



eRA Project Team Meeting Minutes

Date: Tues., Nov. 12, 2002
Time: 9:00–11 a.m.
Location: 6700 B Rockledge, Room 1205
Chair: John McGowan

Next Meeting: Tues., Dec. 10, 9 a.m., 6700 B Rockledge, Room 1205

Action Items

1. (Steve Hausman) The group agreed to recommend maintaining grant images the same length of time as a paper record. They would be maintained in the data base until the grant is terminated, and then follow a retention schedule, which would end in the deletion of the grant record from the data base.
2. (Carla Flora): Revise Advocate Charter (wordsmith section on eRA Project Team meetings and retreats; rewrite and qualify Advocate responsibility of monitoring development).

Attachments

- eRA Focus Groups: http://era.nih.gov/docs/eRA_Focus_Groups.pdf

Half-Life of Grant Images

Steve Hausman asked for a consensus on how long grant images should be maintained in the database before being discarded. He proposed that they be on the same retention schedule as a paper grant record. The grant image would be retained in the database throughout the active life of the grant, and, when the grant terminates, would follow a set retention schedule.

After some discussion, the group agreed with Steve's proposal:

Proposal: The group agreed to recommend maintaining grant images the same length of time as a paper record. They would be maintained in the data base until the grant is terminated, and then follow a retention schedule, which would end in the deletion of the grant record from the data base.

Eulogy for IMPAC I

JJ McGowan said a eulogy for IMPAC I. After serving more than 30 years, may it rest in peace. He thanked all those involved in the sunsetting of the system, the success of which is evident in the fact that most users don't even know that it's turned off.

Budget

Last year, we spent too much on maintaining Oracle Forms while starting the migration to J2EE, causing the budget shortfall and putting the project off schedule. In anticipation of the shortfall, the project was down-scoped in May, delaying requirements that now have to be implemented for

a successful deployment. Additionally, to implement the NIH eRA Commons, a significant increase in resources was necessary.

The budget was established in 2000, before the decision to migrate to J2EE. The estimated cost of project conversion to J2EE is \$10M. Also, the estimated project costs for the Loan Repayment Program is \$1.5M, which is an unfunded mandate.

Consequently, JJ and Donna are making the following budget recommendations:

FY2003

- Request a \$10M contingency fund allotment
 - \$4.9M in requested budget base increase
 - \$1.5M for Loan Repayment Program
 - \$600K for QVR support
 - \$4.0M in contingency fund money (10 percent)

FY2004

- Request a \$4.9M increase to budget base
- Request a 10 percent contingency fund allotment, ~\$5M

JJ said he has presented these issues to the Steering Committee and they have approved \$5M for resources. The eRA Project is spending at an allocation rate that assumes the five million dollars is already in hand.

NIH eRA Commons

NIH eRA Commons Version 1.9 was successfully deployed to the Commons Working Group (CWG) on October 14. NIH eRA Commons 2.0 was deployed to all CWG members on November 1, and it included an improved interface and eSNAP. In December, NIH eRA Commons 2.1 will be released, including fixes based on CWG feedback and the first version of the Internet Assisted Review (IAR) module

NIH eRA Commons registration will open up to the entire extramural community sometime in January 2003. Beyond that, by February, ICs should be starting to reengineer their business processes to accommodate the NIH eRA Commons as well as take advantage of it.

Financial Status Report (FSR)

The FSR system, which was deployed with NIH eRA Commons on November 1, was restricted to OFM and two grantees. Access was expanded on Nov. 11 to all CWG members. Starting Nov. 18, additional grantees will be registered, beginning with heavy users of the IMPAC I FSR system. In December, there will be continued user registration based on the size of the institution and their use of the IMPAC I FSR system.

Due to the release of the new FSR, organizations need to be added to NIH eRA Commons at a much faster pace than originally planned; however, adding more users at a faster rate may stress the system. Also, the aggressive schedule does not allow much opportunity for system tuning as

FSR is rolled out. Finally, additional stress is placed on User Support due to the faster ramp up, limited training aids, and lack of account access.

Project Team Retreat

JJ asked the team to review the proffered focus group subjects and members and to let him know whether or not proposed members can serve as shown, if they would like to be on another focus group, or if they cannot serve at all. Two questions for each of the focus groups to keep in mind as they address their area of focus are:

One year from now, what will be in place?

What are our opportunities for business process improvements?

Discussion at the Retreat resulted in consensus for future focus in four major areas:

- Policy
- Business Process Requirements
- Reporting, Analysis and Retention
- Migration Plan to support E-Grants

Specific questions for each focus group are delineated in the presentation.

Budget Implementation Process and eRA Priorities

JJ reviewed the budget implementation process in terms of setting eRA Project priorities. Advocates, with the assistance of analysts, develop business plans to submit to Project Management. Project Management gathers requirements from these plans along with cost, technical resources, competing priorities, architectural migration, etc. Project Management then develops a straw man list of top priorities and presents these for consensus building.

The common components of the FY2003 priorities will be discussed at the next Project Team meeting:

- Data architecture (document services, XML storage and services, functional data marts)
- Person module
- Workflow
- Edit checker
- E-Notifications

SBIR Grantee Presentations

JJ McGowan introduced the two SBIR grantee companies and their products: *Enhancements to GAMS to Include XML for the NIH Commons* from ERA Software Systems with Dianne Bozler; and *Electronic Submission/Response System via NIH Portal* from InfoEd International with the Ed Johnsons, Senior and Junior.

ERA Software Systems

ERA Software Systems proposes to develop standards-based interfaces between research organizations and the NIH eRA Commons for the submission of competing and non-competing proposals—all based on XML transmissions. The company plans to build these interfaces by developing enhancements to their current GAMS system.

Dianne Bozler reviewed her company's full-costing tool, Grant Application and Management System (GAMS). It is a software suite for electronic research administration from proposal development through closeout of an award. ERA Software Systems will develop a user interface for the NIH grants application system that will be incorporated into the GAMS software package.

InfoEd International

InfoEd proposes to design a Portal that will accept and transmit new proposals, continuations, iEdison reports, progress reports, etc., to the NIH as well as communications from the NIH back to the originator. InfoEd also proposes to build an interface to transfer data from the portal into IMPAC II databases and back to the Portal.

Ed Johnson, Sr., gave some background on his company, which provides a comprehensive and proven suite of integrated software modules for concept-to-closeout sponsored program management. The fully integrated modules enhance collaboration, streamline processes, ensure accountability, and facilitate compliance. His company has 18 products available for research administration. His proposal entails building a stand-alone product (but one that will integrate with other systems) that will accept and transmit new proposals, continuations, iEdison reports and progress reports to the NIH as well as applicable communications back to the originator.

NIH eRA Components of FY2003 Priorities

JJ mentioned the need to make the Program Portal a FY2003 priority. Cathy Walker will be the analyst for the Program Portal, teaming up with Bud Erickson and Carlos Caban. He said that the "My Portfolio" module—a module that tracks information related to grants—could be universally applied, e.g., Review, NIH eRA Commons.

Other FY2003 priorities are incorporating wireless technology so that, for example, QuickView and CRISP, could be accessed using a Blackberry or other Personal Digital Assistant (PDA).

Role of Advocate

There have not been any unifying discussions about the description of roles and responsibilities presented in the draft of the Advocate Charter. JJ said that the eRA Project Team is at the point, now, where it needs to become more realistic and obtain some degree of regularity to ensure that that each business area progresses. The first step is to decide formally on a Charter. JJ asked the team to voice suggestions for the draft.

Steve Hausman called attention to the last paragraph of the charter, explaining that the language gives the impression that the eRA Project Team meetings are compulsory and that the eRA Project Team retreat is optional. He suggested taking a closer look at the language in this section.

Donna Frahm said that it is important that Advocates not only support their business area, but also consider the eRA Project as a whole. She emphasized the importance of Advocates voicing the requirements of their business areas and bringing these requirements to the Project Team so

that the entire project management team is informed. Donna said that it is essential to “know why we are doing what we are doing.”

The Advocate responsibility of monitoring development was questioned. It was said that Advocates should have the authority to determine if an interface, for example, is deployable. Otherwise, without this authority, Advocates have no control over what is released to their community and subsequently are blamed for any problems. This can undermine the credibility of an Advocate. As such, the Advocate’s responsibility to monitor development needs to be clearly understood and defined.

JJ said that the Advocates are not responsible for technical issues, only for the usability of products developed. Donna Frahm said that the Advocate should not monitor development per se, but rather should work closely with the task manager to review Use cases. While Advocates are responsible for reviewing how products are implemented, only Analysts should give instructions to developers.

Action:(Carla Flora): Revise Advocate Charter (wordsmith section on eRA Project Team meetings and retreats; rewrite and qualify Advocate responsibility of monitoring development).

Inside eRA Proposed Articles for Next Edition

Here is a list of ideas for the next newsletter. Please send all ideas for articles or the articles themselves for the next edition to Maddy Monheit (monheitm@od.nih.gov).

The next edition will be published on December 13, and the deadline for articles is December 6.

- Update on NIH eRA Commons 2.0 Deployment (including FSR, eSNAP and IAR)
- Update on CM Fast Track
- eRA Project Team Retreat Outcome
- Highlights of SBIR Grantee Proposals
- New Steering Committee Members
- Top Ten eRA Priorities for FY 2003

Attendees

Albrecht, Lyn (LTS/OCO)	Erickson, Bud (NCI)	McGowan, JJ (NIAID)
Armistead, Allyson (LTS/OCO)	Fitzgerald, Steve (RN Solutions)	Morton, Larry (OER)
Bradley, Eileen (CSR)	Fjellstedt, Thor (OER)	Morton, Pete (CIT)
Caban, Carlos (OER)	Frahm, Donna (OER/CIO)	Panniers, Richard (CSR)
Cain, Jim (OER)	Geaney, Stefanie (SOZA)	Seppala, Sandy (LTS/OCO)
Carter, Dave (OER)	Hahn, Marcia (OER/OPERA)	Seto, Belinda (OER)
Collie, Krishna (RN Solutions)	Hausman, Steve (NIAMS)	Snouffer, Anna (OD/OFACP)
Copeland Sewell, Zoe-Ann (OD/OER)	Hodgkins, Earl (NIGMS)	Spitzberg, Bobbi (OER)
Cox, Mike (OER)	Martin, Carol (NHGRI)	Stone, George (OER/OPERA)
	Maurer, JJ (Ekagra)	Swain, Amy (NCRR)
		Tucker, Jim (OER)

Van Brunt, Virginia (LTS)
Wilson, Mike (NGIT)

Wright, David (OD/OPERA)
Zucker, Sherry (OD/DEIS)