

# **MIT PORTAL PROJECT STATUS REPORT**

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15.568 Practical IT Management  
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*Provide a dashboard light of the overall prospects for achieving the project as laid out in the original project plan: green, yellow, or red*

## Objectives Status

1. Determine necessary costs and resources – Green
2. Identify portal implementation issues – Green
3. Identify portal operational issues – Green
4. Document best practices – Green
5. Create reliable documentation – Green

## I. Accomplishments

*Since the last report, list the significant accomplishments, not just activities but a mention of the value delivered or obtained. Mention any positive opportunities that have arisen.*

In preparation for a meeting with Wayne Turner, Amy King and Mike Berger on Wednesday March 9, Stephen Landry sent our team a compilation of documents outlining business and technical requirements for the MIT portal. Based on the documents and the subsequent meeting with the IS&T team, we identified the following list of issues that IS&T expects the portal implementation to solve:

- The current gateway design to administrative services emphasizes task-based grouping of applications, but client Department, Labs, and Centers (DLCs) have expressed a preference for categories dedicated tabs for their DLC.
- The lack of enforceability of these design choices have resulted in an inconsistent gateway categorized by both tasks and DLCs, which in turn makes navigation very difficult.
- The gateway's horizontal tab design results in tab-crowding and poor usability due to horizontal scrolling.

Additionally, the MIT portal seeks to integrate 8 services (administrative transactions, self-service transactions, institute forms, institute messages and announcements, event calendars, WebMail, TechTime, and Transportation and Parking schedules) into a “one-stop-shopping” site in order to enhance user productivity and generate greater awareness of new functionality. Users of the portal will be divided in three categories: students and faculty, general users, and accounting officers.

Based on these requirements, we have selected two external universities and an internal department to conduct interviews and study their portal implementation: California Polytechnic (MyCalPoly), Stanford University (MyStanford), and the MIT Sloan School of Management (SloanSpace).

Specifically, in studying the portal implementation of these universities and departments, we have identified a set of questions that we can use to assess the amount of human and financial resources needed to successfully implement the portal:

- Obtain accurate figures of time and cost
- Determine the scale and scope of other portals
- Specify the skill-set needed to develop the project
  - Get roles and job descriptions of people involved in the project
- Estimate maintenance needs after development

## II. Issues

*List and explain the barriers or problems that have arisen since the last report. Explain these in terms of the uncertainties and risks as outlined.*

Up to now, we have not encountered serious problems or challenges in the project. The IS&T team has been extraordinarily helpful and has assisted us in meeting our objectives. In particular, the team has provided us with specific documents we had requested and that have allowed us to determine the requirements and to select comparable portals to study.

At this point, we believe that the most probable source of risk is the availability of information from external sources. Specifically, representatives from the institutions outlined above (California Polytechnic, Stanford, and Sloan) must be willing to be interviewed about their portal implementations. Although we have a list of back-up institutions that could be contacted, we plan to foster more productive and sincere interviews by adopting a first-mover position and providing interviewees with a case study of MIT's portal implementation.

## III. Actions to be taken

*List all specific action steps to be taken, other than those contained in the latest project plan revision, to take advantage of new opportunities or deal with new issues. State these actions in terms of tasks, milestones and deliverables. Indicate modifications to most recent tasks, etc.*

We are in the process of creating guides and templates to use when interviewing external sources. In particular, we want to outline a standard procedure for each of the interviews so that we can easily compare relevant and uniform data across all institutions. We have determined that the best way to do this is to write a case study of MIT's portal implementation and use it as a template to generate respective case studies of portal implementations at selected institutions. We expect using parallel case studies will help us in analyzing data and furnishing accurate human resources and financial estimates for the MIT portal.

The following outline illustrates the immediate steps in the project:

1. Write MIT-based case study
2. Contact Steve Landry, Wayne Turner, and Paul Hill to obtain contacts from SloanSpace, California Polytechnic, and Stanford respectively.
3. Furnish interview templates
4. Disseminate MIT-based case study to contacts from external institutions

#### IV. Reflections and Learning

*Use this to report on how this project or the larger IS&T project have relevance to the latest completed topic module in 15.568. Also, beyond that, step back from project work and reflect on what you and the team are learning. Include particularly more or less personal surprises and challenges that were unexpected.*

We learned this week that the portal redesign is being driven partially by a non-technical problem. Originally, IS&T had wished to divide the portal into a set of functional tabs. They were compelled to let one group add their department's name to the set of tabs, and soon, the whole organizational scheme of the site broke down. The new portal will also serve to assist in process redesign, as the way that tasks are being organized is being modified into a different structure.