COmanage Dev Call 20-Mar-09

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Attending

Heather Flanagan, Stanford (chair)
Jim Leous, Penn State
Digant Kasundra, Stanford
Steven Carmody, Brown
Ken Klingenstein, Internet2
Michael Gettes, MIT
Ann West, EDUCAUSE/Internet2
Renee Frost, Internet2
Emily Eisbruch, Internet2 (scribe)
Steve Olshansky, Internet2

New Action Items
[AI] (Digant) will send the group an email with a link to Alpha Release Candidate 4. (Done)
[AI] (Steven) will identify a programmer to help with COmanage Shibboleth issues.
[AI] (Ken) will draft an email to interested parties who could be helpful in COmanage testing.
[AI] (Heather and Steven) will draft a document proposing phases for moving forward.
[AI] (Heather and SteveO) will inform the list of an additional call to be held Friday, March 27.

Carry Over Action Items
[AI] (Anyone interested) available to assist in early testing contact Heather and Digant.
[AI] (Steven and Jim) will flesh out the existing developer domestication guidelines in the wiki.
[AI] (Digant) will create a simple html mockup of the Beau Jest interface and have it available at the Spring I2MM.
[AI] (Ken) will reach out to potential international developers to participate in early alpha testing
[AI] (Ken) will ask his contact at the Norwegian Federation about Foodle.
[AI] (Bob) will provide to the list background on user stories.
[AI] (Ken) will talk with Lois about Fluid involvement in improving the COmanage GUI, scheduling it for later in the year.
[AI] (Chris) will contact Atlassian and try to obtain a timetable for Jira domestication. (Ken) will provide some wording for this communication with Atlassian.
[AI] (Bob) will send links to the group on the invitation problem.
[AI] (Ken) will send a note to his contact at OOI to explore their level interest (after the COmanage alpha is ready).
[AI] (Ken) will ping Frank Siebenlist from Argonne National Laboratory, who is interested in COmanage.
[AI] (Digant) will create COmanage video #2, when the improved Collabmin GUI is available.

Discussion

Update on Alpha Release

Alpha Release Candidate 4 is now available.
   http://comanage-dev.stanford.edu/vm/comanage-alpha-rc4.tar.bz2

Digant has been working on getting the installer to work all the way through. Two use cases are working:
- test Shib
 - local IdP

The ad hoc federation case is not yet working.

[AI] (Steven) will identify a programmer to help with COmanage Shibboleth issues.

It is now possible to test and start to debug integrating Drupal and Sympa. The Drupal installer doesn't work, however running it by hand at the CLI does work. There are remaining issues with Confluence that Chris is looking at. More testers/helpers are needed.

Q: Are you far enough to use more helpers? Does the code fail in "friendly" ways?

A: yes. Testers need to be people of a technical nature (programmers, system administrators, application developers) -- people who can file useful bug reports and patches.

Ken will craft a draft note asking for testers and send it first to Digant for technical accuracy.

[AI] (Ken) will draft an email to interested parties who could be helpful in COmanage testing.

Timing for Public Release

The week before the Internet2 SMM is the target for the public release of the alpha.
It was noted that we had hoped to be at the phase of public release by now, in large part due to having less developer resources available than originally planned. Digant noted that the code he inherited had many issues that needed to be addressed, and lacked proper structure and documentation.

Q: Given the challenges to date with the early (inherited) code base, should we be continuing with it?

A: Yes, we want to get something out there. Once we have a working version out there and people can create domesticated apps, we will work with the design spec and improve the code.

Vision and scope for the COmanage Project

Jim stated that in the VOs he has been talking with, Sympa and Confluence are the most important applications. There is also interest in Dimdim for web conferencing.

Digant: we are still looking at Confluence, Sympa, and Drupal. The vision is on track. Only the code needs work between alpha and beta.

Questions were raised about the value of the appliance with an installer component, versus providing a VMware image. The possibility was discussed of providing different images (representing the most attractive options for the community), rather than an installer.

Ken: we are trying to deliver an appliance that captures the vision, with the emphasis on the vision in the long-term.

Steven: a VMware image has advantages over an installer. Steven articulated the vision of providing an almost-ready- to-run COmanage instance with some set of applications already there, requiring minimal configuration options to be set in order for it to be functional at a base level. We don't need to provide any choices about installing other apps, in this early phase. It should be a simple process to bring this framework into whatever federation one wants to use.

Digant said he agreed with providing a simple installer, but he inherited a web-based installer. There are many scenarios that the installer tries to handle. In the collabmin interface there's an applications tab where it's possible to add the desired additional applications.

It was noted that some are of the opinion that putting a new interface in front of applications like Sympa, v. utilizing their existing UIs, is likely not the right approach.

Q: If COmanage only takes you thru a setup of Internet2 tools (i.e. Shibboleth and Grouper) and you configure other apps (i.e. the actual collaboration tools) yourself, why would people use it? Our approach to date has been to provide an abstracted layer on top of Sympa and Grouper for people who are not so technically savvy.

A: Right now, the primary thrust is to get pieces that may need to be assembled into technical hands for a couple of weeks to kick the wheels.

Digant: The installer is almost done. Questions like "Where are certificates?" need configuring under either approach (VMware image or installer).

It was agreed that everyone could use the same password for this alpha version, simplifying the certificate issue.

Steps for Moving Forward

The current goals are to deliver a
-useful appliance
-vision of domestication.

The goal right now is to get something into people's hands to help inform us of final vision.
Heather and Steven will work on a phasing document to reaffirm the long- term vision and suggest some of the intermediate steps. The group will hold an addition "off-week" meeting to come to consensus.

[AI] (Heather and Steven) will draft a document proposing phases for moving forward.

[AI] (Heather and SteveO) will inform the list of an additional call to be held Friday, March 27 at the same call time: 2 PM EDT.