

2005 Web for Development Conference
“Telling the Development Story to the World”

Notes from the Sessions

MONDAY, MAY 9, 2005

Mohamed Muhsin, CIO and Vice President, World Bank

- After a brief introduction and history of the Web for Development community, Muhsin said: *“While the agenda is full of great new ideas and processes, the real value of the initiative is to focus on how the Web reaches the poor.”*
- He showed a brief film that illustrated how individuals and communities in the developing world are using the Web -- in schools, to make governments more transparent, to provide real-time information to people to use for farming, business, discussions or other development-related activities, and other applications. Muhsin explained that the film would be available to any of the participants who wish to use it for their sites or in presentations.

Ahmed Fawzi, Director, News and Media Division, Department of Public Information, United Nations

- Fawzi described the UN System sites as large, sometimes rambling and with an occasional touch of "creeping incoherence," but stressed that the institution is working to manage its Web presence more tightly.
- Various media, radio, film and the Web, are "coming together" very well in United Nations' efforts to share information with as many people as possible. Providing content in various languages is a key component, as is a fast and intelligent search function.
- He said that there is a growing realization that the Web is a tool that can do more than simply provide information to external audiences. The Web has made it easier, for example, to respond to controversy, immediately and with direct impact -- getting the facts out fast and to the right people.
- He was especially enthusiastic about webcasting, which he said the United Nations is using much more extensively, around the clock, to provide information to audiences. The General Assembly meetings, for example, as well as briefings and congresses, are all going out directly as they are happening.
- Multilingual content was also a priority, he said, noting that the institution provides its material in the six official UN languages. The process is facilitated through partnerships with major universities in countries where the languages are spoken. Without such an arrangement, the United Nations would not be able to support its extensive translation system, even through there are staff assigned to each language in the headquarters.
- He expects that the current staffing structure, which is decentralized, will continue for the foreseeable future, acknowledging that it allows people to "do their own thing" and is not tightly controlled.
- Fawzi also announced that the United Nations will host the next conference. He said specific arrangements have yet to be made among sister UN agencies, and that he expected the Bank to continue to play a role, but that there was a commitment to host the next conference.

Session I: Making Key Connections — A Content Odyssey

Nicole Frost, World Bank

- The Bank site has moved toward feature packages that compile various types of presentations -- stories, multimedia, pictures, interviews and on-line discussions -- to bring focus to urgent issues through the Web. It is more than just publications or data, and requires editors, publication schedules, involvement by other members of the staff, and a commitment by management to support the effort.
- The Bank has recently redone its home page and is integrating a content management system that allows people across the institution to pay more attention to the content and less to issues of design and page formatting.
- This has been a sometimes difficult transition as people work to make use of the programs and processes, but the result has been a cleaner and more consistent site.
- Although the actual production of content and management of sites remains in the hands of individual Bank units, the experience for the user is much easier to manage and the information is much easier to locate make use of.

Earl Mardle. Keynet Consultancy

- Characterizing himself as a "rock thrower," he said that content does not drive good sites. Instead, it is important to recognize that there exists an environment that does not have fixed rules of information exchange, but that are determined by the members.
- Posting information on a site, he said, is effectively "outsourcing" distribution of information and discovery of results. He used as an example that e-government systems, while popular, are being replaced by people who would rather use telephones to conduct their business. They don't want information, he argued, they want help.
- He cited Reed's Law, which says that the Internet is best at forming groups. The challenge is to bring them to your Web site. An example is One World, which is based on trusting people and giving them tools.
- There are conversations going on out there, he said, and they will go on regardless of what content is on your site. The challenge is to become a part of that conversation, or at least to know what it is about.

Alex McKenzie, World Bank

- On the Operations Evaluations site of the World Bank, there has been a major effort to identify particular audiences and to serve their information needs. People can see the evaluations done of projects by the office as they progress. Information is available as the evaluation goes on, rather than only showing the results.
- It is the difference between control of information and providing people with an area that they can influence.

Christopher Strebel, UNESCO

- International organizations are methodological in their approach, and technology can move beyond their ability to keep up. It is important that we become more entrepreneurial in our approach, to suggest rapid pilots, and not to expect perfection in the first go-around.
- Look for aggregations of smaller solutions that will, over time, have a very large impact.
- The key is to look for things that stick and move with them.
- Seek interaction and for processes that help to show us, as Web managers, how to inform and educate effectively. Ask your users. Test your sites. Look for results.

Session III& IV: Unlocking Successful Content -- The Gerry McGovern Approach

Audience

- The first question you should ask as an editor: Who cares? We have to understand what the costumers want. What we talk and care about is not what our audience care about. Questions to ask about consumers (amazon.com is a good example):
 - Who are they?
 - What do they care about?
 - What do they want to do?
- Web sites need to target their appropriate to specific audiences and their needs. What do we want to tell to the audience?
- People look for something specific and act upon it. The best content is "take-action" content, not a static information.
- Focus on three dominant and specific audiences. Trying to serve everybody serves nobody.
- Minimize input for maximum output.

Management

- Educating senior management is key, since buy-in is essential.
- Editors have to decide what to feature, and ensure that those areas get sufficient attention/resources.
- The importance of the Web team is growing. The question is whether you can rise to the challenge and to engage in planning/commissioning in order to use the Web to its full potential.

Links

- Links create expectation. Make sure that the link delivers the promise.
- All content should have an action. Action links should be in the appropriate content.

Words

- Words are incredibly important. Do the research on what people search for, and use the appropriate words.
- People look for practical things (e.g. women's health as opposed to women's rights)
- We have to learn how people are searching. Use the words of the searcher, not your own words.
- Put together a number of terms that go into the Web site and score them. Target efforts into where we can create value by surveying the interests of visitors to the site and scoring them.
- You have to show to your managers that they will be more effective if you provide value. You have to have a Web site where success can be measured.
- Most sites suffer from the fact that the think that they are the "center of the universe." In fact, you are one of many competing sites, and the user is at the center.

Be concise

- Audience wants to know the answer, not the whole story behind it.
- The more people read, the more impatient they get. 500 words is a limit where you loose 50 percent of readers.

There are fundamental rules about content.

1. Short sentences 15-20 words,
2. Short paragraph: 40-0 words.
3. Short headings:: 8 words or less
4. Short summaries: 20-40 words.

Search Optimization

- Search follows the axiom of, "garbage in garbage out." It is better to have no search than bad search.

- Searches moved from one-word to three-word searches. Therefore we also have to increase the size of the search window.
- Importance of various versions of spelling.
- A key part of the strategy is to get linked. Getting Linked means:
 1. Identify sites that are relevant
 2. It is not as effective to have your site on another site that has lots of links – search engines will rank them lower
 3. Sites that don't link out too much get higher placement by engines
 4. Internal – have a rich set of links within your site
 5. Allow people to use your content – but make sure they link to your site.

The Title

Searches totally discount keywords & metatags. Most look at the content & the title. Very few look at descriptions. The Title metatag is used to construct the linked heading (e description) and is essential and very important. It gives significant weight to how your content is ranked. Titles should be

- i) 8 -10 words
- ii) Include general information
- iii) Write from the specific to the general (start with something that's unique, and then move to the more general (ie organizations name). This makes it easier for people to skim through the search results and identify what they want.

The Content

- Most search engines are giving more weight to the content that is on the page.
 1. Top of page content is most important. Having the core messages at the top of the page gives the content a higher ranking.
 2. "Carewords" (the key words that resonate with your audience) bear repetition
 3. Hyperlinked text is ranked higher. Words that are bolded also get a higher ranking.
- Most people look only at the first couple of words of a sentence, and read on only if they are engaged by the words. Therefore, search engines give words at the beginning of a sentence a higher weight than those at the end of the sentence.
- Sentences should start with the point you are trying to convey.

Summary of 6 Cs

1. Care – what does your audience really care about? Get to the point. Deliver the essence of the point.
2. Clear – kill the acronyms, use direct sentences, and speak to the reader.
3. Complete – focus on the task. Measure your site based on how it helps people to complete their tasks.
4. Concise - Remember the rules of content: short and well written.
5. Correct – Be prepared to stand behind every item on your site. The knowledge economy is about quality at every stage. Maximize the input, minimize the output. Content should be accurate & up to date.

Careword categories

- The rankings for "carewords" that the participants had submitted were grouped into five categories.
- Participants were asked to identify five actions items per category on that they felt they could actually put into practice over the next couple of weeks to address these issues.
- The "careword" groupings (with percentage of mentions in the survey) are below, followed by the list of actions that the groups said they could put into place.

MANAGEMENT (31%)

Senior Management buy-in

Quality control

Web metrics

Proving web sites worth

Knowledge Management

Management actions:

1. Establish editorial board
2. Engage in management evangelism to get buy-in
3. Define and circulate top three metrics
4. Provide in-house training for writing for the Web
5. Establish publishing processes

USABILITY (21%)

Usability (observed behavior)

Accessibility

Information Architecture

Easier to use

Consistent navigation

Usability actions:

1. Measure task completion through usability testing
2. Test your sites accessibility
3. Insure that there is internal linking
4. Search log analysis
5. Use standard templates for content and navigation

CONTENT (20%)

Content is critical

Multilingual content

Keep it simple

Finding content faster

Writing for the web

Content actions:

1. Review headings, summaries, page titles & links
2. Say no! Say no! Say no! - slash and burn to ensure that only essential and manageable content is allowed on the site
3. Give out fewer guides, but establish more rules; reinforce existing rules; commit to a 500-word count rule. Set a maximum size rule for PDFs.
4. Getting credibility / get linked – RSS, syndication
5. Identify critical content for translation

READERS (18%)

Knowing target audience

Benefits to public

Community engagement

Visitor friendly

Winning public support

Readers actions:

1. Define top three readers and their top three tasks
2. Use the personas all the time
3. Keep everybody on point
4. Get out of the office (face to face interviews), market research, site feedback
5. Commit to the idea of readers first, technology second

TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2005

Session V: Local Experiences, International Potential

What are the issues when you are trying to reach diverse groups? How do you go about persuading such diverse audience? This session is about reaching the right people and reaching out.

Questions & Answers:

Q: How to advertise the site to the community at large? How to bridge and fund local communities' publishing?

A: We reach local communities and organizations that are already working in these communities. We determine their needs and promote the use of our technologies for their specific needs.

Q: UN is currently looking for a CMS, what is the language component of the ones you have identified?

A: The CMS UNECA has selected had the language component. ILO looked at open source but bought a commercial one. The main criteria was choice of platform (based on Linux system), it had to be used with records management system already in place; service level agreements were also important.

Q: How you manage to make a transition between providing information and actually using it? Empowering people in the community to produce web sites, who comes to these sites and once they are there how they use it?

A: With CMS, it is possible to send alerts to mobile phone and Colnodo is trying to work out how to reach solar phones. We promote usage of usage on these alerts to alert people on flooding and other calamities, but it was very difficult to convince the government to use this kind of service. Communities can put information online related to local issues. Most of this information is available in print; but these communities are discovering the benefits of online publication.

Closing remarks:

Be aware of technology as means of delivering information needed by local communities. Web is a powerful means of delivering information but combining it with other existing means such as radio and others which are already available in rural communities can be even more powerful and achieve a larger outreach.

Luncheon keynote speech: Jeff Jarvis, Buzzmachine

- Increasingly, people see that they have the means to control the creation of media, and they are taking advantage of it through various technologies, blogs among them.
- Journalism is institutional, blogs are personal. They aren't simply tools, they are voices of people and they represent citizens.
- **Hoder.com** is on of the leading blogs, and started a blogging wave in Iran.
- Information presented in blogs can be pulled into other forms of media, and provides a vast amount of information.
- Aggregators: people/groups track blogs on certain topics/themes and brings them into one site (eg. Global Voices online)
- Standard tools & templates are available free online (eg. Blogger)
- Recommended book: "**Cluetrain manifesto**"
- Barriers to blogs are certain governments that ty to stop them by blocking or censoring. International organizations should to work together to stop them.

Questions & Answers:

Q: We are encouraged to control content, length etc, so do blogs have a place in international organizations?

A; Read the blogs, incorporate what they are saying, link them. Find ways to encourage local organizations to encourage people to blog. Aggregate blog posts and put them on your site. No matter what we (development organizations) do, blogs are going to continue and grow. We may as well make note of them.

Q: Bloggers' credibility comes from their independence. How will it affect bloggers to have their blogs presented on multilateral development agencies?

A. To have a conversation with bloggers will not influence them. To have large organizations engage with users and encourage them is important.

Q: How do you encourage people that are scared of blogs, to read/engage in them?

A: Ask them to listen by reading blogs. Do a daily/weekly blog report on blogs that pertain to a topic of interest. It is also important to translate blogs to expose your organization/content to its people

Q: In terms of monitoring blogs, is there a way to identify the most influential ones within a certain group?

A: Technorati allows you to see how many people are linking to a blog and provides a top 100 – but this doesn't allow you to see the rating, broken down into groups.

Q: Several blogs have died in the course of the last few months. How do you stop blogs from dieing?

A: Know what to expect – some people blog everyday, others blog once every few weeks. Some people simply post stuff that is sent to them. If you link out, people notice the conversation, and will link back to you. Only link to topics that are of interest to you and your organization.

Q: Where is blogging going to take us in five years, and what's so special about it?

Blogging is revolutionary because it is proprietary - people can say what they want to say, because it is their property. The linking validates blogs – linking to people will help them keep the blogs alive. Blog is the world's easiest publishing tool, connected to the best network ever. People use it in a lot of ways. I believe blogs are here to stay, and will grow. Blogging is an activity. Something will be happening in five years. Credibility will be maintained -- because when bloggers find a mistake, they comment on it, and will let you know that they disagree. Blogs can become an internal working group – if you produce content – post in on a blog, and have people connect to it.

Q: Why did Dan Rather's blog receive so much attention, and hamper his credibility?

A: The goal of blogs is to bring people together. It's their way to say what we think. When people find a mistake, or something they would like clarified, they get upset when they are ignored. But with a blog, a dialogue begins.

Session VI: Performance-Driven Web management

Pierre Guillaume Wielezyski, World Bank

- How can you use the tools you have, or new tools, to get your information to your management? What are the key measures we should be looking at when we manage our site?
- The majority of respondents to the Web4Dev organization survey said they use simple page views to measure their site's performance.
- Web metrics allow you move away from the politics, and focus resources on what really matters.
- There are eight basic statistics that we should consider – all are available through log-based analysis. These include conversion rates, bounce rates, visitor engagement index, keywords, geo segmentation and email metrics.
- Increasingly, people are starting to move toward page-tagging to measure their sites – it allows organizations with large sites to create aggregate reports throughout the site.
- To monitor activity across a large web site – align the reporting with your organization's goals & engage key stakeholders early.
- Track the "micro" conversations – i.e., first-time users, newsletter subscribers, registered users.
- Focus on what people are interested in – i.e., pages that receive the most traffic – not the content that people do not use (i.e. – lowest page views).
- Use metrics to make a point. If you are trying to convince management that the content should be shorter, then show management how long people spend on a site.
- Inform the people who are contributing content to show the metrics – this can be used as an incentive.
- If you capture what people are using, you can have some form of collaborative filtering. It's not the software you use to report your metrics that matters – it's to create a culture where the metrics matter.

Online Advertising

- Before embarking on advertising campaigns, make sure there is content that will "retain" the user.
- Online marketing is the most effective form of advertising (compared to email, mail, etc.)
- You can measure the impact of your marketing strategy – PPC – Pay Per Click
- Advertising = information distribution. There is a lot of information out there, and ad campaigns help users identify your site.
- Landing pages should offer users what they are expecting
- It is essential to get listed in the Open Directory Project – this crawls most of the site. .Google directory is also helpful
- Behavioral advertising – could be quite costly, but possibly effective. This would allow you to target your information to those who fit your "audience"
- Google tends to measure the click-through rate. If there are advertisements that do not receive a certain number of clicks, Google disables the keywords.

Andrew Macintyre, OECD-NEA

- OECD-NEA has a very simple RSS to manage (takes approx. 15 minutes per month). It results in additional traffic to their site – having the information sent to others, will then result in traffic to the site.

- Several standards for RSS are available, including those that allow for syndication.
- Make sure there is a process in place to update the feeds – CMS usually take care of this. More information on RSS is available from www.nea/fr/download/washington

Questions and Answers

Q: Your traffic went up, but you said you weren't entirely sure there is a correlation between the two.

A: We haven't really studied the causal relationship, but the numbers went up.

Comment: Once someone subscribes to your feed, your page receives a hit every time they turn on their aggregator. There is a pretty dramatic interest in page views, but unless there is some specific page reporting, it is difficult to say who is receiving the content.

A: The metrics on RSS capture the page views that are accessed by people. However, the most important is to track the feeds (i.e. the click-through) since what's most important is how many people receive the content.

Session VII: Information Technology and Communications: Working together in Web 2.0

Pierre Guillaume Wielezyski, World Bank

- Smart engineers, developers, programmers with time on their hands developing simple and accessible publishing tools

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Broadband – the web as an everyday tool

+

IM, SMS, p2p

+

"integrity crisis", global events = The People Web

- Are blogs...hype? This is a new way of sharing information.
- Types of blogs -- Economist blogs, Parliamentary blog, Politicians blog, Business leaders' blog. There are a lot of thematic blogs: Geographic blogs, International organizations blogs.
- We should not ignore blogs, as they talk about our organizations. Media pays attention to them on top of it. People discuss issues that are not necessarily captured by media. We need to listen to these blogs. We need to install an RSS reader, discover relevant blogs and set up radar.
- Should we have a blog? It depends. The guidelines for corporate blogging are still being formulated. Several of these are to tell the truth, post good news or bad news fast, etc.
- Social tagging is when individuals get information and put it together online. **Tagging is flickr** – people use picture in their blog.
- **Wiki? Wikipedia** this is a place where people who are experts contribute their expertise online for free.
- **RSS reader:** this will change the way that we receive information about updated news.
- Online communicator's survival guide: RSS/Aggregation, Keywords, links, search engines, Conversations, Communities, Analytics

The future of online communications:

- Blogs are growing and getting more interactive, more focused and tighter. For us it means that we will need technology that will be able to capture this. What is the impact that the citizens will have on us.
- Ricardo Castro points to World Bank President Wolfensohn's speech, which emphasized that we should focus on two-way communication, not only one-way.

Questions and Answers:

Q: What was the biggest obstacle in launching Pierre's blog?

A: There was no resistance to blogging because it is internal. Ricardo Castro pointed out that it is just a pilot. The Bank is doing a fair amount about monitoring media and is considering applying this to the blog world.

Q: Where is the blogging world going? There is not quality control, traditional media hates blogs, and it is just an uncontrolled world. How long is it going to stay wild?

A: The relation of blogs and media is nothing of threat to the media. This is like the creation of email at the initial stages. Blogs are the real world life Web.

Blogs distribute power in a really interesting way. The context in which the people are reading about us is the context that they want to read about us.

Q: Blogs are for people who have lots of time to communicate and for people who have time to read them.

A: We do not want to create a different picture than the reality is about blogs. It is better to be part of blogs than to ignore it.

Q: How can blog work for, as an example, an organization like the UN?

A: The important consideration is less how it works for the organization, but how it works for individuals in the organization. That will have a benefit to the organization.

Vamsee Krishna Kanchi, World Bank

- There are multiple business units in the bank. Increasingly, a key idea is to focus on business priorities.
- Central groups do a good job, but resources need to be put into strengthening the Web at the business level.
- The solution is to create annual web review
Reviewed ECA Websites in July 2004
Review Objectives, Scope and Format
Logistics (budge and labor) is not clear
- Objective is to develop a comprehensive quantitative metric.
There were four categories and 34 criteria
Categories: Content, Design, Site Management and Impact
- Kanchi went through the four points and discussed the issues connected with it.
- The bank worked with a firm. It is a very resource- and time-intensive process.
- The result of the review is that a common evaluation framework was established, a and a year-long work program at the business unit level. The surveys also opened lines of communication between the HQ and the business unit.
- There was not much negative feedback. Looking forward, we want to update the criteria and to use analytics-based site design and establish standardized measurements across the Bank.

Questions and Answers:

Q: It appears that the best way to test the site is to have actual users to perform variety of tasks. How did you assess the site if multiple people work on it?

A: There have been focus groups in the previous years. I am not a fan of focus groups, because we get feedback, but not really actionable feedback. There were multiple testers, to answer the second question.

Q: A lot of the items were on the check list. What about the quality of these things? Are they long and full of acronyms, or are they quality content?

A: As far as acronyms and jargons, it is easy to pick up. As far as the quality is concerned, it is really hard to judge if you are not an expert. Every region has a quality group. They are the ones who do the scores and review the content. We are trying to see if we can incorporate that. It would be difficult to deal with the bureaucracy that is present in the institutions. A lot of the business-type issues are not addressed well enough, and that is what they are dealing with.

Q: We have been engaged with usability studies. Do you have any tips for us?

A: The mistake we made was that we thought that it was very complicated to understand the content and we came up just with the generic information and standard format. I would suggest do not be so generic. The other factor is time.

Q: Do you think that there is a way to do a decent review studies given the limited finances. Is the investment worth it?

A: This is a multi-year gap. You have to build up the trust of managers and staff. One of the main reasons why I talk about it is because we should come up with some real criteria. I do not see why the cost of this could not be shared across units, rather than just the central Web team or technology section. Most firms understand the logic of the cost and benefits of these studies. It is one thing to do the review, but what is more time costly is to do the follow up and take action on the review.

- Ricardo Castro added that the good news is that we have to develop an attitude to develop a more daily review and reporting. We should start small.
- He said that anyone interested in following up should contact the presenters.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2005

Session VII: Is the Private Sector Really that Different?

There are some traditional differences between the private sector and public sector. In the private sector, success is more easily measurable (investment vs. increase in revenue). It's different in public sector. Before 2000, when the Web was big, there was a belief that the use of technology would lead to a different business model, new venues for business development. It turned out to be "irrational exuberance." But some companies emerged successfully, and have applied technologies wisely. We should use their experience. Another difference between public and private sectors is the level of trust. Trust is essential: public organizations, like World Bank and United Nations are viewed as trusted sources of information.

Reed Kramer, AllAfrica Global Media

- Media is viewed as content supplier. Africa.com packages the news and distributes it all over the world.
- Today, there is a major transformation in Africa. There is an explosion of private stations for radio, TV and the Internet, as an alternative delivery method, which is surprising because of the low connectivity. The Internet has opened new venues for interaction. Professionals in Africa are no longer isolated. Also with the explosion of mobile phones, bandwidth has improved.

- Ten years ago, Africa News Online started working very hard with a few dozen African newspapers to get their news. Today, almost all of the news organizations have sites.
- Some may ask, "Why is this important if access to the Internet is poor?" But the Internet has changed the playing field, forced transparency. Governments cannot easily limit diverse voices.
- All aspects of good governance are facilitated by private, independent media. It also provides monitoring and oversight in the public sector, as well in the private sector. Media is a key to building and fostering democracy and development in Africa.

Lauren White, Bearing Points

- Our company works with emerging markets, applying ICT, providing consulting services worldwide. Our common goals are peace and well-being. They enable investment. Stability, development, health issues, education, gender issues are the goals both for developed and developing countries.
- Education and communication are crucial. The Web is a tool, allowing the communication to go both ways.
- For example, we helped the Afghan government build stability by setting up a portal to apply program management practices and jointly communicate about the common goals and objectives and utilize these tools to get the country stabilized.
- By helping developing countries, BP draw on the local expertise, use it for new ideas, innovations. We learned that at the local level trust is important. We teach them how to fish, not bring fish to them.
- We have to find out, you need to learn how people work with the web, how they perceive the Web environment. They look at knowledge sharing, how long it will take to get a return on investment. What can we do to make people more effective? Metrics are pulled centrally to make informed decisions about investment.
- The objectives of development organizations are giving them a sense of managing their own societies. In the private sector, we reach out to educated people, put some investment under them, use their ideas, and work on spreading best practices.
- The Web is another tool to allow the parties to come together. The common thing is the passion for our work, about using the tools to reach a common goal.

Questions and Answers:

Q: If you think about the developing world, how do you introduce the culture for combining good will with effectiveness? How do you convince the managers?

A: If you look at the world today: millennium development goals - we are in the same business. We are competing for resources, competing to reach 10 children instead of nine. Where should the government focus their money? Why is it important for HIV/AIDS in Africa, as opposed to improving the pavement in my backyard?

Q: How sticky have these dashboards been in your organization? How are you integrating the web in your organization?

A: When you get real-time data, people are not used to using such data. It is difficult but there are ways, e.g., in Rwanda, they are very focused on monitoring these data. Certain organizations are charged with this task.

Those that have integrated the web into their organizations have been more successful. Integration is used to get to the knowledge of other organizations

USAID uses dashboards for reports to the Congress for funding, etc.

Q: Getting people to use it is more challenging than coming up with the technology. How can you change their behavior?

A: It is important to focus on what happens to the information, what response is provided. That's what we can really influence. People get used to access very quickly.

Q: How do you engage people in discussion via the Web?

A: In AllAfrica, we have a blog to link to other bloggers, based on open source software. AllAfrica is integrating blogging with news dissemination.

Session IX: Technology and the Tools We Need

Two themes addressed in the session were:

- Accessibility & standards
- Technology to capture data & transferring it directly into a database (which can then be served up on a site/GIS application).

Terry Youngblood, Accessible Systems

- The power of Web is in its universality. Access by everyone regardless of their disability.
- There are currently several barriers of the Web for many types of disabilities.
- Graphics on sites that do not have text associated with them, so text readers will be able to read it.
- Making pages accessible will also be beneficial for people who access the Web with low levels of bandwidth, literacy, or learning impairments.
- **Challenges** – it's not sufficient to make templates accessible. Content needs to be accessible as well. It is necessary to employ tools that assist content providers in producing accessible content.

Carmelle Cote, World Bank

- Geographic Information Systems are a tool for solving problems (specifically, spatial problems.)
- Integrates various forms of data – government, NGOs etc.
- GIS is a system, not software. It is not just a map. GIS helps/informs decision makers
- GIS is currently used widely in development, humanitarian, conversation agencies (UN System working group etc.)
- While providing data in tabular format is important, putting the data on a map allows people to visualize where resources should be deployed.
- GIS technologies have evolved so that it is increasingly accessible – internet, mobile
- There are several forms of GIS available on web; Internet Mapping Services, GIS Servers, portals, and globe services
- Benefits of GIS for development practitioners
 - Literacy and language barriers diminish
 - Navigation in emergencies
 - Track assets
 - Identify trends, patterns and relation in your data
 - Much analysis, little delivery
 - Data integration field surveys
 - Documenting metadata for data is critical for an effective GIS

Reto Haeni, Digital Solutions for Humanity

- GIS can be used to determine impact of natural disasters – e.g. Impacts of landmines on high-risk communities. Data can be displayed fact sheets, graphs and maps

- Allows users to identify where the high impact communities are, the population #s in these communities
- Applications have also been developed to present accessibility and security information for aid workers in high-risk locations. Presenting this information without a spatial dimension is meaningless
- It is important to work with application developers, web developers & designers when designing these applications

Rudolpho Quevenco, International Atomic Energy Agency

- It is critical to build well designed, clean sites. To do this, it is important to define document types correctly, and tag content correctly
- Using Web standard will allow you to develop just one site for the needs of different devices. Doing this will save time/resources in the long run.
- Using standards are important because users because there are shifts from Microsoft to other open source technologies/browsers increasingly.
- Downsides to using web standards:
 - Steep learning curve
 - Browser incompatibilities

Advantages:

- Site is easy to use, faster loading of pages and accessible
- Faster development time. Easy maintenance. Therefore saving costs
- Better search engine ranking. Search robots can select keywords etc. when page layout follows standards

To follow Web standards:

- Decide standards to use
- Train web team
- Fine tune your CMS/HTML editor to produce the standards-compliant code
- Test and validate

Questions & Answers:

Q: How difficult is coming up with common terminology for the GIS products that are being used.

A. Data model efforts exist. They let you jump start your db design and come up with these. UNGWIG has a number of initiatives to come up with a standard for country/location names etc. There hasn't been a lot of movement, but it's something that needs to be developed/

Q: Member states are stressing the importance of accessibility for the United Nations. How do you handle the multilingual component for the 6 languages

A: That is something we are struggling with too

Q: Gathering data always seems a challenge. If there are projects around the world, what technologies and incentives are available to gather this data?

A: Incentives – work is getting easier. We are moving away from gathering the information into spreadsheets. It's not just the technology that is helping with this, it is the people as well. However, there is smaller technology (handheld) that let's people gather the data, and allow for results and analysis where they are. In addition to make the individual's work easier – it also increases the quality of the organizations data

NDI, as a smaller NGO, doesn't actually collect its own data. It relies on partnerships to collect the data. By partnering with others, you can get a wider range of data – both quality and quantity. XML files also improve the collection of data.

Q: When you are redesigning the site, how does the division of labor work among the team of people working on a project i.e. content, programmer, designer?

A: The CSS specialist will interpret the design presented by the designer, into a series of codes. The programmer should figure out how to interpret the code according to the CMS

Q: What recent technology & the use of CSS does for people that don't have recent equipment/browsers

A: CSS implementation has many bugs. CSS will degrade gracefully in browsers that are not that advanced

Q: AS we move into CMS, we are leaving clean code on the back burner. How do we validate that the content is CSS compliant at the input level? Esp if you cut and cope from Microsoft etc, how do you get the content in clean?

A: The validation occurs at the output of the content and not the input

Luncheon keynote speech: Gerry Rice, World Bank

- The Bank has been quite successful at getting the its message out, and getting feedback in.
- It is important to note that writing for the Web is a specific skill. The Bank attempts to make the content on the Web concise and personal.
- It is also attempting to ensure that the Bank's content is translated – this is the biggest challenge for the Bank on its communication front
- The Web is used significantly to reach out the media. There is a Media center which allows journalists to come to a password protected site, and allows them to prepare for future launches. Also making an effort to reach out to the youth.
- The biggest challenge is to convey the importance of the Web to management. The most effective way to do this would be to show how the Web has helped the Bank achieve a specific result, such as with the Chad-Cameroon pipeline project, which brought in a lot of questions/critical stories from NGOs & the media, etc. The Web was used to convey key messages to provide a dialogue, and get the Bank's message out to the public.
- The web, and our email products, is clearly the future – it's the key mechanism for advancing & disseminating the knowledge.

Q: In OEDC we understand the issues that you face. We tend to show our mgt the web stats to show them the progress we are making. How do you handle the feedback you receive? Is there a standard mechanism for dealing with this? Is there a way of measuring the time spent on answering these questions?

A: Since the Bank is a fairly large institution, we are able to forward questions to other units. We also have a variety of help desks through our networks that are designed to answer some of these questions. We have also developed some (advanced) FAQs that we encourage users to look at. We are also hoping to start assigning more priority to questions that come from governments, the UN & other agencies.

Q: Have you found innovative ways on addressing the multilingual issues you face?

A: We are trying to be as cost-effective as possible. We are trying to do some outsourcing. But it requires resources. We have tried decentralizing some of the translating – keeping it demand driven by asking the regions to translate their own content. However, in the operation regions, there are always other priorities, and the translating was neglected. This needs to be done centrally, to ensure that it is done.

We are hoping to get 6 or 7 editors to cover all the main languages. In terms of communication, translation is the future.

Q: You had mentioned how the Web was used effectively in the Cameroon project etc. how was it used specifically?

A: We found that Web was a very helpful way to push the Bank's message out, and receive feedback. We knew there would be a lot of attention when the first oil was expected to flow from the pipeline project. To prepare for this, we produced a package that addressed some of these issues, and online chat with the task team leader that allowed us to define ourselves, and our project, rather than have it defined for us. This is something we would have done through a press conference/releases, however, this is not being done on the Web.

We have also done something similar with re to corruption – i.e.. what the issues are, what we are doing internally, and what we are doing in the field. We are not only using the Web in a defensive way, but we also use to push issues for other reasons such as advocacy.

Q: You said on the Chad-Cameroon question, that Bank managers don't like to read critical messages in the media. Are you using the Web to manipulate the media? How are you using the feedback to balance the process next?

A; I wouldn't call it manipulating the media. I don't think the Bank has done a particularly good job at communicating – particularly because of our own arrogance. As a result, we have been defined by our critics, rather than defining ourselves. We now have to define ourselves, and improve our communications. Mr. Wolfensohn has made a lot of progress on this.

We keep a close eye on the feedback – via the Web and other sources (e.g. media, civil society.) The pressures/criticisms have helped to shape the Bank's approach – to its benefit. There is a fairly good free-flow of information now.

Comment: We mention multilingualism is the future. But we should talk about it as we are in the presence. We should not be complacent – we should do it in the present. In many units at the Bank, the Web is seen as a tool for dissemination. This is too limited. There are other roles for the Web. There is a lot of work that never gets reflected on the site. The question is whether there are better ways to integrate the work the Bank does on the Web, to give a more holistic view of the Bank. We should go beyond merely communicating.

Q: What are your plans for online outreach?

A: The notion that language is the future is not right – multilingualism should be the “right now.” There is a grave urgency around this, and we need to deal with it right now. Also, the Web is not just a tool for dissemination. It is also a very important tool for feedback. There is also a lot of emphasis on the Public Information Centers, or PICs – not just to pump out information, but as platforms for dialogue around development issues. It is not just a one-way street. It is also about hearing the criticism.

On the future – we are not sure. There are blogs, podcasts, etc. Clearly there is new media developing around the Web, and that's way beyond the control of the Bank. So we need to figure out how to work with this media.

There are some studies we can share with regard to multilingual sites. Within three months of launching the Arabic & French sites, the traffic to these sites doubled.

Session X: Summary and Where do we go from here?

Robert Valantin

1. Balancing between the old and the new – master the old, embrace the new. A lot of us haven't mastered the techniques of the web – there is still a lot of mastering that we have to do, but it is very necessary.

The New: The media has changes, and we have to embrace it

2. Convergence: this conference was as much about communicating, as much as databases etc. The Web is key form of media

3. Communicating – Blogs are letting people communicate and interact. Shared spaces make all the differences in the communication – whether is be a blog, or a shared space. Good web sites need to do this.

4. Know your users & enable them to do things.

5. Reach out through multilingualism, accessibility and different forms of media.

6. Don't create new divides when we are reaching out

7. Don't wait – you will be too late.

8. Apply energy & resources to quality content that is correct, meaningful, accessible etc. Identify where it is essential and crucial to do this – and convince management that it is necessary.

9. There is a lot of information that we can mine and tap. How do we work together/interact with partners. How do we get information about issues, and how can that influence our work programs

10. Be a part of this community and do something

Comments from participants:

- The community site should have a two-line bio that will inform participants on their expertise. (Note: this is possible on the community site, under Professional Interests.)
- The community needs to experiment more. We should have a think-space where we can experiment with technologies, concepts, etc.

Local Meetings

- i) Community Best Practices.
- ii) Reward members of the community for achievements
- iii) Common/shared space where people can upload past RFPs; guidelines on writing RFPs to share with each other
- iv) Try to link up with academia (e.g. design schools)

Five areas that the participants agreed to work on together:

1. Start a number of small technology pilots & coordinate it so we can cover the map of the new things that are coming up.
2. Volunteer to evaluate each others sites.
3. Work together for relief/disaster management, or rapid response mechanism.
4. Metrics – let's set up metrics to measure our impacts on development.
5. Work closely with the United Nations to make next year's conference a success

Mohamed Muhsin – Closing Remarks

- A community that needs to build awareness in the world. Our customers can be the young, the old, from different walks of life. As we work, we have to think of the customers we serve. Engage our colleagues; ask them to play the part as a stakeholder.
- Simplicity is the most important things on a Web site. Our customers want a solution
- Simplicity is the greatest sophistication in life
- Think of leadership as a triangle – the leadership is usually the tops of the triangle. Invert the triangle so that leadership is at the bottom, and you are the top. You are the leaders, and from the top you can influence the leadership below.
- Recognition is an important part of us moving forward. The World Bank will pledge \$25,000 to help identify organizations with leading development sites.