Conference Call Minutes, 2010-12-09

ITANA Meeting Minutes - 09 December 2010

Attending
Jim Phelps, University of Wisconsin-Madison (chair)
Marina Arsiniev, University of California Irvine
Jonathan Breitbarth, Concordia University, St. Paul
Scott Fullerton, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Jim Helwig, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Piet Niederhausen, Georgetown University
Steve Olshansky, Internet2
Ann Kitalong-Will, Internet2 (scribe)

Action Items

(AI) – Scott – will explore the Portal Survey results and discussion in depth to see what next steps should be for the group.

(AI) – Jim – will send out a survey about the conference calls and the areas of interest the ITANA group would like to discuss/work on.

Portal Survey Results

Background:

- Conducted in October, received about 64 responses, partly thanks to the survey being forwarded to the Educause and Jasig lists.
- ITANA put together the survey to assess the need for and role of portals, coming out of similar assessments conducted at UW-Madison and other schools.
- Survey questions requested information about the lifespan of the portal, audiences served, high-level functions, how portal information might be consumed by other devices, frameworks being used, how institutions' portals related to other aspects of web presence, what do people intend for the portal as a destination, the governing structure, and a brief description of state of play.
- We offered the ability for those people who did not have a portal in place to also provide feedback.

Overall Results:

- Contrary to original assumptions, portals still play a vital role as a strategic platform.
- Many universities are just starting a portal initiative.
- Those portals that have been around for a while seem to have been maintained in a healthy manner.
- Many schools are considering how to position their portal for the future.
- Many schools have had a portal in place less than 1 year.
- 27 respondents have had a portal in place within the 5-9 year range.
- Many schools are planning mobile accessibility for their portals.
- The questions having to do with frameworks caused some confusion.

The full report can be viewed here: https://spaces.at.internet2.edu/display/itana/Survey+Results

Discussion:
The group discussed the results, raising the following points:

- Unexpectedly, many schools are instituting new portal initiatives: 7 schools are in their first year, 27 are in the initial 5-year period. Portals remain a vital strategic platform for many schools. Many of those Universities that were in the first year of their portal initiative were larger Universities.
- It should be noted that a number of Universities are or have gone through similar assessments for the ongoing role of their portals.
- Different institutions use the term "portal" differently, and developing common terminology within the ITANA group would be beneficial to ongoing portal work.
- It may be useful to consider three categories of portals: content portals, collaboration portals, and enterprise integration portals. Of these three categories, responses to the survey tended to be slanted toward the enterprise integration portal: schools have diverse services, diverse messages, diverse audiences, and want to encourage users to visit the portal site frequently.
- Those respondents that were in the early phases of implementation tended to envision the future of their portal as the one-stop location, in particular for students. Many were wondering what to do about mobile device access.
- Regarding functionality, respondents were concerned about integrating the portal with the core business services and targeted messaging by different groups.

It was suggested that because so many campuses are conducting portal assessments, there may be value in ITANA gathering that data. ITANA may be able to compile a generic assessment framework for other campuses to use as a starting point to assess their portals.

If this path is pursued, it would be important to develop a common language about the definition and description of a "portal" so the assessment framework would provide value across different organizations. It may not be practical to expect the outcome to be a template for assessment, however, some patterns may be valuable as part of a library of evaluation tools and techniques (e.g. To what extent is governance aligned? What is the funding model? What are the audience and stakeholder expectations of the portal with regard to actual use? What technology changes must be considered?)

(AI) – Scott – will explore the Portal Survey results and discussion in depth to see what next steps should be for the group.

Jasig may be conducting a similar effort: ITANA may be able to collaborate with them if this is the case.

Other Business

The next call will focus on closing out of the year, discussing our accomplishments, and looking ahead to work to be done for the next year.

(AI) – Jim – will send out a survey about the conference calls and the areas of interest the ITANA group would like to discuss/work on.

Next Call – Thursday, January 6, 2011
2 p.m. EDT / 1 p.m. CDT / Noon MDT / 11 a.m. PDT