

Minutes for ACCU Committee meeting

24 November 2019, via Hangouts

Meeting started 2:30PM.

1. Attending

Bob Schmidt, Guy Davidson, Patrick Martin, Matt Jones, Roger Orr, Jim Hague, Rob Pauer

Apologies for absence

Felix Petriconi, Phil Nash

2. Minutes from last meetings

The committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting (September)

3. Actions in progress from previous meeting

Note: the Google Sheet for actions is here:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RMTorasYR_A94VBjv-Dn6ghhTVWLbW0w1ekhN994qFI

Actions from previous meetings:

119	Nigel: GDPR to create steps to take on breach and similarly procedure to handle takedown notices - Patrick to confirm all is done
122	Bob: update the very old advertising card
139	Matt to pass on the Meetup admin role to Phil to help the local groups
140	Phil to write up and pass round his suggestions for local group affiliations
143	All: suggestions to define some central storage solution for ACCU documents. etc. consider GDPR
144	Roger: to investigate the implications on web based publications of receiving a takedown notice and ACCU's liability
145	Bob: to investigate the arrangement in place with Alison to identify the procedure for adding adverts into the publications
146	Phil: Local groups: propose to add "affiliated groups" section underneath - Phil to send details to Bob
147	Felix: to contact Russel for ability to email Youtube authors.
148	Patrick: to investigate the use of Bloomberg auditorium

Actions added by this meeting:

4. Reports

4.1 Advertising

From Bob: Nothing new to report.

4.2 Conference

From Felix:

Regarding the conference: Currently we have four keynote speakers and the committee is within the review process of the session proposals. We have a meeting in Heathrow on December the 7th to create a draft schedule. Everything is here on track.

From Roger: feedback from Belfast

3 tracks

100 attendees

Some local company interest for sponsorship

Archer Yates' view was they thought it went well for a first conference

Some issues with the hotel

Most attendees were non-ACCU

Slightly fewer proposals for Spring - IRL meeting on the selection in Dec., but still fine to fill program.

Question was raised: should there be a TLD for each the conferences?

The thinking being people visiting a simple URL for conference info would not be confused by a call for papers (say) for the other conference.

Action for Roger: discuss the ideas of TLDs for each conference in person

4.3 Local Groups

From Phil:

Really sorry - not able to make it today!

For my parts: groups proposal mostly written up, but set back because of a failed Meetup Pro experiment (I thought we'd be able to consolidate all the groups under one account - but turns out that then costs \$30 per group! So back to the drawing board (most of the rest still applies, but I now need to go over it again).

Best regards,

Phil Nash

4.4 Membership

From Matt:

Membership figures are here as usual:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_DBWE4ya54atjshnEMzA4qdWEa-bagJVc4A36u_YOpQ/edit#gid=11

We sent 100 copies of November's Overload, and a pile of back issues, to the Belfast conference. I have no idea whether they arrived, but presume so!

Apart from that, nothing to report.

Action for Matt: to investigate creating new membership class to allow conference attendees to get a 6 month trial membership - Matt to investigate scripting creating/updating new accounts. The idea is to avoid overlap with the following conference

[Roger confirmed they did arrive in Belfast and were out for delegates to take away .]

4.5 Treasurer

From Rob:

Re: insurance

2 kinds of insurance

Public liability

Officer Insurance

For the latter: there have been issues for getting approval of the appointment process

Open issues:

Vetting process

Complaints process

Rob to email the details around to us with an aim to proceeding with public liability, possibly with a cheaper provider and the requirements for officer insurance still seem problematic - this should not hold up the public liability.

Otherwise: the finances are steady and predictable.

4.6 Publicity

No report. ACCU sponsored TechFest in York

4.7 Standards

From Guy Davidson: the C Vu editor is happy with the recent reports

4.8 Website

From Bob: Latest C Vu is plugged in. Daniel James in continuing to update the process for generating the ePub. Some work has gone into making the QBS adverts come out better on the part of Daniel, and QBS has been asked if they have better more mobile-suitable copy.

From Jim:

Apologies all. I won't be able to make it this afternoon.

With regard to hosting and the current website, there is nothing new to report. Everything seems to be working as per usual. I made some small link emendations to the main site correcting the destination of some links for the Autumn Conference at Felix's request.

With regards to my work on an alternative, I have made some progress. If you examine <https://newsite.accu.org> and look at the journals section, you'll find indexes of CVu and Overload articles. I have completed a Flask module to allow access to CVu only to currently paid-up members, but I have not had time to install the necessary Apache-fu to get this working on the sample site; instead all CVu articles lack permissions to be read, apart from those from 1996 (i.e. the bottom few of the index).

The index is produced using metadata in each article's .adoc, and Hugo's taxonomy function. As you can see, the current index is very basic. Much more is possible, but this (as with so many other aspects of making a site) is a question of templating.

This time I have remembered to upload the article images as well.

For those that are interested, there are updated docs on the article file structure I'm using, plus the process of extracting data from Xaraya and how I'm processing it. These can be viewed at <https://github.com/accu-org/hugo-site/tree/master/doc>.

Otherwise, I have to admit I have spent more than I should spinning my wheels trying to improve translation into AsciiDoc. In fact the current data has probably gone a little backward in that respect; I found myself in a dead-end and have had to backtrack a bit.

Bob suggested to me that we could use the existing HTML. My motives for wanting AsciiDoc everywhere were for consistency of the final HTML; I'm worried about the effect different HTML styles (and the article HTML style has changed over the years). I'll note also that several articles contain HTML errors - unknown tags, typically - so we can't necessarily regard the existing content as uniformly golden. However, I do recognise that my fears may be groundless; this coming month I shall try and experiment further with using the existing raw HTML in the current Hugo theme and see what it looks like. I do have a sample article produced this way at <https://newsite.accu.org/test/>.

I've approached Daniel James and Jez Higgins for assistance. I'm hoping to see Jez in Oxford on Tuesday, and have yet to get round to asking Daniel to do anything concrete. See spinning wheels.

My thoughts on the overall topic of a new website remain centered in two places:

- 1. I still believe that a flat file, git-based workflow best fits the*

organisation's skillset. I would not regard extracting the current site from one opaque database (Xaraya) just to feed it into another (e.g. Wordpress) as a crash-hot idea long term. I have experience of running and using Wordpress, and while it has its place, I do not think the editing and workflow options I know are really suitable for us.

2. Regardless of the website tech, I think the really crucial issue is theming. Apart from the obsolescence and consequent security vulnerabilities of Xaraya, its big fault is that it looks so outdated. This is one area where I don't think we, as an organisation, even begin to have to have an applicable skillset. We will have to either adopt an off-the-shelf theme, and risk looking like a lot of other sites, or get our own made, which won't be cheap.

The current website has a fair collection of different functions, which are not all obvious to the casual observer (e.g. book reviews, membership management, some long-forgotten blogs). There is also the issue of keeping existing URLs working where that makes sense (something I do have provision for with journal articles). Replacing the site in its entirety is not simple; hence my current focus on trying to replace the main shopfront, the front page and the journals Only.

From Patrick: Github pages are restricted, but have some good features, just to raise something from the left-field?

From Rob: some ballpark figures for the work might be £10K- £20K, and the finances would support that well.

4.9 Social Media

No report

4.10 Publications

Nothing new to report

5. Any other business

5.1 YouTube monitoring contract with Jim Roper / alternatives, such as reddit (from Bob)

From Bob: Bob had some conversations concerning pricing models: this likely is delaying a start on December 1. Priority is getting this in place before new conferences

5.2 Status of the officers and liability insurance project (from Bob)

Already discussed.

5.3 Book review partnership w/ No Starch Press (from Bob)

(discuss possibility of using their books for CCC; have conference committee contact them to see if they are interested in sponsoring conference)

A book review was passed onto Ian.

Sounds like we have a new relationship for getting books to review. We have prior history, and this looks promising.

Matt to get the contact details so they can get a complimentary account and perhaps even consider advertising in the magazines.

5.4 O'Reilly partnership (from Bob)

This initiative requires a link on website, committee will be emailed the details offline for their views.

5.5 Alternate web site options. (from Bob)

Already discussed

5.6 Proposal for Ian to be given a complimentary membership

Given there is such an initiative for the new volunteers to have their efforts recognised.

Agreed by committee - Bob will contact Ian.

6. Date of next meeting

The date of the next committee meeting will (provisionally) be Jan 19 @ 2:30, via the usual Hangout