

## ServasOnLine Senior Panel Teleconference

October 27, 2011

**Attendees:** Gary Sealey (Canada), Derek Carver (New Zealand), Penny Pattison (Canada), Phyllis Chinn (USA), Michael Silbert (Canada), Claude Lefrancois (Canada), John Gunther (USA), Sean ? (USA), Jonny Saganger (Sweden), Pramod Kumar (India)

**Chair:** Gary Sealey

### Draft Meeting Agenda:

- 1) Could Wild Apricot support a quick, interim solution for ServasOnLine?
- 2) Can we avoid getting too complex so that we can readily and inexpensively implement some standard basic Servas policies and procedures for use of say at least half of the Servas world?
- 3) Can you in Senior Panel provide kind of advice and recommendations on what actions we should take now, with an understanding of the cost and timing.

### Additional agenda Item requested by M. Silbert:

- 4) Review of the Goals and Processes of the Senior Panel

### Notes:

1. Gary noted that there had been email correspondence about Wild Apricot following the webinar, expressing reservations, with several commenting that it would divert volunteer resources away from ServasOnLine development
2. Pramod gave an update on the Drupal ServasOnLine development project:
  - a. Since the updating of the Use Cases did not happen, Pramod defined an initial set of essential features (see Appendix at end of minutes)
  - b. It was clarified that a process is included to enroll travellers, including the interview step and a LOI stamp, which could be checked by the prospective host
  - c. Pramod noted that Mathew is a programmer, and he needs a designer to work with; Sean is a user interface designer and not a graphics designer.
  - d. To simulate country host lists, a selection of 'all hosts in country ABC' can be made using the filters; it can then be downloaded to an Excel-type format for printing
  - e. In the current specifications, there is no link to Dolphin
  - f. John Gunther pointed out that the Drupal database could be periodically imported from or exported to Dolphin. **John volunteered to take a lead role in developing such a conversion program.**
  - g. John also spoke of the long term vision of one database, but to get there, Drupal could be synchronized with the various existing systems until it is shown to meet their needs
3. Could Wild Apricot support a quick, interim solution for ServasOnLine?

- a. There was general discussion of the vision of the on-line presence that Wild Apricot offered.
- b. It appears that the vision is similar to Pramod's specifications for the Drupal system, except that Wild Apricot already has an attractive interface, and Drupal uses a country-specific registration, allowing different fees.
- c. It was noted that the questions/concerns about Wild Apricot included the cost, and the amount of customization required
- d. The question was raised: Is there a need for an interim solution
- e. Gary replied that the GA mandated ServasOnline, and there is no functional program that we can be proud of, and he feels pressure to do something
- f. There were comments about the amount of work required for an interim solution, and perhaps the focus should be on supporting Mathew's work
- g. It was pointed out that the Wild Apricot cost is not large compared to any paid custom development, and one of the strengths of Wild Apricot is that you can't customize it, which makes it simple and easy to implement
- h. The large cost of volunteer time for these different initiatives was noted

#### 4. Next Steps

- a. It was noted that in a few weeks, there will be a new version of the Drupal system
- b. Gary will investigate proposals from Wild Apricot partners and costs
- c. There was a comment that any interim solution would be optional for the countries, although the details of how that would work were not discussed
- d. Mention was made of the current Dolphin on-line application form on servas.org, which allows interested people to connect with their country group (although some countries are not set up to accept these applications) – the interim solution could be considered a more user-friendly extension of that.
- e. There was some discussion of governance – opinions ranged from saying that an electronic system was mandated and so we can go ahead, to the need for countries to be consulted if there is a potential parallel system implemented.
- f. There appeared to be general agreement that the next GA will be required to address the governance issues.
- g. It was noted that if there is a sizeable membership in an online system, then those not involved will not get contacted as frequently, and will begin to lose out; this would affect the buy-in of the Servas countries.
- h. Michael Silbert mentioned the web-based host list system that Servas Canada has developed. Michael will provide more information to panel members via email in the next week or so.

#### 5. Next Meeting

- a. The next meeting will be held in about 2 weeks
- b. Participant work required before the next meeting:
  - i. Review of next version of Drupal system
  - ii. Review of Canada's web-based host list system
  - iii. Analysis of further information about Wild Apricot options

## **APPENDIX: Features of Servas Online Prototype**

Servas Online Prototype will be an online community of Servas hosts and travelers. The community will be divided into several groups with one group for each country. Every host and traveler who joins Servas Online will be a part of his/her respective country group and will have a unique user ID and password, which will allow him/her to log into Servas Online. Initially, Servas Online prototype will have the following features:

1. Allow non Servas persons to see if there are Servas hosts in different countries and cities. But he/she will not be able to see the contact details of the hosts or communicate with them.
2. Allow a non Servas person who wants to join Servas, to contact the National Secretary or other designated Servas key person in his country, through server based e-mail and arrange for his/her interview. After a successful interview and payment of the requisite fee as applicable in his/her country, the applicant can become a part of the Servas Online community. The Servas Online administrator of the country can designate the new member as a host, traveler or both.
3. Enable Servas hosts and travelers to search for hosts in different cities and countries and see their Servas profiles and also communicate with them using the server based email, but without getting to see the real contact details of the hosts.
4. Enable Servas hosts and travelers to edit and update their profiles, contact details etc. in Servas Online.
5. Enable hosts to check the authenticity of the Lol of a traveler based on the serial number of the Servas stamp on the Lol. By logging into Servas Online and entering the serial number of the Servas stamp, the hosts can see the name and the profile of the traveler to whom a particular stamp has been issued.
6. Enable group administrators to send emails to their entire group using the server email system.

Additional features can be added at a later stage.