

2015 PRISM Conference – Denver

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Conference Summary Report

I would like to thank you, members of the board, for approving my attendance at this year's PRISM (Public Retirement Information Systems Management) conference. I found great value in the conference, not only in the presentation content, but also in the networking opportunities. Ahead of the conference, I was aware that there would be attendees from states/municipalities that have implemented a new retirement system using the same platform MPERAtiv is using. One of my objectives ahead of the conference was to make contact with individuals that could share their experiences directly related to the project.

In my connections with other agencies using the application we're implementing, I found consistent feedback. First and foremost, everyone who has implemented their new application is very happy with it. It is meeting their needs and providing value. Additionally, I received consistent advice in the areas of education and data cleanliness. Each agency found that the training leading up to implementation taught the agency how to use the system but not how to do their jobs within the system. I have discussed this feedback with our vendor and our education team with an aim to incorporate business systems into our training. In regard to the data cleanliness feedback, agencies reported a need to continue updating data after deployment. This is to be expected and is not a reflection of a poor data conversion. Other agencies are updating data behind the scenes, which is time consuming. This is feedback that I've also shared with the vendor, and we are working on a change request to provide an easier way to do very controlled updates of historical data.

Within the conference presentations, the first area of value was with a keynote, John Sileo. Mr. Sileo shared his story of identity theft and the impact it had on his life as he attempted to clear his name. Not only had someone stolen his identity and used the information to purchase a house and then declare bankruptcy, but his business partner also used his computer to embezzle money from their clients and put Mr. Sileo in jeopardy of serving jail time. Mr. Sileo was able to clear his name, but it impacted his life for two years and resulted in the loss of his family business. This presentation is available on DVD, and I plan to look into sharing this within MPERA for two purposes. First, I would like to reiterate to the staff the importance of having passwords that are difficult to hack. Second, I plan to use this story when rolling out second factor authentication to the agency. This authentication is inconvenient as it adds another piece of data to enter when logging into a computer, but it adds further protection to our computers and network. I expect an understanding of Mr. Sileo's inconvenience with identity theft will ease the acceptance of this authentication.

While all the member-led breakout sessions were interesting case studies, Teacher's Retirement Systems of Texas looked at how to present information to members. This was interesting as it pertained to our own future member self-service portal. When looking at presenting information to users, 89% of adult Americans use the internet. A small percentage (7%) relies solely on a smartphone for their internet use. This percentage increases to 15% for those age 18 to 29. This is a statistic that we need to watch and determine how it will pertain to our members in the future. Another interesting statistic they shared is based on knowledge retention. Presenting data in text only has approximately 10% retention while a picture plus text increases to 65% retention. Understanding how people will be viewing information and how they best retain it is important for a useful portal for our members.

This conference provided a valuable experience for networking and knowledge sharing. I thank you again for the opportunity.