

INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

Seventeenth Session of the IOC Committee on International Oceanographic Data and
Information Exchange (IODE), Paris, France, 3-7 March 2003

IODE Public Awareness

(Peter Pissierssens)

1. IODE WEB SITES

1.1 IODE 'Home' site

During the inter sessional period (December 2000 – February 2003) IODE's emphasis on developing a prominent and interactive web presence has continued. As detailed in the Document 'IODE's web presence' (Ref IOC/IODE-XVI/24) prepared for IODE-XVI, the IODE web site has gone through a substantial number of versions since its first launch in September 1995 as one of the first UNESCO web sites.

Although IODE-XVI commented positively on the July 2000 web site, the Secretariat noted that content was created mostly by the IODE Secretariat and that information on national IODE activities was difficult to obtain for inclusion in the IODE web site.

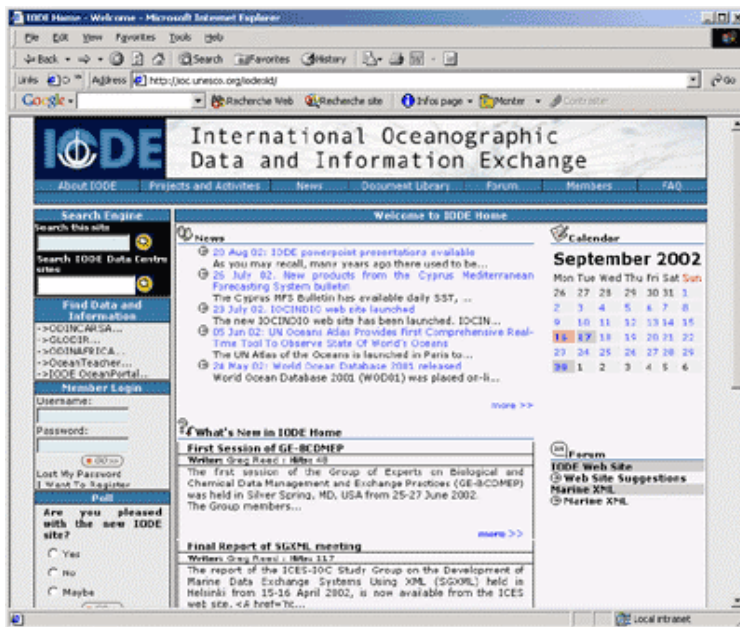
The Secretariat therefore started investigating the possibility to redesign the site using dynamic content management technology. This was done with the following objectives in mind:

- (i) enable multiple authors to submit content in order to strengthen the community nature of IODE;
- (ii) enable multiple editors to take responsibility for specific sections of the web site (eg for the IODE Chairs, IODE project leaders, Chairs of groups of experts etc);
- (iii) enable the use of push technology to more effectively create awareness about IODE related events and activities in the IODE community (and beyond);
- (iv) provide an easy to navigate web presence.

It was hoped that by decentralizing authority for IODE site content to the relevant experts within the IODE community, the site would become more in line with 'what lives' in the IODE community, rather than concentrating on activities of the Secretariat.

Early 2001 the Secretariat undertook a survey of dynamic content management systems and considered Tomoye (previously known as Worldtree and presented by Mr Greg Searle at IODE-XVI) among other solutions. Unfortunately the cost of these solutions were very much beyond IOC's means (upwards from US\$ 40,000) and thus another survey was undertaken for low cost solutions that could be customized to IODE's needs. This led us to DCP, an open source application developed in Turkey. This application was tested and found to respond to our needs.

A first site based on this solution was launched on 5 June 2001:



The site used a simple programme oriented structure including:

- About IODE
- Projects and Activities
- Document Library
- Forum
- Members
- FAQ

Users could register. Following registration they could select on which categories they wanted to be notified of new content.

Based on the stability of the application and the messages of appreciation from users we decided to further develop the application. For this we contracted the author of DCP. We further decided to use the 'content type' concept that differentiates between 4 types of content:

- **the substantive content:** the text of the page (like the text in a traditional web site)
- **documents:** links to electronic documents that are combined in an electronic library (MS-Word or Acrobat PDF format)
- **links:** links to web sites or pages in web sites external to the current site
- **events:** announcements of meetings, training courses, conferences, workshops etc. In general this includes a link to the web site related to the event within our outside the current site.
- **forum:** a discussion forum where users can discuss the content of the page containing 'substantive content'

In order to assist the IODE Secretariat with the implementation and further development of the DCMS (dynamic content management system) application, the IOC/IODE Secretariat

was joined, as from September 2001, by Mr Benjamin Sims as ‘information services developer’. He coordinated the development subcontracted to the DCP author between March and April 2002. Several intermediary versions were used for the ODINAFRICA partner web site between April and August 2002. On 9 September 2002 a first release of the so-called BeeBox software was launched through the IODE web site.



“BeeBox is an open source application for the development of Community portals. Its architecture allows multiple authors to submit content. The system further allows multiple administrators who can validate submitted content prior to publication. The system uses easy WYSIWYG interfaces for content input.

The dynamic content management system used by BeeBox enables visitors to easily see what is new in the site as the homepage lists new items added in the different categories. Content is organized in the site by ‘categories’ defined by editors and administrators. Under a category sub-categories can be defined. Content within a category or sub-category is then either textual content, reference to e-documents, reference to web sites, reference to discussion for a category, or reference to an activity (calendar item).”

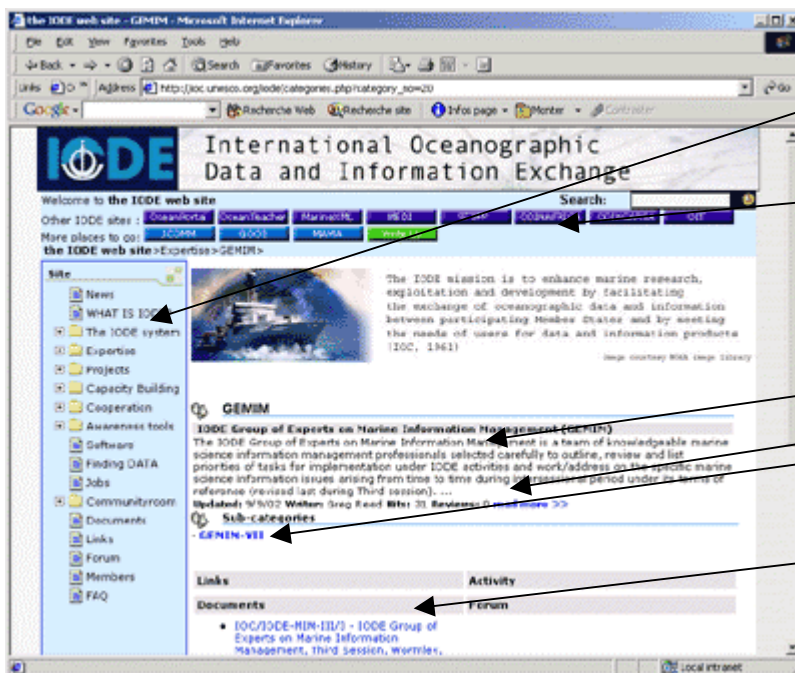
The new ‘look’ of the IODE web site is displayed below:



Main Features of BeeBox:

- expandable navigation menu
- upcoming events calendar
- list of new items in homepage
- news section
- categories and subcategories: tree structure
- content type concept (text, documents, links, events, forum)
- cross linking between categories
- content informer (can be set to send updates to all members or only to those that selected particular category)
- remember last visit for registered users: when a registered user logs on he/she will see, on the homepage, only the items that were created since his/her last visit
- detailed logging of visits to individual pages as well as of downloads of documents
- QuickLink bar to enable shortcuts to specific internal or external pages/ sites
- Multiple administrative levels
- content validation by editors
- writer function (allocation of write permission to specific categories)
- freely available from the IOC/IODE Secretariat

View of a category:



Navigation menu

QuickLink buttons

Summary of content

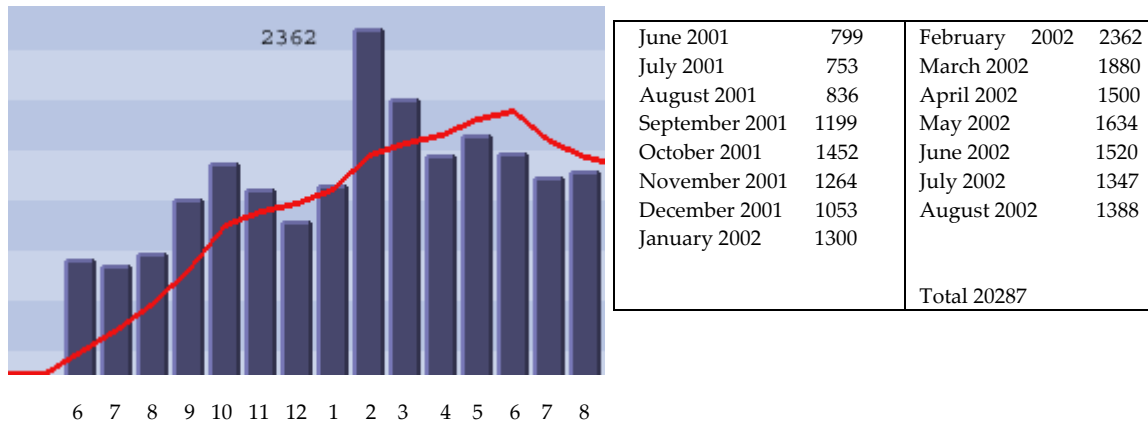
Link to see more

Sub-categories

Links to e-documents

User statistics

Whereas previous statistics logged 'requests' for individual pages, whereas the new statistics system logs requests of the home page only. This is more comparable to 'visits' and better reflects the number of users that visit the site. The results were as follows for the period June 2001 – September 2002:



Origin of users

Continent of origin

1.	Europe	9764	45.4 %
2.	Asia	4263	19.8 %
3.	North-America	3709	17.2 %
4.	South America	1199	5.6 %
5.	Australia	700	3.3 %
6.	Africa	340	1.6 %
7.	Central America	209	1.0 %
8.	None (.net, .org)	32	0.1 %
9.	Unknown	1300	6.0 %

The figures on geographic origin of the visitor show that Africa and Central America still represent a small minority and that the majority of the visitors live in Europe, Asia and North America.

ACTION REQUESTED FROM THE COMMITTEE

The Committee is requested to (i) comment on, and evaluate the new IODE site; (ii) provide guidance to the IODE Secretariat with a view of improving the site; (iii) evaluate the BeeBox software and make recommendations for its further development.

The Committee is requested to consider the target audiences of the site.

The Committee is requested to identify editors for selected categories in the IODE site who will take responsibility for (a) identifying authors for specific subject areas within the scope of their category; (b) validating content within the scope of their category; (c) promoting the IODE web site at the national and/or regional level and attract content.

1.2 ODINAFRICA Partner site

<http://www.odinafrica.net>

This site is running under BeeBox and is maintained fully from Mombasa, Kenya by the ODINAFRICA Regional Information Services Centre.

1.3 OIT site

<http://www.oceans-it.net>

This site has been set up but is not yet used.

1.4 MarineXML site

<http://www.marinexml.net>

This site is running under BeeBox and is being maintained by Greg Reed. Other editors will be identified.

1.5 Other IOC sites

Other IOC programmes have implemented BeeBox for their web sites with the assisting of the IOC/IODE Secretariat. These include ITSU, JCOMM, IOCINCWIO, GLOSS-Africa. In addition IOCARIBE, HAB, and IOC are considering shifting to BeeBox as well.

2. IODE BROCHURES AND POSTERS

In order to promote IODE and its activities a set of six posters were designed and printed. They include:

- IODE general poster
- OceanTeacher
- OceanExpert
- OceanPortal
- ODINAFRICA
- ODINCARSA

Copies of all six posters have been sent in August 2002 to IODE National Coordinators, members of Groups of Experts, as well as to partners in ODINAFRICA and ODINCARSA. They can be requested by email.

In addition a brochure was prepared on 'Ocean Services' for WSSD. This brochure contains a large section on IODE. It is available from the IOC/IODE Secretariat.



ACTION REQUESTED FROM THE COMMITTEE

The Committee is requested to (i) comment on the posters and brochure; and (ii) recommend future posters and brochures to promote IODE.

3. IODE NATIONAL AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

IODE National Coordinators have been requested to report on their activities to promote the visibility of IODE ([CL-2039 - FOLLOW-UP TO IODE-XVI WITH REGARD TO PROMOTING THE VISIBILITY OF IODE \[Sent: 1 August 2002\]](#)). Responses will be made available as an Addendum to this Document at a later date.