



## **Strategic Planning Steering Team**

13 Sept 2007

1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Rio Conference Center

### **Members Present**

SPST – Debra Thompson, Gaye Murphy, Linda Hawbaker, Reyes Medrano

ESCAN Working Group – Christine Moore, Damita Kaloostian, Kerry Mitchell, Cindy Almendarez, Mary Day, Linda Hughes, Jann Contendo, Sue Kater

Facilitator – James Waugh, IR Council

### **2007 MCCCCD Environmental Scan**

This month's SPST meeting was used to evaluate the 2007 EScan process, software, and final product. The evaluation was broken down into key areas as documented below.

#### Overall View

The consensus among the members of the SPST was that the 2007 EScan report was an excellent product. Members of the EScan workgroups, however, highlighted several key issues that they would like to see addressed in the 2008 EScan. These issues include:

- Expanded participation in the EScan fell short of the goal. The original intent was to seek participants outside IR community who could contribute to the research and post information in the BrainKeeper. The timing of the pilot probably had an impact on participation with the pilot largely conducted during the summer schedule when people were on vacation, and faculty and librarians were unavailable.
- There was a general reluctance to summarize articles and difficulty identifying anticipated impact to MCCCCD
- Many felt the learning curve with Brainkeeper was too steep, mainly with regard to the time investment to get comfortable with the tool. Some of this may have been due to the templates that were created and format participants were asked to follow.
- Workgroup members found items/articles of interest that were not part of their scanning category and were unable to post to the appropriate area.

#### Brainkeeper Software

The BrainKeeper elicited the most comments of concern in the entire EScan process. While acknowledging it as a good tool, the issue of user friendliness continued to crop up. One EScan participant said it required three hours to overcome the learning curve. Another said that since BrainKeeper was not a daily use tool, it required a re-familiarization with the process every time they logged in. The training was acknowledged as being counter-productive since the template

was revised after the initial training and probably caused most of the difficulty with use. Instructions and training need to be revised based on changes made to the scanning process.

Other BrainKeeper recommendations included the following:

- One user preferred the method of having article summaries emailed to the IR staff, and then the IR staff would input the info into Brainkeeper. Discussion on this idea noted that this placed the onus of work back on the IR staff, which was the opposite goal of using BrainKeeper. It also meant that fewer people would probably look at BrainKeeper as the intended repository of real-time environmental issues.
- Another voiced concern was that any immediate attempts to broaden BrainKeeper usage should not be undertaken until the process kinks were worked out.
- There was a reaffirmation that the original purpose of BrainKeeper was to move from a static document to a living product that was continually updated. The corollary to working with a living document is to decide how/when data must be purged/retired to ensure current relevancy and to avoid the database from becoming unwieldy.
- The District IE office needs to look at other products in place of BrainKeeper or change the templates being used in BrainKeeper.
- The web-based social book-marking site Del.icio.us was discussed as a possible alternative to BrainKeeper. A demonstration of this product was given by a current user. Highlights of this program are the ability to tag bookmarks with key words, to view other bookmarks added by others, and ease of use/intuitiveness of its interface. The drawbacks of this product are that it would only be for web-based materials and is not a private site.
- The question was posed, 'Are we losing out on key participants because of technology? If so, is that loss acceptable?' No real answer was provided by the group because it could not be determined if the lack of widespread participation had more to do with the timing or if it was the mechanism for collecting data for the EScan.
- The facilitator asked the group, "Is Brainkeeper the proper tool for the job?" One voice said it was just one more website with a user ID and password to remember. That presents a psychological barrier to its being used widely. Another reiterated that the templates as created are too unwieldy. Some believed that a lower technical requirement may increase participation. Overall, it was undecided if BrainKeeper was the right tool. A decision on BrainKeeper will be made following the 2008 EScan.

### 2007 EScan Report

Next, the 2007 EScan final product was evaluated for content, presentation, and appearance. Overall, the members of SPST once again voiced their solid approval of the end product and believed it should be seen as a very successful project and a positive move in the right direction. Discussion on this topic centered on the contents of the EScan and some of their inherent difficulties:

- Since the EScan is a general survey of the Phoenix / Maricopa County community at large, it was noted that the news articles from the press demonstrated that there is often a

very real difference in public perception verses hard facts that MCCCCD can often provide to the contrary on particular topics.

- There needs to be more of an emphasis on looking into the future with this product, and less focus on current and past issues that can no longer be addressed. The skill of forecasting, it was noted, is very difficult for many to do, and that the natural instinct is to look at how an issue affects “me” in the immediate future. This brought the subject back to the usefulness of a small working that would periodically review the data. This group would be responsible for synthesizing the articles in a manner that attempts to accurately forecast future impacts on MCCCCD.

### The Way Ahead

Finally, the next iteration of the MCCCCD EScan was discussed. This brainstorming session was used to plot the way ahead for the 2008 MCCCCD EScan. Suggestions included:

- Continue to evaluate how the gathered information can be made relevant and useful for the SPAC and CEC, as well as the colleges and other advisory groups.
- Consider doing a quarterly review of the accumulated data in BrainKeeper (or other designated collection tool). This will prevent an undo burden being created at year’s end during report compilation. A further iteration of this idea was to consider aligning quarterly reviews by EScan chapter topic, and then scheduling the reviews in a manner that benefits other happenings on the District calendar.
- Delete the requirement for creating a finding. Use a broader group, such as SPAC, to review EScan information, determine relevancy, and craft a finding that is relevant to MCCCCD.
- A dual pilot for the collection tools to be used in 2008 was agreed upon. The Del.icio.us social book-marking website will be used by members at GCC and other interested parties. The DO will look at creating new templates in BrainKeeper that mimic the format of Del.icio.us (book marking) to see if this will aid in increasing user proficiency and willingness to use BrainKeeper.
- Participation in the next EScan should not be expanded much further than it is now to allow for processes to be improved and reviewed again. An unwieldy or undefined process could create unwillingness to participate in the future.
- The issue of citing references still needs a resolution that is acceptable to all.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:45**

**Recorder:** James Mitchell

**Next Meeting:** October 11, 1:30 – 4:30 PM, Rio Tower Room 6D