ABF BRIDGE TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM

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1. INTRODUCTION & VISION

1.1. Introduction

Thank you for expressing interest in the project. This document provides a broad overview of what the project is aiming to do, the major components and some indication of the expected release timeline and contents (these are obviously estimates only and may change as work progresses). It also includes links to more information and ways you can become more involved.

1.2. Project Vision

The ABF bridge technology system is intended to become a web-based bridge management portal ultimately capable of handling every aspect of organised club and tournament bridge. It will provide all the services that players need to organise their bridge and everything that a club or State body needs to run their bridge operations. It will be provided free to all affiliated bridge clubs and their members (it will be centrally financed via their affiliation fees).

2. WHAT ARE WE DOING AND WHY?

2.1. What are we doing?

- Building our own software
- Everything for clubs and congresses, free

  - Scoring
  - Results
  - Event entry
  - Payments
  - Forums
  - Membership management
  - Masterpoints/PQPs
  - Teaching

Transforming the ABF into a **Service Organisation** – technology and financial management

2.2. Why are we doing it?

There is a mixture of drivers for doing this project:

- Key person dependency for some core systems (e.g. scoring)
- Authors of existing systems no longer wishing to maintain them (e.g. entries and payments)
- Disparate systems requiring a lot of inefficient data transfers between them

There is also overlap with a lot of items on the current ABF website which, although not specifically discussed in this document, is likely to end up being largely replaced through this project.

3. WHO ARE WE?

Mark Guthrie

Mark is the ABF National Technology Officer in charge of the project. He has led the decision making leading up to the project and the primary technology choices being used to build it. He is also currently serving as the primary developer (this may change in future).

Mark has extensive experience and spent 17 years working in IT at Macquarie Bank in a number of locations. He has given a lot of time to the North Shore Bridge club in Sydney.

Julian Foster

Julian's role is basically to pull together the "requirements" - i.e. what exactly we need the system to do, and then test what the programmers build.

Julian is an experienced bridge player and an accountant in a previous life with Deloitte before moving more towards the software world and working in development of specialist taxation software. He has been involved in bridge administration for many years and is a past Treasurer and Chairman of the New South Wales Bridge Association. Although never having convened a major event himself, he has worked closely with those who have.

4. SOURCES OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There are assorted sources of background information available:

4.1. ABF technology strategy

For more background on the overall ABF technology strategy and how it has fed into this project there are assorted documents here:

https://www.abf.com.au/about-abf/abf-technology-strategy/

4.2. YouTube videos

There are some videos here:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZPuvivkdbzl4kg-cwxQuNQ/playlists

These include background information, regular project updates and some deeper dives into proposed functionality in some areas.

4.3. Mockup Website

This is a mock-up website from 2019 which illustrates what the system could look like including some of its core functions (a copy of the home page is shown in section 5 below). https://www.markguthrie.com.au/prototype/examples/welcome.html

The mock up includes representations of the main areas but everything is dummy so not everything works fully. Click on the ABF logo at the top left to see more notes about the mock-up and what it does/doesn't do.

5. SOME KEY ASPECTS

1. Web based system
2. Open Source
3. Immersive & Customised
4. ABF Dollars

The system will be web based and users will need to register log in to it. There are several reasons for this, item 3 probably being the most important – being logged in allows the system to know some details about you. That means it can present information that has been customised to you and it can also fill in various fields automatically for you (e.g. you will not need to key in your name or ABF number when entering an event).

Open Source means that the code for the project will be openly available online. That allows other experienced software developers to interact with it, share data with it, build extensions to it, etc – thus engaging the true power of a community of like-minded developers (potentially all round the world).

ABF dollars are a key aspect. The idea is that players will have an account with the ABF. They can choose to add value to it (rather like a public transport card) and use that value to pay for their bridge. If they wish, they can also choose to have their account "topped-up" automatically when it gets below a threshold. Ultimately, they will be able to use their account whenever they play bridge (whether a National event or a local club session). The payment administration behind the scenes gets handled by the system, the ABF, and the Clubs.

6. WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?

This is a screenshot of the home screen from the Mockup website (referred to as the "Dashboard"). It shows broadly what the project is intended to look like. Down the left will be navigation to a series of "Modules". Across the top will be short cuts to particular key aspects. The central part of the screen will display results and events (personalised to you in both cases). The bottom section will include rolling news items from the ABF, your State body, and your Club(s). Visit the Mockup website at https://www.markguthrie.com.au/prototype/examples/welcome.html to play around with this in more depth.

7. WHAT WILL IT INCLUDE?

The system will be web-based with a common framework, user dashboard and ultimately a series of 11 modules delivering specific functions.

- Entries
- Payments
- Calendar
- Scoring & Results
- Communications
- Membership

- Masterpoints
- Forums
- Teachers
- Directors
- PQPs

Further details of the modules can be found in the appendix. This describes each module at a high level, its usage, current equivalents (if any) and how it interacts and depends on other areas.

Users will need to log-in to transact. Assorted user roles will facilitate differing administrative levels of access to the various modules.

There is inevitable overlap with quite a lot of existing bridge software, some of it run by the ABF, some of it run by interested individuals, some of it by commercial businesses. Some modules will be built at the start, others will be placeholders to be added later (some of which will need to integrate with existing ABF or other software for a transition period). Some will also be delivered in defined phases.

The ultimate intention is that it provide everything that clubs and players need to support then when playing and organising bridge.

8. WHEN WILL IT BE RELEASED?

The project will be delivered in stages over the next 2-3 years. A number of releases are currently planned as shown in the table below. Note that these are all estimates at this stage and the exact content and delivery times could change as the project develops.

Release	Estimated time	Broad contents
1	Dec 2020	Framework Dashboard Calendar Events (National events and congresses) Payments (common credit card gateway) Forums Masterpoints (view data only)
2	Jun 2021	ABF dollar payments for National events and congresses (not club sessions) Manage lists of clubs (for State bodies and ABF) Manage & distribute communications – National & State level Teaching part 1 (list & book courses)
3	Sep 2021	Scoring & results – Club duplicates
4	Mar 2022	Scoring & results – Congresses
5	Sep 2022	Manage lists of members (for clubs) Manage & distribute communications – Club level ABF dollar payments for club sessions (and potentially for other items)
6	Feb 2023	Masterpoints – higher level Masterpoint Centre functions, including capitation fees and invoicing
7	Mar 2023	Teaching part 2 (replace ABF website) Directing part 1 (list & book courses)
8	Apr 2023	PQP management Directing part 2 (presentation of other supporting materials)

9. HOW TO GET MORE INVOLVED

9.1. Email and video updates

By receiving this document, you will already be on our email distribution list to receive updates to the project. These will often link to new YouTube videos which are available here:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZPuvivkdbzl4kg-cwxQuNQ/playlists

9.2. Focus groups

There are focus groups who are looking at particular areas (e.g. major events, club congresses, scoring).   This is critical for us to ensure that we are in touch with the people on the ground so that we will end up building what users actually want.

If you are interested in a particular part of the system and would be interested in being involved in a focus group please contact Julian Foster on julianrfoster@gmail.com.

9.3. Testing

We are obviously testing the system as we are building it. However, those of us working closely with the project are not always best placed to spot potential problems – particularly around whether something is user-friendly or not.

Therefore, as we approach each release, we will also be looking for prospective users to test an advance version of the system. This will generally involve accessing the system on the internet and doing two things:

- Following a given script to check the system passes set tests
- Ad-hoc "playing" around to see what you can find!

Anyone interested in helping testing is urged to also contact Julian Foster on julianrfoster@gmail.com and you can be included in a user-group.

9.4. Live sessions

Obviously for most of 2020 we have not had much face to face bridge. Once it resumes, we are hoping to attend several major congresses and will aim to run some demonstrations and question/answer sessions. Look out for advertising through Congress brochures and websites!

APPENDIX: PROJECT MODULES

This tables describes the 13 modules to ultimately be offered. These will be progressively added to the system (the table is not ordered by priority).

Module	Primary function	Typically used by	Current equivalent(s)	Interactions & dependencies with other modules
Framework	- Set up users - Give module permissions - Reset password	- System administrator - Other module administrators	N/A	All
Dashboard	- Display key personalised data for users - Quick links to key areas (Masterpoints, Results, Events, Financials) - Show news items - User Profile/Settings	All users	N/A	All
Scoring/Results	- Score a bridge event - Calculate masterpoints - Display results	- Directors - Masterpoint secretaries (e.g. while reviewing and correcting MPs)	- Compscore 2 (Peter Busch) - Excel (Matthew McManus) - ASE (Ian McKinnon) - BridgeUnlimited (Martin Willcox) - BridgeMaster (Geoff Schaller) - ScoreBridge (UK product) - BridgeScore (UK product) - Assorted others	Events Calendar
Events	- Display and manage bridge events - Facilitate entries to events	- Players (to enter) - Event conveners & entry managers (to manage) - Club/State/ABF officials (to create and review)	- ABF congress website page displays (Pauline Gumby) - ABF entry management & payment website (Peter Busch) - Various State level entry management websites	Calendar (for entries) Payments (for events)

Module	Primary function	Typically used by	Current equivalent(s)	Interactions & dependencies with other modules
			(NSW – Pauline Gumby, VIC – Neil Ewart, WA – Nigel Dutton).	
Payments	• Handle online and offline payments for bridge (club sessions and events). • Manage an "ABF dollar account" for players that they use to pay for their bridge.	• Players (to pay) • Event conveners & entry managers (to reconcile events) • Club/State/ABF officials (to manage ABF dollars)	• ABF online payment website (Peter Busch) • eWay card payment gateway • PP system for clubs (Matt McManus)	Events (for entries) Membership (drives club listings and different charge levels for club sessions)
Calendar	• Manage a customisable annual calendar of bridge events (including events at multiple levels – WBF, ABF, State, Club, etc)	• Players (to view events) • Club/State/ABF officials (to manage)	• ABF website • State websites • Some club websites	Events Directing – to facilitate display and booking of courses Teaching – to facilitate display and booking of courses
Membership	• Manage club membership lists and annual membership payments • (Perhaps manage State and ABF capitation fees)	• Club officials (to manage list of players) • State officials (to manage list of clubs)	• Pianola • Excel	Masterpoints Payments
Communications	• Manage distribution lists and user preferences • Send out publications • Send out notifications	• Marketing staff • Club/State/ABF officials	• Pianola at club level • Externally managed mail listings for some clubs, State and ABF	
Forums	• Facilitate discussion forums	• Forum moderators • Players	• Bridgewinners • NZ Bridge	None
Masterpoints ("MPs")	• Generate and view assorted MP reports • Facilitate MP uploads (manual and automatic) • Update MPs (monthly and quarterly)	• ABF Masterpoint centre manager (administer) • Club masterpoint secretaries (manage) • Directors / event organisers (upload)	• MPC SQL database • MPC web software • MPC desktop package • (all Peter Busch)	Events Scoring/Results Membership

Module	Primary function	Typically used by	Current equivalent(s)	Interactions & dependencies with other modules
	• Invoice for MPs • (Perhaps manage ABF capitation fees)	• Players (view only)		
PQPs	• Manage PQP records • Model PQPs for partner and team combinations	• ABF PQP administrator • Directors / event organisers (upload) • Players (view and model)	• Access database & ABF website (Pauline Gumby) • Spreadsheet (John Scudder)	Events Scoring/Results
Teaching	• Manage accredited teacher listings/points • Manage availability and booking of teaching training days / CPE • Access videos and other training materials	• ABF National Teaching Coordinator (manage) • Teachers (view) • Clubs and players (view & make bookings)	• ABF website (but no listing management or booking facility)	Calendar Events (to book courses) Payments (to pay for courses)
Directing	• Manage accredited director listings • Manage availability and booking of teaching training days / CPE • Access videos and other training materials	• ABF National Director Development Officer (manage) • Directors (view) • Clubs and players (view & make bookings)	No current National accreditation structure. Therefore functions are split between: • ABF websites • State body websites • Australian Bridge Directors Association (ABDA) website	Calendar Events (to book courses) Payments (to pay for courses)