Information Technology Committee

By John Kuhn, Information Technology Committee Chair

The Information Technology Committee has been quite busy this calendar year. In January we approved a new committee Charter of expanded Objectives, Goals, and historic key Milestones of progress (available at TNI IT Committee.)

Website

Committee member and staff webmaster, William Daystrom, has been busy providing requested modifications and enhancements to the website while maintaining public availability to its information and services. He has worked closely with TNI Database Administrator, Dan Hickman, to create code modifications of Laboratory Accreditation Management System (LAMS), provide backups as needed, and track usage and responsiveness of the application. Reduced responsiveness on the original website host server prompted him to review and seek out a new ISP website hosting company for the TNI website and its applications. The move to the new ISP is complete and new ISP hosting services appear to be running 3x-10x faster than the previous provider.

LAMS & Method Compendium

Dan has continued to work with the NELAP Accreditation Bodies (ABs) to help them enter and routinely update their data in LAMS. We understand that budget and hiring constraints have made it difficult for many ABs to devote fulltime resources to get information into LAMS, so Dan has offered his services to help them make the initial transition. Once set up, an AB can update the system with new information uploads in a few minutes. One of the committee's goals is to get all ABs' routine updates into LAMS; the initial data from all ABs are there now. One LAMS expansion underway is an add-on feature called the "Method Compendium." This feature expands the functionality of LAMS beyond just a Fields of Accreditation (FOA) lookup database. The compendium will allow users to click on any method and obtain either a copy of the method or a hyperlink to the website where it is available for purchase (e.g., ASTM, Standard Methods, etc.). This is a work in progress, but new methods are being entered/updated on a daily basis. In addition, a recorded webinar on LAMS functions & features is planned at the upcoming IT Committee meeting in DC this August.

Who can download tables of Fields of Accreditation (FOA) from LAMS is another hot topic of discussion. Currently only ABs can perform this function. The IT committee is seeking opinions of stakeholders on if this function should be available to all LAMS users. Right now, non-AB users can see all the data, but they can't easily download it as a table. This ability can help a lab quickly check their listed primary/secondary accreditations against their application submittals. The discussion will continue at the IT Committee meeting in August.

Generic Application Plan (Gen App)

About a year ago the TNI LAB Expert Committee (LAB) contacted the IT Committee to look into the feasibility of creating a generic application form for laboratory stakeholders. Laboratories would like to have a generic application where they could enter information once and then apply to all the states they want to apply to for accreditation with a single submittal. The IT Committee created a Draft Development Plan and provided several presentations at the Louisville meeting about how this might work. The concept was approved by the LAB and agreed there are many benefits to it. Implementation is underway by TNI's webmaster. Basic demographic data from LAMS will be uploaded into the form database.

Committee Membership

Goodbyes were said to Art Clark, past active member and IT Committee Chair, who officially retired his tenure on the committee at the March 2014 meeting, two years after his retirement from US EPA. Please let us know if you are interested in being a part of this committee.