COMMUNITY LEARNING SPACE PROJECT
Canada's Technology Triangle – Pilot #2
Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 27, 2002
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
Waterloo Region Building, Room 361
150 Frederick, Kitchener

Present:
Trudy Beaulne	Social Planning Council of Kitchener-Waterloo
Melissa Kingdon	Social Planning Council of Kitchener-Waterloo
Jennifer Uttley	University of Waterloo Computer Systems Group
Shirley Fenton	University of Waterloo Computer Systems Group
Doug Mulholland	University of Waterloo Computer Systems Group
Leah Bozic	City of Cambridge
Thom Ryan	Canada's Technology Triangle
Mara Grant	City of Kitchener – maintain Business Directory
Sandy Little	City of Kitchener – maintain Real Estate Directory

1. Welcome

Shirley welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce himself or herself.

2. Overview of the Community Learning Space Project and Conceptual Framework

Shirley provided an overview of the Community Learning Space Project. She described the employment support project, the Waterloo Regional Arts Council pilot, and the third and fourth pilots.

Doug Mulholland provided an overview of the applications that have been developed to create the community learning space.

3. Demonstration of CLS Pilots

Due to technical difficulties the demonstration of the CLS Pilots has been postponed until the next meeting.

4. Discussion of CTT Data Needs and Development / Discussion of Pilot Objectives

Trudy outlined the two general objectives that were established at the time the proposal was developed. One additional objective was added when Thom Ryan spoke with the project team a few weeks ago.

Thom reviewed some of the ideas that have been suggested for the CTT pilot project. This is a wish list that we will add additional items to and remove others.

Searchable Indexing
- There was a discussion of current search capabilities on the CTT site. It could be simpler to use and provide more capabilities. For example, many people phone and ask how to use the business directory search function. People do not want to go through numerous options. Currently there are 7 different criteria that users can select to help them locate what they are

looking for. However, many users do not realize that by entering all 7 criteria they are limiting the search results.
- There used to be a keyword search, called Fast Find, which drew results.
- We need the ability to refine the search.
- The Business Directory has over 3300 records with at least 100 fields.
- Many users of the Business Directory are people looking for employment. For example, a person from manufacturing may want to send out resumes to companies and may have never used a web-based form.
- There is a standard categorization of Businesses. It is an Industrial Classification with 6 digit codes (ICS). Until recently each category was identified by the 6-digit code, however, now there is also a text description.
- Example: If a painter was looking for businesses that require painters, the directory could include a section of the types of jobs that companies are hiring for. Currently, a painter could find a list of businesses that hire a battery of painters.
- Assess the possibility of including job postings.
- Thom can supply Shirley with a form field to give a sense of the data that they maintain.
- The Business Directory is updated on an annual basis on the web site and print version. However, it is updated on an ongoing basis.
- The Real Estate Directory is updated quarterly on the web site. However, it is also updated on an ongoing basis.
- The Business Directory is done on a yearly basis to analyse how much businesses have grown over the years. It would be beneficial for the business analysis if the businesses could be mapped to see the clustering.
- Currently the directories are in Cold Fusion and maintained on Sybase.
- There is a single repository at TRIKE. All cities download the data and are able to manipulate the data for their city.
- It would be ideal if each city has its own excel file and they were able to make changes on a spreadsheet.
- There are three databases: (1) business, (2) Active Real Estate, and (3) Land Available. Each city maintains and updates their own data for their own city.
- How would you want to be able to use the database if you had full latitude? It is too slow and too hard to manage because it is form generated. It would be easier if it was in a table format. It is easier to look at in a table format. It also needs to be easier for the community to search.
- We need to think about who the users are? E.g. unemployed.
- If a user went into lifestyles, they were supposed to be able to find a job. If you were a corporation, they would be able to get the information they wanted. But something got lost in the roll-out
- What do you use the Business directory for? We need to know that businesses are doing well. If they need help to build their businesses, we would help them locate land, etc. It is a tool to help us help businesses. It is a useful tool.
- At the user end, it is working well for the cities purposes.
- At the City of Kitchener, the Business Directory is used as a marketing tool for businesses. It is free advertising for businesses. We also use it for business facilitation.
- City of Kitchener employees use the Real Estate Directory, but they are very familiar with the data, so they may not find many problems in using it compared to the public.
- Have you ever consider having the real estate companies to update the records themselves? From our experience, they are not very good at updating the records unless the City is doing the updates. If they updated the records themselves, it would not get updated very often. It is an onerous task.

- We always confirm whether real estate is still available when we have client enquiries. We have the real estate companies update the information when they are contacted. A notification system would be helpful in this process. If the update was linked to an enquiry.
- Real Estate companies could automatically update their data and it could be directly sent to the Cities. We want EDO's to be notified when changes occur.
- Active land is empty land that can be built on, while active real estate is an empty building.
- What are the barriers to using LoopNet?
- We need to phone the City and real estate companies to ensure that real estate is still available. We do not want to waste clients' time.
- When real estate is sold, the property is archived. On the web site, it indicates that the property is sold and this indication remains on the web site for a month.
- Each city manages its own real estate and business information.
- CTT manages the real estate and business information for the townships.

Mapping
- Doug outlined the mapping capability.
- If visitors to the area could view a page with a visitor friendly map of the area that would be great.
- Searching for clusters of businesses (e.g. high tech) would also be possible.
- GIS capability would allow people to determine the location of water mains, fibre optic cable, etc. on a piece of property.
- How can the CSG get access to the data? How do we get CTT's authorization to access the database.

Pilot Project Discussion
- Are there any additions to the list of ideas or deletions?
  - Virtual tour of area can be removed from the list.
  - Enhance community profile delivery can be removed from the list.
- We have an interest in linking to other pilots. We could possibly draw events going on in the area from WRAC.
- We would like to have an Excel document.
- We would like to enhance the visitor information (e.g. camping, events) on the web site.
  - If people are using the site for everyday life, they will come back for other needs (e.g. employment support).
- The mapping capability would be extremely beneficial.
- It was suggested that a focus group session could be held to demonstrate the learning space. More people can be invited (e.g. one real estate owner is interested in updating the information more frequently – Beth Bailey).
- Thom offered to map out the flow of information exchange for each database and he will also provide a copy of the forms. He will also try to get buy in from other partners to support this project.
- It is intended that both the internal and public areas of the database will be the focus. For internal use (internal process), a password will be provided and it will not be open to the public view (public service).
- Web tracking is available through TRIKE. There is raw data available back to last March (probably).

Next Meeting

A meeting will be scheduled in the week of July 16-20 (perhaps Wednesday at 2:30 or 3:00pm). Pat, the representative for the City of Waterloo will be asked to attend the next meeting.