50%, click rate varies from 5% to 27%
- Posts are automatically published on Twitter (recent formatting improvements)
- Some members require assistance making posts

JSAIT support: Journal web site hosted at itsoc.org, special Mail Chimp campaign email

The Bit Player movie support: special Mail Chimp campaign, Twitter

IEEE Transactions on Information Theory: Email monthly table of contents to 3700 members

Videos from NASIT 2009 hosted at Notre Dame seem to have been lost due to server crash
Six Feet Up (SFU) is the software developer that develops and maintains itsoc.org

At Vail, the BoG approved a proposal to migrate itsoc.org from Plone 4 to Plone 5. Completed:

• Now running on Plone 5 on backend
• Security improvements
• Better interface enables users to contribute content
• Integration with Mailchimp for improved outreach
• Various site improvements

The BoG approved a budget of $77,000* for the Plone 5 upgrade.

As of June 2019, SFU exhausted the allocated budget, completing the above items, but not everything for the upgrade.

*There is some confusion about the requested vs approved vs invoiced amount
Proposal: Complete the Plone 5 Migration (Plan A)

“This upgrade has been pretty difficult due to the sophisticated customizations”

Incomplete items needed to complete Plone 5 migration

- Template migration
- Numerous small fixes
- Testing

Developer requested $33,000.

We need to manage our budget better — we're trying to trim this down to $27,000
Proposal: Subsite Design and General UI Improvements

Subsite functionality is used by WITHITS, new JSAIT, a few others

Problem: subsite cannot be visually distinguished from itsoc.org main site

Developer estimates $2000 for “cheap” approach. I added $2000 for other UI Improvements

Subsites like JSAIT should have a distinctive design and logo.

Delete tall title bar, move title next to body text

itsoc.org top page should switch to a news feed.

Wider menu font for improved readability

Larger font size, bigger line spacing
Proposal: Create an Archive of Past ISIT and ITW Web Sites

ISIT and ITW web sites are created by conference organizers

Very inconsistent web hosting scenarios.

Problem: Web hosts disappear and valuable information and history is lost

Proposal: Create an archive of all existing ISIT and ITW web sites

• Create a static HTML copy of the ISIT and ITW web sites
• Copied after the conference is finished and web site is stable
• For now, use university server so cost is $0
• In future, could get commercial hosting. Allows us to provide non-SFU web pages
This is a summary of recent actual expenses for itsoc.org (as I best understand it). Thanks to Matt LaFleur

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Year Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Hosting Service</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Hosting Service</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Site Improvements</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>33,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plone 5 Upgrade</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 (so far)</td>
<td>Hosting Service</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plone 5 Upgrade</td>
<td>64,000</td>
<td>71,000</td>
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There seems to be confusion because budgeted amounts do not align with actual expenses:

Budgets: 2018 = $61,000  2019 = $40,000  (operational + projects from Aaron Wagner)
Online Committee

SFU says “we are expecting the Plone 5 CMS to be able to power the site for many years”

Aaron Wagner: I think I can put $31k in the budget without an explicit BoG vote.

Expenses in 2020

- SFU says we need a Python 3 upgrade in 2020. No estimate provided — $14,000?
- Hosting switching to AWS passthrough model, where we pay for actual web traffic

### Requested Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Requested Budget</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Plone 5 migration</td>
<td>27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsites: JSAIT, WITHITS, etc. and general UI design improvements</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>31,000</strong></td>
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</table>
There are many benefits to working with Six Feet Up, and Plone which they support.

But they are expensive. We've already paid $77,000 for the upgrade, but about $30,000 remains to complete + plus an unknown amount for Python 3 upgrades.

Plan B: Consider creating a new web site:

- Complete replacement of existing web site, replicating all needed functionality
- Copy all existing content to new site
- Based on Drupal, which won the battle of the CMS’s
- Many competitive developers

Proposal: Get competitive estimates from Drupal developers, compare prices. Based on this, decide:

- Plan A: Proceed with upgrade at cost of $30,000+
- Plan B: Halt Plone upgrades and begin work on new web site.
Many thanks to past chairs Nick Laneman, Matthieu Bloch and Anand Sarwate — incredible work!

Past chair Anand Sarwate has agreed to stay on committee one more year to aid transition

Mine Alsan has agreed to continue as a committee member, her help is greatly welcomed.

**But we have a lot of work to do, and more members are needed.**

Can you think of a possible candidate to join the committee? Typical candidate:

- junior person who wants to contribute to the Society,
- may need service points for career advancement
- specific skills not needed, but social media or experience with conference publicity

This person will serve a specific role like "MailChimp" “Please post this on the web site” “social media” etc. **Your suggestion will do a lot of improve the IT Soc’s online presence.**