

**Program Evaluation Working Group / RREA  
Website Development Committee  
Work Session: Sept. 30, 2008**

**Participants:** Al Fournier, Barb Hutchinson, Sharon Hoelscher-Day, Lisa Lauxman, Dan McDonald, Sheila Merrigan, Susan Pater, Donna Peterson, Sabrina Tuttle (by phone)  
**Guests:** Robert Armstrong, Kelly Block

**Cooperative Extension update**

Sheila made the group aware of Cooperative Extension's position with respect to website development. Because of staffing concerns, no help is available with websites other than maintenance of current websites or possibly adding links to existing sites, etc., although if funding is available, this could raise the priority level for developing our site. CE is moving toward Drupal-based websites in the future. Drupal is a content management system which makes it easier for individual project leaders to maintain their own sites. However, Drupal is new and there is a learning curve for working with it. It was suggested that for our site we explore the possibility of using Drupal. (Note: UITS offers classes on Drupal development on campus.)

Cooperative Extension Administration has asked us to develop a short proposal that outlines the goals, scope, and timeline for completion of our program evaluation website. CE considers this an important effort and wants to promote the site, especially among new faculty. They will consider a proposal from us for some amount of cost-share on site development. As a group, we agreed we should develop and submit a proposal, once we have a firm estimate of project costs.

**Purpose / Scope**

The primary purpose of the Program Evaluation website is to provide faculty with easy access to tools, resources and information related to program planning and program evaluation. The site will include examples of evaluation and needs assessment tools and instruments, many developed by our own faculty, and also links to established external evaluation websites and tools. We recognize that many faculty members are at a "beginning level" with respect to evaluation skills while others are more advanced. A goal of the website will be to provide a structure that takes people through the steps of developing their own program evaluation plan, with an eye toward helping people develop "higher level" evaluation expertise.

This site will serve all of Extension, and so it will not be discipline-based. The basic concepts and principles of program evaluation are not discipline-specific, although we recognize that people in different disciplines will have different evaluation needs and goals that may require more specificity. For this reason, the text content of the site pages will focus on general concepts. However, many of the examples provided will of course be discipline-specific. In time, our site could host discipline-specific pages, if faculty members have a desire to develop such content.

It was agreed to keep the design of the site simple, with no more than 3 levels. We should strive for a “horizontal” design, making use of Drupal and the structure it provides for easily accessing different information modules and services.

## Resources

Program Evaluation WG funds	\$1,000
RREA funds	\$3,000* (estimate)
Cooperative Extension	undetermined

[\*Note: Funding amount is an estimate and is contingent on us providing an RREA-specific section of the website.]

## Timeline

Oct, 2008	Brainstorming Determining content (preliminary) Identify resources Identify student worker
Oct – Dec	Develop content (e.g., IRB info & reorganize current content)
Jan – Feb	Web development
Mar	Beta test & faculty feedback
April	Final changes
May, 2009	Launch website

## Website Content

The group reviewed AI’s draft program evaluation site as well as the Extension Program Development and Assessment (PDA) site, along with many leading evaluation sites from other institutions.

### General discussion

- Provide people with examples to help them get to a higher level of evaluation understanding (e.g., examples of long-term indicators for program success)
- People need to do things in a step-wise fashion, for example, you can’t measure long-term changes without baseline data. Organize the information to take people through these steps.
- We discussed “levels of evaluation” as the difference between doing basic evaluations (e.g., a workshop) and measuring change through indicators. Dan cautioned against the use of the term “levels of evaluation” on the website. The word “levels” may discourage some people from pursuing “high level” evaluation activities, when “high level” should really be the standard.
- “Evidenced based evaluation” is a concept not captured in the draft website. It refers to citing previous work on connections between program activities and outcomes rather than repeating measures for each program implemented. This is an important emerging concept in evaluation that needs to be included.

- We briefly reviewed the “Life Skills Evaluation System,” an online tool for building a custom survey from a bank of existing questions, already approved by IRB. This is an interesting concept, at least at the discipline-specific or program-specific level. Something like this may be beyond our initial goals for a broad Extension evaluation website, but it is something we might explore later.
- Many things may be evaluated and we need examples and resources for all of these: workshops, program goals (broad), clientele knowledge, skills and practices, program outcomes, societal impacts, clientele needs, etc. The information needs to be organized in a way that quickly lets people get at info related to what they need to do.
- Existing resources and data are valuable tools for developing proposals and programs and for setting goals and measuring success. These kinds of resources might be provided as links. In many cases, these may be discipline- or program-specific or relate to specific clientele groups.
- Some type of “introduction thingie” is needed for the site to address the question of “why evaluate?” and how to identify what you need to get started (possibly listing steps or questions), etc. This concept was discussed as some kind of a guide for getting people started and helping them navigate to proper resources on our site. Some of this introductory type information already exists on the PDA site and on AI’s site, and can be used as a starting point for development of this.
- Faculty, particularly new faculty want an answer to the question, “how do I measure and document impacts for my APR?” The organization of our site should direct people with this question to the proper information in some prominent way.

#### Key outside resources

- University of Wisconsin Extension (UWEX), evaluation home: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/index.html>
- UWEX: logic model (includes online training for logic model) <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html>
- UWEX: 3 online training modules on program evaluation concepts: <http://www.uwex.edu/impacts/evaluation-modules/>
- UWEX program evaluation planning worksheet: <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-1W.PDF> and a more detailed booklet.
- PSU Program evaluation home: <http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/Default.html>
- PSU index of Tipsheets: <http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/titles.html>
- PSU Evaluation Strategy Tipsheet #83: <http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS83.pdf>
- PSU state examples of evaluation concepts: <http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/examples.html>
- CYFERnet evaluation site: [http://cyfernet.ces.ncsu.edu/cyfres/browse\\_2.php?search=Evaluation](http://cyfernet.ces.ncsu.edu/cyfres/browse_2.php?search=Evaluation)
- OSU “Sammie” Online evaluation training site: [http://oaa.osu.edu/reaccreditation/documents/5-48\\_SAMMIE.pdf](http://oaa.osu.edu/reaccreditation/documents/5-48_SAMMIE.pdf) [question to group: this PDF is all that a search revealed. Is there an HTML site available or is this still in development?]

- Additional outside links are resources have already been identified and are linked to PDA and APMC evaluation sites. These will also be evaluated as potential site links.

## Organizing concept

Initially, we generated a list of content topics. Nearly all of these were covered in some way between the APMC draft evaluation site and the PDA site. At first, we lacked an organizing concept for all of these ideas. Everything seemed to click based on PSU Cooperative Extension Program Evaluation Tipsheet #83 (<http://www.extension.psu.edu/evaluation/pdf/TS83.pdf>). A modified version of this “Evaluation Strategy Wheel” provided the organization we needed to develop the following structure. Though numbered below, these topics may not always follow the chronology suggested.

1. Identify purpose (of program) and stakeholders (i.e., needs assessment).
2. Program objectives / expected outcomes and impacts (i.e., program planning, including priority setting).
3. Evaluation planning (include information on evaluation logistics and implementation; possibly also include info on working with different audiences here, or otherwise keep this important concept in mind throughout site planning).
4. Human subjects / IRB (content to be developed by Dan McDonald and Lisa Lauxman). Note: be sure to include some examples of IRB proposals and help people understand when they need signed consent forms versus disclosure statements, when IRB review is necessary versus not, etc.)
5. Data collection methods / tools (include info on how to find / use secondary or existing data)
6. Data analysis.
7. Plan use of evaluation results.

Note: graphically, we discussed the idea of presenting these topics not on a wheel (ala PSU), but as parts of a puzzle fitting together.

## Format

### General discussion

- Use Drupal for development of a site that makes key information available with minimal clicks. Go for a horizontal rather than hierarchical structure.
- “Tools” should be accessible as a separate category and also under the topic related to the specific tool.
- Provide access to “local examples” in various ways, by evaluation topic (e.g., workshop evaluations), by evaluation concept (e.g., measuring changes in behavior), by program area (e.g., FCS, ANR), etc.

## Main page

- The main page will centrally feature the “puzzle” graphic or other graphic that includes the 7 steps described above. Each of the 7 topic areas will be color coded for easy recognition and secondary pages will follow the color coding to aid the user in navigation.
- Links to available outside evaluation learning modules in a sidebar.
- “Resource Links” feature could be a list of links to the key external sites identified above.
- “Featured sites” feature could highlight specific external evaluation sites on a rotating basis.
- “Quick tools” feature could provide easy access to templates, examples, consent forms, etc.
- An “events” or “calendar” feature can highlight relevant upcoming trainings, etc.
- We should include a site map.

## Second level pages

- People like the basic design of AI’s site as example of second-level pages: provide some basic information, examples (as many local as possible) and external links (“learn more”) for each topic area—or something similar to this.
- AI suggested that the text for “the basics” will need to be scrutinized and revised by this group.

## Follow-Ups

- Barb and AI will try to identify a student worker or other worker who is familiar with Drupal. [Barb has identified a contact and will soon have an estimate of development expenses.]
- AI will reorganize the APMC Program Evaluation site to better conform with the topic list we came up with today, as a starting draft for content.
- Dan and Lisa will work on developing IRB content information.
- AI and Barb, with input from the group, will draft a proposal to Extension Administration for additional funds to support development.
- Susan will set up Google documents site for group communications.

- **Proposed draft layout of home page**

This is based on rough sketch from meeting. The graphic will feature not numbers but the actual topic areas and will likely be a puzzle.

