

University of Cambridge

Information Strategy and Services Syndicate

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 18 April 2008.

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

In attendance: the Directors of Finance, MISD and UCS; Mr Kenworthy; and Mr Troupe.

Apologies were received from the Registry; the Librarian and Professor Minson.

The Syndicate thanked Mr Kenworthy, who was attending his final meeting, for his contribution the University over the last seven and a half years.

PART A: INTRODUCTORY

10. Procedure of the Syndicate – Declaration of Interests

In accordance with the recommendation of the Audit Committee (13 March 2008), Syndics were asked to declare any conflict of interest they were aware of with regard to the items of business on the agenda.

No declarations were made.

11. Minutes

The Minutes of the first meeting of the ISSS held on 7 February 2008 were approved and signed, subject to minor amendment (Mins/ISSS 01/08).

12. Matters Arising and Review of Action Points

The Syndicate reviewed the Action Points arising from the previous meeting (ISSS Paper 02/08).

The Syndicate agreed that Minutes should be confirmed by circulation rather than waiting until the following meeting.

Action: Secretary

(i) Role Profile for ISSS Administrative Support

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

Following amendment the Syndicate endorsed the role profile whilst recognising that due to current financial constraints, a new appointment to fulfil this role in the short to medium term was unlikely. In the meantime, the current support arrangements

would be strengthened with a member of MISD providing support to the Information Strategy Working Group.

In the longer term the role could become full time and need an individual with the ability to research and write papers in addition to attending and supporting project boards. Although resources might be found in MISD and UCS, it was preferable that any administrative support be independent of the major IT divisions/services. The situation would be reviewed in due course; in the meantime the role profile would be passed to the Registry for comment.

Action: Secretary

(ii) Project Governance Arrangements

The Syndicate noted that there was no single document giving definitive guidelines for project boards at Cambridge. The Cambridge model tended to deviate from the industry standard PRINCE2 guidelines by appointing independent non-executive chairs of project boards. The issue had been highlighted by the Telecomms Project where, in contrast to other project boards, the Joint Telecommunications Management Committee had appointed the Director of UCS as Chair.

It was agreed that Professor Andy Hopper should replace the Director of UCS as the Chair of the Telecomms Project Board and that a set of clear guidelines for future projects be drawn up. The Secretary would draft a letter to Professor Hopper.

Action: Business Committee, Secretary

(iii) GBN/JTMC proposal

The Syndicate received a proposal for the merger of the Granta Backbone Network Management Committee and the Joint Telecommunications Management Committee to create the Joint Network Management Committee (ISSS Paper 04/08).

The Syndicate recommended a number of amendments to the composition and remit of the proposed committee. Following amendment the proposal would be agreed by circulation.

Action: Director UCS, Secretary

13. Business Committee Minutes

The Syndicate received the Business Committee Minutes for the meetings held on 13 and 27 March 2008 (Mins/ISSS BC/0108 Mins/ISSS BC/0208).

The Syndicate noted the 2008-09 meeting dates for the ISSS:

Thursday 9 October 2008
Thursday 27 November 2008
Thursday 22 January 2009
Thursday 19 March 2009
Thursday 21 May 2009
Thursday 9 July 2009

All meetings would be at 2.15pm in the Syndicate Room.

PART B: SUBSTANTIVE BUSINESS

14. Progress Reports

Progress reports from the following were received.

(a) Active Projects

(i) CHRIS

The Syndicate received a progress report on the CHRIS Project (ISSS Paper 05/08). Professor Daunton, Chairman of the Project Board, attended for this item.

The Syndicate noted that:

- despite some difficulties and slippage the project was now going well;
- staff would be paid using the new payroll system by May 2008 for Weekly paid staff and June 2008 for Monthly paid staff and pensioners;
- a new Project Manager started work on 5th February 2008;
- a Senior Management team had taken over responsibility for decisions affecting payroll reconciliation and payroll go live decisions;
- CHRIS software would be upgraded to release 10.5 later in the year. This would provide the increase in functionality and efficiency needed to support self service; and
- the Planning and Resources Committee had authorised an increase in recurrent costs for 2009/10 onwards from £0.5m to £0.6m.

(ii) CamSIS

The Syndicate received a progress report on the CamSIS Project (ISSS Paper 06/08). The Director of MISD commented on behalf of Professor Lethbridge, Chairman of the Project Board.

The Syndicate noted that:

- current projects included a software upgrade, replacement of the student application form (project DeCAF) and development of the outbound interface;
- there were no major issues other than difficulty in enlisting technical resources due to worldwide demand;
- activities for next year included the issuing of fee bills through CamSIS; and
- it would be useful for future reports to list project milestones and to indicate whether the project was on target.

Action: Chair of Project Board

(iii) Telecomms

The Syndicate received a progress report on the Telecomms Project (ISSS Paper 07/08). The Director of UCS commented.

The Syndicate noted that:

- the implementation of the 'core' telephone system was now complete. Systems acceptance testing had been completed and UCS had been migrated successfully to the new system and running without problems;
- approximately £1M of central telephony and network equipment had been installed and tested in the previous six weeks;
- the following phases had therefore been completed - needs/requirements analysis, system design, procurement management and core implementation, including voicemail and call logging;
- 374 new handsets had been deployed as of 11 April 2008;
- the new system was the most cost effective option, would increase functionality and reduce ongoing costs;
- three 'User Briefings' were scheduled for April (one dedicated to Addenbrookes), there would be an article in the next University Newsletter, and a 'Telecomm Newsletter' was in development;
- 80 out of 220 departments and Colleges had so far been directly contacted to plan their migration, with 40 of those committed. Since the installation of the central system had gone so well a more proactive approach on installation and migration was now possible. The remaining Colleges should be contacted in the next 5-6 weeks in order to ensure the costs of installation and migration were built into their budgets for next year;
- there was a perception that the project was costly for departments, the issue being that some departmental networks were poor and would therefore need to be upgraded to interface with the new telephone system. It was impossible to determine departmental network remediation costs until the point of deployment. The Director of UCS was recording remediation costs by department in order to determine the overall cost of the project, the Colleges should also be asked to report any remediation costs and the total figures reported to the Planning and Resources Committee; and
- it was anticipated that the project would be completed by September 2009.

Action: Chair of Project Board, Director UCS

(iv) Web Review

The Syndicate received and noted a progress report on the Web Review (ISSS Paper 08/08).

b. In Planning Stage

(i) Web Review – Phase II

The Syndicate noted that:

- the ISWG would discuss internal communications and promote a re-run of the Information Strategy Task Force Information Needs Survey in Michaelmas term 2008;
- the Communications Office was to employ a consultant to work on phase II;
- a key requirement was for the network to be able to support a 'personalised home page', a single web resource tailored to an individuals areas of interest. MISD provided features would take longer to implement than those provided by UCS due to operational issues; and
- all of these strands would be brought together in a paper for the next meeting of the ISSS.

Action: ISWG

(ii) Reporting

The Syndicate received a progress report on the Reporting Project (ISSS Paper 09/08). The Director of MISD commented.

The Syndicate noted that:

- this was a pilot project to bring management information reporting to the University using the Cognos reporting tool. The focus had been on financial information but some work with student data had also been included;
- the pilot was complete and running, no funding was allocated beyond 2007-08;
- there were possibilities for further reports using student data, HR/Payroll information and corporate planning information. MISD were discussing priorities with a number of Divisions, Colleges and other areas and would report back to the Project Board in due course; and
- should this pilot project continue and require funding due process would be followed and a proposal considered by the ISSS. The ISWG should discuss further and come back with a report before any further action was taken on the part of the ISSS. In the meantime the Chairman of the ISSS would contact the Chairman of the Project Board.

Action: ISWG, Chairman

15. Policy Issues

(i) Bulk E-Mailing - CUSU proposal (ISSS Paper 10/08)

The Syndicate received a proposal from CUSU for the creation of a number of bulk e-mailing lists (ISSS Paper 10/08).

The Syndicate noted that:

- previously the Information Technology Syndicate (ITS) and UCS were of the view that bulk e-mailing should be avoided, however the Communications Office supported such a method of communication and there was a need to be able to contact large numbers of individuals at certain times (e.g. a flu pandemic). This resulted in a paper from UCS setting out guidelines for bulk e-mailing. There was also an ITS webpage with guidance but this needed updating;
- decisions on such lists and technical issues could be delegated to UCS, however the guidelines in themselves were not a policy but a working document. Any policy would need to be agreed by the ISSS before the policing of bulk e-mailing could be delegated to UCS; and
- the CUSU proposal fitted the existing UCS and ITS guidelines well except that one rather than several weekly postings should suffice and this would reduce the number of lists required.

The Syndicate agreed that:

- the existing UCS paper would provide the parameters for bulk e-mailing;
- UCS would be the provider of such e-mail groups and would work with CUSU to create the bulk e-mails lists as required for a single coordinated weekly posting; and

- UCS would amend the existing documents and formulate a policy in the light of experience and bring to the next meeting of the ISSS.

Action: Director UCS

(ii) Proposed Computer Service Charges

The Syndicate received a proposal for an increase in UCS charges (ISSS Paper 11/08).

The Syndicate noted that:

- the Cambridge University Data Network (CUDN) was being significantly improved in terms of resilience, performance, and standardisation of network;
- nearly £1m of external funding had been obtained to cover the capital cost of the enhancement, however more equipment and cabling was required to provide this increased resilience and bandwidth resulting in an increase in the maintenance cost of the CUDN and the annual maintenance charges passed on to University institutions;
- the additional annual cost to each institution was in the region of £500 for the CUDN and 3% for the PWF Managed Cluster Services (there was no increase in PWF charges in 2007, therefore an increase of 1.5% per year);
- in future years institutions should be notified of any increase in September so it could be built into the budget for the following year.

The increased charges were approved.

Action: Director UCS

(iii) Web Cache Migration (ISSS Paper 12/08)

The Syndicate received and noted a paper on the planned web cache migration from UCS (ISSS Paper 12/08).

16. Strategic Planning

(a) Strategy Implementation Plan (ISSS Paper 13/08)

The Syndicate received a paper on strategic implementation from the Chairman (ISSS Paper 13/08).

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;
- each project was summarised on a page including allocations, expenditure, the aim of the project, its history, people issues, status and issues pending;
- the paper raised the issue of when a project became operational, the relevant project board should report when all milestones had been met and the ISSS would then decide whether a project was complete and the project board could be stood down to be replaced by a management committee; and
- further consultation was needed with project boards in order to fill in some of the detail.

The Syndicate welcomed the paper and would submit feedback on the format and contents to the Chairman.

Action: Syndics, Chairman

(b) Report from Information Strategy Working Group (ISWG)

The Syndicate received a report from the ISWG (ISSS Paper 14/08).

The Syndicate noted that:

- the ISWG had made some slight amendments to its Terms of Reference;
- the Information Strategy Task Force issue list would be reworked in the light of the results of the wide-scale Information Needs survey planned for Michaelmas term 2008. In the meantime four issues were identified for consideration pending the outcome of the survey - internal communications, identity/role management, improved search and records management;
- scenario planning was identified as a means of providing early warning of any large scale investments over £2m; and
- the ISWG had requested that it should be able to co-opt up to three members, the first of whom would be Mr Jolly, Director of External Affairs and Communications.

The Syndicate approved the changes to the ISWG Terms of Reference and the arrangements for co-opting additional members.

17. Service Reports

The Syndicate received and noted reports from the University Computing Service (ISSS Paper 15/08) and the Management Information Services Division (ISSS Paper 16/08).

18. For Information

The Syndicate received and the following for information:

- (i) CamRIS Report (ISSS Paper 17/08);
- (ii) Review of Teaching and Learning Support Services – UCS Submission (ISSS Paper 18/08); and
- (iii) Information Compliance Report for 2007 (ISSS Paper 19/08).

19. Other Business

The names of the proposed student members would be available in due course.

The next meeting of the Syndicate would be held on Thursday 5 June 2008 at 3.00pm in the Syndicate Room.

Professor Steve Young, Chairman