

Beacon project update

Beacon Upgrade Project

Version	Date	Change summary
1	09/07/2020	-
2	09/07/2020	Minor revisions

Infrastructure

The infrastructure has been implemented and is working

We still need to

- Complete the documentation

- Test

Stability and security

We have identified the need for a penetration test and GDPR audit

We still need to consider system backup

Data

System in place for transfer

We need to agree our approach for Beacon Polls

- The polls contain a wide variety of data with different approaches in different U3As

- It has been noted some of the data in these fields should be stored in validated fields in the main database, while we still need to retain the unstructured flexibility to meet individual U3A requirements

- Having discussed this with APT, the pragmatic approach may be to bring the 'Polls' into Beacon 2 as-is and convert them into structured data as part of the switchover process for each U3A

Work is still needed on this

Software specification

The specification has been delivered in the form of User stories

These have been created following a process of consultation and discussion with members

It will be released on the Beacon website as the detail is finalised

The process of communicating the detailed specification has started and we expect this phase to be completed in July

Software development

We have divided the system into the following main sections

1. Admin Portal
 - 1.1 Membership, Configuration, Communications, Reporting
 - 1.2 Groups
 - 1.3 Events
 - 1.4 Finance
 - 1.5 Website CMS
2. Group Leader Portal
3. Member Portal
4. Public Website
5. Network/regions portal

The minimum viable product (MVP) will be delivered by the end of September

The MVP currently includes elements of 1 and 2

It is expected this will allow some U3As to begin a pilot in the fourth quarter of 2020

Public U3A websites

The system provides a content management system (CMS) allowing the automation and control of information posted onto the U3A website

While the new version of Beacon comes with its own CMS, it does not preclude the use of other systems, such as SiteBuilder, WordPress etc.

Non-Beacon Users may be able to use the Beacon CMS without using the Beacon membership management system

The SiteBuilder Team sees this as an opportunity to step back from their current roles; enabling them to retire

Usability and accessibility

We have specified a technical requirement for the system to meet the generally accepted AA standard detailed by Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1

This requirement has been included from the start of the Beacon project and extends to the whole "Supporting the Movement" upgrade programme

We have a commitment from the vendor to meet our requirements

We have completed the first of a series of workshops, utilising the experience of members of the Diversity and Inclusion committee, as well as other Beacon Team members with relevant experience

The team includes members who can provide a pragmatic interpretation of the guidelines, as well as an explanation of their needs, taking our demographic into account

While meeting the technical requirements is important, we consider the practical accessibility requirements (i.e. can the users actually use it) to be at least as important

This is a significant challenge for the project team and the vendor as the software user interface requires modification to meet our needs

Documentation

The team is in place

This includes experienced members who can produce videos

The same platform as the legacy Beacon is being used, to create comparable documents

This will allow members to see how they carried out a task in legacy Beacon and compare it with the method for new Beacon

Testing

The team is in place

The team comprises 13 members, with a mix of interests and expertise, including accessibility, legacy Beacon, technology, software, project management and implementation

The Testing sub-Team is responsible for creating testing scripts which will be used to verify that Beacon 2 meets the requirements

External communications

The team is in place

We have been posting on the website and Beacon News

It is accepted these updates need to contain rather more information than previously delivered: in the early stages of the project we had little concrete to report upon

As the project progresses, we will have more information, so the volume of information will increase

Plans are being developed for roadshows using a variety of formats, such as content, size of group etc.

These will be delivered using Zoom

User support

Support requests are channelled through the Zendesk platform to the 50 seasoned users in The Beacon Team

Zendesk also provides a simple, powerful, accessible platform for Users to answer their own queries

Rollout

The team is in place

The rollout will be carried out by a sub-group of around 30 specialists within the Beacon Team

Plans are in place, but not yet finalised, as they are dependent upon the take-up of the pilot phase

People

The team is in place

We have actively recruited people with training and communications experience

We have a team of 10 people to develop the training package and provide it to the Beacon Team Members

This will ensure the quality and consistency of the service, as well as providing the opportunity for Beacon Team members to grow and share their knowledge