Information Technology Bulletin
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Governor's Office of Administration/Office for Information Technology

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ITB Title:	**Collaboration Technology Standards**	
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Discipline:	**Electronic Collaboration**	
Technology Area:	**Online Meetings and Group Site Collaboration Technologies**	
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10/25/2010	**ITB Refresh**	

Abstract

The purpose of this Information Technology Bulletin (ITB) is to establish enterprise-wide standards and provide guidance for the use of Enterprise Collaboration technology. Because agencies within the commonwealth work independently of each other, the risk of duplicate effort is high. Projects that involve participants from disparate off-site locations are hampered by logistical barriers that "cut off" team members. This can potentially result in costly mistakes, rework, project delays, and poor decisions based on incomplete information. The challenges associated with managing such projects are numerous. These challenges intensify when projects involve business partners, contractors, and citizen groups outside the enterprise.

A number of technology solutions are available on the market today to address these challenges. These solutions reduce logistical expenses, facilitate document and file sharing, and bring project members and other stakeholders together across geographic boundaries through real time online meetings. Additionally, they can streamline project management by more precisely linking the right people together to achieve new levels of efficiency, productivity, and responsiveness.

Collaboration Technology

Standards for the following three types of Collaboration Technology are defined in this ITB:

- **Portal/Team Site Collaboration Technology** – A document/application repository and workspace to facilitate file sharing, online discussions, project task management and knowledge management, which complement existing project and Enterprise Document Management System (EDMS) standards.

- **Real Time Web Conferencing Collaboration Technology** – A Web-based solution that allows team members from disparate locations to virtually engage in live discussions, white boarding, and real time sharing of documents and applications.

- **Virtual communities -** Participation in other Internet technologies such as online communities, online chat, newsgroups, blogs, RSS feeds, and wikis. Individuals who participate in a virtual community typically share a common interest.

General

This ITB applies to all departments, boards, commissions and councils under the governor's jurisdiction. Agencies not under the governor's jurisdiction are strongly encouraged to follow this policy.

Legal and business issues in the areas of document management and project management exist that are to be considered when procuring, implementing and using collaboration software tools. Document management issues generally include records retention policies and practices. Project management issues generally pertain to the need to follow the Enterprise Project Management Methodology when working on IT projects and the need to integrate, when appropriate, various software tools in the areas of collaboration, Project Management Domain, Information Domain, EDMS, and project management during the course of a project. Separate domain teams have discussed, or are discussing, the legal and business requirements surrounding these subject areas. Refer to the Office for Information Technology (OIT) Information Technology Bulletins (ITB) Web site for information regarding these considerations or contact the appropriate OIT subject matter expert.

Policy

The main objective of this ITB is to provide guidance and direction to agencies that have a need to implement new collaboration technology.

All new projects integrating collaboration technology are required to use the standards and best practices defined by this document.

Agencies that are developing Web applications are required to submit $(CA)^2$ requests to OA/OIT for review. This review consists of policy compliance assessments and risk assessments, which include source code analysis, host-based intrusion scans, and Web application risk assessments. Refer to *ITB-SEC005 Commonwealth Application Certification and Accreditation*

All collaboration-related IT projects are subject to review prior to their inception for compliance with this standard through the Community of Practice (CoP) Review and/or the Procurement Review Processes.

Portal/Team Site Collaboration

The commonwealth's collaboration solution provides portal and team site collaboration tools that tightly integrate with enterprise systems and applications that employees use every day, such as Microsoft Office, Microsoft Outlook, and Active Directory. The collaboration portion of the commonwealth's portal supports collaboration from the Web, the desktop, applications and projects. This technology provides the ability to connect every employee, citizen, and business partner both inside and outside the commonwealth. Collaborative tools are entrenched directly in the existing work environment. This allows for more immediate and efficient access to the services, which improves the user experience and encourages greater usage. The end result is improved productivity.

Portal/Team Site Collaboration supports the following business requirements:

- Basic Document Management**:** Provides a searchable forum for sharing documents over the Web, support for Web editing, version tracking, discussion threads, e-mail notifications and the ability to create and save new Microsoft Office documents by project. Check in and checkout features support version control, but online editing within the collaboration module allows users to edit documents directly from Microsoft Office without downloading a local copy. To share information with the

enterprise, portal collaboration tools allow documents to be published to the portal's knowledge directory.

Note: *A portal or team site collaboration tool is required to help manage documents on its own, or it can complement the more robust functionality of an EDMS as defined by the Information Domain Team. Refer to ITB Policies & Standards*

- Discussions: Enables searchable discussion threads, with support for moderated discussions, e-mail alerts for project participants, and the ability to export discussions as files within the project.

- Basic Project Management: Provide ability for users to create, assign tasks with dependencies, and due dates. Project managers can import task lists with multiple dependencies and task owners from other project management applications. The collaboration module can automatically map project resources and surface tasks in shared calendars to each project member, and provides an automated notification system.

  Note: *A portal or team site collaboration tool is to help manage projects on its own, or it can complement the more robust functionality of a separate project management software tool as defined by the Project Management Domain Team. Refer to ITB Policies & Standards*

- Community Calendar: Provide group views of events, tasks and milestones from selected projects. A personal calendar surfaces events, tasks and milestones, with the ability to synchronize with exchange calendars enabling users to only reference a single calendar for personal and project schedules.

- Notifications: Provide automatic notification (via e-mail) to project members for key-defined events such as changes to applicable projects, task assignments, and task completion.

- Personal Project Support: Provide the ability to store personal documents, tasks and notes in a secure area online with the ability to share documents with others at any time.

Real Time Web Conferencing Collaboration

Real Time Web conferencing collaboration technologies mimic real meetings or classes with audio interaction among participants and presenters. Real Time Web conferencing has evolved into a mature technology and is accepted as a viable alternative to travel. The technology is now primarily self-serve with no operator services required. The application sharing, presentation and data collaboration features possible with Web conferencing have made the Web a virtual conference room readily available at any desktop, laptop or high-resolution personal digital assistant (PDA).

Real Time Web conferencing has the following features**:**

- View Presentations: The ability for all participants to view a presentation over the Internet.

- Video: The presenter and other collaborators have the ability to present themselves during the conference. This feature requires that a camera is to be connected to each participant's personal computer.

- Application/Document Sharing: The ability to create and share new documents in their native application (MS Word, Excel, and Acrobat) and to allow participants to view and edit them online during the real time sessions within the collaboration module. Participants may edit the documents directly without downloading a local copy of the native application.

- Archiving: The ability to capture and store a meeting for future use. Implementation ranges from simple text archives of chat to full record and playback functions of all interactions from speech and whiteboard interaction, and to slide shows with annotation.

- Moderated Meetings: Mechanisms are available to allow the presenter to control participation. The presenter is able to mute a participant's audio, pass control of the interface, and to set up private discussions. Some tools allow participants to type in questions or comments privately to the presenter or other participants while the presenter is speaking.

- Audio: Conference bridge information can be included in the conference as a potentially cost-saving alternative to the integrated audio provided by the solution.

- Microsoft Outlook Integration: Session invitees are selected directly from the presenter's Outlook interface. Meetings, events and task assignments are then sent automatically to each collaborator's Outlook calendar.

- Reporting: Meeting results, including attendance information, polls, poll results and test questions, are available for the presenter to access. These reports are exportable to desktop and server applications such as Microsoft Excel, Access, and SQL.

- Whiteboarding: The whiteboard is a shared virtual workspace on which all collaborators can brainstorm, illustrate ideas, draw pictures, build agendas, update graphical information, and annotate images or slides. All collaborators can view all activity on the whiteboard simultaneously.

Virtual Communities
The use of virtual communities such as online communities, online chat, news groups, blogs, RSS feeds, and wikis, is bound by the commonwealth's Management Directive (MD) 205.34 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Commonwealth agencies may establish virtual communities for valid business reasons. Agencies desiring to establish an external facing virtual community are to obtain approval for the establishment of the community through:

- the procurement review process
- the establishment of appropriate controls to ensure the virtual community is in compliance with Management Directive 205.34
- and the review through the (CA) [2] process, SEC005

Commonwealth employees are not to represent personal views on any virtual community as an official commonwealth position.

Refresh Schedule:
All standards identified in this ITB are subject to periodic review and possible revision, or upon request by the Enterprise Architecture Standards Committee (EASC).

Exemption from This Policy:

In the event an agency chooses to seek an exemption, for reasons such as the need to comply with requirements for a federally mandated system, a request for waiver may be submitted via the Community of Practice Procurement and Architectural Review (COPPAR) process. Requests are to be entered into the COPPAR Tool located at WWW.COPPAR.STATE.PA.US. Agency CIO approval is required. Contact your agency CoP Planner for further details or assistance.

Questions:

Questions regarding this policy are to be directed to ra-oaitb@state.pa.us.

Policy Supplements:

STD-APP004A: Collaboration Technology Portal-Team Site Product Standards
STD-APP004B: Real Time Web Conferencing Collaboration Standards

References:

ITB Policies & Standards
ITB-EPM003: IT Procurement Review Process
Management Directive 205.34: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy
ITB-SEC005: Commonwealth Application Certification and Accreditation