**[HEADLINE]**

**Best Eco-Conscious Building News Portal 2018**

**[STANDFIRST]**

**National Green Specification is an innovative UK based environmental consultancy that is developing an innovative online resource called Green Building Encyclopaedia (GBE). We explore how this unique solution is set to change the sustainable building market for the better.**

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National Green Specification (NGS) launched in 2001 and set out its agenda, which included creating an Encyclopaedia of Green Construction. Its first major output was the GreenSpec website, which was launched in 2003.

Later, in 2009, NGS uploaded 300 CPD, Specification and other information files to Scribd in the USA to see if this information was of wider interest. As these files achieved more than 265,000 reads, NGS decided that it needed to further enhance its offering, and in 2012 GBE was formed.

GBE would include the original files alongside additional information, including user-friendly environmental checklists and jargon buster. Alongside these GBE has been creating a spectrum of 400 criteria by which it judges potential solutions; when something is labelled as ’green’, eco’ or ‘healthy’, GBE interrogates the offering, seeking out its strengths and weaknesses, recording its properties and identifying the ‘greenwash’. Users can see the analysis and judge if it fits their needs.

Also featured on the site are a shop containing a very low cost CPD, Specifications, Calculators, a blog sharing insight and information on the sustainable building industry as well as offering advertising space for sustainable building solutions providers with or without their own online presence to showcase their portfolios. GBE appeals to a wide range of visitors and is both accessible and informative.

Drawing on the expertise and knowledge of Brian Murphy, who coordinates the site, GBE works to act as a one-stop-resource for its visitors, so that they can find everything they need in one convenient, easy-to-use space.

As part of its commitment to providing users with up-to-date information, the site is working with solution providers to help determine the right information and messages about the competency and environmental characteristics of their products or services. GBE uses 6 core pages, which currently cover solution providers: manufacturers, suppliers, installers; and their solutions: products and accessories that make up systems.

Essential to the success of the website is the linking of these 6 core pages to the relevant content of the GBE Encyclopaedia. This will enrich the user’s assimilation of information; enable greater understanding, to enable better-informed decisions. This know-how will enable them to apply the special properties of the products and arm them with the reasons and ammunition to defend against cost cutting and substitutions and enable Value Engineering of green stuff into projects rather than out.

Today, among the site’s current projects is its work developing whole building Excel calculators for those who do not want to pay high fees for software, but need to understand their designs better. There are many information sources but little is joined up, so GBE collect them, reconfigures the data into drop down menus and look up tables to exploit in MS Excel. Then the calculator quantifies the building dimensions, choose from many energy performance targets, set U values, determine insulation thickness, calculate elemental U values, energy in use, with fuel choices calculate carbon in use, apportion elemental energy losses, add cost data to see where money is best spent (more insulation and better performance windows) for long term running costs.

Over the coming months, the next developments include working with collaborators to interrogate: Thermal mass, decrement delay, condensation risk, embodied energy, embodied and sequestered carbon, waste quantities and costs, whole building life cycle assessment and substitution analysis.

Looking ahead, GBE will continue to create an ultimate guide to all things sustainable, allowing users to discern the truth behind the marketing when it comes to supposedly ‘green’ solutions, and choose the service or product that meets their exact needs. GBE will continue to grow over the coming decades as Brian and his collaborators enhance it further. GBE’s primary ambition is to work with more innovative solution providing manufacturers and suppliers, to help them match the quality of information that mainstream provides to its specifiers and designers, and this will remain its ongoing focus as it looks towards a bright future.

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