



## Use of Mass Collaboration Tools for Conservation

### 2008 CBSG Annual Meeting, Adelaide, Australia

#### Participants

Evan Blumer, Onnie Byers, Frands Carlsen, Kevin Johnson, Maria Finnigan, Wendy Foster, Jo Gipps, Fanny Lai, George Rabb, Hideyuki Takahashi, Yasumasa Tomita, Eric Tsao, Sally Walker, Jonathan Wilcken

#### Background

Participants outlined what they would like discuss during the workshop.

*Sally* – would like a more interactive and effective way to collaborate with colleagues in South Asia.

*Wendy* – would like better collaboration with colleagues. Wendy works in an organisation with two sites, so is looking for ways to improve communication across both sites.

*Eric* – hoping to bring some collaborative tools to SEAZA members to help with current lack of communication, and to improve conservation activities.

*Maria* – same as above. Would like to see improvement in communication with regards to regional and international species management and international collaboration.

*Yasumasa* – would like to see the ability to increase communication with regards to conservation issues, post-PHVA workshops etc.

*Jonathan* – has been discussing this problem for a while, and hopes to establish a framework for a trial based on a defined conservation problem.

*Onnie* – has also been thinking about this for a while, and keen to look at existing tools, and investigate how we could jointly progress the thinking into a trial. Has already undertaken a very small trial and hoping to take this further.

*Kevin* – would like to see increased collaboration regionally, especially with regards to species management, various committees, and also with regards to the global amphibian crisis.

Sally and others raised the discussion about the accuracy of various available information (Encyclopedia Britannica, Wikipedia etc).

We need to be able to access our own colleagues, as well as other networks.

The group discussed the value of existing technologies, e.g. Microsoft SharePoint Server, the difficulty of use, and ease of adoption by new users.


We need a means to avoid recreating what has already been done with regards to specific projects (e.g. Sumatran elephant), and to easily access related information.

What are the sorts of tools we are talking about?

- Blogs (discussion groups)
- Document sharing and collaboration
- Wiki-type information
- Video conferencing?

What was the Berne trial about?

Caroline Lees told us about the trial proposed at the Berne meeting, which was based on bilbies. The wider bilby team involves a coordinator, several state-level teams, a national recovery team, local community stakeholders etc. and they all need to collaborate effectively. This group has a history of wanting to investigate new ideas and bet-



ter ways for coordinating the overall plan. This could be a great team to use as a trial project as it has a dispersed group of people working on various parts of the project, in situ and ex situ components, population management components etc. There has been consideration in the past of holding a national PHVA, and we could initiate this via the internet.

The group wondered if consideration be given to setting up a second trial project that is more general and of significance to a wider, global audience? It was decided to set up three projects, each using a different type of collaboration tool e.g., SharePoint portal, freeware etc.

We need to ensure that the people involved in the trial are not necessarily involved in the particular project, but are able to contribute in other ways.

#### **Potential trials - looking to capture**

- Wide interest
- A compelling reason for initiating it
- Different technologies
- Being able to identify stakeholders
- Urgency
- Engaging a (somewhat) wider audience in the trial
- Isn't otherwise done

#### **Project suggestions**

- Frogs
- Bilbies
- Field project prioritization
- Overview of all of the above

#### **Project 1. A species of frog (poison dart frogs?) (Eric, Kevin, Kazu, Sally, Frands, Maria)**

- How to better maintain – husbandry
  - Disease issues
  - Breeding
- Education
- Research
  - What's being done
  - By whom
- Contact lists
  - SME
- Linking into existing AArk portal
- Promote (pushing out to users)
- Use the SharePoint Server tools (<http://www.microsoft.com/Sharepoint/default.msp>)

#### **Actions:**

- Kevin to expand the existing site (<http://zims.isis.org/aark/default.aspx>), upload document, establish passwords for users
- Promoting the initiative (all)
- Steering group to write an introduction/promotion document
  - Purpose
  - Who to attract
  - What sort of contribution are we looking for
  - Mechanisms for dissemination
- Design of project
  - Scope of information
  - Appropriate tools
  - Quality(?) control / oversight / administration
  - Accessibility



## **Project 2. Field project prioritization (Jo, Onnie, Frands, Bengt Holst, Gerald Dick, Wendy, Chris West)**

- Rationalize different strands
- Field Project Prioritization
- Database
- WAZA projects
- Video conferencing, live editing, general emails etc.

## **Project 3. Bilbies (Wendy, Caroline, Gary Fry, Maria)**

- Coherent conservation plan
  - Linking local efforts e.g. NT WA, Qld, SA under a single plan
- Identify key stakeholders and pitch the idea
  - Zoo people
  - Recovery teams
  - Politicians
- Web-based PHVA process
- Coherent captive management strategy
- Use Socialtext tools (<http://www.socialtext.com> )

## **Project 4. Evaluation (all group participants, Berne group (get from Onnie))**

### Criteria for success

- What would be expectations from face to face meetings
  - Did we achieve those?
- Abiding with CBSG workshop guidelines
- Did it define objectives and did it achieve then?
- User satisfaction
  - Participation level
  - User survey
- Qualitative assessment of whether progress is made
- Use edna tools (<http://www.groups.edna.edu.au>)