



**Training workshop on Website Design, Implementation and Management
Bamako, 16th – 20th march 2009**

WORKSHOP'S REPORT OF FINDINGS

March 2009

INTRODUCTION

In the framework of the FSP 2004-9 project on bringing support to ECOWAS Member States in the process of regional integration in western Africa, data exchange and statistical information dissemination, a workshop on web site design and management was held in Bamako at AFRISTAT headquarters from March 16th – 20th, 2009.

The opening ceremony was presided by Mr Martin BALEPA, Director General of AFRISTAT. In his speech, M. BALEPA welcomed participants and stressed the role of internet in the dissemination of statistical information, as an essential tool to publish data. He requested participants to pay eager attention to the topics covered during the workshop so that they master these new information technologies and convey the knowledge gained to their respective countries. He closed his speech by thanking France, the main financial partner of this project, and the Malian authorities, host country of AFRISTAT.

This workshop gathered the officials from the national institutes of statistics in charge of managing the Institutes' web sites (see list of participants in annex 1)

WORK PROCEEDINGS

The training, conducted by Mr Mohamed SOW, AFRISTAT expert on Data processing and Dissemination, lasted 5 working days. Given the amount of knowledge to pass on, the program of the workshop was quite heavy. The reference document and handouts were prepared in English.

The workshop on web site implementation and management targeted three main objectives:

- to understand the basic principles governing the creation of a site;
- to be able to create a simple web site;
- to develop the capacity to publish and regularly update information on the web site.

Activities included both formal presentations and practical work (see workshop schedule in annex 2).

CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP

Understanding the basics of web site creation

The first objective was the introduction of the basic principles behind the creation of a web site. To this respect, the course presented various aspects including the overall goals of creating a site, namely: publishing data, marketing the institution, publishing information pertaining to statistics domain. More specifically, the workshop covered:

- how to create an efficient web site;
- what should be the content of the site;
- how should files be organised.

Being able to create a web site

The second objective of the training dealt with a step by step learning of web site creation, namely: introduction to technologies used on the internet and the uploading of information.

- How does a site work;
- Description of tools used on the web;
- Introduction to HTML;
- Composing and uploading pages to the site.

Being able to publish and regularly update information on the web site

This last objective of the workshop aimed at teaching participants how to publish (upload) and regularly update the information found on their web site. Three key aspects were covered in the course:

- Hosting of the web site;
- Uploading files to the web site;
- Importance of updating data regularly on the web site.

HIGHLIGHTS

Point #1

The main rules governing the elaboration of a site have been studied. These are guidelines to create a pleasant site in which information is easily found.

Amongst these rules are:

- paying attention to the layout by using pleasant colours, light graphics elements;
- always showing the user his position within the site;
- paying attention to the “weight” of pages to minimize download time;
- favouring usability and navigability of the site.

Point #2

The importance of site contents was stressed. It is essential to properly and carefully define the type and the amount of information the site will offer. It will be distributed in a menu tree with a logic that must be carefully defined so users can easily find the information they need.

Adequate planning must be done before starting any work on pages.

The storage area for files should also reflect this logical organisation to allow for an easy update process of the site.

Point #3

Basic technologies used on the internet were explained. The dialog between a client computer and the web server was detailed. Protocols and languages used were presented:

- File transfers (ftp);
- Requests for web pages (http);
- Web pages format (html).

Point #4

Html language was presented and its main elements described. This language is made of tags that describe internet pages. These pages are plain text files with no specific formatting. Tags are then interpreted by the web browser to render on the screen the display of the page as intended by the creator. Tags open and close (e.g. <table> starts a table definition that ends with </table>).

Among the most important tags we can cite:

- <html> and </html> to define the entire page;
- <head> and </head> to define page parameters;
- <body> and </body> to define all visible elements of the page;
- , <i>, <u>, , etc to define visual aspect of texts;
- <table>, <tr> and <td> to define tables;
- <frameset> and </frameset> to define frames.

Point #5

Internet pages can hold graphics. These elements can be obtained from picture libraries on the internet, but also from digital pictures or from personal creations of the developer.

Many formats exist to save these files, but only a few are widely used on web pages:

- JPEG for digitised images because of the loss of small visual information due to the very nature of this type of compression;
- GIF for drawings (logos, sketches) and graphs (statistics) due to the small number of colours available in this format;
- PNG, similar to GIF, but gaining popularity on the web.

Point #6

These images can be created and/or processed using specialized tools. One of them is Gimp an Open Source software, introduced in the workshop. Amongst its numerous functionalities, this tool allows working with layers, that is stacking individual simple images to compose the overall final image. The main advantage of this technique is to be able to work on one item of the image independently from the others.

Point #7

Documents found on the web are often in the PDF format. These files are created with professional tools like Adobe Acrobat or by free software like PDF-creator which is available freely on the internet.

PDF-creator can convert Word, Excel or web documents into PDF files. It was recommended to get professional and more powerful pdf converters that can also allow merging several documents from various origins into one single PDF file in which a user can create a table of contents using bookmarks.

Point #8

Authoring tools have been created to hide the complexity of web page creation. NVU and Sublime3 were introduced during the workshop. It allows creating, editing underlying html code and previewing web pages either from existing templates or from scratch.

Point #9

Practical work was conducted on individual sites by M. DOUCOURE, the AFRISTAT webmaster, and gave an opportunity to test different solutions to some problems, especially regarding page layout and browsers. Tables were used to define areas on the page in which elements are placed, but this requires replicating this structure in every single page of the site.

Point #10

A practical work on creating a website from scratch was conducted by Mr SOW. Participants worked on two websites templates. The first template was based on the use of tables, unordered lists, Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) and javascripts. The second one used only CSS and javascripts. Participants worked to adapt the templates to their contexts and needs.

Point #11

Web sites so created have been transferred to the host's web server, created on purpose by Mr DOUCOURE to show the process of uploading files. FTP protocol is used for this purpose and is implemented through client software. Several exist on the internet, and the one introduced in the workshop was FileZilla, again a free software.

Its setup is simple, and an account must be created afterwards to connect to the server. Parameters (address, login ID, password and account name) are given by the hosting company (or the provider). Once connected, the user interface allows transferring files by drag and drop from the local computer

to the remote server so the web site becomes available to the public. A simulation was made on a local web server.

An important aspect was pointed out regarding the home page file name. It is essential that it be standardised as servers are looking for default filenames in the site's root directory when no page name is given in the web browser. These default names are often index.htm or default.htm. If no such file is found at the site's root, the browser will display the files list as if we were using the windows explorer.

Point #12

The workshop gave the opportunity to stress the importance of sharing information among the participants. A network to exchange data and experiences should be created among the people and the institutions working in the area of Statistics.

EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP

An anonymous evaluation of the workshop was made. The form used and the results gathered are included respectively in annexes 3 and 4.

The main results show that the workshop was considered very useful by all participants. The practical works as well. All the participants agreed that the contents of the training were very appropriate and relevant. They found that the presentations were comprehensible and have been well prepared but noticed that the duration of the training was too short. Their common wish is to see this training deepened by either a second workshop or a few targeted missions to help the beneficiary institutions on site.

ANNEX 1: List of participants

TRAINING WORKSHOP ON Web site implementation and management

16th – 20th March, Bamako, Mali

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

COUNTRY	Full Name	Institution	Phone	Email
GAMBIA	Abu Camara	Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS)	(+220) 986 31 33	abucamara@gmail.com
	Lolley K. Jallow		(+220) 782 73 95	lolsaka@yahoo.com
GHANA	Kwesi Badu Eshun	Ghana Statistic Service (GSS)	(+233) 244 89 37 18	paama@hotmail.com
	Eric Kobla Duho		(+233) 244 89 37 17	figmonric@yahoo.com
LIBERIA	Joseph C. Kamara	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Service (LISGIS)	(+231) 652 60 43	Joseph.kamara@liscgis.org
	Lewis M. Marwolo		(+231) 651 66 59	Lewis.marwolo@liscgis.org
NIGERIA	Samuel Adakole Augustine	National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)	(+234) 805 5584 808	agwelikwunu@yahoo.com
SIERRA LEONE	David Gbaya-Kokoya	Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL)	(+232) 302 33 793	gbakoya@yahoo.com
	Abdul S. Bakarr		(+232) 338 80 960	al_shamin@yahoo.com
AFRISTAT	Mohamed Sow	Afristat	(+223) 73 05 05 25	Mohamed.sow@afriostat.org
	Abdoulaye Doucouré	Afristat	(+223) 74 11 32 12	abdoulaye.doucoure@afriostat.org

Ali Moussa	Afristat		Ali.moussa@afriat.org
Thierry Salmon	Afristat		Thierry.salmon@afriat.org
Freeman Amegashie	Afristat		Freeman.amegashie@afriat.org

ANNEX 2 – program of activities

Monday, March 16th

08:45 - 09:00	Arrival of participants
09:00 - 09:15	Opening ceremony
09:15 - 09:45	Introduction, course presentation Presentation of the equipment (PC, internet access)
09:45 - 10:00	coffee break
10:00 - 12:00	Main rules governing the design of a web site. Site contents: data.
12:00 - 14:30	free lunch
14:30 - 15:45	Example of known sites: + vs - points Choice of site and data organisation
15:45 - 16:00	coffee break
16:00 - 18:00	Files architecture, directory structure Introduction to internet: principles and technologies Introduction to HTML and description of the important tags
18:00 - 19:00	Cocktail

Tuesday, March 17th

08:30 - 10:15	HTML (continued) Tools (np++, ...) Practical work with HTML
10:15 - 10:30	coffee break
10:30 - 12:00	Practical work with HTML
12:00 - 14:30	free lunch
14:30 - 15:45	Introduction to Gimp. Practical work with Gimp
15:45 - 16:00	coffee break
16:00 - 18:00	Practical work with Gimp Scanning of images/documents: introduction and practice Creation of a PDF file

Wednesday, March 18th

08:30 – 10:15	Offering files for download: how to Summary thus far: what have we seen Implementation: authoring tools An example: NVU / Sublime3 (introduction, setup)
10:15 - 10:30	coffee break
10:30 - 12:00	Authoring tools (continued).
12:00 - 14:30	free lunch
14:30 - 15:45	Introduction to cascading sheets
15:45 - 16:00	coffee break
16:00 - 18:00	Practical work Publishing and updating the web site

Thursday, March 19th

08:30 - 10:15	Hands on work on the target site
10:15 - 10:30	coffee break
10:30 - 12:00	Hands on work on the target site (continued)
12:00 - 14:30	free lunch
14:30 - 15:45	Hands on work on the target site (continued)
15:45 - 16:00	coffee break
16:00 - 18:00	Hands on work on the target site (end)

Friday, March 20th

08:30 - 10:15	Analysis and critics of the sites created
10:15 - 10:30	coffee break
10:30 - 12:00	Improving the site with style sheets
12:00 - 14:30	free lunch
14:30 – 16:00	Global summary, conclusion and closing of the seminar

ANNEX 3: Evaluation Form



Training workshop on Website Design, Implementation and management

EVALUATION FORM

We would appreciate it very much if you could fill out this brief questionnaire, and hand it back at the end of the Training. Your opinion is highly valued and will be used to improve the quality of our future training events.

1. Overall usefulness of the Training

Very useful Useful Not so useful Not useful at all

2. Please indicate whether the Training has fulfilled ...

All my expectations Some of my expectations Any of my expectations

Please explain which expectations have not been met, and possible reasons for this.

3. In general, the contents of the Training have been appropriate and relevant

I completely agree I agree I do not agree

If you disagree, please explain which contents should have been addressed

4. In general, the methodology of the training has been ...

Very adequate Adequate Not really Not adequate at all

5. The practical works were ...

Very useful Useful Not really useful Not useful at all

Suggestions for possible improvements of the methodology of the practical works

6. In general, the document shared at the Training (handouts) were...

Very adequate Adequate Not really adequate Not adequate at all

Suggestions for possible improvements of the documenting process

7. In general, the presentations were comprehensible and have been well prepared
I completely agree
I agree
I do not agree

Suggestions for possible improvements of the presentation and facilitation

8. The organization of the Training was ...
Excellent
Good
Average
Poor

Suggestions for improving the organization

9. The duration of the Training was ...
Too short
(Please indicate why)
Adequate
Too long
(Please indicate why)

10. Other comments

We thank you very much for your collaboration.

Annex 4 : Evaluation Results

Workshop evaluation results

This is the results of the workshop evaluation and the proposals done by the participants from the 5 countries.

1. Overall usefulness of the Training

- Very useful 7
- Useful 2
- Not so useful 0
- Not useful at all 0

2. Please indicate whether the Training has fulfilled ...

- All my expectations 5
- Some of my expectations 4
- Any of my expectations 0

3. In general, the contents of the Training have been appropriate and relevant

- I completely agree 8
- I agree 1
- I do not agree 0

4. In general, the methodology of the training has been ...

- Very adequate 4
- Adequate 5
- Not really 0
- Not adequate at all 0

5. The practical works were ...

- Very useful 8
- Useful 1
- Not so useful 0
- Not useful at all 0

6. In general, the document shared at the Training (handouts) were...

- Very adequate 6
- Adequate 3
- Not really adequate 0
- Not adequate at all 0

7. In general, the presentations were comprehensible and have been well prepared

- I completely agree 6
- I agree 3
- I do not agree 0

8. The organization of the Training was ...

- Excellent 5
- Good 3

- Average 1
- Poor 0

9. The duration of the Training was ...

- Too short 5
- Adequate 4
- Too long 0

10. Other comments

- To organize another training session in order to complete all aspects covered by this workshop;
- To organize a workshop introducing to dynamic web sites;
- To organize a few targeted missions to help the beneficiary institutions on site.
- To make Hotel arrangements more proper;