



eRA Project Team Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2003
Time: 9:00–11:00 a.m.
Location: 6700 B Rockledge, Room 1205
Chair: Jim Cain

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 27, 9:00 a.m., 6700 B Rockledge, Room 1205

Action Items

1. (Donna Frahm) Distribute updated requirements document for the summer release.
2. (Steve Hughes) Provide status updates of the load-balancing project at each Project Team meeting through deployment.

Attachments

- ❑ Looking at Shadows (Nathan Faut & Rob Borotkanics, AHRQ):
http://era.nih.gov/Docs/AHRQ_eRA_MayFinal.pdf
- ❑ AHRQ Questionnaire (handout):
http://era.nih.gov/Docs/AHRQ_questions_for_eRA_meeting.pdf
- ❑ Performance Tiger Team (Chip Schwartz):
http://era.nih.gov/Docs/Performance_Team_Update_5-13-03_v2.pdf

Project Report

JJ McGowan

JJ met with Ed Sontag regarding CDC's use of the eRA systems and the plan to meet the objective of having all CDC grants use IMPAC II. It was agreed that for FY04, emphasis would be put on moving all research grants to IMPAC II and all other types of grants would follow in FY05. The eRA systems already meet 65 percent of the 175 requirements identified by CDC. Many of the remaining requirements do not yet exist in the system currently used by CDC and the development effort could be moved to eRA. Solutions or workarounds were identified for all issues. The eRA Architecture team is currently looking into the possibility of a back-end database for CDC so that there would be a common repository for all CDC data.

JJ reported that Dr. Sontag is pleased with the direction of the eRA project and referred to eRA as "a center of excellence." They agreed that the team should continue to seek out the "best approach" whether that is to leverage an existing OPDIV system or build a new system within eRA.

AHRQ Extension System Survey

Rob Borotkanics(AHRQ) & Nathan Faut (Xcalibur)

Rob Bortkanics from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) provided a brief overview of the project underway to survey NIH's IMPAC II shadow systems.

He described the role AHRQ plays in HHS:

“...the lead agency charged with supporting research designed to improve the quality of healthcare, reduce its cost, improve patient safety, decrease medical errors, and broaden access to essential services. AHRQ sponsors and conducts research that provides evidence-based information on healthcare outcomes; quality; and cost, use, and access.”

Rob introduced Nathan Faut from Xcalibur Software, the company chosen to conduct the survey. Nathan formerly worked at NCI, CC, and CIT and has extensive knowledge of NIH systems and processes.

AHRQ recently adopted NIH's IMPAC II system. AHRQ pulls its grants information nightly in an AHRQ specific shadow system, GIAN.T. Both IMPAC II and GIAN.T lack specific capabilities the AHRQ requires to carry out its specific grants activities. AHRQ is aware that many NIH ICs have shadow systems that may or may not be addressing all the needs of their business. By surveying the current systems and identifying current and future needs, they can identify opportunities to combine development efforts and lower overall cost.

Rob and Nathan provided a copy of the survey questions (handout attached above). They asked the Project Team to identify contacts within each IC to assist with the survey. The information identified in the survey has potential benefit for NIH and AHRQ.

JJ mentioned that many ICs are very sensitive regarding their development teams right now and asked the Project Team to think about ways to ease fears and obtain support for this project.

NIAID CAAP System

Mary Kirker & Dave Wise

Mary Kirker provided a demo of the NIAID Council Action & Approval Program (CAAP) System with Dave Wise at the helm. The old paper system, along with a giant Excel spreadsheet, was difficult to maintain and prone to many errors due to the complicated funding process used by NIAID. The CAAP extension system follows the old paper system, but provides a user-friendly interface that can be used by Program, Budget and Grants Management. Mary explained that having all the teams working from the same information and terminology has been one of the greatest benefits of the system. Buy-in wasn't immediate, but the accuracy of the data, quick turnaround of information, and ease of the system won over the skeptics.

Mary and Dave walked the team through some of the basic functionality and reporting of the system.

Summer Release Requirements Update

Donna Frahm

Donna reports there have been only minimal changes to the detailed requirements that she reviewed with the team on April 22. Approximately six changes have been approved through the Configuration Control Board (CCB). The CCB decision summary for May 8 has been distributed to the team. Future decision summaries will be posted on the eRA website.

Action: (Donna Frahm) Distribute updated requirements document for the summer release.

Load Balancing Update

Steve Hughes

The load-balancing configuration for the NIH eRA Commons was turned over to development for preliminary testing on Tuesday, May 7, a one-day slip in the published schedule for the project. The development team introduced some configuration changes appropriate to the eRA system architecture and use. An issue was uncovered that is currently under investigation by the vendor, F5. The issue is reproducible and F5 has provided a hot patch for diagnosis. The issue has been escalated within the management at F5 and senior resources are looking at it. While the issue is under the control of F5, it is difficult for the eRA team to determine the impact to the schedule.

A system usage spike is expected during the first week of June due to IAR review activities. It is unclear whether the NIH eRA Commons can handle the additional load without the benefit of the load-balancing configuration.

Steve also raised a concern regarding production level support. The load-balancing configuration is new to both CIT and the eRA Operations teams and resources are currently single-threaded. Although the vendor can assist with support up front, more training for both CIT and eRA Operations staff is necessary for proper 24x7 production support going forward.

Action: (Steve Hughes) Provide status updates of the load balancing project at each Project Team meeting through deployment.

Performance Team Update

Chip Schwartz

As the system and usage grows, performance issues have slowly been creeping into production. The eRA team has pulled together a Performance Team to elevate the focus of these issues. Chip Schwartz is coordinating the efforts of this team.

The team is taking a two-pronged approach. First, they have prioritized all current performance issues and are conducting root-cause investigations and creating action plans for the top ten. To date, proposed solutions for three issues are being tested, three issues are under second-level analysis, and four issues are on hold for further information. Second, they are looking at ways to predict, prevent, and more quickly identify future performance issues.

General Discussion

All

Carlos Caban introduced Israel Lederhendler, his new co-advocate for Scientific Program Management. Dr. Lederhendler serves as the Chief, Basic Behavioral and Systems Neuroscience Program, and coordinator for Sleep Research at NIMH. In addition to administering a grants portfolio, he coordinates sleep and chronobiology research for NIMH.

George Stone informed the team that the iEdison pilot is now underway and is being used by six institutions: Harvard, MIT, Wisconsin, University of California, University of Maryland, and University of Chicago.

Contract Re-Compete

Donna Frahm

NIH Only. Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, no minutes are included.

Attendees

Austin, Patricia (OER/COB)	Hughes, Stephen (OD)	Silverman, Jay (NGIT)
Bradley, Eileen (CSR)	Liberman, Ellen (NEI)	Sinnett, Everett (CSR)
Bukowski, Maria (OD)	Markovitz, Paul (OER)	Smith, Carol (NCI)
Caban, Carlos (OER)	Martin, Carol (NHGRI)	Snouffer, Anna (OFACP)
Cain, Jim (OER)	Morton, Pete (CIT)	Soto, Tracy (DEIS)
Copeland Sewell, Zoe-Ann (OER)	Panniers, Richard (CSR)	Stone, George (OER/OPERA)
Cummins, Sheri (LTS/COB)	Pasquina, Joe (PSGS)	Tucker, Jim (OER)
Frahm, Donna (OER)	Patel, Kalpesh (Ekagra)	Van Brunt, Virginia (LTS)
Gibb, Scarlett (COB)	Pearson, Johnnie (Z-Tech)	Walker, Catherine (OER)
Grandy, Vanessa (Z-Tech)	Ratnanather, Chanath (Z-Tech)	Williamson, Mary Ann (NIDCR)
Hann, Della (OER)	Sachar, Brad (Oracle)	Wright, David (OPERA)
Hausman, Steve (NIAMS)	Seppala, Sandy (LTS/COB)	
	Silver, Sara (Z-Tech)	