



February 2011 Message

Marc Simpson, Region Manager

One day a few months ago, prior to attending the ARMA International Conference, I looked over the sessions being offered. I remember reading about the sessions regarding clouds and cloud computing. Although I had something of an idea of what a cloud is, still I thought, no pun intended, that clouds were simply over my head. But then in his comments during the opening session in San Francisco, ARMA International President Nick De Laurentis's challenged us all to learn more about the emerging technologies. When Nick speaks, I listen.

The next morning brought a session on cloud computing. I took a deep breath and went to it. Not too long into the session, it became clear that perhaps I knew a bit more about clouds than I thought. Suddenly it was like I had been hit in the face with a book, well, actually Facebook. Yes, I am on Facebook. In fact, I admit to being a Facebook junkie. And yes, I admit that I play several of the games. So as I sat listening to the presentation in San Francisco and the presenter showed us her virtual meeting room and described many of the things that one could do in it, all I could think of was YoVille. Suddenly I realized that not only had I been in a cloud, but my house in YoVille was a series of virtual meeting rooms! Now I know how many things one can do in that environment and that got me to thinking. As the session ended, I turned to Cheryl Dorman, President of our Oregon Chapter and said that I think the Great Northwest Region could really use a virtual meeting room. Think of the possibilities! Chapters could use it to hold virtual chapter meetings, webinars or workshops. Boards and various committees could occasionally use it when getting together is difficult or impossible due to weather or other difficulties. The possibilities are too many to not pursue this.

As you know, the GNW Region currently has a task force that is putting together a program for February that will be webcast to you. Details about the webcast will be available soon on our website if not emailed to you as well. This is a great initial step forward.

With many hotels increasing their prices, it is getting financially harder for chapters to hold monthly meetings, especially dinner meetings. It has also gotten harder for a number of members to get to meetings. Some of our members are just too far from a chapter to able to attend in person. Perhaps it's time that we occasionally take our chapters out to our members. Webcasts and virtual meetings can be interactive when attended live. They also can be stored and accessed later at one's convenience. Just imagine that if you couldn't attend the live presentation, you could still see it later...in your jammies and your bunny slippers! Everyone from Barrow, Alaska to Fairbanks to Boise and Idaho Falls, to southern Oregon and the Paloose can have access to even more education. Chapters can share speakers. Brainstorm the possibilities!

Several people have asked me if webcasts and a virtual meeting room would replace our regular monthly meetings. I certainly hope not! Networking is, in my book, still the greatest benefit of belonging to ARMA. I would hope that chapters or groups of members could still meet



to attend a virtual presentation. The network you build, the friendships you make attending meetings, seminars and conferences is invaluable!

As we weather the economic storm, sprinkling in an occasional webcast or meeting in a virtual meeting room may just be the ray of hope many are looking for. My forecast for the Great Northwest Region is sunny days ahead with perhaps a cloud.

Marc