

Lincoln Trail Dynamic Business Accelerator

Technical Support Functions

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Objectives

This document describes the technical activities and functions associated with this contract to ensure the associated deliverables are functionally documented and to permit others to adequately reconstruct them if needed. The specific technical functions addressed in this document are:

- DBA Web Site
- Public Networking Demonstration
- IRIE Functions
- Interactive Mentoring

DBA Web Site

Hosting Account. The web site is hosted at *hostmonster.com* under the account of the subcontractor, BURTWALKER.COM. While ownership of the product is presumed to be the facilitator of the grant (Lincoln Trail Workforce Investment Board), for practical reasons, an account was not opened in the name of the WIB. To permit the privacy of the account owner, the login credentials are not provided in this document. At the request of the WIB, all web site content and or information may be transferred to an account of their choice if they should decide to open an account at hostmonster.com. It should be noted however, that nearly all maintenance of the web site can be managed using a browser, without having direct access to the hostmonster.com account. A maintenance manual was prepared, titled “Site Management Instructions” to facilitate most maintenance functions.

Hostmonster.com is a Unix based environment; however, there is no need of the site manager to have any detailed knowledge of Unix. All maintenance can be achieved through an internet browser. The development and maintenance of this site was facilitated using Firefox Mozilla 3.0.11. The hostmonster.com development and maintenance environment is provided through a control panel (see figure on the right).



Web Site Platform. The web site was developed using a content management system (CMS) platform, specifically WordPress version 2.7.1. Within Wordpress, the theme “bSocial 1.0.6” by iThemes.com was employed for the basic structure of the site. Significant modifications were made to achieve the current functionality and look. The Wordpress CMS platform was selected for a

number of reasons: 1) provide web based maintenance without in-depth technical knowledge, 2) availability of robust add-on features, plugins, and themes, most of which are available free of charge, 3) ability to present a professional web site appearance without requiring the services of expensive web site developers. Hostmonster.com was selected as the hosting company because of its reliability, inexpensive costs, wide array of features, and responsive, U.S. based technical support. Each of these were based on prior experience and verification from BURTWALKER.COM.

Electronic Mail. A single electronic mail account was created with the domain. The account is as follows:

Address: admin@dynamicbusinessaccelerator.com
Password: dbaz009

The account may be accessed from a browser at <http://mail.dynamicbusinessaccelerator.com>

To configure an email client, use the following settings:

Mail Server Username: admin@dynamicbusinessaccelerator.com
Incoming Mail Server: mail.dynamicbusinessaccelerator.com
Incoming Mail Server: (SSL) host242.hostmonster.com
Outgoing Mail Server: mail.dynamicbusinessaccelerator.com (server requires authentication) port 26
Outgoing Mail Server: (SSL) host242.hostmonster.com (server requires authentication) port 465
Supported Incoming Mail Protocols: POP3, POP3S (SSL/TLS), IMAP, IMAPS (SSL/TLS)
Supported Outgoing Mail Protocols: SMTP, SMTPS (SSL/TLS)

To configure additional email addresses, you must access the hostmonster.com control panel. Contact BURTWALKER.COM for additional information.

Discussion Forum. To facilitate a discussion forum, Simple Machines software was installed. It was selected because it was provided free from hostmonster.com, is open source, and is widely used. Administration of the Discussion Forum can be done using most browsers. An account with administrative privileges was created as follows:

Click on the Access button at this link: <http://www.dynamicbusinessaccelerator.com/forum/>

On the main page on the top left, there are two fields for logging in. Enter the following:

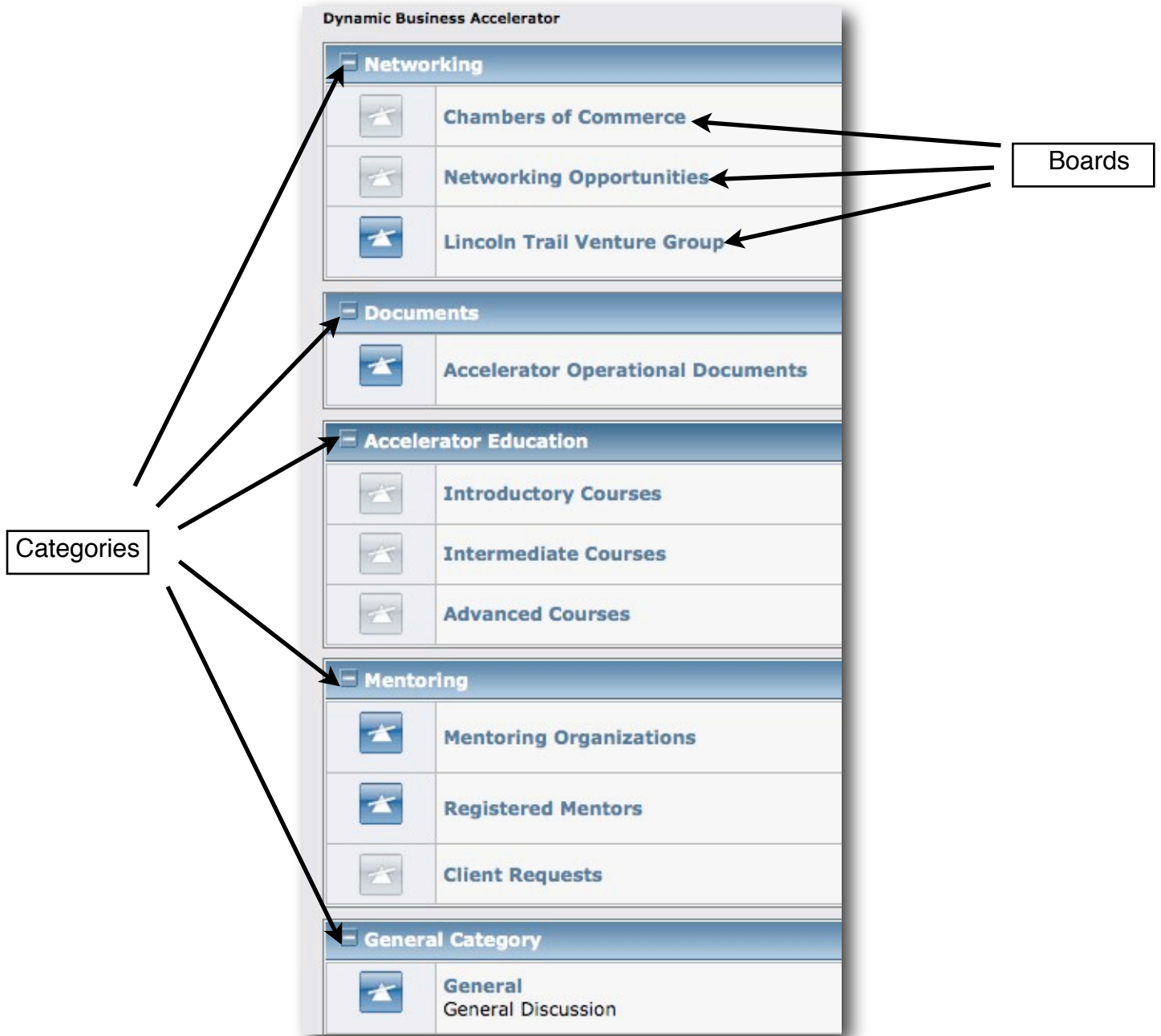
Username: admin
Password: dbaz009

Administration features can be accessed from there by selecting the ADMIN item on the main menu. Information for operation, maintenance, and administration of this forum may be found at:

<http://docs.simplemachines.org/>

It is highly recommended that the administrator for the web site review the information from the link above in detail to properly administer the discussion forum.

The forum was structured with five sections, known as “categories.” Each of the categories may have multiple “boards” which are specific areas of interest within the category. The structure of these categories and boards is as follows:



The categories were selected to demonstrate the usefulness of discussion boards in general, and specifically for purposes of providing services to DBA clients.

For demonstration purposes, some of these boards were sparsely populated with either documents, links, or discussion items. Demonstration populated Boards are:

- Lincoln Trail Venture Group
- Accelerator Operational Documents
- Introductory Courses
- Advanced Courses
- Mentoring Organizations
- Registered Mentors

The forum is currently open to all who want to sign up. This was done for demonstration purposes. This should be changed when it becomes operational to approve requests for registration to avoid spam. To change this setting, log in as an administrator, select “Registration” from the menu on the right under the “Members” heading, then select “Settings” on the Registration menu. Change to the desired setting in the first setting option drop-down box.

Public Networking Demonstration.

This deliverable was cancelled due to security concerns raised by Western Kentucky University and BURTWALKER.COM. It should be noted that WKU offered to pursue this initiative, but due to time constraints and security concerns, BURTWALKER.COM and NCEF agreed the demonstration would not merit the effort required to complete the task. The primary purpose was to ensure that public networks could be accessed from the location in Radcliff and the WKU facility. Given that WKU has already established that, it was determined it was not necessary to pursue it further until such time the DBA becomes a reality.

IRIE (Interactive Remote Instructor Education) Functions.

The principal purpose of demonstrating remote video technology was to ensure the effectiveness of this technology in both the WKU Radcliff facility with a remote location. Eventually, this technology may be used for Accelerator clients to obtain training from individuals with the needed expertise without the need of travel.

This function was demonstrated using the technology provided by Western Kentucky University and Elizabethtown Technical and Community College during the presentation of the Focused Education Pilot. WKU operates their interactive video technology through their Division of Extended Learning and Outreach and through other divisions within the university system.

For demonstration purposes, the Focused Education Pilot, a class was developed and presented by Innovative Productivity, Inc. (IPI), to a business class at the Elizabethtown Community & Technical College (ECTC) on September 4th, 2009. The class was held using interactive video technology

provided through both WKU and ECTC. The students attended in their ECTC classroom while contract personnel from BURTWALKER.COM participated at the WKU Radcliff facility.

The instructor, Mr. Bill Thompson from IPI, gave the presentation to the class at ECTC while BURTWALKER.COM representatives viewed and participated at the remote Radcliff location. The large screen in both facilities allowed the instructor and other participants to view and hear the presentation, in addition to ask questions. The instructor was able to successfully respond to questions in the remote location, effectively demonstrating the use of interactive remote video as a suitable platform for training and education.

The effort required the coordination of WKU officials who helped facilitate the educational session. In addition to coordinating the use of both facilities and instructors, WKU provided proctors in each video location to assist with the technical components of the class. It should be noted that future use of this technology will likely require the same level of coordination and participation by WKU personnel.

Interactive Mentoring.

This project involved demonstrating the use of interactive video technology for purposes of business mentoring. Unlike the IRIE technology, this project involved the use of freely available tools that can be used by nearly anyone and requires no additional personnel to conduct the sessions. The project involved using business mentors, in this case from SCORE, and business clients, which were simulated clients represented by individuals from BURTWALKER.COM.

Two independent sessions were arranged and presented. The first session involved a business mentor from SCORE at a remote location in Indiana and BURTWALKER.COM and SCORE staff at their office location in the Federal Building in Louisville, Kentucky. The second session involved representatives from BURTWALKER.COM in Vine Grove, Kentucky and the home of a SCORE representative in Louisville, Kentucky.

The underlying technology used is based on the freely available service by Skype.com. The technical requirements are as follows:

- Free account with Skype.com
- Computer with:
 - High bandwidth access (cable, DSL, or better) to the Internet.
 - Camera (either built in or USB connected)
 - Microphone (either built in or USB connected)

After each participant (mentor and client) exchanges Skype account names, either may call the other to begin a video session. The quality of the video often depends upon the local traffic volume at both locations, but typically can achieve sufficient quality to maintain an effective conversation.

At the time of these sessions, the service provided by Skype was free. There is no indication that it will not remain free, but it is a possibility the future may require changes to this model. Sign up for new accounts is self explanatory and does not require any technical instruction.