To Buy or to Build?
A Low Budget Answer to the Faculty Credentials Question

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FACDAT, the USC Aiken Faculty Data Interface is a comprehensive multi-semester datamart that serves three primary purposes: to provide information on Faculty Credentials for accreditation purposes, to provide operational support documentation for the Academic Affairs and Human Resources Offices, and to provide credit hour production and faculty load information. This session will discuss how the USC Aiken Office of Institutional Effectiveness arrived at the decision to build this tool rather than buy something off the shelf to meet various reporting and operational needs. The analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation phases of this project will be reviewed, and will include project ups and downs, technical specifications, and the importance of user feedback.
The Method to the Madness

- ADDIE
  - Analysis
  - Design
  - Development
  - Implementation
  - Evaluation
Analysis

- Determine what needs the project should meet.
- Determine the audience. Get input from potential users now. What would work best for them?
- Look around.
- Buy or Build?
Data Mart?

- Not synonymous with Data Warehouse or database.
- A step in the right direction with the outcome being a Data Warehouse.
- Think of it as a data storage closet.
The usefulness of Data Marts in Institutional Effectiveness

- A Proactive, instead of Reactive, approach to data requests.
- Particularly useful for small IE/IR offices with frequent and/or routine data requests.
- Information at the users’ fingertips
“Knowledge is Power”

- Know **who** to talk to
- Know **what** the users really want
- Know **where** the data should come from
  - Data reliability, data clean up
- Know **when** to set deadlines
Design

- Stay focused on the purpose and scope of the project.
- Consider navigation and organization of the database.
- Outline security and access levels.

Beware of becoming a nay-sayer
Technology Needs

- Place to live: Windows Server 2008 backend
- Security: IIS7
- Database: MS SQL Server 2008
- Languages: HTML, ASP, VBScript, and SQL
Development

- Most important part of development is not what you might think

Documentation
- Not just what you did
- Why you did it

Beware of project fade or project explosion. Everyone wants a piece. Look for security loopholes.
Implementation

- A data mart is only useful if it’s being used.
- Never ending process
- Promote from the top down
- Training should be provided on how to “ask” the interface the right questions
Demonstration

- FacDat
  - Faculty Credentials
  - Operational Support
  - Credit Hour Production
Evaluation

- Maintain communication with the users
- Show off your work
- Monitor usage