Project ALPTER web site – User's guide

Foreword: static and dynamic sites

Internet sites can be divided in two categories: **static and dynamic sites**. The pages in a static site must be manually created, using a particular programming language (HTML, Javascript, etc.). In a dynamic site, on the other side, the pages are generated automatically according to the information contained in a database.

Dynamic sites generally present two different interfaces:
- **the external interface,** that can be seen by all the internet users;

- **the internal interface**, accessible only to the users admitted at publishing contents on the web site; this interface is usually defined as C.M.S. (Content Management System).
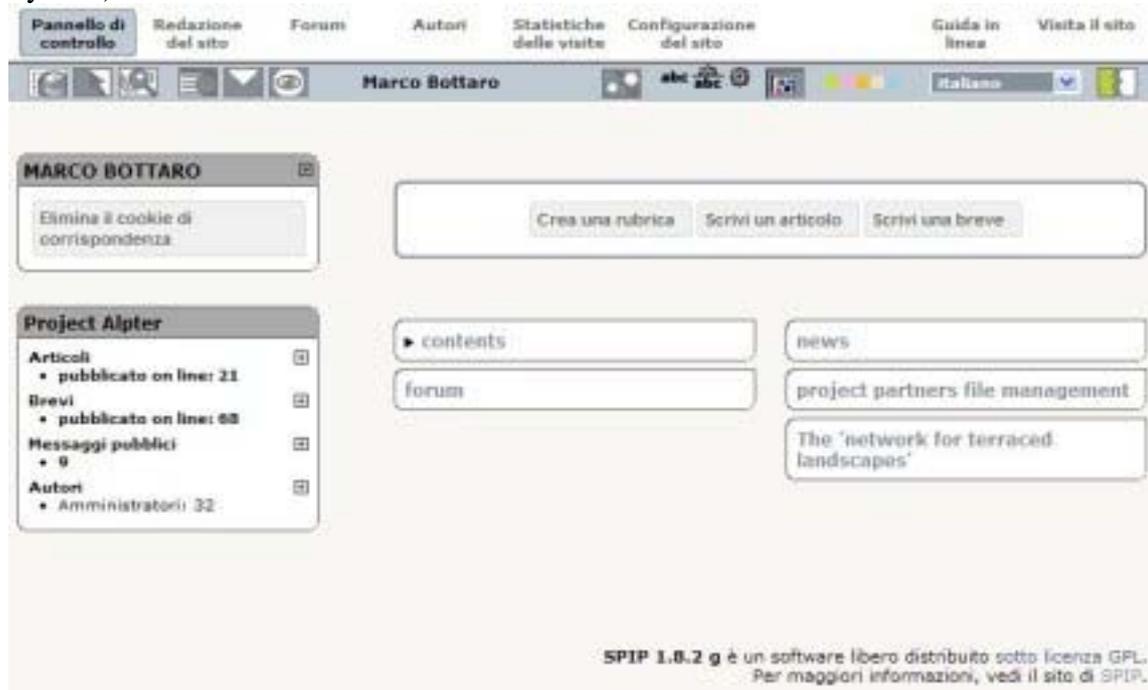
The internal interface makes a dynamic site much easier to upgrade than a static one: it can be used by anyone, also by users that haven't specific competences in computer programming.

The web-site www.alpter.net has been created using S.P.I.P., a free software (GPL) among the most complete and effective actually on the market for creating dynamic sites.

The system of content management can be accessed through an authentication page, clicking "login" on the menu in the left column. [http://www.alpter.net/ecrire] . There the user must insert his username first and then his password, as given during the meeting in Genoa.

Inserting contents in the web site

Sections

The contents of the ALPTER web site have been organized in the following folders (sections).
Contents
- Documents
Forum
News
Network for terraced landscape
Project partners file manager (dedicated to file sharing)

Articles

The contents on the web site are usually published in the form of 'articles'.
Each article is composed of the following fields:
- Top title
- Title
- Subtitle
- Text

The *title* is compulsory. The *top title* and the *subtitle* are completely optional. If you do not need them, leave them blank, the site layout will adapt automatically to their presence or absence.
The *text* of your article as its name suggests.
However, there is one point which could create a problem: the length of the text. It happens sometime that if the text is too long (bigger than 32 Kb), it is truncated or indeed rejected during its transfer to SPIP. This problem is not caused by SPIP, but by the web browser that you are using. If you find yourself with a very long text for one browser, try to use another one. The article text is very well suited to the use of SPIP's typographical shortcuts.

Typographical shortcuts

To make the layout of the documents published by SPIP easier, the system offers a number of «SPIP shortcuts» which:
- simplify matters for users who do not know HTML;
- make it possible for page layout to be processed automatically.

Creating paragraphs

To create paragraphs, you simply leave a blank line, a bit like separating paragraphs in a e-mail (by «skipping» a line).

The simple «line feed» (enter or return) without separating the two paragraphs is insufficient to create a new paragraph (as a matter of fact, it does not even create a line feed).
You can leave several consecutive blank lines without any effect on the layout.

Creating bulleted or numbered lists

You can create **lists** in SPIP in the same way as in an e-mail: you only enter a line feed and start the new line with a dash («-»).
Notice that, here, a simple line feed is enough (you can create lists in the same paragraph); but if you leave a blank line before the one beginning with a dash, then a blank line will appear before the list

For example,
- I like work;
- it fascinates me.
- I can sit and look at it for hours. (Jerome K. Jerome)

will display:
- I like work;
- it fascinates me.
- I can sit and look at it for hours. (Jerome K. Jerome)

You can create **nested lists** by adding asterisks after the list dash.

For example:
-* Your horse is:
-** chestnut;
-** bay; -** black;
-* but my rabbit is
-** white:
-*** angora
-*** or short-haired.
gives:
- Your horse is:
    o chestnut;
    o bay;
    o black;
- but my rabbit is
    o white:
        ▪ angora
        ▪ or short-haired.

- Lastly, ordered list can be made using the following symbol # instead of the star:
-# first
-# second
-# third

returns:

1. first
2. second
3. third

Bold and italic

You specify a text in italic by placing it between simple braces:
«...some text {in italic} in...».
returns:
«...some text *in italic* in...».

You specify a text in bold by placing it between double braces:
«...some text {{in bold}} in...».
returns:
«...some text **in bold** in...».

Paragraph headings

Paragraph headings are titles inside a text that show its structure. In SPIP, they are very simply defined by placing them between treble braces: «{{{Section heading}}}» will display the heading, bold and centered:
Section heading

Hypertext links

The link's URL can be absolute (starting, as in this example, with http://), relative (to another page of the same site), a link to a document using an internet protocol (ftp://...) an e-mail address («[->mailto:info@alpter.net]»)...

Specific application: when nothing is entered before the "arrow", the text of the passed URL is displayed as a clickable link . For example:
[->http://www.alpter.net/anyfolder/]

returns:

   http://www.alpter.net/anyfolder/

Remember that in the case of very long URLs, the display is truncated (in order to avoid the degradation of your graphic interface), but the hypertext link points to the correct address.

Hypertext links inside the site

Furthermore, this same hypertext links system makes it easy to create links inside your site with SPIP. the only trick consists of finding the number of the article or the section or the news item to which you want to link: NUMERO when you «visit» an article, a news item or a section in the private area, the left column contains a box indicating this number in large digits.

This is the number that you should insert in the hypertext link:

   * Link to article 342 (4 possibilities):
   link to [article->342]
   link to [article->art342]
   link to [article->article 342]

A particular use: [->art342] (no text before the "arrow") will automatically display the title of article 342 with a link to that article.

* Link to section 12:
  link to [section->rub12]
  link to [section->rubrique 12]

* images, documents:
  link to [an attached document->doc17] or [the same document->document17]
  link to [an image->img13] or [the same image->image13]

Specific application: here too, we can put nothing before the "arrow" ([->art13]...). SPIP will insert automatically the required information. In the case of an attached document or an image, if we manually entered a title, this title will be displayed ; otherwise, the file name itself is used.

Publishing an article

When the information have been inserted in the various fields, the article can be published on the web-site by changing its status.
An article can take the following states (symbolised by coloured bullets):
-   editing in progress;
-   submitted for evaluation;
-   published online;
-   to the dustbin;
-   rejected.

editing in progress

When it is created, an article is of course considered as being in progress: its authors are in the process of writing it or modifying it.

Submitted for evaluation

When the author considers that his article is ready, he «suggests» it to the other participants, so that it could possibly be discussed collectively, before being validated (published online) or rejected.
When the article is «submitted for evaluation», it appears in the «Launch pad» page of all the users of the private area, who are requested to join in its discussion through the internal discussion forum located below the article.
Such an article is then visible to all editors. On the other hand, it can only be modified by its author or an administrator.

Published online

After being possibly discussed by the editors (during the submission stage), an article could be «validated», that is, published online by an administrator. By then, it is available to all the visitors of the public site.
Once an article has been published online, only administrators can modify it. Its author- unless also an administrator - can no longer modify it, but has to go through an administrator to make any corrections.

To the dustbin

An article can be sent «to the dustbin» only by an administrator.
An article sent «to the dustbin» is not visible anymore in the private area, even for the administrators. Be careful then, this option is «radical»: the article disappears completely.

In fact, the article is still saved in the database, but becomes extremely difficult to reach with the tools provided by SPIP.

Therefore, this option is reserved to articles created by mistake, and destined to be totally removed. Often then, it is advised to choose the «rejected» option instead because it is less dramatic.

Rejected

A «submitted» article, which does not conform to the editorial line of the site, can be «rejected» if the administrators refuse to publish it online.

A «rejected» article becomes visible only to its author and to the administrators.

However, a «rejected» article cannot be modified by its author anymore, hence stopping him from re-submitting it for publication. In the case of an article requiring modification, it is then advised to re-place the article in the «editing in progress» status instead of just «reject» it, in order for its author to be able to modify it and re-submit it later.

Attaching documents

The SPIP interface allows you to integrate multimedia files to your site (sound, video, text,...).

Editors can attach documents to articles. These documents can be located either at the end of the text (a bit like "attachments").

Site administrators can also install documents directly in the sections.

Installing the documents on the server through the SPIP interface

The files installation on the server is performed through the interface «Attach document» for the articles and "Publish a document in this section" for the sections.

Notice that, for the articles, this interface appears in two different locations: at the bottom of each article's page and on the left (under the images) when you modify an article. Those two interfaces have exactly the same functions, and you can use either of them according to your needs. As for the sections, the documents installation is performed on the page required section itself.

Before you install your files, you have to create them on your computer. The document upload interface reminds you of the list of formats supported by the system. You should make sure that you name your files with the correct extension (for instance, "xxxxxx.pdf" for an PDF file.)

The interface is the same as the one for the images: the button "File" or "Browse" (depending on the browser) opens a window allowing you to select the file on your hard drive. Once you select the file, click on "Upload" to send it to the server. Warning: this operation can take a lot of time, depending on the size of the file. You should also note that depending on the settings of your host, big files could be rejected; in this case you can bypass this limitation by installing your files via FTP.

Installing the documents on the server via FTP

Enter partners' ftp space using these parameters

host: www.alpter.net

port: **21**

user: **partners**

password: **terrace**

Then upload your files in /data/ folder and enter the SPIP interface to join documents to related articles.

We suggest the use of FileZilla [http://filezilla.sourceforge.net/], a fast and reliable FTP client.
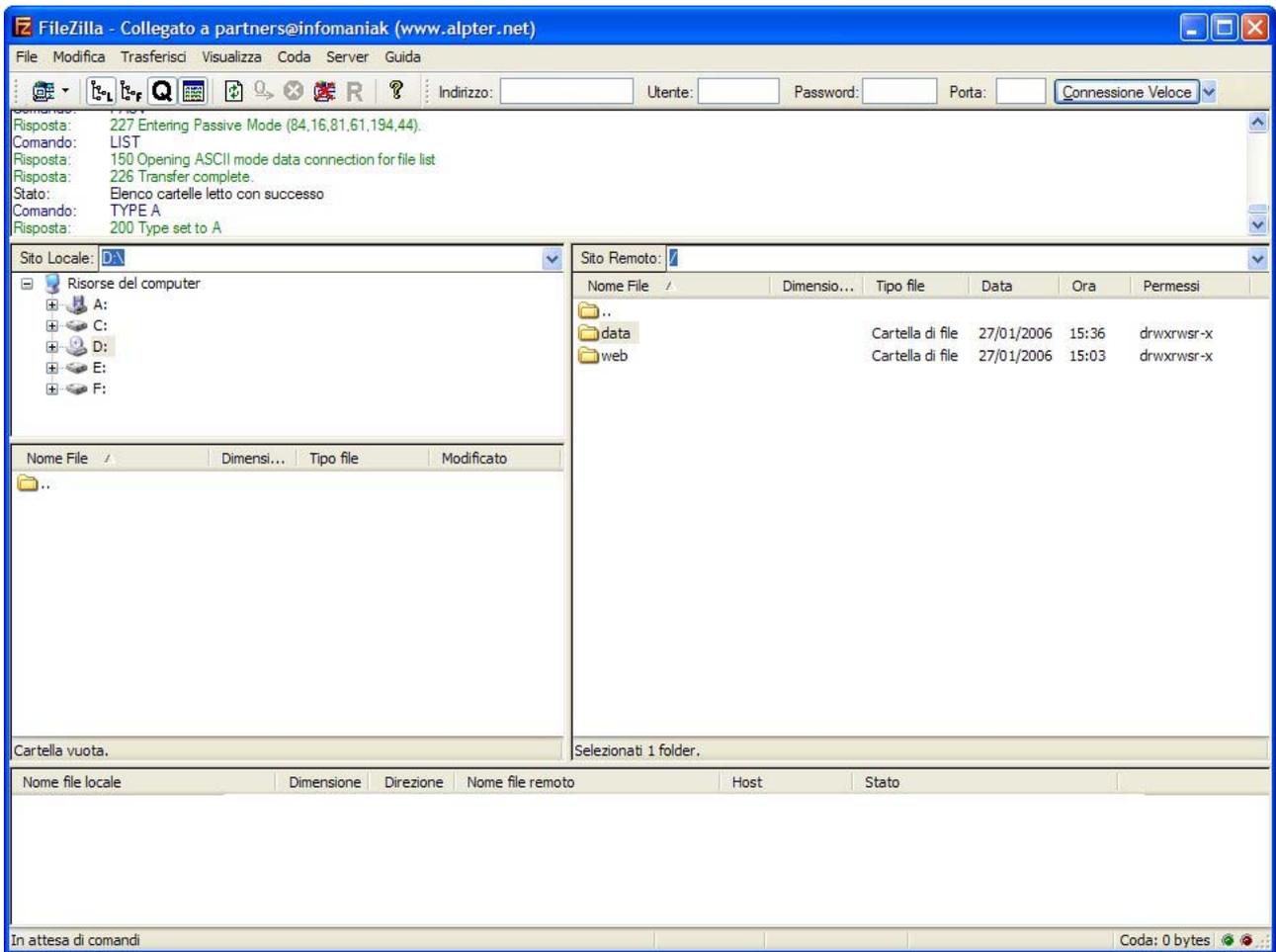
Photo galleries and thumbnails are automatically generated by SPIP when you attach images to an article.