

IEPEC Website Subcommittee (Rob, Sharyn, Bill, Dulane, Monica, Mike) Review Findings and Status

IEPEC Board Meeting, May 24, 2018 , Rob Kasman and Cara Lee Braithwait

Approximate time: 45 minutes

Agenda

1. Website Current Status
2. New Search Feature and Rollout
3. Future Website and Technical Upgrades

Website Current Status

The Good

1. Lots of good info on the site.
2. Our current website is functional and usable for at least the next three years.
3. There is a functional mobile version of site.
4. We have most papers searchable online beginning 1985 (~ 1600 papers and 147 posters). We have hardcopies of papers not online (1983, '84, '87, '93, '95).
5. New search engine is almost complete; estimated rollout June. (More below)
6. Cara Lee and Kris (Website Administrators) manage all major and minor content work. PowderKeg handles the website architecture and development.



Screenshot: May 21, 2018.

General Issues/Observations

1. Given the age of our website, a total rebuild will probably be needed in about three years, either before or after the 2021 conference.
2. We will need to update our content management system (CMS), currently WordPress, either at the same time or possibly sooner.
3. All websites need ongoing review. The Website Subcommittee has requested some minor changes to Sam/Kris and they have mostly already been implemented. Sam/Kris welcome other suggestions/edits/fixes.
4. IEPEC.org is a mostly static informational website. We do not sell products. The bulk of updates between conferences is for job postings, RFPs, webinars, and additions to Evaluator Resources. We also keep all board meeting notes and planning committee information on private pages on the website.
5. Problems with people seeing different versions of documents (agendas) in 2017 was due to the frequent re-posting of pdfs of the agenda. This can be fixed so that all updates are instantaneous for all viewers (by using “tables,” cost is ~\$650).
6. There may be broken links, typos, errors, etc. that we are unaware of. Issues mostly do get resolved after they are highlighted and we depend on all PC members to help keep Cara Lee and Kris aware of issues. We do have a routine testing process when posting new material, but changes can occur simply as the result of a WordPress update.
7. The website may appear “dated” by some standards.

Technical Stuff

1. PowderKeg (PK), Verona, WI, is our current developer/designer firm.
2. A new WordPress CMS version is being developed and expected to be launched in the next two to three years. Our platform version will remain workable, but there will not be any further updates or support at some point in the future.
3. Our website is hosted by HostGator www.hostgator.com, unaffiliated with PK. (Typically, web hosting is a commodity and should not affect functionality.)

Legal Stuff

1. We “own” our website, which consists of files (code, documents, images, personal information, etc.)
2. There is no contract or ongoing fees between IEPEC and PK. All work on project basis; ~\$130/hr.
3. Privacy. Cara Lee and Kris are involved in changes needed for new privacy requirements on all electronic information. We have added a new privacy statement on our website and you will see it referenced going forward on other electronic documents that we send out or receive.

Decisions Needed

1. Do we want to invest \$650 for PowderKeg to implement tables so that updates to agendas and other pdfs documents are instantaneous for all users?

New Search Feature and Rollout

Summary

1. New search feature estimated rollout is late-June 2018. It's really awesome.
2. Allows keyword searches on all pdf papers and posters. We have most IEPEC papers beginning 1985 (~1600 papers and 147 posters). We only have hardcopies of papers from 1983, 84, 87, 93, 95 (not online). These can be added.
3. New search is a huge improvement in functionality, but not a high-power search engine. (E.g., will not find misspelled words, names, or word variations like "targeted" instead of "targeting," or "free rider" instead of "free-rider"). Boolean operators (and, or, not, etc.) will have limited functionality and require precise syntax.

Current Search Results Format



Costs and Additional Features

1. Cost to PowderKeg to implement new Search tool was ~\$800? There is no annual fee for our current search tool.
2. In May-June 2018 we are adding additional search features/fixes with PowderKeg (~\$450) including:
 - a. Updating Search page so it will be editable (by Sam and Kris)
 - b. Adding ability to sort search results by relevance or year (default is relevance)
 - c. Adding ability to sort a single year (Sam are we doing this?)
 - d. Adding ability to sort for posters only, papers only, or both (default is both)
 - e. Adding clarifying text in Search area of what is being searched (describe universe)
 - f. Updating Search tips for clarity and accuracy

Search Rollout

1. Expected rollout is late-June 2018
2. Draft "advertising" email under review

Discussion/Decisions Needed

1. Do we want to add any of the missing proceedings (1983, 84, 87, 93, 95) so they are searchable? Cost is \$2500-\$3000 each. These can also be added later.
2. After rollout, we need to re-assess if the search function is adequate. There are other options, each with different costs/features/time to implement.

Future Website and Technical Upgrades

Summary

1. The IEPEC website currently serves a set of specific purposes including: searchable proceedings, Webinar info, conference info and registration, author resources and instructions, general evaluation info, and other some other miscellaneous info.
2. The IEPEC website architecture is old and not sustainable long term. A ground-up redesign and rebuild will be needed in approximately the next three years. Estimated cost is \$25k-\$35k, assuming a website similar to our existing site.
3. We may need to update our WordPress CMS prior to the website rebuilding.
4. We can rollout before or after the 2021 conference, but a new site will need to be established before the 2023 conference at the latest.
5. Sample Timetable for a new roll-out by the 2021 conference:
 - a. June of 2020, begin revamp of what the website should do and how it should do it—how does the website support our mission and what can be done to strengthen the support
 - b. Talk with web designer (the architect of the framing) to see what options now exist for website
 - c. By November of 2020 have a plan with mock-ups of pages and citations of where the web designer can find the needed files
 - d. Get bids and redefine what we can afford by the January planning meeting
 - e. February, start work on the site with a target date of April 2021 for testing
 - f. May, test run the new website and add more content—still a development site
 - g. July, do a soft roll-out to a limited number of people for testing
 - h. August, launch at the 2021 Conference with possible demos/training sessions

Discussion/Decisions Needed

1. Are we generally happy with the website content that exists today, or do we envision a different website and content in the future? How far away are we from where we want to be?
2. Costs to re-build the website from the ground-up will be at least \$25,000, probably more. What actions, if any, do we need to take over the next couple years to secure funding?
3. Given the choice to rollout a new website prior to, or after, the 2021 conference, is there a preference for sooner or later?
 - a. Does it make more sense to rollout a new website just before a conference, or better to do it in an off year?