

www.genetics.org.uk

The newly redeveloped Genetics Society Website

by Paul Craig, web developer

If you've clicked onto the Genetics Society website within the past month or so, you'll probably have noticed a few changes. This Genetics Society news supplement is designed to give some background to those changes and tell you how to make the most of the newly redeveloped site.

Navigation

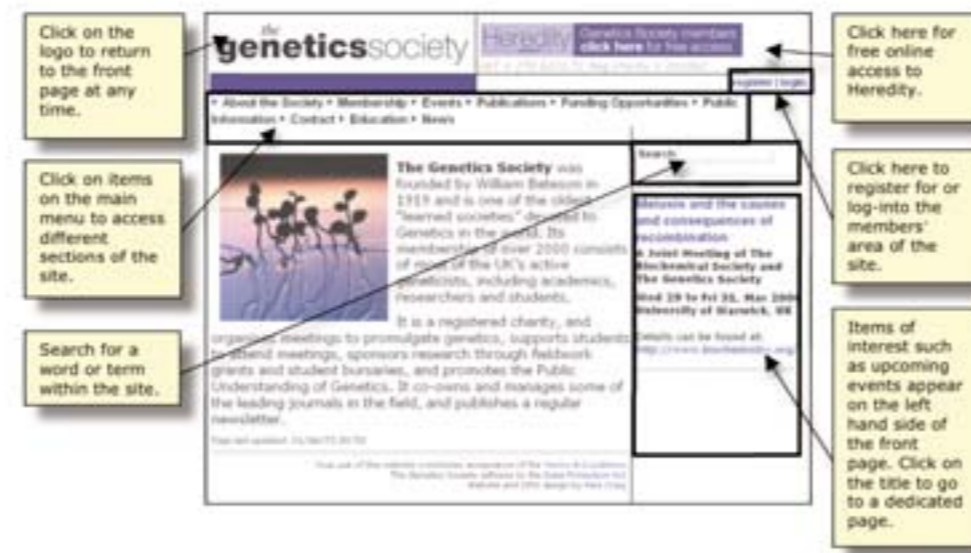
The figure below shows the front page of the new site. The page header is more or less consistent throughout the site. Clicking on the Genetics

Society logo returns to the front page of the site. Clicking on the Heredity journal banner, to the right of the logo, gives free online access to Heredity for all Genetics Society members who can provide their surname and membership number. The lower right-hand-side of the front page lists any important news items such as imminent Genetics Society meetings. Clicking on the title of a news item takes you to a dedicated page with further information.

Below the Genetics Society logo on the front page is the main menu for site navigation. This

provides access to the ten main sections of the site. These are; about the society, membership, events, publications, funding opportunities, public information, contact and news. The site search box (below the main menu) can be used to access pages within any section containing a particular word or phrase.

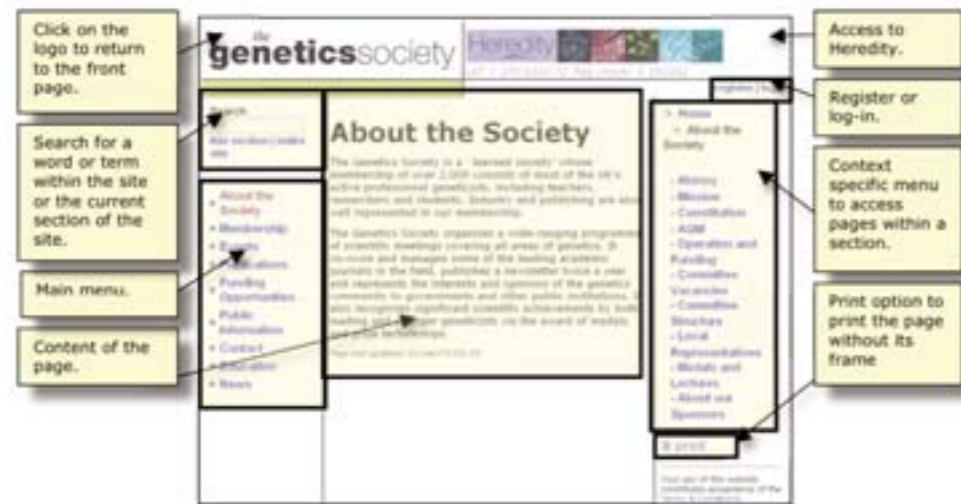
Pages away from the front page have a different layout from the front page (see overleaf). This includes an additional context specific menu providing access to pages related to the current page being viewed. There is also the option to print the main content of a page (without menus or the page header) and have the results of a search restricted to relevant pages.



Front Page of the Genetics Society website

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An internal Page of the Genetics Society website



are four main options. These allow the logged-in user to update their details (as held on the Genetics Society database), change their password, advertise an event on the site or share public information resources.

Updating contact details

When in the members area of the site, clicking on 'update details' initially displays the current address and contact details of the logged-in member. If these details are out of date or otherwise incorrect, clicking on 'correct' displays a form allowing details to be amended. Once entered, the new details are posted to the Genetics Society offices for updating on the main database. The update details option should be used whenever your contact details change. This should help ensure that postings from the society arrive at the right location. It is important to realise that new details are not updated immediately on the website, but require the main standalone database to be updated and selected data from that database to be uploaded onto the site. This is to ensure that online updates do not conflict with those made to the main database.

Style

The outward design of the new website is focused on accessibility and consistency. Here, inspiration has been drawn from the design of the Genetics Society newsletter with a simplistic colour scheme and the use of lines both to separate elements and frame the main content. As people generally prefer reading narrow columns of text (scrolling the text vertically rather than scanning horizontally) and multiple columns are difficult to configure for different screen sizes, the main text is concentrated into a single column in the centre of a page with other page elements flanking it on either side.

Consistency of text formatting, links to documents, lists of items etc is enforced throughout the site.

This ensures that a user doesn't have to adjust to different styles and, overall, gives the site a more professional feel.

Content

Another important aspect of the new site design is the accuracy and relevance of the content. Here, the content of the website changes over time with the potential for pages to become out of date or lose their factual accuracy. While there is no absolute way to ensure that this never happens, the design of the new site accounts for the possibility of discrepancies and allows for them to be easily resolved by the site administrators.

In the first instance, to prevent pages becoming out of date, they are given a date to go offline automatically. This

prevents those pages from being misread or detracting from other more relevant content. For minor factual discrepancies, pages can be updated online within a few clicks by any authorised website administrator. These updates can be either to the main content of a page and/or any other areas of the site that might summarise the content of a page such as the front page or a list of events.

Organization

The new design of the Genetics Society also changes the way information is organised. For example, the events section of the site lists all the events in chronological order (nearest event at the top) giving a brief summary of each. Further information about an event can be obtained by clicking on the title of that event to go to a dedicated page.

The sections for publications and funding opportunities contain similar lists. The publications section has a list of publications with related links such as Genetics Society news issues contained in the summary. The funding opportunities section has a list of opportunities or opportunity types with associated links such as online application forms.

The news section of the site outlines any recent updates. These can be events, publications, general announcements or any area of the site that has been changed within the last month or so. Each item has a summary and these summaries are listed in chronological order. Again, clicking on the title of a summary brings up a dedicated page with more detail included.

Logging-in

While most of the site content is accessible to the general public, there are a few areas of the site that can only be accessed by Genetics Society members. Among these is the free online access to Heredity. This can be accessed from any page but requires the user's surname and membership number.

Other areas of the site are only available to Genetics Society members when they are registered and logged-in.

Registering for the members' area requires a current Genetics Society membership number and a valid email address. Once registered, a password is randomly generated and sent to the email address provided. This password can be changed within the members' area of the site. If the password is forgotten, a new password can be sent automatically if the email address used to register is provided. This is done from the standard login page.

Once logged-in a new option, 'Members area', is included in the main menu. Clicking on this option accesses the members' area of the site. Within the members area there





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Information and Guide to Plant Genetic Engineering
 Keywords: GM Crops
 Michael Bevan John Innes Centre Norwich UK
 The purpose of this report is to describe GM technology, to explain how it differs from plant breeding, and to outline future developments in this area.

file	size
Plant Genetic Engineering.doc	663.5 KB
Plant Genetic Engineering.pdf	168.1 KB

Page last updated: 21/3av/00:59

A public understanding resource in the members' area of the site.

Advertising an Event

The 'Advertise your event' section of the members' area allows members of the society to advertise events within the external events section of the main website. Clicking on 'Advertise your event' brings up a form which must be completed to outline the event. Once the form is completed, its contents are posted to the society offices and the event is reviewed to go online.

Events to be advertised on the site might include workshops, conferences, meetings or any other type of event that might be of interest to other members. The advert should include a title, dates and a short description of the event. It can also include an image or a link to an external webpage.

Public understanding resources

The public understanding resources section of the site allows members to share resources that can be used to increase the general public's understanding of genetics. Typically these might include powerpoint presentations or word documents. Files can be uploaded onto the website server. These are limited to 2 megabytes and should include a title, description and keywords that allow members to find a resource that they might want to adapt for their own purposes.

So far there are only a limited number of resources available on the site. It is, however, hoped that this number will increase as members become

more aware of the facility and find themselves more willing to contribute.

Conclusion

As the main developer of the new site, I hope that it continues to function well. I really believe that a good website can do a lot to promote the society and serve the interests of its members. So far, I have been encouraged to see updates, meeting registrations and membership applications going ahead quite smoothly. I look forward to seeing more event adverts and public understanding resources in the future.

If you have any comments about how the site might be further developed or altered, please get in touch with us via the contact page.

