2015-12-11 Steering Group Minutes

December 11, 2015, 1 PM EST

Attendees

Steering Group Members

Eric Meeks, Julia Trimmer, Dean B. Krafft, Alex Viggio, Paul Albert, Jon Corson-Rikert

★ = note taker

Work group leads

Chris Barnes, Ted Lawless

Ex officio

Graham Triggs, Mike Conlon, Jonathan Markow

Regrets

Melissa Haendel, Kristi Holmes, Robert H. McDonald, debra hanken kurz, Andi Ogier, Bart Ragon

Dial-In Number: (712) 775-7035; 989199  Local country dial-in codes

Agenda

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Notes

1. Updates
   a. Duraspace retreat held in Palm Coast Florida. Graham Triggs and Mike Conlon attended for VIVO along with debra hanken kurz and Jo nathan Markow, Andrew Woods and David Wilcox of Fedora, Carissa Smith and Bill Branan of Duraspace services, Tim Donohue of Dspace, Carol Minton Morris (communications) and Valorie Hollister (finance and membership)

2. Agenda review (no questions)

3. Annual rotation of Leadership Group – principles are in the charter, but details needed for the mechanics
   a. At the end of the year, there will be some people rotating off based on membership and in some cases on membership elections
   b. Need a document describing nominations and elections for Leadership based on the one developed and used for the Steering elections last summer
      i. Mike will draft and Dean and others can review – expects to have a draft this week
   c. There are more bronze members and gold members than would be represented on the Leadership group, while last year we had more automatic elections where only one member at that level
      i. If the number of nominated people is greater than the number of seats, we will need elections

4. Steering Group elections
   a. Five new members were elected to 3-year terms in 2015
   b. Scheduled to rotate off in 2016: Jon Corson-Rikert, Paul Albert, and Robert McDonald
   c. Scheduled to rotate off in 2017: Kristi Holmes, Dean Krafft, and Melissa Haendel
   d. No term limits in the charter for people who might wish to stand for re-election
   e. Want to move the elections up slightly so people won’t be named as Steering Group members only very close to the joint Steering-Leadership meeting at the Conference in August
   f. Jon will be leaving when he retires from Cornell on 1/31 – the remaining group can decide whether to operate with 10 members or have a special election

5. Events – discussed on this Tuesday’s Outreach and Engagement call (Julia, Kristi, and Alex attended from Steering)
a. Discussion about possibilities for doing training – heard several themes:
   i. people liked the idea of remote training – even a couple hours’ course and progressing to the next level a couple of weeks later
   ii. heard that the DuraSpace training for Fedor was very successful
b. A range of ideas about user group meetings and/or hackathons
   i. Some people had some concerns about losing the support the iFest had for new people, but others who had been new when attending the Portland event indicated it had felt more like a user group meeting without enough support for new people
   ii. A suggestion for rebranding as an annual user summit – one person had trouble getting funding to attend an implementation fest a 2nd time, so a different title might help
   iii. Such an event could include other activities such as ontology work, hackathon
c. More discussion would be needed – but it may be hard to organize something for early spring
d. We might form a task force to recommend a set of events with purposes – another call or two, but perhaps under the aegis of a task force charged with creating a document
   i. Aim to have firm recommendations by mid-January
e. Would be great to have input from those familiar with previous DuraSpace (or other) training events, including the recent 3-day Fedora training in DC
   i. But suggests that for us the training question is something somewhat separate for the moment and on a longer time frame to develop
   ii. Received feedback that that the wiki had improved significantly in the past year, which can help offset the need for an implementation fest

6. Budget
   a. Overall the situation is not very good – membership drive not as expected, and while the expenses have been stable across several years, revenue is down
   b. Membership total reflects requested allocations of DuraSpace support to more than one project
   c. Service provider revenue is from Gunther Media Services and Symplectic
   d. Mike is listed as in-kind salary (revenue and expense neutral – donated time)
   e. Looking at 2016, see expenditures reduced since one-time expenditures in 2015 will not recur.
   f. Need to raise more than last year to break even in 2016, either through increased memberships or other sources of revenue such as training, transfer of net income from the conference, grants, or service provider payments
      i. Other than membership, the other revenue sources are not likely to exceed a few thousand dollars in aggregate

7. Membership
   a. See http://vivoweb.org/community/membership for a list of current members
   b. Some of our planning assumptions were not correct about how membership is pursued
   c. A hot topic at the DuraSpace retreat – There’s great interest in how to help VIVO improve its financial position
   d. Need to change how we do this
      i. VIVO membership drive can’t be on a different calendar from the other projects or DuraSpace general membership – hard for DuraSpace staff to support the drive
         1. Theirs runs for 6 months starting in April, while ours has started later
         2. The tracking data we have for VIVO’s prospects is not high-quality data – when we are asked to contact an institution, we did not have high quality data on who to contact and how to contact them – fumbled around trying to even get into position to make an ask
            1. And the level of personal effort involved in this was confounded by the existing data being almost exclusively about libraries – very limited otherwise, and the university librarian is not always involved in the VIVO project at an institution
            2. So this has to change – Mike will have to work with us and go institution by institution to determine who the right people are
               a. May have to collect 5 or 6 names from the institution
               iii. We will need (many) further ideas
      e. Questions
         i. Any feedback from institutions that decided to downgrade?
            1. Often the same story – less engagement at the upper levels of the university, where they may use and like VIVO but not see the value of participating at the leadership levels
         ii. Is it possible to use NSF grant funds to pay for a VIVO membership?
            1. At UF we would have used the indirect return to do that, but at Cornell there’s not much access to indirect return
            2. Not aware that anyone does that
            3. Federal dollars can be used to support memberships, as evidenced by the USDA
         iii. Do we maintain a list of all the people who have communicated with or expressed interest in the project? The people who are on the lists may have influence on their institutions but may not be aware of our membership structure or the drive
            1. We have lists, and a list of implementing sites that we supplement from the lists
               a. Can now track what version people are on, where they are located, etc.
               b. Includes evaluations of VIVO
            2. We should then do a better job of reaching out to every new person we see on our lists, to try to understand what the level of institutional interest is
               a. An actively managed list of prospects
            3. What about German institutions?
               a. There are DuraSpace memberships in Germany, but not for the VIVO project
               b. The current paradigm goes sites -> software -> member, but we should consider other prospects based on the ontology or data or other interest
            4. There is the challenge that institutions may have to pay more for licensing commercial software complementary to VIVO (additional, new Elements modules)
               a. Could discounts be applied to the commercial vendor costs if allocated to VIVO sponsorship?
               b. DuraSpace has asked registered service providers to recruit members, which has not to date been successful
         f. We have a creative and devoted group, and we need to all work on ways to improve our membership process

8. Future topics
Action Items

- Mike Conlon will develop a draft of the Leadership Group election process