

Innovative Technology Solutions for NGOs

Build It in Pieces: An Alternative to Do-Everything Enterprise Databases

Keith Berner, IREX

Yasir Usman, TerpSys




IREX, an international nonprofit development organization that supports educators, journalists and community leaders in over 100 countries.



Chief Information Officer

 kberner@irex.org

 202-947-9457

 irex.org

Discussion Topics - Today's Webinar:

- Part I: Lessons from past application development efforts
- Part II: iKnow
 - IREX's new vision for knowledge management, collaboration and business process automation
- Part III: Challenges

Part I: Lessons from the Past

- Avoid all eggs in one basket
- Use competitive bidding process
- Demand vendor expertise in business process analysis and user interfaces
- Use experienced staff to manage
- Use flexible contract mechanisms
- Prepare in advance for beta-testing process and internal marketing

Creating a New Vision

- AppDev is investment, not purchase
- Competitive vendor selection provides wisdom
- Tools/technologies must be future proof and suitable to needs
- Internal branding and marketing
- Start with most important “pain point” and specific internal client

Part II: iKnow Principles

- Clearly identified needs, clients, and champions
- Consistent IT oversight with end-user advisory teams
- Focus on customer satisfaction
- Build vs. buy analysis
- “80% solutions”
- Simplicity/usability over configurability
- Development as a process, not a product
- Web-based tools for worldwide access
- Interoperable, loosely coupled components
 - Components are independent but talk to each other to synchronize data
- Dispersed document management
- Industry-standard technologies and processes

iKnow Components

- Online Application System
- CRM/Recruiting
- Subgrant Management
- Intranet
- Global Authentication
- Field Operations Management
- Project Lifecycle Tracker
- Unified Search
- Fundraising
- HR

iKnow Underlying Technologies

- At the application level: .NET Framework
- At the database level: SQL Server
- At the presentation layer: XHTML and JavaScript

Dispersed Document Management

- Capture all “vital” documents and disregard the rest
- Tight linkage between structured data and related documents
- Avoid lock-in to Microsoft, Google or dedicated enterprise systems (Documentum, etc.)
- Tagging is tricky - keep schemes simple and intuitive
- Minimize disruptive impact on end users
- Cheap!

Part III: Challenges

- Policy-setting/protocols vs. instructions/help
- Performance in low-bandwidth environments
- Worldwide training and compliance enforcement
- Stovepiped culture
- Lack of insight into/control over field office operations and contexts
- Ongoing authentication/permission management

Summary:

- 80% solutions to clearly identified problems
- Emphasis on usability
- Loose coupling of separate tools
- Dispersed document management
- Strong client-vendor relationship
- Internal marketing and credibility building



We Help You Use Technology

We offer Networked and Web-based Solutions including:


- Network/IT Support
- Custom Application Development
- SharePoint Services
- Web Site Design and Development



Yasir Usman

Director, Application Development
and SharePoint Solutions

 yusman@Terpsys.com

 301-530-9106

 TerpSys.com



Innovative Technology Solutions for NGOs

November 3, 2010