FEMA Accepts MIP Workflow Release

FEMA conditionally approved delivery of workflow (Release 2.2) of the Mapping Information Platform (MIP) this month. The approval document states, “FEMA is happy with Release 2.2 and the functionality and benefits it will bring to Map Modernization. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to making this a quality release.”

What is Conditional Approval?
In simple terms, conditional approval means that a deliverable fulfills FEMA’s requirements, contingent on meeting some specific conditions. In the case of the workflow release, the conditions include addressing some cybersecurity risks and implementing some previously requested functions.

What is Workflow?
Workflow is the automated process that “pushes” steps (such as the “Develop Hydraulic Data” step in the study process) from one user to another. In the case of amendments and revisions, the process steps are moved from the Resource Manager to the Task Lead to the FEMA Lead and back to the Task Lead.

With conditional approval, Wave 2 of workflow training officially began. Cooperating Technical Partners, IDIQs, and FEMA employees from Regions VIII and X received studies training in Denver this week. The MOD team received positive feedback on the training book, presenters, and format used during the training.

Training for Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) processing on the MIP was held this month for Regions I, II, and III in Princeton, NJ. Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) training began this month and will be completed during Wave 2 by the end of the month (including Call Center employee training next week).

The workflow release provides a management tool for tracking and reporting study, revision, and amendment project data. This release will make it easier for IDIQ contractors and mapping partners to forecast their workload and for FEMA, contractors, and mapping partners to report their successes.

What’s next?
The MIP data management release (Release 3) is on track for delivery to FEMA on September 30. Sunia Baqaie is the Release 3 manager, Nickolay Sakharov is the architect, and Scott Beumer is coordinating Release 3 at the MOD team Program Management Office level. Please see article on page 4.

Source: Kris McLaughlin, 703-960-8800 ext. 5316
Region II Signs New Tribal Cooperating Technical Partners

One of FEMA’s goals of Flood Map Modernization is to maximize the use of local, regional, State, and Tribal entities, and to transfer ownership and use of maps and data to these organizations by building and maintaining effective partnerships.

A new partner recently formalized its commitment to FEMA’s goal by becoming a Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP). An official signing ceremony was held on August 13, and the Seneca Nation of Indians in Irving, New York, entered into a Partnership Agreement with FEMA for the purpose of collaborating on the production of a Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM).

In doing so, the Seneca Nation became the second Tribal Nation to partner with FEMA through the CTP Program and brought the total number of CTPs to 214.

“It is this type of collaborative and cooperative agreement between our Nation and the U.S. Government that will not only enhance the data collection for this flood mapping system, but, ultimately, will prevent flood damage to properties located with Nation territories,” stated Nation President Barry E. Snyder, Sr.

The MOD team stands ready to support FEMA and the Seneca Nation in this new partnership and anticipates successful collaboration in the future with the production of the Nation’s DFIRM.

For more information on this partnership please contact Jason Fenn in Regional Management Center 2 at Jason.Fenn@mapmodteam.com. For more information on the CTP Program please contact Beth Norton at Beth.Norton@mapmodteam.com.

Source: Beth Norton (703) 960-8800, ext. 5293

Advantages of Involving the Client in a Document’s Planning Phase

There are many ways to measure a document’s quality, but one of the most important—perhaps the most important—is this: Did the client accept it? Did it meet the client’s expectations first time through?

Clearly, client acceptance is a principal consideration, but perhaps less clear is how MOD team members can improve their understanding of client expectations and, thus, their odds of creating documents that are on target and accepted upon initial delivery.

This article introduces the communication best practice generally known as strategic and design planning and summarizes the method’s potential for increasing client satisfaction. But first, let’s take a look at the bad things that can happen when planning is skipped or when the client is excluded from this crucial step.

Deliveries Should Not Be Surprise Packages. If a FEMA client gets his first look at a document only when it’s delivered as a final, the originating team presumesthe client wants. This is risky because a document can miss the mark in so many ways. It can include information that the client thinks is irrelevant or exclude stuff the client wanted to emphasize. It can be too technical for its readers. It can be too long or too short. And, even when it misses the mark, the document represents a considerable investment in time, money, and potentially gained or lost goodwill. With so much at stake, why take a shot in the dark? MOD team members can avoid the “surprise package pitfalls” by planning documents before writing them and by engaging FEMA counterparts in the planning process.

What Is Document Planning? Technical communication guru JoAnn Hackos, author of Managing your Documentation Projects, divides document planning into two phases: strategic planning and design planning. During strategic planning, the team answers issues that affect the scope, technical depth, focus, and tone of the entire document. For example, who are the document’s readers? What do they need to know? Is the document’s primary mission to inform? To instruct? To persuade? Once the strategic issues are nailed down, design planning begins. During this phase, the document’s underlying organizational scheme is determined. Should the document’s sections and subsections be organized in chronological order? Most important to least? Geographically? This organizational scheme then translates into a topic outline and decisions on format. Upon conclusion of strategic and design planning, the document’s originators and FEMA recipients have a clear vision of what the document should—and will—become after content is developed and finalized.

When and How Should the Client Participate? The MOD team book boss—that is, the person listed in the SharePoint-based master schedule as being in charge of a document—should contact his or her FEMA counterpart before writing begins.

One of the book boss’s most important responsibilities is to make the FEMA counterpart a partner in strategic and design planning. This partnership clarifies expectations, generates effective give-and-take between the MOD team and FEMA, and makes the deliverable a joint project. The book boss should get the counterpart’s input to
The Maryland Association of Floodplain and Stormwater Managers will hold its first general membership meeting on October 27 at the National Wildlife Visitor’s Center in Laurel, Maryland. The focus of this event will center on Flood Map Modernization (Map Mod). Talks will be given on a variety of topics including, an Overview of Map Mod, Hydraulics and Hydrology for non-engineers, Hurricane Isabel follow up and lessons learned, Letters of Map Revision, and the Community Rating System. A meeting open to the membership will take place during the day as well. The day-long event will conclude with a happy hour where members can network, exchange information and reflect on the day.

Maryland ASFPM to Hold First General Membership Meeting

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What Tools Support Document Planning?

As shown in the figure, the SharePoint-based delivery management system allows strategic planning and design planning folders to be created in a document’s Work in Progress site. When planning begins, the book boss grants his or her FEMA counterpart access to the site and begins the collaborative process of clarifying the client’s expectations through strategic and design planning. Appendix A of the Delivery Management Guide, available in Map Mod SharePoint in the Quality Assurance room, provides a list of questions, participants, and output for strategic and design planning. The output—for example, the topic outline created during design planning—can be stored in the design planning folder, where it will be available to the entire originating team as well as to the client. The PMO QA team can assist book bosses in setting up folders and involving the client effectively in planning.

Summary of Advantages of Collaborative Early Planning

- **Higher acceptance rate.** Involving the client in a document’s planning increases the likelihood that the document will be accepted when delivered.
- **Reduced expense.** Involving the client decreases the time and money spent revising rejected documents.
- **Increased document effectiveness.** When the originating team has a clear picture of a document’s mission, scope, and organization, the resulting document is on target and conceptually coherent.
- **Increased production efficiency.** With strategic and design elements clearly defined, the team can efficiently pull together and create documents in less time and with less extensive revision.

Source: Pat Trate, (703) 960-8800 ext. 5243

Outlook Permission to Mailboxes

The owner of an Outlook mailbox or calendar may request that other users have access. Before access can be granted to a new user, the mailbox or calendar owner must grant permission and request approval. Requests for approval should be handled in the following manner:

An executive or a project lead may request that others have access or delegation control of his or her mailbox or calendar by e-mailing OutlookIssues@mapmodteam.com. The owner of a group mailbox or the team lead/manager may request access for others by e-mailing OutlookIssues@mapmodteam.com.

Source: John Ibrahimi, 703-960-8800, ext. 6248
SharePoint Question Box

Question: How do I know if I have access to SharePoint?

Answer: Browse to https://www.mapmodteam.com. Users can check their access status by using the following login information:

User name: mapmodteam\<username>
Password: <outlook password>

If you get in to SharePoint, you will see the following links to the MS Office Job Aides for MapMod SharePoint. If you don’t get in to SharePoint, try using the link for your computer.

Office XP
https://www.mapmodteam.com/Train/General%20Documents/Office%20XP%20and%20WSS.doc

Office 2003
https://www.mapmodteam.com/Train/General%20Documents/Office%202003%20and%20WSS.doc

If that doesn’t help, send an e-mail to SharePoint@mapmodteam.com.

Question: How do I get permission to access various sites in SharePoint?

Answer: A user may have access to SharePoint but not the required work sites. If this is the case, request access to those sites via e-mail to SharePoint@mapmodteam.com.

MOD Team Phone Numbers Added to Outlook Directory

If you need to quickly find a phone number and extension for a fellow MOD team member, then the address list in Outlook should be helpful to you. In the listing, next to employee names with embedded e-mail addresses, are phone numbers and extensions for employees with MOD team phone numbers. In other words, you will find phone numbers for employees assigned to RMCs and headquarters locations, as well as some others.

If your phone number is missing or incorrect, please send e-mail to OutlookIssues@mapmodteam.com with the number and extension that should be listed.

In our Outlook directory, you will find FEMA e-mail addresses, but you will not find FEMA phone numbers; go online and try www.fema.gov/staff/index.jsp to find FEMA listings.

Source: John Ibrahimi, 703-960-8800, ext. 6248

Subject Matter Experts Begin Testing MIP Release 3

The Mapping Information Platform (MIP) team is continuing to test the software that will provide data management capability (Release 3). Last week, the software moved into system integration test (SIT) Cycle 3, and members of the Engineering and Mapping team began subject matter expert (SME) testing. The SMEs bring business knowledge to the testing process.

Listed below are six major modules in the MIP data management release, the lead software engineers’ names, and the names of SMEs helping with testing.

- **Procurement Action Lead Time and Sequencing**
  SMEs: Duane Castaldi, Lillian Pitts, David Siedt, and Josh Smith
  Lead Software Engineer: Lubna Naseem

- **Revisions and Revisions to Termination Letter**
  SMEs: Luis Rodriguez and Allison Westlund
  Lead Software Engineer: Wei Du and Shiva Mantri

- **Amendments and eLOMA**
  SMEs: Chakea Jackson, David Mummert, and Dan Natale
  Lead Software Engineer: Shikah Bahl and Tony Magliero

- **Studies Workflow**
  SME: Matt Morton
  Lead Software Engineer: John Chen and Matt Nuss

- **Map Viewer**
  SME: Mary Matella
  Lead Software Engineer: Dominik Fabulic

- **Tools Integration and Content Management**
  SMEs: Sherri Marshall, Carrie Muenks, Kevin Naxerez, and Justin Warren
  Lead Software Engineer: Charles Hamilton, Padmaja Malladi, and Frank Zeng

The MIP data management release (Release 3) manager is Sunia Baqaie, and Nickolay Sakharov is the Release 3 Architect. Scott Beumer is coordinating Release 3 at the MOD team Program Management Office level.

The last step in the testing process will be user acceptance test (UAT). The independent assessment office, led by Susan Kuiler, is on track to complete UAT in time for the MOD team to deliver the MIP data management release on September 30.

Source: Kris McLaughlin, 703-960-8800 ext. 5316