

Attendees:

Paula Allen, DOR; Shawn Dawson, ODOT; Wes Ford, DHS; Mike Freese, CNIC Project Office; Dennis Green, Employment; Raelynn Henson, CNIC Project Office; John Hubbard, DOC; Daryl Kottek, DAS IRMD; Julie Mallord, CNIC Project Office; Ray Mann, ODE.

1. Introductions & Expectations – Raelynn Henson

Members introduced themselves and gave their agency role; several expectations for the Peer Communications Group were expressed:

- Raelynn shared that she views this new group as a valuable tool and resource for gathering and disseminating information to technical staff about the CNIC project.
- Dennis said the group will provide an accelerated method of information dissemination and that it will help solidify a central repository of project information.
- Mike said that because of the credibility of each of the members within their own agencies, the group will serve as an excellent additional forum for communicating with technical staff.

Other thoughts expressed:

- Daryl: Not knowing what's coming next contributes in part to making staff resistant to change. He would like to see more "what's next" communications.
- Dennis: Some project information is public and some is only appropriate for work groups and subcommittees. A central repository of information and links to information would be beneficial.

2. Purpose of Communications Groups – Mike Freese

Mike believes the CNIC Project will benefit from the input received from this Peer Communications Group. One of the group's roles will be to circumvent agency communications bottlenecks. Just because we have a strong organizational structure does not mean that all communication is flowing properly through that structure to technical staff. If technical staff hears the same message from a peer resource as they hear from their CIO or agency director, the message will more likely be received.

The role of the Cross-Communications Group (which has not officially formed yet) will be to ensure the various technical work groups share pertinent information with each other. Some of the things in the CNIC project are iterative; network decisions can affect the work of the security work group, etc.

Wes asked what level (what audience) the Peer Communications Group is aiming at – the technical level or across their agencies. Mike: The primary purpose is to be a conduit for technical staff, but there could be need for communicating with both groups.

Paula asked for information on the "Whitehouse" group. Mike: "Whitehouse" stands for Randy Whitehouse of ODOT, the organizer of the group. The group formed themselves early during the CNIC project to facilitate sharing project information. The CNIC Steering Committee decided in January to deputize the group for a specific function – cross communication between technical groups. Looking at the staff serving on technical work groups and those attending the "Whitehouse" meetings, the people are much the same.

Formalizing the group has not occurred, but it is planned to be accomplished in the near future. Paula: to restate it, the “Whitehouse” group will focus on communications between technical work groups; the Peer Communications Group will focus on information of interest to IT employees or other agency staff.

Dennis spoke about the need to build trust – a necessary ingredient if we are to be candid with rumors and concerns. He hopes the group will feel comfortable to be candid. Mike: Once the group establishes ground rules this will help with building trust. Wes: We are fighting past history – not just the current CNIC environment. It’s hard for a lot of staff to let go of past bad experiences. Also, the question still looms, “What does all this information mean to me?” Mike: Until we can answer “what happens to me,” it’s hard to move forward because folks want that answer first. It is wonderful that SEIU and management have reached agreement related to CNIC bargaining.

Dennis: There is also apathy in places. For example, the Employment Dept. only has 1.8 employees affected by CNIC. But he would like to see more buy-in even in places where there is not high effect. This project is a big deal for the state of Oregon and everyone should be involved or informed.

Ground rules (this is not a complete list):

- Members can say anything in a meeting and not be concerned about it; comments should be open, honest, direct, and candid.
- The Peer Communications Group needs to get information at the same time as others (preferably before).

The following reflects random comments captured during the ensuing discussion:

- John: Could we have minutes of various groups distilled so staff doesn’t have to read minutes of every group? Shawn: A monthly summary – the “big picture” with links to all other sources of information would be good.
- Wes: Consistency is a good tool; new information should be available at the same time each month.
- Julie: The CNIC Steering Committee will receive a weekly recap of project status, but that information is probably too high-level to be used as a recap.
- Wes: The reason for certain requests for agency information is needed; if staff understand “why” certain information is requested, there is less room for “assumptions.”
- Daryl: People need to feel informed not only about the past (the things accomplished) but about the future – what is right around the corner.
- Shawn: I see three levels to communicate with: The general state employee whose agency may be impacted by having a new data center; staff that are involved (impacted) at an administrative or technical level; and the average person that is not involved in the project at all.
- Dennis: Another audience is the Legislature; it is important for everyone to have the same information.
- John: Perhaps Oregon.gov could also be a central place for agency specific information (each agency having their own way of communicating to their agency). Having the same location for information is the most critical thing.
- Dennis: It would also be good to have a central list of contact persons for various domains.
- Julie restated themes she was hearing from the discussion: packaging and consistency.

3. Structure of Peer Communications – Julie Mallord

Julie asked the group to discuss what they thought was the appropriate structure/formality for the Peer Communications Group such as frequency of meetings, officers, and minutes.

Dennis: Minutes are important. Shawn: We need an official minute taker (outside the membership of the group) so that members can focus on the discussion at hand and not accurate transcription.

Wes: A consistent meeting time is important. Dennis: Because of the amount of work to do initially, meetings should be every week. Daryl: Agrees with weekly meetings right now and then every two weeks. Next meeting, Friday, Feb. 25, 10 to 11 a.m. Dennis will arrange meeting location.

Dennis: Would like this group to take a greater role in getting information from other CNIC subcommittees. Julie: One person from Peer Communications could link up with one of the project managers from the five technical work groups. There was discussion about Peer Communications members attending Julie's weekly Project Office meeting. Julie asked that this be readdressed at the next week's meeting.

The following assignments were made (to link with other subcommittees):

Wes: Mainframe and Service Management
Shawn: Security
Ray: Network
John: Storage
Paula: Servers and Finance
Dennis: HR

Dennis was selected to serve as Facilitator of the Peer Communications Group for an undetermined term.

4. List of Future Agenda Items

Raelynn suggested the group determine the current communications baseline at the next meeting; she will give a presentation on the current communications plan, the matrix of CNIC audiences, frequency of communications, and tools.

Next meeting agenda:

- Raelynn will give an overview of current communications efforts to provide a baseline for future discussions
- Develop list of future agenda items/strategies
- Discuss Project Office meeting invitation and logistics.

5. Other Issues

None were discussed for lack of time; Dennis noted he had two pending issues.

Next Meeting

Friday, Feb. 25, 2005
10 to 11 a.m.
Location: State Lands Bldg, Conference Room 304