

# ICS Coop Planning

## EMTC Fall 2009 Meeting

UW Extension and UW Colleges have institutional plans, as does our division in UWEX (Broadcast and Media Innovations). I am going to focus on some of the things we are doing at the ICS level to keep WisLine services in operation should a flu epidemic cause a staffing shortage.

Scenario assumptions:

1. The building is inhabitable and its HVAC, network, telecom and power are all working so WisLine Audio, Web and Video are still available to our customers.
2. Some staff will be sick at some time, and could be out for several days, and are probably not going to be in any condition to work at home for at least part of that time.
3. Some staff may be staying home to care for sick family members. Depending upon their situation, they may be available to work part of the day from home.

Based on Assumption 1 and 3, we looked at ways staff could work at home. We took these steps:

1. Identified teams that are needed to keep these services operating, Scheduling, Operations, and IT. All three groups could continue with some staff working from home part time. For example, Operations staff use our scheduling systems so could help support the Scheduling staff.
2. Surveyed all staff about their home network access and computer OS's used.
3. Surveyed staff to determine what skills some might have in other areas.
4. Researched what tools we have now to support at home staff:
  - a. VPN to run most applications from home securely if loaded onto their home computers (requires Windows).
  - b. Scheduling systems for two of our teleconference systems will work over VPN. For WisLine audio, we use Remote Desktop over the PC to access the scheduling system.
  - c. Audio Bridge and MCU clients will operate over VPN, Webconferencing does not require the VPN.
  - d. Audio bridge supports SIP, MCU supports SIP and H.323 for operators monitoring, setup, and takedown of conferences.
  - e. BigAnt, an enterprise IM system provides text chat between staff. Maintained by IT so all staff have access. This is handy for communicating between at work and at home staff without tying up phone lines.
  - f. Clearspace, an enterprise Web 2.0 tool for depositing useful information that might be needed by at home staff. Our COOP Committee uses it to share COOP plans with staff. Teams use it in place of an intranet web site because it doesn't require HTML skills.
  - g. Elluminate can be used to hold staff meetings with both staff at home and staff in the office. WisLine Audio and Elluminate VoIP can be used in the same meeting, along with document sharing and collaboration tools. VPN not required. Can be recorded for staff to view later.
5. Researching how we can do it better:
  - a. Using VMware Thinapp load client apps onto thumb drives so at home staff does not have to install them on their PCs. Requires Windows and not all apps will work that way.
  - b. Remote Desktop can be used for most of the identified staff but does still require VPN and may not handle PC audio in both directions for SIP phones.
  - c. Currently testing VMware "VMview" to virtualize a desktop on a server for each identified staff member. It supposedly will work without a VPN connection and can host all applications. We will need to test VoIP soft phones (desktop SIP phone) and if that works, too, VMware could be the best tool.

We have some solutions in place while research on new ideas continues. So far, our staffing levels have not been heavily affected by an epidemic. We have been affected by budget cuts during the economic downturn, yes, like everyone else, but not by the H1N1. Knock on wood.

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