

# **External Relations Committee**

## **Electronic Communications Framework**

**(A Discussion Paper)**

**‘... enabling effective communication with the world...’**

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1. Background

At AIM2004, a strategic visioning process was commenced to define and set the organisational priorities for the next five years. This resulted in five key areas being selected for further development. The External Relations Committee (ERC) and the Electronic Communications Team (ECT) support the thrust of those key areas and see controlled development and management of the electronic communications domain as being integral to the future development and success of the organisation.

The ECT would consider that part of the organisation's vision is to:

**'... provide and maintain an electronic environment that effectively supports the information and marketing needs of CISV at all levels ....**

This vision cannot be achieved by the ERC or the ECT alone. It can only be achieved if the whole organisation has a shared understanding and ownership of the work that needs to be done to build and maintain an electronic environment that supports the information and marketing needs of the total organisation.

### 1.2. Purpose and Structure of this Document

The purpose of this discussion paper is to put the electronic communications domain into context so that the organisation can get a good view of where it is today. It also sets out to better define and understand some long term strategies and plans for the electronic communications domain.

The document is structured in the following way:

1. An Executive Summary that gives an overview of the total document (this section);
2. An introduction that details the assumptions, scope and approach taken;
3. A statement of requirements that sets out the basic functionality expected from the in-scope electronic communications domain components;
4. A brief overview of some of the types of requests that are put forward for action;
5. An update on what has been happening, and what's not, in each component in the electronic communications domain; and
6. Some insights into the issues, impacts and actions that lead to a prioritised list of action items that will help the organisation decide on the most appropriate course to take over the next 12 to 18 months.

All of this together constitutes the framework in which CISV should address its position in the electronic communications domain. The framework takes into account both the historical context and the future needs of the organisation.

### 1.3. Initial Observations

One of the major difficulties for any volunteer organisation is how best to effectively manage the willing volunteer community. The management of these volunteers is especially critical when the output generated by the volunteers is seen as the face of the organisation on the internet.

Therefore the information contained in the requirements section (Section 3) is very important as the organisation needs to be very clear about where each component fits in the jigsaw.

It is also very important that all of the future development efforts are aligned with those agreed requirements. In this way, a volunteer organisation such as CISV has a better chance of making more effective use of scarce volunteer and financial resources.

### **1.3.1. The Positives**

Much has been achieved since the organisation made the first tentative steps into the electronic communications age after the IBM in Canada in 1995.

The international website has served the organisation well as it has given the organisation a professional presence on the internet. Over time, the site has been difficult to manage and has therefore remained quite static and the information and the presentation has become stale.

The Friends website has been a great success since it was launched in July 2003. This success can be measured by the number of past delegates who have registered with the site. Its success can also be measured by its ability to host forums where opinions can be voiced and discussions moderated in a controlled environment.

The Resources website is another example of what can be done when a simple idea is put into practice. This website has simplified the access to key documents for volunteers in National Associations and Chapters around the world. With a few clicks of the mouse the latest forms, guides and other vital information is available.

Another positive is that some Committees and Taskforces have taken the initiative and developed individual websites and are using the electronic domain to communicate with their members and National Associations.

A comprehensive administrative protocol for the naming of email addresses has been developed and implemented. This system allows for management of international, national and Chapter email addresses and has significantly improved the efficiency of the total CISV email system.

### **1.3.2. The Negatives**

Most of the negatives come about because of the way in which the CISV electronic communications domain has been allowed to develop over time.

Efforts to date have generally been determined and executed in isolation and as a result we have three major websites and a number of committee sites that each serve a purpose but are lacking a unity of message, design or even content. This does not even take into consideration the various National Association and Chapter websites that have a wide range of designs and conflicting messages.

The lack of planning and often the lack of active participation of key stakeholders is seen in the number of initiatives that are started in good faith but are not completed. Had some of these initiatives not been started our scarce resources could have been deployed on more important initiatives.

## **1.4. Building on the Framework**

It is important to note that what we have today is not bad or wrong. It is important and a key part of the framework for future development. The electronic communications environment is very dynamic and any actions chosen today need to be regularly reassessed as the environment changes.

The proposed action items have been broken into two separate groups to give specific emphasis to what are considered the six most critical areas. This separation does not mean that individual action items cannot be progressed in parallel. It should also be stressed that not all action items are to be addressed by the ECT alone as a number of action items will need to be addressed by cross-functional teams of which ECT will be only one member.

### **1.4.1. Top 6 Action Items**

The top six action items are considered to be:

- a) Continue the redevelopment of the international website (cisv.org) using design guidelines developed in conjunction with IO, KTP and ERC Public Relations & Marketing resources;
- b) Undertake a separate study to make recommendations and initiate action on how to best use the Friends website and database for the development of the organisation;
- c) Develop management processes that will help inform the organisation about procedures and points of contact and simplify, prioritise and control activity within the CISV electronic communications domain;
- d) Develop a Visual Branding Guidelines Manual that can be used to assist all CISVers, including National Associations and Chapters, in developing websites and other promotional material that conforms to CISV's agreed international visual branding;
- e) Apply the new design guidelines to Friends to provide a consistent visual image; and
- f) Update the Resources 'search' functionality to provide a more comprehensive search facility so that more 'hidden' information is made available to CISV volunteers and other visitors.

### **1.4.2. Remaining Action Items**

The remaining recommendations are considered to be:

- g) Apply the new design to the Resources website, including all Committee and Taskforce websites, so that all major public sites have a common branding;
- h) Initiate a review of the CISV electronic technical infrastructure to document the current environment and to make recommendations for the future needs of the organisation;
- i) Assess the intranet project and make recommendations on how best to proceed with its development;
- j) Commit resources to help build and maintain Committee and Taskforce websites;
- k) Propose a funding model that will support the future development of the electronic communications domain;
- l) Support National Associations and Chapters in implementing websites that conform to the international visual design guidelines; and
- m) Assess the need for administrative requirements of a secure system that allows for the online capture and submission of forms that relate to CISV programs and for the distribution of and response to official questionnaires.

### **1.4.3. Next Steps**

The External Relations Committee is seeking Board acceptance of this report and will seek support for its key action items by way of the normal AIM reporting and motion process.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1. Background**

Over recent years there has been a great deal of CISV activity within the electronic communications domain. The organisation at all levels has become more aware of and adept in using the tools available in the electronic domain to promote the organisation and to improve communications.

The benefits of the use of this technology have been obvious but to some extent have come at a price. The price has been that websites, in particular, have been developed in isolation and with little thought as to the strategic or even operational requirements of the organisation.

This diversity has resulted in mixed and varied messages being sent out and this can lead to some confusion about the organisation as there is no clearly identifiable brand image.

### **2.2. Approach**

A framework provides a structure around which other things can be built. The CISV electronic communications framework is not starting from a clean sheet of paper so it is important to have some reference points to guide the development of the framework.

These key reference points for this framework are a:

- a) statement of the current position; and
- b) clear view of what the preferred future position would look like.

Clarification of these two positions will set the foundation for enhancing the framework. If one or both of these basic positions is unclear, then the framework is likely to be ineffective and the organisation will probably waste time and resources trying to move forward.

Therefore the key steps in arriving at this framework have been to:

- Develop a clearer understanding of the current position with respect to all of the components that make up the electronic communications domain within CISV;
- Develop a realistic understanding of the preferred future position within the electronic communications domain; and
- Suggest and assess action items on how best to reach that future position and to better prioritise and manage activity in the electronic communications domain.

### **2.3. Assumptions**

It is assumed that any new website development or redevelopment will reflect an agreed direction in branding and marketing the organisation.

It is important to emphasise that 'branding' agreed for the three main international CISV websites is likely to be enforced for international Committee and Taskforce websites and recommended for use by National Associations and Chapters.

These design constraints should not be seen as a negative, but rather as a source of support and strength for the whole organisation, and it is expected that the international association will provide guidance to Committees and Taskforces as well as National Associations and Chapters who seek advice in setting up and maintaining their websites.

## 2.4. In Scope Activities

The CISV electronic communications domain covers a wide range of components and not all of these components are included in the scope of this study.

The following seven components are considered to be in-scope for this study:

- An international website - <http://www.cisv.org>;
- A closed-to-the-public document and resource repository;
- An open-to-the-public document and resource repository;
- Committee and taskforce specific websites;
- A website specifically for alumni and friends of CISV;
- The technical infrastructure that supports activity within the electronic communications domain; and
- The administrative process necessary to effectively manage all of the activity in the electronic communications domain.

## 2.5. Out of Scope Activities

National Association and Chapter websites are important resources but will not be specifically addressed in this study. They, most likely, will be affected by decisions taken as a result of this study. Assistance should be provided to these groups to ensure that they can respond to any changes.

Printed publications are out of scope for this study but it is assumed that the electronic visual organisational identity and the printed publications will be aligned and that the publications will be made available online post their publication.

The administrative protocol for naming and managing international and national email mailboxes is also excluded from the scope of this study. The current email guidelines are available on the ERC website, <http://resources.cisv.org/erc/ect/>, and it is recommended that people at all levels within CISV become familiar with and abide by these guidelines. This component of the electronic communications domain is important and will be reviewed and updated on a needs basis.

## 2.6. Related Initiatives

The Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) project is a joint venture between CISV International and the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. The three-year partnership project commenced in late 2004 and initially focuses on improving CISV's marketing, quality assurance and performance measurement.

The KTP project, in conjunction with the ERC and the IO, will be having direct input into the creation of the visual branding image of CISV as an international organisation and as such will have a direct influence on the design of the revised international website and subsequently all other CISV websites.

More detailed information about KTP can be found at <http://resources.cisv.org/ktp/index.html>.

### 3. WHAT DO WE NEED?

The following section defines, in summary, what basic functions are expected to be delivered by each of the seven in-scope components within the electronic communications domain.

There is no effort made to define how those functions will be met. That will be addressed in the official ERC AIM report or by specific motions put before the Board for discussion and decision.

#### 3.1. International Website

The international website is CISV's official face on the internet and therefore must be a true, accurate and effective representation of what CISV is all about.

In summary, it will:

- Make a clear and simple statement about the aims and purpose of the organisation;
- Provide more detailed information about the organisation and its activities presented in clearly written and simple text;
- Provide a structure and website navigation that efficiently refers the various types of visitors to the appropriate pages to gather information on their subject of choice;
- Clearly set out appropriate points of contact;
- Provide photographs, news items and stories that are current, interesting and relevant;
- Provide clear navigational links to other CISV electronic domain resources including National Association sites; and
- Be updated regularly with statistics and testimonials from previous participants, parents or officials.

The following table represents outcomes that could be expected for a selection of potential visitors to the international website.

<b>Type of Visitor</b>	<b>Expected outcome of Visit</b>
A potential participant	Sees CISV as a cool way to spend free time and will put CISV in front of a parent.
A parent of a potential participant	Establishes trust in CISV by its care towards its participants and educational background; Gains an understanding of the impact of CISV participation and the family experience.
A potential volunteer	Sees volunteering with CISV as a great opportunity for personal development and contributing to a wider cause; The visit triggers interest enough to navigate to a National Association or Chapter website to get local information.
An educator	Gets an impression that CISV's intercultural programmes are based on cutting edge research and that CISV is an organisation worth promoting in schools and universities.
An NGO representative	Gets the impression that CISV is an organisation worth considering for potential future co-operation.
A potential donor	Realises the importance of CISV's work and finds information that establishes trust to the extent of becoming involved in a giving program.

### 3.2. Intranet

The Intranet is an internally focused website that cannot be viewed by the general public. Information on the Intranet may well be restricted to certain members of CISV and access to information will be controlled by a security system that grants specific access rights to individuals or groups of individuals.

The intranet will:

- Provide a security system that will restrict access to the site or to certain information within the site;
- Provide a filing system that will allow files to be shared among registered users;
- Provide version control on documents stored on the intranet so that only one user can have update access at any one time;
- Generate secure areas for each of the committees to share documents and communicate within the committee;
- Provide users with a Bulletin Board function that updates users with important new information at each login; and
- Facilitate secure communication and shared forums at the international level.

### 3.3. Resources Website

The Resources website is essentially an internal general purpose website but is also available for viewing on the internet. Therefore information contained on this site must be suitable for general consumption.

The general information section of the site must add value to National Association and Chapter volunteers by providing immediate access to relevant and accurate information.

It will provide immediate and clear access to:

- Current versions of all CISV forms;
- Current versions of the CISV Programme and Activity Guides,
- Relevant sections of the InfoFile containing rules and procedures;
- Explanations of internal procedures;
- Recent editions of all official CISV publications;
- Photographs, news items and good news stories that are current, interesting and relevant;
- Official templates for marketing and presentation material; and
- Each of the official international Committee and Taskforce websites including access to relevant newsletters.

It will also provide a 'Search' function that will allow volunteers to retrieve other relevant documents by entering keywords into the search function.

The enhanced 'search' functionality is a critical requirement as it is not possible to include every piece of stored information as a link on a webpage. This 'hidden' information needs to be brought to the surface by the intelligent 'search' function.

### 3.4. Committee & Taskforce Websites

The Committee pages, accessed through the Resources website, are essentially internally focused but are available for viewing on the internet.

Therefore information contained on this site must be suitable for general consumption and should:

- Provide an overview of the activities of the committee or taskforce;
- Provide links to items such as forms stored elsewhere on official websites;
- Provide clear and appropriate contact points;
- Deliver information that is both accurate and current;
- Provide links to the Friends and international websites;
- Maintain information that is consistent with information held on the main international website; and
- Provide access to photographs, news items and good news stories that are current, interesting and relevant.

### 3.5. Friends Website

The Friends website, <http://friends.cisv.org/>, is a multi-purpose website but its prime aim is to provide an electronic meeting place where past participants can re-connect with other past participants at the same CISV activity.

The Friends website will:

- Provide a secure environment where past delegates can register their interest in the website;
- Provide clear and detailed Terms and Conditions to prospective members for the use of the website;
- Have procedures in place to protect the privacy of all registrants;
- Provide a 'meeting place' for registered CISVers to post information about themselves eg photographs, what they are now doing, where they have been visiting etc.;
- Provide an environment where general discussion forums can be initiated and moderated;
- Facilitate the distribution of communication material such as newsletters to registrants who agree to receive such material;
- Provide a forum where registrants can get or link to up-to-date material about CISV and its current activities;
- Provide links to other relevant CISV electronic communications domain components; and
- Provide photographs, news items and good news stories that are current, interesting and relevant.

As a result of the registration process, a large amount of important information is gathered about the registering participant. This information is a critical resource for the organisation.

### 3.6. Technical Infrastructure

The technical infrastructure is a critical component of the electronic communications domain but is often forgotten when any discussion on requirements or priorities is held.

The technical infrastructure will provide:

- A secure operational environment that supports CISV's electronic activities;
- Sufficient hardware and software redundancy to ensure that the CISV electronic communications domain is not interrupted for any lengthy period because of component failure; and
- A back-up and restore facility to archive and restore critical information and system capability in case of failure.

The technical infrastructure will also be supported by comprehensive and up-to-date documentation that can be used to manage or restore the technical infrastructure in the absence of CISV technical resources.

### 3.7. Domain & Resource Management

The workload within the electronic communications domain is volatile and unpredictable as ideas and requests for work come from a number of directions including:

- Ad-hoc requests to the ECT or International Office (IO);
- Initiatives started independently and partly developed before coming to the notice of the ECT or IO; and
- Motions put and accepted at AIM (often without any depth of analysis regarding work effort required, cost or benefits).

It is difficult to manage outcomes in an environment like this without procedures to help guide resources and to monitor and control the wide range of activity.

The domain and resource management procedures will:

- Provide guidance for the lodgement and approval of requests for work;
- Facilitate the evaluation and prioritisation of all requests for work;
- Enable progress and status reporting to be delivered on all approved projects and related activities;
- Include a responsibility matrix that will set out for the organisation who is responsible for what within the electronic communications domain;
- Include guidelines for the creation and management of websites consistent with the agreed visual branding;
- Include guidelines for the management of content within the electronic communications domain;
- Provide guidance on the enforcement of domain management procedures; and
- Provide direction on security and access guidelines.

## **4. WHAT IS THE MOST CRITICAL NEED?**

### **4.1. There are Many Choices**

The following list is in no particular order and is only a sample of suggestions for improvements that could be made within the CISV electronic communications domain.

The list is included to demonstrate the wide diversity of proposals being put forward.

Inclusion in this list does not imply that the item has any official endorsement as all proposals need to be evaluated before any significant work is initiated.

1. Remodel and relaunch the official international website so that CISV has a more attractive profile on the internet;
2. Develop or implement a system that would allow for the electronic distribution and completion of surveys or questionnaires;
3. Develop the intranet to allow for the storage and restricted retrieval of more sensitive CISV material;
4. Use the Friends Website to profile people for selected marketing campaigns eg. Potential leaders, fundraising;
5. Update the Resources website so that all resource material including videos, publications, presentations etc can be found by an efficient 'search' function;
6. Use the Friends website to enable the creation of an Alumni Association that would support the organisation with activities like fundraising and marketing;
7. Reconfigure all CISV websites so that they all use the same design solution and give a unified message to the outside world;
8. Focus scarce volunteer resources so that each committee and taskforce has a website that is updated regularly;
9. Develop a 'Good News' website where other organisations or individuals will post good news stories;
10. Facilitate discussion forums on the Friends website to involve more people at different levels in the decision making and strategic direction of the organisation;
11. Develop and publish an e-magazine that is specifically geared for children;
12. Build an electronic dictionary that keeps track of and translates CISV's many acronyms;
13. Develop a secure system that allows for the online completion and submission of many of the forms relating to CISV programs;
14. Reduce the administrative workload for International Office and National Associations by improving the data capture of National Report Form (NRF) information.
15. Automate the registration process for all CISV Programs and Activities so that all delegates are pre-registered with Friends.

The list goes on but what is the first priority?

### **4.2. How do we Decide?**

Is number 1 more important than number 6 and number 11 or even number 13?

What about number 16 and 17 that are not even identified yet?

How do we decide where to focus our attention and how do we manage that process?

## **5. WHAT IS HAPPENING & WHAT IS NOT?**

### **5.1. International Website**

The international website, [www.cisv.org](http://www.cisv.org), has served the organisation well but is currently showing signs of age and is not meeting the needs of the organisation especially from a marketing and public relations perspective.

#### **5.1.1. Rebuilding the Site**

A project to redesign the international website was approved as part of the ERC Plans at AIM 2004. The project was initiated in October 2004 and detailed analysis has continued since that date.

The current plan for the project is:

- A statement of work was issued to a number of designers in April 2005;
- A designer and technical developer were selected in May 2005;
- A content management application was selected in May 2005;
- Development work commenced in late-May 2005;
- Home page and Village content scheduled for completion by early-July 2005; and
- New technological and menu structure to be previewed at AIM2005.

Detailed timelines for the completion and public launch of the website will be determined after consultation with the IEC regarding the strategic direction of the branding exercise.

Action item a) has been specifically included to address this activity.

#### **5.1.2. Content Management**

A team of content editors has been formed to ensure that the initial content published on the site meets the current needs of the organisation. The editorial team will be using the selected content management application, OpenCMS, to publish information on the site.

OpenCMS is a professional tool that is designed to help create and manage complex websites without any real technical knowledge. An integrated editor, similar to well known office applications, helps the editor to create the content while a sophisticated template engine enforces a site-wide corporate layout.

OpenCMS is completely free of licensing costs.

### **5.2. Intranet**

The Intranet was suggested by the International Office in response to needs of committees and of sharing confidential information effectively. It was approved in the IO AIM plans and is being rolled out gradually at minimal financial cost.

The intranet data is stored on servers hosted by Moretti Consulting and CISV currently pays £400 per year for the use of the servers and the software that supports the intranet. The supplier of this service is providing the service to CISV at a large discount to current market rates.

The intranet allows secure areas for discussion forums where committee members can communicate with one another and to share files. It also has a Bulletin Board function which displays important news each time the user logs in to the system.

The system has been configured in a top down way. The IEC have access to the entire site while the EEC has access to its own specific areas. At the next level, committees members only have access to data relating to their own committee. There are specific 'general purpose areas' where the information is available to all users.

The intranet is currently seen as a pilot and is restricted for use by International Office staff and members of selected International Committees. It has already proved useful for things like MWM documents, Seminar Camp staff selection and the NADT database.

The intranet has already shown its worth but it is important to keep in mind that the security and administrative set-up requires time and effort. Therefore, it is not expected that intranet capability will be available to the wider CISV audience for some time.

Action item i) has been included to develop a better understanding of the intranet's potential.

### **5.3. Resource Website**

The Resources website, <http://resources.cisv.org/>, is essentially an internal reference site but it is available on the public domain internet. It was developed by an ECT volunteer at little cost to the International Association.

While it does not solve all of the problems with information retrieval, the Resources website has been a great success as it has immediately made available many critical but previously hidden documents for general use within the CISV community.

It has also given IO and the Committees control over the distribution of the most current version of forms and guides. Now there is no excuse for and National Associations or Chapter that uses an out of date form or cannot find the relevant Program Guide.

The Resources site has also given the Committees and Taskforces a template driven framework on which they can quickly build and maintain their own professional looking website.

There are no plans to make any major changes to the Resources site and the main activity is now concentrated on:

- Maintaining the information to ensure that current versions of key CISV documents are always available on this site;
- Adding new reference material to the document centre; and
- Improving the cataloguing of information so that it responds better to the 'search' function.

Recommendation f) has been included to specifically address the last of these activities.

#### **5.3.1. Related Websites**

The CISV International Peace Fund (PFT) website <http://resources.cisv.org/pft/> is also referenced from the Resources website. This site is out of scope for this study but uses a design similar to the Summer Camp site and contains information relating to the goals and workings of the PFT.

#### 5.4. Committee & Taskforce Websites

There is no official requirement for Committees and Taskforces to maintain a website but many Committees and Taskforce have created websites with varying degrees of success. Some have used the templates provided by the Resources website while others have developed sites with unique designs.

Most of the committee websites are updated regularly but some sites have been left unattended and as a result contain information that is either inaccurate or very much out of date. Unfortunately, outdated information is one of the signs that an organisation does not care about its image and many visitors will lose faith in all of the information on a site if seriously outdated information is detected.

The following table gives a brief overview of the current situation with Committee and Taskforce websites. The comments are essentially statements of fact and are not meant to reflect either positively or negatively on the individual committees or taskforces as it is understood that not all of these groups have the resources or even the inclination to maintain a professional website.

Owner	Comments
Executive	The IEC website uses the Resources templates and contains limited information about the IEC and its operation. There are a number of unlinked reference documents on the site but these are being addressed. The news items have not been updated since March 2003.
Education & Research	The EDR website uses its own design and contains a range of information about the committees and its activities. It has sections that relate to the history of the committee, to research articles, educational principles, quality assurance and publications.
External Relations	The ERC website uses the Resources templates and contains information about the committee and its current plans. It also has dedicated pages for each of the sub-groups within the ERC. The NGO site is out of date and does not use the Resources templates. The ERC also posts new items on a regular basis.
Finance	The IFC does not have a website
Interchange	The IIC website is hosted and managed as part of the CISV Canada website. IIC chair is comfortable with the hosting arrangement as the service from the Canadian webmaster is good. The site has detailed information for National and Local Interchange chairs as well as newsletter and articles of interest to Interchange people. It also provides a number of links to other sites of interest.
Leadership Training	The ILTC site uses the Resources templates and provides some good information about the committee and its work. There is information specific to the role of a trainer. There is also a facility for newsletters and news but both of these sections have not been updated since 2004.
Local Work	The ILWC site uses the Resources templates and contains a comprehensive list of information about local work and the committee. It contains current year plans, updates news items and a detailed list of files that could be useful for Local Work. Copies of the Local Work Magazine are available from the site as is access to the Activity Database.
Organisational Development	The ODC is a new Committee and has yet to create its own website. There is still a site for the old Promotions committee that contains some relevant information about that sub-group within ODC.
Peoples Project	The IPP website does not use the Resources templates. It site is updated

	regularly and contains information relevant to upcoming and past IPP activities. It has links to the Resources site for all forms as well as the IPP Guide. It also has a section where stories about previous IPPs are told.
Risk Management	The Risk Management is a new taskforce and has yet to develop a website.
Seminar Camp	The Seminar Camp site uses the Resources templates and provides a variety of information about Seminar Camps. There is a list of current year Seminar Camps as well as links to the most current newsletter. There is also relevant information for National Associations, staff and delegates.
Summer Camp	The Summer Camp site uses its own design but with similar colours as the Resources site. Much of the content on the site is out of date and does not appear to have been updated since 2003.
Village	The IVC site uses the Resources templates and contains detailed information about the committee, its members and the Village program. It has links to newsletters, forms and a calendar to provide assistance to viewers.
Youth Meetings	The IYM site uses the Resources templates and provides comprehensive information about Youth Meetings. It has a calendar as well as a detailed list of forms for IYM use. The site also has stories from IYM delegates as well as a detailed contact list of IYM National contacts. The news section is also updated regularly.
International Junior Branch	The IJB site uses a variation on the Resources template and contains a range of information for Juniors including a comprehensive set of links to other CISV sites. It also has Tools, Data and Management sections with varying information in each section. Much of the information on the site is only accessible via a number of password controlled screens.

A particular concern and a key issue for some committees is the limited availability of skilled resources to create and maintain a website.

## 5.5. Friends Website

### 5.5.1. Early Days

The Friends website was launched in July 2003 with the general purpose of connecting or re-connecting past delegates with other delegates from CISV activities.

The website indicates that the following benefits can be achieved by registering with the site:

- You can make contact with old friends, find out what happened to people and let others know what path your life has taken. You will be able to find each other, share messages, photos, plan reunions;
- In the future, newsletters will update members on exciting new developments in CISV around the world;
- You may want to find out about opportunities to get involved in CISV again as a participant, volunteer or supporter. Help to spread CISV's work to more people in more communities; and
- Let others know about exciting CISV initiatives in your community and about the special people who give so much of themselves to make CISV programmes a reality. Share your feelings in the discussion forums.

The site was an immediate success and attracted over 5,500 members who made over 12,400 claims in the first year. This success caused a greater than expected workload and the early experience led to a belief that the estimation for annual maintenance had been severely underestimated.

#### **5.5.2. Recent Activity**

In late 2004, funds of up to £7500 were made available to expend 15 days of consultant's effort to update some of the functionality within the Friends website. The improved functionality was to be in the following areas:

1. Interchanges
2. Email Communications Tools
3. Survey Tool
4. National Association Directory

The requirements were agreed in December 2004 and development is scheduled for completion at the end of June. The project will be completed slightly under the approved budget.

A number of other initiatives have been suggested for the Friends site but these have not been actioned or postponed because of their relative priority or because of non-availability of funding and/or technical resources.

The Request Tracker software used to manage all of the requests that come to the Friends website is a very slow tool for web support and the lack of Activity Managers has meant that there is now a backlog of requests requiring action. This does not send out the right message to past participants trying to register or to resolve an issue.

#### **5.5.3. Opportunities**

One of the real positives about the Friends website is that it has yet to reach its full potential. The information contained in the Friends database has the potential to reinvigorate the organisation but it cannot be used effectively unless it is understood. It just needs to be analysed and used in an appropriate way to support the strategic direction of the organisation.

Online registration for programmes could facilitate registration on Friends. The process of verifying claims could be avoided and the time-consuming investigations that were necessary for programmes dating years back could be eliminated.

A small group, under the ERC umbrella, have been developing ideas surrounding the formation of an Alumni Association. The work is in its early days and any initiative would make use of the database developing as a side benefit during the Friends registration process.

#### **5.5.4. A Note of Caution**

As a cautionary note, it is important that CISV does not see the Friends website as the tool to solve all of its current administrative problems. CISV has to resist the temptation to expand the scope of Friends without proper evaluation of the options and without detailed planning.

For this reason, recommendation b) has been specifically suggested to make a full study of Friends site and report back on its ultimate capability.

## 5.6. Technical Infrastructure

CISV currently has two servers running RedHat Linux operating system in a data centre:

- rusty.cisv.org (commonly known as Rusty) and
- don.cisv.org (commonly known as Don).

### 5.6.1. Supporting Web and E-mail

Rusty is the backbone of the infrastructure, hosting cisv.org and all national sub-domains. In total, 56 domains are hosted with web and/or e-mail. This includes the international website and the resources website.

Basic websites are served using the Apache web server. In addition PHP and Java is available for more advanced website programming. A MySQL database is running to support those sites that are in need of such a data store. Users can update the websites using either FTP or SSH.

E-mail is hosted using qmail. More than 4000 messages are being handled every day. Since March 2004 all CISV e-mail has been filtered for spam and viruses. Out of these 4000 messages roughly 1000 contain a virus (on a day when there is no particular new virus in the open), 2000 messages are tagged as spam.<sup>1</sup> The e-mail system comes with a web user-interface for managing the different e-mail domains.

Currently the CISV e-mail system only supports forwarding e-mail addresses. The current technical solution allows also for mailbox generation, but this has not been implemented as it would lead to a significant increase in storage needs as well as to increase the number of end user support requests significantly.

### 5.6.2. Supporting Special Systems

In addition to the ordinary websites Rusty also hosts the specialized customer relationship management software Request Tracker (RT), which is used as a support tool for CISV Friends and other projects. RT works as a common mailbox for a team and allows the users to keep track of support requests, and keep all communication regarding one request ticket in one place.

Rusty will also host the OpenCMS system that will support the content management functionality of the new CISV.org website.

A virtual web-accessible shared-drive system (share.cisv.org) has been piloted for a while on rusty.cisv.org to allow different committees to share files between them. The pilot will most likely be replaced by the Intranet.

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<sup>1</sup> Spam messages are given a numerical value indicating its likelihood of being spam, and any message with a value higher than 8 is rejected by the system and the sender will get a message stating that the mail could not be delivered. Messages scoring between 4 and 8 will be delivered to the sender with the prefix [Spam] in the subject-line.

### **5.6.3. Rusty – Backup and Business Continuity**

Rusty is maintained, developed and monitored by a team of volunteers.

The data on Rusty is backed up every night onto a tape. Tapes are rotated so that 5 weeks worth of data is being kept.

Currently Rusty is running as a single system with no redundancy in place for mail delivery or web. In the case of a system failure, e-mail will be cached on secondary mail servers provided by our Internet Service Provider.

A full disaster recovery (DR) solution for e-mail delivery is expected to be in place before AIM 2005. The need for a DR solution for all or a subset of websites should also be discussed.

Action item h) has been included and will cover issues relating to disaster recovery.

### **5.6.4. Supporting Friends**

CISV Friends is running separately on Don and its maintenance is outsourced to the contractor developing CISV Friends. This contractor is responsible for taking backup and updating the operating system when necessary.

### **5.6.5. Supporting the Intranet**

The intranet pilot project is being hosted by an external supplier, Moretti Consulting. The supplier is responsible for backup and maintenance of the system.

## **5.7. Domain & Resource Management**

The International Office and the ERC have joint oversight of much of the activity within the CISV electronic communications domain. Responsibilities have been shared differently due to time and expertise constraints but there is some uncertainty as to who does what and when within the domain. This uncertainty is generally generated because the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the ERC and the TOR for the International Office are very general and do not address all elements of the electronic communications domain.

### **5.7.1. Role of the External Relations Committee**

The terms of reference for the Electronic Communications team indicate that the team should:

- oversee the development and maintenance of an internet presence for the following target groups: members and potential members, education and LMO professionals, the business community, and potential benefactors;
- provide support and advice to Committees and National Associations who are implementing CISV web pages and e-mail addresses;
- help to monitor CISV internet websites to ensure compliance with CISV code of conduct and publishing guidelines;
- help structure and maintain a secure CISV International Intranet; and
- develop and monitor guidelines for electronic communications within CISV.

The terms of reference for the Public Relations and Marketing team indicate that the team should:

- determine target audiences for marketing and public relations activities and initiatives for the target audience; and
- coordinate the overall marketing plan for CISV International.

### **5.7.2. Role of the International Office**

The Terms of Reference for the International Office includes the following activities in reference to managing the international website and electronic communications:

- Manage (in consultation with ERC) the international website [www.cisv.org](http://www.cisv.org) in terms of updates, design, and communications with host;
- Provide support to international committees in setting up websites and linking them and NA sites to the main international site;
- Assist ERC in developing and enforcing CISV electronic communications guidelines; and
- Assist in developing and maintaining an effective internal electronic communications system.

The Secretary General has recently developed guidelines for staff at IO in support of these activities in the electronic communications domain. The KTP project, with the Associate working full-time at the IO, has had an impact on the role of the IO in several areas relating to marketing and electronic communications.

### **5.7.3. The Reality – Work Management**

The work generated within the CISV electronic communications domain is volatile and unpredictable as ideas and requests for action come from a number of directions. There are no set procedures in place to manage these requests even though decisions taken at AIM give some initiatives more legitimacy.

The Board may approve a motion at AIM that generates a huge amount of work but often the Board does not consider the potential workload when making the decision. In essence, decisions are often taken without regard to their impact. In this case the staff at IO or the ECT are left to manage the situation as best they can and with whatever resources they can muster. This generally results in projects running extremely late or failing to achieve their intended benefits. Quite often the Board fails to follow up on projects that it has initiated.

An individual, either a volunteer or an IO staff member, may independently commence an initiative that, at first, seems manageable with little additional resource required. Often the reality is that the individual only identifies that there is a much larger issue that needs to be addressed. In this case, the initiative either founders for lack of resources or seeks additional resources to keep it going. In either case, there is no process in place to decide whether the initiative is worth continuing or even if it should have been started in the first place.

It is difficult to manage outcomes in an environment like this. Simple procedures that help guide resources and monitor and control the wide range of activity are likely to reduce the inefficient use of our scarce volunteer resources and our IO staff.

#### **5.7.4. The Reality - Volunteer Resources**

Activity Managers are responsible for the processing of Friends applications and the efficient management of the Friends site can only be achieved if Activity Manager positions are filled. There has been insufficient response from volunteers and a significant amount of work has fallen back on IO and a very small group of volunteers. Because of this, the service level has not been kept at an acceptable standard with many email enquiries being left unanswered for months.

The organisation faces internal resource limitations within the wider electronic communications domain and is also limited in the control it has over its volunteers.

One issue with volunteer resources is that some people, though their intentions may have been positive, will do what they want regardless of what the organisation suggests or needs. This often causes difficulties when the aim is to work as a team and provide an integrated solution for the organisation. The challenge continues to be on how best to tap into and use these resources.

Another issue with volunteer resources is that the skill levels are often at quite different levels or within very specific fields. Some resources are experts in their field or toolset but often that field or toolset is not the preferred platform for the development of CISV applications. This can cause frustration for both the organisation and the individual as the organisation often spends time and energy convincing the volunteer of the need to use the preferred CISV toolset.

The other extreme is where a volunteer has no real skills but is keen to learn and to contribute to the development activities. This can also be frustrating but in general there is goodwill on both sides and the volunteer learns quickly and becomes a useful member of the team.

The final situation is where a volunteer offers to contribute in a specific area but then fails, for whatever reason, to deliver against that offer. This is very frustrating as the expectations are set and then they are not achieved.

#### **5.7.5. The Reality – International Office Resources**

Every member of the small IO staff is involved in the use of electronic communications in one way or another. However the Operations Officer is the only person with specific IT expertise and corresponding responsibilities. The Operations Officer is responsible for the development and support of a range of software programs that administer programmes, invoicing and other administrative processes. He is also responsible for the technology component of the intranet, the IO computer network and related office equipment.

The Information Officer has responsibility for maintaining and publishing official documents such as Info File, guides and historical data.

The administrators are responsible for uploading necessary material and work on approving claims and responding to support queries for Friends. In addition, the IO maintains the list of e-mail addresses for CISV International officials and NA Secretaries.

The Marketing and Project Manager (KTP Associate) is responsible for the re-branding project while the Visual Communications Consultant works with IO staff and has helped to define visual values to be implemented online.

The Secretary General has assisted on risk management issues and regarding review of content.

### **5.7.6. The Reality – Contract Resources**

CISV does not have an unlimited budget, monetary or human resource, for work in the electronic communications domain so it is important that any work outsourced to professionals is adequately scoped and the work managed so that the organisation gets value for money or effort. Unfortunately, the employment of contract resources has not always led to a delivery of outcome within the expected timeframe although some of the delays could have been caused by the way in which CISV works.

Regardless of any delays, CISV has built up strong personal relationships with its contractors which has led CISV to get favourable rates on some of the work being completed by contractors.

Recent experience would indicate that, while they have finally delivered, our contractors have very seldom delivered on time. There could be a number of reasons for this. It could be:

- Contractors do not have sufficient resources to commit to CISV projects;
- Contractors are donating time or giving discounted rates as they want to help CISV but they sometimes give priority to higher paying clients;
- Contractors know that CISV will tolerate delays and therefore give CISV work a lower priority than other commercial work;
- CISV can also create obstacles due to its way of working;
- The work is not well defined when given to the contractor; or
- Any number of other reasons.

If CISV is to get value for money from its contractors it will need have disciplines in place to ensure that requirements are clearly defined and projects are managed in a professional way.

### **5.7.7. The Reality - Going Forward**

There is a lot of goodwill between the volunteers, International Office staff and external contractors who work for CISV within the electronic communications domain but there is also a lot of uncertainty about processes and roles and responsibilities.

Action item c) has been specifically included as an attempt to clear up any confusion within this area.

The processes covered by the action item will include activities undertaken by staff at IO, Committees and Taskforces and by independent CISV volunteers.

## **6. WHERE TO NEXT?**

### **6.1. There is No Easy Answer**

There is no easy answer as all of the initiatives detailed in Section 4 of this document have some merit and all deserve consideration for action.

Our instinct and experience tells us that the following general activities are very important and need to be addressed if the organisation is to maintain a credible presence in the international electronic communications domain.

We need:

- To define and agree upon a visual branding image for the organisation;
- A commitment from all of the international organisation to use and comply with that agreed branding model so that our message to the wider world is not distorted;
- A simple means of managing content on all our international websites, including Committee and Taskforce sites, so that 'unskilled' volunteers can maintain content effectively;
- Simple processes and procedures that will allow the organisation, probably through the IO and ERC, to manage the volume of work in the electronic area and to maintain the integrity of the design and content; and
- A commitment to research and development so that new ideas and concepts within the electronic communications domain are evaluated for inclusion in the CISV operational environment.

### **6.2. The Challenge**

One of the major difficulties for any volunteer organisation is how best to effectively manage the willing volunteer community. The management of the willing volunteers is especially critical when the output generated by the volunteers is the seen as the face of the organisation on the internet.

To date, CISV has not really tried to effectively manage the pool of energetic, willing and talented people contributing in the electronic communications field. This has meant that sometimes development has gone off in different directions and often in a different direction to the strategic direction of the organisation. This has been frustrating for both the willing volunteers and the organisation.

Our challenge is to take the good things that we have and make them better by aligning our work effort and output to the needs of the organisation. This divergence and the frustration will continue unless the strategic and operational direction is made clear and better efforts are made to manage and make more effective use of the volunteer pool.

In the end we must all believe that it is worth investing our time and the organisation's limited budget in developing a professional presence on the internet.

### 6.3. Issues, Impact & Action

The following table attempts to put some of the current issues into perspective. It also provides a high-level view of the impact of no action.

The proposed actions need to be further expanded and analysed before any specific action is initiated.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Proposed Action</b>
Current international website is difficult to update and contains data that is static.	The professional image of the organisation is at risk if the international site does not contain current information and is not attractive.	Continue with the redevelopment of the international website using agreed design guidelines and marketing framework.
The Friends website was designed and built for a specific purpose but now many people see the Friends website as the tool to deliver a lot of additional functionality.	The Friends site will not meet its original intention and could become unmanageable if development is allowed to continue without the work being planned in an effective manner	Initiate a study to confirm the real intent of the Friends website and on how to best use the information contained in the Friends database.
There are many initiatives in the electronic communications domain and there is little control over the initiation and the management of this work	Scarce skilled volunteers and staff at IO will continue to work in a reactive and generally inefficient manner.	Develop management processes for IO staff and volunteers that will help simplify, prioritise and control activity within the CISV electronic communications domain.
CISV websites do not have any unique visual branding and there is nothing to guide developers who want to build sites.	CISV websites will continue to be developed without any consideration for the visual branding of the organisation	Develop a Visual Branding Guidelines Manual to assist all CISVers, including National Associations and Chapters, in developing websites.
There is a lot of information contained in the CISV filing systems that is not immediately available via the Resources website	Valuable information is not readily available to CISV volunteers	Update the Resource website 'search' functionality to make it more effective.
There are many designs used on international sites	The professional image of the organisation is at risk there are a number of designs used on the official sites.	Apply the new international design guidelines to the Friends website as well as to the Resources website (including Committee and Taskforce sites)
The technical infrastructure supporting the electronic communications domain is not well understood and is not documented.	The resources supported by the technical infrastructure may be at risk if key resources depart or parts of the system fail.	Review and document the CISV electronic domain technical infrastructure
There is limited general understanding of the scope of work or the proposed	Volunteer resources may not be aware of the functions available from the intranet and	Assess the intranet project and provide recommendations on how it can be best used to provide

schedule for the intranet project	may waste time in developing similar solutions.	value to the organisation.
International committees and taskforces do not have the skilled resources to develop and maintain their own websites	Websites are being developed by inexperienced staff and sites are often left untouched for a long time. This leads to a outdated information and a poor image of the organisation.	Commit volunteer resources to help build and maintain Committee and Taskforce websites
There has been little funding planning for electronic communication initiatives.	Development can be delayed because funding approval is usually only available annually at AIM.	Propose and gain approval for a funding model for ongoing development and support of electronic communications domain activities.
National Association and Chapter websites use many different designs on their sites	The professional image of the organisation is at risk there are a number of designs used on national and chapter sites.	Provide web design and development guidelines to National Associations and Chapters
Many of the CISV data capture process are very manual and time consuming for both volunteers and International Office staff	Volunteers and IO staff will continue to spend a lot of time manually collating information when their time could be used more efficiently	Assess the needs and requirements for a secure system for capturing forms information and the distribution of and response to official questionnaires

#### 6.4. The Action Items

The electronic communications domain is a dynamic and ever changing environment so any recommendations made today need to constantly reassessed in light of the changing environment.

The proposed action items have been broken into two separate groups to give specific emphasis to what are considered the six most critical areas. This separation does not mean that individual action items cannot be progressed in parallel. It should also be stressed that not all action items are to be addressed by the ECT alone as a number of action items will need to be addressed by cross-functional teams of which ECT will be only one member.

##### 6.4.1. Top 6 Action Items

The top six action items are considered to be:

- a) Continue the redevelopment of the international website (cisv.org) using design guidelines developed in conjunction with IO, KTP and ERC Public Relations & Marketing resources;
- b) Undertake a separate study to make recommendations and initiate action on how to best use the Friends website and database for the development of the organisation;
- c) Develop management processes that will help inform the organisation about procedures and points of contact and simplify, prioritise and control activity within the CISV electronic communications domain;
- d) Develop a Visual Branding Guidelines Manual that can be used to assist all CISV's, including National Associations and Chapters, in developing websites and other promotional material that conforms to CISV's agreed international visual branding;
- e) Apply the new design guidelines to Friends to provide a consistent visual image; and
- f) Update the Resources 'search' functionality to provide a more comprehensive search facility so that more 'hidden' information is made available to CISV volunteers and other visitors.

#### **6.4.2. Remaining Action Items**

The remaining action items are considered to be:

- g) Apply the new design to the Resources website, including all Committee and Taskforce websites, so that all major public sites have a common branding;
- h) Initiate a review of the CISV electronic technical infrastructure to document the current environment and to make recommendations for the future needs of the organisation;
- i) Assess the intranet project and make recommendations on how best to proceed with its development;
- j) Commit resources to help build and maintain Committee and Taskforce websites;
- k) Propose a funding model that will support the future development of the electronic communications domain;
- l) Support National Associations and Chapters in implementing websites that conform to the international visual design guidelines; and
- m) Assess the need for administrative requirements of a secure system that allows for the online capture and submission of forms that relate to CISV programs and for the distribution of and response to official questionnaires.

#### **6.5. Finally**

This framework is a living document and will need to be reviewed and revised on a regular basis to ensure that new developments can be incorporated into the CISV electronic communications domain.

The ERC/ECT will:

- Submit this framework for acceptance by the Trustees at AIM2005;
- Propose specific actions in the ERC update report to AIM2005; and
- Make specific motions, as required, for discussion and decision at AIM2005 and subsequent AIMS.

END OF DOCUMENT