

BC ELN AskAway Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes: February 18, 2008

In Attendance

Margie Clarke, Camosun
Anita Cocchia, BC ELN
Gordon Coleman, BC ELN
Jo Ann Collins (recorder), BC ELN
Carole Compton-Smith, Douglas
Duncan Dixon, TWU
Debra Flewelling, Douglas
Lila Heilbrunn, VCC
Kim Isaac, UCFV
Marjory Jardine, JIBC

Nancy Levesque, TRU
Ophelia Ma, UVic
Cathy MacDonald, KUC
George Modenesi, Capilano
Todd Mundle, SFU
Sunni Nishimura, BC ELN
David Pepper, BCIT
Marc Saunders, PGPL
Sally Taylor, UBC

Teleconference

Jennifer Brownlow, MUC
Anne Cossentine, OC
Mary Anne Guenther, NIC
Barb Janzen, COTR

Sian Landis, Selkirk
Tim MacDonald, NCC
Dana McFarland, RRU
Kathy Plett, CNC

Regrets

Randy Bruce, BC Campus
Grace Makarewicz, Langara

1. Introduction – C. Compton-Smith

2. Adoption of Agenda

Agenda was amended with the following additions;

9.1 Process for formative evaluation of AskAway Advisory Committee.

9.2 Future of the AskAway project.

3. Election of Chair

Call was made for nominations for the position of Chairperson.

T. Mundle nominated Kim Isaac. The motion was seconded by D. Pepper.

Kim Isaac elected as AskAway Advisory Chair for a one-year term.

Carole Compton-Smith was thanked for her service as Chair.

4. Roles and responsibilities of committee members

Terms of reference for the committee were reviewed. Any changes would need to be endorsed by the BC ELN Steering Committee meeting.

ACTION: Meetings are currently held every 2 months. In light of the current survey the committee may meet more frequently to review and respond to the survey results.

5. **Budget Update**

A. Cocchia presented the budget update –

- AVED 2006/07 start up funding (\$130,000) was used over a 2-year basis.
- In 2007/08 a second request was made for \$120,000 one time funding to cover auxiliary staffing, training and marketing in that order. The request was seen as positive and high priority. A decision may be forthcoming in the next 2 weeks.
- \$35,000 currently comes from BCcampus to fund the coordinator position. We are in line for shared services funding from BCcampus which will be put towards software costs. (\$25,000)
- Licensing costs vary year to year and we will enter our 3rd year in August 2008. August 31, 2009 is the renewal for the software license.
- BCcampus is a strong advocate and supporter of BC ELN and they are looking for other areas which they can explore with us.
- The 2008/09 BC ELN budget presentation is scheduled for February 29, 2008. Participating will be the BC ELN Steering Committee Chair, Lynn Copeland and Anita Cocchia.

The question was raised if other software has been looked at? A. Cocchia explained that in 2006 the public-post-secondary software examining committee participated in an RFQ. Through the evaluation and trials OCLC Question Point was selected for its capabilities, cost, and adherence to BC Privacy laws.

It is advantageous for public and post-secondary AskAway to have the same software as there are savings in licensing and training costs.

6. **Report on Partner Library Survey**

K. Isaac reported that a volunteer sub-committee of K. Isaac, T. Mundle and C. Compton-Smith developed the partner survey in order to ascertain how AskAway is working for participating institutions. There was a short timeline to develop, send out and compile results of the survey.

One response requested per institution. 26 out of 27 institutions responded to the survey; a response from one remaining institution is still pending.

Two summary documents of the survey results available:

1. Numerical summary – just the statistical responses to the yes/no and multiple choice questions.
View at:
<http://www.eln.bc.ca/askaway/documents/AASurveyNumericalSummary1.pdf>
2. Full summary - contains all responses and comments
View at: <http://www.eln.bc.ca/askaway/documents/AAPartnerSurveySummary2.pdf>

K. Isaac suggested that survey results be used in future planning. Either the entire Advisory committee or a sub-committee can be formed to come up with draft recommendations/action steps to be presented to the participating libraries and BC ELN Steering Committee for review.

Coordinator walked through summary documents. In general, very positive results expressing strong support for AskAway. Some highlights:

- **Service hours:** majority happy with current service hours and institutional commitment; some expressed interest in extending hours to 10 PM and staying open Friday and Saturday evenings.
- **Staffing levels:** majority fine with current levels; some time slots reported to be over-staffed. Suggestions: to reduce staffing levels at beginning and end of term; earlier resumption of service after Christmas and summer; one university staff per shift to help with upper-level questions.
- **Evening and weekend staffing:** difficult area – expressed desire for evening and weekend hours, but difficulty staffing them. Budget was main reason these hours difficult to staff; no anticipated positive change in budget situation.
- **Funding:** Strongly expressed opinions from most that AVED should continue to fund auxiliary staffing and software costs for AskAway. Lots of suggestions about how to deal with costs should AVED not provide funding. Unanimous support for a on-going funding request to AVED for 2009/2010 fiscal.
- **Committee structure:** Majority was supportive of adding two positions-at-large and a position for the CPSLD chair to the advisory committee terms of reference. Changes to TOR will have to be made by BC ELN Steering Committee.
- **Evaluation:** Highlights areas of poor communication, as respondents were unaware of existing available statistics.
- **Training:** Lots of suggestions for improving online and in-person training.
- **Marketing & Communication:** Generally positive, lots of marketing suggestions.

DISCUSSION: It was suggested that if AskAway were to be viewed as a core service, then post-secondary institutions might have to explore if there were other things that they would choose not to do in order to free up some money for AskAway. 'Hard choices' might have to be made.

It was suggested that AskAway costs might be proportional to the amount of use of the service made by an institution.

It was suggested that institutions that are able to staff evening and weekend hours could have a reduction in costs.

It was suggested that there be a scaling back of weekday daytime staffing levels during less busy parts of the term.

It was suggested that if AVED did not come through with the \$120,000 that it would be necessary to come back to the institutions for financial support of AskAway.

ACTION: A request was made to produce the AskAway schedule earlier to accommodate budget cycles.

ACTION: AskAway Advisory Committee and BC ELN staff need to come up with an alternative plan if the one time AVED funding is not approved.

ACTION: The AskAway Partner Library survey to be posted on the listserv, blog, portal and What's New section of the ELN website with all identifying institutional names removed.

ACTION: At its next meeting, the Advisory Committee will determine a process for reviewing the survey results and coming up with an action plan for identifying recommendations/action steps, to be presented to the participating libraries and BC ELN Steering Committee.

7. **Joint Administrators Group TOR**

The goal of the Joint Administrators Group (JAG) is to align both the public library and post-secondary library services. Membership is detailed in the Terms of Reference. JAG meets quarterly, or as required.

Joint Administrators Group TOR can be viewed at:
<<http://www.eln.bc.ca/askaway/index.php?page=jag>>

8. **PLSB VR Committee Update**

Public Libraries reported 27,561 sessions in 2007. A good portion of the year (25%) was lost to job action. Service re-bounded by only 75% of original level.

There has been some concern about co-browsing capabilities with Question Point. Public AskAway open to alternative software.

Scheduling is done through ScheduleSource. It has proven to be very useful for managing the service.

Public Libraries have divided their AskAway Committee into 3 sub-committees as follows;

- Strategy – sustainable issues, collaboration, communication
- Operations – staff levels, service, training
- Tools & Technology – integrate virtual reference with email, tools to service providers, Question Point and evaluating other software available

9. **New Business**

9.1 AskAway Advisory Committee – structure/changes

Think about the way the committee functions and address this to ensure that it is empowered adequately for the task at hand. Determine what criteria are required to define success.

The BC ELN Steering Committee could put together the review criteria based on the Terms of Reference. Process could include a survey of participating libraries. T. Mundle suggested for the review that 6 months is too short of a time frame for the December Steering Committee meeting.

ACTION: T. Mundle agreed to bring the issue of evaluation criteria to the next BC ELN Steering Committee Meeting in December.

9.2 Future of Project

This agenda item was felt to be dealt with during survey result discussion.

10. **Next Meeting and Wrap-up**

Next meeting - It was determined to meet before 2 months. Meeting date - TBA

Upcoming speaking events:

Sunni, Gordon & Phil will be speaking at the upcoming BCLA and CLA conferences.