Conference call 17 June 2014

Attendees:

1. Poorvi
2. Judd
3. Judy
4. Susan
5. Doug
6. Peter
7. Josh
8. Philip
9. Duncan
10. Barbara
11. Noel
12. Lori
13. Ron
14. Joe
15. David J.
16. Aggelos
17. Keith
18. Vanessa
19. Dana
20. Paul

**Susan**: (See Susan’s notes)

* Intro
* context for today/starting point
* thank you for joining on the call
* agenda to answer questions
* paint a broad brush summary
* everybody to know the objectives of the project have not changed
* process to examine the specification E2E are written documents – not built systems
* Galois will not have authorship or sole authorship of this document
* While Judy and I have certain strengths, Galois has additional strengths and abilities that we need
* We need managed structure to fulfil this project.
* Positive development for the team
* Refer to Joe re: Demonstrators – what they are and what they are not

**Joe**:

* excited to be talking to everyone
* Thanks Susan for intro
* Characterise suggestion for demonstrators: tech transfer from research based to system
* suggested Galois makes engineering resources to mock up or try new crypto – anything along the project to build something that is open sourced, fully transferable – also as a resource for feasibility testing and usability testing
* Critical small things that need to be built – only goal is to make sure the final artefacts areas good as they can be
* Another example – closed source systems – testing - Attacks on the products that are out there
* For user testing or analysis

**Susan**:

* use of demonstrators and engineering is critical
* your input is essential

**Poorvi**:

* final author and editor of document?

**Susan:**

* everything is made public
* everything that is published is open for anything
* All authors who contribute to the final report will be noted
* Joe can work with others who prefer to not edit
* there can be differences of opinion that are attributed
* Each individual can publish their findings on their own

**Joe**:

* role re: final paper I see myself as editor of conference or book
* the amount of writing can be as large or small as each other individual wants
* If someone wants to take responsibility for editing, that’s fine. We can do other things like the engineering

**Poorvi**:

* like to hear from others
* not so much the authorship
* the issue is if we recommend a build, then if Galois builds, everything we do comes into question.

**Ron**:

* three issues authorship, vendor participating, bias
* Joe playing a key role may introduce a bias into the outcome of the deliberations

**Peter**:

* editorship of final report – same concerns – if Galois editorship applies to final report

**Susan:**

* the project was proposed in phases and will make a recommendation
* that a system could be built – no money for that as of yet.
* This is an exploratory document –
* I did not see Galois as a vendor but as an engineering resource
* Challenge concept as a vendor – Galois does not have a vendor business
* If all vendors are bad, if you look at Star Vote and LA project we are all evidence of the model changing
* OVF is a vendor – we can supply election products as a non-profit
* We should allow these groups to move forward
* I think we need new business model that brings these together – LEOs, non profits, vendors, researchers
* Our own view of election industry is suspect

**Vanessa:**

* two points – tender has been sent around – not theoretical - they have tendered for an internet voting project – not an indefinite but they have already done it
* There is now an economic incentive that is not the academic incentive

**Duncan**:

* everybody is free to discount anything I say but I have been through this
* I do not view this as an academic exercise but a chance for real change in elections.
* Not an academic paper that will be read by few, but will depart change
* If everything is open and transparent, this will allow any biased to be exposed
* we will be taken for he honest attempt we are taking

**Noe**l:

* clarify the terminology – primary report – specification?
* Is this a feasibility study?
* I do agree that where we are heading is important

**Philip**:

* we might not all agree on the term specification – here is what I think

**Doug:**

* I want to back this up
* if we cant specify something then it is not feasible
* Before you build prototypes or demonstrators you need to do this step

**Joe**:

* our interest is in the final report.
* Recently at Galois we started a non-profit – building things below cost – totally open sourced.
* We do not want to be a vendor like anyone out there, but be different to the existing vendors.
* Core capabilities service based - r and d.
* any bids we are trying to write are about trying to shift the way the industry work.

**Poorvi:**

* trust question – it is not not trusting one another
* If NSF were to be reviewing a proposal, Ron could not review - contribute to writing spec, then building - that is a conflict or interest.
* I trust Joe’s intention, but this will not be taken away.
* It really is something about trust, not criticising anyone – but we need to have a distinguishing feature
* that is where Galois can not be involved,
* then if at that point Galois can get involved at this point.
* We should try to figure out what that will be and how we can try to disentangle this.

**Paul**:

* you would not be bothered if Galois does this in their non-profit capacity?

**Poorvi:**

* did not know about non profit

**Paul**:

* what about Microsoft?

**Poorvi:**

* it is tainted

**Paul**:

* it is a recommendation of 30 more academics

**Vanessa:**

* the election officials will know in my country that Galois is a vendor

**Susan**:

* we need someone to pull this off.
* They have special expertise – vendors – this is not their bread and butter.

**Peter:**

* we …

**Ron:**

* there are real issues here.
* I like the idea of Joe working with this but there is negative.
* We need to work out how this can work.

**Susan**:

* are there any specific changes that could be done?

**Aggelos**:

* one possibility here that Joe somehow commits that this is routed through the non-profit
* I see that there is a perceived bias here – but I do not think that there is really one.

**Peter:**

* Galois – prototype etc. sounds valuable.
* I am concerned about this editorship and perhaps they can…

**Philip:**

* does editorship mean final things?
* this is different from having final word

**Susan:**

* Joe has been clear

**Peter:**

* I ask could Joe’s responsibility to be divided up in contrast to being involved in editing?

**Susan**:

* the engineering stuff is not in the contract,
* we need someone who takes responsibility for this project – the report

**Duncan**:

* if people have challenged what we have done then there is not bias.
* I don’t buy the argument that it will be totally tainted.
* I would argue that Joe take full status

**David J:**

* the thing that concerns me – that Galois has made a tender for the NSW project
* ok that is in the past – I would like to know if Galois could say that they are not going to make other tenders.

**Joe:**

* I think this something important – if this means a copyeditor, ok, if this means all non-profit…

**Judd**:

* I’m in a unique position to this, I’m a practitioner
* I used to be an academic, but in terms - this happens all the time – vendor issue tends not to be an issue.
* I’m not actually concerned about this relationship at all.

**Philip**:

* do people ever use it to get political mileage out of this?
* Paint a problem bigger than it is.

**Judd:**

* when the state of CO was trying to find election reporting we looked at Scytl – a Spanish company - how could we hand over all this money?
* There are lots of reasons why people would bring up things – there is usually a different agenda - as long as there is a consensus.
* Every solution in the vendor world was completed by a vendor – we just have to make sure that it is tested, etc.

**Ron**:

* I think it is a little different here –
* the feasibility here – we need to see if it is feasible –
* we envision that a vendor could push this through.

**Judd**:

* yes there are people opposed to this, and you can not get past this.
* Reality is that there are loads of vendors that are looking at this.
* Vote by mail is only temporary – you have to have a next place to go.
* Feasibility is not a long term question for the market place – we are already moving there.
* Practical matter is it will be feasible in the world if we demand it.

**Noel:**

* can we feature this to make the output more relevant? Vendor involvement?

**Susan**:

* up to us how we message this
* what I like about the whole thing is does this work?
* we are not into building – we are way far away from building something.
* any other comments?
* how to proceed?
* We believe in Joe’s integrity
* we need to know if you accept this idea or do not.
* If there are alternatives to move forward otherwise?

**David J.**:

* I propose - one idea is that Galois avoid associating itself in business opportunities in this field during the duration of this project
* I don’t necessarily see Galois as a vendor –
* I do not think this will be long term business – but staying away from this form of business could be avoided.

**Susan**:

* what about e2e - if they do dig into any e2e voting projects- this would add to this project –

**David** J.:

* but the NSW project was internet voting
* I’m trying to create a fence between this
* we need to avoid that conflict
* My concerns about this could be addressed in terms of limiting their business and how we present the others

**Barbara:**

* interesting discussion – I am torn
* I have respect for Joe but the proposal to not get involved in other business – but at the end of the project what about bidding then?

**Joe**:

* one thing is to help this project succeed.
* A different way to proceed is to try to win the Star Vote and make it transparent –
* would you rather me help here or try to get the Star Vote project?

**David J.:**

* star vote bid and this project are not incompatible

**Josh**:

* I support this strongly –
* it is not an internet project but an e2e project
* I am supportive for Joe, but I work for a ‘for profit’.

**Poorvi**:

* I do have a concern about Star Vote

**Duncan**:

* any criteria that would limit Galois ability to bid on stuff will not ever get around this.
* I argue that we set up no barriers and defend with our honour

**Poorvi:**

* yes it is not remote but very close to Helios –
* they are very close - Star Vote and Helios are sisters – they are not different systems

**Susan**:

* isn’t that good?

**Noel**:

* how does that impact us?

**Poorvi :**

* they are similar
* it is in his interest to have Helios approved .
* we all have affiliations to projects that can be used, but none of us are developing them to sell.
* I think we can go forward with this
* Important documents about feasibility and recommendations we could do

**Susan:**

* I respect what you just said but we have been looking for someone to write.
* We can not bind Galois business, but we can put some requests to them.
* I don’t know where we are going to find this person.
* I understand – which protocol is the most favourable?
* We need to set an example here. If we listen to Judd they are going ahead with or without us.
* Feeling a bit alone out here – how much can we ask?

**Barbara**:

* another topic has just come up – what I just heard – he seems to be saying internet voting is moving ahead with or without us –

**Susan:**

* this is what is happening out here – people are using email…

**Barbara:**

* I think what we can do is to try to say this is not possible and stop election officials from proceeding.

**David J:**

* it sounds like we are still locked up in feasibility or not feasibility and if we find it is feasible – Galois makes a product

**Philip:**

* without Joe’s help what we end up delivering would not be as complete,
* but we need to determine if this is feasibility – what is it?

**Joe**:

* a spec is something that informs feasibility

**Philip**:

* first job is to write a requirements doc, if not feasible then..

**Joe:**

* no other way makes sense to me

**David J.:**

* spec implies something

**Philip**`;

* I don’t want to see us committing to a spec come hell or high water

**Barbara:**

* I agree

**Noel**:

* I agree

**Ron**:

* I think this is correct

**Josh:**

* yes this fits into the requirements aspect
* This is a path to move forward,
* we have to move this deliberately. This is the direction to move.

**Barbara:**

* I want to pick up on Philip – I don’t want to loose track of the requirements – assessing of other proposal –

**Philip:**

* yes this is a winning thing

**Barbara**:

* if we agree on this as our immediate goals I have no problem with Joe
* Is Galois in a position to influence vendors to reveal specs?

**Joe:**

* audit of an existing systems? I can’t say I have much faith about them being transparent – Scytl do you want a real public audit?
* if you think this is an important thing to do, I am open to this.
* I think it is important to do but is in parallel with this project.

**Susan**:

* this is not a project to fully evaluate other systems, but I don’t think it can be the focus.
* how we came to the conclusion we are going to go forward with Galois?

**Philip**:

* we were suggesting a feasibility and requirements doc.

**Susan:**

* yes it is the project.

**Philip**:

* comfortable with Joe and Galois being involved.
* Looking at fielded systems – we have no way to…What kind of approaches – we don’t need to analyse their code.
* I think we could get some use from Galois

**Joe**:

* very familiar with vendors.
* vacuous system description –

**David J**.:

* Better use of your time than building demonstrators

**Joe:**

* Summarising the vendors approaches is good –
* I would hope that Poorvi would not have to walk away –

(7 minutes remaining that I did not capture)