



# Engaging the Rural Communities in e-Agriculture through the use of Web2.0

By

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# Land Resources Division(LRD)

- LRD is a division of SPC and covers agriculture and forestry through 8 thematic teams:
  - Animal Health & Production (AHP)
  - Biosecurity and Trade Services (BATS)
  - Genetic Resources (GR)
  - Crop Production (CP)
  - Plant Health (PH)
  - Forestry & Trees (FAT)
  - Forestry & Agricultural Diversification (FAD)
  - Information, Communication & Extension (ICE)
- It uses an integrated and participatory approach to the development of sustainable agriculture and forestry.



# LRD IKM Strategy and Web 2.0

- Developed in 2005
- To collect and share information in a systematic and integrated manner using regional information systems as single access points for the users of information
- To achieve, using a Web2.0 approach, a “One Stop Shop” through merging existing information systems within LRD and linking to existing information outside LRD and making it accessible on an LRD portal to stakeholders.



# Web 2.0 initiative (a) some principles\*

- Use Web 1.0 technology and add:
  - user recognition, involvement, and inputs and tools to facilitate these.
- Recognise that information can be more valuable distributed to users than held centrally
- Recognise that users add value
- Develop databases that get better as more users access them
- Opt for the simpler wherever possible: aim for a lightweight model that allows for loosely-coupled systems
- Enable access to remote users – the ‘long tail’ of the head

\* After O'Reilly (2005) et al



# Web 2.0 initiative (b) Where we are now

- Large repositories of data
- Held and managed centrally
- Much originates in 22 client island states
- Clients have to log in via Internet to access data
- Many clients feel, or are physically, insufficiently connected



# Web 2.0 initiative (c) next steps

- Devise ways in which users play a bigger role in:
  - identifying their information needs
  - supplying information themselves
  - managing that information
  - accessing the common pool of information
- Study tools used in Web 2.0 implementations e.g. RSS feeds, wikis, weblogs, tagging, vlog etc.; assess those most appropriate to our environment; incorporate
- Explore ways to improve client Internet access
- Explore alternatives e.g. information distribution by CD



# Existing Expert Networks in LRD

<p>Pacific Islands Policy Network (PAFPNet)</p> <p><a href="http://www.spc.int/pafpnet">http://www.spc.int/pafpnet</a></p>	<p>email list that provides an avenue to network and discuss agricultural and forestry policies</p>
<p>Pacific Islands Extension Network (PIEN)</p>	<p>a forum which aims to encourage the use of participatory approaches in extension development and delivery.</p>
<p>Pacvet</p>	<p>forum that facilitates on-going discussions on AHP related issues in the region</p>



# Existing Expert Networks in LRD (cont.)

PAPGREN	weblog documents the activities of <b>Pacific Agricultural Genetic Resources Network (PAPGREN)</b> , along with other information on plant genetic resources (PGR) in the Pacific.
Pacinet	part of a worldwide network of people and institutions dedicated to pooling, sharing and enhancing the world's taxonomic resources.



# Constraints to Web 2.0 Uptake

- **Infrastructure**

- a majority in the rural areas have no electricity supply.
- individuals, schools, and organizations have only limited access to information infrastructure such as telephones, computers, and Internet services
- Supply of computers, maintenance & repair services, software & training, are all very limited
- When all the above are in place, bandwidth is small and very expensive



- **Cultural barriers**

- play an important role in the slow uptake of new technologies



# Some Possible Solutions to Constraints

- VSATs
  - provide relatively low cost access to the Internet via satellites.
- National Policy Advocacy
  - Many Governments retain monopoly policies that maintain high telecommunications costs
  - Advocacy is needed to explain the national advantage to removal of such constraints
- OLPC (One Laptop Per Child)
  - Current position: 350,000 units distributed over 5 years
- CDs are used to distribute regional databases such as the Pacific Pest List Database to those without Internet access.



# Concluding remarks

- SPC LRD has very large datasets, gathered over several decades, of great potential value to the peoples of its 22 Pacific Island Country clients
- Current distribution of, and access to, this data has considerable scope for improvement.
- Web 2.0 appears to offer much towards gaining such improvement.
- SPC LRD will need assistance in identifying, evaluating & implementing Web 2.0 functions.





## Questions ?

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