

RePAH management board meeting

January 18th, The Chancellor's Room, Firth Court, Sheffield University.

Present: Prof. M. Greengrass (MG), Prof. S. Brown (SB), Jared Bryson (JB), Dave Gerrard (DG), Robb Ross (RR).

1. Minutes from meeting of 6th December 2005:

Minutes were agreed.

2. Matters arising and to report:

None.

3. Final report headings:

It was agreed that the suggestion of a heading for recommendations be accepted and included within the final report.

It was agreed that content for each heading be distributed between the partners and that Microsoft Word is used in conjunction with its 'track changes' facility. It was agreed the finished report heading sections will then be published on the wiki for wider distribution.

It would be beneficial to the project if the numbers within each AHRC subject domain were known. The RAE may have this information.

Action: RR to make the section of the wiki on which the reports will be held as world readable.

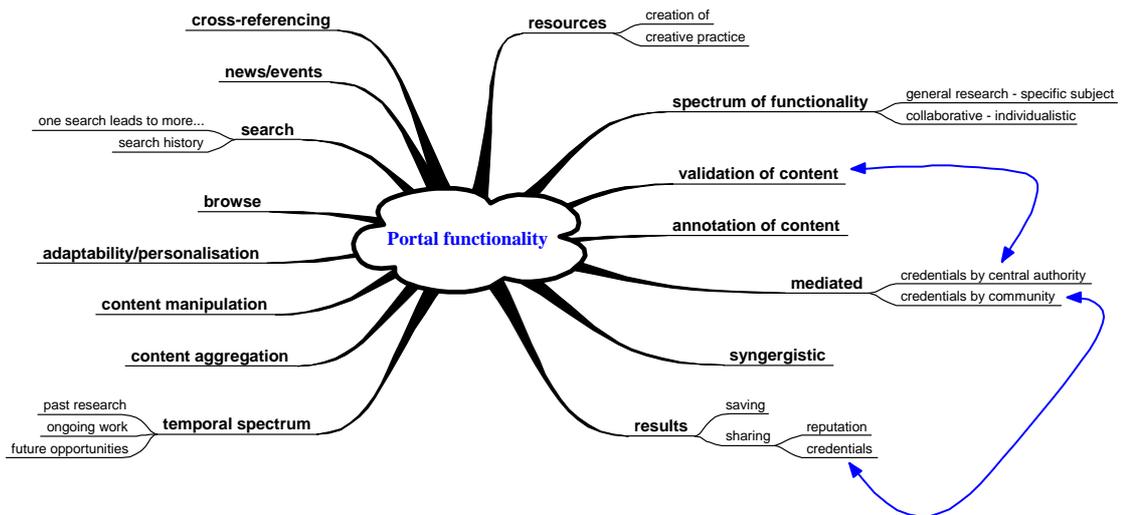
Action: MG to contact RAE to request numbers within each AHRC subject domain.

4. Project scope issues

It was agreed that in order to encompass all developments within the technical domain of the project VREs and libraries should be included.

Initial findings from the focus groups have identified that the 'design' issues of portals were not of primary concern and that the bigger questions of access to information, searching, comparing and relating information were of importance.

A brainstorming session on the functionality of portals followed which produced the following mindmap:



It was agreed that it would be very difficult to include all this functionality into one demonstrator and that a number would have to be considered, offering different clusters of functions. Some of these may already exist and others may need to be developed. It is important to know where the demonstrator will be used in order that an appropriate set of functionality can be build into it and an appropriate skin developed for it. JB has put a matrix of the functionality required by each subject area with the Arts and Humanities on the wiki; these have been gathered from the focus groups. Using this information DG will produce a paper version of a demonstrator for the next meeting.

It was agreed that a distinction needs to be made between a hub and a portal. The demonstrator needs to show the added benefits of using a portal. This can be highlighted by using a series of scenarios, possibly in written format/powerpoint, that shows how a portal can provide a variety of functions.

Action: DG to produce a paper version of a demonstrator for the next meeting.

5. Focus groups: progress report.

DMU was tasked with looking at the practitioner arts but was met with little response from the subject areas at DMU. To ensure it was not an institutional problem, Salford University was also contacted and a similar lack of response was elicited. Further research indicated that practitioners within the arts do not use 'institutional' developed means of research or co-operation and tend to form small clusters of 'counter-culture' networks or research groups. In order to find out more concerning this area, it was agreed that the focus group approach should be modified to one to one discussions with representatives from the arts subject domains.

Sheffield has conducted a number of successful focus groups within the humanities groups and has collected a large amount of data.

Action: RR to organise a set of one to one discussions to find out how art practitioners view or use portals.

Action: RR to conduct desk top research to try to find any 'counter-culture' portals.

6. User questionnaire.

There have been 73 completed online questionnaires. It was agreed that more was needed and a check made to ensure that links to the questionnaire were present on the Humbul and Artifact sites.

It was agreed to ask David Robey if he could help to promote the questionnaire.

It was agreed to use the Project and Methods Database to identify all currently funded AHRB projects and ask them to complete the questionnaire.

It was agreed that we need to identify what kind of data we need from the questionnaire results. This should be made a point on the next agenda.

Action: MG to contact David Robey to ask him to help promote the questionnaire.

Action: RR to look at PMDB and send request to all current AHRB projects to take part in questionnaire.

Action: RR to add point on next agenda concerning what data is necessary from the questionnaire replies.

7. Deep log analysis.

Nothing has been received yet. It was noted that if nothing was forthcoming before early March, the findings would not be incorporated into the development of the demonstrator.

Action: RR to write to CIBER to get update.

Action: RR to write to Claire Warwick to inform her of the March deadline and to ask if she was experiencing any problems.

8. Demonstrator development.

Dealt with in point 4.

9. Delphi forecasting

It was agreed that the results from the focus groups were needed before starting the Delphi exercise which is intended to check the findings.

It was agreed to send the Delphi questionnaire to a representative from each focus group as well as those people who provided their email on completion of the questionnaire.

Action: RR to put together a Delphi questionnaire using opinion for the next meeting.

10. Future focus groups at conferences

JB produced a list of suitable conferences where a focus group could take place within the predetermined time frame. If there are any more that the group can think of, they should be emailed to him.

It was agreed that a change of approach may be required for these events, moving towards more generic questions and quick one to one interviews. The budget will

need to be investigated at the next meeting to see what was available to fund attendance at these conferences.

Action: RR to bring up to date budgetary expenditure records to next meeting.

11. AHDS newsletter copy

MG will provide draft copy for comment by the group.

Action: MG to produce draft copy for the AHDS newsletter.

12. AOB

a. Conferences for presentation of findings

It was agreed that a paper would be appropriate for DRH '06 and a poster for the E-Social Science conference.

b. Methods Network

The MN were happy for us to disseminate our findings at their gatherings.

Action: RR to produce new poster that included initial results for use at conferences

13. Next meeting

The next meeting is set for 7th March 2006 by video conference.