

13 – Web Presence

Action Item Template Response

General Action Item Information

Lead Division/Office: ES/ESID

Action Item Number: 13

Action Item Short Name: Web Presence

Dependencies with other EP Action Items: 7, 34

Implementation leader (name & email): Brian McGough (bmcgough@indiana.edu)

I. DESCRIBE YOUR PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS ACTION.

IU web managers have a wide range of web hosting options, from individual departmental web servers to the centrally managed Webserv environment. IU needs to complement the existing hosting environment with a comprehensive set of tools, services, and support for web content management, navigation and search, data access, and web utilities.

Steps are already underway to enhance web content management. The Web Content Management System is a tool web managers, editors, approvers, and contributors can use to manage their web content. The system is running effectively and 120 have received site manager training. The next step will be to establish best practices and policies to assure the system fulfills the expectations of the IU web community. The system managers actively seek input from the system users and the IU web community to assure the system meets the needs of users and becomes increasingly attractive to potential users.

Once web content is well managed and hosted the next step is to assure it can be found efficiently. This requires a combination of proper indexing, effective search capabilities, and web log and search data analysis. We have developed custom tools, and tried open source and vended products such as Drupal, Infoseek, and the Google Search Appliance. We have learned a lot and can now use our knowledge to vastly improve search and navigation for users of IU web sites. In fact, we have already formed a Search subgroup to identify search and navigation requirements for all stakeholders.

Web managers need assistance with access to institutional data, storage, and fulfilling new requests. The data warehouse is an excellent repository for the data but only the subject matter experts understand the data well enough to know what is available and permissions necessary to obtain the desired data. A web manager is confronted with many challenges when are asked to solve even simple problems. For example, a web manager setting up a web site for a strategic partnership may need to access IU data from outside the IU network. In addition to gaining the necessary approvals to use the data, web managers are on their own to create the new policies and procedures necessary to securely meet the need for the special circumstances of the strategic partnership. We would like to put in place standard processes and tools to accommodate these needs instead of requiring web managers to resolve the problem for every new need.

Web utilities such as wikis and blogs continue to emerge. We need the ability to quickly evaluate these utilities and determine how they will best enhance our web presence. We would like to establish processes to identify technologies as they emerge, assess their impact to our environment and, if desired, introduce them into our environment. Web managers need to determine how well the goals of their web presence are being met through web analytics and site auditing. We need to identify solutions for the web community. Currently, restrictions on distributing raw web log data prevent users of central web services from performing the analyses they need. This drives some web managers to avoid the benefits of centrally provided web hosting services in favor of having their own web servers so they can have the raw web log data for analysis. We need to revisit web log data restrictions to make sure we can get as much value from the data while ensuring adequate privacy. We also need to evaluate the centrally available web analysis tool Analog and upgrade or replace it if necessary. We need to evaluate desktop web analysis tools, and possibly, recommend and support the best tools. Finally, web professionals need a common web site auditing tool the community can share knowledge and cost.

Finally, to make all this happen the IU Website and Content Management Vision and Strategy Task Force in August 2007 (the final report is an attachment) recommended "a baseline service to assist all units to create a basic level of web presence." Such a service is what is needed for widespread adoption of the existing or future improvements targeting web presence. The other critical aspects of this action are support and training. Services such as Search, Mypage, CHE, WCMS, Confluence, and Jira were launched quickly to fill immediate need, and Tiers I and II support are still provided by the system managers. The Support Division needs resources to provide Tier I and II support for these services so the system managers can focus on Tier III support. Excellent training has been developed for the Web Content Management System and the other web services would benefit greatly from instructional resources.

This action is broken down into the following sub-actions.

Sub-actions:

- A - Search
- B - Web Content Management System
- C - Data Access
- D - Web Utilities
- E - Services and Support.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Web Content Management System was implemented (Cascade Server)
- Site Builder tool was created that allows for rapid, template- based site development
- Google Search Appliance and tuning of search results were implemented

Next steps

- Rollout of Analytics tool (Urchin)
- Working with web community regarding mobile sites
- Common implementation of some core tools like WordPress

II. WHAT ARE THE POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS OF YOUR PLANS?

Web managers currently function very independently. Organizations have developed unique web-related practices and toolsets. Consequently, achieving consensus on standard practices, policies, and common tools will be difficult. The approach will be to select the best tools, policies, and practices available, then provide excellent training and support to encourage use.

III. IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS.

IU Webmasters

- IU - Greg Polit

Campus Webmasters

- BL - Thom Atkinson
- IN - Steve Hodges, Chris Brown
- IUN - Kathy Horvath
- IUK - Carl Pennington
- IUS - John Stammerman
- IUSB – Gary Browning

Libraries

- BL - Robert McDonald
- IN - Joseph Harmon, Charles Dye

Departmental Website Owners

- David Altenhof
- Heather Beery
- Ryan Cobine
- Joe Ehlers
- Anne Palmer
- Darren Hawkins
- Scott Myers
- Scott Orr
- Doug Ryner

UITS Communication & Support

- Chuck Aikman
- Jonathon Bolte
- Bob Flynn
- Ray Foster
- Dennis Gillespie
- Kate Holden
- Jim Kippenbrock
- Kim Milford
- Greg Moore
- Chip Rondot
- Duane Schau

UITS Teaching and Learning

- Chris Payne

UITS Telecommunications

- Brian Hughes

UITS Enterprise Software

- Amber Harmon
- Jeannie Kellam
- Brian McGough
- Pete Percival
- Craig Spanburg

University Information Policy Office

- Scott Wilson

Groups

- Faculty Council Technology Committees
- ITOC regional campus technology operations
- Regional Campus CIOs
- Web Standards Committee