

EAAE website development | Status report

5th May 2017

1. BACKGROUND

As decided on the Lisbon Council meeting (07/2016) and confirmed by the EAAE General Assembly in Delft (09/2016), the Council started to redesign the EAAE website. Dalibor Hlavacek, with the Secretariat support (Inge Lens, Emma Boelen), were assigned the development of the new website.

2. CURRENT STATUS

Dalibor Hlavacek with his team prepared a brief for the graphic concept and high-end specification of the front-end and back-end. The Secretariat continuously cooperated in this process to ensure that the website maximally fits the needs of both the member schools and the EAAE itself.

Graphic designs of every unique page were prepared. After the graphic design presentation to the Council in Oslo, the work proceeded with the following steps:

- front-end templates of every page were designed, tested and approved
- back-end in WordPress was programmed
- interconnection of WordPress and mobile / tablet optimization was prepared

On April 18th a workshop was organized in Prague together with the web development firm representatives (Little Greta), the EAAE Secretariat (Inge Lens, Emma Boelen) and the EAAE Council representative responsible for the new website development (Dalibor Hlavacek). The current state of the website was presented and the 1st testing phase carried out.

After the Prague meeting the work proceeded as follows:

- incorporation of suggestions from the Prague meeting into the website design and functionality
- 2nd phase front-end and back-end testing (Emma Boelen, Dalibor Hlavacek, Karel Vujtek)
- transfer of data from old databases (Little Greta)
- upload of contents (Dalibor Hlavacek)
- purchase of webhosting (Emma Boelen)

At the moment, the EAAE website is filled with contents up to ca. 80% and ready for presentation to the EAAE Council in Rome.

3. NEXT STEPS

After the EAAE Council meeting in Rome, the uploading of contents will be finalized, final testing of front-end / back-end functionality will be performed and the website will be ready for deployment.

The new EAAE website is a logical step in the development of the EAAE as a “hub where the European Schools of Architecture exchange information and debate architectural education”. The online portal is the EAAE display. It has to become a mirror of the network that has been created throughout the last 40 years.

This revolutionary step in the EAAE life would not have been possible without Ivan Cabrera, who developed the website in the period between 2013 and 2017, and who defined the basic structure of the website, which was used as a cornerstone of the web redesign.

4. LOGO

Issues with the current logo (white space, shadows, no vector file available, no version with text available) lead to the proposal of a new logo / updates of the current logo to make it more usable in different sizes and give it a more contemporary feel. These proposals were presented on the Oslo Council meeting.

The Council decided:

- Keep the two languages in the logo: it fits with the spirit of the organization and with the logo (eg. Letters in the logo can change places, depending on the language).
- The council cannot completely change the logo or its color, but may update it to modern standards (no shadow, no unclear lines).

Following the decision from Oslo, the current logo was updated. This updated logo can be presented in Bordeaux as part of the 40th anniversary celebration and will also be used on the new website.



5. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

With the new website launch, the need for EAAE communication strategy became more relevant than before, taking into account the website contents, newsletter and social media.

EAAE can easily reach people by using the online media tools. Already, there are a number of contacts available:

- Facebook: 1110 fans
- Twitter: 197 vloggers
- Statistics of the current website
 - Visitors in the week between April 24th and April 30th: + - 2.900
 - Visitors in the month of April: 13.600
 - Visitors over the duration of one year: 119.553

Newsletter Subscribers: +- 700 with an open rate of an average of 43% (which is a very good open rate). The numbers show that there is a very solid base of contacts available, which the EAAE Council needs to treat with care and respect. This contact base should rapidly increase due to the new website and a more visible possibility to subscribe the newsletter. It is important that EAAE, as an organization, involves its members not only in the face to face contact but also in the online approach.

How can we accomplish creating a good and solid online approach?

There are three stakeholders in this online portal.

1. Members

- Shown on the website (own page, own responsibility but with support of the secretariat)
- Possibility to create own contents (event, job vacancies)

2. Members to be
 - Clear explanation why become a member
 - Showing the richness of the EAAE community and its actions
3. The EAAE fans
 - Individuals not directly related to EAAE but interested in the EAAE life (workshops, conferences, etc.)

The communication is not a one-man job, but team work of the Council members and the Secretariat. It is necessary to always keep in mind that the communication of a conference / congress / publication / can / should also be distributed online. Therefore relevant and quality contents should be available ahead of time.

To give an example: an event should not only be announced beforehand, but a short report with pictures of the event should be shared afterwards on the website and on social media. This way it will be shared not only with the attendees, but also with the wide EAAE community.

Another topic is creating our own contents.

1. Interviewing Key Speakers, council members in picture, ...
2. Brief reports / summaries of the events (in case the contents is supplied to the Secretariat)
3. ...

The launch of the new website should also be used as an opportunity to restart the communication with the EAAE members and motivate them to use the EAAE web portal.

This is what the new web portal should work towards:

- It should be an extension of the network
- It has to be professional
- It has to show trustworthy information
- It has to serve as a promotional service for members as well as for the conferences and workshops
- It has to be alive and kicking (instead of static)

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