



First Nations Technology Council's

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT FORUM

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Summary Report

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Executive Summary

In recognition of the importance of information management (IM) as First Nations move towards, once again, becoming self-governing Nations, the BC Chiefs mandated the First Nations Technology Council (FNTC)¹ to develop an integrated information management strategy and to work with communities to develop an integrated, flexible data/information management system that could be shared by all First Nations in BC.

To begin to implement this mandate FNTC hosted a 2-day Information Management Forum to solicit input and direction from key First Nations and government stakeholders. Musqueam Elder Delbert Guerin, Norm Leech, Chair of the FNTC and A-in-chut (Chief Shawn Atleo), Regional Chief, Assembly of First Nations, in their own ways, stressed how important it is for First Nations to become masters of information management. FNTC's Integrated Information Management Working Group Co-Chairs' Jess Gordon, representing the Namgis Nation and Gwen Phillips from the Ktunaxa Nation set the stage for the Forum, stressing governance as an important issue. On the second day Harold Calla, Chair of the First Nations Financial Management Board made the cost/benefit case for information management, and noted that more and bigger forums needed to be held so that all First Nations would reap the same benefits that his Nation, Squamish, has as a result of implementing and resourcing an IM Strategy. Marlon Grove, Director, Corporate Information Management Branch, Ministry of Labour and Citizen Services presented BC's IM historical and current strategy and addressed some areas where collaboration with First Nations might occur.

The Matrix Interview Technique was used by Facilitator, Janice Rose to solicit input from all participants on 8 key questions that, following significant discussion, resulted in the following:

Vision: British Columbia First Nations recognize and respond to emerging trends as a result of having access to the best information possible.

Mission: To achieve the Vision, FNTC will ensure that First Nations have relevant integrated Information Management Systems and technology that adheres to First Nation values, relationships and defined standards: including reliability, flexibility, sustainability and self sufficiency and have the capacity and competencies required to manage their information.

Recommendations:

1. FNTC should play a coordinating role in developing collaborative relationships with communities that have embarked, or are ready to embark, on the information management journey.

An Information Management Working Group should be established to develop a Strategic Plan for Integrated Information Management for all BC First Nations that includes:

- a. an Environmental Scan;

¹ First Nations Summit #0906.03 2006-09-29
Assembly of First Nations Resolution 17/2006
Union of BC Indian Chiefs Resolution 2007-07

- b. a Communication Strategy that begins with building awareness of the importance of information management;
 - c. a definition of the competencies and capacity required for First Nations to become good information managers;
 - d. policies and procedures, based on ‘best practice’ organizations so that First Nations communities will be on a par with industry standard information management organizations;
 - e. a definition of the requirements for a standards based information management system that could shared by any First Nations in BC;
 - f. an Information Management roadmap that begins with planning, process mapping, user requirements, systems analysis and implementation activities that are generic enough that any sized community could profit from this exercise.
2. The Federal and Provincial governments should acknowledge the cost of not properly and adequately resourcing First Nations Information Management initiatives and should provide adequate base resources to help First Nations implement an Information Management solution.
 3. FNTC should liaise with software vendors and negotiate bulk purchases as appropriate, develop a list of reliable consultants and work with other organizations, including international organizations to ensure that ‘best practices’ are being promoted and, where possible, ensure that development of relevant government applications is leveraged so that all communities benefit.
 4. FNTC should organize Regional Workshops where this information and capacity building can begin.
 5. FNTC, in partnership with those communities who are leading the way in information management planning, should develop an “Information Management Tool Kit” including a generic Policy Manual, a Retention Schedule, etc.
 6. The Information Management Working Group should promote the belief that information should be managed as any other resource and be viewed as a regular source of revenue generation, especially in the area of land referrals.
 7. FNTC should work with both Canada and BC to ensure that communities get access to required government data, in a format that is useful to them.

Background

Mandate and Authority

The BC Assembly of First Nations, the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, the three First Nations political organizations that comprise the First Nations Leadership Council, have endorsed the need for an information management strategy to support self government. First Nations Summit Resolution #0906.03 dated September 29, 2006 mandates the First Nations Technology Council to work with First Nations to develop a an integrated information management strategy and to build and distribute an integrated data/information system model. This resolution was passed by the First Nation Summit at their October 2006 meeting. Similar resolutions have been passed by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the BC Assembly of First Nations. (See Appendix A) FNTC recognizes that working collaboratively will bring the best results to BC First Nations and the Information Management Forum was an important first step in building this collaboration.

The resolution mandates the FNTC to undertake an environmental scan to determine which First Nations communities are planning for a single function data/information management system and work with these communities to develop an integrated, flexible data/information management system that could be shared by all First Nations. FNTC recognizes that an integrated system is an important tool, but the overall success of the implementation strategy also requires development of policies and procedures and a significant information management capacity building plan. A strategic approach to integrated information management will benefit not only First Nations, but will benefit government by ensuring better access to more reliable First Nations data. This integrated approach to information management fits with INAC's Comprehensive Community Planning model that has been received enthusiastically by First Nations. Information management is key to better decision making, accountability and the reduction of the reporting burden that plague so many of our communities.

Role of Government

The Leadership Council, the Federal Government and the Province in signing the Transformative Change Accord have committed to reporting progress in closing the socio-economic gap between First Nations and non-First Nations in British Columbia. Accurate, good quality data is critical if all stakeholders - Federal, provincial and First Nations- are to know whether progress is being made.

As First Nations move towards self-government, the awareness of the need to develop and manage information is building and, like other governments, the understanding that they require the vision, policies, procedures, tools and capacity to do this successfully. Among the 203 First Nations in BC, some are further along in thinking about an integrated approach to information management. The FNTC Information Management Forum has brought together leaders to share work that has already been completed and define the work that is remaining.

Some First Nations are developing their own information systems for land and resource management and health and social services. Neskonlith/Adams Lake/Little Shuswap, Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, Tsilhqot'in National Government, Treaty 8 and others are developing land referral tracking systems, Cowichan Tribes have developed an electronic medical records system, Mustimuhw and the Sto:lo Nation have developed Unification- a

comprehensive, integrated, citizen-centred systems for social development and human resource management.

These information systems are essential pillars of self government and will provide important data for First Nations governments. It is important to get the 'big picture' and that requires the ability to integrate data from various systems for planning and decision making. The Ktunaxa Nation has developed an integrated information management system model in CRIMSIN(Comprehensive Resource and Information Management System for Indigenous Nations) which is under development but requires more work to make it fully functioning. FNTC intends to support and build upon the work of these leading communities with the goal of supporting communities who are just beginning to develop their information management strategy. An integrated approach to developing an information system that can be used by all First Nations is an investment that will bring significant returns for both First Nations and for government.

For Transformative Change reporting and to support improved provincial government administrative data, BC has developed an Aboriginal Administrative Data Standard for the collection of data specific to Aboriginal people but this standard is based on self-identification and will not necessarily result in accurate data. The Service Delivery Initiative Office, Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services is focusing on developing a citizen centered approach to service delivery for British Columbians. It provides added impetus to cross-ministry data sharing and integration and it also supports the development of Service Delivery Networks, which bring together staff from all levels of government. The initiative also seeks to develop innovative partnerships and approaches to improve government services to First Nations. The Ministry of Health is leading a pan-Canadian initiative focused on public health – a multi-million dollar project called Panorama. The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance and the Ministry of Children and Family Development are developing a complex case management system that will allow them to share data. With proper planning and collaboration, provincial investments of millions of dollars can also benefit First Nations governments.

The First Nations Technology Council's Integrated Information Management Working Group hopes to leverage and participate, where appropriate, in the development of these provincial systems in order to:

- Ensure that the needs of First Nations citizens are reflected in the systems architecture (i.e. Movement from on reserve to off reserve means that data about a particular individual needs to move from a community system to a provincial system);
- Develop policies and procedures around information management that support government to government relationships;
- Ensure that systems developed by First Nations organizations and/or communities can leverage the development of policies and standards as appropriate;
- Cooperate with, collaborate with, and share in Provincial systems projects (as appropriate) while respecting the principals of OCAP (ownership, control, access and possession of information);
- Develop First Nations systems that can easily share data with Provincial and Federal systems in a secure, transparent manner;

- Provide tools to First Nations communities to reduce their reporting burden to Government and facilitate reciprocal accountability; and,
- Ensure that a qualified, capable First Nations information management work force is developed both on the systems side and on the business side.

The Planning Committee includes Sue Hanley (FNTPC), Gwen Phillips (Ktunaxa Nation), Jess Gordon (Namgis First Nation), Judy Wilson, Chief Neskonlith Indian Band as well as additional representatives from other First Nations communities/organizations and Provincial, Federal government and academic experts.

Goals and Objectives

The overall objective of the Information Management Forum was to begin the collaboration process in determining information management related goals that will benefit all First Nations. The FNTPC Information Management Forum was an important first step in beginning the process. The long term goals include:

- Determining First Nation community information needs as an essential starting point
- Developing Information management requirements – what the First Nations public service needs to manage
- Determining the structures and processes needed to support an information management plan including:
 - Governance (legislation, bylaws, resolutions)
 - Policies, procedures, record keeping
 - Business processes and workflow analysis
 - Traditional Knowledge Protocols and Protection
 - Access and privacy including ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP) principles
- Determining the skills and human capacity (how to build capacity in information management, data base development, technical support, website/community portal management)
- Ensuring that all stakeholders recognize there is a need for reciprocal accountability and reporting to and from INAC, HRSDC, Health Canada, etc.
- Ensuring that data standards, storage, security are incorporated into the process
- Supporting applications that are interoperable and, where appropriate, open source

Some of the initial steps required would include the following:

- Define the Information Management processes, policies and systems a self-governing First Nation needs to have in place;
- A ‘roadmap’ that would define a generic information management process for First Nations communities;
- A commitment from all levels of government to move forward, including resources;

- Collaboration in the development of generic policies and procedures that could, if necessary, be modified at the community level;
- An agreement to work on a draft capacity building plan modelled on work done by the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association (i.e. competencies identified, curriculum development, partnership with post-secondary institutions to ensure that Certification is recognized); and,
- A post forum Working Group that would lead a collaborative approach to First Nations information management solutions, coordinating federal, provincial and First Nations plans and resources associated with surveillance and accountability.

Introduction

The FNTC Information Management Forum’s goal was to determine the information management needs of First Nations in BC as they relate to a functioning self governing nation.

A welcome message from the FNTC Chair, Norm Leech and an Opening Prayer by Delbert Guerin of the Musqueam First Nation began the day. Both wished the group well in its endeavours to tackle this important function. Both speakers stressed the importance of working together to reduce duplication of effort and ensure that requirements that are defined in this Forum are transferable from Nation to Nation.

Delbert Guerin spoke of the efforts required to produce that documents that resulted in the world famous “Guerin” case where fiduciary responsibility of the Crown was established. The case was fought and won through research of historical documents that not only proved the case. Mr. Guerin stressed the importance of an organized comprehensive Information Management Plan for all First Nations.

Norm Leech

Thank you to the Ministry of Labour and Citizens’ Services, Office of the CIO, Network BC, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, and other sponsors for supporting this Forum.

These are exciting times and the FNTC is pleased to help facilitate this forum. Times are especially changing for First Nations. The 10,000 year history has undergone more change in the last 200 years than ever before and it has only accelerated in the last 20. The challenge is in translating between the differing worldviews. But translation must be a two-way street. The elders need to understand the science and technology less than the scientists need to understand the experience and wisdom accumulated over a hundred centuries. Technology and Information Management can be a tremendous tool in that exchange of information and translation for all.

Another difference in worldview is the understanding of rights and responsibilities. Some people believe in so-called god-given rights but First Nations people tend to believe the Creator entrusted us with the responsibility to use, protect and maintain our lands in a good way, we were not given the right to exhaust, abuse or destroy it. We have been largely prevented from fulfilling our responsibilities to our lands but people are becoming ready to

assume those responsibilities again. Information management can help us prove and share the value of traditional experience and knowledge and reclaim our responsibilities.

Too often we fall into the trap of “us” and “them” thinking, of bands, or nations, or races, or ethnic or interest groups, but in the big picture, all those differences are meaningless. Ultimately we share 99% of the same concerns, hopes, dreams and DNA; there really is just “us”. All humanity needs to learn this and information management can facilitate that. The sharing of knowledge, data, information, experience and so on can break down those barriers and enable better management, better communication and better governance through improved planning, coordination, cooperation and collaboration.

A-in-chut (Chief Shawn Atleo), Regional Chief, Assembly of First Nations

A-in-chut shared that he is the 25th line of Chief in his family and that his name means the rope that holds on to the whale – an important part of the food for his people. He opened by reminding the audience of the importance of sustainability and that everything is one.

Chief Atleo has a Masters in Global and Adult Learning. He described his educational experience as one of the beginning of change and transition and stressed the importance of ensuring that the learning is appropriate for the learner. Higher learning used to be simply sitting down with the Elders. Now we have different methods of teaching. The Colonial system has been the teacher for First Nations but it does not begin where First Nations are knowledgeable and First Nations have not been very successful within this system. The results are a deep mistrust of the education system and the people involved in it.

Chief Atleo stressed that, today, First Nations are taking control of our future by taking control of their information’. Because decisions are made daily based on information and data, First Nations need to become masters in this area. He described stories of how his people have evolved through time and have adapted to change and wondered how his community of Ahousaht (a village of 900 people) can connect globally when there are only 25 telephone lines. Chief Atleo pointed out that technology is a mixed blessing – sometimes humans need to turn off the blackberries and the internet and sit with our Elders in our quiet communities where a different kind of learning occurs.

The First Nations Leadership Council is looking to leaders such as the Ktunaxa Nation Council, Namgis Nation, the Nisga’a, Shuswap Tribal Council, and the Sto:lo Nation to provide guidance in the area of Information Management and to work collectively and collaboratively with the FNTC.

Video – Dr. Doug Aberley

A short video was presented wherein Dr. Doug Aberley spoke about the wide collection of information held by the Namgis Nation. They hold maps, reports, ethnographic records, research materials, which amounts to the best source of information about the Namgis territory. They used to have to go begging for information from various agencies – now those agencies come to the Namgis Nation for information.

Setting the Stage – Jess Gordon, Namgis Nation and Co-Chair FNTC Integrated Information Management Working Group – “Information Management in a Self Governing Nation – Challenges and Rewards”. (See Appendix C for Mr. Gordon’s presentation)

This forum is not about which policies to adopt, what laws will be good for self-governing First Nations or even which services may need to be delivered. All of these subjects will vary, sometimes greatly, from community to community; Nation to Nation.

What we are here to consider is how we will administer the laws that are enacted – whatever they may be. We need to be ready and able to provide our leaders and lawmakers with timely, relevant information to support their deliberations. We will need to have legally defensible records to take to court, accurate and reliable tax rolls, health and social programs that are administered within meaningful guidelines and with measurable outcomes, economic development agendas that are profitable, culturally aware and environmentally sound. And, we will have to do these things with far smaller numbers of people than other levels of government have available.

Citizens expect their political and administrative leaders to make sensible, informed decisions when administering laws, delivering services, granting land use permits or accepting or rejecting economic development proposals. Making informed decisions demands information – accurate, timely, relevant information provided to the decision-makers in a form they can easily understand.

Information is power, and whenever power is needed to protect the rights, prerogatives, safety or future of a people, the party with the best information is far more likely to achieve its goals.

Although it is clear that there will be differences in the authorities and responsibilities applicable to different self-governing First Nations, it is also clear that all self-governing First Nations will share many of the same or similar administrative responsibilities. Those similarities form a core of functions that will be common to any First Nations.

FNTC’s Vision of Integrated Information Management and Suggested Outcomes from this Forum – Gwen Phillips, Ktunaxa Nation Road Map Development - “Needs” – Open Space Social/Vital, Financial/Economic

Gwen, a self described practical manager and not a technology person, has been a Director of Education and found that the children were not prepared to learn (dealing with social and health issues). As the Director of Education, she could not get health and social information and had to meet with many different people to find out what issues were affecting the education of the children. Assessments determined that approximately 40% of the community was affected by maternal alcohol exposure and presented signs of FAS. Teaching had to be adjusted for students to learn and so did the child’s environment both in and out of school. The Labour Market is looking to First Nations demographics but when you examine the human capacity in detail, it is limited. We need to change the opportunities to match the people, because sometimes you just can’t change the person.

Sometimes, things are not always as they seem and in order to be successful, we must try differently, not harder.

In the realm of Information Management, we need real time information not just a “dipstick” approach every certain amount of years. When you get the information, you can then plan; set a vision and make decisions. We are looking at governance in this process as it is not just about technology. Capacity and Competence – we need people that know how to do things, and we also need systems and tools

We don't want government to do it for us not necessarily even with us. They need to give us the resources to identify and meet our own requirements.

Nunavut Broadcasting Development Corporation - David E. Smith, President

Dave Smith's presentation spoke to the history of setting up the Government of Nunavut and the relationship and importance of information management. He spoke about the need to involve local people in any information and communication technology initiative. Without that, the buy in to insure the success and sustainability of the project will be more difficult. The project team working on setting up IM believed that a citizen-centric database would be required to manage their information – what they didn't count on was the many languages, the two styles of writing using different characters, that exist in the territory, the fact that many people have a 'government name' and the name by which they're known in the community, many people are transitory – they move about the land so have no permanent address, and that people didn't know their exact address. Privacy issues result in government information silos. In hindsight, Dave suggested that it would have been better to focus on financial information, ensuring that every citizen had a personal identity card, and helping businesses by setting up clear permitting and licensing procedures. Dave stressed that there can never be enough capacity building. It needs to be foundation and it needs to be continuous.

Group Discussions by Matrix Interview Technique

Janice Rhodes, the Forum Facilitator, used the Matrix Interview Technique to obtain information and input from all participants.

Four questions were asked in each of two discussion sessions. The questions were asked of each participant within the group, the responses of each participant were recorded. Duplicate answers were combined. As a whole, each group presented their list of responses for discussion with the entire group of attendees.

Lively discussions ensued within each of the groups as the questions were answered. The questions that lead the discussion were as follows:

1. What are the functions of a self-governing First Nation?
2. Which self-governing functions are going to require technology to ensure their reliable operation?
3. What are the elements and indicators of a healthy Information Management system as it relates to a self-governing First Nation?
4. What do you see as the biggest obstacles or challenges to effective Information Management in a self governing First Nation?
5. How can an Information Management system meet Grandma's goals and Treasury Board's goals at the same time?
6. What standards and principles should be applied to Information Management for a self-governing First Nation?

7. How can we collaborate in building an Information Management system for use by all BC First Nations?
8. When it comes to Information Management collaboration, who needs to be involved and what are their roles?

Input From Groups

1. What are the functions of a self governing First Nation?

All current functions and departments are part of a self governing First Nation such as Housing, Lands and Resources, Economic Development, Health, Government liaison, etc. Additional functions such as law making and enforcement which would be new for most First Nations in the self government realm would be included as well. Examples of the application of an Information Management system were given by many attendees. In some cases, access to the information was via a public portal for members of the community and in other cases it was the development of Chief and Council agenda packages and minutes.

2. Which self governing functions are going to require technology to ensure their reliable operation?

Basically all self governing functions can benefit from the automated processes, policies and application of Information Management principles. Referrals are easily processed with the use of an automated workflow process that includes the progressive verifications involving research and the response. Similarly health case files can be tracked for all community members with different levels of access depending on the employees' role in the First Nation Administration.

3. What are the elements and indicators of a healthy Information Management system as it relates to a self governing First Nation?

The indicators of success predominantly relates to the users' experience. User involvement in the development of the system and their ability to provide input into the design and function of the system were of high impact to a healthy Information Management solution. The ability of the system to be user friendly and improve the work of the users (lighten workload, find information faster) was essential.

Overall, user experience can make or break a system. If users are expected to use a system, then it must meet all, of most of, their needs. User acceptance is paramount. There is no point in having a system that is comprehensive, if the users are not using it. The training of the users is critical to the success of the system.

Another factor of success is the comprehensiveness and reliability of the information contained therein. The system must contain good information to which searching and processing is enhanced from any previous process. It is important that the information is "cleansed" before being migrated into the system so that duplicates and outdated information are not part of the library and the information is of value to the community.

Discussion

The system must be able to interrelate with current culture and First Nations culture needs to be adaptive, while retaining the integrity of the culture, to allow this to happen. Employees will have to adjust to a new manner of performing old tasks. Incorporating technology into our culture is similar to changing from the use of buffalo hides to canvass. First Nations have shown that despite historical practices, they can adapt to new methods.

There is sometimes a fear of the written word by Elders, therefore the system should not dominate the culture or take over the culture. A practical example comes from the Nunavut where the percentage sign is used in words. The government would not have been able to operate without the percentage sign, therefore, the system needed to handle the percentage sign within a word - to be able to both enter and search for these words. The absence of the percentage sign within a word would have cultural significance to the Nunavut people.

4. What do you see as the biggest obstacles or challenges to effective Information Management in a self governing First Nation?

There are many obstacles and challenges within a self-governing First Nation relating to Information Management. This is mainly due to the fact that First Nations operate differently and have different skill sets among their employees and community members. Challenges, such as funding constraints, are often prevalent and one of the main barriers First Nations face. Staff turnover, and the associated retraining, is costly and time consuming. Given that there are few Information Management specialists within the community, staff turnover could mean the reassignment of an unskilled (in the area of Information Management) employee trying to fill the gap..

There is a technology gap between the generations - the younger generation is very computer literate and the older generation has some resistance. There needs to be a way to bridge this gap and ensure that all community members have the skills to access the information.

Lack of infrastructure - including the lack of community access to the internet, up-to-date computers and information systems are barriers many communities still face. Broadband connectivity is essential to the success of sharing applications and working collaboratively. FNTC is working with Canada and BC to ensure that industrial strength connectivity and the related technology skills will be available to all communities. In the meantime, there is limited access in some locations so that has to be taken into account during implementation of any system.

The challenge of competing priorities involves departments competing for resources for other projects or initiatives, as well as the development of requirements for one department without consideration given to the needs of the First Nation as a whole. This can be costly and problematic.

Discussion

There is a need for a common vision with increased collaboration so that all First Nations can benefit from the shared progress of managing information. The Federal and Provincial governments need to acknowledge the cost of not properly and adequately resourcing First Nations Information Management initiatives and provide

adequate base resources to bring First Nations to a level playing field. First Nations need to develop a business case that shows government that millions of dollars are wasted on projects when the Information Management foundation is not in place. Initiatives such as aggressively training First Nation IT specialists and Information Management personnel would be helpful to all communities.

5. Once the information is organized and useful, it can be part of an economic development initiative where a fee structure can be put in place for non-community member requests for information. This can be a regular source of revenue generation, especially in the area of land referrals. **How can an Information Management system meet Grandma's goals and Treasury Board's goals at the same time?**

Assuming that Grandma is concerned with the wellbeing and future of the community, and that Treasury Board is concerned with compliance, the system must include consultation and understanding of both Grandma's and Treasury Board's viewpoints. The system must prove to be beneficial to the people, while at the same time allowing the First Nation administration to operate at a high level of efficiency to maintain the requirements presented by the Treasury Board and other sources of compliance.

The cultural values of the community must be respected as the system is implemented and evolves. The abilities and perspectives of the people must be taken into account. The goals of both Grandma and the Treasury Board can be very similar with each needing different details or level of detail. For instance, the tracking of health information is necessary for the wellbeing of a community member but the ability to track and make decisions about the person and the appointments is an administrative tool that is more necessary to the Treasury Board or other government agencies.

6. **What standards and principles should be applied to Information Management for a self governing First Nation?**

The standards and principles of an Information Management system are far reaching. They range from legislative impacts imposed by government or adopted international standards (ISO, OCAP) to best practices established by other organizations. The application of standards must become part of the requirements of a system, particularly if FNTC wants to champion the concept of a shared system; and plays an important role when looking at the ability to share information or to collaborate on information management issues.

7. **How can we collaborate in building an Information Management system for use by all BC First Nations?**

The collaboration process begins with the FNTC which includes representatives from many First Nations. However, expanding the membership will ensure that the system is relevant to more or all First Nations within BC. The sharing of knowledge will enhance the experience for all and evaluating software and sharing that information will benefit all interested communities. Regular meetings and communications will set the stage for knowledge transfer between First Nations organizations. The collaboration process will combine opportunities for success to maximize financial resources.

Discussion

Some First Nations have systems or vendors in whom they have confidence but the awareness of choosing systems that are standards based cannot be stressed enough. FNTC should promote the sharing of systems evaluation based on basic standard requirements. This will help those communities who do not have existing relationships, as well as those First Nations who are unsure of their exact requirements. Most First Nations would welcome reliable advice regarding system selection and this would be enhanced by sharing best practices of those First Nations who have implemented information management systems. FNTC should organize Regional Workshops where this information and capacity building can begin. Regardless of whether different systems are selected, First Nations will be able to share information if the systems are standards based.

The shortlist must include software that is scalable so that both small and large First Nations can enjoy the benefits of the same systems if they so choose. There are financial benefits to having common systems such as volume discounts, vendor allowances and other incentives.

8. When it comes to Information Management collaboration, who needs to be involved and what are their roles?

Overall, an Information Management initiative involves everyone from the Front Line End Users, to the Chiefs, to the different levels of government. All levels of employees within the First Nations need to collaborate by bringing their respective viewpoints into the development and/or implementation of the system the community will use. Ensuring that all interested stakeholders are involved will increase the success of the project and help ensure its adoption.

End users provide functional requirements, help define the parameters and provide input on how the system should operate. End user assistance in testing the system before acceptance ensures that it will meet the community's needs.

FNTC has the mandate to develop an Integrated Information Management Strategy and should, therefore, play a coordinating role, working with communities that have or are ready to embark on the information management journey.

An Information Management Working Group should be established to look at the requirements of an IM system that could work for any community in BC. The Working Group should create an Information Management roadmap that begins with planning, process mapping, user requirements, systems analysis and implementation activities that are generic enough that any sized community could profit from this exercise. FNTC should:

- liaise with software vendors and negotiate bulk purchases as appropriate;
- develop a list of reliable consultants;
- work with other organizations, including international organizations to ensure that 'best practices' are being promoted; and, where possible,

- work with First Nations communities and/or government agencies who are currently developing systems to leverage investments to the benefit of communities; and,
- play a coordinating role in efforts to make available to communities, data that is currently held by governments and other third parties.

Government should collaborate with First Nations as both parties embark on the Information Management Highway. Millions of dollars are being spent on information management processes and government systems, with little or no support being provided to First Nations who, in many situations, are the providers of the data government is seeking. Collaborating with, and supporting information management in First Nations communities is a win-win situation. The communities will benefit by having organized information that is so badly needed for planning and decision making, and government will get better administrative and accountability data. Government should be providing financial support to supporting First Nations information management initiatives. Overall, the development of an Information Management system is collaborative with all interested and affected parties coming together to attain the common goal of managing information in an integrated environment.

Ktunaxa Nation Council Information Management Project was presented by Roslyn Chambers of Aspects InfoTech Solutions and Margaret Teneese, Ktunaxa Nation Council (see Appendix C for presentation)

Margaret Teneese is leading a project for the Ktunaxa Nation Council which includes the development of requirements for a Document Management system. The presentation outlined the development and documentation of requirements and business rules. This included reviewing records of all media (paper, electronic, microfilm, and cassettes), incorporating materials from the Archives as well as examining current processes such as Land Referrals. A thorough examination of all aspects of the Ktunaxa Nation Council operations resulted in requirements that were more comprehensive, and built awareness among users that resulted in them being more educated when they participated in a review of various document management systems. Collectively they developed a short list of suitable software products that could be implemented with very little customization. This short list would likely be suitable for many First Nations since they met well defined requirements and were affordable.

Day 2: Keynote – Harold Calla, Chairman, First Nations Financial Management Board (see http://www.fntc.info/information_management) for Mr. Calla’s presentation)

Harold Calla, of the Squamish Nation, is a strong supporter of information management as a tool to creating an informed membership. His role as Chair of the Financial Management Board has made him aware that the lack of good information management practices in communities is working against First Nations. Upcoming changes to Treasury Board Directives will require more onuses on First Nations to better manage and account for resources, including capital assets on their lands.

Information Management is the foundation for accountability and transparency to the membership. Policies and protocol are needed to address the release of sensitive information. Data in various forms (quantitative and qualitative) are needed in both electronic and hard copy. First Nations need to understand the confidential and private nature of the information

and how it can and must be protected. There are different levels of access, and First Nations' staff needed to be trained to distinguish the differences. Charts of accounts and reporting tools are needed, as much as the file numbers and names required in an automated system.

Information can be a powerful tool when dealing with government and other stakeholders. The Squamish Nation improved their "Additions to Reserve" process by including data (statistics), scanned documents and photographs into one library, using a visual presentation – Google earth to deliver a very important message.

Information management systems should be affordable but the financial impacts of buying a system should be minimal since, in a very short time, the benefits the system bring should well outweigh the costs. Information Management is essential and needs to be funded. It is a tool that can support important areas such as the assertion of aboriginal rights and title, but Mr. Calla noted that it is important to ensure that staff is properly trained by qualified professionals. It important to schedule training sessions in easy to absorb segments, so that a strong foundation is developed and future training can be built upon that foundation.

Mr. Calla stated that these Information Management Forums should occur on a more regular basis, with an expanded participation.

Records Management as the Foundation – What Can BC Offer – Marland Grove Director, Corporate Information Management Branch

Marland Grove has been involved in Records Management for 30 years. BC is the only province in Canada that has an Archive that appraises the records. Mr Grove manages common services, offsite storage management, standardized classification scheme and standardized Electronic Records Management system.

The classification scheme, comprising the ARCS (Administrative Records Classification System) and ORCS (Operational Records Classification System), has been set up by function so that it can adapt to reorganizations as they occur within the provincial government. His department is very much paper based (over 20,000 activities per month) but is slowly moving to more electronic processes.

Retention Schedules are approved through the Public Documents Committee which includes an Archivist and Legal contact.

There is a need to break down the silos that exist within the ministries. The provincial government is using TIM Management (Tower software) that is slowly being installed in each ministry.

The overall goal of the electronic records system is to increase collaboration and standardize practices within the provincial government.

Discussion

There is a need to share information between ministries. The provincial government is willing to share resources, such as their classification scheme, with First Nations and is open to looking at working collaboratively where possible.

FNTC is committed to helping First Nations get access to the data that they require and is currently working with the Integrated Land Management Bureau to ensure that First Nations needs are paramount in the development of the First Nations GeoBC Gateway. The inclusion of a thesaurus, cleansing of the data, system certification (DOD 5015.3, and MoREC) were briefly discussed.

Most First Nations lack qualified information management staff. Job shadowing within the provincial government offices was discussed as a possible way of building that capacity. It was noted that this would take some coordination and planning but could be considered. Group training may be another option that could be acquired from a Consultant or Training Firm.

First Nations keep everything forever and therefore find it difficult to manage and adopt retentions. First Nations need the capacity to maintain a system (ie staff and training). First Nation need the data of the various levels of government and industry but must review it and interpret it for their uses.

Charting the Path to Achieve the Vision

As a group, strategic direction was formulated. This will further be shaped by:

The Vision:

British Columbia First Nations recognize and respond to emerging trends as a result of having access to the best information possible.

FNTC's Information Management Mission:

To achieve the Vision, we will ensure that First Nation have relevant integrated Information Management Systems and technology that adhere to First Nation values, relationships and defined standards including reliability, flexibility, sustainability and self sufficiency and have the capacity and competencies required to manage their information.

Desired Outcomes:

- Archives and other historical materials important to the community are protected and safe.
- Increased understanding of the importance of Information Management to First Nations.
- Every First Nations has an Information Management system that supports their community members.
- FNTC is working with communities to ensure that information management solutions are community driven and benefit all members.
- Recognition of First Nation as the legitimate owners and creators of information and that, while they may have a legislative or accountability obligation to share some information with governments, recognition of OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession) by all stakeholders and all governments are dealing with First Nations in a government to government relationship.

- Funding has been secured to support a province-wide information management initiative that includes a strong capacity and competencies building component.
- Information Centres, are established in communities, whether in a museum, band office, tribal office, and the collections are accessible to membership and other community approved researchers.
- Communities have access to local statistics for decision making.

Recommendations:

1. FNNTC should play a coordinating role in developing collaborative relationships with communities that have embarked, or are ready to embark, on the information management journey.

An Information Management Working Group should be established to develop a Strategic Plan for Integrated Information Management for all BC First Nations that includes:

- a. an Environmental Scan;
 - b. a Communication Strategy that begins with building awareness of the importance of information management;
 - c. a definition of the competencies and capacity required for First Nations to become good information managers;
 - d. policies and procedures, based on ‘best practice’ organizations so that First Nations communities will be on a par with industry standard information management organizations;
 - e. a definition of the requirements for a standards based information management system that could shared by any First Nations in BC;
 - f. an Information Management roadmap that begins with planning, process mapping, user requirements, systems analysis and implementation activities that are generic enough that any sized community could profit from this exercise.
2. The Federal and Provincial governments should acknowledge the cost of not properly and adequately resourcing First Nations Information Management initiatives and should provide adequate base resources to help First Nations implement an Information Management solution.
 3. FNNTC should liaise with software vendors and negotiate bulk purchases as appropriate, develop a list of reliable consultants and work with other organizations, including international organizations to ensure that ‘best practices’ are being promoted and, where possible, ensure that development of relevant government applications is leveraged so that all communities benefit.
 4. FNNTC should organize Regional Workshops where this information and capacity building can begin.

5. FNTC, in partnership with those communities who are leading the way in information management planning, should develop an “Information Management Tool Kit” including a generic Policy Manual, a Retention Schedule, etc.
6. The Information Management Working Group should promote the belief that information should be managed as any other resource and be viewed as a regular source of revenue generation, especially in the area of land referrals.
7. FNTC should work with both Canada and BC to ensure that communities get access to required government data, in a format that is useful to them.

Next Steps - Establishing Priorities

After a discussion of various next steps that would keep the group moving in a forward direction the following priorities were established in the order below:

1. Steering Committee
2. Communications and Marketing/Build Awareness
3. Defining principles and values
4. Conducting an environmental scan
5. Continue to build leadership awareness of the importance of this issue
6. Defining standards
7. Vocabulary/thesaurus to be used as an information tool

Participants agreed to focus on some immediate actions to move the Information Management Agenda forward.

1. Establishing the Steering Committee.

The establishment of the steering committee was determined by a group voting process to be the most important next step.

This is predominantly to establish

- o Meet in February 2008
- o Develop context for Information Management Steering Committee
- o Send out information to communities
- o Develop Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee
- o Identify funding for the committee
- o Members could include representatives of First Nations and Tribal Councils who are leading the way, Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, various First Nations organizations such as the First Nations Financial Management Board, the National Centre for First Nations Governance, Aboriginal Financial Officers’ Association, members of Academia, including Archives and Museums.

Discussion - Member criteria for who can participate in the Steering Committee

There is genuine need to proceed quickly to set up a committee so that the work that is being done in First Nations takes into account the broader vision

Liaising with government is important but the First Nations' Agenda must drive the Steering Committee's work. The Steering Committee must be politically neutral and of a size that allows it to move forward in a timely manner.

The Environmental scan will help in determining which First Nations can provide valuable input and play a leading role. The immediate task is to build awareness of the FNTC's mandate and connect into the information management agenda currently underway in the BC government. Currently, there are approximately 11 different government ministries that hold information related to First Nations that are developing or making improving systems. This effort represents several millions of dollars in investment. .

Build awareness

The group agreed that there is an immediate need to produce and distribute an awareness piece to support the Information Management vision and to begin to promote the Steering Committee. The upcoming conference in February 2008 can be used to launch the initiative. This Report should also be distributed at the Conference.

An Environmental Scan of First Nations' Information Management activities should be undertaken immediately. This is important as a number of communities are at the point of making investments in IM, including systems.

Conclusion

The FNTC Information Management Forum provided an opportunity for key stakeholders from First Nations communities, government and industry to begin a dialogue on an issue of foundational importance. Significant input was gathered that will form the basis for on-going work that will build on the collaborative efforts of participants. It is imperative that work begin immediately and that FNTC continue to play a coordinating role.

FNTC could like to thank the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, the Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services and Microsoft Canada for their financial support

Appendices

A. Agenda

B. Resolutions

- First Nations Summit Resolution
- Assembly of First Nations Resolution
- Union of BC Indian Chiefs Resolution

C. Presentations

- Jess Gordon – Opening Remarks
- Nunavut Broadcasting Corporation – Information Management in Nunavut - Dave Smith
- Ktunaxa Nations IM Project – Roslyn Chambers and Margaret Teneese
- Records Management as a Foundation – Marlon Grove

D. Interview Questions with Group Responses

E. List of Invitees