

## MeetingBytes Online Survey Results

Our team administered an online survey to supplement our Contextual Inquiry results. The survey was administered through <http://www.freeonlinesurveys.com> between October 16, 2009 and October 25, 2009 and consisted of 31 questions about meeting patterns and behavior. All of the questions were designed to gather details regarding meeting preparation, note-taking, participant contribution, and follow-up. We included primarily multiple choice questions as well as several free response questions that allowed us to get information from potential users' in their own voice. 40 people completed the survey that expands on the 15 interviews we conducted earlier in the semester. The report is broken into six sections: Meeting Preparation, Meeting Dynamics, Meeting Notes, Audio-Recording, Whiteboard, and Meeting Follow-Up which represent the trends found in the results. The main design ideas that we gathered from this process are described at the end of each section.

### Meeting Preparation

*Overwhelmingly, people prefer to receive presentation slides, handouts, and agendas before meetings and there is a preference for receiving agendas electronically.*

Although half of the survey respondents read meeting information (slides, handouts, agendas) just before the meeting starts, about 40% read materials immediately upon receipt or a day or more before the meeting. 68% of respondents prefer to receive agendas electronically by email, GoogleDocs, or other means.

*People like receiving suggestions about agendas before meetings, but they might not keep agendas after meetings.* 90% of respondents want people to make suggestions about agendas they send before meetings. Approximately half of respondents keep agendas after meetings and the other half do not.

#### *Design Idea-Agenda and Handout Organization*

Meeting Software should facilitate electronic agenda and handout receipt and management. People like receiving these documents in advance of meetings and they like receiving feedback on agendas if they are responsible for creating them.

#### *Design Idea-Agenda and Handout Annotation*

One respondent indicated that he or she would like to see "an annotated agenda". Our team could consider creating a software product that takes advantage of an agenda as its main organizing metaphor. The software would allow people to annotate agendas and pass those annotations around the meeting before, during, and after the meeting.

### Meeting Dynamics

*Meeting organization and participant preparedness impact meeting effectiveness.* When asked to rank common meeting problems on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 = significant problem for meetings and 1 = not a problem, people ranked lack of organization an average of 3.59. In addition to meetings lacking organization, participants often feel that they are not organized enough to contribute: People indicated that the leading reason why they do not contribute to

meetings is lack of preparation. The second leading reason is that their ideas are not developed enough to share. Further highlighting the challenge, one respondent wrote that he or she “felt confused and lost by what others were talking about.” Another wrote “my ideas were too disagreeable, and I couldn’t figure out how to fit them into the... positive thinking that most meetings are”; Similarly, in response to the question, how do you like to contribute to meetings? One person said, “Converse. Push on ideas, good and bad. But mostly, I seem to question motives and intent.”

*It is clear from the comments above and the data, that meetings have the potential to be very awkward and contentious.* When people do have something they intend to say, 43% say it immediately and 40% wait for a break in the conversation. About 60% sometimes leave a meeting without asking a question or making a comment that is important to them. After lack of organization, people who have questions that do not get answered and people who have comments that are never responded to ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively.

*Questions and comments can be a source of curiosity as well as tension.*

88% of respondents would like to see a list of other people’s questions during a meeting if they could and 85% would like to see a list of other people’s comments during a meeting if they could. This suggests that it software that moderated or otherwise organized comments and questions might be helpful.

*Design Idea – Support Awkward Moments*

Make functions to support awkward meeting moments. Some examples for these are below:

- “I am lost.”
- “I have something negative to say.”
- “I am have an idea that is not fully developed.”
- “I want to challenge an idea.”

*Design Idea-Add a Social Component to Questions and Comments*

Allow people to see other people’s questions and comments during a meeting. This functionality could be extended to include allowing people to respond to others’ questions and comments or indicate that they have the same question or comment as another person.

*Design Idea-Archive Questions and Comments for Later Response or Retrieval*

Store questions and comments so that they carry from one meeting to another. If people sometimes leave without getting their questions and comments noted, it might be useful to record them so that they are addressed at some point.

## **Meeting Notes**

*People take notes during meetings for a variety of reasons and mostly by hand.*

27% of respondents said they review notes after meetings to help them in their work. 24% said they write down questions and comments so they can ask them during meetings. 22% write down notes to stay engaged; and 20% write down notes to summarize points of others and

provide context for a question or comment that they have. About two-thirds of respondents take notes by hand during meetings and a third take notes electronically.

*People want to review others' notes after meetings they attend and meetings they miss.*

67% of respondents have wanted to review others' notes after a meeting they attended and 88% have wanted to review others' notes after a meeting they did not attend.

*In terms of notesharing, people feel that notes are personal but some are curious to know what others write.*

In a free response question on notesharing, 6 out of 9 respondents indicated that notes are individual or private in describing why don't think notes should be shared. Another issue at play is curiosity around wanting to know what others are writing. This will need to be considered responsibly.

*The biggest challenge to understanding notes that another person has shared with you is context.* This quote is indicative of comments that people made on a free response question about challenges to understanding notes: It is difficult "because priorities, context and notetaking styles vary" across notetakers.

Another challenge is handwriting.

*Design Ideas-Meeting Notesharing*

Create software that lets people share their notes centrally. Users would have the option to make portions of their notes private as desired.

*Design Ideas-Context for Notes*

Create software that allows people to easily add context to notes. This context can take the form of tags of keywords or links to related projects and ideas.

### **Audio-Recording**

*Our survey revealed that audio-recording of meetings will have to be designed correctly in order to be helpful to users.* Only 3% of respondents currently use audio recording and only 40% wanted audio recording of meeting. When asked what they would do with an audio-recording one respondent indicated that he or she would use an audio-recording "if formal reviews of meetings were conducted" in order "to see how effective the meeting was". The same person wrote that the audio recording must be "broken up into logical tracks that ma[k]e it easy to find a particular segment of the meeting." Another wrote that they would use it if they needed to "follow up on a topic and had not taken notes during a meeting." Yet another respondent wrote that he or she would "Archive it to a...records management system." Other suggested uses included transcription.

*Some people expressed concerns about using audio-recordings to capture meeting information.*

One respondent wrote that there are "nonverbal elements of conversation that get lost in audio recordings" and another thought it might "inhibit people's participation in meetings."

### *Design Ideas-Audio Recording*

Allow users to jump to specific parts in a meeting that they want to here.

### *Design Ideas-Sync Audio with Handwritten Notes*

Allow syncing between written notes and audio-recording

### *Design Ideas-Archive Audio Recordings*

Archive audio-notes for users

## **Whiteboards**

*Whiteboards are popular meeting tools used for a variety of purposes.*

Our Contextual Inquiry process revealed that whiteboards are very popular meeting tools. Our survey further highlighted this point. People use whiteboards for sketching ideas (35%) and brainstorming (35%) as well as keeping track of running discussion points (24%)

*Software whiteboards have a lot of potential for satisfying user wants.*

About 80% of respondents have wanted to preserve sketches or writing on a whiteboard for later use and 70% refer to sketches or ideas on a whiteboard from a past meeting in a subsequent meeting. In the Free Response question on whiteboards, people indicated that they would want to do the following with whiteboard sketches and writing: Review, Archive/Upload and Share, Markup, Email, and Print.

### *Design Ideas-Software Whiteboards*

Create an electronic whiteboard with the capabilities described above: Review, Archive/Upload and Share, Markup, Email, and Print.

## **Meeting Follow-Up**

*People often attend multiple connect meetings.*

90% of respondents said they need to use information from a past meeting in an upcoming meeting; and 45% of respondents have 1 to 5 meetings per project and 32% have over 10 per project.

*Meeting Evaluation is useful, but people do not feel it is important.*

In designing the survey, we thought that people attending meetings might want to evaluate meetings afterward. 70% of respondents indicated that formal evaluation of meetings is not important. However, 57% said that it would improve meetings. 9 out of 10 respondents addressed meeting evaluation in a free response question. This comment was most indicative of all responses: "It depends on a lot of circumstances, but generally, it helps the group that is meeting to step back and look at what went well, what didn't, and where improvements can be made."

### *Design Ideas- Meeting Evaluations*

Create a tool to support meeting evaluations. People are aware of the value of meeting evaluations so they might take advantage of this tool if it were readily available and easy to use.