

## **RS Site Review**

### **Thursday January 22, 2004**

**URL:** <http://csg.uwaterloo.ca/beta/learningspace/>

Follow the link to **rural switchboard**

**User Name/Password:** rs/texel

The rural switchboard learning space is under development. This initial view shows “proof of concept”. Your feedback will provide direction for the development.

Reviewed with Kyle by Christine Broughton

#### **Site Design**

“Look and feel” is configurable

- Comment on the overall appearance (colours, background etc.)

- Lighter background for body content is good because it stands out

- Site is easy to read

- Toggle to map is good

- Map clustering is good

- Entry name identified when the mouse moves over the “dot” is good

Comment on ease of use for changing the site’s appearance.

- Kyle – found it easy to use; Christine seeing site for the first time

Topic menu

- Top-level list of topics are the applications.

- Compare to the pilot objectives

- Top level mirrors the objectives and includes additional applications (e.g.

- Calendar)

Is the breakdown of topics acceptable or would it be better to reorganize them to focus on specific target audiences (e.g., tourism, agriculture sector, etc.?)

- Focus on audience may be better (e.g. tourism, business, community)

#### **Applications**

##### **Searchable Directories**

Businesses

- Accommodations / bed & breakfasts – are the topic-nesting levels OK (i.e. are there too many)? Nesting levels are OK; there are not too many levels; grouping is good

- bed and breakfast listing – does the summary listing contain sufficient information? Yes the important information is listed

- Number of items in a list is configurable. How many should be listed per page?

- No more than 20 per page, otherwise too much scrolling.

Link to a detail listing for an entry.

Comment on the layout.

Layout is OK

Is there more information that should be presented?

Detail seems to be sufficient .

Link to topic “construction/landscaping” – no sub-topics.

Is the navigation confusing? No

Link to topic “shops” – should the lists be combined with “type” another column?

No; the grouping of like shops is preferred.

Business search

What fields should be searched for businesses?

Might add a “category” field and possibly “township” in addition to location.

Map search

Do you envision a search via “map” as useful?

Definitely useful.

Should map search have additional criteria?

If yes, what additional criteria

Might be useful to add “category” as a criteria.

Organizations – data not yet complete

Review the list of topics – Schools are useful because school boards’ lists do not include private schools (e.g. Mennonite schools)

Additional topics that could be useful include government resources

Discussion about possible applications such as “recycling catchments”; “school catchments”, school bus routes; footpath trails

Producer’s Corner – few entries

Pork – review the topics

Pork news – keyword search might be useful

Documents have been uploaded as an archive but some perhaps should just be links to the site where the document is stored. It would be good to encourage the local community to upload relevant news documents.

Would these topics apply to each “producer” Yes each producer would have links and news etc. Each producer has some that is specific and other that is common across producers.

**Calendar** - not in the objectives but easy to add to the learning space

Is the calendar useful? Yes helps different communities plan events; currently don't have a rural events planning calendar. Townships have a calendar but it is generally static containing only annual events.

Who do you envision will use it? Local and tourists

Update? Service groups

Browse? All – general public and local community

### **Training Material**

Learning Centre

Are online courses useful? Yes if the information is up-to-date.

How do you envision it would be used? Include training material that is useful for farming community as well as employers (e.g. WIMIS)

### **Searching**

Should “database” search be added to “organizations” and “producer’s corner”?

Yes for organizations

Should “map search” be added to “organizations” and “producer’s corner”?

Yes for organizations; no for producer’s corner.

Do you envision “keyword” search as useful?

Useful for producer’s corner. Add a description for links and index the description

If yes what would you search (i.e. which fields in the directories, all directories.)?

See above.

### **Data**

Currently Kyle has been gathering the data and updating online.

Data sources discussion – where the data has come from?

Business improvement associations – have a list of businesses in a spreadsheet.

Townships provided some data.

Kyle developed additional data

Data collection field should be added to the database to indicate the source.

How would we sustain data creation and update?

1. Refresh data from the spreadsheets
2. Check with groups to maintain their own data online; provide a mechanism to email changes
3. Rural Switchboard will maintain some

### **Administration**

Who do we envision administering?

e.g. adding mapping coordinates

Rural Switchboard will administer the site (currently Kyle Young) but encourage groups to maintain own data.

**Next Steps**

What do we need to do to make it public? More data and cleanup formatting etc.

Who else needs to review the learning space?

Data owners should review the site.

Send an email to them with a request and instructions about how to review

Additional data?

See above

Overall comments:

Will be very useful

Mapping especially useful (e.g. print all B&Bs in Woolwich)

Use for Economic development and tourism