

# Redesigning the association's website on a budget

International Commission for Alpine Rescue



## ASSOCIATION SUCCESS STORY



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### PROJECT

Redesign of the association website in connection with the implementation of a new corporate design



### SUCCESS ACHIEVED

Redesigning the association's website on a budget, with one part-time employee



### ORGANISATION

International Commission for Alpine Rescue



### DATES

2014-2016



### MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

109-member organizations and 19 honorary members worldwide



### CATEGORIES

Website, rebranding



### Project Team at the association

- ≡ Tom Spycher – Secretary, part-time
- ≡ Rosaria Heeb – Treasurer and executive board member (volunteer)



### Discovery

Member and user feedback were collected by the ICAR Executive Board upon our annual convention. We looked around what other similar organizations had.

Then a small work group (including external technical support and graphic designers) created a corporate identity/design and drafted first new website layout versions.



### Partners

- ≡ Technology and programming: Extranetz AG, Liechtenstein.
- ≡ Conception and design: usgfuxt @ die Webgefährten, Austria.



### Objectives

- ≡ Professional appearance of the ICAR "corporate" identity/design
- ≡ Introduction of a new, more up-to-date ICAR logo
- ≡ User friendlier website structure (simpler, more logical, more intuitive)
- ≡ Plenty of visual impressions
- ≡ Complete, up-to-date (and where needed fully explained) content
- ≡ URL/domain name change from [www.ikar-cisa.org](http://www.ikar-cisa.org) to [www.alpine-rescue.org](http://www.alpine-rescue.org) (focus on English language)
- ≡ Prepare and guide the member community into the digital future (exchange and promote tools)



### Tools & systems

For our website content management, we use a Typo3 based CMS (Horde/Nexus).

Our website has an internal (members only) area, and the user administration for that (some 350 internal users) is integrated in our CMS. Also, there is a separate internal area just accessible by the 12 members of the ICAR Executive Board.

We still run our membership management on MS Excel offline (as we "only" have 109 member organizations plus 19 honorary members to take care of).



### Introduction

We are a small association with a volunteer Executive Board and just 1 part-time (30%, 12 hours weekly) employed staff at ICAR Office (handling the secretarial, the accounting and the webmaster tasks). Consequently, such projects are a major challenge for us and do require extended time until full realization.

Our previous website was lacking a clear structure, had plenty of incomplete content, the appearance wasn't identifiable as common ICAR content, and there was just text without any visual content.



### Timeline

- ≡ **January 2014:** Summarize the desired requirements, arrange budget, get external offers/first drafts, secure new domain name
- ≡ **August 2014:** Final decision on the drafts, technical implementation and initial basic content upload/relocation starts
- ≡ **January 2015:** New visual content is added step by step, as well as documents in the new ICAR corporate design

- ≡ **August 2015:** External cost slightly below budget, new website (with basic content) can now be presented to the ICAR community, more content (with support by the member community) constantly added
- ≡ **August 2016:** Project completed

## Activities

Initially we identified the needs of our main users / target groups: Members, Partners (Sponsors), ICAR Organizational Bodies. The ICAR website should be the common rooftop appearing in a clearly identifiable ICAR corporate design. There will only be one corporate logo. Commission/Sub-Commissions use their own workspaces outside of the corporate website depending on their individual needs (i.e. Dropbox, Evernote, etc.). The new ICAR website shall be user friendlier, give plenty of visual impressions besides plain text and shall provide useful links as well as downloadable documentation.

We looked around what other similar organizations had and started to adapt or website accordingly. Besides the new domain name, a new logo and corporate identity was implemented.

This required a corporate design manual and all sorts of document templates to be created and made available for online download (in the member only internal area of our website).

We also implemented a clearly defined document name giving concept, helping to immediately identify its last update and the organizational body it originates from within ICAR.

Once the technical rebuild / relocation was completed, the main and largest task (more than 500 hours in total) was to update and sort / streamline current content and then to add step-by-step the new additional content (including several hundreds of pictures, documents and links).

This was done over 2 years by the association's secretary (part-time 30%, 12 hours weekly), besides the regular day-to-day tasks (member and partner administration, corporate correspondence, annual congress coordination, billing and payment administration).

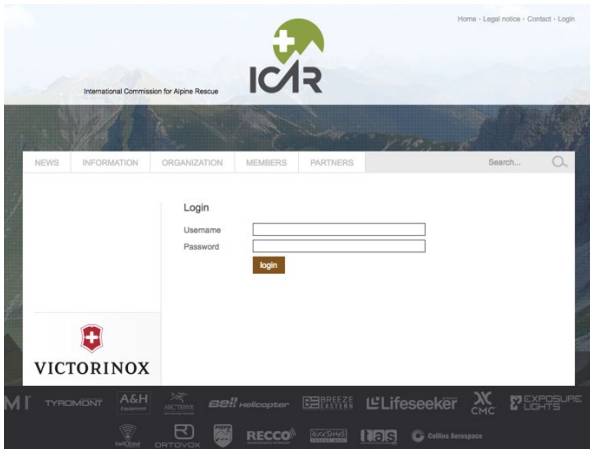


Figure 1: Member log in area

In order to be able to provide internationally interesting content (events, trainings, incidents, news on community known persons, etc.) we invited and motivated our

community to actively submit such information and got a lot of support in that respect.



Figure 2: Site menu, first website proposal

The more international content was visible online, the more international interest too it came up. A win-win situation for all involved.

Then we focused on the user paths on our new website and made sure that all needed information is available where it is needed. This helped to considerably reduce inquiries by e-mail ICAR Office had before the website redesign.

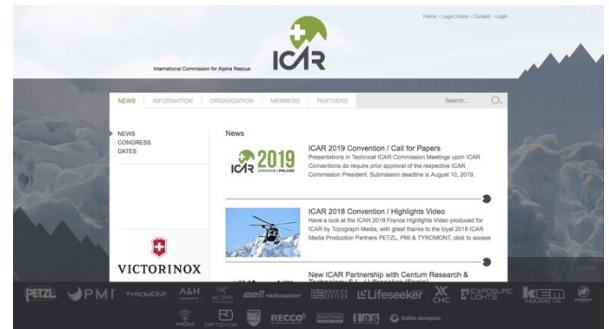


Figure 3: Home page screenshot

The website redesign project was a development of our existing basic IT infrastructure.

## Innovation

The creation of our new ICAR corporate identity/design and the implemented visual impressions on our website were the innovative aspects.

## Challenges

The limited budget and personal resources did not allow us to set up a completely new website, or the realize the project in a shorter amount of time.

## Achievements

Besides the main, public sections of the website, there is an internal (member only) area and additionally a small section available to ICAR Executive Board Members only. All major objectives of the project have been achieved. Nevertheless, we don't want to rest on our laurels and we are already planning to implement an association app next. This app will extend (or eventually even replace) the current (member only) internal website area and will allow

member/user interactivity and facilitate more networking within the community.

| ID   | Sub-Section   |
|------|---|
| 1063 | News / Home   |
| 1062 | Congress  |
| 1064 | Dates   |
| 1049 | Basics (including statutes)                               |
| 1066 | Recommendations   |
| 1067 | Publications  |
| 1069 | Minutes   |
| 1088 | Glossary  |
| 1070 | Links   |
| 1047 | Assembly of Delegates                                     |
| 1074 | Executive Board   |
| 1075 | Terrestrial Rescue  |
| 1076 | Air Rescue  |
| 1077 | Avalanche Rescue  |
| 1078 | Alpine Emergency Medicine                                 |
| 1115 | Dog-Handlers  |
| 1081 | Members / Member Organizations                            |
| 1048 | Sponsors / ICAR Partnerships                              |
| 1082 | Legal Notice  |
| 1084 | Contact   |
| 1053 | Login   |
| 1085 | User Profile (internal area)                              |
| 1086 | Newsletter (internal area)                                |
| 1087 | Search Agent (internal area)                              |
| 1096 | Community Information (internal area)                     |
| 1089 | Statistics (internal area)                                |
| 1090 | Corporate Design / Logo (internal area)                   |
| 1093 | Regulations (internal area)                               |
| 1091 | Information (internal area, Executive Board Members only) |
| 1092 | Minutes (internal area, Executive Board Members only)     |

Figure 4: Website sub-section ID list

## Statistics & Targets

On the old website we did not have user statistics. On the new, redesigned website (after the project was completed) we installed Google Analytics, which now provides us with user statistics. We can now see the steady global annual growth.

- ≡ **Users:** 15'254 (2017) to 17'015 (2018) plus 11.54%
- ≡ **Sessions:** 24'843 (2017) to 27'357 (2018) plus 10.12%
- ≡ **Pages per Session:** 3.88 (2017) to 3.60 (2018) minus 7.39% (reason: more direct links via newsletters)
- ≡ **Average Session Duration:** 00:03:04 (2017) to 00:02:48 (2018) minus 8.65% (reason: content found quicker)



Figure 5: Google analytics report - users 2017 vs 2018

## Financials

We had a project budget of 10'000 EUR and were able to realize everything slightly below the full budget.

We expected an increase of site visits, wanted to attract more potential new member organizations and were looking for more partnerships (sponsors). In the end, all of that was achieved.

## What we would do differently

We would separate such a project from the every-day tasks and/or arrange extra personal resources for the project.

## Advice

Do not underestimate the task of maintaining a new website with permanently up-to-date content after its initial creation!

## Feedback & Testimonials

There was a lot of positive verbal feedback to this website redesign project.

The not so perfect search function on the website, and the fact that downloads don't come with the original file names (but with cryptic CMS database names), was criticized.

## Wider impact

The redesign of our website (and the introduced corporate design/identity) is one of several puzzle parts which helped ICAR to grow in recent years: From 70 member organizations (2014) to 109 member organizations (2019) in 38 countries worldwide. Today we additionally follow some 35 organizations on our membership candidate watchlist.

Also, we were able to double the amount of ICAR Partnerships (sponsors).

Phone and e-mail inquiries on association related information and documentation at ICAR Office have decreased considerably since the complete content on the redesigned website is fully available online.

