

**The Inspiration Foundations Inc. Proposal for
Management of all Projects for the 2003-2004 Season**



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Foreword

This proposal is just that, a proposal. Anything and everything in it can be changed, edit, moved, or deleted if we figure out a better way to do things. Anyway, on with the report.

Proposed Projects

The Inspiration Foundation Inc. is acting as the coordinator and legal entity for all the said projects. This way all the projects can share in the entity of The Inspiration Foundation Inc. and if donations are needed can be obtained for that project.

The only two exceptions of the sharing of the entity at the current moment are the Western Region Robotics Forum, Inc. (WRRF) and the Southern California Regional Robotics Forum (of which I don't know the status of). These two entities are merely for knowledgeable trading and spreading of FIRST knowledge and ideas.

Anyway the following projects are currently being worked on:

1. FIRST Scouting Network (FSN)
2. FIRST-a-holics Anonymous
3. Grant Program
4. Help Desk
5. Resource Network
6. Traveling Toolbox
7. Video – to – CD System
8. Video network
9. Webpage Development
10. Web server

The WRRF and the SCCRF will be considered co-companies, not being run by iF, but being run on their own and only working and collaborating with iF when they can gain from or contribute to iF.

FIRST Scouting Network (FSN)

The mission of the FIRST Scouting Network is to provide teams with reliable access to accurate information about the teams which they will be competing with, or forming alliances with, in the FIRST Robotics Competition.

FSN will accomplish this goal through the use of server-client software, and database software. FSN is organized in a way such that no one team has control over any of the network's resources. This allows all members to communicate better.¹

The FSN was asked to join iF for multiple reasons. The first actually was to give them an avenue should they need it to obtain donations for equipment such as computers and handheld PDA's.

¹ Taken from www.firstscouting.net/mission.

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The second was that iF already had projects of similar nature in the works and could easily integrate FSN into its already existing structure and allow equal access to their equipment. For further information please see the "Video Network" section of this document.

The FSN is headed up by Jack from Rochester Hills, MI at jack@firstsn.org. He is co-collaborating with Tim D. Ginn from Port Perry, ON, Canada. The FSN has already created a basic website system to use in it's efforts. This webpage can be accessed through www.firstscouting.org. The FSN has found multiple donors already for webspace and software to begin building their system with.

The FSN expenses would include computers and handheld PDA's. Many of the other projects are also using computers and may be able to collaborate and use the same systems during competition.

FIRST-a-holics Anonymous

The FIRST-a-holics Anonymous (FaH) program was created to promote the spirit of FIRST. The Inspiration Foundation Inc. already owns the address at <http://www.first-a-holics.org> and is planning on setting up the page on the new server as described in the web server section.

Grant Program

The grant program is designed to help FIRST teams pay for the expenses of running a team. Keith and Anthony are coordinating this project and as of the moment I do not have a summary of the program from them. I am hoping to have an update from them shortly, but Anthony is away on vacation with an unknown return date.

Help Desk

The help desk system is also being developed by Keith and Anthony. There is also thought of running it in collaboration with the traveling toolbox. Basically the help desk would consist of a number of volunteers in a variety of fields to help teams at competition. Basically when teams needed help, they would come up to the help desk and tell what they need help with and as soon as the volunteer in that field is available, they would be sent to assist that team. The advantage of this project is there should be very little to no overhead expense. It has also been thought that if any teams wish to show their thanks, they can donate a nominal amount of money or supplies to one of our other projects.

Livejournal System

The livejournal system is intended for FIRSTer's to keep a journal of their life through FIRST. This can be used as advertising for FIRST itself. It also can be used to find out what teams need, and also what needs to be changed within FIRST by getting the honest opinions from students themselves.

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Resource Network

The resource network was originally conceived by Team #166. It will be designed as a support center for all FIRST teams to get one on one support from those who have been through the FIRST program. It is also designed to be an area to share ideas on fundraising, organization, and any other thoughts on how to run a FIRST team.

The only true expense would be a domain name, which has not been obtained yet. The system would be hosted through the web server as described in the web server section.

Traveling Toolbox

The traveling toolbox is a program designed to bring tools to teams during the competition. The tools would be leant out at competition to the teams that needed them, probably on a first-come, first-serve basis. The tools would be returned when the team was finished using them so that other teams can use them as well. The tools would be free for all teams to use.

After much research, we've found that a number of teams either can't bring all their tools with them or don't have the tools to bring to competition. A number of teams have offered support to this program so that they don't have to attempt to bring every possible tool with them to competition. A number of teams talked to have said that they would prefer to donate a couple of tools or some money to a program and then have access to a number of tools at competition.

There has been talk from Janice Bourget who is heading up the project of also obtaining a van of some sort to move these tools to and from competition. Janice is currently researching the possibility of obtaining such a vehicle and also any expenses that would come along with it.

The major expenses of this project would be the tools as described above. Also if a vehicle was brought into play and any insurances and other fees that needed to be put on it.

Video – to – CD System

This is a new idea that has not been talked about much. If it is worked on correctly it could also provide funding for other projects.

Basically this project is a service to the FIRST community. Most teams have video that they've taken at competition or while working on the robot that they would like to be able to incorporate in a presentation slideshow and/or to have it readily available to give to a prospective sponsor on CD, which is becoming more popular then VHS cassette and can be more informative then a standard presentation booklet.

The expenses for this project would hopefully only the CD's that would be burnt. We're hoping to get the computer and video equipment donated. This also possibly could be the use for the any computers that we get donated when they're not in use at the competitions.

Video Network

The video network has a multi-fold purpose. With it's original intent to be used at kickoff, it's designed to give teams instant access to the video in a computer format after

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the event has concluded. There has been also talk of combining it with FSN's effort's to allow each match to be recorded and then played back mere seconds after the match concludes so that teams can scout and strategize with live feed.

There are essentially two different networks that we are conceiving to use. One for kickoff and one for competition.

The reason for having the network at kickoff is due to the reason that not everyone receives NASA TV or high-speed internet. Also there is internet hiccups (I believe that's the technical term) that can cause interruptions in the feed of kickoff. We have done some research and found that some teams would like to obtain feed at the competition.

The network for kickoff would combine both wired and wireless technology, having more of a concentration on wireless technology. We are hoping to tap into the live feed as it's being recorded and placing it on our server (which will be in the building) before it transmits out to the world. We are talking about making video files in 15 minute increments so that anyone with a wireless connection can connect to our network and download the video every 15 minutes. We're also going to have a master video file for download at the end of the kickoff. There is also talk of burning either a CD, DVD, VHS, or all of them so that teams that aren't able to bring a computer or laptop to tap into our network can also walk away with a nice copy of the kickoff. Also any team that wishes to bring a regular desktop computer with a pre-setup configuration we may also be able to patch into our solid network and be downloading the video for them as they watch the kickoff.

The design for regionals is going to be again both a wired and wireless network but this time concentrating more on a wired network with a lot of wireless support. The setup for regionals would be that all the matches are recorded (hopefully through the video that FIRST will be taken) and recorded every three minutes, probably looking at recording 30 seconds before and after the match. This may be changed however depending upon the structure of the competition in 2004. This allows teams to download any match they want from a central server either through the wired or wireless network.

The expenses for this project would be extreme if donations can't be found. This projects manly concentrates on computers and networking materials. With wired networks in every pit and a wireless network able to be accessed anywhere in the competition arena, the networking alone would cost a large amount of money (probably easily going over \$1000, although it is reusable). It may be possible to get teams involved in this and if every team can obtain some network wire or routers from their school or sponsors, we could very easily get this entire project done for very little money.

Webpage Development

The webpage development part of this is to create the webpages for all the different divisions and projects listed in this project. It is also for webpage support for any teams that need it. The advantage to this division is most of the code that is being planned is being done in PHP so that a person that doesn't understand the code could actually change the design to any of these webpages if the page is designed with that in mind. There has been no one to date has been asked to undertake this project. There are a number of people that are going to be asked. What makes this project difficult to undertake is the pure amount of time that is going to be needed to contribute to this

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project. We have found resources such as <http://openfirst.sourceforge.net> that has already begun making a public

Web server

The web server is being donated currently by Team #1073. We are also working on a project to create a mega-massive server with tons of memory and bandwidth. Currently I do not know who is donating the internet access for the server. This server contains roughly 13GB of space and is running FreeBSD 5.1. We will have email, PHP, MySQL, and just about every other major computer language that a team could use in web development.

Tim April will be heading up this department with possible assistance from Sunny Thaper and Tim Smith.

There are no expenses as of the moment; however with the building of a super-server, we could accrue quite a number of expenses if donations can't be found. We could easily be talking more than \$5,000 if we build the server that we're dreaming of. We have had some teams interested in helping donate in exchange for free web space and other things. I'm thinking that any team that donates to this would be promoted either through iF's main page or some type of donor page for the web server itself.

Overall Communications and Execution of Projects

There has been thought to create a common forum for us all to use in coordinating our projects together. We would need to design a common setup for all the projects so that they can equally submit to this system. We also need a programmer in PHP to develop this custom designed system for us.

Combined and individualized Fundraising

Some of these projects require quite an amount of funding but unfortunately cannot raise any money due to what they do. There are also a number of projects that can generate a great deal of money. We need to coordinate and figure out how we should distribute expenses and income so that it's fair for everyone.

Combined and individualized Expenses

A number of expenses that we seem to have in common are simple office expenses, such as CD's, pens, and paper. We're hoping that all the projects can figure out what expenses they need long before they need them so perhaps we can order them in bulk and save some money.

I would like if every group could estimate what kind of expenses they might need and when they would be looking at getting it. I am going to try to create a nice shopping list of everyone's expenses so when we get everything we can share and buy in bulk and all the good stuff.

Combined Marketing Techniques between projects

I believe that we need to promote all these projects both between ourselves and on any other websites (such as CD) that we can get them on. I'm thinking we may want to

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create our own type of web circle, hosted on our own systems, so that people can go to one page and see everything that we're trying to do, including a team listing of who's working on these projects. This idea may need to be developed further and I will need everyone's input when you begin to work on your projects.

Project timelines

As of the time of the release of this report there are no timelines to report. I am asking that every project group sit down and design a project timeline with due dates, safety dates, etc and talk to me so that we might be able to make a master project timeline, perhaps focusing on one project at a time if possible.

Project Organization

To note the system I'm envisioning for all the project is a VP that essentially coordinates me and the other heads of iF and acts essentially like a board for all the projects of iF. That way all the projects can have a fair say in the operations of all the other projects while the heads of iF remain neutral and look at the overall good for FIRST that the project actually brings.

VP's are merely that on paper for the moment, you will not be added to any official paperwork. We are assigning this title for the time being merely because it is the simplest we could come up with. The organization tables as shown in Figure 1 in the Charts/tables section displays all of the essential groups and

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Charts/tables

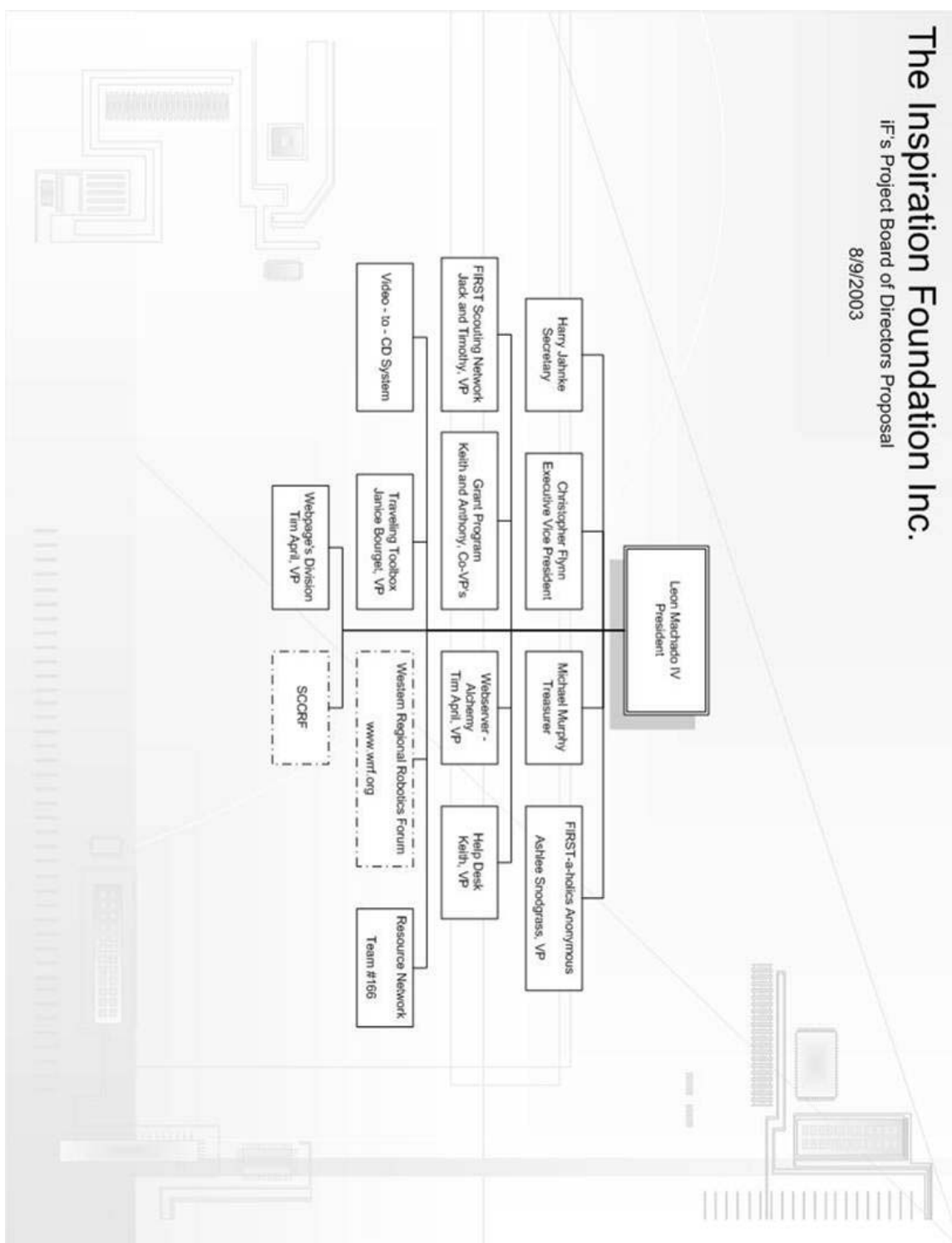


Figure 1-iF's Project Proposed Board of Directors

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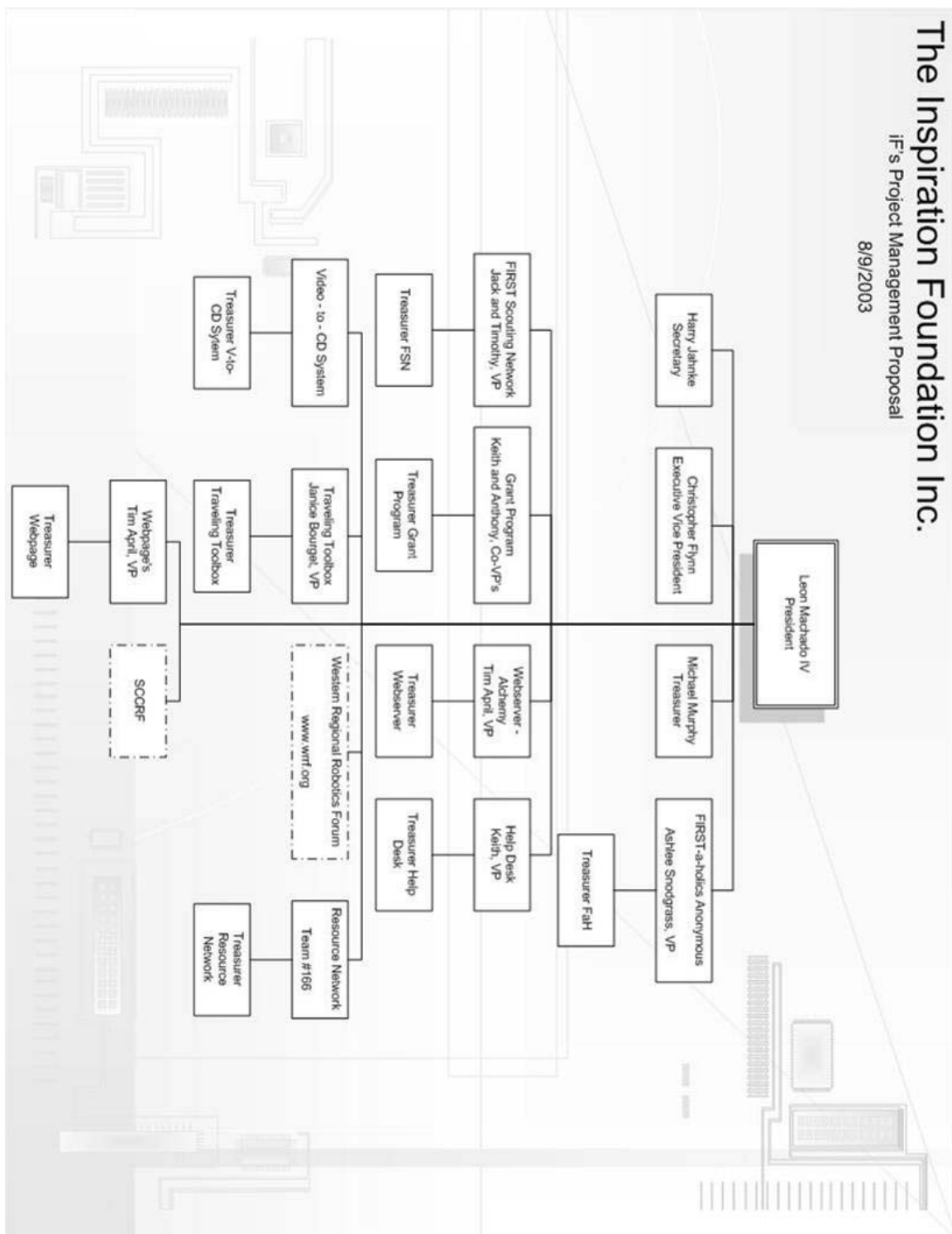


Figure 2-iF's Project Management Proposal

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Acknowledgements

There are many people that need to be acknowledged, not only for working on these projects, but also coming up and making these ideas possible. In no particular order they are:

Jack and Tim for creating and working on the FSN
Keith and Anthony for creating and working on the Grant Program
Ashlee Snodgrass for running the FaH
Tim April for donating the server
Chris Flynn, Michael Murphy, and Harry Jahnke for their support of iF
The Western Region Robotics Forum (WRRF) for help and support
The Southern California Regional Robotics Forum (SCCRF) for help and support
Sunny Thaper for webpage design support
Team #166 for pouring out new ideas and working on them

Biography

<http://www.first-a-holics.org> – FIRST-a-holics Anonymous

<http://www.firstscouting.org> – FSN's Main Page

<http://www.firstscouting.org/mission> - FSN's Mission

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Updates

There are no updates as of yet as the original copy has just been written.

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