EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
eXtension Implementation Plan

Dear Colleague:

In the pages that follow you will see the future—the future of eXtension, the land grant university’s newest endeavor to apply cutting edge technology to the nation’s largest information and non-formal education entity: the Cooperative Extension System.

eXtension takes Cooperative Extension to the next level by introducing millions of Americans to what many already know to be innovative, objective, research-based information and education. Through the power of the Internet, eXtension complements the work of Extension agents and educators already working in nearly every U.S. county. eXtension brings the best university research on current topics to help citizens improve the quality of their lives by making wise life choices.

Many people helped to develop this implementation plan. Countless hours of meeting, strategizing, and discussion were spent to bring the best thinking to this new entity. What you will see is a dynamic document reflecting the changes that those working on this project anticipate in the years ahead. In 2005-2007, as eXtension is developed and launched, you will note efforts spent toward planning, implementation, and evaluation. As with any good programmatic effort, these components are critical. Its dynamic nature anticipates change.

eXtension is a collaborative and interactive effort that will engage all of the Cooperative Extension System during the next few years. It is an effort that has come a long way since its inception and will move even further over the next few years.

Please review this plan. Share your thoughts with us. And, finally, help us to move eXtension forward with great speed and your generous support.

Sincerely,

Dan Cotton, Director
eXtension
What is eXtension?

At the core of the land-grant university system is the drive to provide objective, scientific information to the public to answer questions and guide decisions. By creating an interactive national repository of high-quality, non-duplicated, research-based information:

- **eXtension will better serve the needs of the anywhere-anytime generation of users**, giving them quick access to the organized, customized resources they need to make informed decisions.
- **eXtension will use modern Internet technology to harness the power of the land-grant system** on a national level, giving users best-of-the-best information from across the country, but also fostering community through discussion groups, local contacts, and interaction with experts.
- **eXtension will be available for access on any Internet-ready device**, bringing the benefits of the Cooperative Extension System to an increasingly web-savvy clientele. Users will be able to access educational resources anytime on topics such as food safety, homeland security, energy, youth development, agriculture and natural resources, lawn and garden, environment, families, and health/obesity.
- **eXtension users will find objective, science-based information that is aggregated**, not duplicated, from universities, research centers, and industry experts throughout the land-grant system. Fact sheets, frequently asked questions, ask the experts, topic discussion groups and educational modules, all created by experts from the land-grant system and related industries, will help users quickly find the information they need, when they need it.

What about Content?

- Content on the eXtension web site will be created by groups of experts called Communities of Practice. Educators from all parts of the land-grant system will work together to consolidate existing content from the land-grant system, create new materials, answer user questions, perform distance diagnostics, and interact with eXtension users through live chats and discussion groups.
- **Personalization options** will allow users to customize how they receive information and view resources at eXtension. When site users register at eXtension, the educational resources will be branded to state universities and local Extension offices, maintaining the local, personal focus that is vital to the Cooperative Extension System.
- eXtension will not only benefit users, but will be a cutting-edge resource for land-grant universities, as well. Personalization and institutional branding provides individual institutions with an efficient, cost-effective way to disseminate in-depth information via the Internet.
• Collaborative effort capitalizes on the vast expertise and knowledge base of the land-grant institutions and partners and creates a way for all involved to bring high-tech information to users.

• eXtension will be an outreach service of the land-grant system and its partners. Other organizations involved in the project include the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP), the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) and USDA’s Cooperative State Research, Extension, and Education Service (CSREES).

• eXtension is the modern evolution of the land-grant university system. It will provide collaborative workspace for people to learn about new and traditional Extension topics in myriad ways.

What’s the History of eXtension?

Many would agree that eXtension is a concept of education and information access and delivery whose time has come. But it’s been a long time coming.

The seed was planted in 1994 at the U.S. Agricultural Communicators Congress in Washington, D.C. with a presentation called “Extension on the Brink.” Communicators concluded Extension must compete for new audiences by stepping out of a sole-source provider mode.

In September 2001, ECOP created a regional taskforce to develop a workshop on the eXtension vision for the Southern Region of NASULGC. Attendees at this workshop agreed it was time to transform the way Extension delivers its mission and message through technology.

In 2002, an ECOP-appointed national committee issued recommended a national information technology network. In June, the Digital Access Research Team came away with basic concepts used to draft the eXtension plan. In December, the American Distance Education Consortium invited 50 people to Atlanta to write guiding principles. These experts from throughout the Extension family hammered out the basis of today’s concept.

In 2003, CSREES sponsored regional meetings for more than 300 information technologists, communicators, content specialists, and administrators. In February, the National Extension Directors and Administrators endorsed the concept and called for a business plan. In June, CSREES provided the services of Accenture, a world-class consulting firm, to help develop a business case by September 1.

By 2004, the concept had gained national traction. In April, the Cooperative Extension System adopted an assessment to provide project start-up funds through 2007. In September 2004, Dan Cotton was hired as the first eXtension director. He was joined in October by Carla Craycraft and Craig Wood as co-associate directors for content and Kevin Gamble as associate director for technology. They produced a prototype in February 2005.
After a two-year start-up, eXtension has a governing committee, rules of operation, staff, a prototype and a long-term implementation plan. After a series of pilots and “targeted launches,” the full extension system will be released in the first half of 2007. eXtension will provide unprecedented access to the land-grant system.

Why Write an Implementation Plan?

eXtension must look forward through the process of long-range implementation planning to determine vision, direction, risk, action steps, and possible outcomes. This planning will assist the stakeholders of eXtension as well as the management team and staff in understanding the steps to be taken to move forward toward success. In developing this implementation plan, major milestones have been identified for each of the three years of the plan. They are explained through narrative and graphic “gameboards” that provide a visual perspective on each year’s developments.

Year 1: The Highlights

In 2005, a number of critical milestones have been identified to begin implementation of the eXtension Initiative. Together, they are designed to set eXtension on the path toward becoming a successful customer-centered Internet-based education and information delivery system. The plan includes several goals in Year 1. Here are the highlights:

- **Develop an eXtension prototype system** as a proof of concept and as a vehicle for learning how to design, develop, and implement a full eXtension model.
- **Develop a long-range implementation plan** to serve as a roadmap to guide and assess project development and communicate the vision and mission of the initiative within the organization.
- **Identify and select pioneer Communities of Practice (CoPs).** These Communities of Practice will engage and interact with Communities of Interest (CoIs), an identified group of individuals sharing similar interests, concerns, and educational needs around a subject area.
- **Implement a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) initiative.** Content providers throughout the Cooperative Extension System will submit their most frequently asked questions and related answers.
- **Develop technology to support Year 1 goals and objectives.**
- **Develop an evaluation plan and execute year 1 plan.**
- **Develop a communications and marketing plan.** The plan will address the eXtension Initiative overall, as well as individual plans for each CoI. Attention will be given to developing a plan focused on both internal and external stakeholders.
- **Organize and charge advisory and work teams to assist in the design and development of eXtension products and services**
- **Establish an eXtension business center for financial management.** The center, which will be provided as an in-kind contribution by the University of Nebraska, will provide budget, revenue, expenditure, and contract management services.
- **Develop an effective business model and policies to govern and manage eXtension.** Develop policies such as intellectual property, privacy, copyright, customer service, risk management, liability, licensing, acceptable use,
membership, system functionality, sponsorship and paid advertising, and eCommerce.

- **Identify and develop revenue generation strategies.**
- **Develop an effective leadership, administrative, and management team and an eXtension management office.**
- **Obtain contractual support to help build eXtension.** Support will be needed in areas such as communications and marketing, project management, evaluation, technology, content development, hosting services, and customer relationship management.
- **Implement Year 1 Customer Support Strategy.** An online self-help capability will be developed and processes will be defined for how existing staff will address customer support.

**YEAR 1 Gameboard**

**Marketing & Communications Plan / Evaluation Plan**

- **Long Range Funding Strategy**
- **Performance Measurement**
- **Community of Practice Operations**
- **System Operations**
- **Business Development**

**Marketing and Communications**

**Business Operations**

**Program Management**

- **completed**
- **in progress**
- **future work**
- **repeatable in year 2 & 3**
- **ongoing**
**Year 2 Highlights**

For 2006, critical milestones continue to be identified to further implement the eXtension Initiative. In summary, they are:

- **Update budget and implementation plan.** Continue to identify desired outcomes, key performance measurements, and strategies.
- **Develop and open access to the Web sites and services of individual CoPs.** The Web sites will address the needs of specific CoIs identified and targeted by the respective CoPs. They will represent the first time customers will have the opportunity to engage with eXtension. The sites will provide access to FAQ and Ask the Expert services and access to educational programming and related resources.
- **Identify and select additional Communities of Practice (CoPs).** At least two more calls for engagement and related processes will be conducted to identify and select additional CoPs.
- **Continue evaluation plan and execute year 2 plan.**
- **Implement the communications and marketing plan.** Attention will focus on internal and external stakeholders, and market and audience needs assessments.
- **Plan and launch the eXtension learning management system (LMS).** USDA’s AgLearn system may be used to develop and offer in-service educational training for Cooperative Extension staff.
- **Develop Technology to Support Year 2 Goals and Objectives.** Three primary examples include open access to a national news service, develop and provide access to an eXtension digital commons for a collaborative workspace, and establish permanent hosting services to support eXtension and possibly member institutions.
- **Develop an eCommerce strategy.** Products will include publications, curriculum, certification, and specialized and customized services.
- **Identify and select the most appropriate business model for eXtension.** Currently, eXtension is operating as an internal initiative within the land-grant system with financial, business, and human resources functions supported by member institutions. Should it be an independent entity?
- **Define and Implement Long Term Customer Support Strategy.** As CoPs begin to develop customer products and services, a customer support strategy will need to be developed and “help desk” services obtained.
- **Establish Operational Policies and Practice.** Such policies will include content development, interaction with customers, training programs and services, use of the technical infrastructure, various business functions and activities, and more.
For 2007, another series of critical milestones supplement the implementation of the eXtension Initiative:

- **Update Budget and Implementation Plan.**
- **Continue to develop and open access to the Web sites and services of individual CoPs.** This will represent the customer-centered Web sites and services for CoPs selected in the first and second calls for engagement. The sites will provide access to FAQ, Ask the Expert services, and educational programming and related resources. Later in the year, these and other new CoPs sites resulting from the third call for engagement will be aggregated to officially launch eXtension as an aggregated model for the Cooperative Extension System.
- **Identify and select additional Communities of Practice (CoPs).** New CoPs will evolve from either planning grants, or as new or existing teams.
- **Implement eCommerce.** eCommerce tools and services will be added to sell educational materials and specialized customer services.
- **Launch National eXtension system in mid-2007.**
- **Continue Evaluation Plan and Communications and Marketing Plan.**
- **Continue Long Term Customer Support Strategy.**
- **Establish additional operational policies and practices.**
- **Conduct a formal review of eXtension.** In the fall of 2007, reviewers will focus on overall development of the initiative, the development of effective CoPs, access and use by CoIs, revenue generation, and future directions.
- **Add external strategic partnerships.** Such partnerships will be vital in the development and growth of the initiative.
- **Develop Technology to Support Year 3 Goals and Objectives.**
- **Develop new eXtension 3-year (2008 – 2010) strategic plan.** Strategic planning resulting in a new 3-year implementation plan will be critical to the future growth and development of eXtension.

**YEAR 3 Gameboard**

![YEAR 3 Gameboard](image)
EXtension Organization Chart

Under the leadership of eXtension Director Dan Cotton, eXtension staff members are organized around various components of the project. With the initial focus on technology and content/process, additional staff and contract support will be added as the project develops.
Budget YEAR 2 - 2006

The following table illustrates the summary of labor and expenses for both staff and associated projects. The implementation plan defines core staff as full-time resources, while projects use 3rd party resources, whether from within the eXtension system or through private contractors. Expenses also include any capital expenditures such as hardware and software.

2006 eXtension Budget
(Approved by Governing Committee, January 13, 2006)

Forecast Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Labor</th>
<th>Grants / Expenses</th>
<th>Contract Services</th>
<th>Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive &amp; Business Admin</td>
<td>$177,330</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
<td>$109,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eXtension Program Management</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$104,000</td>
<td>$300,236</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>$644,719</td>
<td>$101,000</td>
<td>$325,000</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoP Support / Content Development</td>
<td>$475,746</td>
<td>$1,139,000</td>
<td>$190,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications &amp; Marketing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>$278,545</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total:</strong></td>
<td>$1,297,795</td>
<td>$1,419,000</td>
<td>$1,202,781</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Investment Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eXtension Private Gifts/Contracts</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$300,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference: $983,892

Revenue Projections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Contributions (estimate)</td>
<td>$2,100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d Line - CSREES (estimate)</td>
<td>$1,425,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 Budget Carry-Over (estimate)</td>
<td>$450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 NASULGC Carry-Over (estimate)</td>
<td>$572,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry-Over from eXtension (2004)</td>
<td>$130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total:</strong></td>
<td>$4,678,468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Planned Receivables: $4,978,468
**Performance Metrics**

eXtension has established performance metrics to evaluate how effectively it is meeting its strategic goals. The following table shows what will specifically be measured to see if each goal is being met. Details on these metrics are found in the full implementation plan.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Enhance accessibility and quality of relevant knowledge for existing customers, partners, and Extension educators.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of registered users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of new users that return within 1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response time for each question submitted to &quot;Ask the Expert&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System up-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>User satisfaction with the format of available content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pace of content conversion to &quot;approved&quot; formats according to agreed upon prioritization of existing content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content meets the quality guidelines set forth by the eXtension system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of learning modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of users attending eXtension sponsored events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Foster collaboration across the Extension network by creating communities of practice to develop educational programs.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of active Communities of Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of institutions represented in CoP core membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of users who join a CoI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation of content providers in CoP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level of CSREES involvement in CoPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Enhance Extension's technological capabilities through strategic investments in shared cyber infrastructure.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average cost of creating and using content that is provided to end-users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Continually adopt and employ new technology to help customers acquire and apply knowledge to improve their quality of life.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New technologies that are evaluated and implemented to support system users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of new concepts tested using eXtension environment, tools, and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Expand access to new partners and customers including an emphasis on the underserved.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of external partners and sponsors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Content modules accessed specific to targeted underserved community
Number of "official" sites referencing eXtension on their sites

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Expand the breadth and depth of content accessible at county offices.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Localized content contribution to a CoP's content repository</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County offices that use eXtension-sponsored services to enhance their local site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of eXtension common tools (e.g. calendaring Web service)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Enhance efficiencies of budget and expand resources across the Extension network to support the overall Extension mission.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New revenue generated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Risk and Mitigation Strategy**

eXtension determined that the following risks are present in the attempt to achieve milestones for Year 1. Detailed risk mitigation strategies are found in the full implementation document.

- **BUDGET RISKS**
- **BUY-IN**
- **DELIVERY**
- **COMMUNICATIONS**
- **RESOURCES**
- **TECHNOLOGY**
- **CUSTOMER SUPPORT**

**Ready to Learn More?**

The full three-year implementation plan is available on the Web at [http://intranet.extension.org](http://intranet.extension.org). Dan Cotton and the eXtension staff want to hear your ideas, reactions, and questions. You can contact them at:

**Dan Cotton,**
Director, eXtension Initiative
University of Nebraska - Lincoln
6 Ag Communication Building
PO Box 830918
Lincoln, NE 68583-0918
Office: (402) 472-2821
Fax: (402) 472-0025
Email: dan_cotton@extension.org
Craig H. Wood, Ph.D.
Associate Director, eXtension Initiative
University of Kentucky
236 Scovell Hall
Lexington, KY 40546-0064
Office: 859.257.4736 x495
Fax: 859.323.1006
E-mail: craig_wood@extension.org

Carla G. Craycraft, Ph.D.
Associate Director, eXtension Initiative
University of Kentucky
236 Scovell Hall
Lexington, KY 40546-0064
Office: 859.257.4736 x495
Fax: 859.323.1006
E-mail: carla_craycraft@extension.org

Kevin Gamble, Ph.D.
Associate Director, eXtension Initiative
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC 27695-7641
Office: 919.515.8447
Fax: 919.515.3777
E-mail: kevin_gamble@extension.org

Terry Meisenbach
Communications & Marketing Leader, eXtension Initiative
26600 Avenida Quintana
Cathedral City CA 92234
Office: 760.318.0276
Fax: 760.318.2942
E-mail: terry_meisenbach@extension.org

Betty Johnson
eXtension Corporate Development Officer
447 Edgerton
Manhattan, KS 66502
Office: 785.537.4660
Fax: 785.537.0467
E-mail: betty_johnson@extension.org