Final Report:

Development and Marketing of an Online Community-Building Resource for Information Professionals Interested in Library-based CTSA Initiatives

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Submitted May 6, 2011 by:

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Project dates: May 1, 2010 - April 30, 2011
Executive Summary:

“Development and Marketing of an Online Community-Building Resource for Information Professionals Interested in Library-based CTSA Initiatives” was a project intended to develop and market an online resource intended to foster collaboration, idea-sharing, role investigation and networking among information workers with an interest in Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSAs). The primary investigator was Jerry Perry and the coordinator was Adelaide Fletcher. Dana Abbey of the MCR-RML and Lisa Traditi both provided support for the project as well. Between May 1, 2010 and April 30, 2010, the coordinator performed an environmental scan of existing and potential online collaboration platforms for CTSA information professionals; conducted a survey of potential users on AAHSL-L, MOLBIO-L, and MEDLIB-L; spoke informally and sought advice from known CTSA librarians including Kristi Holmes at Washington University in St. Louis and Michelle Tennant at University of Florida in Gainesville; set up an email discussion list; and presented the project at the MCMLA 2010 Annual Meeting in Wichita and submitted a poster to MLA 2011 in Minneapolis. The listserv, CTSA-LIB is hosted by the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus and is managed by Fletcher. There are currently 177 members who have posted a total of 18 messages on 8 threads in the first month. Members are from all over the United States and Canada, approximately half are at CTSA or CTSA affiliated institutions, and at least five are from institutions awarded a CTSA grant in 2010. The project ended April 30, 2011, but the listserv continues and Fletcher will continue to manage it until it ends or she no longer works for UC-AMC, whichever comes first. There are at least two similar efforts, one by the NIH to start a similar listserv, and one by MLA to start a Translational Sciences SIG. It may benefit the different entities to collaborate in the future, though the direction of that collaboration should be determined by its members.

1. Geographic region/number of counties:

The project’s official home is in Aurora, CO (Adams County), but it was carried out there, in Carbon County, WY and in Salt Lake County, UT. Participants of the CTSA listserv represent 62 counties, 34 states, and four Canadian provinces, see Table 1 for a list of institutions represented on the CTSA-LIB list.

2. Collaborations/Partnerships:

No official collaborations or partnerships were formed during the project other than the existing one between UC Health Sciences Library, and the NN/LM - MCRML. During the course of the project, the coordinator did form relationships with two people working on similar projects: Kristi Holmes of Washington University St. Louis, and Jonathan Eldridge of University of New Mexico. Holmes is working on a very similar project—a NIH sponsored listserv for librarians involved in CTSAs. That listserv was approved by the NIH the day before our listserv was formally announced. Eldridge is working to
establish a Special Interest Group within the Medical Library Association on Translational Sciences.

Both Holmes’ listserv and the MLA SIG will be open to anyone, and will not require any kind of formal membership within a larger organization to join. Because of overlapping goals and structures, it is possible that we will form a more formal partnership with both efforts as we move forward.

3. Training:

The project did not involve training.

4. Training sites:

N/A

5. Exhibits:


6. Resource materials:

   a. Promotion/Marketing:
      i. Emailed survey announcement (See SurveyAdvertisement.doc)
      ii. Emailed listserv announcement (See ListservInvitation.doc)

7. Web sites:

   CTSA-LIB signup and archives page: (See https://lists.ucdenver.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=CTSA-LIB)

8. Document delivery and reference services:

   N/A
9. Approaches and Interventions used:

a. Discussed project, sought advice and ideas from two well known CTSA Librarians: Kristi Holmes, Bioinformatics Specialist, Washington University, St. Louis, Bernard Becker Memorial Library (June 3, 2010); and Michele Tennant, Bioinformatics Librarian, University of Florida Health Sciences Center Libraries (July 13, 2010).
b. Completed an Environmental Scan (See EnviroScan.doc) of existing and potential communication methods and their functions for CTSA librarians.
c. Compiled a list of known CTSA librarians (from the list of CTSA awards at www.ctsaweb.org, the library websites of each institution were searched for liaison appointments) (See CTSALibrarians.xls). There are very few CTSA librarians explicitly identified as such, however the listserv shows there are many more than it would appear.
d. Sought and obtained exemption from review from the Colorado Multiple Institutional Review Board to conduct a survey of potential CTSA information professionals. (Application submitted Oct. 26, 2010, Approval received Feb. 9, 2011)
e. Issued a survey to determine the best platform for online communication for CTSA information professionals (Feb. 17-21, 68 responses, see CTSA_Librarian_Survey_Analysis.doc)
f. Created the listserv: CTSA-LIB@lists.ucdenver.edu and invited participants (April 11, 2011, 100 members in the first 24 hours, 177 members as of May 5, 2011).

10. Evaluation:

When creating the logic model to guide this project, we decided the best indicator of success would be that information professionals from at least nine of the established CTSA’s (38 institutions from 2006-2008), and one of the 2009 institutions participate in the online community. By the time the project was complete, ctsaweb.org no longer listed 2009 institutions, but lumped 46 2006-2009 institutions together with a separate list of 9 2010 institutions, so the evaluation criteria used instead is nine 2006-2009 institutions and one 2010 institution. By examining the email address domains of the member list and cross-referencing the member’s institution (if apparent) with the list of institutions on www.ctsaweb.org, we discovered that membership represents at least:

- 44 CTSA or CTSA Affiliates, including:
  - 5 “2010” awardees
- 46 Non-CTSA institutions, including:
  - 34 Academic
  - 6 Clinical
  - 3 Corporate
  - 2 Professional
  - 1 Government
Some of those identified as “Non-CTSA” may be in some way affiliated with a nearby CTSA. This listing was based simply on the institutions listed on www.ctsaweb.org. See the full list in Table 1. Our project exceeded the success indicator almost by a factor of five. (44 versus 9 established CTSAs, and 5 versus 1 new).

11. Problems or barriers encountered:

The one major barrier to this project was obtaining IRB approval of the survey. The IRB application for exempted review requires grant funded projects provide a contract number from the funding agency. That contract number was not received until October 21, 2011, nearly six months into a 12 month project. The IRB application was submitted on October 26, but was returned with a request for minor modifications Dec. 3. The application was resubmitted with the requested modifications Jan 7, 2011, and final approval was given Feb. 9, 2011.

12. Continuation plans:

Adelaide Fletcher has volunteered to continue the project as list administrator for CTSA-LIB until the list either is closed or Fletcher no longer works for UC-AMC, whichever comes first. Fletcher will also present the poster listed in section 6 on May 15th, 2011.

As for the project itself, Jerry Perry, Adelaide Fletcher and Kristi Holmes met by phone May 4 and discussed the possibility of joining CTSA-LIB with the NIH sponsored listserv for CTSA librarians. Also discussed were aligning efforts with Jon Eldredge and the MLA Translational Sciences SIG, to be formed May 15 at the 2011 MLA annual meeting. It was agreed it would be best to let the future direction of any collaborations be at the discretion of its members as a group.

13. Impact:

The perceived impact is that the NN/LM MCR and the UC-AMC Health Sciences Library have a higher profile in the CTSA information professional community, and the CTSA community at large. That perception is supported by the number of list members and the fact that both institutions were named in materials promoting it. All comments received by Fletcher have been generally positive and supportive of the project.

14. Recommendations for improvement:

Continue to communicate with Holmes and Eldridge and others at MLA Annual; seek collaboration with them so that the different efforts do not duplicate one another unnecessarily.
FOLLOW-UP Questions

1. Were the original project goals and objectives met? If not, why not?

The goal of the project was to develop and market an online resource intended to foster collaboration, idea-sharing, role investigation and networking among information workers with an interest in Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSAs). The project was linked to the CTSA goals of: improving the conduct of biomedical research; engaging communities in clinical research; and training the next generation of clinical and translational investigators. It is believed that the project goals were met and that the CTSA goals will be aided by the project in the future.

2. What significant lessons were learned which would be of interest or use to others conducting outreach projects? Which strategies were the most effective in implementing the project?

Learn the IRB process before applying and have all the needed documentation and training completed as early as possible.

This project used a coordinator that telecommutes to the Health Sciences Library from over 200 miles away. This was a successful strategy in that the project was a virtual one anyway and the coordinator was well supported by colleagues at the Health Sciences Library and the RML.

3. If you were to start all over again, what, if anything, would you change about your goals, project plans, etc.?

Reconsider applying for IRB exemption from review for a web based survey. It certainly was not necessary, but it was helpful for the library to learn about that aspect of research and gain insight into the lives of the researchers it supports. If the IRB approval is deemed necessary, have all documentation and training completed sooner.

4. What advice or recommendations would you give to anyone considering a similar outreach effort?

See #3, above.

5. Please describe plans for disseminating lessons learned and other information about the project, such as through a conference presentation or publication. In accordance with the NIH Public Access Policy (http://publicaccess.nih.gov), project directors are asked to submit voluntarily to the NIH manuscript submission (NIHMS) system (http://www.nihms.nih.gov) at PubMed Central (PMC) final manuscripts upon acceptance for publication.

   a. Poster presentation at MLA 2011, May 15, Minneapolis, MN (See BringingLibraryToCTSA.ppt)
   b. A paper has not been planned, but is possible.
Table 1: Some of the institutions known to be represented on CTSA-LIB

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MCMLA 2010 - BRINGING THE POWER OF INFORMATION TO THE PEOPLE

AN ONLINE COMMUNITY FOR LIBRARY BASED TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE INITIATIVES

Addie Fletcher, MLIS
Dana Abbey, MLS

THINK GLOBALLY

- Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA)
- Translational Science and Translational Informatics
- T1 and T2 levels of CTSA

Translational Science

Informatics

http://www.icts.uiowa.edu/content/what-translational-research


Translational Informatics

SO WHAT?

- Why should libraries care?
- What is the librarian’s role in all this?
  - Regulatory compliance
  - Scholarly publishing
  - Database design and searching
  - Health Information Literacy
  - Structured vocabulary/terminology/ontologies
  - Social Networking (Reference)
  - Infobuttons / EHR support
  - Literature searching
  - More?
**ACT LOCALLY**
- Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CCTSI)
  - Bioinformatics in the cycle of research
  - CCTSI Informatics Education Resources
  - Colorado Translational Informatics Community on Facebook
- Regional medical library support

**CREATING COMMUNITY**

**DESIDERATA of a CTSA Librarian Community**
- What does it look like?
- Who should use it? Who should be invited? Allowed?
- What are the functional requirements?
- What platform?

**WHEN YOU’RE READY FOR MORE**

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We want your ideas!
Bringing the Library to the CTSA: An Online Community for Library-based Translational Science Initiatives

Adelaide M. Fletcher, Dana Abbey, and Jerry Perry, (Primary Investigator)
This project has been funded in whole or in part with Federal funds from the Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, under Contract No. NO1-LM-6-3504 with the University of Utah. Contact: Adelaide.Fletcher@ucdenver.edu

Goal: Advance the role of library and information science professionals in Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) - related initiatives through the creation of a robust, freely available online community for interaction.

Results: Do Information Professionals want to network with each other about CTSA related efforts? 80% said Yes in our survey (67 responses).

On what platform?

Conclusions: An email listserv was opened April 11, 2011. There were 102 members as of April 12. To join CTSA-LIB, go to https://lists.ucdenver.edu.

Possible future goals: Create a companion wiki or blog to collect and organize CTSA-Library related information, knowledge, and best practices; work with MLA Translational Sciences SIG and/or other groups in other organizations.
Survey Advertisement to be sent via Email

Dear Colleagues,

If you have an interest in Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSAs) and how they are involved with libraries, please fill out this seven question survey. The University of Colorado Health Sciences Library is conducting a research project to explore setting up a community for librarians and information professionals interested in or involved with CTSAs, and your opinion is needed. Please forward the survey link to colleagues you think appropriate. We apologize if you have already received it. Your response is critical to the success of this project. No personal information will be collected in this survey. This survey is voluntary and will take approximately five minutes to complete.

<Link>

Thank you for your input!

Adelaide Fletcher, Primary Contact and Jerry Perry, Principal Investigator:

“Development and Marketing of an Online Community-Building Resource for Information Professionals Interested in Library-based CTSA Initiatives”

– A project of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Library, with funding from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, MidContinental Region under Contract No. 2567710.

Jerry Perry, Principal Investigator
Dana Abbey, Supporting Investigator
Adelaide Fletcher, Project Coordinator
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This instrument has been approved by the Colorado Multiple Institutional Review Board (COMIRB): Phone: 303-72401055.
ListServ Invitation

Dear Colleagues,

Join the discussion on Clinical and Translational Science and Libraries! A new listserv (CTSA-LIB@lists.ucdenver) has been created for librarians, information professionals, and anyone interested in how libraries support Clinical and Translational Science, specifically Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSAs).

One need not be a member of a CTSA funded institution or any professional organization to join. This is completely independent of institutional bounds because: (1) Those whose institutions are applying for CTSA funding need to know how to get their library involved, and (2) Those who support translational science come from a variety of professional organizations, such as MLA, AMIA, and SLA to name a few.

Why should you join this list?

- It is free and easy!
- It is a place to ask and answer questions about Clinical and Translational Science Awards, how they work, how libraries can get involved, and get funding!
- It is an easy way to find out who’s who at a specific institution, and who has expertise in a particular area of Translational Science.
- It is an informal place to share information, articles, and news about Clinical and Translational Science.
- It is a way to find out about other groups e.g., MLA’s emerging Translational Sciences SIG.
- It is a way to show stakeholders at your institution what kinds of value your library can add to the CTSA process.

This listserv was created as part of the NN/LM – MCR Project “Development and Marketing of an Online Community-Building Resource for Information Professionals Interested in Library-based CTSA Initiatives”, Primary Investigator, Jerry Perry, and Project Coordinator, Adelaide Fletcher, Health Sciences Library / Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute, University of Colorado – AMC

The listserv is hosted by the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, and is moderated by Adelaide Fletcher

To subscribe go to: https://lists.ucdenver.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=CTSA-LIB

Or send a request to Adelaide.Fletcher@ucdenver and she will add you.

Thanks!

Adelaide Fletcher & Jerry Perry

This project has been funded in whole or in part with Federal funds from the Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, under Contract No. NO1-LM-6-3504 with the University of Utah.

PS. If you would like to know more about why a listserv was chosen instead of another platform, please email Adelaide and she will send you an analysis of the “CTSAs and Libraries Survey”, issued in February via AAHSL-L, molbio-L, and MEDLIB-L.
Results and Analysis of the CTSA Librarian Survey

Issued as part of the MCR-RML project: “Development and Marketing of an Online Community-Building Resource for Information Professionals Interested in Library-based CTSA Initiatives”. This project has been funded in whole or in part with Federal funds from the Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, under Contract No. NO1-LM-6-3504 with the University of Utah.

Adelaide Fletcher, Project Coordinator, March 10, 2011

Executive Summary:

The CTSA Librarian/Information Professional (henceforth “IP”) survey was very successful, gathering input from 68 people – far more than were expected. Results show an overwhelming desire among CTSA IPs and potential CTSA IPs to network with one another. The survey indicates users prefer to network via an email listserv, although there are several networking demands (such as a structured, collaborative body of information) that a listserv won’t answer. A listserv would, however, be the perfect place to discuss developing static but editable platform, such as a wiki or a blog, which users can consult for factual information.

Slightly more users indicated they prefer a network to be independent of professional organizations. Those who did feel an organization should “own” the group didn’t agree on which one. It is probably best to start off with an independent platform that could, eventually, be adopted by MLA, AMIA, or SLA, if users feel it necessary to do so. Responders felt that the platform should be open to anyone to join and generally open to the public to view, but some content should be reserved for members only.

Results:

Who took the survey:

The survey was distributed via the AAHSL Director’s list, MLA’s Molecular Biology SIG list, and MEDLIB-L, in that order. 67 people took the survey, mostly from the AAHSL dissemination. 95% (64) completed it. Not all questions were required and the survey could have been answered by more than one person at a given institution, so answers cannot be construed to mean anything about the institutions themselves, just the IPs who answered the questions.

A simple majority (44.8%, n30) are unofficially affiliated with their institution’s CTSA. The second largest group (31.3%, n21) is affiliated officially, meaning they were named in the grant. We did not ask whether that means they get funding from a CTSA grant, or just that they are an officially recognized part of the institution. Nine responded that they are not involved at all. To better understand this group, we asked if they are working independently, outside of a library, and none are, but there may be individuals who fit this category but did not receive the survey because of the way it was distributed. Those who are not involved with a CTSA in any way could either be in an institution that doesn’t have or isn’t applying for a CTSA, or they may be left out of the process entirely. Seven responded that they fit into an “other” category. After
examining the comments, six of them are affiliated (with an existing CTSA or with an institution that is applying for a grant). In some of those cases, respondents may have answered “other” because their library does not or will not receive funds from the CTSA. The one “other” who was not affiliated with the CTSA application did try to keep current with his or her institution’s application process.

If re-code the “other” answers, one would go into the “unaffiliated” category and six would go into the “affiliated” category, bringing those totals from 30 and 21 to 31 and 27, respectively, or 46% unaffiliated and 40% affiliated. Either way, 57 of 67 respondents are in some way affiliated with their institution’s CTSA, before, during, or after the funding process.

**Desire to network:**

Participants of the survey overwhelmingly desire to network with other IPs who are concerned with CTSA. 80.3% or 53 respondents said they do want to network with other CTSA IPs, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t already doing so. Twelve of those who want to network already are, formally (3), or informally (8), and 12 said they know someone else who might be interested. Curiously, nobody answered that they don’t want to network, but of the 14 who didn’t answer “yes”, six said they “don’t know right now”, and four said that someone else they know might want to. Of those who did not say “yes”, three are already networking informally, and one said he/she is already networking formally, but commented “My personal involvement is oversight rather than hands-on; I can gather most of the info and networking I need from the AAHSL listserv.”

Assuming no overlap, if we add those who are interested in networking to the total who said they knew someone else who might, we have as many as 69 potential participants in a CTSA librarian/IP network.

**Platform preference:**

Respondents were given a list of possible platforms to choose from and were instructed to check boxes for the ones they would want to use. There is considerable overlap since participants were allowed to check as many as they wanted. 58.5% (n39) indicated they would use an email listserv, but 38.8% (n26) said it doesn’t matter. A close third was a blog (34.3%, n23), followed by a wiki (19.4%, n13). Less popular are a file sharing group such as Google Groups (17.9%, n12), a Facebook page or group (13.4%, n9), an online journal club (11.9%, n8), another social network (4.5%, n3), or “something else” (6%, n4). We asked that those who chose another social network (besides Facebook), an online journal club, a file sharing group, or “something else” to elaborate in comments. Eleven comments emphasized the importance of file sharing (3), the need for an in-person component (3), and the incompatibility with social networks at one person’s institution. Two specific suggestions were a *Diigo* group for sharing discoveries, and a collaborative suite of tools, such as *Confluence*.

Simply looking at the answers to this question, one could conclude that 98% (the email listserv plus those who don’t care), would be satisfied with an email listserv, but the next question forced the respondents to select their favorite of all the choices. An email discussion list was still the favorite, with 42.6% (n23). The second choice was a blog (22.2%), followed by a wiki (13%). Next we asked respondents to list what they would do on such a network, which may better determine what platform is most suitable.
Functional preferences:

While no majority was “very likely” to do anything, if we add the “likely” and “very likely” numbers together, a list of criteria begins to form:

Users would:

- Discuss CTSA issues with and post questions for other Info Pros (asynchronously): 92.3%
- Post information about what their CTSA is doing (with or without them): 63.1%
- Post information about what they are doing with their CTSA: 78.5%
- Post links to articles they think others would like: 75.4%
- Post articles or other documents they and their colleagues have created: 64.6%
- Show stakeholders at their institution how other libraries are collaborating with their CTSA’s: 83.3%
- Find out who’s who at a particular CTSA or library: 81.8%
- Just lurk and learn about CTSAs and libraries: 66.6%
- Look for learning tools they can share with scientists at their institution: 92.2%

Users would be less likely to:

- Help maintain an encyclopedia-type page about CTSAs for newbies: only 33.3% were likely or very likely to do so.
- Chat informally online (synchronously) with other CTSA Info Pros: only 42.9% are likely or very likely to do so.

Openness:

In terms of openness, respondents felt a platform should be:

- Semi-private: 53.1% (n34) (allowing non-members to view most content, but only members to access certain content, like discussions and files).
- Completely open to all: 32.8% (n21)
- Closed to anyone except members: 10.9% (n7)

Organizational alignment:

Respondents have mixed feelings about whether or not the platform should be aligned with any particular organization:

- 15.6% (n10) feel it should be freestanding, or “Affiliated with relevant organizations as members see fit, but controlled only by members of the group”.
- 10.9% (n7) feel it should be officially aligned and/or controlled by an organization such as MLA, SLA, or AMIA, but the comments show little agreement on which:
  - AAHSL (1)
Relevant comments:
- “No do not align PLEASE! We will get nothing done”
- “I would love to see a librarian section of AMIA I would definitely join AMIA and that section if it existed.”
- “I would like to here what colleagues see as advantages and disadvantages with the community ideas in question 6.”
- “I wouldn't align this to an organization.”
- “can often serve as conduit into other relevant groups”
- “This would be ideal since it would give more credibility - AMIA might be best in that respect.”
- “Establish a MLA section or SIG or join CTSAs”

Summary:

In sum, three quarters or more users agree, it is important that this platform:

- Allow asynchronous discussion.
- Help users find learning tools to share with scientists at their institution.
- Give users information about how other libraries are collaborating with their CTSAs so they can show that information to stakeholders.
- Contain some sort of directory of who’s who at a particular institution.
- Allow users to post information about what they are doing with their CTSA.
- Allow users to post links to articles they think others might like.

It is desirable, but not critical that this platform:

- Allow users to share information about what their CTSA is doing (with or without them)
- Allow users to share articles and other documents they have created
- Allow users to lurk and learn about CTSAs and libraries

It is not necessary that a platform:

- Contain an encyclopedia-like article on CTSAs
- Allow chat

Some comments worth noting:

- “Our institution has not been awarded a CTSA grant, but I would like to keep current with library involvement with their CTSA's to help with future grant applications.”
- “extremely interested”
- “We are just getting started with our CTSA grant and would value collaboration with other institutions. We are collaborating locally with our local partner institutions.”
“One concern I have here is the possible overlap with early efforts started at U XXXXXXX. I advise contacting XXXXXX to see where his efforts are going re: CTSA librarians.”

“I’d love to learn more about how librarians can support translational research, whether as part of a CTSA or not.”

“My institution hasn’t gotten the grant yet. 5th time the charm? We have a very active CTS education program PHD and MA emphsizing research methods and informatics. I am involved in the program and Librarians are written into the grant proposal. I think this would be a useful group.”

“I would like to be more actively involved w/my institution's CTSA, but it's not really working out. They are aware of our services and contact us when needed, have meetings, but I think there's SO much more the library could do for them and I don't know how to make that clear.”

“I'm not quite sure how open or closed I would want this to be. Part of me is thinking about a twitter group, but that may also be more public than people would like. So mostly I don't know what I want :)--but something more coherent than what currently exists would be great.”

“I and my institution will not participate in this if this is a facebook, goggle entity or similar. They are not private and this must be a private, secure, independent environment where content is not captured.”

“I think CTSA is TOO narrow and is just the most recent hot craze to be replaced in the future by something equally hot. I would rather have a group that focuses on research support in a broad sense -- CTSA is too limiting -- I am from a CTSA institution and there is far more than just CTSA that concerns our library in the research world”

“My institution has not achieved CTSA but is working toward it. I am especially interested in the Community Engagement Research Resources.”

“Some documents might not have permission from their institutional CTSA reps to share openly.”

“Please share thoughts or comments with us: - Open-Ended Response

Discussion:

Listservs:

There are hundreds of free collaboration tools available on the web. New ones appear and disappear each day. Some try to include as many functions as possible, while others focus on one aspect of collaboration, such as social bookmarking. Nonetheless, it appears an email listserv is most preferable to this group, though the reasons are not clear. It could be that librarians are simply used to communicating via a time tested technology and are not eager to go to another new venue, especially if it has a learning curve and a possibility of going under. Listservs require very little effort, but they have many limitations. It is not an ideal place for a body of knowledge to be collected for users to consult when in need of a certain piece of information. One can certainly query the list for an answer to a specific question, but it is also easy to see the need for a place to “read up” before asking colleagues for help. As regards sharing documents, tools, tips, etc., a listserv makes a poor house for a collection. Organization and browsing are nearly impossible because one is required to search the list archives – if that is even possible.
Furthermore, non-members of the list are unlikely to have access to such an archive, or find it easy to navigate if they do have access. That being said, a listserv has a low barrier of entry. Another benefit is that a listserv eliminates the need for the user to visit a certain page periodically to check for updates. All new posts come to them. It should be noted blogs and wikis have ways around this too, either through RSS feeds, or automatic email alerts.

**Face to Face component:**

Responses indicated a desire for an in-person component; the kind that is typically served by professional organization meetings. It doesn’t seem likely that this platform will evolve into its own organization with face to face meetings, but members who share an affiliation could at least use the platform to set up a rendezvous at an annual meeting of a professional organization. One possible way for users to feel more connected to each other is to set up an occasional web meeting that anyone with a phone and/or video connection can join.

**Social networks:**

Although social networking among colleagues is a tacit goal of this community, it will not be served well by an existing social networking site, such as Facebook. The primary reason is that such sites are blocked by many hospitals and some academic institutions.

**Blogs and wikis:**

A blog is preferred over a wiki page, which is surprising, since a CTSA Librarian blog was started in 2008 and appears to have been abandoned after a few months (<http://ctsa-lib.blogspot.com/>). One can only speculate why it fizzled. A blog, like a listserv, is organized chronologically, though tagging facilitates searching and browsing. Much of the information desired by respondents is going to be arduous to find and assemble from a listserv. It may be better to consider a hybrid listserv/wiki or listserv/blog model. This method will allow users to communicate however casually they wish on the list, but when something is worth noting for posterity, it can find a logical home on a blog or wiki.

**Diigo, Confluence:**

Two platforms mentioned in comments are Diigo and Confluence. We were unable to identify Confluence through a web search, possibly because the word is so common in so many contexts. Diigo is a neat, all-in-one social bookmarking platform that has many exciting features, such as highlights, sticky notes, and document storage. It just doesn’t facilitate the day-to-day communication that will make this community stick.

**Other CTSA networking efforts:**

As this project has evolved, so have other networks that are officially recognized by the CTSA consortium. One is VIVO, an open source ontology framework that organizes data about scientists and helps them identify one another using a front end such as Harvard Profiles. Unfortunately, these networks don’t appear to be open to non-CTSA affiliates at this time, but
may be later. Another network appeared at the time of writing which seems to be sort of a meta-network for discovering research partners. It is currently called DIRECT, but that may change as there is some confusion with another project by the same name. It is open to all, including institutions that do not have a CTSA. It does not require individuals to sign up as it searches information that is already there, but participation is likely initiated at the institutional level. A search for “librarian” finds dozens of hits, sometimes from one institution – indicating the platform crawls institutional websites for information about people, in this case picking up all librarians at a given institution.

**Credibility:**

One respondent noted that organizational alignment would lend credibility to this community. It will help this project’s credibility to note whenever possible that it is supported both by the MCR-RML and the UC-AMC Health Sciences Library, which is affiliated with the CCTSI. An MLA Translational Sciences SIG is in the early stages of formation at the time of writing. There is potential for that SIG to adopt and/or be facilitated by this listserv. The purposes of both projects are very similar and one can benefit greatly from the other. Similar efforts at AMIA, SLA could be afoot. An independent listserv can serve as a conduit between like minded individuals from all three organizations.

**Conclusions:**

It’s clear that there is a desire, if not need, for cohesion between a currently amorphous class of librarians and information professionals who serve, or want to serve Clinical and Translational Science Award institutions. A listserv seems to be the place to start. It could either be owned by the UC-AMC Health Sciences Library or the RML. Because the Health Sciences Library is already connected with a CTSA institution, the Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute, it would be better recognized by other CTSA librarians. Jeff Kuntzman and Steve Weaver at UC-AMC have indicated it will be easy to set up a listserv that Adelaide Fletcher could manage. After starting such a listserv and collecting members, the members themselves can discuss forming a wiki or blog if they feel it is merited. The basic need to communicate will be served by a listserv and future needs such as an organized collection of relevant knowledge and best practices can be addressed with additional tools as the fledgling community sees fit. If and when the listserv ceases to be useful to its members, it can be decommissioned or adopted by an organization.