

NCNR User Group (NUG) Executive Committee Minutes from conference call on July 21, 2015

Present from NIST:

Present NUG executive committee members:

Topic 1: Scheduling

The next conference call will be scheduled for mid to late September.

Topic 2: Update from NIST (Dan/Rob)

- Both the House and Senate have proposed budgets (NIST funding is flat in House budget and slightly increased in the Senate budget). There is no new information or action required from NUG.
- The National Academies panel assessment went well. The panel was complementary of the NCNR programs. A public report should be available in 6-8 months.
- A call for proposals just concluded.

Topic 3: Letter to Willie May

A letter has been sent thanking Willie May for his support of the NCNR and emphasizing the importance of the NCNR to the scientific community.

Topic 4: New survey to be implemented after user experiments

A new survey will be implemented in the fall for users to complete after each experiment is concluded. The NUG executive committee will develop the questions for this survey. This may provide an opportunity to ask questions which may change over time (in contrast to the official user survey, in which the questions are deliberately kept constant so that user responses can be tracked over time). In addition, instrument-specific questions can be more easily asked, such as regarding new software for controlling instruments or data analysis.

Topic 5: User survey

Target for sending out survey: early September

Target for finalizing questions in survey: early August

Logistics: NIST will handle payment to survey monkey (or another website) through which the survey will be run. The NUG executive committee will upload the survey into the website (Megan has volunteered to do this).

A new question has been added regarding educational and outreach programs (following the NSF review). The instrument list needs to be updated in the survey.

The following are suggestions for new questions or other modifications to the survey:

- Add a question that probes the user's impression of how the software/instrument performance/etc is changing over time. This can be either added as an additional section at the end of the survey, or alternatively, a question to this effect can be added in each existing section of the survey. An important aspect of these questions is the ability to specify comments.
- A question could be asked regarding the new software for instrument control and data analysis that is being implemented at NIST. The instrument control software is being used on a limited number of instruments to date.
- We may consider using the new after-experiment survey to ask questions that are instrument-specific, or questions which may change over time.
- The wording of each section can be changed to encourage more comments, i.e. "Please rate and provide comments on...." or similar.
- There were two questions in the email that Alan received from the National Academies review that may be incorporated into the user survey:
 - "Are there important experiments that may be done in other parts of the world that can't be done at NIST? Provide examples."
 - "Are they aware of any tech transfer activities? If so, can they share any personal experiences of users?" (Note: a discussion ensued regarding the difficulty in tracking IP and tech transfer related to NCNR experiments. Currently NCNR relies upon self-reporting, which is known to be inaccurate. Suggestions are welcome to improve this process.)