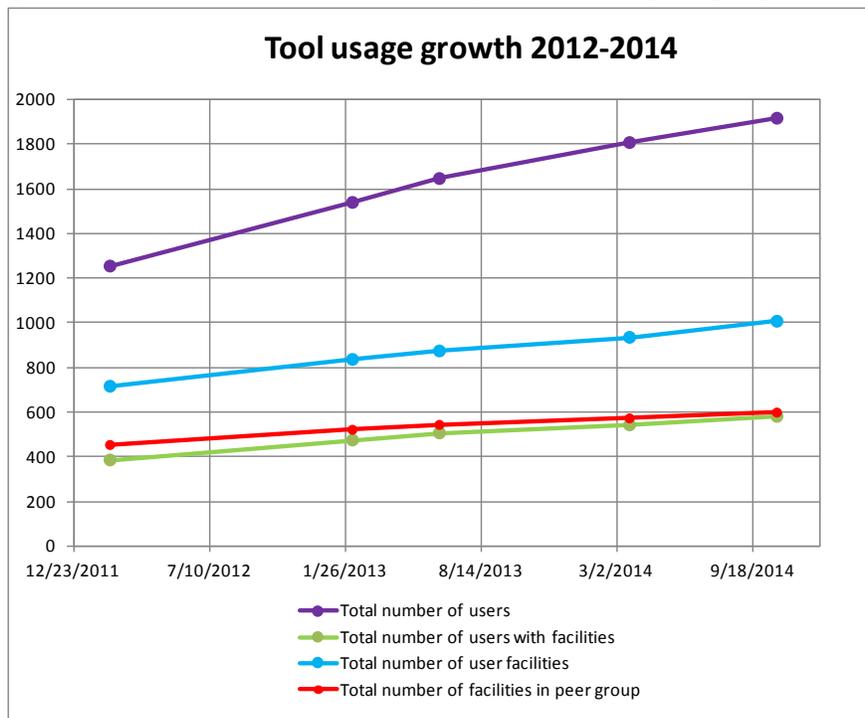Minutes of the I²SL Benchmarking Working Group conference call held on 19 Nov 2014

Attendees: Vikram Sami, Phil Wirdzek, Craig Wray, Paul Mathew, Dan Doyle, James Root, Joe Pustai, Michelle Ruda, Bryan Donovan, David Landman, Alison Farmer

1) Alison gave an overview of the meeting agenda (appended to these minutes), and thanked Michelle and Bryan for their note-taking efforts. Thanks also to Paul for screen-sharing.
2) Alison reviewed the Labs21 Benchmarking tool usage statistics, including new data on submissions over time (received from Craig; see below).
   a. There have been approximately 300 new submissions (out of about 1000 total) over the past 2.5 years, of which about half have been incorporated into the peer-group database.

Tool usage growth 2012-2014

Legend:
- Total number of users
- Total number of users with facilities
- Total number of user facilities
- Total number of facilities in peer group

Statistics	10/24/2014	3/21/2014	6/14/2013	2/6/2013	2/15/2012
Total number of facilities in peer group	598	572	543	521	453
Total number of users	1916	1807	1646	1539	1254
Total number of users with facilities	581	543	507	475	386
Total number of user facilities	1007	935	874	836	716

   b. Paul pointed out that the lack of international submissions is related to a conscious decision to focus on US climate zones and zipcodes (which is itself related to the tool's original DOE/EPA funding).
   c. The website does not currently use Google Analytics but is equipped with a less sophisticated analytics tool. Can we obtain stats from this?
3) Phil summarized the status of I²SL's DOE grant proposal. This proposal, which was mentioned during the previous conference call, will relate to the systematic optimization of lab energy and safety. The initial concept paper has been submitted; if this is accepted, then use of the benchmarking tool may be highlighted as part of the full proposal package. The group will await notice from Craig or Phil if a collaborative effort is required.

4) Alison reviewed the homework exercise, thanking those who made the effort to submit. The most recent submissions will be added to the master spreadsheet and distributed with these minutes.
5) Alison outlined the split of potential projects into three groups (see below)

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Increase participation in existing tool	Enhance existing tool	Separate from existing tool
Marketing effort / offer incentives	Update interface	Using live submetering data for benchmarking
Incorporate energy disclosure data	Additional input questions for more granularity	Using BMS data for benchmarking
Leverage utility incentive programs	Compare multiple output metrics	Actionable benchmarking
International expansion	Paywall tied to I²SL membership	Pursue lab energy star rating
	Longitudinal capabilities	
	Develop API/improved data exporting	

6) Alison outlined a potential path for the group (for discussion):

Proposed project:

- Selected items from group 2 (enhance existing tool)
- Then all items from group 1 (outreach effort to encourage increased participation in the new and improved tool)

Questions (with some *answers* established during the call):

1. Is there a good business case for this project? Would it meet a need of the community? Benefit to I²SL? – *General impression is yes. High usage of tool suggests a demand from the community. Would be good for raising profile of tool and of I²SL, and more data would allow finer slicing to benchmark.*
2. Who owns the tool and its data? – *The tool is currently owned by LBNL, but data is owned by the users who enter it; permissions are complicated. Discussion with LBNL tech transfer office may be a good idea.*
3. What features can/should be added? – *Longitudinal benchmarking seems popular with the group. This is a subject for further careful investigation.*
4. What interface upgrades would be feasible and useful? – *Vikram discussed interface modernization, e.g. a dashboard (less retro) look. It's not clear how much this might cost.*
5. What might be good incentives for participation? – *mention of Brad's idea of a logo for facility website.*
6. Can I²SL offer premium benchmarking content to members? – *Phil is not averse to this idea, if suitable content can be identified.*
7. Which localities have useful disclosure data? – *Specific labs data not necessarily readily available, but can it be separated from other building's data and added to the database? Might need some extra work. Could work with those creating central platforms for disclosure data. Phil mentioned that Erica Cochran may have some useful experience with this – Alison will contact her separately.*

8. Which utility companies might be receptive to involvement? – *Dan mentioned his success with including tool participation in Chicago's prescriptive lab incentive program.*

9. What sort of financial outlay might be required? Would we need sponsorship? – *Discussion of difficulty of associating corporate sponsors with LBNL, and also with perceived objectivity of tool. Could sponsors pay I²SL for a study (a grad student?) to investigate options for tool enhancement? Utility companies might be good candidates for sponsorship.*

10. What challenges might we face?

Other ideas floated during the discussion:
- Mention of Dan's suggestion to include usage stats or other interesting info on the tool as part of an I²SL newsletter publication.
- Craig suggested issuing a survey (SurveyMonkey or similar) to the community to assess needs and desires.

7) Next steps and action items:
    a. Group members to "plant seed" with local utilities about incorporating use of the tool in their incentive programs for labs, and report back.
    b. Group to research local disclosure ordinances and potential for harvesting data, and report back.
    c. Group to develop a survey to issue to the I²SL community.
    d. Alison will create shared Google docs to report back findings and to allow collaborative work on the survey. Docs should be available and seeded with some starter information over the Thanksgiving break.

8) Next call: the group decided that to maintain momentum the next call should be in mid-December. A Doodle poll will be sent out after Thanksgiving to help establish the most convenient date and time for the group during the week of December 15.

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Submitted by Alison Farmer
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19 Nov 2014

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I^{2}SL Benchmarking Working Group Conference Call

Date and time: Wednesday 19 Nov 2014, 12pm-1pm EST

Call-in info:	Webmeeting info:
Call-in number: (605) 562-0020	Web: readytalk.com
Meeting ID: 636-071-648	Access code: 4865116

Expected attendees: Benchmarking working group members

Purpose of meeting: to review current knowledge (and the homework exercise) and to discuss proposed next steps for the group.

Preparation for the call: please read through the results of the project assessment homework exercise (the attached Excel file). We won't go through the sheets in detail on the call, but reading them should be good preparation for our discussion.

Agenda:

Item #	Description	Presenter	Time	Expected product/outcome
1	Roll call	Alison	2 min	Attendee list
2	Overview of purpose, agenda, and format of meeting	Alison	5 min	-
3	Update: Tool usage stats	Alison/LBNL	5 min	Refresh knowledge on tool usage
4	Update: Brief update on DOE grant proposal	Phil/Dan	2 min	-
5	Review of homework exercise; discussion of usefulness	Alison/Group	5 min	-
6	Summary of potential projects; outline of proposed path	Alison	5 min	-
7	Group discussion on proposed project path	Group	20 min	List of open questions and action items
8	Review of action items; next steps; date of next call	Alison	5 min	-