



IADISC Report to the ISIS Board of Trustees May, 2006

October 2005 – April 2006 have been very busy for IADISC members. An IADISC meeting was held in Minneapolis in February 2006, with seven IADISC members and five ISIS staff present. A number of issues were discussed, but most notably, the formation of an IADISC Executive Committee was proposed and agreed upon. The Executive Committee is able to make rapid decisions on behalf of IADISC, if required, and is made up of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs each of the regional ADISCs. This has proven to be a very valuable progression, and has resulted in better sharing of workload, and quick decisions from the Committee.

During the past six months, IADISC has been supporting the ZIMS Project and ISIS in many ways including:

- Eleven Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and eight representatives from alpha adopter institutions participated in a ZIMS construction walkthrough workshop in February. CGI staff presented a number of ZIMS screens and sought feedback from the participants on their readiness. This was the first real opportunity for many people to see completed screens.
- A number of very small workshops with selected SMEs and CGI developers in Toronto. Following the construction walkthrough, it was clear that the project would benefit significantly from having one or two “Super SMEs” working closely with CGI developers for a couple of days each, to ensure that screens meet the needs of the community. Both ISIS and CGI found these sessions to be extremely productive and worthwhile.
- A large workload to complete the drafting of report specifications for ZIMS. Focus groups have identified 200 reports that are required for ZIMS, 101 of which are legacy reports from the current software programs. Work had begun some months ago on drafting the report specifications, but the number of volunteers working on these reports was not as high as we had expected, and as a result, only 20 reports were ready for CGI by the due date in mid-March. An extension was given by CGI, provided we continued to deliver completed reports each week. Thanks are extended to Duncan Bolton, Bristol Zoo, who pulled together a small and dedicated group of volunteers to complete and review as many reports as possible. As of 14 April, a total of 88 reports were delivered to CGI, including 66 reports that were written and reviewed during the additional month-long extension. The remaining reports will be developed at a later stage.
- Data standards development and review continues. We are about to commence a similar rapid development and review process for data standards as we have done with reports. Again, due to the decline in volunteer hours, work has not progressed as quickly with the data standards as we had hoped. We are currently working on a plan with another small group of SMEs to complete the data standards work by 19 June.
- A number of IADISC members have been participating in internet-based teleconferences to review the early builds of ZIMS. The first build has required six 2.5 hour sessions with up to 12 SMEs involved, to provide further feedback on the development of the screens. By necessity, these sessions have been scheduled so that participants from Europe and Australasia have been involved very late in the evenings or very early in the mornings, and our thanks go to these dedicated volunteers for their dedication to the project.



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- IADISC members continue to manage the ZIMS Discussion Forum, a web-based discussion forum. This has been a very successful tool for SMEs' electronic involvement in data standards and reports work, and use case feedback. The discussion forum now has 420 members, with some 5378 articles posted.

The next six months present further challenges pertaining to the user community's involvement in the ZIMS Project. During this time, IADISC members will be involved in completion of the remaining data standards, additional construction walkthrough workshops to review screens, many more online ZIMS build reviews, user acceptance testing and assisting with the development of deployment and training materials.

There has been a further decline in the number of SMEs that have contributed their time over the past six months, and the amount of time that SMEs have worked on ZIMS seems to have decreased. As was suggested during the last Board report, this is predominantly due to volunteer burnout, combined with other work commitments such as regional conferences. The schedule of work for the SMEs has been aggressive and demanding of late, and this results in a high risk of further decreases in SME participation.

IADISC members will continue to work very hard to ensure that we have the broadest possible regional representation and that adequate SMEs are involved in the process to ensure the successful delivery of ZIMS.

Submitted by:

Kevin Johnson
Chair, IADISC