

VATSIM Board of Governors
Quarterly Meeting Minutes for February 25th, 2006

Present:

Jeff Clark (JC)
Roland Collins (RC)
Rob Phillips (RP)
Richard Jenkins (RJ)
Ruth McTighe (RM)
Lefteris Kalamaras (LK)
George Marinakis (GSM)
Roberto Bazzano (RB)
Mike Hayden (MH)

Apologies:

Mike Bevington was unable to attend and left his proxy with GSM.
Tom Schroeder was unable to attend and left his proxy with RJ.

Absent:

Michael Zazula (MZ) was absent at the start of the meeting.

Also Attending:

Harv Stein (HS) - Founder

Mr. Jenkins served as chair of the meeting.

Mr. Clark served as secretary.

The meeting was called to order by RJ at 1611Z.

I. Update on User Survey

JC advised that the user survey was nearing completion due to the hard work of Panagiotis Verras of the Hellenic vACC. It was expected that the BOG would be able to view the finished survey in one to two weeks. JC asked who should be involved with the publicity surrounding the survey launch.

RJ suggested that JC liaise with RM who could put us in contact with various flight sim websites, and to also contact Jesus Betancourt and the other RD's for localized websites / resources.

LK suggested that simflight.com also had "regional" websites which might also be useful.

II. ASRC 1.2

LK advised that when he took over as VP for Development, he advised all developers that he wanted to put into place standard rules / procedures for all developers, which would include code review prior to software being approved for use on the VATSIM network. He indicated that he had emailed this notification to all developers, but had received no response from Mike Evans (ASRC developer). He attempted to reach

Mike through Ben Supnik and Richard Critz, but had only been able to reach Mike Evans in the last few days, but has been in communication with Mike about the code review.

The BOG entered executive session at this time (1621Z) to discuss development issues.

While in executive session, Mike Zazula (MZ) joined the meeting (at 1659Z).

The BOG left executive session at 1814Z.

III. Development Projects

LK presented a summary of current development projects:

Ben Supnik and Chris Serio were in the process of documenting a new voice library. This reusable code would guarantee that future development would be shorter as new developers will be able to use this library code, which will be pre-tested to be secure and efficient.

VRC was reported to be entering “late beta”, and RD’s were being asked to submit 3 names each to be added to the beta. The code was now “frozen” to any new development.

MZ asked if Ross Carlson (the developer) would be interested in assistance in providing the documentation in various languages. MZ noted that the ASRC documentation was not as exhaustive as many had wished, and the lack of documentation in other languages was criticized by some.

RJ noted that the existing documentation for VRC was already better than that for ASRC, but still difficult for a “newbie” to understand. Suggested that the assistance might be welcome and useful.

GSM noted that he was in the process of working on documentation for ASRC, and asked Ruth to assist him with this as ASRC was likely to continue to be the “main” controller client for the foreseeable future.

RM said she wanted to centralize the list of ASRC documentation/resources as it is spread out in lots of places currently.

LK noted that the beta team will be increased this week, and if Ross agrees, RM will be brought in to help with documentation.

LK also noted that Steven Odgaard had recently signed the VATSIM NDA, and had joined the development team, which LK noted as a success as Steven had felt alienated in the past by VATSIM development. Steven appeared to be enthusiastic about developing an alternative ATC client.

LK reported that Fred Clausen had also joined the developer’s group and had expressed an interest in developing a Macintosh-based ATC client.

MH left the meeting at 1825Z, leaving his proxy with GSM.

LK asked that the BOG take steps to ensure that there were more than one person who had control of the database, as it was taking more time than he had hoped to get beta-testers added.

RJ agreed that adding beta-testers shouldn't take "weeks and weeks". He agreed that it was part of LK's portfolio and that Richard Critz should be willing to allow LK access to this.

RJ noted that Richard Critz was working on an "LDAP" system which would allow other websites to authenticate to VATSIM using the password database. This would allow other websites to check ID's and passwords against the CERT files, which would eliminate the need for sites like Eurobook and VATUSA to have their own separate passwords.

LK again asked that there were more than one person who would have access to the LDAP database.

RJ asserted that "the days of one person controlling all the databases is done".

LK noted that the election of the new VP Membership was due to be announced soon, and that this person would need to work on Cert, and would need documentation from Richard Critz as to how CERT is updated.

RJ stated that the VP Membership had the CERT server as part of their portfolio, and that the new VP is expected to have a more technical base. RJ said he'd sit with CZ to see how to streamline the update process.

RB stated that with regards to the new Advanced Voice Servers, that VATSIM should be "in charge" of installing any new voice servers. He noted that in the past, servers were completely controlled by the server owners. RB believed that since the AVS technology was proprietary to VATSIM, and VATSIM should control the servers for security reasons. RB said he had the time and resources to manage them personally.

LK said he tended to agree with RB's suggestion, but asked if RB would be able to respond to major events quickly enough?

RB said that if he had an assistant, he should be able to stay on top of any major events.

LK asked if RB needed more than one assistant.

RB noted that one assistant would suffice. He also proposed to generate a list of "certified" voice servers, and to remove any servers not directly controlled by VATSIM.

LK suggested RB contact AVSIM to see if they would allow RB to become an administrator on the AVSIM voice server.

RM left the meeting at 1842Z.

MZ asked if we had enough servers in place to take the load from the decommissioned roger-wilco voice clients?

LK indicated he would be happy to work with AVSIM and Liveatc on this project.

RM returned to the meeting at 1845Z.

MZ requested that if AVS was ready, that the decommissioning of roger-wilco voice clients be pushed through as quickly as possible as “voice pirates” were still a big issue for his supervisors.

LK and RB left the meeting at 1850Z.

IV. New Website

RM reported that Dan Schultz, who is designing the new VATSIM website, had previously indicated that he was planning on having the website ready by the end of Dec. 2005. He had recently e-mailed to her to apologise the delays, and was now ready to upload the website files to Richard Critz (CZ), who will then upload them onto the server. At that time, we should be able to see how it looks.

RJ noted that the top half of the front page is done in Flash, and built in SQL, which meant it made good sense to have CZ do it, as he'll need to set up a database for it.

V. Screenshots on the Forums

RM asked if it were possible to have a sub-forum where it were possible to put screenshots that were not meant to be part of the screenshot competition?

RJ said the problem was whether or not we had to host the images. S1 was “creaking” as it takes about 58,000 hits per day just on the webpages. The PRC, when removed from behind the password protection, used up approx 120GB of bandwidth a month. If users were to host the images themselves, this would be less of an issue. RJ indicated he wanted to think about this a little longer, but that if there was a way, he wanted to do it.

RC asked about signatures on the forums, and that some were too wide to easily read, and that he would like to see more vigorous management of this on the forums. He also noted that there was a need for supervisors to be able to post screenshots on their forum.

RJ asked MZ to see if signatures were causing problems, and that RC could discuss screenshots in sup's forums with MZ.

VI. Virtual Airlines

RP noted he had recently implemented some basic reporting requirements on VATSIM-related VA's to ensure that the ones listed on our website are truly "active". He also removed many pages from the links manager that were simply lists of other VA's.

RP also noted that as it was impossible to police the use of the VATSIM-Certified logo that it was his recommendation that this logo be removed in favor of a plain "VATSIM" logo.

RP enquired as to whether or not VA's might be able to use the new LDAP functionality.

RP also noted that he was doing more work with virtual military groups, and that he was spending more time liaising with local ATC to ensure that missions where virtual military traveled away from their normal bases, were handled according to the COR's, and that local ATC's policies were as they should be.

GSM noted that he agreed with removing the VATSIM-Certified logo, and noted that the LDAP data would likely need to be tightly controlled as there were legal rules about sharing personal data outside of the organization, and it might violate the privacy policy to do so.

RM and RJ agreed that the logo should go.

GSM said that a new logo should be made available and that the outdated ones should be gotten rid of. Suggested a disclaimer be put up on the download site ensuring that users know that VATSIM was not approving of the language.

RJ thanked GSM for volunteering to redesign the logo.

VII. Code of Regulations sections 2.04 and 3.06

MZ acknowledged an ongoing discussion on the BOG emailing list where members had been discussing possible changes to these sections to correct an unforeseen problem where downgraded users were being placed into the roles they had never been qualified for. MZ said he would forward his proposal for this amendment to the Governors later.

RP indicated he had agreed with the tentative wording of the amendment.

RM added that it should be clear that when upgraded to ADMIN, previous ratings be recorded in CERT so that it would be clear what level to return the user to when they were no longer performing an ADMIN function.

GSM agreed, and enquired as to whether the corrections should be retroactive?

MZ said he would likely ask those who were inadvertently made "supervisors" to step down from their posts.

RP left the meeting at 1925 and left his proxy with RC.

VIII. Supervisor Upgrades / Downgrades

MZ indicated that although his target for the number of supervisors was still 1 for every 100 online users, he was still having some problems actually getting that number online. In addition there are some continuing problems with recruitment in North and South America, which are both still under-represented. He suggested a radical change was needed in the recruitment process and that upgrades need to be quicker.

IX. Joint EC/BOG Meeting

RC noted that there were still outstanding issues the BOG wished to discuss with the EC.

RJ asked RC to approach the EC and set a date for an upcoming meeting.

X. 2006 Convention

Harv Stein enquired what the status was of planning for the 2006 convention?

(Joel Lesser – founder – joined the meeting at 1938Z).

RJ indicated that the BOG was considering doing away with the International Convention altogether and allowing regions to have their own events as they see fit. He indicated that he would start a thread on the BOG mailing list about this.

JC suggested the EC be asked for their feedback on this, and RJ directed RC to ask the EC about their opinions.

The Meeting was then adjourned by RJ at 1944Z.

Appendix 1: Record of votes, and significant discussions held between the October 22, 2005 meeting and the February 25th 2006 meetings of the Board of Governors.

The following votes, and significant actions were taken by the Board of Governors between the quarterly meeting of October 2005 and February 2006:

VP – Communications:

On 23rd October, 2005, voting was opened for the new VP Communications, to replace the vacancy created by Richard Jenkins' election as President of the BOG. On 2nd November, Ruth McTighe was elected by the BOG to this post.

VP – Membership:

On 23rd October, 2005, Ed Hemsley submitted his resignation as VP of Membership, to be effective upon the selection of his replacement.

RD – VATCAM:

On 7 December, 2005, Jesus Jacir was elected to the post of Regional Director for VATCAM by the BOG.

Removal of Voice Restrictions:

On 6 December, the BOG rejected a motion from Jeff Clark that: “the BOG, through the Executive Committee, directs all local regions / facilities to remove any specific requirement for controllers to pass a separate "voice test" prior to students being able to operate, using voice, any position they would otherwise be eligible to work.”

The voting was as follows:

Jeff Clark	AGAINST
Mike Hayden	AGAINST
Tom Schroeder	AGAINST
Roberto Bazzano	AGAINST
Robert Phillips	FOR
Lefteris Kalamaras	FOR
Michael Bevington	AGAINST
George Marinakis	AGAINST
Richard Jenkins	AGAINST
Ruth McTighe	AGAINST

An alternative motion, “To approve the amendment to Article III., §3.05(B)(4) of the Code of Regulations and Paragraphs B(5), C(8) and C(10) of the Code of Conduct as set forth in the email sent to the BOG on Wednesday, January 25, 2006 at 1449 UTC (949a EST U.S.)” was approved by the BOG by unanimous vote on 1 February, 2006 which initiated the elimination of voice restrictions.

User Survey:

On 7 December, 2005, the BOG authorized a motion “That the BOG send out a "user survey" to users, as attached by e-mail from Jeff Clark, dated 30 November 2005.”

The voting was as follows:

Jeff Clark	FOR
Robert Phillips	FOR
Lefteris Kalamaras	FOR
Michael Bevington	FOR
George Marinakis	AGAINST
Richard Jenkins	FOR
Mike Hayden	AGAINST
Tom Schroeder	FOR
Ruth McTighe	FOR

Supervisors:

The BOG approved the appointment of 14 new supervisors on 22 January, 2006, and 3 additional supervisors on 3 February, 2006.