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D-WP9-2a, Create and administer the restricted- and open- access websites, maintain development
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PU	Public	PU
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
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Report on the Central Network Resource, D-WP9-3a

(incorporating D-WP9-1a, Inventory of key electronic links, key contributors, key stakeholders and needs assessment, options; and D-WP9-2a, Create and administer the restricted- and open- access websites, maintain development)

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Summary

A needs assessment for the web-based communications platform was made by discussions with members of the FMD and CSF subgroups. A requirement specification was developed. Subcontracts for stakeholder representative and website development were written, agreed and issued. A phased implementation was effected and the website was launched in June (<http://www.fmd-and-csf-action.org>) administered by the WP leader. The framework to foster good communications within the project and with other stakeholders has been made. Directions for further development are being discussed.

A brief overview of the website follows:

General: Home Page – portal for ‘Open’ and ‘Restricted’ areas; Language – choice for navigation tabs; News; Alerts; Upcoming events; Contact information; Disclaimer; Resources – URLs of sites that have information on FMD and CSF; Related Projects – information on other projects; Search Box – searches entire site (permission sensitive); External News – automatically polls news providers and screens using keywords;

Open site: About the project – much of the technical annex; introduction, better access to project partners, some disease information and electronic links to further information, workplans and expected deliverables; Fora – with FMD and CSF discussion areas.

Restricted site– not accessible from the open site: Partners News; Partners forum; Partners Calendar; Contacts; Workspaces for all the WPs; Documents; Resources with key electronic links and Reports for the EC.

Introduction

A central network resource is essential for a coordination action involving large numbers of partners and project associates scattered around the world. In the first instance, all administrative information related to the CA, on meetings, progress, reports, etc can be made available to the many participants. Therefore the key players in this WP will liaise very

closely with the CA secretariat, the two subgroup coordinators, and the other WP leaders. Once established for the CA, the site can be expanded to hold a wide variety of information that is collected by reference/research laboratories, such as disease occurrence reports, diagnostic protocols, strain characterisation information, stocks of reagents, etc. Presently such information is either not generally available or is restricted to the web sites of each of the many partners and project associates.

Less obvious, is the need for a reliable source of unbiased, easy to access, accurate and up-to-date information to be made readily available to the wide stakeholder community involved in all aspects of the livestock industry and rural environment, whose involvement and cooperation is essential to aid prevention, preparedness and control of an outbreak. Livestock keepers must have confidence that all necessary measures are being taken to prevent entry of disease, and that regulations related to biosecurity, movement control, surveillance and vaccination/slaughter are necessary and proportionate, and take account of how differing livestock management systems affect spread of the disease, in order to gain their active compliance with regulations. Livestock keepers, together with their local veterinary practitioners, are in the front line of identifying and reporting disease and their trust and cooperation is crucial to ensure they are willing to regularly inspect their animals and notify any suspicious symptoms.

Approach

Mindful of the objectives: to foster effective information exchange between partners on technical and administrative CA-related FMD and CSF activities (restricted website), and to impart CA related information to the wider scientific community and to other stakeholders with an interest in the control of FMD and CSF (open-access website), a needs assessment for the web-based communications platform was made. Advantage was taken of the EUFMD meeting, Crete, where most of the FMD sub-group members were present to seek opinions and opinions from the CSF sub-group were taken by phone. Documents that defined the requirements for the website including a 2-phased implementation and contracts for the subcontractors for website construction and stakeholder representative were prepared. Phase 1 of website construction was mainly concerned with the open site accessible to the public and contained project information, news and discussion fora that required registration before participation. Phase 2 was concerned with the partners' area and was restricted.

Subcontractors to deal with stakeholder involvement and website construction were engaged. Computing hardware and software were sourced and purchased. Textual and visual content was prepared and uploaded to the site by the WP leader, the site tested for function and eventual launch before or by June 2005.

Results

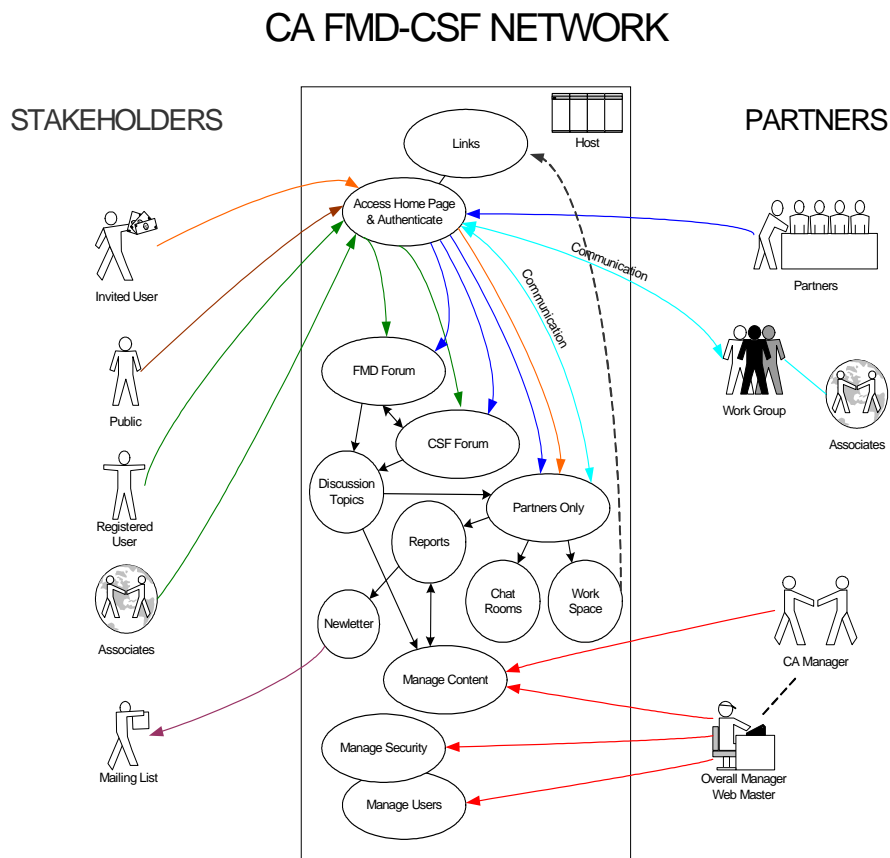
A complex network of interactions emerged from the consultations and the project document (Figure 1) and was the basis for the detailed requirements document for the website (<http://www.fmd-and-csf-action.org/partners/wp9/private/>).

Mary Marshall, a director of Animal Health Resources was sub-contracted to be the Stakeholder representative. Mary is active in compiling scientific information for best control

measures, and has established communication with an international network of leading FMD experts. She is a member of DEFRA's FMD stakeholders group and their Veterinary Surveillance Strategy's Business Assurance Group; the Foreign and Emerging Diseases Committee of the United States Animal Health Association; the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians; and is a ProMED-mail Rapporteur.

Paul-Michael Agapow of VieDigitale, was sub-contracted to construct the framework and establish the functions of the website. He is a laboratory scientist who has moved into computational biology, his interests include evolution and biocomplexity. He has worked and consulted in IT and academia in the UK and Australia.

Figure 1



The website has been constructed from widely used open sourced software (Zope, Plone) that has been rigorously tested (and thus has quality assurance). It has many of the normal functions expected from a website and may be extended with a variety of third party products. Alternatively, functions may be added to it with new specifically produced programmes. A schematic representation of the website is in Figure 2. Phase 1 and 2 of the implementation programme were conducted consecutively. All of the basic functions and some of the advanced functions envisaged in the technical annex have been implemented.

Briefly, the Home page (see Figure 3) is the portal to the 'Open' site. No log-in is necessary to browse the site that has information about the project and partners. Some of the

functions and products that make functions available to the public are listed here with brief descriptions.

- About the Project contains descriptions in a simple list of files. Links to these are also seen towards the end of the first display screen. The partners' logos including that for the EC are buttons that link to partners' own sites.
- News: two types of news are displayed, one that is entered by the site manager into a list. The other is handled by ListingPages, a product which contains tools for letting site administrator build pages containing listings of items, and we use it to gather and list news with appropriate keywords pertaining to FMD and CSF.
- Alerts is also run similarly but entered by the site manager.
- CMFBoard manages the Forum that is divided into sections for FMD and CSF after consultation with the stakeholder representative. Registered members and project partners may post discussion topics and participate in the discussions.
- PloneLanguageTool allows the setting of the available languages in the site, select various fallback mechanisms, and control the use of flags for language selection and translations.
- Plone Keyword Manager is a quite simple solution to a major problem in the real world use of Plone: If you can't work with restricted vocabularies, your keyword-vocabulary will get duplicate entries very quickly - depending on your authors' interpretation of existing keywords.
- PloneSearchBox is a component for Plone. It allows users to access quickly to a search tool. The Search can be done on the entire site, the current section of the site, or directly in search engine like google.
- CMFUserTrackTool lists the currently concurrent authenticated users that are logged into the portal.

Upon log-in partners that have permission may enter the Partners' Area, which is otherwise hidden. Some of the features are:

- Several folders provide space for each WP and the EC and each space is permission sensitive. Each folder has two subfolders that provide private and public (other partners only) space where content such as reports etc. may be stored.
- On log-in a messages pane appears on the screen that allows instant messaging and is managed by PloneChat - an interactive discussion tool for Zope/CMF/Plone.
- Partners News is only for partners – news from this area will appear on partners' screens only.
- Partners Forum may be used for internal discussions.
- Partners Calendar is managed by CalendarX that is a customizable, open source metacalendar application written for the Plone content management system on top of Zope and Python. It has all the important dates (deliverables, meetings, etc.) installed.
- Contacts' information is managed by mxmContacts is a Plone product for managing contacts. Both contacts as individuals and organizations are entered.
- Documents, contains templates and reports.
- Resources has a list of URLs categorised to reflect partners needs such as contingency plans, veterinary surveillance etc.

Figure 2 Schematic representation of the website

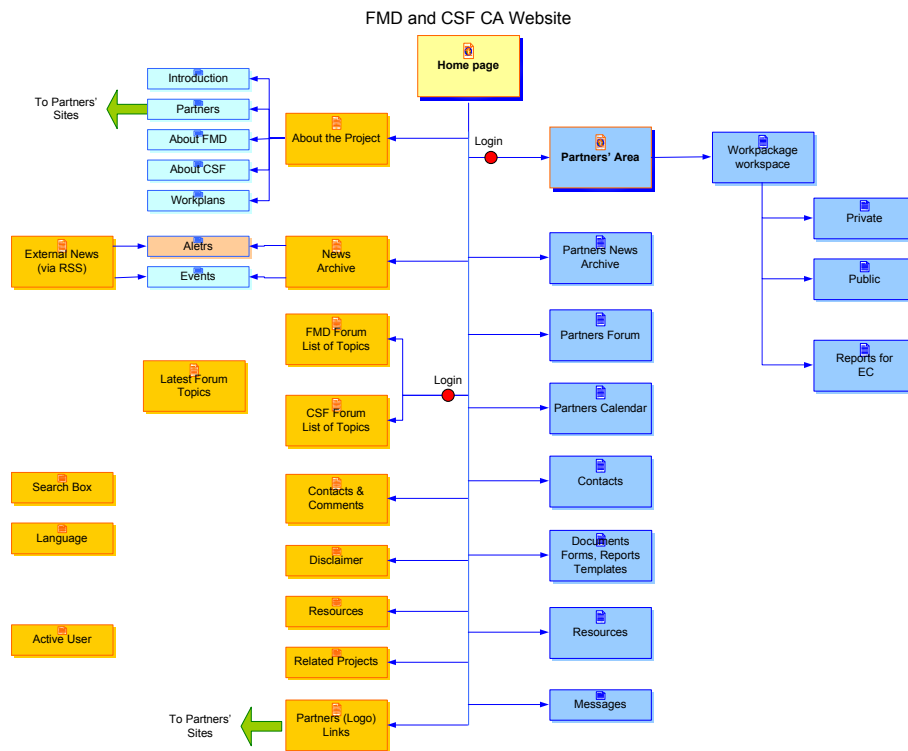
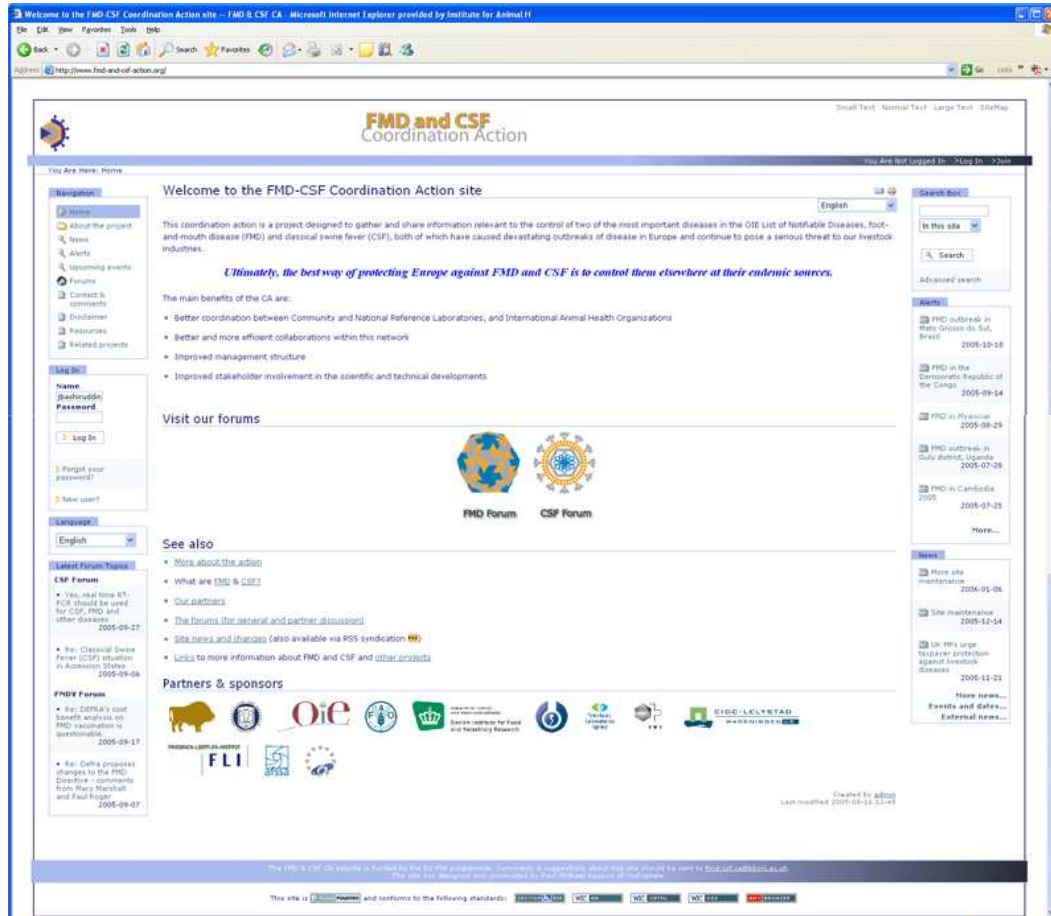


Figure 3 Copy of the Home page for the FMD-CSF CA website



Discussion and Conclusions

A platform for use by partners and other interested parties has been provided, to enable: 1) effective, secure technical and administrative information exchange; 2) dissemination of information related to the CA to the wider scientific and general stakeholder community and 3) feedback mechanisms from the wider scientific and general stakeholder community so that concerns and issues can be identified and then considered by the CA network.

A web based system that has open and restricted areas has been created and administered (as required by D-WP9-2a) and development is ongoing. Its content include electronic links to partners, institutions concerned with disease management, stakeholders and contributors (as required by D-WP9-1a) and further efforts are being made to enhance these lists. Thus all the programmed milestones and deliverables for the first reporting period have been achieved.