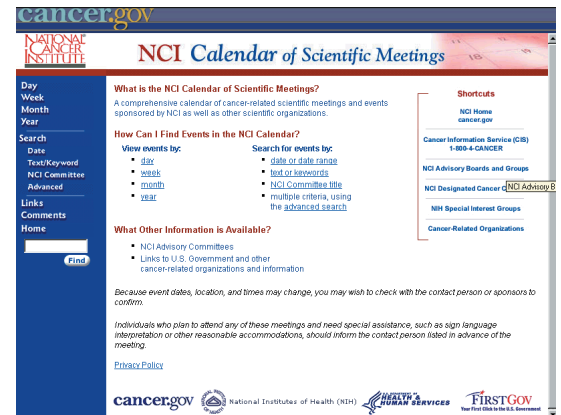


## The Challenge

Turn an existing, primitive system into a fully-fledged "proof of concept" according to others' rough designs. Then make the prototype serve the enterprise almost immediately, ensuring uptime and user satisfaction.

## System Background

The system was developed in response to a request from the Director of the NCI for an Institute-wide calendar system that would include cancer-related scientific events, and internal and external advisory of activities across the NCI.



## System Description

The NCI Event Calendar provides centralized access to current and historical information about meetings and events related to:

- NCI Chartered Advisory Committees
- NCI Planning and Oversight Groups
- Cancer-Related Scientific Meetings, Conferences, Symposia, Seminars and Workshops

Some of the other uses include:

- Planning attendance at future meetings
- Checking dates when planning meetings to avoid scheduling conflicts
- Determining staff availability
- Checking the archive of events to see if a particular topic was discussed
- Identifying the dates of past and future meetings of an event or committee
- Promoting cancer-related events to the NCI community and the public
- Finding Internet links and contact addresses for major cancer-related scientific organizations
- Searching for types of events using keywords or text matches

Users may search for events:

- by date or within a date range
- using any word or phrase, or choosing from a list of key words
- by categories or titles
- by multiple criteria, combining the date keyword, and/or title search with other search features in order to be more selective

Calendar data can be reutilized for such purposes as electronic information kiosks. Events can be automatically extracted from the NCI Calendar and displayed in a special format on the information kiosks.

A network of Calendar Liaisons from each NCI Office and Division has been established to provide decentralized data input and oversight of events from their respective offices. Not only can events be designated as "Invitation only" or "NCI staff only", but the NCI Calendar also has two views:

- The "Internal Staff View" for events that are announced to "NCI staff only" on the NCI Intranet version of the NCI Calendar
- The "Public View" for events that are announced to the "public and NCI staff" and are displayed on both the public Internet view and the NCI Intranet NCI employee version of the Calendar.

Yes, it can be done!

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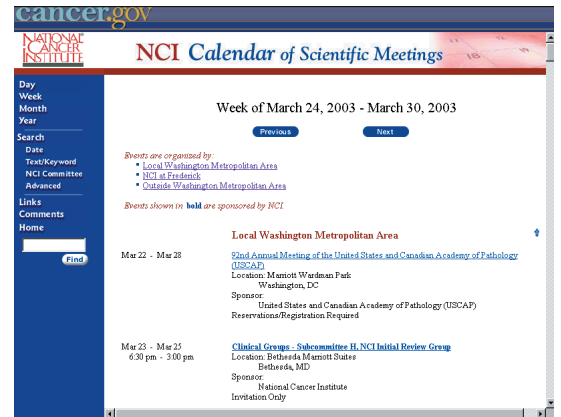
In addition to the public and NCI staff-only views, there is a separate interface for the Calendar Administrator, as well as for data entry persons (Calendar Liaisons). Both are controlled by a secure log-in.

The NCI Calendar interfaces with the NIH Calendar of Events (the "Yellow Sheet"), which TCG built, so that information provided by NCI staff to the NIH Calendar of Events is automatically sent to the NCI Calendar system, facilitating the exchange of information and eliminating duplicative effort.

## The TCG Solution

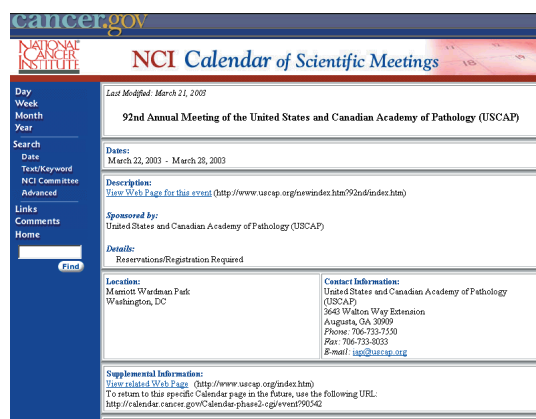
TCG had to completely rewrite the underlying code and the database to work with a structured Oracle format, although the screen design remained as we had first created it. The new database included the following features:

- keyword, title, building editors
- group access capabilities for internal and external (NCI employees and public) users
- support for large kiosk displays in NCI buildings
- inclusion of Kiosk administration editors
- nightly update of kiosk screens
- weekly e-mail service for weekly internal events
- support for multiple types of events (scientific meetings, internal groups and kiosk specific events)
- full context (free text) search capabilities of events
- daily checking of URLs in the database



## Technology Used

- The database server is Oracle 7.3.3
- Apache Web server 1.3.3
- Both the Web server and the database are running on the same system, a Sun Ultra-1 running SunOS 5.5.1
- The scripts are written in an SGML-based language called DAT (Database Access Tags) which allows SQL statements to be embedded into HTML.



## Outcome

The NCI Calendar has been serving NCI users and the public for 6 years. Work is distributed to the individuals best equipped to conduct it. NCI saves money by centralizing and reutilizing the data. The technology is scalable and extensible; the enterprise is served appropriately by a flexible tool. The public is able to learn more about cancer-related scientific events through the Web browser, therefore serving NCI's mission of cancer education.