

Web Policy and Review Committee Minutes
July 22, 2008

Present:

Ed Osborn, Brian Lashley, Kevin Gill, Bill Kenney, David Stoloff, Sarah Tasneem, Yaw Nsiah, Tyler Knotts (student), Chris Dorsey, David Oyanadel

OLD BUSINESS

1. Online Calendar: Kevin Gill reported that individual departments are using the Active-X online calendar application to customize event calendars for their websites. He also indicated several departments (continuing education, ITS training) are using the application's private calendar customization tool. Kevin also mentioned several features of the technology, which allows someone to send reminders to their own email, to promote events to email distribution lists, and to add to one's Outlook calendar. It was agreed that the calendar system could be better marketed, both to people needing to promote their events, and to end users. Kevin Gill will work with Ed Osborn on this.
2. Google Mini-Search/Site Map: Kevin indicated the product has been purchased. It needs a UPS and Kevin recommends we launch it when we index the new web server. Ed Osborn made the point that it will be important when we launch the site map to find a place for the current alpha index of Eastern web sites.
3. E-Web's treatment of course descriptions/schedule: This is a limitation of Banner and there is no relief in sight. Issue tabled pending any technology developments.

NEW BUSINESS

1. New Web Server: Bill Kenney described the new server and its capabilities. He indicated it is an HP box running on the Linux OS and has SQL and PHP capabilities. Eventually (and seamlessly), Bill will migrate the new server to a SUN/Solaris box. In the meantime, the committee addressed several "naming convention" issues. It was agreed that we do not want to get rid of the "www" prefix, since that defines and brands our domain. We also no longer will need lengthy urls, including the "ecsu" and "depts" directories. The committee discussed the benefits of new naming convention and agreed that naming should be consistent, reflect the Eastern brand, and focus on the convenience of site visitors (outside end users), not internal staff/faculty. The committee agreed to migrate to full titles for department sites (i.e., www.easternct.edu/biology) as opposed to using abbreviations, and consensus was also reached that these department page urls should go after rather than before the domain name. (i.e., not biology.easternct.edu) As a way to transition, esp. for those who have bookmarked what will be "old" urls, redirection pages/language will be generated, and a table showing all dept names (old and new) will be published on the web site. The next committee meeting will be devoted to preparing an implementation plan for this decision.

2. Dynamic Pages: The new server has SQL/PHP capability, which means knowledgeable users will be able to launch dynamic pages from databases. It was agreed that few people on campus will have this skill set, and that we need to be cautious as to what projects are authorized to proceed with SQL/PHP. Concerns range from security to staffing stability (someone builds a page and then leaves, taking the ability to update the page) to institutional benefits to training. The committee agreed that a policy needs to be created on this new technology, and Kevin Gill and Ed Osborn agreed to draft something. ITS should be able to review security issues related to the request, and the committee should have final authority to approve. The policy should also mention faculty/staff personal pages. It was also agreed to conduct a survey to see who has these skills on campus, with the survey sent out once the policy is approved. Training must also be identified: [Manchester Community College has a course (CSC230: Database Concepts with Web Applications) that teaches SQL, PHP, and related programming/concepts.] An initial pilot project might be creation of a true, web-enabled staff/faculty directory.
3. Other:
 - a. Next Meeting is August 5 at 3 p.m.
 - b. Members will be recruited from Continuing Education and Student Affairs.