

## 2012 Report of the Information Strategy and Services Syndicate

### Introduction

This is the fourth annual report of the Information Strategy and Services Syndicate (ISSS), which normally meets six times each year. Members are listed in Appendix A.

### Operation

The Syndicate's annual cycle of business is shown in appendix B.

The ISSS has three subcommittees: the Business Committee (BC) prepares the agenda for the ISSS and ensures proper preparation and presentation of issues; the Information Strategy Working Group (ISWG) which is tasked to anticipate and gather future information needs, provide a sounding board for new proposals, advise on allocations from the Technology Development Fund (TDF), and to work with the BC in drawing up papers for formal discussion at the ISSS; and the Joint Network Management Committee which oversees the management of the University Telephone Network (UTN), the Cambridge University Data Network (CUDN), and the Granta Backbone Network (GBN).

Various other committees, Project Boards and System Management Committees report to the ISSS (some also reporting to committees in the business area they serve): University Card Management Committee, Student Information Systems Committee, Financial Systems Management Committee, HR Systems Management Committee, X5 Project Board.

The information systems activities of the Library and CARET are included within the ISSS's remit.

The ISSS's last annual report described the steps the Syndicate had taken for a major review of the Information Strategy and the reports of the working groups set up to advise it. The last stages of this work were, however, overshadowed by the separate IT review commissioned by the Planning and Resources Committee. The PRC in March 2011 had considered outline arrangements for a review of IT and subsequently approved the membership and terms of reference. The ISSS Business Committee met with the Review Group on 1 November 2011. The Group's membership included the ISSS Chairman, Professor Oliver, who reported to the Syndicate in July 2012 on what were expected to be the main conclusions of the review. The Syndicate will be giving full consideration to the recommendations (which include the replacement of the Syndicate by another body) at their meeting in MT 2012.

The Syndicate has published guidelines for the governance of IT/IS projects and these are updated from time to time. Previous Annual Reports have referred to the approval by the ISSS in 2008 of the establishment of a Project Office to assist it with the setting up and subsequent governance of major projects. Those reports referred to the budgetary constraints that prevented the creation of the associated post, but noted that the need for the Project Office has not been acute because there had been relatively few new major projects. That position has not changed.

## 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 reported last year on the working parties it had established to advise it on the development of the Information Strategy (for details see annex C to the 2010 Report) and the two key themes reinforced by these studies: usability; and the need for Identity Management. The ISWG and the Syndicate developed the Information Strategy to a final draft intended for approval and publication as a Notice in MT 2012. It now seems likely that publication as planned should wait until after the outcome of the IT Review is clear, but meanwhile it may receive more limited exposure on the Syndicate's website.

- (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;*

The strategic implementation plan as it stands at present (Appendix D) was due for review after the new IS had been agreed.

The ISSS has continued to provide funding for UCS to complete the identity management project, which will enable an individual to be identified across systems and hence allow information from these systems to be combined. The ISSS has continued to encourage the interlinking of systems generally and is pleased to note that departments are developing their own specialist front-ends to the central MIS systems.

- (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 maintains a rolling five-year list of developments requiring funding in excess of the regular Service Allocations. It recommends annually to the PRC which developments should be funded in the next year and the provision that should be earmarked for future years. The ISSS requests an annual allocation to the Technology Development Fund from which it can provide limited development funds. These allow small projects to be completed, and larger projects to be evaluated and brought to a stage at which support may reasonably be requested from PRC. That process was again followed for 2012-13.

Allocations were approved on the recommendation of ISSS for further years of funding for research grants financial management and documents management; for implementation of the strategy for development of the Finance and HR Systems and in particular the CUFS upgrade; to improve the CUDN/GBN resilience and its extension and – arising from the discussion reported in 2011 about the co-ordination of software purchasing, funding for the co-ordination of site wide licencing which will deliver both value for money and wider access to specialist software.

The Syndicate responded to the request for departed students and staff to continue to receive e-mail for a limited period by authorising UCS to develop a system which would notify senders that a person had left and giving a new address which the departed member could edit.

The planning guidance asks institutions for early notice of local IT/IS projects to assist the Services in developing their plans. The ISSS received a summary compiled from the 2010 returns, which it referred to the ISWG to see if assistance could be provided. The ISSS has asked that it should be kept informed of all plans with a bearing on IT/IS strategy and of examples of best practice in IT/IS that it may promulgate across the university. By means of this report, and otherwise, the University should be made more generally aware of IT/IS planning and best practice.

For the first time the Syndicate received a report on Information Compliance from the Information Compliance Officer and endorsed the proposal for a statement on the handling of confidential data for its complete life-cycle.

- (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 “exception” reports of Project Boards and Service Directors and through the minutes of the system management committees and project boards.

- (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 annual planning round, the ISSS asks to be informed of major changes of plan in good time before reviewing Services' strategies during the Michaelmas Term and, with input from the ISWG, producing a combined IT submission.

The Syndicate agreed that after some essential costs had been met, service charge rates should increase by no more than the rate of increase in Allocations.

- (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.

The current systems are overseen by the HR Systems Committee, the Financial Systems Committee, and the new Student Information Systems Committee, all of which report to the ISSS, as well as to – respectively - the HR Committee, the Finance Committee and the Education Committee.

The ISSS received reports from the project board established to oversee the Cambridge interest in the "X5" project, being promoted jointly with Oxford, and proposed that central funding be provided to support wireless coverage across the University. That proposal has now been approved by the Resource Management Committee.

The ISSS manages the Technology Development Fund (TDF). Projects that have been deemed suitable for TDF funding by the ISWG during 11/12 include the development costs of: the University Map; a feasibility study for Finance & HR Systems Strategy; developments and configuration of systems and templates associated with web content management systems; a feasibility study for Vivo, and investigation of Grant Management Systems.

Funding is earmarked for 12/13 on projects including (\* = rolled forward or continuing from 11/12): the \*REF Support System; \*Project Office; \*Identity Management; Internal Communications; \*Timetabling/Resource Planning software; \*a replacement for the Alumni System; \*Institutional Repository; Vivo and Grant Management Systems.'

*(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 the maximum prescribed by Ordinance.*

Review of the rules and guidelines is an annual item of business and the ISSS is assisted in this by staff in the UCS. Some of the rules and guidelines reflect legislative requirements. There has been new legislation, which needs to be reflected but there have been delays in implementation by government and so the impact is not clear. Further revision is therefore pending until there is greater clarity of the requirements.

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

This report is sent to all these bodies.

## Appendices

A - List of Members

B - Annual Cycle of Business

C - Glossary



**A – List of Members.** The ISSS was constituted by Grace in November 2007

1.	The Information Strategy and Services Syndicate shall consist of:	<i>Appointment to</i>	
(a)	The Vice-Chancellor (or a duly appointed deputy) as Chairman	Professor Steve Oliver	
(b)	Three persons appointed by the Council	Mr. James Matheson, Engineering	Reappointed to 31 December 2015
	▪ ▪	Mr. John Norman, CARET	Reappointed to 31 December 2015
	▪ ▪	Professor Christine Howe	31 December 2012
(c)	Three persons appointed by the General Board of the Faculties	SAH/SHSS: Dr Gavin Alexander , Faculty of English	Reappointed to 31 December 2015
		SPS/ST: Dr Graham Titmuss, Computer Laboratory; (Dr Alan Blackwell until 31 December 2011)	31 December 2015
		SBS/SCM: Dr. A T Carpenter, Clinical Neurosciences	Reappointed to 31 December 2015
(d)	Three persons appointed by the Colleges' Committee	Sir David Wallace, Master of Churchill College	Reappointed to 31 December 2011
		Dr Matthias Dörrzapf, Senior Tutor St John's College (Dr. Stephanie Ellington; Senior Tutor, Lucy Cavendish until 31 July 2011)	31 December 2014
		Mr. Ian du Quesnay, Bursar, Newnham College	Reappointed to 31 December 2015
(e)	one person elected from among their own number by the officers of the University Computing Service;	Mr Julian King (Mr Jon Warbrick until 31 December 2011)	31 December 2014
(f)	one person elected from their own number by the officers of the Management Information Services Division of the University Offices	Dr Stephen Smith (Mr Andy Richardson until 31 December 2011)	31 December 2014
(g)	two members of the University in <i>statu pupillari</i> , co-opted by the Syndicate, at least one of whom shall be a graduate student *	Vacancy (Mr Alex Wood until 31 December 2011)	
	▪ ▪	Vacancy	

(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	Dr Robin Walker	Co-opted for a further period to 31 December 2015
		Dr Steve Hand	31 December 2015
2.	The Registrar, 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, shall have the right to attend meetings of the Syndicate.	Respectively:	
		Dr Jonathan Nichols	
		Mrs Anne Jarvis	
		Dr Ian Lewis	
		Mr Paul Dampier	
		Mr Andrew Reid	
	To attend by right of Standing Invitation	Professor Steve Young, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Planning and Resources	
	Secretary:	Mr. Nick Wilson, Senior Assistant Registrar, Academic Division	

Dr Sandra Fulton (College Teaching Officer and Admissions Tutor at Girton College and Assistant Director of Teaching at the Department of Biochemistry) was the Syndicate's representative on the Student Information Systems Committee.

Sir David Wallace represented the Syndicate on the Oversight Committee of the High Performance Computing Service

Dr Dörrzapf served as the Panel Convenor required by the Syndicate's Disciplinary Procedure at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/committee/iss/rules/discproc.html>





## B - Annual Cycle of Business

Meeting	Date	Business
1	Early October	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preliminary planning round discussions about MISD, UCS, UL and Projects (taking account of financial outturn for previous year)</li> <li>2. Discussion of Information Strategy and annual programme of work.</li> <li>3. Annual Report</li> <li>4. Appointment or election of Syndics</li> <li>5. Review of sub-committees</li> </ol>
2	Late November	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Final planning round submissions for MISD, UCS and Projects (having received relevant financial outturn information)</li> <li>2. ISSS covering paper on planning round submissions under 1 including recommendations/priorities for resources.</li> </ol>
3	Late January/Early February	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initial annual review of guidelines (in first year those inherited from ITS)</li> <li>2. Annual Reports [on Information Compliance and] from MISD, UCS, Library [and CARET?]</li> </ol>
4	Late March/Early April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initial planning discussions</li> </ol>
5	Mid to Late May	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>2. Approve published rules, guidelines and disciplinary procedures etc</li> </ol>
6	July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outline ISSS Annual Report including review of effectiveness</li> <li>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.</li> <li>3. Strategic Plans – first look</li> </ol>

## **C - Glossary**

<b>BC</b>	<b>See ISSS - BC</b>
<b>CamTools</b>	<b>an innovation unit focused on learning and research technologies helping the University's staff and students collaborate, communicate and interact online</b>
<b>CARET</b>	<b>Centre for Applied Research in Educational Technologies</b>
<b>CamSIS</b>	<b>Cambridge Student Information System</b>
<b>CHRIS</b>	<b>Cambridge Human Resources Information System</b>
<b>CUDN</b>	<b>Cambridge University Data Network</b>
<b>CUFS</b>	<b>Cambridge University Finance System</b>
<b>GBN</b>	<b>Granta Backbone Network</b>
<b>ISSS</b>	<b>Information Systems and Strategy Syndicate</b>
<b>ISSS- BC</b>	<b>The Business Committee of the ISSS</b>
<b>IS, IT</b>	<b>Information Systems; Information Technology</b>
<b>ISWG</b>	<b>Information Strategy Working Group (a sub-committee of the ISSS)</b>
<b>JNMC</b>	<b>Joint Network Management Committee (a sub-committee of the ISSS)</b>
<b>MISD</b>	<b>Management Information Systems Division</b>
<b>pFACT</b>	<b>Project Financial, Accounting and Costing Tool; used to calculate the Full Economic Cost (fEC) of a research project</b>
<b>PRC</b>	<b>Planning and Resources Committee</b>
<b>TDF</b>	<b>Technology Development Fund</b>
<b>UCMC</b>	<b>University Card Management Committee</b>
<b>UCS</b>	<b>University Computing Service</b>
<b>UTN</b>	<b>University Telephone Network</b>
<b>X5</b>	<b>The project for the replacement of pFACT (qv) grant costing system</b>

