

Communications report of Dec. 11, 2017

Overall

Our social media followers continue to grow. We continue to take actions (pointing to letters, etc.) to highlight issues affecting our members (potential tax on grad student tuition) or where our members' expertise is relevant (climate change). Many of these issues are political – as a nonprofit, I try to make sure our stance is only about informing, no call to action (no “Call your representatives,” “Donate to this PAC,” etc.). It doesn't mean individual members can't call for action, of course, just that our society itself doesn't.

I set up GSuites for us, using a new domain systematicbiologists.org. We have a mixture of abbreviations we use online (systbio, sysbiol, sysbio, etc.) which leads to confusion. We also don't have much separation between us and our journal, and I think creating that could be useful long term (especially if we set up a second journal, as we've talked about in the past and which SSE has done).

GSuites hasn't gotten much use by us yet. It costs a few dollars per user per month. I've set up group emails with the hope that we can do something like email.president@systematicbiologists.org and it'll go to whoever our president is (maybe with a backup so that the past president can see it). As groups band together (letters written by AIBS, for example), we can miss out on the conversations if they have to keep track of the email addresses for dozens of presidents turning over every year across various societies. I'll start giving more instructions on using these addresses soon.

For SSB elections the intention is to have active campaigning, and candidates have been told this. This is great – having folks in the field talk about what SSB is, how it's meaningful to them, and how they want to improve / sustain it could help drive home the importance of a scientific society. I'll use our various media outputs to support this: post candidate blurbs various places, link to info, etc. (being fair to all candidates). btw, I was asked to run for something (thanks!) but declined, and I think it's a good policy for the communications director not to run in an election while they're serving – it prevents too much opportunity for conflict of interest. Not that anyone is likely to abuse this, it's just a pain to navigate (“we're all friendly here, so let's arrange names on the ballot by first name alphabetical. Oh, wait, my name starts with a B – is that ordering favoring me? Should we do last name? Should I post blurbs now, including mine, or wait until that one last candidate turns in his?”). We have a one year out of power rule for the council before you can run again, perhaps we should do the same for communications.

Not nearly as many Oxford issues requiring responses have come up on social media the past six months. We're still, as far as I know, the only society affected by their issues to talk about this openly. It's possible that this (plus the threat to switch publishers) has led to the improvements we've seen in the platform; other

OUP partners who have been silent still have problems (i.e., *SMBE's* journal *Molecular Biology and Evolution* still has articles with missing formulas and odd references: Sanderson 2002, for example).

It's been suggested that I form a committee to help with communications. I think it's a good idea, and I have a few candidates in mind, but I haven't done this yet. We should have at least one person in place for the Montpellier meetings – as I mentioned in last year's Portland meeting, given the timing of the meeting and my teaching schedule, I won't be able to make it to that meeting in person (I should be able to attend all but one hour virtually).

We've been calling attention to the format of Evol2018 meetings so our members hopefully won't be caught by surprise: talks in symposia, invited talks only, abstracts due in Jan., etc. This has been in tweets, facebook, the website, and mailings.

Facebook

On Facebook we have gone from 1,747 to 1,862 members since Jan. 2017. Autofeed of early access articles has started up again (Oxford RSS feed now fixed), but articles typically get a few likes but no discussion. I also post our various letters there. I've also quietly loosened restrictions on content (workshops, etc. of interest to SSB members can be posted) in a bid to get more activity. We've had little spam.

Twitter

Since January our number of Twitter followers has gone from 5,154 to 6,120.

Month	Tweets	Impressions	Mentions	New followers
Dec. 2016	8	18.3K	34	51
Jan. 2017	41	53.8K	101	102
Feb. 2017	24	34.9K	68	59
Mar. 2017	22	55.5K	52	64
Apr. 2017	22	28.8K	53	69
May 2017	14	32.3K	35	5539 (perhaps a bug in twitter analytics?)
June 2017	10	28.6K	12	28
July 2017	19	44.3K	73	92
Aug. 2017	16	78K	36	72
Sep. 2017	5	36.2K	49	90
Oct. 2017	11	32.4K	53	80
Nov. 2017	4	33.9K	31	59

MailChimp

We use mailchimp to communicate with our members. We still have the loop of me asking Oxford for our membership list, them sending it, then me using it to populate MailChimp. This should change with our new (yet to be selected) membership service. Given the per-account cost, we shouldn't switch all members to GSuite accounts.

One issue that came up was voting: we used Google forms for voting, which was set up to work for anyone with the link. One of our members sent the link to all EvolDir. We redid the vote, but this shouldn't arise as a problem again when we move to an external membership management service that can handle voting for us.

Website

We have kept the main website on Weebly. Long term moving to something like Wordpress or Github Pages might be nice (easier to update – the enforced GUI interface is deeply annoying).

Supplemental info

In the transition to Weebly any supplemental files we were hosting on our old site [dating from times before there were repos like Dryad] didn't make the move, but they are still present on our archived site (<https://github.com/systbiol/backups>). (actually, some of the issues with Oxford DOIs came to light when I was talking to Dryad about moving over the old data). Oxford has expressed interest in helping move files over to Dryad – I said we're fine with that. However, I imagine we'll ramp up on this once we've decided who our publisher will be.