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TO INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

MOREQ2010: POOR MANAGEMENT OR GOOD NEWS?

The MoReq2010 project continues to miss its delivery dates. Is this good news, or does it simply result from poor project management?

The background is that the MoReq2010 project is way behind schedule – and it seems to be slipping further and further with every passing week. From an original intention to present a draft at the DLM Forum's Spring 2010 meeting, it has slipped so far that we still have yet to see a single word of the draft. And yet the project is sticking to its announced intention to deliver MoReq2010 before the end of 2010.

Two weeks ago, at a conference in Bucharest (Romania), Jon Garde (the consultant who is writing MoReq2010) announced the following plans:

1. publication of his responses to the first round of consultations by 15 October;
2. consultation on the draft in “October-November”;
3. completion of the project before the end of December 20103.

Let's look at these one by one.

First, the date for “responses” has come and gone, and we have seen no responses published yet – this despite that the consultations in question finished a long ago as 6th September (and in reality, most of the consultees' comments were known well before 6th September).

Second, it is difficult to see how the consultation can now take place in “October-November” if it is truly going to follow the responses. There is hardly any of October left – so very little time to work up a draft after the responses are published. And as a consultation has to last at least 4 weeks, it really would need to start in October if it is to conclude before the end of November.

Third, the latest MoReq2010 newsletter (downloadable from the DLM Forum website from the award-winningly memorable url http://dlmforum.eu/index.php?option=com_jotloader§ion=files&task=download&cid=330_06bd7e20bb2215b9b62b20efa31b031b&Itemid=113&lang=en) says the MoReq2010 “...draft specification will be publicly released in October”...) and also that “The MoReq2010 project will be in its final stages...” by the time of the DLM Forum meeting in Brussels on 16th/17th November 2010. Really? By the time of the Forum, the consultation will still be running; and stages to follow include responding to the consultation, incorporating feedback from the consultation, review from the European Commission's Expert Group, incorporation of their feedback, and a QA review by the DLM Forum's independently-appointed consultant. All these things take time. Can this be

consistent with completion before the end of 2010, as was promised in Bucharest? It all seems highly improbable.

The project gives every impression of not being managed tightly, in particular of not learning from the planning mistake that each slippage represents. Instead, every step is reached later than expected, but the delivery date remains unchanged.

There is a way in which we might see part of MoReq2010 before year-end. This would mean something like publishing the core module only, which by definition is due to be compact. Such a scenario would save the DLM Forum some face by claiming that the most important part of MoReq2010 – its core – was delivered on time, leaving only the additional requirements modules, the extension modules, the metadata model, the xml schema, and the testing framework to be delivered during 2011. The trouble with this scenario is of course that the core module alone is of no interest to anyone outside the vendor community – it is singularly useless to users without other modules.

This all sounds bad. But there is good news too. The fact that everything has slipped suggests that due care and attention is being paid to the work. And the work need is enormous and painstaking, to be sure. The task of replacing MoReq2 – 73,000 words plus 345 metadata element definitions plus over 1,000 pages of testing documentation, all extensively cross-linked – is large, and it must have been under-estimated. But if it is being done carefully, not rushed, that is a great relief. Taking the long view, it is much more important to get it right than to stick to the original timetable.

So: poor management or good news? The answer is: both.

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This paper is also available on the AIIM ERM Community website
(<http://aiimcommunities.org/erm>).