Improving the EMBL-EBI online experience
User-Centred Design & Inspiration from the BBC

Jennifer A. Cham, Paula de Matos, Francis Rowland, Rodrigo Lopez & Brendan Vaughan

On 4th March 2013, the European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) launched its new website. The site reflected the systematic ‘rethink’ of EBI’s diverse online services. The redesign followed a user-centred design (UCD) process, where the requirements and behaviour of users guided the decisions for the design and navigation. Our aim was to create a new website that is both useful and easy-to-use for life science researchers. Please email your comments to feedback@ebi.ac.uk

Dec 2006 Last EMBL-EBI website launch
Since 2006, a lot has changed: for example, there are new web technologies, mobile devices are used more frequently for the web, and there are new trends in web design.

Oct 2010 Online User Survey
Analysis of the 3,500 survey responses from our users showed that there was scope for improvement in the navigation logic, look & feel, and searchability of our website. Further motivation for the redesign came in the form of users’ comments, feedback from training course participants, and email help requests.

May 2011 Internal Consultation for Requirements
Each team at EMBL-EBI, as well as close collaborators, were asked about their needs for the new website. Teams brainstormed answers to key questions to determine the direction of the redesign.

June 2011 Magnetic Wall
We had a large space to collect ideas from colleagues on what we should keep, and what we could do in the future on our website.

July 2011 Formed Working Groups
For planning and executing the redesign project, we formed small groups including staff across several service teams. The groups were: Strategy, Policy & Management, User Representatives, User Experience Design, Information Architecture, Search, Research.

Summer 2012 Prototyping & Styleguide
We formed a web guidelines committee of developers and user experience analysts to make the final decisions on the web design guidelines.

August 2011 Implementation phase
Development of the website was coordinated by a project manager. We used an intermediate platform for development and testing. One service acted as a pilot to follow the new styleguide and guidelines, before the other teams followed.

Winter 2011-2012 Usability testing
We evaluated various aspects of the new website design with users, including the search boxes, header designs and search options. All testing was based on scenarios and tasks, and used either paper prototypes or interactive html mockups.

Jan 2013 Trouble-shooting phase
In the weeks before launch, final fixes were made to our pages. EBI’s services are diverse so some needed bespoke “tweaking”. The redesign was not implemented retrospectively, so some service teams opted to carry through the full rewrite of their pages to their next scheduled website release cycle.

Improving the EMBL-EBI online experience
User-Centred Design & Inspiration from the BBC

Jennifer A. Cham, Paula de Matos, Francis Rowland, Rodrigo Lopez & Brendan Vaughan

On 4th March 2013, the European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) launched its new website. The site reflected the systematic ‘rethink’ of EBI’s diverse online services. The redesign followed a user-centred design (UCD) process, where the requirements and behaviour of users guided the decisions for the design and navigation. Our aim was to create a new website that is both useful and easy-to-use for life science researchers. Please email your comments to feedback@ebi.ac.uk

Dec 2006 Last EMBL-EBI website launch
Since 2006, a lot has changed: for example, there are new web technologies, mobile devices are used more frequently for the web, and there are new trends in web design.

Oct 2010 Online User Survey
Analysis of the 3,500 survey responses from our users showed that there was scope for improvement in the navigation logic, look & feel, and searchability of our website. Further motivation for the redesign came in the form of users’ comments, feedback from training course participants, and email help requests.

May 2011 Internal Consultation for Requirements
Each team at EMBL-EBI, as well as close collaborators, were asked about their needs for the new website. Teams brainstormed answers to key questions to determine the direction of the redesign.

June 2011 Magnetic Wall
We had a large space to collect ideas from colleagues on what we should keep, and what we could do in the future on our website.

July 2011 Formed Working Groups
For planning and executing the redesign project, we formed small groups including staff across several service teams. The groups were: Strategy, Policy & Management, User Representatives, User Experience Design, Information Architecture, Search, Research.

Summer 2012 Prototyping & Styleguide
We formed a web guidelines committee of developers and user experience analysts to make the final decisions on the web design guidelines.

August 2011 Implementation phase
Development of the website was coordinated by a project manager. We used an intermediate platform for development and testing. One service acted as a pilot to follow the new styleguide and guidelines, before the other teams followed.

Winter 2011-2012 Usability testing
We evaluated various aspects of the new website design with users, including the search boxes, header designs and search options. All testing was based on scenarios and tasks, and used either paper prototypes or interactive html mockups.

Jan 2013 Trouble-shooting phase
In the weeks before launch, final fixes were made to our pages. EBI’s services are diverse so some needed bespoke “tweaking”. The redesign was not implemented retrospectively, so some service teams opted to carry through the full rewrite of their pages to their next scheduled website release cycle.

Improving the EMBL-EBI online experience
User-Centred Design & Inspiration from the BBC

Jennifer A. Cham, Paula de Matos, Francis Rowland, Rodrigo Lopez & Brendan Vaughan

On 4th March 2013, the European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) launched its new website. The site reflected the systematic ‘rethink’ of EBI’s diverse online services. The redesign followed a user-centred design (UCD) process, where the requirements and behaviour of users guided the decisions for the design and navigation. Our aim was to create a new website that is both useful and easy-to-use for life science researchers. Please email your comments to feedback@ebi.ac.uk

Dec 2006 Last EMBL-EBI website launch
Since 2006, a lot has changed: for example, there are new web technologies, mobile devices are used more frequently for the web, and there are new trends in web design.

Oct 2010 Online User Survey
Analysis of the 3,500 survey responses from our users showed that there was scope for improvement in the navigation logic, look & feel, and searchability of our website. Further motivation for the redesign came in the form of users’ comments, feedback from training course participants, and email help requests.

May 2011 Internal Consultation for Requirements
Each team at EMBL-EBI, as well as close collaborators, were asked about their needs for the new website. Teams brainstormed answers to key questions to determine the direction of the redesign.

June 2011 Magnetic Wall
We had a large space to collect ideas from colleagues on what we should keep, and what we could do in the future on our website.

July 2011 Formed Working Groups
For planning and executing the redesign project, we formed small groups including staff across several service teams. The groups were: Strategy, Policy & Management, User Representatives, User Experience Design, Information Architecture, Search, Research.

Summer 2012 Prototyping & Styleguide
We formed a web guidelines committee of developers and user experience analysts to make the final decisions on the web design guidelines.

August 2011 Implementation phase
Development of the website was coordinated by a project manager. We used an intermediate platform for development and testing. One service acted as a pilot to follow the new styleguide and guidelines, before the other teams followed.

Winter 2011-2012 Usability testing
We evaluated various aspects of the new website design with users, including the search boxes, header designs and search options. All testing was based on scenarios and tasks, and used either paper prototypes or interactive html mockups.

Jan 2013 Trouble-shooting phase
In the weeks before launch, final fixes were made to our pages. EBI’s services are diverse so some needed bespoke “tweaking”. The redesign was not implemented retrospectively, so some service teams opted to carry through the full rewrite of their pages to their next scheduled website release cycle.

Improving the EMBL-EBI online experience
User-Centred Design & Inspiration from the BBC

Jennifer A. Cham, Paula de Matos, Francis Rowland, Rodrigo Lopez & Brendan Vaughan

On 4th March 2013, the European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) launched its new website. The site reflected the systematic ‘rethink’ of EBI’s diverse online services. The redesign followed a user-centred design (UCD) process, where the requirements and behaviour of users guided the decisions for the design and navigation. Our aim was to create a new website that is both useful and easy-to-use for life science researchers. Please email your comments to feedback@ebi.ac.uk

Dec 2006 Last EMBL-EBI website launch
Since 2006, a lot has changed: for example, there are new web technologies, mobile devices are used more frequently for the web, and there are new trends in web design.

Oct 2010 Online User Survey
Analysis of the 3,500 survey responses from our users showed that there was scope for improvement in the navigation logic, look & feel, and searchability of our website. Further motivation for the redesign came in the form of users’ comments, feedback from training course participants, and email help requests.

May 2011 Internal Consultation for Requirements
Each team at EMBL-EBI, as well as close collaborators, were asked about their needs for the new website. Teams brainstormed answers to key questions to determine the direction of the redesign.

June 2011 Magnetic Wall
We had a large space to collect ideas from colleagues on what we should keep, and what we could do in the future on our website.

July 2011 Formed Working Groups
For planning and executing the redesign project, we formed small groups including staff across several service teams. The groups were: Strategy, Policy & Management, User Representatives, User Experience Design, Information Architecture, Search, Research.

Summer 2012 Prototyping & Styleguide
We formed a web guidelines committee of developers and user experience analysts to make the final decisions on the web design guidelines.

August 2011 Implementation phase
Development of the website was coordinated by a project manager. We used an intermediate platform for development and testing. One service acted as a pilot to follow the new styleguide and guidelines, before the other teams followed.

Winter 2011-2012 Usability testing
We evaluated various aspects of the new website design with users, including the search boxes, header designs and search options. All testing was based on scenarios and tasks, and used either paper prototypes or interactive html mockups.

Jan 2013 Trouble-shooting phase
In the weeks before launch, final fixes were made to our pages. EBI’s services are diverse so some needed bespoke “tweaking”. The redesign was not implemented retrospectively, so some service teams opted to carry through the full rewrite of their pages to their next scheduled website release cycle.