

**Brainstorming Session:
Launching GroupSites for the ToP Trainers Network**

**Agenda and Documentation
May 10, 2010**

Executive Summary and Background:

This two-hour virtual meeting focused on one of three initiatives for the **TTN Asynchronous Platform Project**. The project was initiated by the TTN Leadership with a request for a recommendation from the Virtual Team for a virtual platform for the entire network to use. A small group of Virtual Team members experimented with three platforms: ning, GroupSites, and Google Sites. Based on specific criteria, GroupSites was chosen. The three initiatives to implement the recommendation are: Site Development; Launch; and Training and Technical Support.

The Launch Initiative is coordinated by Catherine Tornbom and John Epps. The invitation list for this meeting included the TTN Leadership Team, TTN Virtual Team, and the TTN Membership Team.

The meeting was conducted on **Adobe Connect Pro** with two different teleconference services. We started with FreeConferenceCall and then switched to **TimeBridge Conference Call** after a system-wide glitch of the first service caused a brief disruption in our meeting. Catherine convened and facilitated the meeting and Ester Mae was the technologist

Attending:

- ★ Deb Burnight, Sioux City IA & Heaven
- ★ Ester Mae Cox, Madison County IA near Des Moines (at a country acreage)
- ★ John Epps, Denver CO
- ★ Wayne Nelson, Toronto Canada
- ★ Nadine Bell, Dallas TX
- ★ Catherine Tornbom, Tucson AZ
- ★ Sunny Walker, Aurora CO
- ★ Jane Stallman, Oakland CA
- ★ Alisa Oyler, Phoenix AZ
- ★ And during clustering, Lynda Baker joined the group – Austin TX

	Agenda	Description	Page
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Using Connect Pro • Opening Conversation 	Layout #1 included a poll on our use of Connect Pro; noting our geographical location; a quick review of virtual meeting basics; and then thru the ppt's on agenda and expectations. Layout #2 posted two questions on change as part of the opening conversation.	2
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question 1 – <i>What is the value-added benefit to the TTN to use this type of technology?</i> 	Layout #3 started with information on GroupSites and then had each participant list their responses to the value-added question in individual Note pods. We then discerned the themes in a central Note pod.	3 4
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question 2 – <i>How do we support a shift of the TTN into a virtual-savvy organization through 100% adaptation of the new virtual platform?</i> 	Layout #4 featured a Consensus Workshop. Everyone had an individual Note pod for brainstorming. We started with clustering and used Note pods for the columns.	5
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing Conversation: What are the next steps, who will be involved, and when will this happen? • Meeting Evaluation 	Layout #5 was the closing conversation with next steps using Chat pods for each question. Layout #6 provided an opportunity to evaluate what worked/didn't work during the meeting.	6 7

Opening Conversation

Poll: How many times have you participated in an Adobe Connect Pro Meeting?

- Zero, Nada, Never = 0
- A couple of times = 4 (40%)
- Somewhere between 5 and 10 = 5 (50%)
- More than I can count = 1 (10%)
- No vote = 0



Consider
our time
together
as...

What do you find most exciting about change?	What causes you anxiety about change?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential for the technology to create greater efficiencies in our communication. • The opportunity to use tools in the TTN's interactions that can then become a product of the TTN. • The novelty of trying something new. • Moves fast, creative, new insight, keeps me in touch with my grandchildren, more and new ideas, so much to learn and so little time • Learning something new • The possibility of having an easy way to work together. • It gives me opportunities to do things I have never done before. • I love learning. • Adrenaline rush of something new & exciting • Making new ideas real and concrete. • Integrating new ideas into systems and structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The possibility that rather than efficiency, the new tools will become more time consuming, require more of a learning curve to navigate the technology than the content it creates merits. • Not being able to have the skills necessary to adapt, nor the insight to see alternative options for action. • Can I personally keep up? • Goes faster, than my mind and machinery are able • The time it can take to figure things out. • I'm not sure what value is added to our present system of email & list serves. • We need a system to make it easy to work rather than to have to learn new technology. We're all busy and want to work rather than to learn new systems for little obvious value. • I hate not knowing how to do things. • I do not like to perform in a substandard manner. • When something simple and easy becomes complicated & thus takes longer & I'm frustrated • Not knowing the impact of the changes made • Change is so abstract that it's difficult to address as a topic

Information on GroupSites

A virtual platform that combines the benefits of Social Networking with collaboration.

- Member Profiles
- Sub-Groups such as TTN Leadership Team, Virtual Team, Membership Team, etc, as well as special interest groups
- Group Calendar
- Email blast capability
- Receive digest of activities by email
- Discussion Forums
- Blogging
- Share documents/files/videos
- Photo Galleries
- Key connections for external contacts
- Private or public visibility
- Security
- Easy to use and set up

Additional Information:

- Twitter and FaceBook connections
- So helpful to have our work displayed visually real time and moved things along quickly.
- We've had someone lead us and it has worked well
- GroupSites that Linda Alton has set up - I have found it fascinating. Files, archival forms, documents put to use that I didn't know existed. Discussion area to communicate, calendar, not high-tech.
- When someone posts you get a notice and can read the whole notice without going online.

The screenshot shows the Groupsite.com website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Tour', 'Features', 'Cases', 'Pricing', 'Support', and 'About'. Below this is a large blue banner with the text 'Affordable Collaboration to get things done.' and 'Easy-to-use and designed with humans in mind.' A prominent orange button says 'Try Now For Free!' with '3 EASY STEPS' below it. To the right of the banner is a stack of three laptop screens displaying the Groupsite interface. Below the banner is a horizontal menu with 'What's a Groupsite?' selected, and other options: 'Social Networking', 'Collaboration', and 'Social Collaboration'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'Here's what you can do.' and lists four features: 'Discussion Forums & Blogging', 'Group Calendars', 'Files & Media Sharing', and 'Member Profiles & Management'. The right column is titled 'Here's what people are saying:' and features a quote from TechCrunch by Mike Arrington, a 'Customer Cases' section with logos for Accenture, JPMorgan, CDC, West City Connect, and the American School Counselor Association, and a 'Check out the Groupsite Directory' section. At the bottom right, there's a 'Questions About Groupsite?' button.

Individual Brainstorming on “What is the value-added benefit to the TTN to use this type of technology?”

- Closer connection among members
- Ability to keep documents up to date as they are developed
- More information for decision making
- People can find information
- Conversations can evolve over time
- Group brainstorming
- More functionality than just email or listserv
- File storage
- File sharing,
- Subgroups workspace
- File collaboration & version control
- Profiles of members so you can find who has expertise you may want to contact
- We can stay abreast of each other's work.
- We can work collaboratively.
- We can check the calendar that we all keep up to date.
- We can discuss ideas on the discussion groups.
- We get updates on activities thru the digest.
- We can share documents, files and videos.
- Sub-Groups such as TTN Leadership Team, Virtual Team, Membership Team, etc, as well as special
- Share documents/files/videos
- Photo Galleries
- Group Calendar
- Email blast capability
- RSS Feeds
- Intell Streaming
- Text Based approached to information sharing
- Shared Documents
- Photo Gallery
- E-mail (list serv like)
- Information Sharing
- File Storage - archives
- Discussion threads
- All task teams having workspaces on one platform.
- More collaborative in real time.
- The archival function.
- Blogging.
- Photo galleries where we could share good pictures for marketing purposes.
- Group calendar.
- File storage / sharing in the 'cloud'
- Discussions that are better tracked and stored & easily accessible.
- The ability to create 'subgroups' when they are needed, and streamline communication amongst them
- Email blasts could become more strategic.
- Having member 'profiles' makes it a little easier to know your network
- If we learn the calendaring function well, could use it to create national course calendars that are more accurate / up to date
- Access on mobile media
- Search-ability?
- All the teams can meet in the same "place." A common system.

Discerning the themes: What is the value-added benefit to the TTN to use this type of technology?

- ➔ More information for decision-making
- ➔ Meeting place for everyone - a virtual village commons
- ➔ Storage place for keeping history of our work and access to it
- ➔ Keeping everyone up-to-date on calendar, documents, et al
- ➔ Continuity theme - from one year to another with task teams and platforms - All the teams meeting on the common platform
- ➔ Fact that platform accommodates technology level that young people are used to - (we may not be at same level)
- ➔ Does pull us into a fresher space to be able to market the value we have as a network and put more modern face on who we are and what we do (marketing to & attracting members and potential members & committee members = extends engagement)
- ➔ Lot of functionality - it does many things
- ➔ Variety of different groups can work at the same time
- ➔ Opportunity to be on committees and experiment and learn and attracts people to membership

**How do we support a shift of the TTN into a virtual-savvy organization through 100% adaption of the new virtual platform? -
Brainstorming Session – Selected TTN Members – May 10, 2010**

Intentionality - Commitment	Phasing	Training	Vibrant Content – System Customizing	Radical Exposure	Help & Support	Member Benefits	Non-Member Involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% adaptation - make it member specific (only available to members) • Let old listserv stand as long as it needs to • Continually refer people to this workspace • Quit using Yahoo listserv and LinkedIn and FaceBook and Ning, et al • Drop other forms of web related communication • Require that TTN members use GroupSites to access any and ALL ToP resource documents (i.e. Course Materials, Course report forms, etc.) • Keep TTN information very current • Well defined "client" section for people who buy facilitation services • Keep the membership exclusive to TTN dues paying members only. • Have some of it function like before (for comfort) • Well developed economic model to ensure the "technology" is sustainable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an incremental focus to adoption for the slow adapters. • We get comfortable & competent first so we can hand hold • Add additional functions later. • Start with obvious functions, like committee workspaces. • Suggested learning phases (i.e. don't try this until you've mastered that) • Make the system SIMPLE • Avoid some of the more "exotic" functions like blogging; include those we really use like listserv. • Start with a 'sexy' resource that draws people to the site. Perhaps some of the PPT's and other resources people wanted from the TTN annual meeting, or thee results of the IAF sessions? • Have some of it function like before (for comfort) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer monthly training on the use and benefits of GroupSites. • Offer learning sessions - Train the trainers/members - start with trainers a small group and have them train others • Provide training for both GroupSites and Computer skills • Provide computer competency training for all TTN Members • Provide simple training • Ability to work with Windows 7, MSWord 2010 Files as well as Word Perfect and Lotus Notes • Do several online orientations to the GroupSites functionality, ensure that all members are able to sign up for one of the orientations. • Offer Community of Learning training early on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to current and validated research on ToP methods • Cross Link to a sim in Second Life to ensure full global engagement • Ensure that there is a system for maintaining the 'file cabinet' that keeps it extremely simply and easy to access. • Links to ToP Source documents on the methods • Start with a 'sexy' resource that draws people to the site. Perhaps some of the PPT's and other resources people wanted from the TTN annual meeting, or thee results of the IAF sessions? • Use the calendaring function to create the national course calendar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use it to prepare for virtual and F2F meetings • Involve many people directly in small group work • Use it during task team meetings to familiarize members with it • Refer all work to new site • Provide the consulting service to teams that you already are doing. • Demonstrate its usefulness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An easily accessible user's manual w/ graphics • Provide problem solving help. • Provide a helpline that people can contact in real time. • A training manual • Contact info for the competent "helpers" • Partner with people not part of our team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it fun - have some prizes for people who go there and do something or find something • Have a group license for the platform that allows us to offer this to our clients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We seriously need a way to KEEP connected with the unpaid - perhaps some pieces are less private (2 levels)

Closing Conversation....

Where are you most optimistic about the Launch?

Deb Burnight: I have great confidence in the volunteers who are leading this charge.
Wayne Nelson: There seems to be a fair amount of anticipation
John Epps: Having simple start-up mechanism
Jane: I think that members, committees will be fascinated by the capacity of these systems
Alisa Oyler: A lot of talent has already gone into mapping the functionality.
Nadine Bell: There was great energy among the participants today and I think it will be contagious.
Lynda Baker: I like seeing this info all coming up on screen! Very exciting
Ester Mae Cox: Seems like a critical mass of us have gotten started - that's a good thing - Heard very little negativity about this tool.

What will be the impact on the TTN of the Launch?

John Epps: Potentially providing access to helpful ToP information
Sunny Walker: It could draw us all back into the closeness we had in January
Nadine Bell: It will connect us in a way we have not previously known and generate more than I can imagine at this time.
Wayne Nelson: A splash of interest and activity at the beginning
Alisa Oyler: A self-image shift for the network.
Deb Burnight: Done successfully, it can propel us into a whole new place, able to compete in the marketplace, of course, ideas and member organizations.
Deb Burnight: I meant "of courses" in my previous post.
Lynda Baker: May give more info than we can deal with????
Jane: If we can provide greater functionality to the committees, there work will be ramped up and have more impact.

Where are you pessimistic about the Launch?

John Epps: Getting too complicated at the beginning
Ester Mae Cox: So much to do, with finite time
Deb Burnight: So many of us are on the first arc of a very steep learning curve.
Sunny Walker: Too little function might "off-put" our younger, savvier members (e.g. Kim in Marketing)
Wayne Nelson: There are people with low-level skills who may be put off if things don't work right away.
Jane: It will be important for new people to not get discouraged when our "leaders" have challenges in using the system - keep it simple as John says ... ;)
Lynda Baker: is this the best tool?
Alisa Oyler: I'm hoping the same kind of energy goes into thinking strategically about the how to manage content, keeping it vibrant and incrementally manageable.
Jerry Mings: Concerned over the scope of the site - what is the real purpose of the site?
Jerry Mings: Would like to see less emphasis on a variety of methods and more consolidation on core compute skills like data base management, matrix analysis of course results and publishing.
Sunny Walker: We will need the answer to Jerry's question VERY CLEAR in writing
Lynda Baker: Cannot maximize the sticky blue virtual wall
Ester Mae Cox: Whether or not we can all get to the station at the same time (or use the same train) and quit using the 1001 other ToP social networking sites where stuff currently is
Nadine Bell: I am concerned that people will let their technical inexperience hold them back from this incredible opportunity.
Jerry Mings: I sense there is not a shared understanding of what the site will do and what people want to do in support of their practice. While related, they are different.

Are you interested in being involved moving forward? How so?

Catherine Tornbom: Penny was not able to make the meeting but would like to be involved with the Launch.
John Epps: Sure
Nadine Bell: You bet!
Jane: I would like to learn how to use the system to help the committees I'm on and also for client use
Lynda Baker: Ditto Jane
Wayne Nelson: I'll help set up the system
Ester Mae Cox: I won't stand in the way of this... and will certainly support it... but know I'm not in spot to have time to lead it
Alisa Oyler: I can't commit to at this time. Apologies.
Wayne Nelson: I have an Elluminate users manual that can be a model

What are the next steps? When will this happen?

Sunny Walker: Lynda has agreed to use her credit card. YEA!
Ester Mae Cox: Figuring out way to "level" folks - who is beginner, who is intermediate, who should teach?
John Epps: Develop a simple system and a training tool
Nadine Bell: I was thrilled to hear that the target date is June 1.
Alisa Oyler: Talk with other committees about what the available content is and how to get it appropriately "sold" and shifted over.
Alisa Oyler: Lots of PR to the network about exciting new platform.
John Epps: Please get documentation of this meeting to us.
Alisa Oyler: Scheduling online training / orientation sessions.
Wayne Nelson: We need the essential TTN organizational information right away to populate the site
Jerry Mings: Need to build a well defined scope for the site and technology road map to ensure the site can meet the requirements of the group.
Sunny Walker: Getting the right stuff into the site development in the next 3 weeks
Ester Mae Cox: Need to create a training design/plan and get some trainers ready to launch this
Jane: Have a publicity/marketing campaign that goes out to all members that draws them into they system and that it will be our sole means of TTN communication starting in July (well maybe not sole but major)... use this as a tool to get those membership dollars in.
Lynda Baker: Ditto to Ester Mae's comment
Sunny Walker: Will need to migrate TWiki content (into the very secure "paid trainer only")
Deb Burnight: Holding a TTN-wide call to publicize the launch, where people can ask questions and have an initial orientation.

Meeting Evaluation...

What worked during the virtual meeting today?

Deb Burnight: Excellent leadership.

Lynda Baker: I am grateful I could drop in late - thank you very much

John Epps: Well done!

Sunny Walker: The hustle through it worked

Deb Burnight: Workshop process

Nadine Bell: Catherine, your facilitation was very effective and I appreciate the way you handled the technical difficulties.

Lynda Baker: Ditto

Jerry Mings: Good meeting.

Ester Mae Cox: A lot of data was clustered relatively

Wayne Nelson: Calm facilitation and problem solving

Alisa Oyler: The facilitation, management of time and silence and using the tools to (raised hands, pre-prepped pods) well. We (you!) have clearly gotten better at this.

Nadine Bell: Ester Mae, your capturing of data and creation of new pods in a rapid manner is awesome. Thanks

Ester Mae Cox: A lot of data was clustered relatively quickly (the rest of the comment)

Sunny Walker: You two are a FAB team!!!

Nadine Bell: Taking the pairing out of the clustering helped us with time and results.

What are your suggestions to improve our virtual meetings?

Ester Mae Cox: Catherine & I will schedule a formal de-brief

Wayne Nelson: I think a simple Users Manual for Adobe Connect would help people

Lynda Baker: I cannot see the complete title on this pod

John Epps: No need to have people read their comments written in our individual pods -- seems a duplication of effort; either speak them or write them.

Sunny Walker: We still need to figure out how to cluster more quickly and easily.

Jerry Mings: Consider providing members with minimum technology requirements so they can have a meaningful experience (e.g., Monitor sizes, connection speed, etc)

Deb Burnight: Practice, practice, practice.

Wayne Nelson: I shifted text to 10 pt type and it made for easier reading

Jerry Mings: Please, Please Please use a VOIP connection. The call today cost an extensive amount of money

Alisa Oyler: Is there a way to do small group work in the conference calling function?

Ester Mae Cox: Suggest people put comments into 3-7 words -- need to think about if this would help or not - longer statements mean we don't need as much "clarity" time

Ester Mae Cox: Yes Alisa is the answer to your question

Nadine Bell: Find a way to have a VOIP connection.

John Epps: Jerry, I'm on Skype, and it worked well.

Deb Burnight: I also used Skype with success.

Ester Mae Cox: We are moving quickly toward a voice solution that won't cost you -- SoundConnect - only one person will pay.

Alisa Oyler: Nice. Ester Mae.

Nadine Bell: Have everyone speak loudly so we can be heard by everyone.

