

ALCS User Group Requirements Process Draft Proposal

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ALCS User Group Requirements Process

At the last ALCS User Group meeting in Holland, IBM was asked to take responsibility for managing the ALCS User Group Requirements list. We have conducted a detailed review of the complete *user group requirements process* and would like to recommend to the ALCS User Group a new procedure for managing it. This revised process is described below.

We have been informed by some ALCS customers that they are unhappy with the *voting procedure* for the user group requirements list. One of the primary objectives of the voting process is to identify user requirements that are of importance to multiple customers, rather than just one or two customers. The current voting process allows a customer to cast a maximum of 100 votes, but the manner in which they distribute those votes varies enormously from one customer to another. Some customers cast almost all their votes on a single requirement and this normally results in that requirement being positioned within the top ten, even if no other customer votes for it. IBM is committed to delivering (where possible) each requirement that resides in the top ten, but are unhappy about delivering requirements that will be used by only one customer. IBM prefers to focus its development effort on requirements that are of interest and importance to multiple customers rather than a single customer. We therefore recommend the following changes to the voting procedure.

- Impose voting limit for a single requirement

When each customer casts their 100 votes over the various user requirements, a limit of 30 votes should be permitted for a single requirement. This will therefore result in the 100 votes being cast over at least four requirements.

- Allow less than 100 votes to be cast

With the limitation of 30 votes for a single requirement, if a customer wants to vote for less than four requirements, they may do so. For example, if there are only two requirements that they wish to vote for, they can cast just 60 votes.

IBM would be pleased if each ALCS customer would carefully review the recommendations for the revised *user group requirements process* and also the recommended changes to the *voting procedure*. Feedback on both of these issues would be very welcome.

Revised User Group Requirements Process

The revised process would be conducted over a six month period and would begin with the ALCS customers receiving a request to submit new requirements to IBM. It would be initiated every nine months and would not necessarily be linked to the date of the next ALCS user group meeting. ALCS user group meetings normally occur every nine months, therefore where possible, this complete process will be performed during the nine month period between user group meetings. If a user group meeting is delayed or cancelled, this will not impact the initiation of the next *user group requirements process*.

The following provides a summary of each individual step in the revised *user group requirements process*.

1. Request for new requirements

IBM will announce on the ALCS web site, and inform every ALCS customer via email, that it has initiated a new *user group requirements process*. With this announcement, IBM will request each ALCS customer to submit new requirements. IBM will give six weeks for submission of new requirements (this does not inhibit customers from submitting new requirements at any time during the year).

2. Review of new requirements

As IBM receives each new requirement, it will be reviewed to verify that it is clearly understood. If clarification is required, IBM will request that from the customer. When the submission of requirements is complete, IBM will have four weeks in which to complete its requirements clarification process and include the new requirements on the user group requirements list (and place the list on the ALCS web site).

If IBM disagrees with an enhancement that is being requested by a new requirement, it will ask the User Group chairman to fully review the requirement and to provide guidance on how the requirement should be progressed. The customer who submitted the requirement will be informed and given the opportunity to review it with the User Group chairman.

3. Requirements list voting

A formal request will be sent via email to each ALCS customer requesting the submission of votes for outstanding items on the user group requirements list. This will be accompanied by guidance on the voting process. IBM will give each ALCS customer six weeks in which to submit their votes (those customers who have not voted after four weeks will be sent a reminder). IBM will also announce this voting process on the ALCS web site, together with the target completion date.

IBM will keep the ALCS User Group chairman informed on the voting status. If there are many ALCS customers who have not voted after 4 weeks, the User Group chairman will assist IBM in encouraging those customers to submit their votes.

4. Voting results announced

The results of the voting will be announced on the ALCS web site. A news bulletin will give a list of the ten requirements that received the most votes and the complete voting results will be included in the requirements list itself.

5. IBM technical review of top ten requirements

IBM will perform a detailed technical evaluation of the top ten requirements to determine if and how they can be implemented in the ALCS product. The results of this evaluation, which will be documented and placed on the ALCS web site, will identify the requirements that will be implemented and a description of the proposed solutions. IBM will complete this process within an eight week period after the announcement of the voting results. ALCS customers will be encouraged to send IBM their comments and suggestions on the proposed solutions after they are placed on the ALCS web site (they will also have the opportunity to review them with IBM at the next ALCS user group meeting).

6. Requirements technical review with User Group chairman

IBM will hold a meeting with the User Group chairman in the period immediately prior to each User Group meeting. Various items related to the User Group meeting will be discussed, including items related to the ALCS requirements list. IBM will conduct a technical review with the User Group chairman of all new requirements submitted since the last User Group meeting, plus a technical review of IBM's proposed solutions for the top ten requirements.

7. Presentation of requirements status at user group meeting

At the next user group meeting (after IBM has completed its detailed technical evaluation of the top ten) IBM will give a status update on the requirements list and the implementation plan for the latest top ten requirements.

Requirements List Review

At the beginning of each year (commencing January 2003) IBM will conduct a review of the ALCS requirements list. This will include the following.

- Removal of requirements already delivered

User requirements that were delivered more than two years ago will be removed from the requirements list. Until recently, the requirements list included requirements that were delivered over 5 years ago. IBM has now removed from the list all requirements that were delivered between 1997 and year 2000.

- Identify requirements no longer relevant

Some user requirements may no longer be relevant due to changes in the ALCS product or technology trends (the current requirements list includes requirements submitted nine years ago). When a requirement is regarded as no longer relevant, IBM will ask the requirement sponsor (and all the other ALCS customers) if it can be removed from the requirements list.