Bandwidth management and optimisation

Policy development workshop

Unit 1: Overview of challenges and solutions

Discussion: Facilitator’s notes

In this session we will break into small groups and examine issues of bandwidth management and optimization including challenges and solutions (technical and policy-based). We will attempt to examine these issues in light of our experience in managing bandwidth in each of our institutions.

Document Notes

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Summary

On completion of this session the learner will have:

1. Discussed challenges and solutions to bandwidth management and optimization;
2. Compared technical and policy-based solutions to bandwidth management and optimization;
3. Determine which policy-based solutions can be used within your institution.

Expected time to go through all parts of the discussion is 1.5 hours.

The facilitator should have some “blue tac” or similar to stick summarised flip charts to the wall for future reference during the workshop.

Introduction

After having introduced some of the challenges and solutions to bandwidth management, any questions regarding these issues can be answered.

Once any unclear issues have been explained, participants examine how the bandwidth management challenge has been dealt with within their institutions (expected time: 45 minutes). Results of this group discussion are shared with all the workshop participants and discussed (expected time: 45 minutes).

Advice on how to carry out each activity is given in Sections 1.1 and 1.2.

Group discussion

Please **break into groups** of 3 to 5 participants each and **reflect on the questions listed below**.

You may want to **nominate a group representative to capture the key points of the discussion on a flipchart sheet** (this person will also present the results of the group discussion to all workshop participants during the plenary discussion).

1. What are the challenges your institution faces in managing bandwidth?
2. What are the solutions you’re using?
3. What solutions would you like to use in addition to what you have now?
4. What challenges do you anticipate in introducing new solutions?

Plenary discussion

Please (each group representative) **present the results of the group discussion** to all workshop participants. Each presentation should take about 10 minutes.

Facilitating the plenary discussion

The facilitator then leads a plenary discussion focussing on the following questions:

* Are policy-based solutions in use? How widely? Are there plans to introduce them?
* If policy-based solutions are not in use or not planned, why is this so? Are the challenges technical, organisational, or both? Could these challenges be overcome?
* If policy-based solutions are in use, how effective are they? If they are planned, what effect are they expected to have?
* How could one develop general principles for choosing between the two types of solution? How could they be blended together?

Once all groups have provided summaries of their discussions, the facilitator should collect their completed flip charts and either stick these up on the walls using blue tac or (more likely) summarise the key issues from all groups into a common set of issues and then stick up those summary flip charts.

This write up should be done at the end of the day or during one of the later group discussion exercises – there is usually free time for the facilitator to write up and prepare during these exercises.

Conclusion

The purpose of these activities has been to critically reflect on challenges and solutions to bandwidth management. Attention has been paid to experiences of participants within their institutions and reflection on lessons learnt.

The displayed summary flips charts can be useful to refer to during future discussions in the workshop. They are particularly useful when referencing other discussions later in the workshop.