eRA Project Team Meeting Minutes

Date:	Tuesday, February 11, 2002
Time:	9:00–10:00 a.m.
Location:	6700 B Rockledge, Room 1205
Chair:	John McGowan

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 25, 9:00 a.m., 6700 B Rockledge, Room 1205

Action Items

1. (Tim Twomey) Send to the OD-eRA Project Team distribution list the URLs for the internal websites demonstrated during the meeting.

Attachments

- John McGowan's presentation: http://era.nih.gov/Docs/pjteam021103.pdf

- New Advocate List: http://era.nih.gov/Docs/eRA_Advocates_02-12-03.pdf

System Status

Brad Sachar

Brad Sachar updated the team on the document services problem that affected user accessibility to external documents (PDF files, Summary Statements, applications, etc.). The problem surfaced on Sunday evening when Operations received numerous job failure notifications for external documents. A directory on the storage area network was corrupted and all external documents were forced off-line. Operations and the Vendor (HP) began fault isolation activities. Concurrently, the directory was mounted in a Read Only state and the files copied to a different location to restore service. The lengthy file transfer process concluded at approximately 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, February 11, and the all clear was given following final testing with the help desk. Root cause analysis with the vendor continues. No files were lost due to this issue.

The Developing World at Night

John (JJ) McGowan

JJ started his presentation with a slide showing the world at night with the developing world, our target audience, brightly lit in contrast to the large, undeveloped dark areas. He stressed that eRA is now a global effort that encompasses many components, including but not limited to, IMPAC II. He pointed out that eRA partners with the NIH's 27 ICs and the OD, 6 SBIR commercial partners, 5 DHHS operating divisions, and 18 Federal agencies. A program of this complexity and reach requires very high standards and world-class quality. He reminded the team that internal terminology does not always translate outside of the eRA team and that we need to be careful to use plain text in all communications, especially those that are externally facing. Looking at the new eRA website design, he noted the links to NIH eRA Commons, IMPAC II, CRISP on the Web, HHS E-Grants, iEdison, OER, NIH, DHHS and FirstGov that further emphasize eRA's global reach.

JJ discussed a quote made by OMB Director, Mitch Daniels, in a press briefing:

> *"Let me say that a lot of the [IT spending] is under question and we will not permit it to be spent unless the people running those programs can bring us a business case that shows that it makes sense. Part of making sense is you get a good return on the dollar ..."*

JJ used this quote to emphasize that all projects require solid, detailed plans for implementation with realistic timelines AND a justifiable business case for the expense with a significant Return On Investment.

Referring to an article in Federal Computer Week titled "OMB puts agencies on notice", he said that there has been a significant change in the way OMB operates. Now, OMB can withhold funding from projects it doesn't approve – even if Congress appropriates the money. Their criteria for funding gets to the heart of how the project is managed and redundancy and overlap will be considered red flags.

New Deputy Director of NIH

John (JJ) McGowan

Dr. Raynard Kington is the new Deputy Director of the NIH. JJ pointed out that Dr. Kington brings some key background that should provide support for the eRA project:

- He knows the NIH and how it operates
- He worked at the CDC
- He has proven experience working on major statistical and analytical projects

New Landscape of the Project Team

John (JJ) McGowan

JJ thanked the entire team for all the tremendous service put forth throughout the year. He handed out Award Certificates to Advocates for their leadership, contribution, and commitment to the eRA project.

JJ then announced the new eRA Advocate assignments for the coming year (see attached), and pointed out two new additions, Knowledge Discovery and Internal ADP/EP Representative. Marcia Hahn, who was advocate for Grants Management, will stay on the team as leader for Grants Policy. Also, Reporting will now include Carol Martin and Thor Fjellstedt.

New members of the project team include:

- Grants Management (GM), Mr. Michael Loewe
- IC Technical Perspective, Mr. Chip Groh
- NIH eRA Commons, David Wright joins Dr. George Stone
- Internal ADP/EP Representative, Ms. Mary Ann Williamson
- Knowledge Discovery, Dr. Richard Morris
- Receipt, Referral & Assignment, Dr. Ellen Liberman
- Training Activities, transitioning to Ms. Barbara Huffman and Dr. Rick Ikeda

JJ emphasized again that the Project Team is the key to moving the eRA project forward. That's why the commitment and contribution of Advocates to the project have been so important.

Web Development Site

Tim Twomey

Tim Twomey demonstrated the capability to view "mock-up" user interface screens prior to the actual development and release of the functionality. Users had been shown PowerPoint versions of new screens in the past, however, the medium did not provide the same interactive feel as the Web "mock-ups." The team agreed that this is a wonderful feedback tool for the extramural community and also a great, self-contained way to demonstrate functionality when no network connections are available.

Tim described the three internal websites: eRA Web Development, IMPAC II Web, and eRA Web Production and the flow of the pages as they move towards production. Two firewalls are used to restrict user access at various stages.

Looking forward, users could be given a specified window of time early in the development cycle in which they could review the screens and provide feedback. The team was quick to note that timing of the feedback cycle should be taken into consideration when developing project timetables.

There is still some work to be done to simplify the current edit-intensive method for posting the "mock-ups." Tim noted that there should be a more cohesive plan in place for moving pages from development to production. The feedback process must also be clearly defined.

Attendees

Caban, Carlos (OER)	Hughes, Stephen (OD)	Sinnett, Ev (CSR)
Cain, Jim (OER)	Martin, Carol (NHGRI)	Spitzberg, Bobbi (OER)
Carter, Dave (OER)	McGowan, JJ (NIAID)	Stone, George (OER/OPERA)
Cummins, Sheri (LTS/OCO)	Morton, Larry (OER)	Tucker, Jim (OER)
Erickson, Bud (NCI)	Panniers, Richard (CSR)	Van Brunt, Virginia (LTS)
Flora, Carla (OCO)	Patel, Kalpesh (Ekagra)	Walker, Catherine (OER)
Grandy, Vanessa (Z-Tech)	Sachar, Brad (Oracle)	Zucker, Sherry (DEIS)
Hahn, Marcia (OER/OPERA)	Seppala, Sandy (LTS/OCO)	
Hodgkins, Earl (NIGMS)	Silverman, Jay (NGIT)	