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## Progress Report: April 21, 2008

We met with Jason on the morning of April 16th over the phone, to discuss our plans for the release of Longhouse and our development plans for the rest of the quarter. Jason expressed, as his number one priority, the idea that Longhouse should be released in alpha form as soon as possible in order to integrate the feedback and ideas from open-source developers during the rest of the quarter. He said that if we were to do so, he would be happy with the project state at the end of the quarter. Our first goal is therefore to have it ready to release in alpha form by the end of 4th week. We are not sure whether he will open the project up at the end of 4th week (on Friday) or the beginning of 5th week (on Monday); during our Wednesday meeting this week we'll ask him what he prefers. If he has no preference or no strong preference, we will ask him to wait until Monday of 5th week so that we have an extra weekend to put the finishing touches on the release and take care of any emergencies.

During the end of 3rd week, after we met with Jason, we made plans for how we were going to get the software ready to release by the end of 4th week and began to execute them. We set a baseline goal in terms of functionality of having the issue tracker as complete as possible, since it is the central feature of a CDE and almost done anyway. What is mostly missing now is the javascript, which Sean has been working on since the last meeting with Jason and which is almost done.

The release of the code also requires new features to be implemented rather quickly. Kyle has been spending time writing a user registration and account validation service, which involves both adding new pages and forms to Longhouse and also modifying the existing permissions system in Longhouse, a part of the code that we previously haven't had to deal with. In addition, this task required investigating the email server that Twisted comes packaged with and writing a centralized email service that Longhouse can use for all of the emails it needs to eventually be able to send to users. This is necessary because the system will need to send a key-code to the user and request that the user visit a page and enter the code, to validate that a newly registered account is a real person and not a spam-bot. The registration and validation service is finished, and only the email system remains to be built. It should be done by the middle of 4th week.

Finally, Chris took care of doing the outside usability studies with graduate students after the Wednesday meeting. As of writing, he's conducted 3 out of 5 tests and is awaiting replies from the other 2 students in order to schedule times early next week. He sent out the results that he did get so far, and Kyle prepared the presentation that is due in discussion on Wednesday about the testing results. We'll add to the slides once we conduct the last 2 usability tests. In addition, Chris has been working on researching and beginning to implement the search engine that Longhouse will use, and has been working with Lucene to try to see if it provides the necessary functionality.

One other task that Jason wants us to do before the code is released is to investigate whether Google AppEngine could serve as a sufficient running environment for Longhouse, and if not, what changes we would need to make to either Longhouse or AppEngine to make it happen. As far as Jason is concerned, this is our second highest priority task for this coming week, and he wants a report on whether it is feasible or not to run Longhouse on AppEngine by the time that the code is ready to open-source. We will conduct this research in the middle of next week, once we are basically done with both the issue tracker and the usability testing. This task is tentatively assigned to Sean and he will be responsible for

giving an official recommendation to Jason about the feasibility of using AppEngine after his research is complete.

In addition, we will need to write a substantial amount of documentation to accompany the release of the first Longhouse alpha. Jason created a new Google Code project during our meeting and gave us permission to change it, so we will need to create a few sets of documentation: one set for Longhouse installation, one set for Longhouse usage, and one set for extending Longhouse. The most important for this alpha release are the first two. Tentatively, Kyle will be responsible for getting the site ready with documentation. The documentation should be published on the Google Code project's Wiki and be linked from the release's page, which will be in the Google Code project's Downloads section. In addition, the issues on the current Google Code project's Issue Tracker need to be migrated into the new project's Issue Tracker, so that developers are reassured that work is being done. We will allow users to post additional issues, but we will reserve the ability to change and/or close them.

Finally, the release of the code demands that the code itself be in releasable condition. This task involves clearing out extraneous and non-used code, old comments that no longer apply, and other things that shouldn't go out to the public, and removing operations done in the code that should technically not be done in a production environment, such as creating test users and projects in the code rather than through the interface. In addition, the things that are in highest need of commenting should be commented in the code. The code then needs to be packaged and put on the Google Code site. Chris is tentatively responsible for this task.

While we are performing these tasks, Jason is going to keep working on the code for the Downloads sections and the code for a small part of the issue tracker that he forgot to deliver to us when he gave us the large code delivery. Once the first alpha is released we will work with what he delivered to do further functional reclamation, as well as working on the search functionality. For the rest of the quarter schedule, please consult the earlier e-mail. We will add the information to our project plan once we are sure of it and have consulted Jason to make sure he approves.