2020-08-17 - Fedora Leadership Group Meeting

Time/Place

Time: 12:00pm Eastern Time (US)

Please see the calendar invite for the Zoom link.

Attendees

1. ~~Tammy Allgood Wolf~~ ⭐
2. Melissa Anez
3. Chris Awre
4. ~~Thomas Bernhart~~
5. Danny Bernstein
6. ~~Robert Cartolano~~
7. ~~Sayeed Choudhury~~ (Aaron Birkland will represent JHU)
8. ~~Stefano Cossu~~
9. ~~Dan Coughlin~~
10. Jon Dunn
11. ~~Dan Field~~
12. Raman Ganguly
13. Jennifer Gilbert
14. Babak Hamidzadeh
15. ~~Neil Jefferies~~
16. ~~Mark Jordan~~
17. Danny Lamb
18. Rosalyn Metz
19. Este Pope
20. Scott Prater
21. Robin Ruggaber
22. Tim Shearer
23. Andrew Woods
24. Dustin Slater
25. Jennifer Vinopal
26. David Wilcox
27. ~~Wei Xuan~~
28. Maurice York
29. Laurie Arp
30. Robert Miller

Agenda

Topic	Lead
Financial Update **(10 minutes)** The end of year Financial Statement for FY19-20 for Fedora (July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020) is available as an email attachment. Overall we were positive to budget by $ 55,719. This was more than anticipated due to several variances. Positive variances include • $ 20,700 in additional membership dues • $ 20,060 underspent in travel due to pandemic • $ 2,409 in interest • Miscellaneous service provider fees, supplies, services, IDC Negative variances include • $ 20,932 in salaries and benefit – leadership approved this variance to increase Danny Bernstein's time to 100% for the last several months of the fiscal year to accelerate Fedora 6 development • $ 8,133 in meeting expenses - these were related to the Islandora and Fedora Camp and were planned for but not included in the original budget Overall net assets (retained and current) are now $ 109,991 **Goal:** Review the financial statement for FY19-20, provide opportunity for questions.	Laurie

IMLS Fedora Migration Grant Announcement **(15 minutes)** $249,859 over 18 months (September 2020 - February 2022) We will develop, pilot, and document migration tools and paths to upgrade Fedora 3 to Fedora 6. The community identified migration tools and documentation during a planning project as important resources to support Fedora 3 upgrade and migration processes, which are necessary to sustain repositories that provide critical access to digital collections. Pilot migrations will be conducted and documented for two Fedora 3 repositories; a toolkit then will be shared through training programs to support broad community adoption. **Goal:** Review the planned work, increase awareness, provide opportunity for questions.	David
IMLS Grant Impacts **(20 minutes)** The FY2021 Fedora budget assumed a 15% reduction in membership revenues relative to FY2020 for a total of ~$66,000. So far we have surpassed that estimate with ~$92,000 in net losses. However, we also received the IMLS Fedora migration grant, which pays for 50% of David's time over 18 months (September 2020 - February 2022). However we will need to reduce some activities David normally performs so that we can accomplish day to day operation of Fedora. See Program Leadership Activities Document **Goal:** Review current financial forecast and agree on how to manage staff allocations during the grant period.	Rosalyn
Assessing Different Funding Models **(30 minutes)** The current membership funding model for Fedora (and other open source programs) is proving to be unsustainable, so we need to discuss the viability of different approaches. **Goal:** Break into small groups to discuss the proposals and make note of the benefits and drawbacks, as well as any suggestions for improving the models.	David
Strategic Subgroup Reports and Next Steps **(30 minutes)** **Goal:** Agreement on priorities for each subgroup	David Rosalyn Este
Wrap-up	David

Previous Action Items

Notes

Financial Update

Report shared in advance; main points in the agenda above. We are at end of fiscal year.

IMLS Fedora Migration Grant Announcement

Previous IMLS grant (last year) examined barriers to migration. One clear takeaway: migration is difficult, requiring a lot of effort, but the value proposition wasn't clear. To bring the community forward, the value proposition needs to go up and the work needed to migrate must to go down. Users don't just want tools; the want examples, pathways, pilots to follow.

Phase one: work with two pilots institutions. One a custom Fedora, and then an Islandora institution (fairly standard and representative). Goal is not just migration, but to create documentation and guides which can be shared.

Phase two: taking the toolkit produced by the first phase, sharing it more broadly, and improving it.

Phase three: (dependant on COVID): hold a migration camp, with funded migrations. Could be online if face-to-face events are still hazardous.

IMLS Grant Impacts

We have surpassed the projected budget deficit, but the IMLS grant pays for 50% of David's time, so we don't need to dip into net assets to cover the shortfall.

BUT- this will be a 50% reduction in David's time for other activities. Which duties will David no longer be able to perform, or will perform less? How will these tasks be managed? Program Leadership Activities Document outlines a list of tasks and suggests areas where the Chair and Chair-Elect can help to fill in gaps. Fedora Governance Sub-Group could help with election organization, but David will still need to run the form to preserve election confidentially.

Community engagement: Este, Rosalyn, and David ran a membership forum this year. Afterwards, they handled a number of follow up communications, which dovetails well with the membership work section of the list. Having doen one meeting, repeat meetings will be easier. The work may not be done as David would have done it, but the grant will also have outreach aspects.

Conference proposals and presentations: can be directed to Steering, with leadership ooped in as needed. The grant will also feed into conferences.

This should reduce the work reasonably, but we will need to evaluate how well it's working. Communication to the community about David's re-allocation of time could help as well, to manage expectations.

Can we front-load David's time now on communication, ahead of his time reduction, especially as regards Fedora 6 messaging?

David has already started work on the grant, which officially starts in September.

Is there an opportunity to bring in a different staff member on reduced time, using the budget freed-up by the grant?

Laurie is working through the numbers for this.

Assessing Different Funding Models

Reflection of current situation is that current Fedora funding model isn't working as well as it has and will need to change, with some urgency to identify the path forward. This isn't just Fedora, other communities are experiencing the same. Lyrasis is more generally looking at funding opportunities where it can.

Exercise for the Leadership Group to look at and discuss two alternative funding models using Zoom breakout rooms, with Rosy, Este and David as facilitators. Each group is asked to make some brief notes for inclusion on this page.

- Licensing model - 10 mins discussion
- Centralised model - 10 mins discussion

Come together again to compare notes.

Question about DSpace - this is more global in its community, hence has had greater resilience. But they also do not have a dedicated program manager, which is impacting on their ability to grow during the pandemic.

Breakout rooms

* - preferred model to give focus to in each of the breakout rooms
NB. breakout groups worked well.

Rosy's breakout room:

Licensing model pros and cons*:

Do we have a sense of how the community would respond?

Is this really a licensing model? Perhaps we need a different name for what we're talking about.

Prompt the user to register and prompt to pay the licensing fee? Helps us know who is using the software.

Phoning home is possibly at odds with Open Source values?

ArchiveSpace does not have a tracking device, but offering exclusive benefits to support membership proposition

How would this change impact all those who are using the software that we do not currently know about?

Talking paper clip constantly reminding you you need to make a donation?

Are we talking about a requirement to buy a license or just constant reminder that you haven't yet supported the project?

To what extent does the community understand that Fedora is under financial strain?

Would the messaging go to the right place? The developers / devops people are the ones who would see this message - not the ones holding the purse strings.

We could ask for minimal information (what is your institution) in order to

Build into rollout of Fedora 6 so there is clean messaging?

One membership to rule them all approach

All communities would need to want to make this work!

Cons:

- Heavier lift politically within an institution
- Folks might want to support only the elements they use

Pros:

- One bill - convenient - doesn't say "membership" but rather "support of open infrastructure" - technology support fee, technology development fee.
- Uncertainty about where the money is going once given to parent body?

Maybe we need a focus group/survey to try to understand how appealing this approach is, especially understanding whether one bill (one institution/cause to support) is to administrators.

CARES grant could help us get the answers to these questions.

Este's breakout room:

Other models should be considered, not just these two?
Shared community manager (DSpace, Fedora, others?)
-- not a current model in Lyrasis
  some efficiencies could be achieved, but may not address fundamental need that members need to contribute

Licensing*

How many people even know they are using Fedora (Islandora, Hyrax...)
Are there other open source licensing models out there that work?
Easier to make a business case to license a thing, rather purchase a membership
-- Risk: may cause people to drop out
Timing is critical (now not the best time to shift?)
What would be the incentive to switch to a license model?
-- The software itself: the alternative is a future with no support?
Opportunity with 6: move to new financing model for that version
-- generate income: migration consultancy to 6
Licensing also a commitment to long-term sustainability
Looking ahead - the ghost of Christmas Future!
Apache License, as currently written, is not compulsory (anyone can use Fedora without license), so license would need to change if we followed this route.
What advantages come along with a license model, financially -- at what point would a license be cheaper for a license than a membership model? What would be the optimal price point?
Meta-questions: do people use Fedora because it's free? Do people value Fedora enough to pay for it?
-- if people were to stop using Fedora, what would they use?
-- what are the alternatives to Fedora?
-- what is the total cost of ownership for Fedora (staff expertise, etc.)

Didn't have time to consider centralised model

David's Group

Licensing

Robin: Brought up the Samvera example: if you are an institution of a certain size and you are using Samvera, you are expected to become a partner.

“Licensing” fee may not be a palatable way of framing the requirement to pay; Mark suggested that “Sustaining” fee may be better - to pay for staff time and organisational activity. Framing should be transparent about the necessity for contributing more funds.

Maurice wondered if a fee should be only applicable to Fedora 6 and not earlier versions.

Make Fedora nagware? Have a reminder about contribution every now and again.

Raman thinks that institutions in Europe won’t pay a fee, since there are alternatives to Fedora in some platform domains, e.g. Zenodo.

Centralized funding

- Allows organizations to pay one invoice rather than many
- Coordination of roadmaps and interoperability between projects
- Pivoting the membership model in a way that allows the academy to continue owning its own software and services
- Funding for innovation
- Risk of the software you use being sunsetted if it cannot be sustained

Discussion

Robin: Need to make sure senior managers (who make funding decisions) stay engaged, as they need to continue to understand what they are getting to understand the value it offers.
Tim: Pay for ArchiveSpace, and has been able to do so going forward as not reviewed alongside 'memberships'. Depends on what 'membership' encompasses (Emory has taken a different view in considering what is paid for)
David: Looking for ways of making the budget 'sticky', so it stays in budget
Jon: Bundling community costs as a package so it can be defined more easily for investment. Use of this word, 'investment', helps convey a specific type of message.

Strategic Subgroup Reports

See the quarterly report for written updates. Membership of subgroups is encouraged for Leadership Group members, with more time made by moving Leadership Groups meetings less often.

Product Technology (David)

- Focus on Fedora 6 rollout
- Testing schedule developed, reaching out to those who can help with trying this out
- Steering suggested a 'phone home' feature to help understand usage

Communication, Outreach, Marketing and Community (Este)

- Looking at producing. 1-2 page brochure for circulation/download as useful
- Blog post focusing on use of Fedora at a time of COVID, another on the global reach of Fedora
- Shout out for contribution to the information about uses of Fedora
- Convey messaging about challenges to funding and highlight ways of tackling this in a transparent and constructive way

Governance and Business Model (Rosy)

- Recently voted change from 1-year to 2-year terms to help maintain continuity of activity
- Need to consider who gets extended and who doesn't - those who are NOT looking to extend should let Rosy know

Technology - see written report in quarterly update

Lots of engagement on testing side, plan is on target

Effort is going to bringing everyone to Fedora 6 (from 3, 4, and 5)

Reminder about online user groups this week (US timezones) and September (European timezones)

Action Items