

2009 Report of the ISSS

Introduction

The ISSS was formed by a merger of the Information Strategy Group and the Information Technology Syndicate with terms of reference published in October 2007 and has now been operating for 18 months. This is its first annual report, which we have chosen to align with the terms of reference. The Syndicate meets 6 times per year. Members are listed in Appendix A

Operation

An annual cycle of business has been established (Appendix B)

The ISSS has created two subcommittees: the Business Committee (BC) prepares the agenda for the Syndicate and ensures proper preparation and presentation of issues; and the Information Strategy Working Group (ISWG) is tasked to anticipate and gather future information needs, provide a sounding board for new proposals, and to work with the BC in drawing up papers for formal discussion at the Syndicate. Two other committees also report to the ISSS: the new Joint Network Management Committee (JNMC), formed from a merger of the JTMC and GBN Management Committee; and the University Card Management Committee.

The ISSS has chosen not to establish sub-syndicates (see Appendix E), and thus has taken direct reporting of projects and services to the full committee. Having established narrow reporting boundaries to reduce the volume of paperwork, the Syndicate believes that this is preferable and working well.

The information systems activities of the Library, CARET and the Language Centre were not included in the Syndicate's remit but have been reported informally. The Syndicate believes that these should now be included within its remit.

The ISSS has delegated authority from the RMC to approve expenditure from the Technology Development Fund which plays an essential role in facilitating the Syndicate's remit.

An internal audit by Grant Thornton has produced a draft report which is largely supportive of the ISSS role, and encourages a shift over time from project governance to setting a strategic focus. This trend is one that the Syndics support. The Syndicate has approved the establishment of a Project Office to assist it with the setting up and subsequent governance of major projects. Officer support will also be needed for the strategic role and this may also in part have to come from the Project Office.

Reporting under Terms of Reference

(a) to establish and keep under review, subject to the approval of the Council and the General Board and in consultation with the Senior Tutors' Committee and the Bursars' Committee where appropriate, an information strategy in support of the aims and objectives of the University and the Colleges;

The ISSS has revised the information strategy (Appendix C). The ISWG is developing the security, archiving and other policies which underpin this.

(b) to promote the adoption of the information strategy where appropriate throughout the University and the Colleges, and advise on developments in information technology and its implementation;

A strategic implementation plan has been developed (Appendix D)

(c) to keep under review the information requirements of the University and the Colleges, and advise the Council and the General Board on priorities for and other matters relating to the development and application of appropriate information policies, facilities, and services in support of those requirements;

The ISSS has identified issues that it has referred to the ISWG for development. The main topics currently under their review are: internal communications; identity/role management; improved search; records management and data archiving.

(d) to ensure that any such information policies, facilities, and services provided are operating effectively and are fit for purpose;

This is ensured by regular reports of the Project Boards and Service Directors. In the next year, the ISSS will consider the development of appropriate performance indicators to streamline the reporting.

(e) to oversee the direction and planning of the University Computing Service and Management Information Services Division and to approve general principles for the allocation of resources and priorities in the use of their facilities;

The Directors of the UCS and MISD provide service reports to each meeting. As input to the planning round the ISSS reviews the Services' strategies in July and drafts of their submissions in October.

(f) to be responsible for ensuring that appropriate project and budgetary management and control mechanisms are in place for such major information systems and technology projects as the Council or the General Board may from time to time determine; and to be accountable for the funds allocated for such projects;

The ISSS has developed project governance guidelines for major projects and these will be implemented through the Project Office. Three major projects are currently overseen by the ISSS: CHRIS, CAMSIS, and the Telephone Replacement Project. Transition from project to service status has been agreed for CHRIS from the start of FY09/10, and is imminent for the Telephone Replacement Project; CamSIS is expected to transition by the end of calendar year 2010.

(g) to make, or amend, and publish rules, subject to approval by the competent authority, for the regulation and security of the use of information technology facilities within the University, and of such computing facilities in College institutions as may be designated for this purpose from time to time by the appropriate College authorities concerned, and to impose on a person infringing one or more of those rules either or both of the following penalties:

(i) the suspension of authorization to use computing resources for such a period as the Information Strategy and Services Syndicate shall determine;

(ii) a fine not exceeding £175.

Review of the rules and guidelines is an annual item of business and the Syndicate will be assisted in this by staff in the UCS. The Syndicate has agreed that all those empowered by the guidelines and rules to impose a fine should be enabled to impose up to the new maximum of £175. Regular amendment of this figure will in future be avoided by referring to the “maximum prescribed by Ordinance”.

(h) to make an annual report to the Council and the General Board and to the Senior Tutors' and Bursars' Committees.

This report fulfils this duty.

Appendices

A – List of Members as at 1 November 2009

The Information Strategy and Services Syndicate was constituted by Grace in November 2007.

1. The Syndicate consists of:

(a)	The Vice-Chancellor (or a duly appointed deputy) as Chairman	Professor S Young, from November 2007 until March 2009; Professor P Littlewood from April 2009	
(b)	Three persons appointed by the Council	Mr. James Matheson, Engineering Mr. John Norman, CARET Professor Christine Howe SAH/SHSS: Dr Donald Robertson (Professor Nolan until 30 September 2009)	31 December 2011 31 December 2011 31 December 2012 31 December 2011
(c)	Three persons appointed by the General Board of the Faculties	SPS/ST: vacancy (Professor Littlewood until July 2009) SBS/SCM: Dr. Carpenter, Clinical Neurosciences Sir David Wallace, Master of Churchill College	31 December 2011 31 December 2011
(d)	Three persons appointed by the Colleges' Committee	Dr. Rob Wallace, Senior Tutor, King's College Mr. Ian du Quesnay, Bursar, Newnham College	31 December 2011 31 December 2011
(e)	one person elected from among their own number by the officers of the University Computing Service;**	Mr Jon Warbrick	31 December 2009
(f)	one person elected from their own number by the officers of the Management Information Services Division of the University Offices**	Mr Andy Richardson	31 December 2009, re-elected to 31 December 2011
(g)	two members of the University in statu pupillari, co-opted by the Syndicate, at least one of whom shall be a graduate student *	Clare Tyson *Siza Mtimbiri	31 December 2010 31 December 2010
(h)	not more than two persons co-opted by the Syndicate, provided that it shall not be obligatory for the Syndicate to co-opt any person or persons	Robin Walker (Chair, JNMC) Professor Steve Oliver (from October 2009)	31 December 2009 renewed (ISSS October 2009) wef 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2011 31 December 2010

2. The Registry, the Librarian, and the Directors of the University Computing Service, and of the Management Information Services Division and the Finance Division of the University Offices, have the right to attend meetings of the Syndicate.

To attend by right of Standing Invitation	Professor Steve Young, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Planning and Resources (Professor Minson until 31 July 2009)
Secretary:	Mr. Nick Wilson, Senior Assistant Registry, Academic Division. (Mr Ian Troupe until 31 December 2008).

** The Ordinances were amended during 2009 to provide for elections in 2009.

B - Annual Cycle of Business

Meeting	Date	Business
1	Early October	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preliminary planning round submissions for MISD, UCS and Projects (subject to financial outturn for previous year) 2. Discussion of Information Strategy and annual programme of work. 3. Annual Report 4. Appointment or election of Syndics
2	Late November	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final planning round submissions for MISD, UCS and Projects (having received relevant financial outturn information) 2. ISSS covering paper on planning round submissions under 1 including recommendations/priorities for resources.
3	Late January/ Early February	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial annual review of guidelines (in first year those inherited from ITS) 2. Annual Reports on Information Compliance and from MISD, UCS, Library [and CARET]
4	Late March/ Early April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial planning discussions
5	Mid to Late May	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite comments from Syndics on (a) operation of Syndicate (b) matters to be covered in annual report for consideration by BC in first instance 2. Approve published rules, guidelines and disciplinary procedures etc
6	July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outline ISSS Annual Report including review of effectiveness 2. In accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure (para v.) to appoint a Syndic to be the Panel Convenor of any Panel that needs to be convened in the next twelve months. 3. Strategic Plans – first look

C – Information Strategy

The Syndicate's Information Strategy is published at:

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2008-09/weekly/6150/6.html>

D – Implementation Plan

The Syndicate's Implementation Plan is published at:

http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/committee/iss/strategy_plan.pdf

E - Sub-Syndicates

Extract from the Minutes of the ISSS meeting held on 7 February 2008

4. In view of the weight of work likely to fall upon the shoulders of new Syndicate, suggestions had been made later that the Syndicates could possibly benefit from the support of two sub-committees or sub-Syndicates.....The Chairman therefore proposed that the formation of sub-Syndicates should be held-in abeyance for at least 6 months pending experience of ISSS operation.

5. The effect of this would be that the existing Project Boards would, for the time being, report directly to the Syndicate, as would those responsible for the operation of the Granta Backbone Network, Telecomms management and aspects of the operations of the Management Information Services Division (MISD) and the University Computing Service. In parenthesis, it should be noted that the information systems activities of the Library, CARET and the Language Centre were not included in the Syndicate's remit

6. The ISSS has established two sub-committees (the Business Committee and the Information Strategy Working Group) which report directly to it, as do the Joint Network Management Committee and the University Card Management Committee.