

Jeffrey D Stoner

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To: GS-W DC

cc: GS-W RH, GS-W ITAC

Subject: ITAC summary notes from June 2004 meeting

21 July 2004

District Chiefs,

Notes abstracted from ITAC (Information Technology Advisory Committee) minutes for District Chiefs are below. The full minutes can be reached by the link at the bottom of this message. Remember that we now have an ITAC glossary on the Web for many IT acronyms on the ITAC home page:
<http://water.usgs.gov/usgs/nwis/itac/>

ITAC is a WRD committee to foster communication and services between HQ and the "field". Our last meeting was in the Alaska office, which is now an integrated center of all USGS Disciplines. So some of the district interactions included discussions about IT services to all disciplines.

Feel free to contact Jim Nicholas or me for any clarifications,
Jeff & Jim

Alaska Science Center (ASC) overview by Steve Frenzel (Acting Center Chief at that time of ITAC meeting) and IT overview by Carl Simpson:

Carla is team leader under GIO; will answer to Leslie (new ASC Chief in August). Supporting about 215 FTEs (250 people). 11 staff members on GIO Team — 7.5 FTEs; rest are contractors; supporting about 215 FTEs (250 people). Team — "really great" -- They integrate philosophy of mission statement into everyday work within constantly evolving environment. Been integrated 3 years now (re: IT stuff).

"Different disciplines should be able to access each other's data; need to get scientists to collaborate and work more as a team. Lack of actual co-location is an issue."

TRAINING needs for IT people:

Terri has been asked to identify what type of training should be planned for IT staff during IT technical reviews. She suggested adding this to the IT Review Checklist. Many SAs and supervisors need assistance in identifying training for the IT staff's IDP's.

Can training be prioritized? List of 5-7 courses. RCSers will prioritize list of courses needed and request recommendations from ITSOT, SUN TAC, BWTST. (Terri Moore, WR; Scott, CR; Tim McElhone, ER)

Windows Office 2003 — Streaming video will be made on how to create Word template for creating reports before being put into InDesign. Phil Redman, CAPP, teaches these. This will be

done by August 2004. 90% of people would not be using InDesign. Sandy suggested cutting course down to an hour from two. One DVD and online for streaming. E-mail should go out to everyone individually (not just via Bulletin Board).

For further reading, suggest you check out notes on:

- **Regional Computer Specialists District IT review** led by Scott McEwen
- **Future of the USGS Annual Data Report** led by Brian McCallum

AD (Active Directory) deployment plans for the entire Bureau and associated transfer to Windows 2000 and XP mandate by Paul Exter:

Requirements of WRD offices

- http://adipr.usgs.gov/ad_sys_admins.html
 - Upgrade desktops to Windows 2000 (min) or Windows XP Professional (preferred)
 - Upgrade servers to Windows 2000 (min) or Windows Server 2003
 - Upgrade systems to meet minimum hardware requirements
 - Inventory site applications that will be affected by AD
 - Review security guidelines for AD
 - Educate management and users on proposed site changes
 - Select a technical liaison to work with Regional AD team



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Summary

- **AD Services provide business value by:**
 - Increasing security
 - Reducing ongoing operations costs
 - Efficient IT support and administration
 - Increasing productivity, collaboration and mobility
 - Replacing obsolete technologies
 - Allowing IT to focus on science support
 - Improving "organizational readiness"
 - Establishing a platform capable of meeting Department and Federal requirements



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DOI Website moratorium by Karen Klima:

Will be a freeze on Web-related software and hardware. **One-year limit on this freeze.** Web hardware and software have not been identified; will be by end of this fiscal year. Karen Siderelis has ultimate responsibility — not DOI.

Discussion:

The number of Web sites is being restricted - not necessarily the content of the Web pages. The Dept. has over 55,000 Web sites (some redundant and some out-of-date) and only 70,000 employees. They wanted to push a lot of clean-up and better monitor new Web sites. Will stress having all Web sites registered. Enterprise Web Team is given challenge to come up with a plan in next 180 days. Detailee from EPA working with them; will be working with Communications Office and Enterprise Web group (Web Advisory Group).

Wireless waiver process by Tim Quinn:

Can control environment of Gov't computer used at home by installing certain encrypted package on system and building VPN network. (Tim does not see this environment any different than airport or hotel.) Wireless Team will be determining what that software will be to do this.

OPINION--This is a sticky one that will involve more discussion:

Non-Gov't computer for Gov't work: Negatives — Viruses; have to meet specific minimum standards; total cost of ownership is cheaper for Gov't to put a Gov't PC in someone's hands instead of dealing with liabilities, etc.; still may require encryption, firewall, etc.

Futures of Temporary DMZs by Kevin Gallagher and Lester North:

Basically, DMZs are servers put outside the firewall for public file transfers where the activity is more heavily monitored. A lot in the job of the ITSOT falls out of perimeter standards document. The more we proliferate DMZs, the more the potential for risk. Ideal would be only four DMZs for USGS. This is still the goal, using tools like reverse proxy.

Q: If a cost center has a temporary DMZ, what should ITAC members advise? Something will be put out later by the Dept. about this. Will be like Windows Support Team, where they can help and design solutions. Real-time delivery issues need to be kept in mind. Temporary DMZs are needed and they will stay until there is an alternative solution in place.

FISMA (Federal Information Security Management Act) update by Kevin Gallagher:

Sensitivity-level assignments (about 200 positions are “sensitive” —will require background investigations (some IT Specialists and system owners included and District Chiefs). No funding came with this; just a mandate. FISMA corrective action team is trying to figure out how to address the funding for these investigations. Can't do all this by 7/31/04 — Okay if we at least have a process in place.

Lowest common denominator is the **score**; we have an 88.5 as a score. It's always higher than Department score. They're trying to figure out which bureau is “dragging them down.” We're not the lowest bureau, but we're down there (bottom three or four). Large distributed bureaus with large infrastructures are hard to get a good score. Scores are based on self-assessments (until 7/31/04). Then IG will come in and “check” and their score will go to Congress. We could end up with a “C.” (Not too bad from an “F”!)

The next ITAC meeting is proposed for Little Rock Arkansas (Central Region) in November 2004, a District that has not been visited by ITAC.

[[District Chiefs](#), please feel free to contact your reps. Jim Nicholas or Jeff Stoner about your comments or additions to this agenda for IT issues for the next ITAC meeting]:

Proposed topics for next meeting agenda:

- Have Paul Exter on telecon and for update on AD and C&A:
 - o Impacts on field
 - o Critical information infrastructure
 - o Update from ITSOT (telecon with Lester North)
 - o Wireless status (Skip Dutrow)
 - o Enterprise Services Network (ESN)
- Publishing technology plan for competitive sourcing and re-engineering (Greg Allord)
- Update/follow-up on CHIDER Conference (Burl Goree)
- IDEAS & FBMS updates (Donna Hector-Sabin)
- MY SAP (Kevin Gallagher) - ?
- ADCP and handheld demonstrations

ITAC Membership changes for calendar year 2005:

Rotation of Positions: Brian, Sonya, and Joel will be rotating out (Data Section Chief, Studies Section Chief & Database Chief positions will be needed). Jeff Stoner will rotate into Chair. Katherine will ask Regional Hydrologists to suggest nominees and report these at next ITAC teleconference call (August 20).