Information Management Committee May 2012 report

Not as much happened this month. The Terms of Reference should be ready for approval now. The manufacturer of the "Fraudulently labeled" network cable got back to me. Their testing of the cable sample I sent revealed that the cable was in fact 24 AWG as advertised. Since their testing was more rigourous than mine was, I have to go back and figure out where I went wrong.

Terms of reference

Description

Committee "Terms Of Reference" are now ready for approval

Review of progress made during reporting period

- Made wording of "General Purpose" stronger by removing the implication that the Chair's opinion is important or distinct from the committee.

- Added Website redesign as project to be completed by AGM.

- Reworked the financial section. The committee is only directly responsible for capital costs up to $300/year. While committee activity may have an impact of reoccuring budget items, they are already accounted for in the budget.

- Replaced template wording for "Review and Evaluation process" with what I actually plan on doing for review and evaluation: write reports. The "Key Duties and Responsibilities" also need to be reviewed annually for relevance.

Network Cable

Description

The manufacturer, having done more thorough testing than I have, has concluded that the 500ft box of cable was in fact 24 AWG

Review of progress made during the reporting period

After reporing my findings of 26AWG wire in the network cable to the manufacturer, I was instructed to send pictures and a 5 foot cable sample. They tested the indiviual wires with a "Beta LaserMike Model 283-10 BenchMike, ... a non-contact optical measuring device using a laser for measurement with an accuracy of less than 1 micron (0.00004in)." They concluded:

> The diameter of the conductors measured in a range from 0.0199" to 0.0203" (0.507 mm to 0.515 mm). UL 444 specifies that the solid copper conductor diameter should be a minimum of 0.0191" or 0.485 mm to be classified as a 24 AWG conductor.

They also checked with less accurate dial calipers, making any calibration error exceedingly unlikely. When I measured (a single) wire with the fancy digital calipers in the North Shop, I got measurements ranging from 0.39mm to 0.42mm. Even in the letter I sent with the cable sample, I noted that that range was larger than the rated accuracy and reproducibility of said calipers. Either I was using them incorrectly, or there is something wrong with them.

Plans and Next steps

I intend to remeasure the cable samples in question (over 100ft apart), as well as some scrap 24 AWG cable that appears to have more copper. To match the thoroughness of the manufacturer, I plan on measuring each strand 3 times with two different instruments (144 measurements in total). The second instrument I plan on using is the vernier calipers located at the south shop. If nothing else, it should explain if the problem is with the new digital calipers or the user.

Spoke computers

Progress made during the reporting period

- The third Spoke computer is now wall-mounted.

- Re-installed USB stick in GNU/Linux (CentOS) test computer. Added "Anything Windows can do, GNU+Linux can do better.txt" on desktop to invite user comments.

- Installed updates, Open Office.org, GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP), Inkscape (vector drawing), a pair of project management programs, and a sound recorder on the computer running the GNU/Linux USB stick

- On one of the Windows computers, I configured Windows media player in order to test the microphone. I used a custom configuration to disable the automatic downloading of "rights management information".

Hurdles

- Around the time of the last report, the USB stick was removed from the GNU/Linux test computer. It turns out the reason was that the [Alberta 1 Call website](#) requires Internet Explorer 7 or newer. I sent them a WTF? message, but have not heard back from them, despite it being over 2 days. While the "Welcome" computer at Bikeworks North does have IE8 installed, the icon was removed from the "Start" menu and desktop.

- I was told to cease and desist activities outlined in the May report as "Plans and next steps". I suspect the problem may be a lack of communication.

- Somebody installed something called "HP Touchsmart Magic Canvas" on at least one of the Spoke computers. This may have be an attempt to lock the machine down, but had the side-effect of disabling the on-screen keyboard. In my experience, such task managers don't work anyway, since it sets up a situation that the software (not intended for secure operation) is trusted more than the user. This leads to a situation where users can circumvent the restrictions simply by manipulating the software in unexpected ways.

Plans and next steps

- I may investigate if the Alberta 1 Call website *actually* requires Internet Explorer (by using proprietary features), or is just discriminating based on user-agent string.

- I will try opening the lines of comunication with the Spoke people over the use and configuration of their computers.

- I may ask Brett (or Leila?) about making non-marring covers for the webcams on the spoke computers. I have observed that people find cameras a little creepy. Since the security of the computers can not be assured, physical covers for the cameras would make any remote or delayed activation pointless. The computers are still wired for sound though.