

Newsletter Team Annual Report 2007-2008

Introduction and Overview

Following the successful launch in year 2006, the Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association (EMA) has been expanding in terms of its number of members and publicity, significantly. As one of the main service provided by EMA, newsletter service team constantly contribute in gathering, reviewing and editing newsletter content, as well as cooperating with other service teams. This report is created by the current team coordinator as an annual summary of year 2007/2008.

Team Mission

Newsletter as a main instrument for distributing internal and external information of Erasmus Mundus master programs, EMA, and European higher education, is a main service provided by EMA. Newsletter Service Team is responsible for gathering, reviewing, editing and distributing the newsletter issues for the target audiences. This goal is ensured by the active participation of the members and coordinator of the team.

Current situation

As the new contract with the ICUnet is signed in June 2007, the EMA has a new service provider. Many practical missions of the newsletter service are currently provided by the staff from it. Newsletter Service Team is responsible for gathering, editing and distributing the relevant news among EMA students and alumnus. The active members of the team are the key of success team work.

The current team is consisted with the following members:

- ❖ HU Zhongliang, China, Space Master Program (Coordinator)
- ❖ Izabela Viana De Araujo, Brazil
- ❖ Maggie Boshek, US
- ❖ Bilal Aurang Zeb, Pakistan
- ❖ Mao Weizhun, China
- ❖ Tyler Henderson, US
- ❖ Cathy Brown, US

Achievements

Team building up. To have a proper communication channel is important for members within a service team to exchange ideas and work on a joint project. This is especially true for the newsletter team as one of its main tasks is to edit the news jointly within the team. Within this active team, the building up is almost immediately after the GA.

New features. To increase the attractiveness of the EMA newsletter, the team has brainstormed about the possible new features. A series of new features are proposed and included in the issues. The new features are, 'One issue one program', 'Spot light of EMA members', 'One contact one program' and so on.

Team emails. We have created a 'googlemail group account' for distributing the emails for the team. There were some minor problems at the beginning, but solved by the members.

Wiki Page. The team has been trying to use Wiki page, created by IT team to jointly edit the news articles. Due to the budget limitation, there are not many choices. The idea of wiki is nice though not without flaws.

Representing email. Thanks to IT team and service provider, the team has a representing email address newsletter(at)em-a.eu, which is the official one to communication with the EMA members and other organizations.

Team reorganization proposal. The team is aimed to rename, redefine its vision and missions, and reorganize itself. A detailed proposal is attached at the end of this document.

Challenges

For year 2007/2008, Newsletter Service Team has been also encountered with some challenges:

Team Email Exchange. The 'googlemail group account' is used for communication internally for the team. There were some complications at the very beginning. It is solved for the moment, but still members are added in with their personal account. A service team member account might be nice when it comes to organize the different types of members' emails.

Article Joint Editing. It might be a little too complicated, especially for those who do not have prior knowledge of the wiki, to use the page to edit the articles. The team members have tried to use this feature as much as they can, but still it has been proved not working properly. A new and more effective way of editing the articles is generally needed for the team. This will be brainstormed further within the team.

Representing Email. There are two major challenges for this matter, how to use this account and the service itself. There was some confusion at the beginning about using which email address to contact the members. An official email policy is needed as a guideline for the members. On the other hand, with a limited budget of the association, the email server service

itself can sometimes be problematic. As the email address constantly receive a big amount of spam email, it created quite a bit of chaotic situations for the coordinator of the team, who is the first mail address user. A new address, along with the new name of the team, communication@em-a.eu was requested by the coordinator.

Budget. For the year 2007-2008, there is virtually no budget allocated for the team. It is due to the fact that there is not really a need for the funding. Although, the team do foresee that we shall reserve certain amount of the coming year to foster the activeness of the members to provide news items for the community. Ideally, according to the working document of Newsletter Service Team, there should be a professional editor for both newsletters and magazines of EMA. Although due to the budget limitation it was not possible at this stage of EMA. With the help of the new service provider, a satisfied work of newsletters are issued and distributed among students and alumnus. For the coming year, we would like to elaborate the possibilities to further improve the appearance and format of the newsletter.

Activities

Newsletter Service Team, as one of the most active group also undertook several representation mission of EMA during last year. Table 1 shows a summary of such events.

Table.1 Events and Activities 2007-2008

Topic / Means	Time/Location	Agenda	Minutes
First Online Meeting	Nov.08/Internet		
Second Online Meeting	Nov.21/Internet		
Third Online Meeting	Jan.29/Internet		
Liaison Group Fact-to-Face Meeting	Mar. 3- /Brussels		
SC Face-to-face Meeting	Apr.18-19/Lund		
Fourth Online Meeting	Apr.28/Internet		

The major activities are actually the email exchange and jointly editing the news items as well as contact the corresponding person for more information about their articles. The details of them are not listed here. For further information please contact the coordinator of the team.

New member recruitment

For the coming EMA general assembly, one of the main missions of the Newsletter Service Team is to recruit new member into the team. Fresh and inspiring ideas are highly expected from the new members. Please check the website for further information.