

VIVO Notes 15 -- March 20, 2011

Value Added Services for VIVO

This week, VIVO will host a workshop in Bloomington regarding “value added services” for VIVO – the meeting is basically a think tank and brainstorming exercise regarding what comes next in the world of research discovery. Bringing together faculty, technologists, sponsors, publishers and others will provide a unique opportunity for discussion of research discovery, sharing of concepts for development and identification of opportunities for future collaboration.

For additional information on the workshop, please see <http://scimaps.org/flat/meeting/110325/>

We'll share thoughts here on ideas from the workshop regarding future directions.

VIVO 18 Month Meeting Materials

VIVO 18 month meeting materials are on-line. Please see

<https://confluence.cornell.edu/display/ennsrd/18+Month+Review>

Thanks to the organizers and all who participated!

Open “Documents” for VIVO

For some time, I've heard of the need to improve the “documents” for VIVO. I must admit, I find the term “documents” a bit stuffy. I understand the need for information regarding adoption, implementation, outreach, software development and technical support of the application. “Documents,” has, for me, meant relatively long, relatively fixed, formal, PDF style materials that I typically don't find very compelling. I've tried substituting the word “materials” for “documents” to convey the reality that VIVO is presented in many ways – through web pages, PowerPoints, posters, “documents”, postcards, videos, wikis, flyers, white papers, blogs and emails.

As we build our VIVO open source community, we must build a community of practice around open materials as well as open source. The best model I know of for open collaborative production of materials is Wikipedia. I hope you have had the chance to read about Jimmy Wales, the founder of Wikipedia, regarding why and how Wikipedia works. Wikipedia unleashes, but also channels, the creative energy and passion of individuals for particular topics and particular information organization activities.

A few years ago I had the great pleasure of working to develop a wiki for a group of system administrators at the University of Florida. The idea of a wiki was a radical one and we started gingerly. The team members told me they did not like to write. They told me that technical writers should be brought in to write better materials for them. Within one year, that group of 10 administrators had produced 400 well-crafted mostly accurate pages of technical information. I say “mostly accurate” because that is one of the features of a good wiki – there is a lot of content and a range of quality. Some pages were quite short – just reminders of tuning parameters and settings. Other pages were longer, describing processes. Longer pages were used less often. Good, short pages helped provide information across the group. I served as the cataloger – discovering new pages, creating categories and putting pages in categories, tagging pages for duplication, deprecation and out-of-date content. We created the wiki as a natural part of the work. The team accessed pages to do their work and corrected pages as work was progressing if they found the page to be incomplete or incorrect.

I see much of this behavior in the VIVO team currently. We have many pages in our restricted Confluence site. We need to begin to move our work to the open wiki at Source Forge. We need to fill in some gaps. We need to update some pages. I have asked [Amy Buhler](#) of the UF Marston Science Library to take on the role of cataloger for SourceForge. Her background in library science, her interest in information seeking behavior and her great interest in VIVO make her a perfect choice. She has accepted what I hope will be a fun and important opportunity for contribution to the development of the open VIVO community.

In creating materials for the open wiki, I do not see a need for a rigid process of “document production” with accompanying version control, editing, formal roles, checklists and the like. Each of us can review new pages of interest. Team members review for different purposes – some have “domains” – if a new page appears about a topic close to their interests, they review, comment and correct as needed. Others find that fixing formatting and creating a common look for pages was a passion. Still others work on grammar.

Are you passionate about VIVO? Perhaps you are passionate about adoption, or about faculty use, or about Tomcat configuration, or the extension of ontologies. We have an extraordinary amount of material produced about VIVO. We will begin opening up our materials and the production of materials to Source Forge.

Ideas for VIVO Notes?

Is there an idea that you would like to see developed in VIVO Notes? Do you have questions or concerns that might best be clarified here? Please drop me a note.

[Mike Conlon](#)