Stakeholder Liaison Report

FAIMS Deliverable #10

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During the first three months of 2013, the FAIMS project conducted a significant outreach effort. Having completed our Stocktaking workshop and elaboration phase we begun taking our first prototypes to our stakeholders and soliciting feedback. This report summarizes the principal outreach activities we undertook, lessons we learnt and future plans we made on basis of the stakeholder feedback.

# Principal Outreach Activities:

Our principal (sustained) outreach activities included:

## FAIMS direct email:

All major events were announced using a contact list established through personal contacts and a direct email from a FAIMS team member, usually Adela. We used direct email sparingly, but did announce events such as:

* the end of elaboration;
* acceptance of the revision of the project in the aftermath of elaboration;
* intention to apply for 2014 LIEF grant; and
* the launch of our first video.

Use of mass direct email provided the most consistent response from FAIMS stakeholders. Email has proven extremely effective and will remain the principal means of making major announcements. We also communicate with our Steering Committee using direct email.

## FAIMS Blog

The FAIMS Blog serves as our primary web presence at<http://fedarch.org/>. It is updated once weekly at minimum, with Adela, Brian and Penny actively posting. Typical subjects included:

* announcements of newly developed features,
* FAIMS activities, both social, managerial and development-related,
* technical aspects,
* usecases,
* planned events, and
* general updates.

While we have only received one comment on the blog itself, we believe it is an effective means of communication. Our analytics indicate that, from the period of 1 July 2012 to 6 April 2013, we’ve had 1139 unique visitors to the site, with an average of 3 pages viewed per visit. A significant number of visits were direct, with a majority of the non-frontpage viewers using the time-tracking survey (ie members of the FAIMS community logging their in-kind contributions). Our “about” page is the third most visited destination on the site. It is quite clear that we can improve our web presence and communications presence, but we are not sure that such an improvement would be worth the time spent on it.

We have had direct feedback from NeCTAR managers and external organisations (eg ARCHES project and Getty Foundation) that our outreach strategy is effective and we have been congratulated on the clarity and frequency of updates communicated via the blog. We will continue to use the blog for routine updates, because it is less intrusive than emails to the entire community.

## Product videos:

Located at:<http://www.youtube.com/user/FAIMSProject>

Beginning in February core functionality of prototypes was demonstrated in videos that included screen captions and narration, walking viewers through the capability of the device. Other videos consisted of conversation between Adela and Brian, discussing technical decisions and directions of the mobile development. We established the FAIMS YouTube channel and linked it to the blog, where we announced the creation.

The first video was also promoted by group email to the entire FAIMS community. The second video was advertised only on the blog. The first video, a general overview, elicited a much greater response thanks to email promotion, and the second video generated no feedback at all, demonstrating the effectiveness of email promotion and relative lack of attention to the blog.

The strong response to the first video, created spontaneously as a drop of the hat decision, has inspired and encouraged us to commit to the production of a series of videos. The lack of response to the second video has convinced us that if we go into the effort of creating video, we must promote it via email.

The channel has received 156 views with a total of 363 minutes being viewed. The first video accounts for 127 of those views, with a meagre view time of 2:39 of a 5 minute video. The second video has 19 views, but the average view time is the length of the video.

## Google groups:

A dedicated google group venue at groups.fedarch.org were established for us to communicate with subsets of our stakeholder community and for us and our steering committee to communicate with one another.

Unfortunately, our stakeholders, with the exception of the Steering Committee, have made little use of the Google Groups. As a consequence, FAIMS personnel have directly emailed a privately compiled list of contacts in lieu of using Google Groups. At the next SC meeting we will discuss whether to abandon Google Groups or whether to promote them to make further use of them. We suspect that, due to the leadership team not taking advantage of google groups save for internal communications (the leadership@fedarch.org is powered through groups and is used extensively), the rest of our community has followed our example.

## Conference attendance:

FAIMS ensured an extensive presence at the major archaeological conferences: eResearch in Sydney, AAA in Wollongong, AIA in Seattle, WAC in Jordan, CAA in Perth, and SAA in Honolulu. It is difficult to gauge the overall success of conference attendance, but we have received excellent feedback and encouragement from the fellow conference goers who attended our session. We have produced posters and significant promotional material for the CAA, available at:<http://www.fedarch.org/caa-pamphlets/>. We also produced a postcard for the AIA and WAC. We have not conducted any systematic survey of communications from conference material, but it does seem that (through traffic analysis) few people are using the QR codes embedded in our material for communications.

* ***Australian Archaeological Association Annual meeting, Wollongong, NSW, 9 -12 December 2012***
  + The core FAIMS team attended the AAA in Wollongong. Shawn and Penny presented the FAIMS project at the Digital Approaches to Archaeology session. The session was organized by Ian Johnson, our partner at the University of Sydney on the afternoon of last day. Shawn and Penny described the mobile application and ontology mapping tool in tDAR respectively and opened the ground to feedback. While the crowd was biased to technology users and no prototypes were yet available, so the discussion was fairly abstract. A number of interesting questions popped up, such as “how is your system an improvement from ArcPAD”, which helped us formulate and better direct our future outreach initiative.
  + **SC Meeting:** We held a Steering Committee meeting. It is our intention to align our quarterly SC meetings with major conferences to ensure participation.
* ***Archaeological Institute of America Annual Meeting, Seattle WA, 4 - 7 January 2013***
  + Shawn and Adela have represented the FAIMS project in Seattle. Shawn presented in the Mathematics and Shipwrecks session, which sounded rather unrelated to us at first, but turned out to be a valuable forum in which to present the project to a “new” audience, including potential users. We appreciated not being in the main digital session on the last day of conference, as we were not “preaching to the coverts”.
  + Adela and Shawn also met with Eric Kansa, Adam Brin, Adam Rabinowitz and other US collaborators and partners, bringing them up to date on the results of the elaboration phase of the project.
* ***World Archaeology Congress, Jordan, 8 -14 January 2013***
  + Brian travelled to the WAC conference to represent FAIMS in Jordan in a session chaired by Julian Richards, director of the Archaeology Data Service in the UK and a member of FAIMS Steering Committee. Reception of FAIMS was quite muted at the conference, with only four contacts continuing to correspond with the team after the conference. Unfortunately, none of those contacts turned into significant participation in the project. Brian’s presentation focused more on federation and the mobile device than an emphatic look at the repository.
* ***Computer Applications in Archaeology Conference, Perth, WA, Australia, 24-28 March 2013***
  + **Workshop:** At the CAA, FAIMS held a Monday morning hands-on workshops, which drew 20 attendees. Five of the core FAIMS team attended this workshop: Shawn, Adela, Penny, Brian, Martin and had the opportunity to spend time with the potential users of this system, demonstrating the core functionality of this device and the FAIMS repository.This workshop generated valuable feedback and provided an indication of what outsiders—not directly embedded with the project—think of FAIMS undertakings. At the end of the workshop we invited the attendees to fill in an online survey, leaving feedback on the FAIMS components. Due to limited connectivity we received only 10 answers.
    - The majority of respondents (5) rated themselves as “average” technical aptitude.
    - A plurality of respondents engage in survey work.
    - We posed a question about what would make FAIMS mobile a killer app. Answers, below, suggest that many of our current design directions are appropriate, but that our respondents didn’t really understand the term “killer app.”
      * To be multi-platform, and multi-language support (I know it will support that, so you are in the right way!)
      * Mobile, open source
      * There are a number of software packages which allow for mobile data collection but very few integrate spatial mapping in a GIS sense. So, a mobile data application which allows for in-field mapping such as points, lines and polygons which could be converted to the same in GIS (ArcGIS, MapInfo) and allow for the same level of attribute information to be collected for the spatial information as dedicated data collection apps.
      * Integration of imaging and Geophys data
      * Easy to use, but customisable
      * "Level of ease using in the field
      * Quick and efficient to use"
      * Something that is efficient, intuitive and allows for the "easy" integration of data without having to work with "code" too much!
      * Easy to use electronic data recording. Output that is ready to go straight into a report.
      * To help me get things done in an organized and systematic fashion.
    - Respondents’ answer quality declined further in “killer app” for repository, suggesting a problem with the way we asked the question.
    - People seemed to like our data-recording capabilities:
      * Allowing user to define their own classes, structures, etc. Also, the integration with GIS and maps.
      * The flexible logic structure (design for data collection).
      * Flexibility to tailor the UI
      * Customisable nature of the recording forms
      * "+Mobile device - the ability to integrate data in the field and the offer of ongoing support
      * Repository - fantastic resource that I would definitely use"
      * Electronic data recording.
    - People want to be able to play with the app before making any real decisions, as shown in answers to the next question:
      * Perhaps the ability to design a very simple data collection project.
      * Some developed templates for common recording tasks
      * "Some way of tracking GPS data automatically for example every 100 m but still keeping a manual control
      * Having devices that allow for the photos being taken being on a screen as scaled photos are important!"
      * A beta version that I can use.
    - A majority of respondents did not follow instructions for our “order priorities” question.
    - Most of the respondents heard about us via the CAA program, suggesting the majority do not participate in the typical communication streams used by the Australian Archaeological community.
  + **SC Meeting**: We held a Steering Committee meeting. It is our intention to align our quarterly SC meetings with major conferences to ensure participation.
  + **Reception**: FAIMS sponsored Monday evening reception at the CAA, which was well attended. FAIMS was mentioned several times by the organisers and Shawn had the opportunity to talk to everybody. The team was beset with questions and stayed until the very end talking to archaeologists in attendance.
  + **Keynote:** The opening keynote was by Eric Kansa, a member of FAIMS community, who also discussed FAIMS in positive light in his address.
  + For the next 3 days, FAIMS leadership attended a wide range of sessions, where we were gratified to see that FAIMS was widely discussed in discussions of data management, field recording. etc. Attendance at these workshops generated many fruitful conversations.
  + **Session:** FAIMS hosted a Roundtable on the final day of the conference, which was attended by approximately 30 people. Each member of the team presented on an issue relevant to FAIMS infrastructure development, opening a discussion of the project. In addition, Kai Christian Bruhn brought a European perspective to the project, offering examples of European initiative and demonstrating the potential for the reuse of existing data and the interoperability between different data sources.
    - Assessment: Overall, the CAA was extraordinarily worthwhile. It gave us an opportunity to introduce our team to a wider Australian and international community. It allowed us to present our project to new members and update the existing community. We made many new contacts and we received extremely valuable feedback from the attendees at the conference who had higher than average technical proficiency. In addition, the other session introduced to us other attempts to introduce mobile applications. We learnt about our competition, especially the fact that all of the other applications we either customizations of ArcPAD or deployments of bespoke databases to Android or iOS platforms, all of which contained only very simple data representations and interfaces. Martin Paulo remarked on the value of the feedback regarding the repository during the workshop, and his presentation on repository was very well received by the FAIMS stakeholders.
    - Presentations about the mobile application were well received, but the workshop was disappointing in the fact that attendees were happy to see the presentations but were less engaged that we had hoped. Attendees seemed reluctant to handle the devices and try out the app. Some later remarked on the peer pressure of onlookers, others claimed unfamiliarity with digital medium and feeling out of their comfort zone without their “paper sheets”.
    - A common theme permeated the CAA questions to FAIMS. Some wondered why we have not instituted common standards for everyone to follow.
* ***SAA, Honolulu, Hawaii, 3 -7 April 2013***
  + FAIMS sponsored a poster at SAA delivered by Penny Crook. This poster was well received. Perhaps the most important outcome of Penny’s attendance at CAA is the budding relationship with Sandra and David Schloen, who are developing an online application for application and we are now in discussion whether OCHRE wants to join FAIMS as a new northern American partner.
  + As a result of FAIMS attendance at the SAA there is also an increasing discussion online
  + Among more informal voices, the SAAs had a wide coverage on Twitter and Facebook. FAIMS featured there as one of the comments (unsolicited) shows: "[Brian](http://www.facebook.com/brian.crosby.779) Dude, you have no idea. I'm also super excited about Australian FAIMS project [Adela Sobotkova](http://www.facebook.com/adela.sobotkova.39) is involved with. One small part of FAIMS is an open source Android based fully customizable data collector app . I've been working on a similar project for some time now, but I think I may just switch to making modules for them instead. There's more as well. Give me a call sometime and we can catch up on all the stuff going on recently." This social media comment shows that FAIMS is gaining wide recognition among the technology-inclined archaeologists.
* **In-house Consultation**
  + As of mid February we have settled in a new office at UNSW and have begun visits by project participants and other interested parties. Amongst others we have met with Peter Grave from UNE, whose investment in the project rose dramatically after he has handled the application personally. He has since been lobbying strongly for our project.
  + In March, just before CAA, we have met with the ARCHES project leadership, composed on the WMF representative and Getty Conservation Institute members, who have discussed their project with us and enquired about FAIMS. In a series of encounters we have explored possibilities to synergize our mutual efforts. The ARCHES release schedule is aligned with ours and we will try to make them both interoperable
* **External Consultation**
  + Penny and Adela have been taking advantage of opportunities to demonstrate the prototype mobile application to Sydney-based archaeological consultants in the FAIMS community, including a visit to an archaeological site in George Street, Sydney, and a meeting with the Partner and Archaeology Manager at Godden Mackay Logan (who are alternate members on the steering committee).
  + On 13 March Penny attended the NSW Archaeology Advisory Panel to present an update on the FAIMS project to Panel members, and demonstrate a prototype of the mobile application. The presentation was well received.

# Lessons Learnt

## Kudos

Taken together the feedback garnered through the sources listed was for the most part positive and constructive. The Australian archaeological community is excited about a new open source Android application that is more accessible than ArcPAD and more robust than ODK or simple iOS dataloggers.

The project is particularly well received amongst programmers and software developers, who recognise the power and flexibility of the core mobile system, designed by Brian and Intersect. The videos and hands-on demonstrations of the device have dramatically increased the motivation and engagement of project participants who have seen them. The conferences have earned FAIMS a permanent place in the archaeological community and have become a major networking event serving us to update our constituents in a social environment and hold steering committee meetings.

Australian archaeologists are mostly looking forward to having a comprehensive Australia based repository that takes data curation responsibly and offers online tools to help them ingest their data. Archaeologists are beginning to see the possibilities and transformative power of widely available, compatible, primary datasets.

## Remaining Challenges

Despite these accomplishments, by the time of the CAA that our outreach strategy still has some challenges to deal with.

The first of these is the difficulty in having people to be more engaged with hands-on demonstrations. Currently they are more than willing to see the demonstrations by Brian, Penny and Adela, but when handed a device they seem unsure of what to do with it. The problem is less pronounced for the repository, which seems a more familiar for archaeologists. We believe that we can overcome the problem of mobile engagement by actually develop a functioning artefact module and having some “artefacts” like modern potsherd for archaeologists to catalogue. Demonstrations need to be more purpose-driven and less an abstract demonstration of features.

The second of these challenges is a number of misconceptions that surround digital archaeology and have direct impact on potential adoption. They can be divided among wrong conceptions and problematic habits that emerge when a new application is introduced into archaeological practice. The misconceptions include ideas such as “open source equals open access”, while the problematic habits that need correcting include behavior such as “give me your application and I will see whether I can fit my workflow to it”. While the first myth needs to be dispelled through explanation of the benefits of open source software and the difference between software and data, the habit manifest in the second example shows the legacy of archaeological practice to adopt available software and adjust field workflow to technology rather than the other way around.

We counter these myths by explaining and dispelling them orally where possible. We are working on a series of blog posts about common misconceptions.

# Future Plans

Continue the successful strategies we have employed, including:

* occasional group emails announcing major news and releases
* continuing day-to-day news on the blog
* continue attending conferences
* organise more hands-on workshops
* invite FAIMS partners to talk to us directly in our office
* review the use of Google Groups and either better promote or retire them
* promote videos consistently
* systematically address common misconceptions

Specifically, in the next three months we plan to go to the Office of Environment and Heritage launch of the AHIMS system (a competing iOS application for data registry in New South Wales). We are also scheduling a workshop for our Melbourne constituents in late May, in attempt to bring them up to date and to continue dispelling common myths.

Our project has already been praised for its openness and frequent updates. This is a practice that we want to uphold. We are planning a revamping of our webpage including the posting of all project reports, documents and resources with DOIs to ensure their long-term citation.

## Steering Committee Feedback

*Hi Adela,*

*This report is great, on the back of some really good outreach.*

*I'm a fan of the blog!*

*Cheers,*

*Joe*

*Excellent report. They should be impressed by the amount of outreach you've been doing. For a system which isn't yet out of nappies it is getting good press and profile in the community.*

*Cheers*

*Ian*