

February 22, 2012

Executive Committee  
Long Term Recovery Committee  
Joplin, Missouri

Rebuild Joplin  
Joplin, Missouri

Re: Communication Plan Design Proposal

Dear Executive Committee of the Long Term Recovery Committee and Rebuild Joplin:

We are pleased to submit the following proposal for the development of a communication plan for the Long Term Recovery Committee (“LTRC”) and Rebuild Joplin (“RJ”).

### **Introduction**

We understand that there exists no consistent method of communication or project management among the members of the Long Term Recovery Committee (“LTRC”) and Rebuild Joplin (“RJ”) organizations. In an effort to meet your needs, we will design a communication infrastructure based upon the website Mindjet Connect Action and an accompanying user guide, which will provide a consistent means of communication and project management for the members of both organizations.

### **Audience**

As the Executive Committee has a varied demographic, we will pay special attention to making the documents approachable to those coming from a diverse background. Almost all members within this audience maintain full-time positions outside of their organizations and, as a consequence, have limited time and attention to devote towards learning new programs. Likewise, not all of the audience members will have the same level of interest and/or confidence in the program. Within this general audience exist two specific main groups, each with slightly different needs depending upon their roles in their respective organizations.

The primary audience for this project is the Executive Committee members who represent LTRC and RJ. The Executive Committee members need a more efficient method of communication apart from email, such as Mindjet Connect Action, to help them design and delegate tasks as well as monitor the status of those tasks. Furthermore, they need some sort of guide to help them complete these tasks, given their limited time availability to learn the new program.

The secondary audience includes the remaining members of LTRC and RJ. The remaining members need to know how to use the task features of the program to see which tasks they are assigned to, see who else is assigned to these tasks, and to report their own task progress. They, too, most likely have limited time to master the new program. Our user guide will apply to both audiences, though they may not need all information contained therein.

Through effective project design, we will establish a central communication infrastructure in order to meet each of these audiences' needs.

### **Project Design Criteria**

Our project design group consists of seven technical writing students in the graduate program at Missouri State University: Nicholas Carrington, Adam Lockwood, Ramey McCracken, Tavia Pennington, Kristie Reynolds, Amber Salmon, and Katherine Wertz. The project design group is overseen by Dr. Lyn Gattis, a professor at Missouri State University.

After communicating with the LTRC and RJ about the needs of these two organizations, we investigated the website Mindjet Connect Action. To meet your request of a communication infrastructure for these two organizations, we will set up and populate at least two accounts through Mindjet Connect Action for the committees of Unmet Needs/Case Management and Emotional/Spiritual Needs. Populating these accounts will include adding members, creating projects, scheduling task deadlines, and linking established tasks to assigned members.

Because this is a communication tool, many users must be connected and interacting through individual accounts. Members of the organization will be added to specific projects and given tasks to be completed by a specific deadline. The members can update their progress of each task and privately or publicly communicate to other members of the organization. Tasks can be put in a specific order in cases when one task must be completed before beginning another task. The criteria and deadlines of tasks can be edited solely by project leaders. This makes every member of the organization accountable for their action or inaction.

We will also create a user guide for Mindjet Connect Action in order to assist members in navigating the program. The user guide will provide information about setting up accounts and logging into an account. It will define projects and tasks and how to create these in the program. Program options will be discussed, pertinent terms will be explained, and helpful tips will be provided. Alongside explanations and instructions, we will provide screenshots and visuals to help you navigate and use Mindjet Connect Action.

### **Design Elements**

In addition to setting up and populating at least two accounts through Mindjet Connect Action's website, we will also create a user guide for Mindjet Connect Action in order to help members navigate the program. The design elements we will incorporate into the user guide will involve headings and sub-headings to make sections easier to locate. Each section will be labeled by number, and there will be a table of contents and an index to ensure finding information is simple. Screen shots will be included in the document to aid in efficient learning. Screen shots are actual pictures from Mindjet that will illustrate various steps. Any additional design elements we adopt would be purely for the user's convenience in navigating through the document and the online program.

### **Tasks and Schedule**

We plan on creating a rough draft of the user guide and setting up the accounts in Mindjet Connect Action before April 2. During the week of April 2, we plan to conduct a usability test of

our user guide and communication infrastructure with the appropriate Executive Committee members or appropriate substitutes to see what needs to be revised and/or changed. This feedback is essential to us in creating a communication infrastructure that addresses the needs of LTRC and RJ. We will conduct the usability test at times and places convenient for the Executive Committee members who volunteer to test our documents. The usability test will consist of questions that will allow our group to draw conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of the communication infrastructure and accompanying user guide.

On April 30, we will send a report to LTRC and RJ Executive Committee members explaining how to implement our tools. Our group intends to complete the entire project by May 1. At this point, we hope to have created a communication infrastructure through Mindjet Connect Action that satisfies the needs of LTRC and RJ. The user guide will help Executive Committee members understand this infrastructure further and help them to train other members of their organizations to use this infrastructure. We hope our end product allows LTRC and RJ to communicate more effectively within and between their organizations.

If convenient, during the week of May 7, we will present our communication infrastructure and accompanying user guide to the appropriate members of the Executive Committee. We will thoroughly describe how the system works and answer any questions the Executive Committee members may have. By the end of the presentation, the Executive Committee members should have a clear understanding of how the communication infrastructure works and how they might implement this structure further within their organizations.

### **Resources**

LTRC and RJ will not have the burden of any monetary expenses for this project. The English Department at Missouri State University will bear the printing and binding costs associated with producing hard copies of our user guide, the number of which will be determined at a later date. However, an electronic copy (Word document) of said user guide will be provided to your organizations should the need to update the documents or produce additional hard copies arise.

Missouri State will also provide the computer labs, printers, and software for the students in this course to set up accounts on Mindjet Connect Action and create the associated user guide for your organizations. Your organization members should only need access to the internet in order to use Mindjet Connect Action. They will be able to use Microsoft Word to amend the user guide.

Certain LTRC and RJ members will be required to invest a minimal amount of time during this project to provide assistance to our group in order to facilitate accurate information when setting up the Mindjet Connect Action program.

### **Obstacles and Contingency Plans**

The major obstacles for this project are a limited time schedule (both for our project team and the Executive Committee members) and anticipating what content will be needed in the user guide. While limited time could possibly create several problems, it should not be a major issue because we have developed a work schedule which will keep us completing tasks in a timely manner in order to meet our projected completion dates.

The limited amount of usability testing will hinder our ability to truly gain an understanding of all of the issues users will encounter as they set up an account and begin to interact with the software interface. To overcome this complication, we will thoroughly document any issues that arise as we familiarize ourselves with the software and create the user guide. As we create the user guide, we will approach the software as a first-time user, so we are equipped to develop a user guide in a way that will intuitively guide first-time users through the software.

As a form of support, we will also include a troubleshooting section in the user guide to answer questions that users may have while learning or using the software. While the troubleshooting guide may not be able to answer every question or solve every problem, it will at least provide some answers and reference materials to guide users to further information.

### **Institutional Review Board Approval**

Because several Executive Committee members (or appropriate substitutes) will be testing a draft of our Mindjet Connect Action site and user guide later this spring, all class members have already completed the training MSU requires for working with human subjects. The project as a whole will be approved by MSU's Institutional Review Board before we test any of our work. Executive Committee members (or appropriate substitutes) will be free to accept or decline our invitation to test the website and user guide.

### **Conclusion**

We are excited to be a part of the recovery effort in Joplin and look forward to working with you to help implement a better way for your organizations to communicate and manage your work. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments you may have about the project.

Respectfully,

Nicholas Carrington  
Adam Lockwood  
Ramey McCracken  
Tavia Pennington  
Kristie Reynolds  
Amber Salmon  
Katherine Wertz