# VDX "Lessons Learned" Meeting Report

On January 9, 2007 SOPAG hosted a meeting to discuss "lessons learned" from the UC Libraries' implementation of VDX. SOPAG's goals, in calling this meeting, were to:

1. Develop recommendations regarding managing and implementing future system wide projects that meet some or all of the following criteria:
    - Involve changes in workflow or substantial training for staff at each campus
    - Require having staff at all campuses trained and proficient in order to realize the benefits of the new system
    - Affect multiple units on each campus (in the case of VDX, both ILL and IT were involved)
    - Rely on purchased software

2. Identify changes in our current project structure that could enhance coordination and implementation of VDX going forward.

The meeting was organized by the SOPAG RSC Liaison, Susan Starr, Diane Bisom (also representing SOPAG) and the Chair of RSC, Eric Forte. It was facilitated by Mary Beth Baker, an independent consultant. Attending were all campus members of RSC; Gary Johnson, Jenny Lee and Jason Newborn to provide more in-depth expertise in Interlibrary Loan and VDX; Patti Martin and Lynne Cameron from CDL; Carol Hughes (Chair of HOPS); and Susan Starr, Diane Bisom and Bernie Hurley on behalf of SOPAG.

Below is the summary of the meeting from M. Baker, the facilitator. The RACI chart mentioned in this summary is attached as a separate file. This summary has been submitted to SOPAG for discussion at a January 30, 2007 conference call.

Susan Starr
Diane Bisom
Eric Forte

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**Meeting Summary**

**Introduction**

This document is a synthesis of the discussions held during the CBS/VDX Planning retreat. The information compiled includes notes captured on the flip charts and summary results of small group discussions. The objectives of the session were to:

- Understand the strengths and issues of the current VDX project and identify implications for the future.
- Develop recommendations to improve Consortial Borrowing Service (CBS) planning and VDX implementation going forward.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for enhancing and improving the CBS.
- Develop principles to guide planning and executing future system-wide projects.

The remainder of the document is organized according to the five major topics outlined below.

**Topics of Discussion**

I. Comments about the summary of survey results
II. Recommendations for future CBS planning/initiatives
III. Roles and responsibilities for CBS planning/initiatives
IV. Guiding Principles for future system-wide projects
V. Next Steps

I. **Comments about the summary of pre-meeting survey results** (see Appendix 1 for survey questions)

- Surprise that there were no comments regarding the need for a pre-project planning phase. Executives need to plan ahead so they can support implementation and identify/secure resource needs.
- Needed more executive leadership involvement at the campus level.
- Staff felt as if they were conducting "alpha" testing on the product.
- Campuses had a wide range of experiences implementing VDX. Some had a very positive experience and some experienced considerable difficulty. To better understand the disparity among the campuses it would be helpful to understand some local context about the implementation. Information such as the following would be helpful:
    - Level of resources devoted to the project (both functional and IT (programming, support, communications))
    - As-is/current processes – so can determine what the workflow is in/out of the system
    - Organization structure
    - Environment (both technical and functional)
    - Campus sponsorship
    - Communication
    - Training
    - Underlying processes
- It would be helpful to better understand what went well and what could be improved upon with the vendor.
    - Positives
        - Responsiveness to customizations requested for UC
        - Site visits by the product manager
        - Product is robust in terms of its breadth and power
    - Improvements needed
        - Amount of configuration required. Vendor did not provide templates for default installation.
        - Standard pull-down menus are very rigid
        - Training provided too early, and not at "point of use/implementation" time
- Communication must be done with multiple groups and multiple times:
    - Onset
    - RFP
    - CDL
    - Campuses
- Must look at the overall training model
    - What should be done centrally versus locally
    - Training must be linked to the upgrade cycle
- Need to monitor developments in light of purchase of VDX by OCLC's Pica.
- Need to formalize a process to review project costs and functional needs and assess whether the product/solution is still meeting needs. If not, must be able to exit the project and look at alternative solutions.

## II. Recommendations for future CBS planning/initiatives

The group was divided into four teams to identify recommendations in the areas listed below. The groups were asked to brainstorm ideas and then to select top three choices in each category.

### *A. Project Organization*

1. Create a new project organization structure consisting of:
    - A core project management team (campus wide and CDL)\Must involve operational staff
    - Supported by campus implementation groups for each campus (serving as a satellite for campus-wide group)

### *B. Communication*

1. Each campus/Team/SOPAG/ ACG needs a communication plan (in all directions)

2. Plan must have multiple communication modes – email, in person, web cast, etc.
3. Create searchable archives of communications – don't underestimate the volume of communications
4. Address communication needs of new staff

***C. Project Resources (local and central)***

1. Resources need to be dedicated to the project so operations can continue simultaneously while project is implemented.
2. Plan ahead for when trained staff leave the university or unit. Be sure there are other staff who share their knowledge. (Avoid starting over with new people).
3. Don't underestimate the number of people required for the project (The number of people is often twice the original estimate).

***D. Training***

1. Identify a centralized training leader with an advisory committee/campus representatives
2. Identify local training leaders
3. Design training for different learning styles
4. Allocate financial resources and time release for staff
5. Assess training techniques and overall plans (conference-based, manuals, recognition of different training, modalities)
6. Develop documentation to describe expected behaviors
7. Consider multiple sources of training ((vendor, central and local)

*Key Benefits*

- Training is a key element of planning, implementation and assessment.

***E. Planning***

1. Formalize planning process at the beginning of the project.
    a. Revisit the plan at specific milestones and adjust activities, as necessary
    b. Include activities to analyze local workflows in project plan
2. Develop a calendar with benchmarks and dates to link project goals and measure success
3. Plan for clear lines of authority and responsibility for participation
4. Recalibrate training after system matures

*Key Benefits*

- Better resource planning
- Better communication with documented plan
- Identifiable key points for assessment
- Better training because there will be benchmarks on when training is needed

**F. Continuous Improvement**

1. Definition: Scheduled continuous improvement is a process of making service better while minimizing the costs given available resources. Topical areas include:
    - Functionality
    - Assessment
    - Workforce/resource management (additional)
2. Develop assessment tools across projects
3. Beyond assessment, there is a need for environmental scans

*Key Benefits*

- Retain support for project

**G. External Entities (E.g. vendor management) and Interoperability – did not address during the session**

## III. Role and Responsibilities for future CBS planning/initiatives

- Using the RACI model as a reference tool, the group initiated a discussion about roles and responsibilities for different activities in a project. While we did not have time to complete the RACI chart it was helpful to initiate the discussion and understand the importance of clarity of roles and responsibilities for each participant of the project team, campus, etc. Projects will only be successful if participants have a clear understanding of what they are expected "to do".
- RACI definitions are as follows:
  - (R) Responsible: owns the project/problem
  - (A) Accountable: must sign off or approve the work before it becomes "effective"
  - (C) Consulted: Has information and/or capability necessary to complete the work. Should provide input.
  - (I) Informed: Must be notified of the results but not necessary to consult.
- It was decided that developing a RACI chart for future projects would be a useful exercise to complete.
- Refer to attached excel spreadsheet.

## IV. Guiding Principles for future CBS initiatives

A. Develop project plan that identifies major activities, milestones (to measure progress) and resource requirements.
   - Identify when a project transitions from planning to implementation to communication and training.

B. Involve SOPAG in review and understanding of plan so SOPAG can help identify resources.

C. Hire trained project managers.

D. Use project management software.

E. As projects become increasingly complex use a new model for project management. Support project manager with additional roles such as the following (Individuals may fill multiple roles):
   - Project Management (Planning)
   - Documentation
   - Training
   - Software
   - Communication
   - Process Improvement
   - Advocacy
     - One advocate to work with central team to provide leadership and advise on the implementation and policy issues;
     - Individuals on project task force must be able to be a liaison with the campuses
       - Should use existing structure (SOPAG) and representatives from ACG's as the nucleus to advise local campus implementation resources.

F. Don't underestimate the "people" issues.

G. Project Team must consist of two layers of expertise:
   - Decision-makers who can address policy and procedures questions
   - Functional subject matter experts who can identify policy and procedures issues

H. Assign specific roles to Campus Teams and line staff. Campus teams need help with:
   - How to redistribute work
   - Backfill
   - Need to be available for testing

I. Central project team should provide a generic manual of the system procedures.

J. Allocate enough resources locally and centrally
   - Document resources used by early adopters and share with campuses that follow.

K. Manage expectations of what the software can do and will not do. Communicate results of vendor agreement with Department heads (with expectation that this information will be shared with line staff).

V. **Next Steps**

| Action Item | Owner | Due Date |
|---|---|---|
| • Decide what the project management structure will be for VDX/CBS going forward | • **SOPAG/CDL** review the CDL proposal, the critical roles and evaluate whether or not it makes sense. | • TBD |
| • Evaluate areas requested for additional training<br>• Determine what areas require new training versus re-education/refresher training | • **SOPAG/CDL** | • TBD |
| • Review recommendations developed during the meeting | • **SOPAG/CDL** | • TBD |

**VI. Assessment of Meeting**

- *Worked Well*
  - Stuck to the agenda
  - Advance work helped prepare the group for discussion during the meeting
  - Identified key areas for improvement
  - Nice setting
- *Needs Improvement*
  - Not enough concrete conclusions

## Appendix 1 :Questionnaire

**CBS/VDX Project Questionnaire, October 2006**

1. What, in your understanding, were the goals of the CBS/VDX project?

2. How were those goals communicated, up or down the line, between administration and ILL staff, during the project?

3. How did your campus conduct training for VDX?

4. In what areas would you like more training?

5. What three things did your campus do well during VDX implementation?

6. What three things did your campus 'miss' (or what might you have done better) during VDX implementation?

7. What three things went well at the system wide and CDL level?

8. What three things were 'missed' (or might have been done better) at the system wide and/or CDL level?

9. What are your top 2 priorities for additional VDX functionality?

10. Based on the VDX experience, what three suggestions would you make to the UC Libraries (UL's, SOPAG) regarding future system wide projects, especially those that might require all campuses to participate and might involve changes in technology and workflow?

11. What three suggestions would you make right now to the UC Libraries (UL's, SOPAG) regarding the ongoing CBS/VDX project?

12. Do you have any additional comments you would like to share?

| Key Activities/Roles | Project Manager | (VDX) Implementation Task Force | SOPAG | ILL Staff | ACG and Campuses | University Librarians | Library IT Groups | RSC | TF | CDL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-project Planning | | | | | | | | | | |
| Contract Negotiation | | | | | | | | | R | C |
| Vendor selection | | | A | | C | C | | | R | |
| Project Organization | | | R, A | | | | | | | |
| Project Planning | | | | | | | | | | |
| Project Management | | | | | | | | | | |
| Project Communications (local) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Project Communications (systemwide) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Process Change | | | | | | | | | | |
| System Enhancements (Selection) | | | | | | | | | | |
| System Enhancements (Implementation) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Training | | | | | | | | | | |
| Help Desk | | | | | | | | | | |
| Technical Readiness (hardware) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Campus Commitment | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ongoing Vendor Management | | | | | | | | | | |
| Documentation of Policy and Procedures Decisions | | | | | | | | | | |
| Policy Decisions | | | | | | | | | | |
| Procedures Decisions | | | | | | | | | | |
| Resolution of Campus Differences | | | | | | | | | | |
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