University of Cambridge

Information Strategy and Services Syndicate

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 5 June 2008.

Members present: Professor Young (Chairman); Professor Nolan; Professor Wallace; Dr. Carpenter; Dr. Wallach; Mr. Du Quesnay; Mr. Matheson; Mr. Norman; Mr. Richardson; and Mr. Warbrick.

In attendance: Professor Minson; the Registrary; the Directors of Finance, MISD and UCS; and Mr. Troupe.

Apologies were received from the Professor Littlewood, Mr Fletcher and the Librarian.

PART A: INTRODUCTORY

20.   Procedure of the Syndicate – Declaration of Interests

No declarations were made.

21.   Minutes

The Minutes of the second meeting of the ISSS held on 18 April 2008 were signed having been approved by circulation (Mins/ISSS 02/08).

22.   Matters Arising and Review of Action Points

The Syndicate reviewed the Action Points arising from the previous meeting (ISSS Paper 20/08).

(i)   Technical Sub-Committee (Action Point 7 refers)

The Syndicate accepted the recommendation of the Directors of MISD and UCS that a Technical Sub-Committee was sub-optimal and agreed that working groups should be created to deal with specific issues (e.g. authentication and authorisation, intranet, search). Nominees of the College and Departmental IT Managers Groups would be included in the membership of working groups to ensure the enfranchisement of staff at the grass roots level. It would be useful if the ISSS were to receive the minutes of both Management Groups for information and that both be informed that they could bring any issues to the attention of the ISSS, as proposed in the Business Committee minutes.

The Directors of MISD and UCS would be able to convene working groups on any issue; however the remit and membership of working groups would be reported to the ISWG so it could comment.

It was agreed that an Authentication and Authorisation Working Group be convened and a list of members submitted to the ISWG.

Action: Directors of MISD and UCS

(ii) **Role Profile for ISSS Administrative Support**

The Syndicate received a revised role profile for ISSS administrative support (ISSS Paper 03/08).

The Registrary noted that due to current financial constraints, a new appointment to fulfil this role was unlikely in the short to medium term. However, the Syndicate had identified the level of support required and informed the UAS of the need.

(iii) **Web Review Phase I**

The Syndicate noted that the University website would be launched in its new format on 12 June 2008.

(iv) **Membership**

The Syndicate noted that the search for a replacement for Professor Walsham continued. Mr Mark Fletcher had been nominated by CUSU as one of the student representatives.

23. **Business Committee Minutes**

The Syndicate received the previously circulated Business Committee Minutes for the meetings held on 1 and 22 May 2008 (ISSS Papers 22/08 and 23/08).

PART B: SUBSTANTIVE BUSINESS

24. **Project Reports**

Progress reports from the following projects were received.

(i) **CHRIS**

The Syndicate received a status report on the CHRIS Project (ISSS Paper 24/08). The Director of MISD commented.

The Syndicate noted that, subject to one or two verification issues, it was hoped staff would be paid using the new payroll system in June. Otherwise there was nothing adverse to report.

(ii) **CamSIS**

The Syndicate received a status report on the CamSIS Project (ISSS Paper 25/08). The Director of MISD commented.

The Syndicate noted that the version 9 upgrade was going well and that there was nothing adverse to report.

(iii) **Telecomms**

The Syndicate received a status report on the Telecomms Project along with a Migration Chart, a Deployment Status Report and a table of Departmental Network Expenditure (ISSS Paper 26/08). The Director of UCS commented.

The Syndicate noted that:

- overall the project was on track, however the 1,000 handsets live milestone had slipped to mid-June;
- the 5,000 handsets live milestone was likely to be achieved by the beginning of September;
- UCS were working at full capacity on the migration of Colleges and Departments;
- some Colleges and Departments, having agreed a migration date, had then wished to change it. As it was not possible to shift to the following week, those Colleges or Departments would be re-scheduled at the end of September. Colleges and Departments would be informed that this would happen when they agreed a date; and
- the amount of network expenditure by Departments varied widely with some choosing to implement wider improvements. It would be useful, when reporting actual network expenditure to the PRC, if an estimate of the cost was given based on like-for-like replacement, rather than the cost of any wider improvements.

Action: Director of UCS

(iv) **Web Review – Phase II**

The Syndicate received a status report on Phase II of the Web Review project (ISSS Paper 27/08). The Director of UCS commented.

The Syndicate noted that:

- limited progress had been made on Phase II of the project;
- the Office of Communications had undertaken the work to optimise the external web presence, a similar exercise for the internal web presence was now needed;
- an illustrative layout of a staff and student portal was included in the report. The page was divided into two halves, one for University news and the other for personal links and some self service aspects (e.g. voicemail, personnel/HR information). Some Syndics expressed the view that a portal-based approach such as that proposed may not be what was required and that many web-browsers included functionality for personal links;
- it was not clear who owned Phase II of the project or what information requirements needed to be addressed, in any event the search facility needed to be improved before the website could be fully effective. A number of initiatives were underway such as the ISWG looking at how the search facility could be improved but they were not joined up;
- the Directors of External Affairs and Communications, MISD and UCS plus representatives of those who might use a staff and student portal should meet and bring forward a proposal through the ISWG. The paper should detail requirements, including resources, and identify an individual to own the project and who then would drive it forward; and
- Phase II should not be launched until the outcome of the review of internal communications, due in the Michaelmas term, was published.

Action: Directors of External Affairs and Communications, MISD and UCS and ISWG

(v)   Reporting

The Syndicate received a verbal report on the Reporting Project from the Director of MISD.

The Syndicate noted that:

- originally this project had been a pilot to look at capabilities and a platform for business reporting. The Finance Division was now using Cognos for financial reporting;
- rather than stand down, the Project Board felt it was useful to continue as a sounding board or user group for future reporting requirements;
- there were two sets of needs, operational reporting from existing systems and cross reporting/management information from a number of systems. It could be a large project or a number of smaller initiatives;
- the Information Strategy Group, at its last meeting, had asked for a reconsideration of the Reporting Project Board membership and a review of its Terms of Reference. The ISSS was waiting for a proposal as to whether the project should continue or stop. The Director of MISD was asked to submit a report in due course. The Syndicate decided that in the meantime:
  - the Reporting Project Board should be renamed the Reporting Project User Group and should provide feedback to the ISSS on reporting issues; and
  - the Project Boards for individual projects should now be responsible for individual system reporting, rather than all reporting being the responsibility of the Reporting Project.

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Action: Director of MISD

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25.   Policy Issues

(i)   Project Governance Guidelines

The Syndicate received a draft of the proposed Project Governance Guidelines (ISSS Paper 28/08).

The Syndicate noted that:

- it had agreed, at its meeting on 18 April 2008, that a set of clear project governance guidelines should be drawn up;
- the guidelines were based on documents from MISD which were revised;
- clarification was needed on: who would have overall responsibility for a project, especially in the case of a project failing; the project assessment function; and whether Steering Committee members would be nominated by the Project Sponsor or appointed by the Project Board;
- a document on the life cycle of a project would be available at the next meeting of the ISSS;
- the Director of MISD and Mr Matheson would revise the guidelines for the next meeting.

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Action: Mr Matheson, Director of MISD

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(ii)   Turnitin Plagiarism Detection Software

The Syndicate received a request from the Plagiarism Steering Group for advice on the future support of Turnitin UK Plagiarism Detection software (ISSS Paper

29/08). The issue was whether the software should be supported via UCS, MISD or CARET.

The Syndicate noted that:

- the Business Committee, at its meeting on 22 May 2008, had recommended that the Turnitin software continue to be supported by CARET for the time being but that this should be reviewed in the light of the outcome of the General Board's Teaching and Learning Support Services Review;
- there was increasing demand across the University for plagiarism detection software;
- Turnitin was currently supported by CARET and demand was constrained while use of the software was piloted in a few departments; however, were the software to be more widely used, CARET was not necessarily resourced to support it. There were a number of issues such as the administration of access and usernames;
- as for the longer term, the support requirements would be clearer once the pilot programme was completed, it was not possible to estimate the support loads and resource requirements without more experience of operating the software; and
- the licence was being renewed for a further year and the ISSS would receive a report at the end of the pilot programme. In the interim, CARET would continue to support Turnitin.

<div align="right">Action: Secretary to inform the Plagiarism Steering Group</div>

26.   Strategic Planning - ISSS: Financial Planning Summary and Forecast

The Syndicate received a progress report on the Financial Planning Summary and Forecast document from the Chairman (ISSS Paper 30/08).

The Syndicate noted that:

- the paper was a work in progress which provided a broad picture of all the University's IT projects. Such a document was required in order to assist the ISSS in strategic planning;
- the document had been subdivided into major projects, running systems and MISD/UCS projects;
- some initiatives that were not yet projects had been removed from the list;
- guidelines on how to complete an entry were now included;
- the entry for CamTools had been completed and all other projects had been asked to complete an entry by the end of July 2008; and
- the document would be updated and a completed version would be submitted to the next ISSS meeting.
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<div align="right">Action: Chairman</div>

27.   Report from Information Strategy Working Group (ISWG)

The Syndicate received the Minutes from the ISWG meeting held on 7 May 2008(ISSS Paper 31/08). Mr Norman presented the paper and highlighted the following:

Minute 3.1 Internal Communications

This was a key area of the Office of External Relations and Communications ongoing review of internal communications. As a result and the fact that a number of the recommendations from the previous Information Needs Survey had not been implemented, the ISWG had decided not to proceed with an Information Needs Survey in the Michaelmas term.

Minute 3.2 Identity/Role Management
The Directors of MISD and UCS would work on a paper for submission to the ISWG drawing on input from the Authentication and Authorisation Working Group (Minute 22(i) above).

Minute 3.3 Improved Search
The current search facility used two different search engines (internal and external views), which were not satisfactory. It was suggested a Google domain search may be more effective. A number of institutions used Google as a search engine; however this would cost tens of thousands of Pounds. There were also issues around searching for documents that were not public and were not linked into often. In order to make a material improvement to the existing search facility, a substantial project would be required which would involve widespread annotation of content with metadata A paper on Improved Search should be brought to the ISSS via the ISWG.

Minute 3.4 Records Management
The Director of MISD, the University Librarian and Deputy Keeper of the Archives would produce a paper for the ISSS. The ISWG warned the ISSS that it would be possible for large sums of money to be spent on records management.

Action: ISWG

Data integrity and the need for the proposed Data Centre were also referred to. In order for the ISSS to give the matter further consideration, a full analysis of the issue (whether the current arrangements were satisfactory, an analysis of the risks and risk mitigation and a business case) would need to be prepared.

Action: Directors of MISD and UCS

28.   **Service Reports**

The Syndicate received and noted reports from the University Computing Service (ISSS Paper 32/08) and the Management Information Services Division (ISSS Paper 33/08).

29.   **For Information**

The Syndicate received the following for information:

(i)   Public Workstation Facility Briefing Paper (ISSS Paper 34/08).

The Business Committee, at its meeting on 22 May 2008, recommended that the paper be received for information but not endorsed. Further consideration of the PWF would be undertaken after the General Board's Teaching and Learning Support Services Review was completed.

Professor Steve Young, Chairman