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April 2012

IBEE Meets in the Sonoran Desert for Mid Year 2012

PHOTOS BY RON HAMBLEY

Michael Thompson, Executive Director

Thirty-six attendees turned out for this year's Mid Year Meeting January 25th through the 27th at the beautiful Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain Resort in Marana, Arizona to network with their colleagues and experience the breathtaking views, upscale dining, challenging golf and area attractions. Of course, the entire meeting was not just fun and games!

Keeping in line with IBEE's goal to make the Mid Year Meeting more of a "peer-to-peer" event, the program and topics were geared toward more of an interactive, open discussion format in which members were able to share best practices, innovative ideas, and various challenges facing builders exchanges and plan rooms. Prior to the Welcome Reception on Wednesday evening, the Board of Directors met to discuss the financial state of the organization, planning for the upcoming convention, communication with the membership, our affinity partnerships, and upcoming changes to our policy and organizational makeup. Despite a slight drop in membership over the past couple of years, IBEE is in solid shape financially,

Click Here for the more images

and is working diligently to improve upon the vast network of knowledge within our membership by developing ways in which to expand communication and resources available to our members.



The Welcome Reception took place later that evening at the Kiva Room, located at Cayton's Restaurant at the Ritz-Carlton Golf Club. Just a brief shuttle ride away from the hotel, this semi-circular outdoor patio area provided a beautiful fireside ambiance for attendees to catch up with one another and enjoy a steady flow of cocktails and hors d'oeuvres.





Thursday morning, following a brief Board update by President Dan Cowan of the Altoona Builders Exchange, attendees took part in an open forum plan room discussion, led by Laura Regan of the Eastern Contractors Association. Several common themes were shared by various exchanges, including the increase in competition from general contractors and project management firms in providing plan room services, economic impact on plan room operations, improvements in technology and database management, and increases in barriers to obtaining project documents.

Next, Brenda Romano, Chief Operating Officer for the Virtual Builders Exchange, gave an insightful presentation on utilizing social media in your exchange. The Virtual Builders Exchange has begun to develop a full organizational policy and operating guidelines on how to implement this technology into your exchange. Her presentation covered many aspects of social media management, including the difference between various social media outlets, the time and skills involved in staffing such sites, how they can be used to gain knowledge about members, and how information can be distributed through such media. In addition, being present on such networks not only allows your exchange to "be part of the discussion" but also is an important branding tool to let industry professionals know about the various membership benefits and services exchanges can provide.





Following up on Ms. Romano's presentation was Sterling Raphael, President of Avectra Labs, a market-leading software design firm focused on integrating the newest technology into association management and member based software. His presentation entitled, "The New Era of Membership: Expectations Changed by Innovations", discussed how social media has influenced the way membership organizations will operate into the future. In order to meet increasing member expectations, organization will need to find ways to not only embrace, but to integrate new technology into their marketing and management software programs. This eye-opening presentation gave attendees much to think about as we try to retain membership and stay relevant in a rapidly changing world. We would like to give a special thank you to Avectra for their corporate sponsorship of the Mid-Year Meeting.

After a delicious Ritz-Carlton deli buffet, attendees concluded the afternoon with a final best practice sharing session which involved a broad participation from nearly all attendees. Among items discussed were BIM training, plan room reporting, GC hosting, social networking, publications, and marketing.

On Friday morning Mark Levin, CAE, CSP, returned to our group to give another outstanding presentation. His two-hour

leadership presentation focused on the various skills and characteristics of a good leader. The attendees broke out into groups to participate in various exercises and case study scenarios which were both engaging and entertaining. Mark's humorous style had attendees evaluating their own leadership practices and how to handle some difficult but common scenarios with both volunteer leaders and staff members.

The final wrap-up session, led by Dan Cowan, gave each attendee a chance to share news about what was happening in their exchange and throughout North America.

I would like to thank our Mid Year member sponsors, Calgary Construction Association, Builders Exchange of Wisconsin, Lincoln Builders Bureau, Builders and Contractors Exchange, Builders Exchange of Rochester, Altoona Builders Exchange, Syracuse Builders Exchange, Construction Association of Michigan, Builders Exchange of Tennessee and Grand Valley Construction Association for their support in making the Mid Year Meeting a success. If you were unable to attend, you can download all of the presentations by accessing our website, **www.ibeeonline.com**, and logging into The Vault. We hope to see you in June at the Hilton Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco!



Flying Into the CCLOULD

David Carrick, Aikins, MacAulay & Thorvaldson LLP From Winnipeg Construction Association Magazine

The computer world always seems to develop creative and descriptive labels for new service offerings. 'cloud computing' is a recent service offering to emerge and be so labelled.

Think of a cloud as something that, while not solid, can't be seen into or through. This is a useful way to approach 'computing in the cloud'.

The consulting firm Gartner, Inc. defines cloud computing as "a style of computing where scalable and elastic IT-enabled capabilities are delivered as a service to external customers using Internet technologies".

In practical terms, cloud computing is a business model whereby a customer:

- contracts with a third party to store the customer's data on the third party's computer system, which could be located any-where;
- uses a computer or other device to access that data through the Internet only when it needs to do so, but from virtually any-where so long as there is Internet connectivity;
- reduces (potentially significantly) IT costs, since there is no longer a need to own a computer system to store and process its data and typically the third party is paid a fee that is based on how often the customer accesses the third party's system; and
- relies on the third party to protect its data, wherever it may be. From a lawyer's perspective, this is outsourcing on steroids!



While there is no doubt that the proponents of cloud computing are able to argue the benefits of the 'significant reduction in IT-related costs' and 'access anywhere' attributes, these benefits are typically accompanied by a number of significant risks for customers, including:

- The cloud computing business model is predicated on cost reduction for customers. In order to offer very affordable 'pay as you go' fees to its customers, a cloud computing service provider needs to minimize its own costs. This means that there is an incentive to 1) locate its computer systems in low cost jurisdictions (typically not here in Canada!), 2) offer the service using standard form, non-negotiable contracts, and 3) include in these contracts provisions that limit its liability as much as possible. Bottom line these are not customer friendly contracts!
- Most private sector organizations carrying on business in Manitoba, including those in the construction industry, have privacy obligations under Canada's Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, otherwise known as PIPEDA. These obligations include being "responsible for personal information in [your] possession or custody, including information that has been transferred to a third party for processing", and using "contractual or other means to provide a comparable level of protection while the information is being processed by a third party." While some cloud computing agreements include provisions that refer to protection of personal information, others don't. More importantly, even those that do also include other provisions that limit the service provider's liability in the event of a privacy breach to a very low amount. Finally, legislation to amend PIPEDA is currently before Parliament. Among other things, this legislation will impose an obligation on organizations to advise the Federal Privacy Commissioner and individuals of a privacy breach in certain circumstances.
- Some regulated industries entitle the regulator to conduct periodic audits of the data holdings of organizations in that industry. Such an audit can only be conducted if access is provided to the computer system where the data is being stored. Such access is typically never contemplated by a cloud computing agreement.

Given these risks, organizations can't just focus on cost reduction when considering whether or not to engage in cloud computing. Quite to the contrary, it is recommended that cloud computing only be considered by an organization if it has been properly advised as to the risks associated with that agreement. In addition, unless the agreement provides appropriate protection (which may be very difficult to negotiate, given the cloud computing business model), it is also recommended that cloud computing never be utilized where the information proposed to be put into the cloud is highly sensitive.

This article is prepared for general information purposes only. The contents should not be viewed as legal advice or opinion. If you have specific questions concerning technology law, you should discuss them with a legal advisor of your choice. David Carrick is a partner and head of the Technology Law practice at Aikins, MacAulay & Thorvaldson LLP. You can reach him at dmc@aikins.com.





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PLANSROOMS MANAGEMENT

Responding to Charange of the second second

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Contacting people	Ş	
Reading the news		
Making Music		

As a father of 3 teenagers the cartoon to the left really connects with me how things and life in general have changed.

A typical school night scene in the DeVries household -

Daughter # 1 - Julia in 1st year university at home in her room doing an assignment on her Mac Pro laptop (only one of the payoffs of the negotiation process to keep her home for university) wirelessly connected working from lecture notes of one of her classes downloaded off the university website while at the same time having a number of other webpages open to distractions like YouTube music videos of her favourite artists while at the same time monitoring text messages from her in-town and cross-Canada network of former high school friends attending out of town school on her Blackberry. If the need arises from the urgency of the text exchanges, then she gets on Skype to have a 'face to face' with one of her friends.

Daughter # 2 – Virginia in her final year of high school similarly in her room doing homework on her non-Apple (how embarrassing) desktop computer with multiple webpages open monitoring her Facebook page or Tumblr and also listening to Youtube music videos. Just like her older sister she has a blackberry as well at her side for text messaging and social networking. Oh yeah I shouldn't forget to mention her nightly ipod wireless connection utilizing Apple's 'Facetime' so she can see and chat with her boyfriend on his Apple iPad.

Finally my son – Robert in grade 9 locked in his 'man-cave' with his Xbox playing the world's most popular and addictive game for young males - Call of Duty on the internet. Mostly he gets online to play with his group of friends he has grown up with but at any given time participants in the games come from every corner of the globe. He is just like his sisters and keeps a blackberry at his side to monitor the texts and Facebook updates. His blackberry is an old one handed down from his older sister (how embarrassing) and apparently he is the last one in Grade 9 not to have the latest smart phone with a full data package. I asked how he knows this and he advises one of his teachers started the year by announcing students are allowed to use their smart phones to a limited degree in one class and students were asked what they used (the school system has gone mad).

I will stop there with the family

insight and not get into the modern parenting challenges the internet and technology presents but catch me at the next IBEE conference and we can pick it up then over a strong cocktail.

As managers and senior staff of construction associations or builders exchanges we all have seen the industry change and have played a role in it. I liken it to standing on an ocean beach with an approaching storm as the waves increase in depth. Since the 1980s we have laid witness to wave after increasing wave of computing capacity, software programming and internet capacity.

For those of you old timers, think back to the 1980s and consider the cartoon at the beginning and visualize the next row of cartoons for "Finding Bid Opportunities".

I can visualize a few cartoons of what it was like 20 years ago:

• A member standing in front of the Association bulletin board listing all



projects that we had in the plansroom.

- A member subscribing and reading through various trade publications, local newspapers, specialty reporting services searching for bid notices.
- A member having phone exchanges or visits with Buyers of construction or with general contractors pursuing bid opportunities.

Each of these cartoons would end up with now with the same end cartoon of someone looking at a computer screen.

So with every contractor and supplier now sitting at their desk looking at a computer screen what have we seen in our association:

- Less and less visits to our physical plansroom by members (just this month I leased out 1,200 square feet of the OCA plansroom this month to a member shrinking our space for actual plan review down to 600 square feet enough for 8 stations)
- Despite offering a pretty competitive drawing copy service at \$0.15 per square foot, we have seen less and less demand year over year for the Association to provide drawings and specifications copy services. I see a number of forces at work here. The increasing use of on-screen take-off software that is available has an impact for certain and as the old guard of estimators who need their paper drawing to estimate with their various colour highlighters retire annually I expect you will see a complete transition to on-screen estimating. More and more members have benefited from the price decline over the years in wide-format copiers to set themselves up with their own printing or alternatively they are economical in their printing by printing onto 11" x 17" size paper from their photocopiers or they utilize the capabilities of modern viewer to print only sections of a drawing.
- More and more general or prime civil contractors setting themselves up with their own version of an electronic plansroom providing a full suite of features subtrade bid invitation tools, document viewing, download and print features, etc. What this translates to is less and less projects, especially private development projects coming into the plansroom.

APRIL 2012

So I see those 3 impacts as the result of internet and software/technology evolution.

Additionally up in Canada I would argue that there have been three other significant changes that have impacted how plansroom associations manage their project bid information service:

- Emergence of Official Government Bid Opportunity websites In the early 1990's the Canadian government made the decision to combine all their procurement and outsource the notification and distribution of bid documentation to a 'for profit' 3rd party. Presently that 3rd party is MERX (www.merx.com) for the federal government and Biddingo (www.biddinggo.com) for the Ontario provincial government. The role of the association was immediately made secondary as a non-official bid communicator and we had to start to beg for a parallel feed.
- Evolution of inter-provincial trade and open procurement agreements in the 1990's went hand in hand with the emergence of the Merx's of the nation. Open non-discriminatory procurement was codified and government entities were required to formally identify their 'official' bid notification service. (for reference check out the website **www.mar-can.net**). Rarely will you see a construction association listed as the official bid notification provider. The role of the association was secondary.
- Downsizing and Offloading by public and private sector organizations of their property construction and maintenance needs to 3rd party 'Project Management' firms who conduct their bidding invitations quite differently than what it was in the public domain. Check out major firms such as MHPM, SNC Lavalin O & M, CB Richard Ellis. Once more, the associations started to see a decline in what was a reliable secure flow of construction bid opportunities....and we had to start to beg for a parallel feed.

With all these changes coming at the local plansroom association what are the responses some of us are coming up with.

First and foremost, the business plan for our association has been to drive revenue on the membership side and forget the traditional plansroom print revenue. One low fee gets you everything – including full access to the electronic plansroom. I believe our membership growth year after year is being driven on our ability to be known in the industry as the 'one stop shop' for finding out what bid opportunities are out there. Contractors want life easy and quick.

On the Buyer front it is critical to have and maintain a good relationship at the local, provincial/state and federal level.

I know from personal experience that all it takes is for a new procurement manager to come in at the local college or school board and bang all of a sudden the local association has been cut-off from the annual flow of construction opportunities.

Refine your value proposition as to why the Association is the best bang for your buck in communicating bid opportunities.

Focus your argument on your reach to the entire industry the countless subtrades and suppliers not just the prime bidders who are the tip of the iceberg. Focus on why the industry loves your strength in posting projects with full file naming, file structure consistent with the industry's master format and undertaken by staff who are construction knowledgeable. Show the Buyers what your members see as a user and point out your strengths versus the bid notification service they are using. For example I utilize a comparison of an airplane hanger project posted on Merx versus the OCA electronic plansroom to hammer home the message that the industry prefers to go to the Association. While this may be a temporary advantage due to Merx's current lazy procedures, I am playing it for what it is worth. Take a look at these screen shots to see how minimal the Merx website offers detail in comparison to the Association's file structure and full naming.

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Here is one OCA screen shot showing the drawings. Where would you prefer to go to?

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CONSTRUCTION OPPORTUNITY NETWORK

Creation of Link2Build – The majority of the construction associations across Canada came together and created a single construction bid opportunity website in 2011 called Link2Build (www.link2build.ca) The website is an aggregator of bid opportunities (no plans and specs) from the participating associations. To access actual plans and specs, project links go back to each association where a user fee or membership fee is required. Link2Build provides the same single website identity that the competition Merx or Biddingo offers. It offers value added to the Buyer who wishes to have their bid opportunity reach a wider audience, as is usually required by our interprovincial trade agreements. It is now one more reason to present to a Buyer on why they should provide their projects to the local association.

Improve your value proposition to Buyers Beyond Bid Opportunity Communication

More recently the majority of Ontario local plansroom associations have entered into an Alliance with REED Construction Data and also with the WadeTech Group of Companies to enhance what we can bring to the table to any Buyer that we have a relationship with. No doubt the more questionable alliance from the perspective of many associations outside Ontario is the one with REED which many reading this newsletter may consider making a deal with the devil as there is a history of REED being in the plansroom business – more so in the United States than in Canada.

The Alliance is based on our mutual opposition and competition to the evolution of the bid opportunity websites.

REED will be enhancing our value proposition to Buyers by offering tools that would aid their management of construction procurement such as regional cost data and analytics, construction economic data, complimentary electronic subscription to their daily construction journal. REED and the construction associations in Ontario are also putting in place a business development position to tackle marketing and Buyer relationship building.

The big one is the associations have agreed to upload our plansroom content to REED Connect for which the associations will be compensated.

The partnership with the WadeTech Group of Companies is really just an extension into a new area as the Ontario associations have been in a license arrangement with Wadetech for several years now for our electronic plansroom software.

What is new that the Associations and Wadetech have agreed to jointly market and sell Wadetech's restricted project hosting platform called INVITELY PRIME (www.invitely.com)

The platform is being promoted to both BUYERS and to General Contractors to manage their own bid invitation process. It is a proven product and is exceptionally competitive on price in comparison to the many platforms out there. The associations will share financially in all sales.

I have started to promote Invitely Prime to Ottawa area Buyers with the sales pitch that the platform in conjunction with Link2Build is an option to Merx. With Invitely Prime they could have their own internal ability to manage their bid invitation process all in compliance with our trade agreements. Invitely Prime is able to feed bid notification information up to our national Link2Build portal while the tender documents are resident back on our Association EPR.

I have also started promoting Invitely Prime to our general contractors and one of the features is the ability for any GC to import or export back and forth a project and its documents from our plansroom to theirs. While some of you reading this may be unnerved at the thought of any general contractor member pulling your plansroom projects off your site, the revenue safeguard is our ability to implement access controls or user charges on any non-member subtrade the GC invites.

Check in a year or two from now and we'll see how all this evolves but I can tell you that 10 years ago I would never have predicted OCA would have an alliance with our reprographic firm Wadetech nor the Reed Construction Data group.

On a humorus note let me pass along an old Chinese proverb: "change is inevitable unless it involves a vending machine".



Announcing the IBEE Job Board

The International Builders Exchange Executives would like to announce the return of the IBEE Job Board, now available on <u>www.IBEEonline.com</u>.

The IBEE Job Board is a Web-based career center that connects job seekers with prospective employers in the Builders Exchange industry. The new Job Board, powered by career services leader *Job Target*, can be found at <u>www.ibeeonline.com</u>.

Visit the Job board today to search and post jobs, view and upload a resume, set up personalized account and much more.

Setting up an account is free for employers and job seekers.

Single 30-Day Job Posting	\$50.00
Single 30-Day Job Posting with exposure on the Construction Job Board Network	\$400.00

The Construction Job Board network includes:

American Design Drafting Association (ADDA) American Institute of Building Design American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) American Subcontractors Association (ASA) JobsInWelding.com ConstructionJobNetwork.com Associated Builders & Contractors - Baltimore Associated Builders and Contractors of Georgia Associated General Contractors of Alaska Associated General Contractors of California Associated General Contractors of Metropolitan Washington DC International Builders Exchange Executives (IBEE) Construction Association of Michigan The Construction Specifications Institute (CSI)

Greater Houston Builders Association (GHBA) InteriorDesign.net International Code Council (ICC) International Interior Design Association (IIDA) MonkeyBoard.com Society of American Silversmiths Syracuse Builder's Exchange U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) Flow Control Career Center Greater Baton Rouge Industry Alliance (GBRIA) National Demolition Association Construction Marketing Association AsphaltJobs American Society of Professional Estimators (ASPE) National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) Momentum Fleet Management Service: Save Time & Hassle; Get The Best Price Possible On The Vehicles You Need Now.



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Mark your calendars to attend



The International Builders Exchange Executives **2012 Annual Meeting**

Wednesday, June 13 – Friday, June 15, 2012

at the Hilton San Francisco at Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, CA

Conference Session on topics including Marketing, Technology, Virtual Competition, Disaster Planning and Recovery, Project Reporting Analysis, and more

Group outings including a wine tour of Sonoma and Napa Valley and a hiking tour of Muir Woods

Annual Business Meeting and Board Induction Ceremony

Networking opportunities: Casual receptions, and Shop Talk

The Annual Meeting Program will be publicized shortly. We hope to see you in San Francisco!



The IBEE's Mission, Vision and Strategic Goals

IBEE MISSION

The International Builders Exchange Executives (IBEE) serves as a catalyst for the exchange of ideas and experiences to advance and enhance the role and effectiveness of construction association and plan room executives and their organizations. The IBEE also aims to assist the construction industry in obtaining information, services, and support at the local level.

VISION

The IBEE is a representative organization of Construction Association Executives and their organizations, dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in Construction Association and Plan Room services through cooperation and participatory action.

IBEE STRATEGIC GOALS

- Increase awareness and enhance the image of Builders Exchanges and their services among owners and design firms;
- Provide a forum for managing executives to share information, enhance management skills, develop professional standards and explore new methods;
- Provide tangible services, resources and support that will improve Exchange operations and member service at the local level;
- Identify common problems and seek solutions that benefit IBEE members and the construction industry they serve.



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