

University of Cambridge

Information Strategy and Services Syndicate

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 March 2009.

Members present: Professor Young (Chairman); Mr. Du Quesnay; Professor Nolan; Mr. Norman; Ms Tyson; Dr Walker; Sir David Wallace and Mr. Warbrick.

In attendance: The Registry; Directors of Finance, MISD and UCS; Professor Leslie for MM 76 and 77; Mr. Wilson.

Apologies for absence were received from: Dr. Carpenter; Mr Fox; Professor Littlewood; Mr. Matheson; Mr. Richardson and Dr. Wallach.

The Chairman welcomed Clare Tyson, a student member.

There were no declarations of interest relating to matters on the agenda.

73. Minutes

The Minutes of the sixth meeting of the ISSS held on 22 January 2009 had been approved by circulation.

74. Matters arising and review of action points

Action points arising from the last meeting and the annual cycle of business had been circulated as ISSS 95.

Updating the JNMC and ISWG websites was in hand.

The Project Manager's job description had been completed and would be circulated to members for information. Expenditure for the post had been approved from the Technology Development Fund.

It would be essential to show in due course that the post delivered economies but (with reference to the discussion of the Business Committee recorded at M2 of ISSS 96) Syndics were uncertain at present how they would be measured.

75. Business Committee minutes

The Minutes of the Business Committee's meetings held on 5 February and 6 March 2009 were received as papers ISSS 96 & 97, subject to the replacement of "ISSS" for "CamSIS" at M9 of ISSS 96.

Syndics recalled that the University Card Management Committee had been established some years previously as a joint committee of the Bursars and the Council, but for the benefit of the Syndicate it would be useful to confirm and document the formal arrangement.

The HR training project had been referred to the ISWG.

There was no implication at M2 of ISSS 97 that any current project was working less than well.

The Syndicate endorsed the Business Committee's proposal for a strategic planning meeting in the Easter term.

Action: Secretary

76. Research Excellence Framework (REF) pilot project

The Syndicate considered a further paper (ISSS 98) on the REF.

Professor Leslie said that first paper had taken the broad view and not shown clearly how the REF pilot would influence implementation of the project. There would be another paper in due course about post-pilot plans. He emphasised that the pilot, including an interface with CHRIS, was the minimum needed to deliver the pilot data collection *and* the full submission expected in 2010. £30k expenditure had already been approved, with £7.5k contingency. Evolution of the REF might require interfaces with CamSIS and with CUFS, but it was not expected they would report through Symplectic and nor was additional functionality for Symplectic assumed.

The Project – including the use of Symplectic - was overseen by the Research Policy Committee (reporting to the General Board) and managed by Peta Stevens. The REF alone did not need a project board, but the outcome of the pilot and the possible need for other interfaces would show if this should be reviewed.

The focus was on the sciences and on the need for a single coherent submission to HEFCE; the default would be to assume staff and publications were eligible. For extension of the REF to the humanities and social sciences there was little expectation of any system that could capture research eligible books. There was little prospect of any alternative system.

The total attributable costs of running the REF would be considerably more than the modest expenditure on the pilot.

The Syndicate noted that another decision would be needed in July.

77. Environmental Monitoring

The Syndicate welcomed RMC approval of a non-recurrent allocation of £87.5k for the piloting of a database to provide public access to the fine-grained environmental information gathered within the University.

Professor Leslie explained that the arrangements described in ISSS 99 were not yet within the ISSS domain, but were hosted by the Computing Service. They enabled direct charging for utilities and were part of the University's sustainability portfolio; monitoring could be expected to grow in importance.

The Syndicated noted that this was not yet a candidate for funding from the Technology Development Fund.

78. Syndicate Strategic Planning: draft list of projects

The Syndicate considered a first outline draft list of projects circulated as ISSS 100 and agreed that environmental monitoring should be added to the list.

The need for timesheets had been identified as part of the accounting for the cost of research. It was not a substitute for the Time Allocation Survey and was not part of pay arrangements. Nevertheless, the Syndicate thought it prudent that the proposal should be discussed with HR to ensure there were no employee issues.

Additions to the list could be made at any time.

79. Technology Development Fund

The Syndicate noted that the RMC had approved the Syndicate's proposals for (1) project funding in 2008-09 (2) the Allocation (subject to Grace) to the TDF for 2009-10 and (3) delegation to the ISSS authority to approve expenditure. The paper submitted to the RMC was circulated as ISSS 101, with annex 2 – the timetable – amended to take account of the RMC's decisions.

80. Syndicate guidelines and rules

The Syndicate was reminded that a review of guidelines was an annual task for March/April. Syndics' attention had been drawn to the various guidelines approved by the IT Syndicate appearing at:

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/committee/iss/otherguidelines/> and on the Computing Service website.

No suggestions for amendment had been received and it was agreed to place all the former IT Syndicate guidelines under the ISSS.

Action: Secretary

81. Bulk e-mail

The Director of the Computing Service said that it was the Judge Institute's use of bulk e-mail that fell mainly within the revised guidelines circulated as ISSS 102 and they had been most co-operative. The Guidelines had to be, and were, acceptable to both the University and JANET; they were consistent with acceptable use policies.

The Guidelines should be brought to the attention of Bursars. They would apply to any College using the CUDN for mailings, but not otherwise.

The Syndicate endorsed the Guidelines subject to the addition of the words "except in accordance with these Guidelines." at the end of the second paragraph on page 2 of ISSS 102.

Action: Director, UCS

82. Service and project reports

The Syndicate received reports, including status reports, from:

- (1) MISD (for CUFS; CamSIS; CHRIS) as ISSS 103;
- (2) The Computing Service as ISSS 104;
- (3) Telephone replacement project as ISSS 109; and
- (4) CamTools as ISSS 110.

Google Apps and Live@edu were being evaluated for their delivery of standard packages, but a method of Raven authentication for login had not yet been established. There was some concern that their use would place content outside the University's domain, but it was assumed that other users had considered and satisfactorily resolved that issue. This might become a project in due course, and advice would be taken at that stage.

Analysis of network use showed streaming media to be 5% of total traffic including 40,000 video downloads each week – showing an extreme peak when the Corpus Christi clock was unveiled. Other charts documented the growth in Lapwing use and in web access to journals.

Syndics asked if the vacation was the best time to survey PWF use.

The Telephone Replacement Project would be completed in June, ahead of schedule.

Syndics were reassured that departments during the survey were given two – and only two - choices for telephones in elevators: land-line or uninterruptable VOIP.

83. CUFS2010

The Syndicate received an update on the CUFS2010 upgrade project as ISSS 108. The upgrade was significant enough to be a project in its own right: a later report would cover project governance. Costs had already been earmarked.

There was a general policy to keep software up to date and supported, which in the case of CUFS was monitored by the Financial Systems Management Committee. The Syndicate were reminded that CHRIS and CamSIS had both been upgraded recently, and that telephones and pFACT were both up to date. These were all the responsibility of the relevant management groups. The Syndicate asked for reassurance through the regular reports that upgrades were not falling behind.

They were assured that upgrades were a small proportion of operating costs and were normally routine. It was unlikely that an upgrade would be so expensive as to lead to a review of an entire system, but continued fitness for purpose and the costs were constantly evaluated. If any change were to be considered it would be dealt with initially in great confidence to minimise the risk of support being turned off prematurely. No such changes were in view.

84. Any other business

Syndics asked if there was a recommended content for disclaimers appearing at the end of many e-mails and if they had any value.

85. Information Strategy Working Group

The Syndicate received the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2009 circulated as ISSS 105, noting the further discussion on identity management at (M4.3).

86. Annual Reports 2007-08

The Syndicate received the MISD annual report for 2007-08 (ISSS 106) noting that the UCS annual report for 2007-08 (ISSS 73 - reported to the November 2008 meeting of the Syndicate) available at: <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cs/annual-report/>

87. Report of disciplinary proceedings

Received: a note (ISSS 107) of summary action taken in accordance with paragraph (iii) of the Syndicate's Disciplinary Procedure at: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/committee/iss/iss/rules/discproc.htm>

88. Meeting dates

Noted: the schedule of remaining meetings in 2009. Meetings for 2009-10 were being arranged.

BC	2nd April 2009	2.00pm	
BC	5 May 2009	2.15pm	
ISSS	21st May 2009	2.15pm	Syndicate Room
BC	4 June 2009	3.30pm	

<i>BC</i>	<i>29 June 2009</i>	<i>11.00am</i>	
ISSS	9 July 2009	2.15pm	Syndicate Room
<i>BC</i>	<i>17 July 2009*</i>	<i>11.00pm</i>	

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