

US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Host: Julie Marcy
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Julie Marcy: Hello everyone. I'm Julie Marcy with ERDC Environmental Lab and I welcome you to the second of our quarterly Webinars in support of the facilitators exchange program.

These web meetings are intended to share facilitation and topics of interest and also to provide an informal venue for exchanging facilitation best practices.

The meetings are recorded and archive files are posted on our facilitators exchange webpage. The specific address for the archive section is shown on this introduction slide under the third bullet. So, you might want to make a note of that -- if you haven't already visited the page.

Just a few etiquette items before we begin today. We will have question and answers after Maria's program. But, if there a term or something that you need explained while she is speaking, please let us know and we'll address it.

You may either use the chat feature to ask a question or ask verbally -- as you prefer.

And then, once we're finished with the questions about the Walk Shop presentation, we'll have an open session where folks can ask general facilitation questions or just share other facilitation items of interest or best practices.

If you would please keep your phones on mute -- when you're listening -- and don't put us on hold, please. So, we don't get the muzak - which can be rather distracting.

But, when you are ready to speak, remember to unmute.

In order to have a better list of attendees, if I could get folks to use the chat feature to indicate your organization. Some folks have done that, if you'll look at the participants list. It'll have a name and organization. If it's just a name, if you wouldn't mind using chat to give us a full name and your organization, that would be very helpful for our record keeping purposes.

And with that, I'll give you today's speaker on Walk Shop.

Maria Placht is a Collaboration Specialist in the Conflict Resolution and Public Participation Center at the Institute for Water Resources.

Maria joined the Army Corps as a Presidential Management Fellow in 2008. As part of her two year fellowship, she completed details at the State Department's Office of Air and Water and at the U.S. Institute of Environmental Conflict Resolution.

She currently serves as a mediator on the Department of Defense Roster of Neutrals and on the Leadership Committee for the Association of Conflict Resolution, Environment and Public Policy Section.

Maria received her Master's Degree in 2008 from the Fletcher School at Tufts University in negotiation and conflict resolution and also water resource

policy. Her master thesis focused on the role of collaborative models in resolving water conflicts.

More information about Maria's background can be found in her biography that is posted on the facilitator's pages along with a posted pdf copy of the Power Point she'll be sharing with us today.

So, Maria, we're very happy to have you with us to discuss the technique of Walk Shop. And, if you give me one minute, I will give you presenter rights. You should have those now and we'll let you take it away.

(Maria Placht): Thank you so much, Julie.

Hello everyone and thanks for joining me today on this webinar. I do really appreciate the opportunity to share information about this technique with you because it's something I learned recently at the annual Association for Conflict Resolution Environment and Public Policy chapter meeting and I know a lot of people aren't able to attend external meetings or conferences these days.

I was really grateful for the opportunity and I'm also grateful for the opportunity now to share what I learned with you because I think it's great when we do get outside the Corps and learn other things to share, especially with this facilitators exchange, which is a really neat forum for all of us to talk about what we're working on and hear each other's stories and things that we've learned and also talk about our challenges and our issues.

Since this is a facilitator's exchange forum, I was just wondering from those of you on the line -- who of you did attend that Facilitation Fundamentals class last year. If you could just raise your hand if you were in that class, I'm

just curious. Okay, so one. Okay, excellent, thank you. So a couple of you attended that class. And then I also wanted to know how many of you are in the facilitator's database, the Find a Facilitator Corps database.

Julie Marcy: See more hands coming up.

(Maria Placht): Oh, excellent. Okay that's great. Yes, just wanted to get a sense of who is out there. And I do know some of you so thanks for joining.

(Maria Placht): This is a technique that I learned about in this past June. The Environment and Public Policy chapter meeting is a several days' conference and they have these trainings the first day where you can go and learn about specific skill sets. And this was a full day of training on the walkshop, so it was pretty in-depth.

And I wrote an article about this in the last Collaboration and Public Participation (CoPP) newsletter, so what I'm speaking of was somewhat captured there. But I'm speaking of this now more from a facilitation perspective, so if you are a facilitator and you're actually trying to use this technique, what you need to do. And I'll give you some background and then I'll talk a little bit more about the facilitation side of this (topic).

The walkshop was really a walking workshop or a field trip, they called it. It really focuses on using photos with text as a subpart for capturing comments on different site attributes and use those photos and those comments to discuss the issues in question -- whatever - if it's a project or whatever - the problems or concerns or whatever the issue was.

And for our purposes of the training, it was the issue of accessibility around the local D.C. Metro stop. So the facilitators sort of made up the issue so that

we would have a concrete example to use as we went on our tour. And so as I go through this I'll reference that question, that issue that we used of accessibility around the local D.C. Metro stop.

This particular technique really requires people to be out and walking around in the field or at the site. And it also had the requirement that people have smart phones. So we had a pretty specific segment of the population for this workshop and those people who did have a smart phone and were willing to use them. But I just want to caveat that up front -- these are two of the requirements for that technique that may not always be present in your situation.

The other thing I wanted to do was to set the stage with this as an information sharing technique. So, when you look at the different facilitation techniques trying to match them to the different purposes or meeting purposes, this is really when you have a meeting where you want to foster information sharing. This is a technique to get you to that goal.

And if you guys have questions, you can chat them in. I may or may not see your chats but as Julie said, we will have Q&A later, but you're welcome to chat them in or you can even jump in. I don't mind at all.

Julie Marcy: I'll help watch the chat for you (Maria). This is Julie.

(Maria Placht): Okay. This is just to give you an example of what this looks like in practice. And I'll go into this in a little more detail. But basically, participants go out into the field -- either by themselves or in groups -- and they go and look for attributes, content or subject that answers the issue at hand or the question in mind that the workshop is trying to focus on.

This is a photo that I took. I went out with everyone else thinking about accessibility of the local Metro stop, and I found this bike storage unit and bike rack. So what the participants do is they take a photo of whatever strikes their fancy and then there's two steps.

First the subject of an e-mail with a code. And I'm going to get into the codes a little bit on the next slide. But the intent is -- as you're out and about -- you're taking pictures or photos and you're e-mailing them back to an account that the facilitators have set up so that they're tracking as you go. And that's what feeds the discussion later.

Before I really delve into that, I wanted to give you an example of what it looks like -- an example subject of an e-mail, an example body of an e-mail -- so you see what people are doing as they're out there on the tour. They're taking this photo and then they're using a coding system that you come up with in advance and then giving it a title.

And then you have the option to -- in the body of the e-mail - you can describe it. You can write as much as you want, but here I just sort of threw in two options. This could just be an explanation - here assisting (bike walkers) and bike stations. Or it can be an opinion -- that it was a great option or really liked the space layout. Or you can even -- the participants can add as much as they want but the key here is the subject of the e-mail because that's how people actually start the conversation when they get back in the room.

Let me just talk a little bit about how this gets set up. When you figure out your workshop, you really are -- and the question of your workshop. For an example, if this was accessibility, you would come up with a coding system that corresponds to some of the questions that you want to answer. This example is made up, but the coding with A is somebody who views that

attribute as a positive thing. The coding with B is the person views that attribute as a negative thing.

And then here are some examples - the 1's and the 2's and 3's - they're going to be the same, so is it a positive from an environmental perspective, from a safety perspective, from an economic perspective. Or does this person from their perspective see it as a negative? Again, So again you come up with your codes based on specific questions that you want to answer about the topic in question.

And you know, for example, in this photo, somebody might come along and say, "Okay this is a positive because there's a bus. That means it's accessible for maybe the elderly or handicapped," and they might rate it as positive. But somebody else may come along and rate it as negative if they were a biker because maybe there isn't a bike rack on the front of the bus like many buses have. This one doesn't have one. So they might rate it as negative.

But this is sort of what the actual process, or the content of the participants - this is what the participants are doing. So just more back on why a walkshop is a good technique before I get into how you actually would facilitate one.

I thought - and people in the meeting, in the training also shared that they thought it was a really energizing way to get people talking about a project site because you do - you're out on site on a field trip. And depending on who your participants are and how you group them -- which I'll get to in a bit -- you're really enabling people to build relationships as they're going about this.

And the other thing is a photo really adds an interesting dynamic to conversations, really gives some interesting context and allows people to be

really specific about their comments in that coding system. The other interesting thing is that the participants themselves are capturing their comments and capturing their views directly instead of through a facilitator.

And that's a really interesting take on facilitation when you think of recording and note taking and facilitator up in the front of a room trying to capture everybody's comments. And this way, people are out in the field in advance capturing all their comments and then the facilitator's just pulling them up and working through them in a meeting setting.

It was also interesting to see how you can really pull out many different perspectives on one attribute. So many people, or some people might take a picture of the same attribute of the same thing, but they might define it differently like I was mentioning. It could be a positive or a negative. It could be a safety issue. Some people might see it as an environmental issue. They're going to look at the attributes from different perspectives and this really fosters a greater understanding amongst all present in terms of how well you really see this from all the different angles.

You also get a ton of information depending on the size of your workshop and depending on how many photos people take. That's one of the challenges with this is that it can be a bit overwhelming, all of the photos and the attributes and the comments that you can bring in to a project, to the issue.

Now let's turn to the actual facilitation process. I've simplified this a bit because I know these Webinars are designed to tee up a technique and we explain it and we talk through it, but then we have a lot of time on the Webinar also for everyone to share their issues. So I'm not going to dwell on this too much. I do want to get through my slides pretty quickly.

In terms of preparing from a facilitation perspective, of course one of your first questions is what is the issue in question? What are you trying to look at? And in the case for our training it was the accessibility of that Metro stop. And then often, when you're thinking about your goals of the workshop, after you have defined those, you think about the technique, the facilitation techniques, that you need to meet the goals of the meeting or meet the purpose of the meeting.

In this case again, this technique is really when you've decided that the purpose of the meeting is to share information. You may have meetings that have other purposes after getting the information out, but this technique is really for that purpose of sharing information.

Thinking about who the participants are and who should go on the walkshop together -- being deliberate about who the participants are in your workshop. But in this case, thinking about who's going to be walking around in the field together. Do you want to put them in groups or different stakeholders perhaps? Or do you want to make sure, for example -- like in the accessibility of the Metro stop -- do you want to make sure that somebody from a local community government office is present?

Or do you want to make sure that somebody from Metro is present to go on that or multiple people from Metro are present to go on the walkshop with people because it's an interesting opportunity to have people together walking around looking at things and talking about them on site and learning from each other and hearing their different perspectives when they're in the field and then also when they're back in the meeting room?

In this case, you're going to have to think through what your technology is for the photo compilation. What happens is everybody is e-mailing in these

photos to an account that you're than pulling up in the meeting room. And of course whenever we talk about technology, we have to talk about what technologies are approved in the Corps.

I have not pursued this to great extent. I can tell you that we can use Flickr and we cannot use Picasa, for example, but there are many other photo accounts out there beyond that. Then thinking about your coding questions --- what really are the questions that you want to focus on in the workshop and then developing your coding system around those questions specifically. For the accessibility, I just gave some examples of safety and environment, but you may want to target different user groups.

You may want to divide it into positives and negatives. But then you may want to actually use the code for user group -- so positive for bikers, positive for elderly, positive for the handicapped - and you have those be your codes. That's something that you have to think through.

And then your room set-up and process review using the photos -- so of course you're always thinking about your room setup, what's the best setup that's going to foster the best discussion? And in this case, I sort of see - depending on the size of your participants - you're going to have everybody in a main group, if that makes sense.

But then you could also do smaller groups that look at specific coded groupings of photos. Like maybe one could tackle the positive and one could tackle the negative and then they switch.

Or you could do something like open space or roving tables where people moving from table to table based on the code or the attribute and you've got somebody who's recording the discussion. I think it's a similar process in

terms of thinking of how you want to set up your room to a regular meeting, but you also have to figure out how you are dividing up the discussion around the coding grouping.

In practice what happens for the facilitator is the facilitators may be out on a field trip and then some may be remaining in the meeting room to start cataloging the photos as they come in. As the photos come into your account you're opening them up, you're sorting them by tags, you're grouping them, you're getting them ready for that discussion that's going to take place when all of your participants come back into the room.

And I mentioned this point about whatever the process is for reviewing the photos, you're making sure you're set up for that, you have the right facilitators for that, the right materials for that. And then you move into this discussion about participants' photos and you go through the photos in the groupings, whatever process you've laid out, and the participants share their views on how the photo subject relates to the topic in question, to the issue, and they describe the tag that they sent in.

And you're really using the photos as the focus, the focal point for guiding the conversation. And people have a chance to really share what they saw out in the field and how they perceived it, how they reacted to it, what they thought about it.

I was mentioning earlier about the benefits, you're really fostering that discussion amongst the many different perspectives. You're having interesting conversations when you get two photos of the same thing but people have tagged them differently. And you're really fostering that sharing of information and perspectives and knowledge and facilitating that type of discussion.

One of the final things that I wanted to point out is that while I think this is an information-sharing technique, I think it can also be used to kick off other meeting purposes. So, if you needed to get everybody to the table and just have a general information sharing session, you could use this technique to achieve that purpose.

And then you could move them into other sessions of the workshop that had different purposes, such as actually looking at specific problems that they might have raised in their tour, in the photos. You know maybe starting with all of those in the negative category and sort of sifting through them to pull out the problems and identify the problems.

Then further from there, maybe talking about how to solve those problems. I mean you can take this in many different directions after you've used this technique to set an initial foundation of increased understanding and appreciation of people's perspectives on the issue.

Okay, so that is basically a pretty quick summary of my interpretation of the walkshop method when applied from the facilitator's perspective and how I would think of actually going through and carrying it out myself as a facilitator.

One of the things I had mentioned in the newsletter article is that I really liked the idea for a field trip for a smart planning charrette because I had just done a field trip for a charrette out in Honolulu where we had gone out. The PM did a great job of setting up a field trip with the different stakeholders who had authorities in the watershed to get together and go out and look at the site and talk about it together.

Now there was definitely some relationship building and some meet and greet, but basically people walked around and looked at the sites and sort of shared information and spoke to the issue in question at the different points along the field trip based on their perspective. And I really -- once I attended this workshop -- thought it would be a really neat idea to just take that one step forward. People were taking photos anyway, many with their smart phone, some with cameras.

But just take that a bit further then and have them actually capturing the attribute, coding it, sending it back into the charrette and then having that as material to go through and to start your conversation about problems and opportunities. Then the PT would have this wealth of knowledge to sift back through later when they're looking at the different flood control measures or the issues that have occurred in that - it was a flood control project - in that watershed. They would sort of have this database or collection of perspectives and opinions of the different stakeholders who play a role in the area or live in the area.

So, if and when the next charrette comes along that really does want to do a field trip, I might try and see what we can do to implement this approach.

Julie Marcy: Maria, this is Julie. We've had one question come in on chat asking what you think the pros and cons of this method are over other qualitative public input methods?

(Maria Placht): Hmm, for me the opportunity for people to really hear from each other different perspectives that might be applied to the same question I think is an interesting benefit to this method when you can actually take a photo of an issue -- of either perhaps a broken bridge or a flood control wall or whatever it is -- and then talk about that from the different perspectives and really foster

some understanding between participants. I would say that probably is one of the benefits, the extent to which you can really foster understanding and share perspective.

Maybe - I mean the cons are maybe some of those constraints that I said up at the beginning. This is only going to be relevant to a specific site and you do have to really depend on people to use their personal phones to carry this out, which I think is another constraint.

I think from a facilitation perspective, the process of gathering all the photos and sorting them and reviewing them in some settings might be overwhelming and that there would be a need to really pick and choose some if you were in a larger group or figure out how to break them down for smaller groups. Just that additional process of going through a photo account I think might be cumbersome.

Julie Marcy: Okay. I've had another one come in on chat. In terms of who thinks through the coding system and how far in advance of the actual session would that be done? Is the coding something that would be done collaboratively with participants or a smaller core group or just the facilitator? What's your understanding of that?

(Maria Placht): The coding - my understanding is that when you're actually setting up your meeting with your - let's just call it a client or who you're working with to define the meeting goals. At that time you are thinking about how you define success in your meeting, what your goals are, what are you proposing, what's the issue, what are the questions you want to answer - as you're doing that initial planning of your meeting, that's when you start thinking about okay, how can I translate that into some codes that people will then use to answer those questions?

I think it starts at the beginning with that in the back of your mind as a facilitator in terms of translating into the codes, those initial conversations, and then working with the meeting lead to see if that makes sense to them.

I see (Hunter) asking about is are the codes a process with participants? So my take on it is that it's with the meeting leads coming up with the codes to answer the questions that the meeting leads want to answer. Because it's a bit of a process to come up with the codes.

I could see where as you're doing your meeting preparation you're asking -- depending on the type of meeting it is -- and you're reaching out to the participants with the meeting information and the "save the date" and all that, you could start. You might ask for some input at that point in terms of what are some of the questions you have about the site or what are some of the users of the site, some of the customers.

You might come up with some questions to ask them as you're preparing but otherwise. I think it's just the meeting leads as you're designing the meeting initially.

Julie Marcy: This is Julie. So it sounds like you're really working with your leads or your customers as a facilitator to try to figure out how to organize that input to be able to address the questions that you have or the need that you have.

(Maria Placht): Yes.

Julie Marcy: That it's going to be logical and understandable.

(Maria Placht): I would say that's the main approach and then whether or not you ask your participants as you're putting the meeting together for additional thoughts, that would be a secondary option.

Julie Marcy: Okay. And why don't we just open the phones -- either the phones or the chat -- to additional questions that may have come to mind as you were hearing (Maria) speak. Remember to take yourself off mute if you muted earlier so we can hear you.

(Maria Placht): Well I might pick on (Diane) since I see her in the participant list. (Diane) I know has been thinking about having a charrette. And (Diane) I wonder if there -- I know there's limitations on a field trip but I wonder in general your reaction to this kind of approach and how you might think it would apply to in the charrette context.

(Diane): Well actually I was going to e-mail you a compliment afterwards. Pretty much right when you started the presentation I was getting ready to ask you how do you think this fits into our Army Corps of Engineers planning process? But you answered that at the end. I think it's a great idea to use it as a part of a new start charrette.

The tricky part is making sure that the site is accessible. I don't know how well that would work for the particular charrette that I'm looking forward to in the near future being as it's a 12-mile extent. And you cannot get to all of it by foot, might be like a boat trip or something, so it gets kind of tricky.

I was just about to type in a question for you though. Besides a charrette new start, when might some version of this be useful in an Army Corps of Engineers planning process? Have you thought beyond a new start charrette? Seems perfect there, but I was just wondering.

(Maria Placht): That is what came immediately to my mind. I think that's a great question and maybe it would be good to throw it out to the group in terms of specific context that everybody on the phone is familiar with or as you were listening to the description, did you think that any of this might apply to a project you're working on or a meeting you attended or are planning? I would definitely be interested in hearing from everyone in terms of the applicability of this technique.

(Hunter): Hi (Maria). This is (Hunter).

(Maria Placht): Hi (Hunter).

(Hunter): How are you?

(Maria Placht): Great.

(Hunter): I think it's great concept and a good you know idea that to go forth. I would not likely adopt it for this upcoming meeting that I have scheduled, or these two upcoming meetings simply because of the - in the interest of time I don't think I'd be able to prepare it well enough in advance. With only three weeks I don't think I could pull it off.

However, just to provide an example for discussion is that I'm working on a recreation plan for a group of users and stakeholders and residents who are very concerned with lots of different aspects of recreation for their own socioeconomic interests because it's - it's a lake community.

And while our project is limited in focus, their interest in discussing lots of issues is much, much broader. And so one idea would be that this could be

incorporated into - in essence incorporated into a meeting offline so that you could give that group something to do in the period of time of the day that the meeting isn't taking place. The meeting is only a two hour meeting. And, it's for information related to our project.

But if you were to know ahead of time, send out this sort of read ahead cheat sheet card that says, hey we're looking forward to your input. Go out take some pictures of the things that you want to talk about. And then be able to organize it, it seems like it would be an effective use of the period of time, as long as there's enough resources ahead of time to organize that data. And that would be the big if.

(Maria Placht): I was thinking also that this would be a really neat way for websites where we ask people for comments and they can just type in their comments whenever they want on the project website. Or we'll have a little button that says submit feedback, and people can sort of type it in whenever they want over the comment period whatever that might be, weeks or months.

You could almost set this up as a - I want to want to use the word asynchronous because it's all in my virtual sort of mindset of the day. But it - you could use it as a way to collect input on a project without even tying to a meeting, or you could use it as a way to collect a bunch of input and then from that figure out how you want to design your meeting or how you want to structure it based on the input.

I liked the idea of a general input process where instead of clicking the button they're actually sending in a photo in their comments. It's kind of an extension of that in some ways in that setting.

Julie Marcy: (Maria) this is (Julie). I agree with both of you because I think it could be done in real time as you did in the training session, but also in advance to submit photos and information prior to the meeting.

(Hunter) brought up the recreation or natural resources setting, and I can see that in the operations. Sometimes, the various lake projects will bring in a group like Paralyzed Veterans of America and ask them to check out facilities or trails for how user friendly they are for folks with physical challenges.

And I could see it being a great application for something like that or for a smaller restoration project, like when you're trying to get a handle on impacts to the site. You know what are the different aspects and issues we need to be concerned of and then get that feedback...

(Maria Placht): Yes that's an interesting point about especially the Disabled Veterans touring a site and then being able to submit things that they liked or that they didn't like. And you could have the coding system or based around specific concerns you had so you'd get targeted or structured comments.

That's what's neat about the codes is instead of just sending in a comment, you're getting people to structure their feedback a little more.

Julie Marcy: Yes and then again if you did it asynchronous versus real time, it would give you a little more time to do that compilation and sorting. Then, you could even do that individually before you actually bring a group together and that would work for some situations.

(Maria Placht): Yes.

Julie Marcy: How about others? Any other thoughts that you all have on this topic before we open it to other topics?

Okay, why don't we go ahead and open it up to our general discussion? If someone has a facilitation challenge they want to pose, you're welcome to do that. Or, if you've got something new and exciting or best practice thoughts you want to share, you may also do that.

(Marie Burns) I see you have joined us. Correct?

(Marie Burns): Hey (Julie). Yes I apologize for being late.

Julie Marcy: No problem.

(Marie Burns): Really late.

Julie Marcy: Would you mind taking just a moment to tell us a little bit about the large scale virtual meeting that you did recently? Just a little bit about what it was about and who attended and which process you used.

(Marie Burns): Oh sure. Yes I'd be happy to. We are involved in an overall facilitation effort with the port association - the port authorities and the Corps of Engineers basically in something called a quality partnership initiative. And part of that initiative is to have a series of webinars to help the Corps get information to the port community and for the port community to have an opportunity to ask questions.

So the first one we had was on contributed funds. And we had that last Friday. It was our first one. (Jan Rasgus) from headquarters was our speaker and (Tad Brown) also ended up participating in terms of answering questions.

We set it up for 50 lines. And we probably needed 150 lines. So I totally underestimated the interest in the topic. But, we had lots of districts on. And we had lots of ports on. It was a really great opportunity to serve - just sort of do something in a collaborative way as opposed to in a hands-off way, which sometimes happens.

So a whole lot of interest. It was my first webinar in terms of setting up and trying to find the best way to do everything. And so mistakes were made.

But we've had some lessons learned come out of it. So it was excellent. Really excellent.

Julie Marcy: And did you use GoToMeeting?

(Marie Burns): We did not.

Julie Marcy: Did you use Adobe Connect, or did you use WebEx?

(Marie Burns): No we used the Corps of Engineers system.

Julie Marcy: The WebEx? AT&T WebEx.

(Marie Burns): That's right. Because here's what I found out when I tried to use GoToMeeting, which was the original plan. In talking with (ACEIT), they said that they were not going to allow Corps of Engineers folks to sign into any collaborative tool except the AT&T one.

Julie Marcy: Or Defense Connect On line, which would impact some of your outside folks or be problematic for some outside folks.

(Maria Placht): Yes (Marie). This is (Maria). I've tried so many times to access other people's GoToMeetings, and I think I'm not sure if we're blocked or what it is, but I can never get into the meeting space.

(Marie Burns): Yes you are blocked.

(Angie): This is (Angie) in Rock Island.

(Angie): I ran into a similar problem with GoToMeeting. And what I have found at least to actually view other webinars that use GoToMeeting is they loaded Mozilla on my computer, and I was able to accept the certificate that was needed.

Julie Marcy: Okay.

(Angie): Otherwise if I'm using the Explorer, they just updated on ours at least, I'm blocked. I can't get to it. But Mozilla allows me to get into them.

(Marie Burns): Yes you're not supposed to be technically blocked. (ACEIT) was trying to help me. And they tried to get me the stuff, but it just never worked.

(Angie): Yes because GoToMeeting is good, because it really only gives you the AT&T option if you can't use GoToMeeting, because (DCO) if you have outside vendors or people listening, it's not the right choice.

Julie Marcy: Yes it can be problematic. And (Angie) was that to actually participate in a GoToMeeting with Mozilla?

(Angie): Yes.

Julie Marcy: Or was that to - just to review a recorded session?

(Angie): No it was to actually participate.

Julie Marcy: Well that's a great tip then.

(Angie): Yes if you just get with a tech that's willing to upload or let them download Mozilla as your internet viewing tool.

Woman: Browser.

(Angie): Yes. That works. So I don't know why they just don't do that standard. I don't get why they're limiting it just to AT&T. But...

Julie Marcy: They say it's security related but I don't know.

(Marie): How long ago was that that you had them download that Mozilla?

(Angie): Probably it's been - probably a month and half to two month maybe.

(Marie): Yes that's - when I talked to (ACEIT) here in the Jacksonville district, they said that the Corps previously was able to get into GoToMeeting, but that they were no longer going to allow that. And that was about a month and a half ago. And they were just in the process of updating everybody up so they couldn't get to.

So I don't know if you've used it recently, but I just know that they were pretty adamant that I couldn't use anything but the Corps one, and since I'm

retired and can't get in anymore, we went through (ERDC) actually to set up our meeting.

We didn't want the Corps folks to be blocked out..

(Angie): Right. I'll let you know, because I have one scheduled for I think it's the either next week or the following that I want to listen to so I'll let everybody know.

Julie Marcy: That would be great (Angie). And while I have you captive (Angie), this is (Julie).

(Angie): Yes.

Julie Marcy: Have you been doing more on the strategic engagement issue?

(Angie): Yes.

Julie Marcy: Have you all been able to finalize some things, or what's your status with that?

(Angie): The strategic engagement (SOP) has been accepted into the national (QMS).

Julie Marcy: Yeah!

(Angie): So it's uploaded as one of the processes. And it follows the customer relation management course material well. We just had a great conversation with (Maria) and (Hal) yesterday about trying to transfer over some of the course to (IWR) and kind of pull it out of Prospect because it's better if it's deployed per (MSC).

Julie Marcy: Okay.

(Angie): So it's doing good. Working with (Bill Peoples) on potentially having some webinars at the various districts to kind of launch a marketing plan for letting people know about the process and the new procedures and stuff.

Julie Marcy: As I recall, it's essentially how to guides, some flow chart process type information. How you go about setting up strategic engagement plans? Correct?

(Angie): Yes basically it walks you through how to develop a plan, how to - I can't remember if the plan goes into how to kind of select your key customers or figure out who your key customers are or stakeholders partners, however everybody wants a say.

And then it also goes into account planning, which is probably the most beneficial thing where you can take a particular customer, say the EPA, and develop a profile for them that talks about future trends, where they're going, how they can partner with the Corps in the future, what's been done in the past, different things like that.

Kind of gets into knowledge management and succession planning as well in there. So it's a good tool. And one that follows the campaign plan very well.

Julie Marcy: That's great. I appreciate that update. And I see we've had some chat with (Hunter) and (Maria) talking about Yammer. How much it's being used. The main folks that I've seen using that are a few of the folks at headquarters in Washington. But I haven't seen a whole lot of use of that recently.

One other thing that some of the headquarters folks have been experimenting with is the AT&T Connect service, I think it's limited usage right now as they're testing it.

It's another one that's - it's more similar to like a voice over internet protocol, where you'd have a linked audio and online link. If you're interested in it, I downloaded a manual that I found online about it. I had some preliminary conversations with some of the (ACEIT) folks about it, but essentially it's in the trial phases, while they see if it works.

I understand it's a little more expensive to use than our WebEx. So they're trying to work through some of those issues now. I think ACEIT has slowed their effort on assigning virtual technology billing. Right now, if you do web meetings and so forth, it goes into a big (ACEIT) charge account, where those fees are paid out of, like for the number of lines that you use and so forth. They were getting ready to start individualizing that, to track it to individual usage.

So, that the heavier users would actually pay for that use. The last message I saw said they were backing off on that for right now and just going to keep it in the big contract for the time being. So, we'll have to see if anything more develops with that.

I had one other thing that I wanted to share with you all. But, I'll open the floor to see if there's anyone that hasn't had a chance to speak, or might want to ask a question or add a thought.

(Hunter): This is (Hunter) again. Just to follow up on the Yammer idea, is simply that with the advent of some of these social media - multimedia social media apps

and people using smartphones, it might be the accepted platform that's both USACE friendly and outside USACE friendly that people can actually use.

Kind of like Instagram would be the photo version of social media, Yammer is sort of a little bit - closer hold, but not so close that's it's only USACE. So, just as an idea, playing around with that as a concept.

I know you can upload a photo. I'm working on downloading the app right now just to see if it works. So that's what I was thinking of.

Julie Marcy: Okay great. Thank you. Anyone else?

(Maria Placht): (Julie) this is (Maria). Can I ask for a show of hands of people on the line who have actually virtually facilitated?

Julie Marcy: Sure.

(Marie): I have no clue how to do that.

(Maria Placht): If you're on the line and you've facilitated...

Julie Marcy: You raise your hand.

(Maria Placht): Yes can you raise your hand.

Julie Marcy: You see that you have a little box that says raise hand. It should be below your participants and above your chat.

(Marie Burns): Oh. No I'm on an iPad. So just consider my hand raised.

(Maria Placht): (Marie) okay. And I know (Hunter) has as well, so that makes three of us. Just curious.

(Maria Placht): It's quite interesting.

Julie Marcy: And we have some in the near future it looks like. One other thing I wanted to mention to you all and to see if any of you all had played with - since we were talking about some smartphone applications and so forth, is the Poll Everywhere service.

The WebEx site that we're on now has some limited polling ability. But Poll Everywhere is another site where you would set up an account. Most of it is free, but if you want all of the bells and whistles you have to pay for the service.

Then your participants would use their individual smartphones to respond to polls, say during a facilitated meeting. Are any of you all familiar with that? Or have you played with Poll Everywhere at all?

(Maria Placht): (Julie) this is (Maria). I saw that used recently at EPA's public involvement conference, for the people that they were pulling in virtually. And it was fun. You can use it with a regular cell phone too. You just need to be able to send a text message to participate.

Julie Marcy: Okay.

(Maria Placht): I think it - I think people had fun with it.

Julie Marcy: Yes I went ahead and set up an account, and I'm going to start playing with it. I'm actually going to try it at a workshop that I'm doing in New York in September. They're going to be my guinea pigs. But it looks like it has some neat features, it seems to be pretty easy.

It gives you the opportunity to do practice polls, and you can set up your questions and categories and so forth in advance. Then people very quickly just vote on their smartphone or send a text message and you can get - it sends it to the site, the Poll Everywhere site, and the person who's counting the responses are coming back can see it live and project that on the screen for folks to see.

So I just wanted to make sure you all were aware of that. Like I said for the most part, a lot of the applications are free up to a certain number of participants. I think it may cut off at 50 or so. Then, if you want more participants or all of the bells and whistles you would have to pay. There's a fee structure that's available on the site.

I'll go ahead and send the link for that site to all of the attendees so you can check it out when you have time and see if it works for you or if it's of interest to you.

(Marie Burns): So (Julie) this is (Marie). So one of the things we're doing is there's a whole list of topics that folks are interested in hearing on webinars. And so is this one of those things that if I sent out to like everybody on the distribution list and asked them to pick their favorite topics that it could gather that information?

Julie Marcy: On Poll Everywhere?

(Marie Burns): Yes if they would vote.

Julie Marcy: I think you would run - if you're over 50, you're going to run into that numeric restriction.

(Marie Burns): Correct.

Julie Marcy: I think then you'd have to purchase one of the higher level accounts to be able to have a higher level. But if you're outside the Corps, you can also use some of the other meeting polling features. We are not supposed to use SurveyMonkey anymore, the other one - there's another one whose name is escaping me right now, but I can check when the meeting's over and send it to you.

Woman: Are we really not supposed to use SurveyMonkey? I heard that we can use that.

Woman: I was just going to ask that. I had not heard that.

Julie Marcy: Have the rules changed again? So it sounds like that's another homework assignment for me.

Woman: We've been using it.

Woman: Until I can't access the site, I say it's fair game.

Woman: Yes.

Julie Marcy: Yes. The the last I heard it was coming from contracting. But, I have not asked the question for some time, so I can follow up on that and the legality of SurveyMonkey.

Woman: The Corps of Engineers folks couldn't vote on anything except for Poll Everywhere or something else? You know I'd like to get the Corps input too so...

Julie Marcy: The last time I tried to access like something like SurveyMonkey, I was able to. I had been told that we were not supposed to use it. But, I don't know that I ever actually saw that in writing. So that'll be one of my homework assignments to try to track that down and find out the answer of that.

Woman: That's a good idea.

Julie Marcy: (Marie) I don't know if you've got a website associated with your effort, with your ports authority effort. Your webmaster can also set up an input process for you where you could query the folks on your distribution.

(Marie Burns): Oh.

Julie Marcy: Or ask them to rack and stack topics or to generate topics, whichever you need, generation or the prioritizing. Your webmaster may be able to set something up for you as well.

(Marie Burns): Oh that's a good idea.

Julie Marcy: Then you just send folks the link and then they go to the link where there would be questions and they'd provide their input. And then normally, the

webmaster would set it up so that it would roll up into an Excel spreadsheet and you would access that. So you might want check into that possibility.

(Marie Burns): I will, thank you.

Julie Marcy: Okay any other thoughts from anyone before we conclude for the day?

Maria: I just wanted to make the comment that I heard you say at the beginning of this webinar that you're worried about participation rates for these facilitation - facilitators exchange webinars. And I just think it's so nice to have a small group and all be able to talk about what we're working on and what our issues are and just have a forum.

Maria: I just wanted to commend you to - you know for having this space available to us. And I hope it keeps moving forward. I know there aren't many people maybe like between five and 10 each time or something. But I think they're great.

Julie Marcy: Well thank you. And the smaller groups are really nice to get some quality discussion. So for now we're going to continue them. I would love to hear thoughts from any of you or others that you interface with on some topics that you think would be beneficial. Things that you would like to hear about.

Maybe I just haven't found the right topics that a larger group is interested in or I imagine part of it is folks are so busy with the end of the year fiscal closeout and other matters that may be an issue.

One of the things we're trying to start doing is tracking the web page usage of the archive, so that will tell us that if some folks cannot attend in person, they

may be taking advantage of the archive site. So that'll give us a little more insight as well.

(Angie): Hey (Julie) this is (Angie).

Julie Marcy: Yes.

(Angie): I've been thinking about this and a lot of creative things going on in my head. But one of the things that - since we have all these conference restrictions, some of the thought that I've been thinking about is having like a virtual conference.

Has anybody successfully done that in the Corps? Like if we wanted to have a conference on say flood risk management or something like that, - has anybody done that, facilitated that big of a thing where there's multiple sessions and different things like that?

(Maria Placht): (Angie) did - well when you say flood risk management are you not aware of the (Silver Jackets) flood risk management conference last week online?

(Hunter): It was a big one.

(Angie): Was it?

(Maria Placht): Yes it was.

Julie Marcy: Is there a website where...

(Maria Placht): Yes let me chat it in.

Julie Marcy: Okay yes. Then she can go - (Angie) can go and check out - did you all record archived sessions?

(Maria Placht): Oh yes.

(Hunter): Well funny you should be asking that.

(Maria Placht): Funny ha, ha.

(Angie): Well gee okay.

(Hunter): It was great. They're all getting recorded and posted. All of the sessions too. (Maria) did an awesome job by the way for everyone that's listening.

(Maria Placht): (Hunter) was one of our virtual facilitators and he also did an awesome job.

(Hunter): Yes.

Julie Marcy: And did you all - and I see we've got the link coming in now. Did you all use WebEx? Is that the technology you used?

(Maria Placht): We used three different kinds of lines. We used the AT&T Reservationless lines up to 125 people, we used the AT&T on the spot reserved lines up to 200 people, and we use the executive conference line the new one that headquarters has been using for sessions over 200.

Julie Marcy: Okay. And then did you do audio?

(Maria Placht): Yes it was crazy.

Julie Marcy: Did you do audio recordings? Or video recordings or...

(Maria Placht): We did audio recordings for most of them, and then we did voice over PowerPoint video recordings for the opening and closing summary.

Julie Marcy: Okay well great. That's very helpful.

(Angie): Because I was just thinking, something like that, a topic on that would be good.

Julie Marcy: Okay.

(Angie): Because I know that everybody is trying to find creative ways to partner with our customers when we can't actually go and have - participate in their conferences and stuff.

Julie Marcy: Okay and this one was internal and externals folks?

(Maria Placht): Yes it was everybody under the sun.

Julie Marcy: Okay yes so that might be great. Maybe use that as a case study, but with the overall topic, how do you do a large virtual conference. How many days was it?

(Maria Placht): Four.

Julie Marcy: Four days.

(Maria Placht): It was four days. Sorry do I sound exhausted?

Julie Marcy: Still alive yes. Okay.

(Maria Placht): It was four days, and it was four hours a day. Because you had to go with a time change right, so you can only really occupy four hours of any given day and still hit everybody from Honolulu to D.C.

(Hunter): And three concurrent sessions each at the same time so.

(Maria Placht): Yes and (Hunter) since I presented on the last one of these, you're going to have to present the next time. Sorry.

Julie Marcy: Sounds like a volunteer in the works. Okay. And I see we've got another note in chat too that we always need to remember the difference between leading a meeting and facilitating a meeting, because there definitely is a difference there.

And it sounds like you all probably did a combination of that with the (Silver Jackets). Probably had folks serving in both roles.

Any other thoughts or insights from anyone on the line? (Maria) thank you so much for sharing (Walk Shop) with us and helping us get acquainted with it. And thanks to all of you for the great discussion.

I think we touched on quite a few topics. I've got about three or four homework assignments here that I'll follow up and send back to you. And if you think of something else whether it's topic or other questions or a challenge, I am a call or email away.

END