

The New AOLS Website

By Ken Wilkinson, O.L.S., O.L.I.P. on behalf of the AOLS Website Committee

Our website now has a new more modern look. That being said, the really important news is that the entire site is being updated and modernized to allow for greatly improved on-line service to both members and the public.

So what is changing? The answer is - basically everything. Our website now employs an entirely new back end system that supports many really useful web features such as easy site administration, video, blogs, collaboration and news feeds. The new system also supports a new robust membership database with many new self serve options. This means that members will soon be able to update their profile, sign up for courses and pay their fees directly online through the website. Other new features include:

- improved ability for the public to find a surveyor through a mapping service
- support for the new AOLS learning site
- production of a yearly printed directory and
- a new document collaboration area for committee and Council members

The revamped aols.org will also provide the public with improved accessibility to the many educational and informational materials that have always been on our website but were previously very difficult to find.

One thing that will not change is that members will continue to be able to access website content and documents based on their current roles and responsibilities. For example, committee members will continue to have exclusive access to their committee documents.

The New Design

Although the new website back end features are vital to supporting our association, it is the new design that will really stand out.

The design was developed based on three principles:

1. AOLS is the definitive professional body for the practice of land surveying, providing information, and serving the public interest.

The design had to reflect a professional association that has had a long history of governing the practice of land surveying in Ontario. The new site also had to demonstrate that the practice of land surveying continues to be relevant and vital to the people of Ontario and around the world. The fonts, colours and look and feel throughout the site were chosen to provide a feeling of both stability and openness.

2. The AOLS site is a dynamic resource for a wide audience, not a static source for a few.

The site was required to be a resource to clients, students, other professionals and especially the membership. The website is made to be as open as possible to the public without sacrificing the requirement for a strongly protected members' side. The new site was designed for maximum flexibility and ease of use for the content updates by AOLS staff without the need for assistance from the website developers. The new site will continue to offer and support key resources such as items for sale and job postings.

3. Privilege the search.

The main reason members and others come to aols.org is to get authoritative information not available anywhere else. The 'privilege the search' design means that the entire site is driven by the requirement for visitors be able find exactly what they need with as few 'clicks' as possible. This design reduces visitor frustration by reducing the amount of time spent browsing the site looking for a document which is buried deep within the website.

Please visit the new site when it is launched and let us know what you think. The site will continue to be improved and developed so your constructive comments and suggestions will be greatly appreciated!



Sites to See

GoGeomatics Canada

<http://gogeomatics.ca>

GoGeomatics is the largest and most popular job board in the Canadian Geospatial industry. The job board allows you to search for jobs in GIS, remote sensing, surveying, geodesy and engineering. You can also post jobs and resumes for free.