

## **NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Information Services**

**Winter Committee Meetings – February 13-16, 2005**

**Hyatt Regency Washington Hotel  
Washington, DC**

### **February 13, 2005**

Attendees:

Gerry Pacyna, Virginia (Chair)  
Randy Erskine, South Carolina  
Mike Kretzler, Washington  
Paul Martinez, Washington, DC  
Ann Saban, Maine  
Lorraine Smith, Delaware

### **Introductory Discussion**

The first discussion topic: The Finance and Technology Committee has apparently disbanded Gerry read a resolution drafted at the summer meeting at the Convention in Nashville that recommended that course of action and the assignment of the staff subcommittees to other parent committees. From the evidence in the Membership Directory and the agenda for this meeting, that has happened and we've been moved to the Board of Directors/Executive Committee. Gerry may learn more at the committee chairs' coordinating meeting tomorrow.

Gerry described this meeting's agenda. We did have another speaker idea, but Gerry couldn't get the vendor to agree to provide it, so he substituted a presentation he gave to his management about performing a security assessment.

The Subcommittee then moved on to reviews by the states of their current environments and activities/projects.

### **Delaware**

A recent reorganization resulted in the consolidation of the PSC with several others agencies.

They began using ScanPoint for scanning/imaging, and the installation went well. Staff is using it through a browser interface, but the data are not yet available on the public Web.

They're moving to XP on new computers. They may have to stretch their computer replacement time from 3 years to 6, due to budget constraints.

They have started a Web site revision, to match their site's look and feel with Delaware's. It should be up in a month or so. Lorraine is the lone IT person, among 36 staff.

### **Washington, DC**

Like Delaware, DC recently purchased a new fiche machine, which can be put on the network, prints, and copies to electronic files.

Everyone is on XP SP2. All the servers will be Windows 2003, once the Exchange server discussion with central DC IT is complete.

The intranet is up, and they are working on increasing the content. The Web site allows the public to access any of the documents that the Commission has scanned and posted.

Goals for the next year include a new server implementation, terminal services, and work on rights management.

### South Carolina

The reorganization is complete and what was once the Commission are now two agencies, the Commission and the Office of Regulatory Staff. For Randy, who stayed with the Commission, this meant a downsizing from 83 to 38 staff to support, including losing one of the three IT positions. It also meant rewiring and moving the network closet to put it into the portion of the building that they still occupy.

They have fiber to the state's network. All of their servers are at Windows 2003. Desktop replacements were purchased and installed in the spring of 2004.

Randy has found that his new responsibilities for coordinating and supporting the telecommunications equipment, number assignment, and billing are taking a lot of time. Gerry commented that his unit, too, has taken this on and found it to be a lot of work.

They've implemented lots of recent improvements in their document management system. Using Lanier Capture, they create a bar code sheet for the document being scanned and the document is captured as a PDF and then automatically indexed for access. The public can access these documents over the Web. An electronic filing module is nearly complete.

They're also using a Canon Document Recorder to capture old orders as text-searchable PDF documents. Once these are done, they hope to turn to their telephone tariffs and make them available through the document management system.

### Maine

Maine is re-doing its Web site totally and Ann is almost done. She's using Dreamweaver, which she highly recommends.

They are starting a new project, to get GIS data from the utilities and to store it with appropriate security. They can then make it available, again, maintaining security, to other state agencies and – selected data only – to the public. As part of this, everyone in the Maine Commission is supposed to be able to do mapping from their desktops.

There is also a new project to add more back-end processing to their electronic filing and document store system, so that staff can save some effort and time. Right now, the companies and the public gain most of the benefit. As part of this, Ann wants to distribute filings automatically and scan annual reports and produce invoices from them automatically.

All their servers and PCs have been upgraded. Ann plans to migrate to Word 2003.

### Washington

The biggest project completed over the last year is an interstate carrier registration system that takes Web form (and data entry) input, creates the registration document, performs automated review for the registration and, if possible, automatically approves the registration. The registration receipt is created automatically, in Adobe Acrobat PDF format, which is then automatically emailed to the registrant or queued for printing and postal mail. This application decreased the amount of work staff has to do and decreased the time the registrants had to wait for their receipts.

The other effort worth highlighting was the first test of their disaster recovery plan. It was a limited test, but very instructive. The scenario was that the building and its contents were not available – they had to make do with what was stored off-site or in an on-site, but external storage building. The scenario also provided for a few scrounged PCs and an Internet connection. The major lesson of this test was to be completely sure of the off-site backup storage vendor's procedures, both for disaster recovery and disaster recovery plan testing. They learned this the hard way.

The Commission uses Lotus Notes for its email, calendaring, Web serving, and primary application development. Its servers are a mix of NetWare and Windows 2000 servers. The PCs are a few 9x machines (because of a need to run some older programs, slated for removal), 2000, and XP as new PCs are installed.

Plans for the next year include an Office 2003 upgrade, rewiring the final third of the users with CAT5 wiring, a second test of our disaster recovery plan, and support for the agency's participation in a now-delayed, state-wide, SAP human resources application installation. On the development front, they plan implementation of a new industry cost and revenue reporting system, motor carrier permit and insurance tracking, an electronic filing Web portal, and replacement of the revenue tracking application.

This year the Commission is marking its one-hundredth year. Plans for an observance are underway.

### Virginia

A statewide financial shortfall of two years ago has turned into a surplus. The state has created the Virginia Information Technology Agency (VITA), centralizing many functions previously performed at the agency level. There's talk of outsourcing VITA's responsibilities.

The Corporation Commission has one new Commissioner and the other two Commissioners are considering retirement within the next year. This caused legislation to be passed to alleviate concern about the potential loss of experience on the Commission.

Gerry distributed a handout with an impressive list of projects completed, underway, or planned. The highlights in the "completed" category include a storage area network and enterprise backup solution; pulling Web hosting back from the VITA; and changing the agency's domain from ".state.va.us" to ".virginia.gov;" and an automated call center implementation.

The (to us) most interesting project was a kind of open house called the "IT Expo" that Gerry's staff put on for the rest of the agency. Over the course of two days, IT staff hosted their co-workers in their work areas, with food, door prizes, a "passport" and stamps, brochures, notepads, and other goodies. It served an important educational and morale-boosting purpose and was a great success. Of the approximately 600 staff of the Commission, there were over 190 attendees and 73 evaluations filled out, all positive.

Because they are planning a lot of new Web services, they have undertaken an extensive security assessment. Gerry shared the December report from their intrusion detection service, and the numbers are staggering. There's no reason for any of us to think that our Web sites are not under attack from both casual and serious intruders.

Other projects in the pipeline are a new equipment inventory system, a service request management application, foundation document management system, implementation of teleconferencing through the automatic call distribution system, electronic filing and payments, and a Web-based complaints system for the Securities division.

Planned projects include improving the network infrastructure to provide 1 Gigabit to the desktop, applying a single look-and-feel to the agency's Web site, revisions to the disaster recovery plan, getting off the remaining Unisys applications, and a redesign of the pipeline safety application.

Gerry's final point was an interesting handout showing his calculations around the productivity gains possible from increasing speed to the desktop and how a one second improvement in response time grows into real money. The basic algorithm is simple:

annual savings = response time improvement, in seconds  
X how many screens a day a typical staff person would view (start with 100)  
X how many staff in the agency / 60 seconds per minute / 60 minutes per hour X 250  
working days in a year X how much the typical staff person is paid per hour.

### **February 14, 2005**

#### "Turnkey solutions for the Paperless Office" ScanPoint, Inc. Presentation by Bill Cross, CIO

There were several guests, including from Iowa, South Carolina, DC, and Michigan.

Mr. Cross started with an introductory video, which highlighted some of the issues that his talk covered. Computers, so far, have not made the issues of managing paper and documents go away.

ScanPoint, Inc. is based in New Hampshire. Its products include Easy File and Desktop Mailman (which is a Canon eCopy extension). A sister company, ScanSmart, does document conversions.

The stages of document management are scan, index, store, retrieve, and archive. Mr. Cross then ran through the product's capabilities, based on the stages listed above. Then he guided a tour of the Maine PUC site. During that tour, we discussed a number of issues, including filings, tariffs, and annual reports and invoicing.

We briefly discussed electronic signatures. Michigan uses electronic signatures, relying on Adobe's self-sign feature. We discussed sharing, reading, and working with electronic documents. We heard testimony that the new feature in Office 2003 that allows group annotations works very well.

We discussed the general advantages and savings of electronic availability, which include space savings, more effective disaster recovery, and wider and faster data availability. With all that, we still need paper for archiving.

This presentation was useful as much for the discussion it generated as the presentation itself.

#### Committee Business

Gerry ran through the content of the meeting of the committee chairs. Through there was no discussion of the fate of the Finance and Technology Committee, he did hear that Rajeev Pillai, the NARUC Webmaster, is moving on to another organization, and has been training his replacement. Rajeev has made great strides on the NARUC Web site. We wish him the best of luck in his new job. We hope to meet his replacement soon.

#### Project Management talk by Gerry Pacyna

There were a few guests for this presentation.

He started with a tongue-in-cheek presentation of what not to do, in the form of “how to screw up a project.” The recommended steps to wreck your next project include:

- \* assume everything;
- \* expect things to go right;
- \* over-promise everything;
- \* complicate things unnecessarily;
- \* alienate everyone;
- \* experiment during the project; don't test anything;
- \* deny problems, responsibility, limitations, the obvious, etc.;
- \* change anything you can during the project;
- \* procrastinate;
- \* withhold information, cooperation;
- \* underestimate time and money needed;
- \* avenge slights, disagreements, etc.; and
- \* ignore problems, warnings, complaints, test results, and rumors.

How do we avoid these pitfalls? During our discussion, planning and issue/change management were identified as essential. This calls for professional and dedicated project management. At the Virginia Commission, even business staff receives project management training and will receive requirements definition training.

Gerry continued with a discussion about the separate and shared roles and responsibilities, which he supported with a handout. He stressed that developing project plans and maintaining the discipline to stay with them often requires different skills, than held by those solving the problems of the project's objectives, the creative effort. Virginia has a project management office, which provides the administrative support and discipline to projects in the Commission. This has worked very well.

Gerry discussed the Project Definition Document/Charter document, which is jointly developed by both business and technical staff before the project begins. It describes the scope, rationale, benefits, objectives; the deliverables, duration, costs, risks, impacts; the roles, staffing, approvals, on-going costs; and establishes a steering committee, project team, and a high-level project plan for the project.

Finally, Gerry stressed the importance of a formal process of completion for the projects. In Virginia, they have a debriefing meeting, where lessons learned are developed and discussed and where acknowledgements and recognition can happen.

## **February 15, 2005**

### **Sensei Enterprises presentation - Sharon Nelson and John Simek**

This was another of this talented team's effective presentations on security and legal technology topics. For us, they focused on what's hot right now.

The first topic was the merger of Symantec and Veritas, which is interesting because it might lead to some useful tools that come from thinking about backup and security together. Storage might be another area that could grow from a concern for security.

John talked briefly about Veritas's Backup Exec Version 10. There's a problem with the wizards used to build the jobs; better to build them from scratch. The installation routine is good, however; as it looks ahead to what it might need for the installation and builds a checklist for you before it starts to work. Sadly, this is not a common practice in most software install routines.

A recent survey of network administrators found that spyware was, by far, the biggest issue (67%), with viruses (23%) next, and phishing (9%) third, but surely coming up. This introduced the core of the talk – spyware.

They began by discussing what spyware is, but the core of the matter is that spyware collects information about you. It may do so for many purposes, of which marketing is the least pernicious. They expect a law to pass this year, but no one's sure yet what it will look like.

Spyware is growing very fast as a problem. Essentially, every PC is infected with it. The best practice is to use two or three spyware scanning/prevention tools and keep them up to date. They discussed some ways that spyware ends up on your machine and, while they recommend the Foxfire browser, they don't expect it to stay off the list of ways to get spyware. Even visiting a Web site can get you spyware – the “drive by” method.

Some of the infections are so embedded that they can't be removed as a practical matter, and you are better off re-installing the operating system. Indicators that you've got spyware on a PC include popup windows, home page change, new toolbars, new system tray icons, slow performance, strange error messages, etc.

So, what do you do to prevent and remove spyware? Sensei have used Pest Patrol in the past, but are becoming disenchanted with it lately, and have switched to Spy Sweeper, because of its robust enterprise features and effectiveness in removing spyware. This area is changing fast, though, so long term contracts may not make sense. They recommend running the free spy audit on Spy Sweeper's site (at [www.webroot.com](http://www.webroot.com)) – and other sites selling the software – if you need to persuade someone of the need for these products.

Products they recommend for home use include the Google toolbar (but disable the advanced features), AdAware, and Spybot, among others.

Sharon discussed the legal situation and expressed her opinion that the laws now on the books are inadequate. She cited two case results to show that the wiretap law isn't doing the job against spyware. This is why there is a push for new legislation, though direct Marketers are going to be working to limit the scope of any new law in this area.

Next, they turned to phishing – the use of email to trick people into visiting a bogus Web site and providing personally identifying information about themselves– is also on the rise. There is good information on current phishing attempts at the Anti Phishing Working Group's site at [www.antiphishing.org](http://www.antiphishing.org).

They finished with a quick review of spam, voice over IP, wireless, and document metadata issues. As always, it was an entertaining and valuable presentation.

### Conducting an Information Security Assessment

Gerry Pacyna provided us a run-through of his presentation on security assessments. It started by answering the question of “Why do an assessment?” Because the attacks on our networks are rampant, our responsibilities for the information are increasing, our dependence on information technology is growing, and constant vigilance is required to safeguard these important resources.

What are the things to assess? Look at management of the security program, at application and data security, at the physical security of the installation, at security awareness and training efforts, at incident response procedures and guidelines, and at security products, practices, and services.

During the presentation, we discussed our various experiences with thefts of equipment, from walk-ins to break-ins to stuff just disappearing. We also discussed how those of us who had done

awareness training for staff have done so. Washington's Dept. of Information Services produced a training video for users on security awareness.

We discussed the usual, but dangerous, disconnect between security plans and actual practice.

### Business Meeting

We accepted the offer from the Washington representative to host a meeting in Seattle in, probably, early October of this year.

Agenda ideas suggested include:

- \* GIS, especially securing data for collection and distribution;
- \* User training, including security training;
- \* Project management
- \* E-commerce, and the new demands it can place on staff and infrastructure;
- \* Security;
- \* E-filing;
- \* Methods/means for providing off-hours support;
- \* IT governance, within the agency and within the state government;
- \* New options for mobile computing;
- \* Software licensing and tracking; and
- \* Help Desk software.

The Staff Subcommittee on Information Services adjourned.