Project no. SSPE-CT-2003-502329

PANDA

Permanent network to strengthen expertise on infectious diseases of
aquaculture species and scientific advice to EU policy

Coordination Action

Scientific support to policies

Deliverable 1 - Project website

Due date of deliverable: Month 1
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Start date of project:01/01/04   Duration:44 months

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Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	PU
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

Contents   Page

1.   Aim of website

The website has been designed to be the communications hub of the network, providing a platform for the discussion and development of not only the project deliverables but any matters relating to aquatic animal health. It is also used for the dissemination of information such as project outputs.

2.   Development of the website

Over the course of the project, the website has been upgraded several times with improvements to content, graphic design, forums, security and other features. This brief report accompanying the deliverable describes the current latest version of the site, launched in early 2007.

3.   Technical overview of the current website

The website is built on the NET Framework 2.0. The site itself is a custom application programmed in the language C# (c-sharp). The source code for this application is available on request, but due to its length has not been appended to this report.

The site is designed using the latest XHTML and CSS technologies, making it accessible to disabled (partially sighted) users. It is designed to work with Internet Explorer 6.0 and above, Mozilla FireFox 1.0 and above, therefore catering approximately 99% of the Internet population. The site is designed to prevent spammers from registering themselves on to the network. Unfortunately it is not technically possible to prevent it 100%, however, regular vetting serves to identify individuals who are not relevant to the network.

The website is hosted in-house on CEFAS servers. Backups are made daily (differential), weekly (full) and monthly (full – kept for 12 months). Access to the website for developers is given via FTP (File Transfer Protocol). The domain name (www.europanda.net) is rented through an agent (Tollon Ltd, www.tollon.net) for a fee of approximately GBP20 per year.

In order to update the content of the website, an IT professional with knowledge of web development (HTML and CSS) is required. To make changes to the source code, an IT professional with knowledge of the .NET framework and programming in C# will be required.

Maintenance requirements are minimal, but as Microsoft are constantly updating their platforms further changes to the website structure may be needed at some point in the future to integrate properly into new technologies. Additionally, ongoing vetting of new members is required.

4.   Overview of website contents

A summary list of pages and website features is presented below.

Open access pages

- Homepage
- What's New (list of recent news - when a new item is posted here an email update is sent to all registered members)
- About us (project background)
- Publications (newsletters)
- Meetings list
- Useful links (including associated organisations and related projects)
- Contact us (feedback form)
- Registration form
- Login page (to members area)
- Forums (read only access to open forums)

Members pages
- Members Home
- Forums (full access to open forums and access for selected members to private forums)
- Search experts database
- My details (edit personal details on database)
- Topic areas (links to information and outputs from the 5 scientific work packages)
- Stats (analysis of network membership)

Consortium / admin pages
- Add/edit What's new
- Document editor
- Email broadcast function (to entire network or selected sub-network)
- Full access to all forums

5.   Overview of forums structure and function

Forums are now custom built application designed to integrate into current design, whereas before it was a 3rd party application bolted on to the site. They now have added security and the ability for administrators to make specific forums 'private', giving access to nominated users. Administrators can choose whether a forum can be made publicly available or have restricted access to logged in users. Forums have a document upload facility, enabling users to download the document, make changes (using track changes), and re-upload for others to view. Users are able to register an interest in specific forums, which then allows the system to notify them via email when a post is made to that forum. Users are able to create topics and reply to posts within forums to which they have access.

6.   Usage statistics

6.1   Website usage

Summary statistics of website usage from 1st May 2006 (when the C# version was uploaded) are presented in Table 1. Through this period, the site has attracted an average of 435 hits and 100 visitors per day. Visits to the site originated from a total of 7476 unique IP addresses. Each IP address may either represent one individual, or

a whole organisation (e.g. all visits from CEFAS staff would originate from the same IP address) so the number of different individuals accessing the site is higher than this. In comparison, the Community Reference Laboratory for mollusc diseases website had 6545498 hits, 3831897 page views and a total of 9188 different visitors during 2006. Data was not available for the Community Reference Laboratory for fish diseases website

Table 1. Visits to www.europanda.net since 1 May 2006 to 6 June 2007.

Total Hits	173904
Average Hits per Day	434.76
Average Hits per Visitor	4.383
Total Reloads	11652
Average Reloads per Day	29.13
Average Reloads per Visitor	0.294
Cached Requests	185556
Incomplete Requests	2142
Failed Requests	39685
Visitors	
Total Visitors	39674
Average Visitors per Day	99.185
Average Time Spent (min:sec)	02:38
Total Unique Ips	7476
Resource Accessed	
Total Page Views	29640
Average Page Views per Day	74.1
Average Page Views per Visitor	0.747
Total File Downloads	4521
Average File Downloads per Day	11.303
Average File Downloads per Visitor	0.114
Total Images	87928
Average Images per Day	219.82
Average Images per Visitor	2.216
Total Other Resources	23782
Average Other Resources per Day	59.455
Average Other Resources per Visitor	0.599

The following topics have been posted on the following forums:

Members forum - 5 topics
Risk analysis forum - 2 topics
Epidemiology forum - 1 topic
Diagnostic methods forum - 26 topics
Environmentally safe disease control forum - 1 topic
EPIZONE project forum - 1 topic
EU legislation and OIE standards forum - 3 topics
NACA forum - 1 topic
All forums - 40 topics in total

Many of these topics consist of the initial post only with subsequent replies despite being read many times. It therefore appears that this method of seeking feedback and

opinions has not proved as fruitful as envisaged to date, despite the continual improvements to the forum system. Recently, a facility for creating email alerts to all network members expressing an interest in a particular topic has been added. It is hoped that this will stimulate more activity.

7.   Discussion/Conclusions

As a tool for the dissemination of information, and the building and hosting of a scientific network the website has fulfilled its objectives. However, as an online platform for the discussion of issues related to aquatic animal health, the forum usage by network members has been disappointing. It is hoped that this system will improve following the recent addition of a system for creating email alerts to all network members when a new topic is posted on the forum. As more project outputs are added to the content, it is envisaged that the number of visitors will increase. Although maintenance requirements are minimal, there is no financial provision for the ongoing maintenance of the site after the project lifetime, so any problems which may arise in the future will not be remedied as a priority. Also, there will be no funds available for making backups or renting the domain name.