

**VP Electronic Presence**  
Report to the 2012 Summer Meeting of the Policy Council  
Submitted by Bob Eberlein July 9, 2012

## **Summary**

We have moved the main website to a content management system (Wordpress). The new site, using the visual format from the conference site, contains the key pages that are frequently updated with links back to older pages for less used portions. Many of these will be incorporated into the new content management format though some, such as conference proceedings, will continue to be presented as static pages. We, continue to make changes to the web submission system (soon to be renamed as the Web Portal). A subdomain has been added for tools in conjunction with a forthcoming publication in the SDR.

## **Content Management System**

The main website has a different appearance and is now based on a Content Management System (Wordpress). This allows web pages to be edited directly using a web browser simplifying updating and preventing issues with different people making updates to different pages and having those changes potentially conflict with one another. The transition was enabled by a burst of activity at the central office from Roberta, Robin Langer, Jaehoo Jong, Katrina Hull and Weijia Ran (introduced below).

**Volunteers:** Special thanks go to Vedat Diker from the University of Maryland who spent several days in Albany working with Roberta and the team to move the site to its new format. Many of the photographs displayed on the site header were taken by Dan Langer (who is related to Robin by marriage).

Weijia Ran has joined the Central Office staff as a graduate research assistant. Weijia has experience with web site design and will be working to improve the appearance of the web site and resolve known issues with viewing the site on smart phones.

The conference website uses the same software and layout and its development laid the foundation for the main website. It is being maintained as a separate Wordpress Instance with common themes and formats. Thanks again to Bart Steverink for help on the conference site theme and menus.

## **Webmaster**

The movement to a content management system allows the editing of pages by multiple people without needing to worry about one person's changes overwriting another's. This greatly simplifies file management.

So, while it would be good to have a volunteer webmaster, we have not been successful in finding someone to do this and now have an effective way of working with less burden on Robin to be sure that things are in sync.

We have had a little more luck finding people willing to take on time limited activities and with Wordpress in place hope to attract more volunteers to update specific content and keep the website both current and informative.

### **Tools, cases and more**

The subdomain tools.systemdynamics.org was created in response to a request by Rogelio Oliva that the Society host a tool described in a Notes and Insights contribution to the May, 2012 issue of the System Dynamics Review by Ignacio Martinez. The site lists tools available for developing and working with System Dynamics models and can also be used to host open source software such as SDM-Doc which is now available on the site.

This structure is parallel to cases.systemdynamic.org, which continues to be maintained on a volunteer basis by Navid Ghaffarzadegan.

### **System Dynamics Web Portal**

What has been called the Web Submission System is being renamed to the Web Portal and is being given a modest face lift. We hope, during the fall, to finally incorporate the membership directory into the Web Portal which will simplify access to the directory as well as the load on the office of updating member information.

We continue to make changes to the Web Portal in response to conference and office needs and expect to make a number of refinements during the fall.

### **The System Dynamics Discussion Forum**

Discussion of Policy Council matters has been moved to SDForum and the email list discontinued. This is primarily to allow archiving of electronic discussion without placing an unreasonable burden on the Central Office.

The amount of activity on the forum remains modest.

To be consistent with other practice we will probably move the forum to forum.systemdynamics.org and provide a redirect from the current location.

### **Wiki**

The Wiki has been removed. Some of the content from that may yet be included elsewhere.

## **The Student Twiki**

The Student Chapter has developed and is using a Twiki hosted on our website. This seems to be working fairly well and is maintained by members of the Student Chapter.