1. MEDICOL Access & ID Management – Final Report

1.1. Background

A key recommendation from the MEDICOL Recommendations Report is: "Decentralize some of the processes for managing content on MEDICOL providing more control and flexibility for managing the curriculum." This recommendation provides the impetus for individualized user access, a necessary precursor to decentralized content management.

Staff and Faculty access to MEDICOL (both Medicine and Dentistry) has been facilitated through the use of generic ID's and Passwords since the inception of MEDICOL. While generic ID's provide efficient user access they allow reduced control over security and management of sensitive information. Individualized access can be provided to users, resulting in increased site security and allowing more comprehensive file management. However, this will require time and resources due to increased user management, support and training. Two pilots were implemented to examine the implications of establishing a system-wide individualized-access user database – the Faculty Resources pilot and the DPAS Tutor pilot. The results of these pilots will be available at the end of May. This report is intended to highlight the current status and some important modifications to the pilot.

1.2. Administrative Resources Considerations

With the advent of the distributed curriculum in January, transfer of large multimedia files between the three sites' administrative units became an identified need. As such, a special MEDICOL section called "Administrative Resources" was set up in each course component (i.e.: DPAS, HDI etc) and released to an ID called "mdcoord". The "mdcoord" ID is a generic user ID commonly used by administrative support personnel to access MEDICOL throughout the four-year undergraduate program. However, implementation of the "Selective Release" function in WebCT is prone to human error; in January the Administrative Resources section of HDI was inadvertently made available to all users for a 24 hour period. Server Logs had to be requested from ITServices to identify compromised information and the identity of users who accessed it. This crisis culminated in a decision to remove all administrative documentation from the curricular sites and onto a new, separate Administrative Resources site. At this time it was further deemed that the "mdcoord" ID did not provide sufficient security for the materials[1]. Individual access to this new site was implemented for the necessary administrators, faculty members and course directors at all three sites.

1.3. Interim ID Management Measures

The decision to move to individualized ID management for administrators, certain faculty members and course directors has added significant workload to the ID management project – representing approximately 200 new users over the first two years of the

[1] The ID has been in use for a number of years and the password has not changed for 20 months due to limitations of staffing last summer (the only practical time for a password change). There is no feasible method for tracking who is using this ID or whether it remains strictly in use by administrative staff. For these reasons the ID may present a security risk for the handling of sensitive documents.

program. A small portion of this time has been offset by the termination of the Faculty Resources ID pilot – some of those users have been switched to the Administrative Site.

Management of such a large number of users has become a problem. Initially, due to the low numbers of users, IDs were managed in a semi-haphazard fashion, typically listed on an excel spreadsheet. Often, information was lacking with regards to contact information or which sites a user had access to and, more importantly, how long they were to have the access. With the initiation of the ID pilot an effort has been made to standardize the ID management process and can now be summarized as follows:

- A user access request is presented to the MEDICOL Administrator responsible for ID management. This may occur through a variety of channels such as telephone and direct or forwarded email.
- The MEDICOL Administrator will first evaluate whether the request warrants individualized access. Currently, only users who need access to the Administrative Resources section are added, including Program support staff / administrators, acting course directors and faculty members involved in overall program delivery (i.e.: week chairs). One exception to this rule is the decision to phase out the use of the "guest" ID and add collaborative lecturers or other guests separately and for a specified, finite period of access.
- Users who do not meet the above criteria are given generic access information such as the "mdfac" ID.
- Users who meet the above criteria are forwarded the *MEDICOL Access Request Form*[2] to complete.
- The user returns the form to the MEDICOL Administrator for addition to the user management database and the appropriate MEDICOL sites. Where necessary[3] the MEDICOL Administrator will first generate a guest CWL for the user.
- The user's access rights will be revaluated every 6 months for perpetual requests and as required for temporary requests.

1.4. Current Status

Due to the unexpected requirement of increased user management the procedures described above have not been applied retroactively to September 2004, the beginning of the ID pilot. The first priority has been to bring the user management database up to date and in-sync with the MEDICOL access database; unfortunately WebCT does not allow for any database integration short of custom programming. The projected completion for this process is mid April. Thereafter, the database will be maintained until early June at which point the access revaluation notices and accompanying *MEDICOL Access Request Forms* will be sent out. The form is considered essential for the ongoing success of ID management and will therefore be required for future access without exception. Users who do not respond with the correctly completed form will have their access revoked on June 30, 2005.

[2] The MEDICOL Access Request Form is a document designed to help safeguard curricular materials through efficient tracking of user information and provisions for binding agreement to a code of conduct. Contact Christopher Stephenson christjs@interchange.ubc.ca for further details about this document.

[3] Users without a UBC student, employee or faculty number must be sponsored as guest users even those directly involved in the delivery of the program.