

Reimagining the organisation's website

Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)



ASSOCIATION SUCCESS STORY



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PROJECT

Reimagining the website of the Union for International Cancer Control – www.uicc.org



SUCCESS ACHIEVED

How UICC re-built the association website into an award winning, dynamic, living, flexible platform; a true mirror of the bold and evolving nature of the organisation



ORGANISATION

Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)



DATES

January 2016 – June 2017



MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

UICC members share a passion to eliminate cancer as a life-threatening disease for future generations. Current UICC membership comprises more than 1060 member organisations in 166 countries and continues to grow. Our network brings together cancer leagues and societies; research institutes; treatment centres, hospitals, scientific and professional societies; ministries of health, public health agencies; and patient support organisations to shape cancer control on a global scale.



CATEGORIES

Website, Integration, Membership



Project Team at the association

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Partners

Inovae Web Agency (www.inovae.ch) – Our Web development agency, who led on the technical aspects. They provided guidance and expertise on many of the concepts, implementing the design, functionality and architecture and they are also responsible for our hosting solution and CRM.
 Motherbird (www.motherbird.com.au) – Our design agency which oversaw the look and feel of the website, ensuring the successful implementation of the UICC visual identity.
 For the Social Live tool, we used the social media stream from Publing (www.publing.co) and the news feed content is fed by Meltwater’s (www.meltwater.com/uk) news aggregation services. However, the implementation of the data streams and custom coding for the Social Live and News feed was done by Inovae.



Introduction

Since 2010, UICC has transformed as a membership organisation, moving from one with a passive relationship

with its members to one which is highly interactive. As the organisation has grown and developed, we have sought to align our website to the changing demands of our members. The last redesign and launch of uicc.org took place in August 2012. The 2012 version of uicc.org had a very clean and simple design. It presented a basic menu and a limited facility to navigate the content. The pages were somewhat static and we had feedback that they were difficult to read. This was particularly true of the “resources” section which was user-unfriendly and as a result, underused. You can still [view the old website](#).

In 2017, we sought to refresh the design and navigation to align it with our new business ambitions and priorities. We also applied a fresh new UICC visual identity which was concurrently applied across all UICC materials and events. We set out to deliver a more dynamic, flexible, accessible website with improved user experience, through better navigation by setting in place powerful search tools, better categorisation and tagging of content. In short, it needed to be a “living, breathing website” packed with top-quality content that was easy for the cancer community to find, discover and use.



Objectives

In 2017, UICC entered a new phase of growth and critical to that ambition was the re-purposing of the organisation’s website to support the business strategy with a suite of online platforms that support the delivery of its objectives, satisfying the needs of members and partners. The new website would have compelling content and the latest functionality to present our convening,

capacity building and advocacy agenda in a compelling and engaging way.

We therefore set out to make the website much more living and dynamic. We wanted UICC.org to be a hub - to help members and partners become aware of what is happening in the cancer community. We wanted to increase the engagement of our visitors with the content, by improving the presentation and quality of the content, introducing a Blog, improving the navigation, discoverability and searchability of content (with tagging/classification and an advanced faceted search) and by revamping the resources section to better showcase them. Consequently, the key metrics that we wanted to see improve were: number of downloads, average session duration, number of page views, bounce rate reduction. While an increase in traffic (sessions/users) was also a consideration, we were primarily concerned in enhancing the site's quality first and it is our hope that the traffic will increase as a consequence.

Background

Our initial plan was to make a light refresh to integrate our new visual identity and make some small improvements. However, we quickly ascertained that a complete revamp of the website was really necessary. We therefore started our research through an in-depth needs assessment, consisting in: reviewing web analytics, benchmarking websites of our members and networks, interviewing UICC's various teams and management, and reaching out to our members and partners to gather their feedback. Following this research, a "requirement specifications" document was drafted, shared and discussed with our external suppliers (our web development agency) which came back to us with some wireframes and novel concepts based on some of the ideas that were submitted in the requirement specs. Based on these, we set up a mock-up website and conducted some interviews with representatives of our members' organisations. It's important to note that since its launch in June 2017, we have continued to make improvements based on feedback (from internal and external users) and have continued to do so in 2018.

Activities

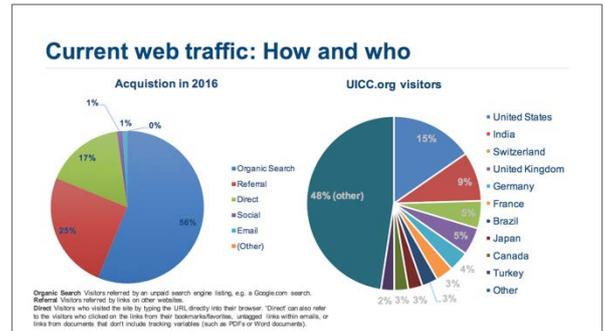
Starting with analytics

A good starting point in any web project is to look at the current data, so Google Analytics is where we started our journey. We tried to get a better picture of our web traffic, in order to understand:

- ≡ Who was accessing our website (the demographics),
- ≡ How they were accessing it (types of devices, mobile, tablet or desktop)
- ≡ How much time they were spending on the website,
- ≡ Getting a sense of the user journey/path,
- ≡ What were the top pages being accessed, and those poorly accessed.

All of this data was useful in understanding which of the metrics we were doing well in and which ones needed improvement.

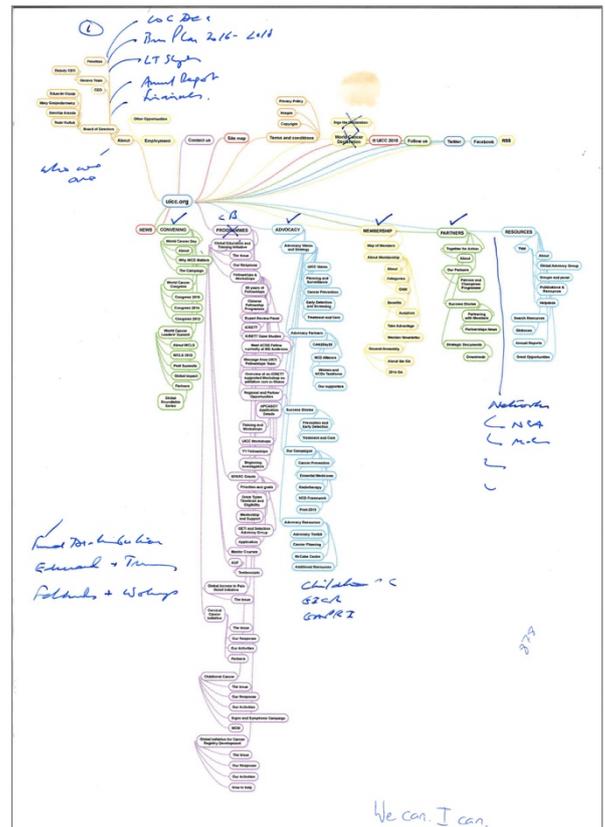
Figure 1 Previous website traffic



Needs assessment and requirement specifications

Our second step was to conduct a needs assessment, in order to draft the requirement specifications of the website. This consisted in interviewing the different UICC Teams to get their feedback, understand their needs and how they wanted to showcase their work. In some instances, they provided examples of websites they liked or features they thought we could benefit from on ours. We also met with our CEO, to understand his long-term vision for our organisation's online presence and how he envisaged the future structure of the website. We also took into account the feedback that we had received informally from our network of members and partners.

Figure 2 Site map with changes



Benchmarking

Following this first round, we started benchmarking, by looking at some of our member and network websites (and those recommended by staff members) for inspiration. Through this observation, we could see the different approaches to modern web building, and we also noted some common trends. Some websites were more geared towards story-telling and others more "practical"

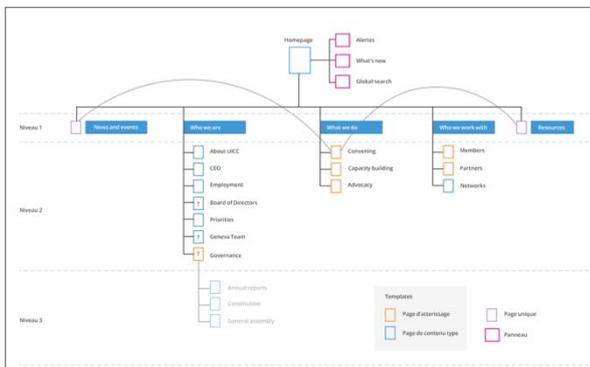
and functional; we strived to approach building our website with a bit of both.

A lot of these discussions and benchmarking led us into reworking the menu architecture and site map under four main pillars: Who we are, What we do, Who we work with and the Resources section.

While we did look at a lot of external websites, we also took a look at some of the features and functionalities that we had already implemented on our other websites (UICC runs www.worldcancercongress.org, our main congress website, www.worldcancerday.org our World Cancer Day campaign website, as well as www.iccp-portal.org, which is an international portal dedicated to Cancer Control Plans and resources). We had the advantage of having already experimented with some new features on these websites, and that experience really helped in taking those concepts to the next level with uicc.org.

The process of gathering feedback and information, and benchmarking, lasted a few months and culminated in the drafting of the requirement specifications document which also contained a series of recommendations.

Figure 3 Reworking the menu structure



Getting the buy-in from management

These findings and recommendations were subsequently presented to the UICC management team to get their formal sign-off.

Following their sign-off, the document was shared with our web development agency. They came back to us with a concept offer in the following weeks, with some wireframes* and early designs to get an idea of the look and feel of the website and the functionalities proposed.

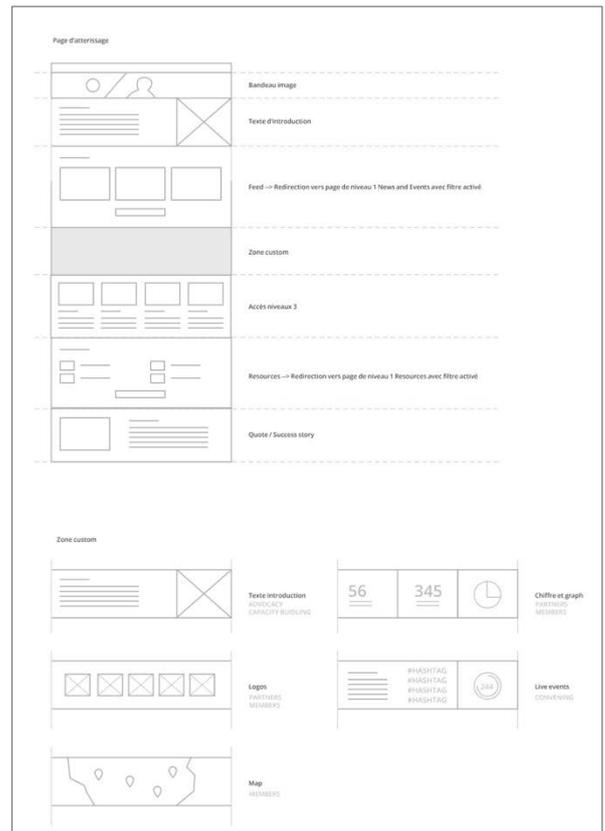
*A website wireframe is a visual representation of the basic layout and framework of a website.

After many rounds of refinements to multiple aspects of their proposals, we were provided a final offer, on which we agreed, along with a defined work and delivery schedule. We also agreed on a work flow, where every time a type of page (e.g. the homepage, a landing page, a resource type page etc.) was finalised in concept, it would then be sent to our designers for them to finalise the design; to make sure the end-product was 100% in-line with our visual identity.

Kicking off the development

The development work was kicked off and we set up weekly meetings with the developers to have progress updates and to discuss points that still needed clarification or decisions that needed to be made along the way. These weekly meetings allowed us to continue to refine the way features would work and find solutions to overcome technical hurdles.

Figure 4 Landing pages - Wireframe concepts



In parallel, the designers were also working on refining the different design elements. Every time they would deliver a new batch, we would provide annotated feedbacks on the design. This usually required several rounds for each type of page to ensure everything was perfect.

Prototyping and usability testing

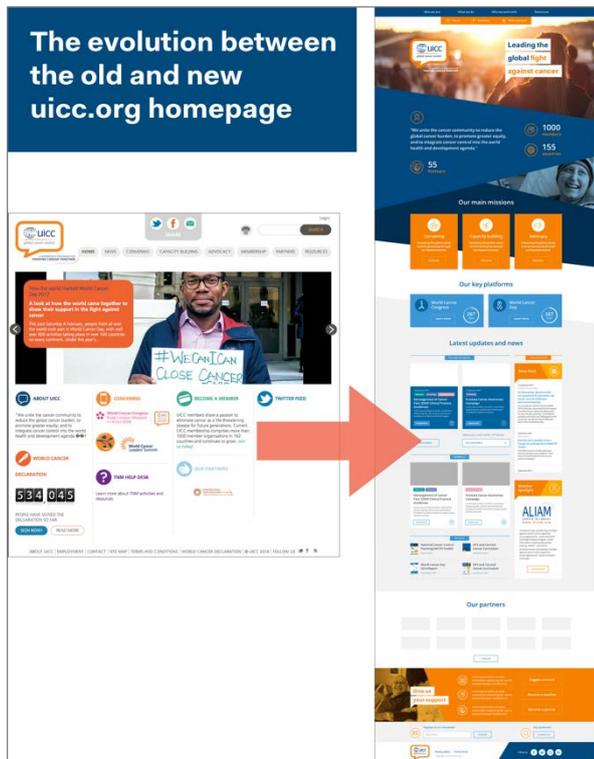
One of the efficient methods to refine the designs and functionalities was through the use of a prototyping apps/websites (e.g. www.marvelapp.com or www.invisionapp.com). These allowed us to load the early design mock-ups and create a prototype website with basic links created between the pages. This makes it much easier to get a sense of how the website is structured and how the different pieces fit together. While we started off using Marvel, the developers quickly switched to Invision, which proved to be much more powerful and useful in our prototyping phase, as it allowed direct insertion of feedback on the mock-ups themselves.

It was at this stage, with this “mock-up” website, that we conducted interviews and basic usability testing with some key UICC members to gather their feedback on key pages of the website. This invaluable feedback was then shared with the developers and designers and further refinements were made.

As development work progressed, and because our initial deadline was very short, we looked at a phased launch, prioritising features in different phases. Our initial plan had been to launch the new website in time for the 2016 World Cancer Congress (which took place from 31 October to 3 November 2016). However, it quickly became apparent that the amount of work that would be required to deliver the website was too consequent, especially while taking into account the other projects that needed to be delivered in parallel by the web agency and UICC

Team. It was therefore decided, with the backing of our CEO, to push the launch to a later date. At the time, this was a difficult decision to make, but in retrospect it was really for the best, as the thought of launching a website without some of its core new features was clearly unwanted.

Figure 5 Old website to new website



A first look at the future (and final touches)

In the first quarter of 2017, the first deliverables of layout, design and functionalities of the website were made to our staging server (the server where all the tests are made, before they are approved to be put into production, which is the real website everyone sees and uses). Over the next couple of months, regular rounds of tests were conducted to work out small kinks and errors and there were daily exchanges of feedback through emails and skype calls/chats with the developers.

Once most of the functionalities were delivered and the kinks resolved, we started getting the website ready for launch. This involved meeting with the assigned web-editors of each UICC team, to train them on the new functionalities of the website and to work with them to prepare their sections of the website and the content of their pages.

3, 2, 1... Launch

In May 2017, the website was presented to the Board of Directors for final approval before launch. The Board were extremely pleased with the website and the formal launch date was set.

The website was successfully launched on 7 June 2017, after eighteen months of work, including over 2,000 hours of project management, design and development time, involving over a dozen people, such as project managers, web developers (front and back-end, system admins), UI/UX designers from our web and design agencies, without counting the web-editors and many other supporters in this project.

It's never really over

The work didn't stop there however. Since the launch, we've continued to work on enhancing the website, following feedback we received and day to day testing. We are currently running a short survey to get some additional feedback and plan on also doing some further usability testing to improve existing features and look at future improvements.

It's truly been a wonderful learning experience. There were certainly plenty of challenges along the way, but the result and feedback has definitely been worth all the hard work and efforts.

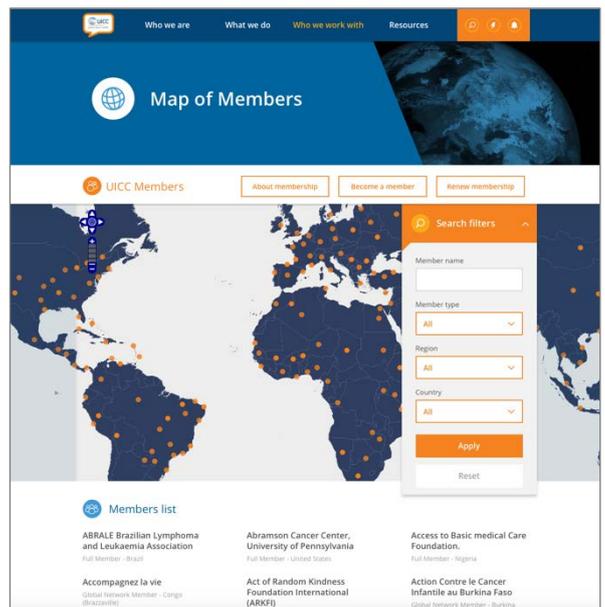
Promotion

We announced the launch of the new uicc.org on the new website itself of course, with a [news story](#). We also sent out a [special eBlast](#) (to our members and partners), highlighting some of the core functionalities (Social live and What's new). A series of [Social Media posts](#) were also sent out over the following weeks, [highlighting the new functionalities and features](#).

Tools & Systems

Our Content Management System (CMS) is [Drupal 7](#), which is closely interlinked with an open-source CRM aimed at NGOs called [CiviCRM](#). Our new members apply to UICC, through a web-hosted form which is directly connected to the CRM and automatically creates the member profile and all related contacts. The system is closely connected to our website, with all the information about our Members directly fed by the CRM. Visitors can view our worldwide membership through [the interactive Map of Members](#) (and search via the general search section). Additionally, on our dedicated event website [worldcancercongress.org](#), our programme information (speaker and organisations) is also interconnected with the CRM.

Figure 6 Map of members



For the Social Live tool, we used the social media stream from [Publing](#) and the news feed content is fed by [Meltwater](#)'s news aggregation services.

When designing and prototyping the website, we mainly used the prototyping app called Invision, found at invisionapp.com.

Challenges experienced

The main challenge, in many projects, but this one in particular, was time. Our initial plan and deadline to launch this completely revamped website proved overly ambitious finally. Some of the aspects of work, particularly, the refinement of the design, took longer than expected. This was also due to the challenge of coordinating the work between the developers and the designers. A lot of features and pages were continuously being refined, the way some of the functionalities would work had impacts on the design, and therefore these adjustments needed to be efficiently communicated to both parties. These challenges were overcome by regular communications between all parties, as well as periodic rounds of feedback and annotations on the different versions of the mock-ups. The prototyping tool also proved very useful in making sure everyone was on the same page and had a common understanding of how some of the features would function.

Other challenges included:

- ≡ Taking into account our diverse membership and their needs
- ≡ A website which contained a lot of content, including a resources section with much needed revamping and cleaning
- ≡ Delivering a coherent website and sections, while taking into account the diversity of areas of work, and their teams, which had different needs
- ≡ Finding solutions to deliver the new functionalities that never had been done before (even by our developers).

Results

Achievements

We set out to make the website a dynamic, living, flexible platform, a true mirror of the bold and evolving nature of our organisation. Increasing our visitors' engagement with the content and making the resources more accessible were key objectives and the increase in downloads have clearly showed this has been met. The "halo" effect on our other websites has also validated our strategy of building a powerful advanced search section. We also had set out pragmatic internal objectives, of giving the web-editors more powerful and user-friendly tools to enhance their ability to create more captivating pages to better highlight our work, without relying as much on the web developers. The increase in average session duration seems to support that this has been successful. We do have objectives that have not yet been exploited, but those mostly revolve around increasing the ways our CRM is integrated with our websites. It's also true to note that the work is never truly ever finished, there are always new features and improvements to introduce. We look forward to

introducing further enhancements and CRM integrations as our next big milestone.

Member experience

There are two key new features we've introduced which directly enhance the user experience by offering a personalised experience.

- ≡ **What's new:** <http://www.uicc.org/#toppanewgo>
The "what's new" section offers new and recurring visitors the ability to quickly discover the latest news, blog posts, upcoming events and new resources. The alerts panel provides a glimpse of the latest updates since the user last visited the site, using browser cookies.
- ≡ **Implementation of improved tagging of content:** Content on uicc.org is now tagged according to the areas of work, topics, cancer types, location, and more, to improve the searchability and discoverability of content. Moreover, the advanced search includes search filters to search through all of UICC's other websites (worldcancercongress.org, worldcancerday.org and iccp-portal.org) and / or our members' websites. These search technologies were custom built for uicc.org by our developers. UICC therefore acts as a portal / search engine for the highest quality cancer-related content. This is particularly useful for our members to more easily find what they are looking for.
- ≡ **The News feed:** located on the homepage in the latest news and updates section, the feed offers a collection of cancer-related articles fed from diverse sources.

Our aim was to offer a living and dynamic website that our users would find value in returning to in order to receive the latest news about the activities of the cancer community and we believe we've achieved this.

Figure 7 Promotion on Twitter

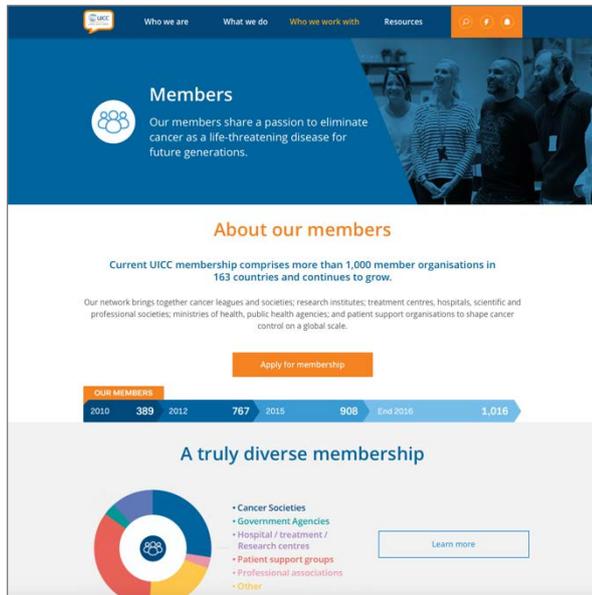


Statistics

UICC.ORG is visited by an average of 22k users per month. Since the launch in June 2017, we have been extremely pleased to see an increased engagement by our visitors, with an impressive 35.26% increase in downloads, a 24.5% increase in average session duration, as well as some more modest increases, such as number of page views (+1%), page views per session (+0.6%), and finally a reduction in bounce rate (-6.1%). In the last five full months, we have seen a steady increase in traffic and we are already levels higher than in previous equivalent years. One of our key objectives was to improve the visibility and usefulness of our resources

section and these initial numbers do seem to show that this objective has been met. Moreover, the other UICC websites have seen a “halo effect” of the launch of the new website, such as a dramatic increase of 90.3% in visitors to our cancer control planning portal (iccp-portal.org) through better visibility on uicc.org’s advanced search section. We should note however that large increases in traffic was not the primary objective of the project, but rather improved usability, engagement and synergy with our other platforms.

Figure 8 Members landing page



Financials

Our development and design costs amounted to about 150k CHF. While the website is a key tool for the “recruitment” of new members and partners, this is not its main purpose. We therefore had no special expectations of changes in revenue forecast.

Impact

The website is the window to our community. It gives our members and partners the opportunity to stay close to everything that is being undertaken in fight against cancer, worldwide. It is a contact point for over 1,060 organisations in more than 166 countries. We wanted it to be as “living and dynamic” as our membership. It helps fulfil a critical part of our purpose “to unite the cancer community...”.

In our recent membership survey (conducted in Oct. 2017), members have highlighted that the most important reason for being part of our membership, was: “to access, learn, and exchange knowledge, experience, and information among the global cancer community including the latest updates, best practices, and new research”. In the digital age, and where all of our members are geographically dispersed – having a first-class website is the fundamental way in which we are able to meet this objective. It also contributes to the other needs as identified by members:

- ≡ To support and contribute to the global fight against cancer
- ≡ To access tailored support and capacity building activities from UICC to build the capacity of the local

and regional cancer community to address cancer control

- ≡ To be a part of a recognised global cancer organisation and community and benefit from international visibility
- ≡ To support advocacy activities and raise awareness of specific issues
- ≡ To facilitate connections, collaboration, and networking with a wider cancer community
- ≡ To contribute to and participate in UICC campaigns and activities

Additionally, our members also shared the following comments about UICC.ORG (and in particular its resources section):

- ≡ “A great platform that has enabled us to find out about possible partnerships.”
- ≡ “Good resource and easy to access”
- ≡ “The resources add value to our programme information”
- ≡ “Good informative website”
- ≡ “Helps in the dissemination of information about cancer”.

As such, we are extremely pleased with the feedback and glad to see that the new website, with the focus we’ve placed on engagement and improving its searchability and the resources section, has especially had an impact on our membership and their work.

In February 2018, we received the award for “Best Association Website” at the European Association Awards 2018, which was an incredible achievement after all the work we put into this project. The European Association Awards Judging Panel 2018 had the following to say about our website: *“A well-structured, easy to navigate, informative website that offers great interactivity. Really complete at first sight - very user friendly.”*



Innovation

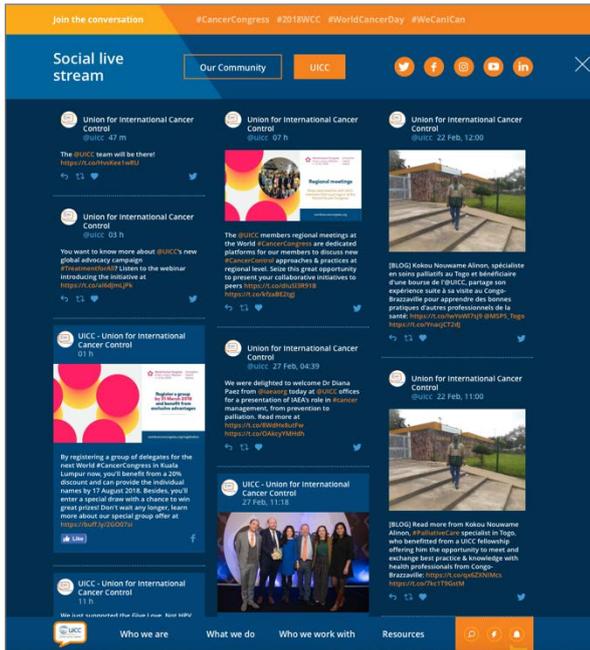
One of the unique new and innovative features we introduced to highlight our social media communications is the **Social Live panel** (<http://www.uicc.org/#toppanesocial>). The custom coded “social live” gives a bird’s eye view of not only UICC’s social media activity (on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube), but that of the cancer community - with the “Our community” section. This feature was challenging to implement, as we had to develop the concept, find the right supplier of the raw data, and the developers then had to develop the custom code.

As part of our online platforms strategy, UICC has more than one website. Each designed around a subject matter which is different and aimed at distinctive audiences. We run worldcancercongress.org, worldcancerday.org and iccp-portal.org, each providing varied elements of learning and inspiration towards the new uicc.org. Some of these features which have been introduced onto uicc.org include:

- ≡ A larger menu, improvements in navigation and the use of accordions as on worldcancercongress.org

- ⇒ Improvements to our membership map learning from the [Map of Impact](#) and the “sticky menu” on [worldcancerday.org](#)
- ⇒ Our faceted-advanced search section and search guides from [iccp-portal.org](#).

Figure 9 Live updates from social media channels



Another unique approach concerns the implementation of back-end improvements: we worked very closely with our web developers to implement improvements, which really give UICC’s web-editing team members the ability to build complex pages without coding or requiring the intervention of our web developers. While these improvements might not be as evident for our visitors, we still believe it comes through in the variety of pages we are now able to build to better present our work and that of our members and partners.

What we would do differently

While we did start working on the website with wireframes, we quickly moved to using design mock-ups. This approach helped us better imagine how the website would look like and how it would function, but it did also mean a lot of back and forth between the developers and the designers. If we were to do it again, we would probably have spent more time working on the basis of wireframes before working with the designs. One of the factors, which led us to work in this way was time. And as in any other big project, time plays a crucial role and we always wish we had more of it. We would have particularly benefited from more time to conduct additional usability testing. Overall though, we think the project and delivery went pretty smoothly, considering the amount of work it represented and the challenges we faced.

Feedback

“Not sure if you have a new team maintaining the UICC website... but, they can’t get paid enough given the content and the quality. It just keeps getting better”
“LOVE, LOVE the updated website! This version is even sleeker.”

The material shared on UICC website has been very useful in planning awareness campaigns, as we do have resource constraints in the area of producing good campaign material.”

“UICC website is very resourceful. It is rich in providing updates, capacity building options and opportunities, mentorship, training and funding opportunities etc. which PERFECTLY meet our purpose for joining UICC even though poor internet services hinders maximum benefits of accessing your programs.”

We also received some great feedback from the survey that is currently running on [uicc.org](#) itself. Over 92% of survey participants thought the website was visually appealing, and 81% of them felt the website met their needs and finally over 70% thought the new website had improved their user experience. They also left us some lovely messages and feedback. Here are a few direct quotes:

“Easy to navigate and informative”

“Keep up the excellent work”

“An important, and useful website. Well done.”





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