TASK FORCE CHARGE

Revised Charge - 6 June 2006

The Task Force is to lead and complete the Cascade Server pilot project offered by Web Communications and IATS (cf. http://webcom.missouri.edu/tools/cms/index.php); to identify areas of the current MU Libraries web sites to include in the pilot; and to evaluate the pilot upon its completion and report its findings to the Director of Libraries. The Task Force will then return to its original charge.

Original Charge - 20 April 2006

The Task Force will identify minimum requirements for a library content management system (CMS), survey available systems, oversee public demonstrations of systems that meet these requirements, and select a CMS to recommend to the Director. Among the CMS packages that must be considered is Cascade Server, the university's preferred platform.

INTRODUCTION

Since its establishment in April 2006, the Content Management System Task Force has reviewed the literature, identified criteria relevant for the MU Libraries, corresponded with other libraries (including current Cascade customers, Big 12 Libraries and selected ARL Libraries) to gather information, completed a cursory review of products and conducted and reported on a pilot project with Cascade Server.

Based on this investigation, we highlight some of the issues relating to content management systems for the MU Libraries and offer recommendations to the Director.

CMS ISSUES AT THE MU LIBRARIES

With the current system of publishing web pages for the MU Libraries, content providers can create and publish web pages using Dreamweaver. This allows any staff member to publish relevant content to the web and to quickly make web pages available as they are needed. However, there is no uniformity to the MU Libraries' web presence. Each web

page must be updated separately when there are changes to the same content on different pages. There are also a number of quality control issues.

A content management system (CMS) would allow the MU Libraries to easily provide for uniformity of web pages, rapid update of all content, quality control and allow us to establish a process for development of the MU Libraries' web presence that we currently do not have. However, we would lose the ability to quickly publish pages at point of need and the degree of difficulty of use could discourage experimentation and many staff members from posting content on their own.

The most important issue we identified regards staffing. Who will be responsible for the CMS? The results from our investigation and the Cascade pilot indicate that any CMS will require a full-time staff person to implement, establish a workflow and maintain the system, as well as administer the website. A CMS cannot easily be used by all the library staff that currently create and maintain content for the MU Libraries. Additional support staff will be needed to work with current content providers for the quick and accurate publishing of web pages from a CMS to the website.

As a result of these findings, the CMS Task Force outlines below two different options for pursuing a CMS for the MU Libraries. Both options are heavily dependent on having staff devoted to support the CMS and content providers. The difference between the options is primarily whether the MU Libraries should move forward now with Cascade Server (Recommendation 1) or provide the necessary resources to commit to a full evaluation of open source products with the hope of being able to create a system that meets all the MU Libraries' needs (Recommendation 2).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 – Implement Cascade Server with the new MU Libraries' Gateway design for certain web pages.

    A. **Identify staff**

        Implementing and maintaining Cascade Server will require identification of staff resources. This would be a staff person's primary, full-time responsibility (along

with web development, training staff on Cascade and coordinating work). This requires a great deal of time and cannot be added to a current staff member's existing duties. Additional support staff will be needed to support content providers.

B. **Selectively implement Cascade Server**

If staffing is available, move forward with implementing Cascade for static and non-resource pages. Cascade Server is the product purchased and used by the MU Campus. Local support is available from IAT Services. Our review of other commercial products demonstrated that all are time-intensive and none met all of the MU Libraries' needs.

C. **Appoint technical working group to work with dynamic content**

The primary concerns identified from the Cascade Server pilot project were the inability to provide for our dynamic pages within Cascade and the difficulty of use for general content providers. For the dynamic pages (subject guide pages, database pages, etc.), we recommend identifying a technical working group to review options for integrating a separate system with Cascade (e.g., expanding the existing Health Sciences Library Coldfusion database, utilizing a third party solution such as LibData, etc.). Providing additional support staff to assist content providers will help with the issue of difficulty of use.

Recommendation 2 – Commit staff and resources to test open source CMS solutions

A. **Identify staff**

No commercial product has been identified that meets the MU Libraries' needs. To completely test open source CMS options requires a great deal of staff time. This cannot be added to someone's existing duties.

B. **Appoint a technical working group to explore open source options**

Create a technical working group to fully test open source CMS options. The CMS Task Force has created a list of criteria to define the MU Libraries' needs. We have a list of open source software implemented by other libraries. Correspondence with

other Big 12 Libraries indicates that all who have replied to our request for information have situations similar to the MU Libraries. One has identified a commercial product to use and most have not implemented a CMS.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

- Felicity Dykas (dykasf@missouri.edu)

- Janice Dysart (dysartj@missouri.edu)

- Anselm Huelsbergen (Chair) (huelsbergena@missouri.edu)

- PT Martin (martinp@missouri.edu)

- Ernest Shaw (shawec@missouri.edu)

- Michael Spears (spearsm@health.missouri.edu)

- Rhonda Whithaus (whithausr@missouri.edu)