

Communications Sub Committee Working Group Secure Document Findings and Recommendations.

Written by: Communications Sub Committee Chair, George Roughan, on October 23, 2013

Background

Based on the original charge to develop a password secure document sharing feature for use by the FPMCC preliminary pass code programming was developed with graphic menus and placed on an active web site. Next, a document working tool was selected for use inside the pass coded menu areas. When the two features were combined it was discovered that the selected working tool, Google Docs, had a robust security capability which made the pass code programming and menus redundant. By removing the pass code programming from the process it simplified access to the online document. Further, it removed any need for the foodprotect.org Web Master's involvement and any associated costs of that involvement. For these reasons, the working group reviewed only the tool, Google Docs.

Meeting and Findings

Based on these findings a phone conference meeting was held on October 23, 2013. The working group consisted of FPMCC members George Roughan, Tom McMahon, Craig Douglas, and Geoffrey Heinicke.

The tool allows a group leader to establish a document. Documents can be in a number of forms, documents, spreadsheets, graphics and presentations. Having selected a form the leader using Gmail accounts invites participants to work on the document. There are four levels of participants. Owner (leader - can invite/uninvite and make changes to the document), Editor (can make changes to the document), Commenter (cannot change the document but can provide comments for consideration) and Viewer (can only see the document). The levels are set when the leader is sending the invitations.

There are a number of ways of working on a document. Collaboratively, through either a phone conference call while logged into Google Docs or through a live text messaging feature offered in Google Docs. Participants can also work on a document alone by leaving highlighted comments for review by others. These comments can be set to automatically be sent to other participants by email to alert that a new comment has been made. Google Docs also provides a history log that shows all activity by participants involved with the document, the day and time of each action, and what was done. Besides these security and communications features the different forms of documents have many of the use features found in Word, Excel or Power Point. Google Docs being based on these commonly used programs greatly lowers the learning curve for most participants.

Recommendations

After the work group finished the review it was unanimously decided that the tool fulfills the charge by providing different CFP bodies the ability to create a secure online place for collaborative document development. It is the recommendation of the working group that a basic "how to" document be created. Initially, this document would be made available to members of the FPMCC sub-committee chairs and heads of working groups. These bodies will be asked to use this tool in any future or ongoing

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document development and to provide feedback about their use experience. If the experiences are generally positive, the goal would be to report the results to the Board with the recommendation that all CFP bodies use this tool and that the “how to” document be posted on the foodprotect.org web site.

End of Report