

April 7, 2011



Design Charrette Report Project 17 Asset Inventory Solution

Project 17 Asset Inventory Design Charrette Report

Overview

On Thursday, March 31st, 2011, nine members of the Asset Inventory Group met at The Lodge at Tangled Oaks with the intent of designing a technology solution to support the asset inventory portion of Project 17.

We worked loosely from an outlined sequence of questions, which when answered, provide the basis for the solution. These included:

What is the solution or site all about? We wanted two types of input here. First, a concise statement similar to an elevator pitch that describes the solution. In addition, we wanted a series of stories about how we envision the site being used.

Here's a consolidated version of the statements we got for the elevator pitch description of our asset inventory solution:
*[Our Solution] is a database that contains USEABLE information about anything and everything that is valuable in growing a sustainable regional economy and nurturing a business ecology to support **ag/tech**.*

Stories were harder to come by. In retrospect I think we were trying to make them too elaborate. Here are the story statements that were discussed:

- *Chris wants to be able to look for people who need something in his interest space and to look for others who have something in his interest space.*

- *Susan wants to be able to do research on agricultural robotics looking for regional resources for tech in ag. She wants the results of her research to be included in the database so that others might benefit from her efforts and might add to her work in a collaborative manner.*

Other statements about the solution's purpose and use:

- *A tool to help local people start businesses locally.*

- *Jurisdictions will use it to sell the region and justify economic development.*

- *Regulators can use it to provide creative solutions.*

- *It will match opportunities, products, services, talent, IP, assets. It will be able to provide intelligence beyond the basics in making these matches.*

Who will be visiting/using the solution or site?

What types of content will be provided to each type of user?

What functionality will be provided to each type of user?

We intended to get through these three questions and stop there, leaving the technical and visual design for a next step. What actually happened was that these three questions intermingled and spilled over into the technical more than we would anticipated. Content types and assets got intermingled as well. In digesting the raw information and my memory of the day, I have come up with an approach for ordering this very organic examination we did.

First, if you wish to refer to the original and transcribed notes from the day. Go to this URL:

<http://www.a2technology.com/DesignCharrette/>

What I have done is create a chart that can be used to create Mini Stories about the use of the solution. The left column contains types of users, the middle column contains verbs or actions, and the third column contains what is involved in the action. All the terms were taken from our original notes.

Mini Story Tool

User	Verb/Action	What
Entrepreneur	Look for	Jobs
Pre-entrepreneur	Research	Skills
Investor	Communicate	Money
Large Business	Collaborate	Accommodations
Small Business	Contribute	Entertainment
Job Seeker	Advertise	Products
Traveler	Publish	Services
Vacationer	Sell	Knowledge
Student	Buy	Education
Inventor	Consume (media)	Partners
Jurisdiction	Match	Opportunities
Regulator	Learn	

To tell a Mini-Story, select one item from each column. Examples:

- *Entrepreneur looks for money*
- *Investor researches opportunities*
- *Vacationer looks for accommodations*
- *Large business advertises jobs*

Try a few. Not all combinations are relevant to our purpose. The ones that are appropriate will define our solution. Content types can be inferred from the resulting list of mini stories. If a vacationer is going to look for accommodations, then we must have content types that contain that information. If businesses are to advertise jobs, then we must have job listings as a content type.

Content Types

Content types and assets crossed boundaries in our discussions. Sometimes an item seemed to be in one category, but might also fit into the other. Sometimes conceptual assets seem to be represented by existing content types of another name. For instance, a company might be considered an asset, have a company profile, one or more contact records, and also have several principals that are considered assets themselves under the heading of talent or brain trust. Below is a listing of all the terms recorded with asset and content type designations.

Assets vs Content Types

Item	Asset	Content Type
Intellectual Property	Yes	Yes
Companies Large and Small	Some can be highlighted as assets	Yes
Services	Yes	Yes
Products	Yes	Yes
Organizations, ie WIB, CASP	Yes	Possibly
Governments, ie counties, cities	Yes	Possibly
Horticulture, agriculture, viticulture	Yes	This is a grouping of information
Places	Yes	Yes
Communities	Yes	Possibly
Infrastructure, ie highways, utilities	Yes	Possibly
Amenities	Yes	Possibly
Natural Resources	Yes	Possibly
Talent, professional profiles	Some can be highlighted as assets	Yes
Routes, hike, bike, auto, horse, run	Yes	Possibly
Retired Brain Trust	Yes	This is a grouping of information
Professional Services	Yes	See services
Business Infrastructure	Yes	This is a grouping of information
County General Plans	Yes	This is a grouping of information
Land Use	Yes	This is a grouping of information
Employment Boards	Yes	This is a grouping of information
Language	Yes	This is a grouping of information
Meteorology	Yes	This is a grouping of information
Oceanography	Yes	This is a grouping of information
Educational and Research Institutions	Yes	This is a grouping of information
Hospitality, entertainment, conference, culture	Yes	These are groupings of information
The following are generic content types we would expect to need for a complete solution.		
Contacts	No	Yes
Addresses	No	Yes
Phone Numbers	No	Yes

Item	Asset	Content Type
Email Addresses	No	Yes
Topics	No	Yes
Notes/Articles	No	Yes
URLs	No	Yes
Electronic Documents	No	Yes
Images	No	Yes
Audio	No	Yes
Video	No	Yes
Ads	No	Yes
Notices	No	Yes
Messages	No	Yes
Actions	No	Yes
Events	No	Yes

Central to our desires is the ability to easily and naturally morph information structure and presentation as our needs evolve.

Technology

Although we weren't focused on technology during the charrette, we do have some preliminary opinions. We want our solution to be a platform to grow on. It should morph and change as our needs evolve. We want web technologies and modularity. We want to take advantage of open source technologies, but have the solution be usable by proprietary applications. We want to be enabled with social media and collaboration tools. We want to be able to display appropriate information in geographical interfaces, such as Google Maps or Google Earth. We want a sophisticated and reliable security scheme. We want to be able to learn from our user's behaviors, so that we can understand better what they want and need. We want an advanced matching capability. We want to be able to exchange information with other data repositories, such as the Connectory and WIB's systems.

Summary

I think all of us hope, if not believe, that given a tool as we imagined it at the charrette will give Project 17 and the region a much greater chance of success. These capabilities are not only possible, but practical.

We can have an intelligent application that provides natural, highly usable access to the information we need. We can manifest all the mini stories. We can have a friendly application with power to look deeper than we currently can, analyze what it finds and present us with important information that we might otherwise have missed. Our solution can nurture a business ecology to support ag/tech on top of a sustainable regional economy.

Next Steps

Once a common vision is agreed on, a solution will be described that can be estimated and funded. The next piece of the design is necessarily technical and the audience of participants might shrink dramatically. Therefore, to save some time, I am going to write a white paper describing solutions in hawkVision technology and also in Drupal. These can be treated as fast lane choices and could be further compared to solicited proposals if desired. - Prepared by Alex Adams -