Nelnet, Inc.

IT Delivers!
Significant Bits and Bytes

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IT Delivery Integration Information: Meet Your Epics!

In last month's update, Rodney Peffer highlighted the Leadership/Culture and Agile Center of Excellence Epics. The Delivery Integration Steering Committee remains committed to providing ongoing updates regarding the progress of the Integration Epics. This month, we are continuing by highlighting the Team/Organizational Items and the Tools/ Development Environment epics.

Integration Updates

Team/Organizational Items

As a part of this epic, Jason Rieber and Eric White are currently teaming up with the NDS Finance and Accounting teams to integrate the budgeting process across all of NDS IT Delivery. Information and training opportunities will be communicated soon to all associates involved in budget reforecasting and 2019 budget planning processes.

Even sooner, the team will release a handful of fully integrated email distribution lists. Thanks to Carrie Hafele, Eric Maly, Curtis Oie and others, distribution lists are nearly complete and will include groups such as:
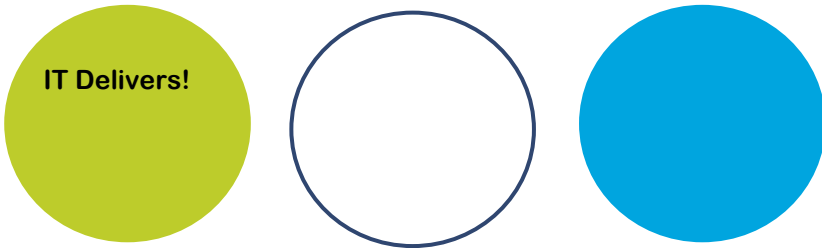
- All IT Delivery
- Product Managers
- Scrum Masters
- Leadership
- Specific office locations
- and others

This will remove one of the larger barriers of getting consistent information to groups of people.

Eric and Jason are also working with asset management and infrastructure leaders on another important integration task: software purchasing and vendor management. They are currently refining the process and coming up with a plan to communicate that information to all of NDS IT Delivery.

Tools/Development Environment

As a part of this epic, Chad Krogstad and Eric White are teaming up with a wide variety of delivery and infrastructure associates across the organization to integrate the best development/delivery practices and tools for our teams. For the second quarter of 2018, the epic team focused on the collaboration and communication tools that our teams will use. The focus on the tools will help ensure that they align with the overall corporate strategy.

Second Quarter Highlights:

- Nelnet rebranding of the Confluence site with a third-quarter planned release.
- Coordination and initial understanding of the direction for our communication tools.
- Working with the Training/Hiring Epic owners to close some training gaps the epic team identified.

Thanks to Jeni McDonald, Alex Garrison and others for work in the rebranding of the Confluence site and in establishing the communication templates.

In the upcoming quarters, Eric and Chad will continue to focus on training on the collaboration tools, the development/delivery

Inside This Issue

IT Delivers!

IT Delivery Integration Information: Meet Your Epics!

practices, and the rollout of the Nelnet-branded Confluence site. They will also be collaborating with teams to begin the migration of existing Confluence content to the new, Nelnet-branded Confluence.

Welcoming Feedback

The combined talent of our delivery teams channeled collaboratively will be the engine that drives integration forward and makes it a success. It is important to remember, though, that delivery is still our first priority. Integration will be a marathon, not a sprint, but together we will all make it happen!

Look for future updates from the Steering Committee members and again, we welcome your feedback. Contact us at any time via the z-ITDeliveryIntegration@nelnet.net email group. Thank you!

~ Jeff Ross

Accessibility: Empowering Customers to Achieve Dreams

Nelnet's vision is to *empower our customers to achieve their dreams*. For the accessibility architecture team, empowering customers means ensuring that people with disabilities can access Nelnet websites and applications.

For this team of two (Marc Thorson and Stacy Carston), Nelnet's vision inspires and drives their mission to support accessible development practices as an integral part of the software development lifecycle.

Accessibility Defined

As defined by the Worldwide Web Consortium (WC3), web accessibility means that "people with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the web, and that they can contribute to the web."

Marc and Stacy prefer a simpler, more concise definition: Accessibility = Equivalent access for all!

In a recent knowledge share (available for viewing and listening here), the team discussed three main ways they support accessible development practices:

- Creating accessible code
- Training and knowledge shares (including an accessibility forum and "Jedi Council")
- Testing and audits for regulatory compliance

Types of Disabilities

Stacy and Mark also summarize four different categories of disabilities, along with the common annoyances each faces in accessing the web:

Type of disability	Common annoyances experienced
Physical	Poorly labeled or organized form items, interfaces that require using a mouse, UI items that require a pinpoint level of precision
Auditory	Videos with no captioning, transcripts or audio description
Visual	Images lacking alternative text, poorly structured HTML, poor color contrast, tables used for layout, poorly labeled or organized form items, visual error messages and other dynamic content changes with no corresponding auditory notifications
Cognitive (such as dyslexia or ADHD)	Inconsistent interfaces throughout a large and complex site, timed tasks, lengthy and complicated instructions or complete lack of instructions

Best Practices for Developers

For each of these categories, the team provided best practices and guidelines for software developers in order to address the issues of each audience. The emphasis is on the practical, such as:

- Properly label form items and make sure they are arranged in a logical order.
- Make sure there is a keyboard fallback for users who cannot
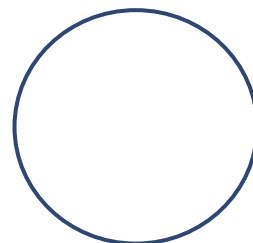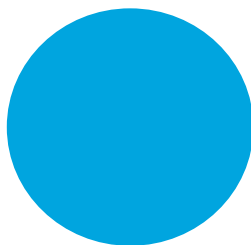
Accessibility: Empowering Customers to Achieve Dreams

(Continued from page 2)

Accessibility Architects Marc Thorson (left) and Stacy Carston

use a mouse.

- Every image must have an alt (alternative text). No exceptions!

The team provides a number of resources for developers. The accessibility space in Confluence provides a living knowledge base of accessibility standards and best practices, broken down categorically by background info, techniques, impact and collaboration. It also contains background and getting started pages for those who are new to accessibility, as well as an accessibility testing process and testing tools.

Marc says that accessibility is a team game. Each and every stakeholder makes a difference. Our products are only as accessible as the weakest link in the process, so it's critical that each of us understands our role. If you're interested in learning more and would like to elevate your product's accessibility to the next level, please feel free to reach out to Marc and Stacy.

Why Accessibility?

Why be concerned with accessibility? One reason of course is that it's required by law. As a contractor for the Department of Education, we are legally bound to adhere to Section 508. All Nelnet web products must comply with WCAG 2.0 level AA (which encompasses all of Section 508).

But Marc emphasizes that ultimately accessibility is the right

thing to do, and fits well with Nelnet's vision.

"Creating the most accessible state-of-the-art user experience empowers each and every one of our customers," Marc said. "It removes barriers and sets them up for success."

~ Frank Nowell

Industry Resources on Accessibility

W3C – WCAG 2.0: w3.org/TR/WCAG20

WebAIM: webaim.org

The Paciello Group: paciellogroup.com

Deque: deque.com

Nielsen Norman Group: nngroup.com/articles

Save the Date for Agile Camp 2018: Chart Your Own Course

Agile Camp 2018 is coming! The Agile Committee announced the following dates for the camp.

- Denver: Sept. 11—Sept. 13
- Lincoln: Sept. 18—Sept. 20
- Madison: Oct. 23—Oct. 25

The theme will be "Chart Your Own Course" and the committee is "dedicated to providing sessions that empower you to reach your own Agile Champions," Theresa Krupicka said.

Have any questions or suggestions? You can email z-agilecamp@nelnet.net. Watch out for emails and newsletter updates with more information as planning continues.

Upcoming Training

July 10 & 12: Accessibility Tools Knowledge Share
July 24 & 26: Client Spotlight Knowledge Share
July 24: Behavior Puzzle 101 (Highlands Ranch)

See the IT Delivery Learning Center for the latest information.

Associate Named Junior Achievement Volunteer of the Year

Junior Achievement-Rocky Mountain named Brian Sowl, Director of Security Compliance, volunteer of the year for 2018. Brian was honored at JA's recent Inspiration Reception and shared the following advice on living up to Nelnet's core values and taking the time to give back to the communities in which we live and work. *See SharePoint for more photos.*

Why is volunteering so important to you?

I feel it is very important to support the community you live and work in. Growing up in a middle-class home in Aurora showed me how important community is for so many families. Life is so much more enjoyable when we help one another and find ways to make life easier for everyone.

How can others find volunteer opportunities in their communities?

Working at Nelnet gives our team members many different volunteer opportunities. In the Aurora and Highlands Ranch offices, I am always looking for volunteers to support Junior Achievement.

Finding volunteer opportunities is very easy — just ask how you can help. Offering to help goes a long ways to making our community better.

Here are some good places to start:

- Junior Achievement — Denver area/Lincoln/Madison area
- Food Bank of the Rockies
- United Way

What advice would you give to people who want to volunteer and give back, but don't feel like they have the time to do so?

There are only so many hours in the day so finding time to give back and volunteer is not always easy, but it's still very possible. For me, finding time to volunteer is about time management: I need to prioritize my time based on getting things done that add the most value.

Spending time with my wife and our three-year-old son is a top priority, so we will often volunteer as a family, giving back to the community but also spending time together. Occasionally, I will choose to work on nights and weekends so that I can make time to go to the classroom to help JA during the week. Effectively managing your time and prioritizing your tasks is the best advice I can give.

How do you feel Nelnet encourages associates to be involved and give back to their communities?

It starts with Nelnet's core values. "Give back to the communities in which we live and work" is very important to Nelnet's overall success. During the 2017-2018 school year, Nelnet's Colorado team members gave more than 600 hours of service to our communities. We encourage all Nelnet team members to find what you are passionate about and look for opportunities to give back. Providing superior customer service is our top priority and customers include our community.

As a director, how do you encourage your teams to volunteer?

You will always make time to do the things you enjoy doing. Giving back to the community is so rewarding for the individual but also helps Nelnet — volunteers are networking and building relationships in the community that can help Nelnet in hiring new team members, finding new vendors, identifying new business opportunities and enhancing the customer experience.

I encourage all Nelnet team members to live the Nelnet core values and make time to give back to the community.

Information on JA-Rocky Mountain:

JA-Rocky Mountain, Inc. (JA) is part of the world's largest organization dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people to succeed in a global economy. Through a dedicated volunteer network, JA provides programs for students which focus on entrepreneurship, financial literacy and work readiness. The goal is to teach concepts through experiential learning, allowing young people to put their new knowledge and skills into practice.