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UPGRADE was created in October 2000 by CEPIS and was first published by *Novática* and *INFORMATIK/INFORMATIQUE*, bi-monthly journal of SVI/FSI (Swiss Federation of Professional Informatics Societies, <<http://www.svifsi.ch/>>)

UPGRADE is the anchor point for UPENET (UPGRADE European NETWORK), the network of CEPIS member societies' publications, that currently includes the following ones:

- *Informatica*, journal from the Slovenian CEPIS society SDI
- *Informatik-Spektrum*, journal published by Springer Verlag on behalf of the CEPIS societies GI, Germany, and SI, Switzerland
- *ITNOW*, magazine published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the British CEPIS society BCS
- *Mondo Digitale*, digital journal from the Italian CEPIS society AICA
- *Novática*, journal from the Spanish CEPIS society ATI
- *OCG Journal*, journal from the Austrian CEPIS society OCG
- *Pliroforiki*, journal from the Cyprus CEPIS society CCS
- *Tölvumál*, journal from the Icelandic CEPIS society ISIP

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(The full schedule of UPGRADE is available at our website)



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\* This monograph will be also published in Spanish (full version printed; summary, abstracts, and some articles online) by *Novática*, journal of the Spanish CEPIS society ATI (*Asociación de Técnicos de Informática*) at <<http://www.ati.es/novatica/>>.

# UPGRADE: The Unofficial Story of a Successful CEPIS Undertaking

Rafael Fernández Calvo

This article describes the story of *UPGRADE*, "The European Journal for the Informatics Professional", a digital publication promoted by the Council of European Professional Informatics Societies (CEPIS) and published by *Novática*, journal of the Spanish CEPIS society ATI (Asociación de Técnicos de Informática). The author offers his personal, unofficial view of the people and facts involved in its creation, growth, and consolidation.

**Keywords:** ATI, CEPIS, Digital Journal, European Journal, Informatics Professional, UPGRADE, UPENET.

## Foreword

This article could just as easily have been co-authored by the other two founding fathers of *UPGRADE*, *Wolffried Stucky* and *François Louis Nicolet*, but the author has preferred otherwise because in this way they can get all the praise that both deserve for their key role in conceiving and implementing the CEPIS digital journal, a role that their modesty would have forbidden should they have had to share authorship.

In the same vein, the author sincerely apologises if some relevant person or fact has been inadvertently omitted.

## 1 Prologue

Providing useful services to its members is one of the main aims of almost any association worldwide, and for associations operating in fields related to science and technology, some kind of publication, a journal possibly, is commonly a flagship service/product, one that helps increase the prestige and visibility of the publishing society. *Communications* of the Association for Computer Machinery (ACM), *The Computer Journal* from the British Computer Society (BCS), *Informatik Spektrum* from GI (*Gesellschaft für Informatik*, the German Informatics Society) and *SI* (*Schweizer Informatiker Gesellschaft - Société Suisse des Informaticiens*, the Swiss Informatics Society), *Novática* from ATI (*Asociación de Técnicos de Informática*, the Spanish Informatics Society), are only a few but relevant examples in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

Ten years after its inception in 1989, CEPIS, the Council of European Professional Informatics Societies, was in search of higher visibility among its approximately 30 national member societies and their large memberships (around 300,000 informatics professionals in that particular moment). A Product Task Force (PTF) was set up, led by *Dr. Wolffried Stucky*, who was Vice President of CEPIS at that time and champion of *UPGRADE* in the organization for years.

Another member of the task force and key protagonist of our story, *François Louis Nicolet*, Chief Editor of *Informatik/Informatique* (the magazine of the SVI/FSI, Swiss Federation of Professional Informatics Societies), suggested that a publication could be an important tool to that end,

## Author

**Rafael Fernández Calvo** is currently journalist and teacher, after a long career in the Information Technologies (IT) industry as a software developer and Information Systems Consultant. He is Associate Editor of *UPGRADE* and Coordinator of *UPENET* (*UPGRADE* European Network), the network of publications from CEPIS member societies. He was Chief Editor of the Spanish journal *Novática* from 1996 to 2006, as well as co-founder of *UPGRADE* and its Chief Editor from 2000 to 2006. He collaborates with the News Service of *Cadena Ser*, the leading radio broadcasting network in Spain, and with the Latin American Service of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) on topics related to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the Internet. He is an Associate Professor in Computing Law at the Faculty of Law / ICADE of the *Universidad Pontificia Comillas*, Madrid, and is a member of the Board of the Spanish CEPIS society ATI (*Asociación de Técnicos de Informática*). <rfcalvo@ati.es>

one able to contribute to the professional update of the membership of the CEPIS member societies. "It appeared obvious to name this publication *UPGRADE*", read the minutes of the task force.

The PTF concluded that there was a need for a pan-European non-commercial publication for IT professionals, produced in Europe by Europeans, and CEPIS was perfectly placed to do this.

## 2 Tough Choices

However, on the one hand, since CEPIS was a multinational umbrella organization whose members are independent national associations (some of them having their own printed or digital publication) care had to be taken to prevent any interference or competition with them. On the other hand, it was unthinkable, and very likely always will be, that the budget of CEPIS could allow for a fully-fledged printed journal for the approximately 350,000 associates of its 36 member societies in 33 countries across Europe (current figures).

These constraints led to two choices by the CEPIS Executive Committee: firstly, the CEPIS journal had to be edited jointly with one of the existing journals of a member society; secondly, the journal had to be an electronic one.

A third highly important choice was not so obvious: had the publication to be open access and free of charge or accessible for a fee? Although discussion about this matter was ongoing for some time, a decision was made in favour of open access distribution initially. A wise choice which has been consolidated over the years by the rise of the vibrant movement for free knowledge (our readers will know that, as in the case of free software, here "free" is in the sense of freedom, not in the sense of *gratis*, although usually the two terms go together very well in this context).

It has to be remarked that some significant voices within CEPIS preferred a different publication, one rather more product and market-oriented, or even wanted no CEPIS publication at all. This legitimate opposition faded out over the years when UPGRADE demonstrated its potential as a quality publication that fosters the image of CEPIS in the ICT world.

### 3 Marching on

With the support of SVI/FSI, **François Louis Nicolet**, produced the April 2000 issue *Informatik/Informatique* as the pilot issue of UPGRADE, featuring the topic "Java - The Evolutionary Attraction". Shortly afterwards, the CEPIS Executive Committee decided that more issues were needed to check the success and viability of UPGRADE and issued a call for participation to member societies.

This marked the arrival of another key player: the Span-

ish CEPIS society ATI (*Asociación de Técnicos de Informática*) and its journal *Novática*, a printed publication created in 1975, which is currently the oldest existing ICT journal in Spain. Its Chief Editor at that time was **Rafael Fernández Calvo**, author of this article, who encouraged ATI to respond to the call.

ATI stepped forward and offered the editorial framework of *Novática*, as well as administrative support and hosting for the UPGRADE Website. Until 2003 this was provided at no fee by KPNQwest Spain, whose Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at that time, **Juan Antonio Esteban**, was a senior member of ATI.

*Informatik/Informatique* and *Novática* had a very similar and well proven editorial approach, which was used to establish the editorial model for UPGRADE: a monographic section dedicated to a topic of current interest at its core; refereed papers; and a bimonthly distribution. With minor adjustments, this is still the current model for UPGRADE.

The Hispanic-Helvetic partnership proved to be highly efficient and fruitful, and soon produced the first formal edition of UPGRADE, volume I, issue n° 1, in November 2000, with a monographic section dedicated to "Corporate Websites".

The inaugural issue appeared on the UPGRADE Website (Figure 1<sup>1</sup>), designed in a rather austere fashion by the Chief Editor of *Novática* with simplicity, ease of navigation and access to relevant information in mind. Austere was also,

<sup>1</sup> All the issues of UPGRADE are freely available online at <<http://www.upgrade-cepis.org/pages/pastissues.html>>.

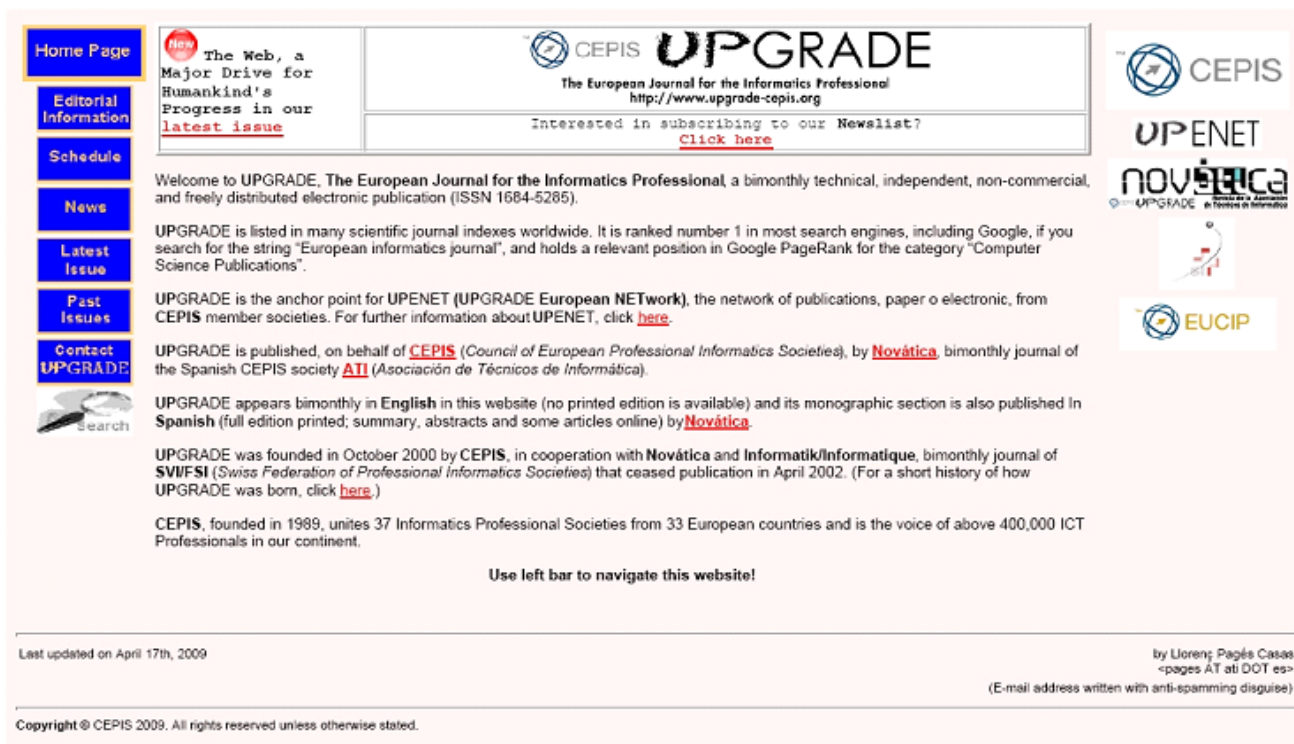


Figure 1: Home Page of the UPGRADE Website at <<http://www.upgrade-cepis.org/>> [June 11, 2009].

and still is, the design of the journal itself, which is the one originally intended for *Informatik/Informatique*, crafted by its Chief Editor.

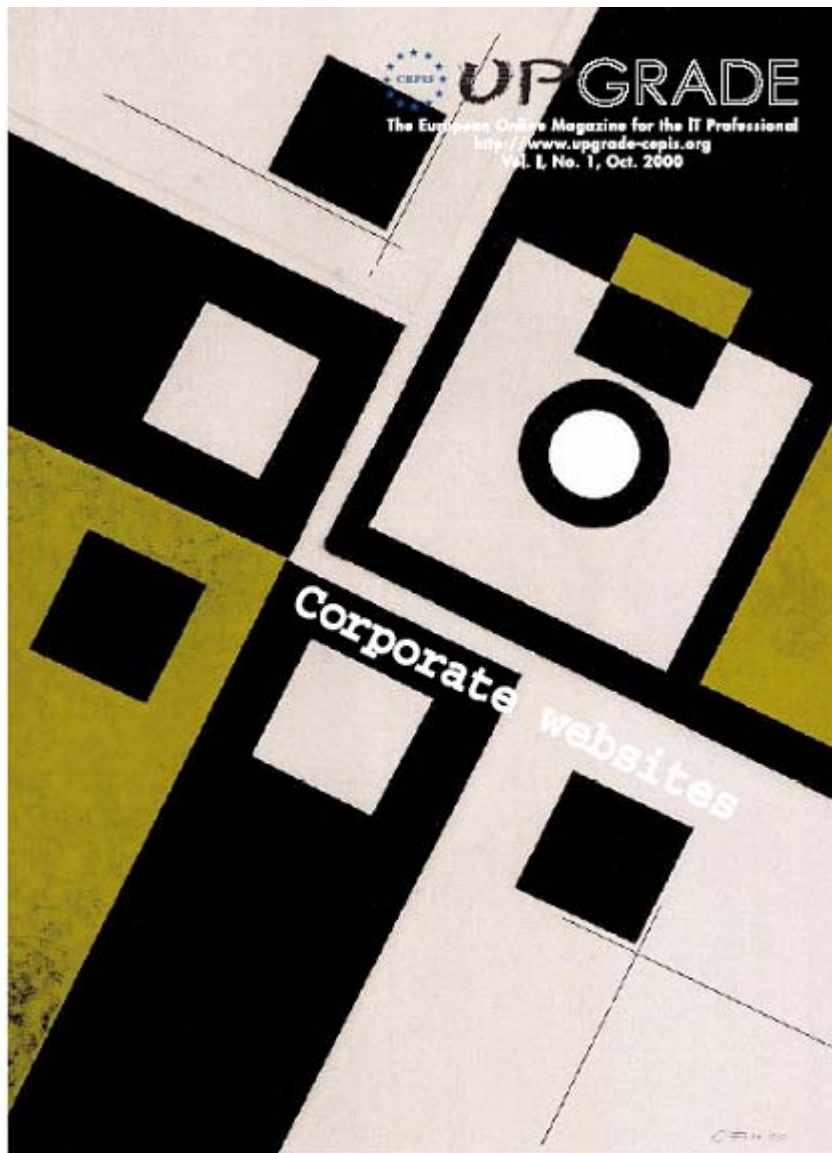
The monograph of the first issue (see cover in Figure 2) was also published by *Informatik/Informatique* in English (some articles were in German) and by *Novática* in Spanish. It included three interesting pieces in its editorial section, worthy of mention for historical reasons: one by the Presidents of the supporting societies SVI/FSI and ATI, *Carl August Zehnder* and *Josep Molas i Bertrán*; another by the President of CEPIS, *Peter Morrogh*, and the last by *Wolffried Stucky*, Vice President of CEPIS.

It should be noted that, from a formal point of view, **UPGRADE** remained as just a pilot project for nearly three years, but in 2003, when **UPGRADE** had already earned its place as a solid presence in the worldwide arena of ICT journals, the 30th CEPIS Council Meeting held in Dublin on

April 26 approved "that **UPGRADE** should be promoted from a pilot stage to a permanent CEPIS service". A budget was allocated too, a small one affordable for CEPIS' cofers. *Wolffried Stucky*'s subtle but strong leadership, plus constant dedication by the Chief Editors of *Informatik/Informatique* and *Novática* and their collaborators, helped a great deal in this context.

#### 4 Pan-European Reach: Internationality and UPENET

As we have seen in the previous section, **UPGRADE** enjoyed a multinational, multilingual environment from its very inception. Not only was **UPGRADE** published in English as well as in Spanish by *Novática*, and in German or French by *Informatik/Informatique*, but soon, in March 2002, an Italian edition emerged as a result of the collaboration between the Italian CEPIS society ALSI



**Figure 2:** Cover Page of Inaugural Issue (Vol. I, issue no.1, October 2000). Author: Antonio Crespo Foix.



**Figure 3:** Cover Page of Vol. X, issue no.1, February 2009. Author: Concha Pérez-Arias.

(Associazione nazionale Laureati in Scienze dell'Informazione ed Informatica) and the Italian IT portal Tecnoteca. **Roberto Carniel**, its Editor, was also appointed Associate Editor of **UPGRADE**.

An important fact is that, although **UPGRADE** is edited by *Novática* and both share their monographic section, our editorial approach ensures that the mix of nationalities of guest editors of monographs and authors of articles is as balanced as possible<sup>2</sup>.

Furthermore, in order to make our pan-European ap-

proach stronger, in April 2004 **UPENET** (**UPGRADE** European Network) was created as the network of publications, printed or digital, from CEPIS member societies.

With **UPGRADE** as its anchor point, the main purpose of this network is to make the wealth of knowledge and experience accumulated by CEPIS member societies' publications available to the ICT communities, mainly in Europe but also worldwide, and to foster cooperation among them.

<sup>2</sup> *Informatik/Informatique* ceased publication in April 2002, being replaced by the journal *Informatik Spektrum*, of the German society GI, as the official publication of the Swiss society SI. The Italian edition of **UPGRADE** ceased publication in 2005.

### UPGRADE Milestones

1999 (November)	CEPIS Product Task Force recommends creating European-wide publication
2000 (April)	Pilot issue of UPGRADE, edited by the Swiss journal <i>Informatik/Informatique</i>
2000 (October)	First formal issue of UPGRADE, edited by the SVI/SFI Swiss journal <i>Informatik/Informatique</i> and the ATI Spanish journal <i>Novática</i>
2002 (March)	Italian online edition created by ALSI and Tecnoteca
2003 (February)	UPGRADE Newlist created (nearly 2,000 subscribers as of June 2009)
2003 (April)	CEPIS Council promotes UPGRADE to permanent CEPIS service
2003 (June)	UPGRADE issue (Vol. IV, no. 3, June 2003) dedicated to "Open Knowledge" becomes a hit, being widely used in the European Parliament debate on software patents (this issue was translated into French, Italian and Spanish)
2003 (December)	UPGRADE is shown as first entry when you search for the string "European informatics journal" in nearly every major search engine, including Google (and remains so as of June 2009)
2004 (April)	UPENET, UPGRADE European Network, created (eight publications from CEPIS member societies belong to this network as of June 2009)
2007 (February)	UPGRADE achieves high position in Google "Pagerank" for ICT journals worldwide
2008 (August)	UPGRADE issue (Vol. IX, no. 4, August 2008) dedicated to the CEPIS project EUCIP (European Certification of Informatics Professionals) appears exceptionally in printed format (it was sponsored by the Italian society AICA and CEPIS, for the 20th IFIP World Congress, held in Milan)

To this end UPGRADE republishes in English, in its UPENET section, articles from the syndicated publications, while they in turn can republish, in their own languages, articles published in UPGRADE or in any of the syndicated publications.

Today eight publications participate in UPENET<sup>3</sup>:

- *Informatica*, from the Slovenian society SDI (*Slovensko Društvo Informatika*).
- *Informatik-Spektrum*, published in German by Springer Verlag on behalf of the German society GI and the Swiss society SI.
- *ITNOW*, published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the British society BCS.
- *Mondo Digitale*, from the Italian society AICA (*Associazione Italiana per l'Informatica ed il Calcolo*

*Automatico*).

- *Novática*, from the Spanish society ATI.
- *OCG Journal*, from the Austrian society OCG (*Österreichische Computer Gesellschaft*).
- *Pliroforiki*, from the Cyprus society CCS (Cyprus Computer Society).
- *Tolvümál*, from the Icelandic society ISIP (*Skýrslutæknifélagið*).

It is worth mentioning that other publications belonging to CEPIS member societies will probably join soon.

### 5 The Protagonists

A lot of voluntary work is required to produce a bi-monthly independent non commercial publication like UPGRADE. This is why it is imperative to mention, in addition to the pioneers, a lot of people whose participation has been instrumental to the success of our digital journal<sup>4</sup>.

First of all, since quality content is the flesh and bones of a journal like ours, special thanks must be given to the

<sup>3</sup> *Pro Dialog*, published jointly by the Polish CEPIS society PTI-PIPS (*Polskie Towarzystwo Informatyczne*) and the Poznan University of Technology, Institute of Computing Science, was a member of UPENET since 2004 until ceasing publication in 2008. By the way, from these footnotes one could deduce that the world of ICT journals (and in general of scientific ones) is rather unstable and shaky, and in fact it is increasingly so since the boom of Internet in the mid 90s and the dramatic shift in information distribution it nurtured.

<sup>4</sup> As mentioned in the foreword, the author offers his sincerest apologies if he has involuntarily forgotten some significant names, not only in this section but throughout the article as a whole.

multitude of authors from all over the world who submit their papers for review and publication, as well as to the Guest Editors of the monographs. These are recognised world-class experts in their fields of expertise and are able, through their reputation, to motivate first-rate authors to submit papers on different facets of the topic covered by the monograph, papers that they peer-review and approve.

Inside the **UPGRADE** production cycle, we have to extend our deep gratitude to: **Roberto Carniel**, Editor of the Italian edition and former Associate Editor of **UPGRADE**; **Zakaria Maamar** and **Soraya Kouadri Mostéfaoui**, Associate Editors responsible for the former Mosaic section; **Antonio Crespo-Foix** and **Concha Arias-Pérez**, the Spanish artists responsible for our original and attractive cover artwork (see Figures 2 and 3); the person in charge of the composition of our journal, **Jorge Llácer-Gil de Ramales** (who was preceded in this vital job by **Pascale Schürmann**); not to mention the current members of the Editorial Team (**Llorenç Pagés-Casas**, **Fiona Fanning** and **Francisco-Javier Cantais-Sánchez**), as well as our volunteer English-language editors and our professional translator, **Steve Turpin**, who together ensure the linguistic correctness of everything we publish. We cannot praise them all enough for their decisive and valuable collaboration.

Thanks are also due to the courage and foresight of the CEPIS governing bodies for their commitment to an open, independent, quality publication and to ATI for having determinedly undertaken the implementation of the project (some names which come to mind are **Nello Scarabottolo**, **Jukko Ruissalo**, **Francisco López-Crespo** or **Fernando Píera**, who, among many others in a list too long to be included, have strongly supported **UPGRADE**). The Swiss society SI (*Schweizer Informatik Gesellschaft*) deserves grateful mention too for having provided occasional financial support.

### 6 Epilogue

A lot of things have happened to the founding fathers since 2000: **François Louis Nicolet** retired in 2003, although he remained as an Associate Editor until 2006, the year in which **Rafael Fernández Calvo** resigned as Chief Editor, but has continued as an Associate Editor; he was succeeded by the current Chief Editor, **Llorenç Pagés-Casas**; in 2003 **Wolffried Stucky** was substituted at the helm of CEPIS by **Jukko Ruissalo** ... but it looks like the engine is well enough conceived and tuned and has therefore kept going on at a steady rhythm regardless of the personnel involved.

This explains how our digital free access journal is moving towards completing its first decade and has consolidated as a publication service that, as primarily intended, has given CEPIS very positive visibility in the ICT communities worldwide in the professional, academic and Public Administration fields. Present in many relevant international indexes and widely referenced, **UPGRADE** has become to a very satisfactory extent "The European Journal for the Informatics Professional", as its motto reads and its promoters envisaged<sup>5</sup>.

Of course, a handful of mistakes have been made along the way and there is still a lot of room for improvement but, on the one hand, (IRONY ON) it might be considered somehow inconvenient to mention mistakes in a commemorative article like this one (IRONY OFF), and, on the other hand, any details about future developments must be mandatorily left to the current Chief Editor, my friend and colleague **Llorenç Pagés-Casas**.

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<sup>5</sup> **UPGRADE** is shown as first hit when you search for the string "European informatics journal" in most major search engines, including Google.