

University of Cambridge

Information Strategy and Services Syndicate

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22 October 2009

Members present: Professor Littlewood (in the Chair), Dr Carpenter, Mr. Du Quesnay, Professor Howe, Mr Matheson, Professor Nolan, Mr Norman, Ms Tyson, Dr Walker, Dr Wallach, and Mr. Warbrick,

In attendance: the Director of Finance, Director of MISD, Dr Kearsley for the Director of the UCS, the University Librarian, Mr. Wilson.

Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Lewis and Sir David Wallace,

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

PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

120. ISSS Membership

A note of the terms of reference, constitution, membership and methods of appointment were circulated (ISSS 145).

Elections for members in classes (e) and (f) were enabled during MT 2009 by an Ordinance amendment proposed by Grace 1 of 7 October 2009, approved on Friday 16 October as shown in ISSS 145. The Chair was the returning officer but, with their consent, appointed the Directors of the Computing Service and of MISD as his deputies to hold the elections within their services.

It was noted that there were local arrangements for the nominations of candidates so that a greater range of staff could be involved than the Ordinance prescribed for the election itself. The Syndicate had no objection to such arrangements provided that no eligible candidate was thereby prevented from standing for election.

There were a number of other vacancies.

Dr Walker was co-opted for a further term of two years from 1 January 2010.

There were two General Board vacancies one of which (in accordance with the General Board's decisions) the Schools of Humanities and of Humanities and Social Sciences had been invited to fill; the other being open to a nominee from the Schools of Technology and Physical Sciences. Syndics were welcome to suggest names to the Chairman.

There being no other suitable vacancy the Syndicate therefore co-opted Professor S G Oliver (Dept of Biochemistry) who had been nominated by the School of Biological Sciences, with his consent.

121. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the ISSS held on 9 July 2009 were approved.

122. Matters arising and review of action points

The Chairman reported that he had written to Professor Daunton as requested, asking about outstanding HR System issues; Professor Daunton would reply after making enquiries.

Action points arising from the last meeting were circulated (ISSS 146). The Syndicate noted that the Business Committee would review the scope of the Project Officer post and agreed to review the annual cycle of business at another meeting.

123. Business Committee minutes

The Minutes of the Business Committee meetings held on 16 July and 5 October 2009 (ISSS 147 and 148) were received.

124. Strategic Planning

Syndics were invited to consider draft submissions to the 2009 Planning Round for the UCS and UL circulated as ISSS 150 and 151, noting that draft submissions for MISD and CARET had already been received at the July meeting (ISSS 130 and 133) and that the “within the envelope” estimates were unchanged.

The Syndicate also received a copy of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor’s letter of 22 October 2009 about medium term financial planning. The letter did not affect the estimates for 2010-11, but gave no assurances about Allocations for that year and warned that as savings were likely in future years every attempt should be made to economise as soon as possible.

MISD

The Director of MISD said that CamSIS (ISSS 152) and CHRIS (ISSS 153) had both embarked on cost cutting exercises some 18 months earlier and that this had been sufficient to fund the £100k additional cost of the Oracle licences. As well as CamSIS which remained a project, there were a number of development areas: a replacement for pFACT, in cooperation with Oxford; the future development of CUFS, after the deferment of the upgrade consequential to Oracle continuing support; of CHRIS, and of the suite as a whole. Oracle no longer offered major upgrades for CamSIS but an incremental approach, and patching as necessary. These costs were included in forecasts with a small development budget for the years in which they arose, although funding could be smoothed. A group had been established to look at the costs of CamSIS and how they should be met. The longer term upgrade costs of CUFS had not yet been included, but some development money had been committed in the current year.

UCS

The Syndicate received paper ISSS 150 setting out the UCS plans. Projected income and expenditure within the envelope were unchanged from the version seen earlier by the Syndicate, and some new tasks could be funded from reserves. £400k was needed annually for critical equipment but funding was uncertain. The plan assumed £110k from Allocations and the balance from CIF. There would need to be cuts, but severe cuts would affect performance. There was a continued need to invest.

The Syndicate agreed that the resilience of the network was not optional, but there were options about providing (for example) 24/7 cover – as had been suggested. There were workarounds for emergencies if the telephone network was down. Complete network access in case of a serious problem would require a cascade of call-outs. Resilience could be improved by duplication, but these solutions were expensive. There were a whole series of risks to manage.

The Syndicate agreed the network was a very high – if not the highest – ISSS priority, and options should be considered for inclusion in the overall Information Strategy which would guide its maintenance, development and funding needs. There should at the same time be an exploration of alternative charging mechanisms both for the network and other chargeable services provided by UCS, and consideration of the impact on the budgets of

client institutions.
University Library

A full plan could not be properly developed for either the UL or CARET while CARET's position was unresolved, but ISSS 150 set out the priorities for the major proposed Library developments, costings having been set out in paper ISSS 132 for the July meeting.

Current plans were to implement a Voyager Upgrade in 2014-15 at a current projected cost in that year of £1.5m; if the Syndicate was anxious to smooth funding requirements it would seem sensible to begin to make financial provision now. It was the UL's first priority, and a key dependency of the continuation of library services.

The Digital Asset Management System was a priority for 2010-11.

Infrastructure was needed to implement the Institutional Repository, and for 2010-11 it was a second priority.

CARET

Pending resolution of CARET's position with the UL, the default was last year's plan, less one post, with the majority of CARET expenditure funded by project income. The bid for funding would include the £100k for CamTOOLS.

125. Technology Development Fund

The Syndicate received a note (ISSS 154) from MISD making the case for support from the TDF for a number of projects but these had not yet been prioritised by the ISWG within the larger list. The REF project was not optional and should be the subject of a further proposal to the ISWG with clarity over the funding of the licence. There was some concern about whether unspent funds would be carried forward and if the Allocation would continue at the present value. This was ongoing business of the ISWG and a further report would be made.

126. Identity Management Report

The ISSS received paper ISSS 155 setting out the requirements for a University Identity Management System, but noted that the ISWG had reservations about the proposals. These had not yet been fully addressed and the paper was referred back for those issues to be addressed. The ISSS noted the need for this work to proceed as rapidly as possible.

127. Google Apps vs Microsoft Live@Edu

The Syndicate received a report (ISSS 156) on the UCS's pilot investigation of the Google Apps and the Microsoft Live@Edu cloud application suites. Live@Edu did not provide a suitable solution. Of the Google Apps only the calendar, which CARET was already running, seemed at this stage to offer a significant advantage.

On the understanding there was no additional cost, the Syndicate agreed that the UCS should proceed to a larger pilot with a view to implementing a limited subset of the Google Apps suite for the University.

128. Lapwing deployment and usage to year-end 2009

The Syndicate considered an analysis of Lapwing use circulated as ISSS 157. There was some concern that the pricing structure (based on a 1000 units, but with takeup much lower) was a disincentive even though it provided more functionality than an institution would get by simply buying low cost wireless access points. It was not the only solution and similar functionality was now becoming available via Eduroam/Shibboleth which would also allow visitors from other Universities to access the network. The lack of this kind of wireless access in some areas was a growing reputational risk.

The Syndicate endorsed a statement that “*Departments should ensure that all students of the University have a common and consistent access to online resources via a wireless network by the end of the academical year 2009-10 and Colleges are encouraged to make similar provision*”.

129. Telephone Replacement Project – Closure Report

The Syndicate received as ISSS 158 a project closure report, produced by the project management consultants, PTS Consulting, with a summary of the project benefits and issues.

The Syndicate noted with pleasure that the project had been delivered on time and under budget, and had been almost completely uneventful. It was a good example of a successful implementation which coincidentally delivered departmental savings totalling some £1m a year.

The Syndicate approved the report and the closure of the project.

130. Computing Service Charges 2010-11

The ISSS were asked to approve the Computing Service Network and PWF charges for 2010-11 set out in ISSS 159 but concern was expressed about passing on a 10% increase in network charges to institutions that had been asked to reduce expenditure.

Dr Kearsley explained that GBN charges were originally intended to provide funding for network capital costs but had been projected as falling short for some time and the JNMC had adopted a policy of phased increases. The 10% increase came close to funding fibre costs but would not make up the shortfall of £100k CIF funding for network equipment..

The Syndicate endorsed the PWF and GBN charges as proposed but asked for a detailed explanation of the recurrent and capital costs required to sustain a high quality network.

The Syndicate agreed that the continued need for dial-up by a small number of Magpie users could be satisfied by commercial providers and was not a reason to prolong the service.

131. Review of Information Strategy

The Syndicate noted that their annual programme of work (ISSS 146) provided for a review of the Information Strategy in “early October”. The current Information Strategy was at: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2008-09/weekly/6150/6.html> but had its origin in the need for an Information *Management* Strategy and needed further development into a full Information Strategy if it was better to inform the Syndicate’s planning. The ISWG was invited to consider how to take this forward.

132. Information Strategy Working Group

Received: the minutes of the ISWG meeting held on 17 September 2009 (ISSS 160).

133. Syndicate Annual Report

A draft Annual Report had been circulated (without annexes as ISSS 161). Subject to clarification in the report of the position of the sub-committees, Syndics approved the report for submission to the Council.

134. Review of effectiveness

No comments had been made.

135. Service Reports

The Syndicate received Service reports for CamTools (ISSS 162) and the Computing Service (ISSS 163). The Syndicate confirmed its decision that routine service reports for which they were the sole recipient were not required and that reporting should be by exception, however the Syndicate would be pleased to continue to receive routine reports that were written for other purposes.

136. Annual Reports

The Syndicate received the following annual reports (ISSS 164-168):

IT Purchasing Group activities for the year 2008-09
MISD
Financial Systems Management Committee
CamSIS
CHRIS

137. Meeting dates

Noted: the schedule of remaining meetings in 2009-10.

	BC	9 November 2009	2.15pm	Syndicate Room
ISSS		19 November 2009	2.15 pm	Newton Institute
	BC	30 November 2009	2.00pm	Syndicate Room
	BC	11 January 2010	11.00am	Treasurer's Office
ISSS		21 January 2010	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room
	BC	1 February 2010	2.00pm	Syndicate Room
	BC	8 March 2010	11.00am	Treasurer's Office
ISSS		18 March 2010	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room
	BC	29 March 2010	2.00pm	Syndicate Room
	BC	10 May 2010	2.15pm	Finance Meeting Room, Old Schools
ISSS		20 May 2010	10.15am	Syndicate Room
	BC	27 May 2010	2.00pm	Treasurer's Office
	BC	28 June 2010	11.00am	Treasurer's Office
ISSS		8 July 2010	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room
	BC	19 July 2010	2.00pm	Treasurer's Office

This list may change and the latest version should be referred to. Changes since the dates were first agreed are **bold**.

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November 2009