

University of Cambridge
Information Strategy and Services Syndicate

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 October 2011 in the Syndicate Room, the Old Schools.

Members present: Professor Oliver (in the Chair), Mr. Du Quesnay, Dr Alexander, Dr Dörrzapf, Professor Howe, Mr Matheson, Mr Norman, Mr Richardson, Dr Walker, Sir David Wallace, Mr. Warbrick, and, by standing invitation, Professor Young (Pro-Vice Chancellor for Planning and Resources).

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

Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Blackwell, Dr Carpenter and Dr Lewis

The Chairman welcomed Dr Matthias Dörrzapf, Senior Tutor of St John's College, to his first meeting

282. Membership

The constitution, membership at 1 October 2011 and terms of reference of the Syndicate were circulated as ISSS 281.

Syndics noted that the term of office of a number of members ended on 31 December. Retiring members had been consulted about their availability for reappointment and the Council, General Board, Colleges Committee, MISD and UCS had all been asked to make appointments from 1 January 2012.

The Syndicate noted with concern that bunching was inevitable if casual vacancies could only be filled for the remainder of the retiring member's period of office. A steadier rate of turnover would be achieved if appointments to casual vacancies were for the full three years. The Syndicate asked appointing bodies to take note of its view through these minutes.

With effect from 1 January 2012 the Syndicate co-opted:

Dr Steve Hand (Chair, ISWG)
Dr Robin Walker (Chair, JNMC)

Both of whom had indicated they were willing to serve for a further term.

283. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the ISSS held on 5 July 2011 were approved subject to a minor amendment to the attendance record.

Members asked if unconfirmed minutes could be circulated earlier than had recently been customary.

284. Matters arising and review of action points

Action points, the annual cycle of business and an outline programme of work were circulated as ISSS 282.

The Librarian said that she had established an internal review group for DSpace in order to implement the recommendations and a report would be sent to ISWG in due course.

The ISWG should also be asked to consider the related but separate issues of records management and document management; of content management and access to material, and paperless working.

The identity management system had been constructed. Interfaces were being developed and a pilot would be ready to be run shortly. A progress report would be made to the next Syndicate.

The Business Committee would be meeting with the IT Review Group on 1 November.

285. Review of Information Strategy

The newly appointed Chairman of the ISWG was in the process of merging the four documents into a single draft strategy with the aim of the one document being available for the IT Review Group.

286. X5 review

Mr Dampier reported that Dr Padman had been appointed Project Sponsor. The aim was delivery in mid-February 2012 with final user acceptance in May. Both Oxford and Cambridge would sign off the Unit 4 development at the same time, probably in July, but the Cambridge interfaces may require further work after that date. The go-live date had yet to be decided by the Board but the Board was considering the feasibility of early implementation of a demonstrator. Generally, the Board had been disappointed that few PIs had so far engaged with the development.

The Syndicate noted with approval the two screen approach (quick set up, followed by the detail) and that the system would be configurable, enabling use by a wide range of expert and non-expert users, including College users with a CRSSid.

287. Annual Report

A draft Annual Report for 2011 was circulated as ISSS 283. Syndics agreed that reference to the JNMC and a glossary should be added, and that it should reflect the Syndicate's view of the continued desirability of a Project Office. Further comments should be sent to the Secretary. It would be helpful to have a final draft for the IT Review. (See also M 292 below.)

Sub-Committees had been asked for their annual reports but none had so far been received.

288. E-mail accounts for former staff

The Syndicate was invited to consider a proposal (authored by Steve Kimberley, Computer Officer, Faculty of Classics following e-mail discussions on the ucamsitsupport mail list) to institute an auto-responder for Hermes e-mail addresses of former academic staff who had recently left the University. Correspondence had also been received from Alan Rogers, IT Director Pembroke College on behalf of the College IT Management Group, and from Professor Moore, acting Head of the Department of Experimental Psychology

The UCS had provided an analysis of the issues and a proposal. The papers were circulated as ISSS 284-287 [post meeting note – further supporting letters were received subsequently].

Syndics saw the advantage to former staff of an auto-forward but after discussion agreed that the risks were too great. Auto-forward might lead to sensitive internal documents being included, and it would enable an individual to retain a Cambridge identity. Syndics favoured an auto-reply giving a forwarding address, including a mail address if wanted, with the

member of staff being able to log in to update the details. The facility should be open to all leavers including retirees and students – anyone with an e-mail – and be available to an individual for up to three years. It would not be offered as a right and could be withdrawn at any time. HR, for example, might require that the service not be provided to a particular individual.

The problem would be identifying leavers, and so the system should require an individual to opt in. Default provision would be no provision.

The Syndicate agreed that a mechanism should be introduced as soon as possible to enable leavers to make the necessary arrangements, even if it would take longer to arrange secure login to update details during the subsequent three years.

The system would require maintenance and UCS would need resource.

289. Computing Service Charges for 2012-13

The ISSS approved the Computing Service Network and Managed Cluster charges for 2012-13 as set out in ISSS 288. The increase in charges had been contained by a lower than expected rate of breakdown, but unless the system was to be allowed to degrade the charges needed to meet the full predicted costs and might therefore not change in proportion to institutions' Allocations over a transitional period. After this, the Syndicate expected charges to rise in proportion to increases in Allocations.

290. Radio Microphone Frequency Changes

The Syndicate endorsed the IT Purchasing Group's approach to Departments and Faculties about the legal consequences of the upcoming Radio Microphone frequency changes, and to assess the possible need for a purchasing agreement in this area (see ISSS 289). Non-compliant microphones must be withdrawn.

Colleges should also be informed of the consequences and invited to participate in any bulk purchase of replacement equipment.

291. High Performance Computing Service

The Syndicate nominated Sir David Wallace as their representative to serve on the Oversight Committee of the HPCS. The invitation from the School of Physical Sciences had been circulated as ISSS 290.

292. Disciplinary Procedure: appointment of Panel Chair

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

293. IT Purchasing Group Annual Report

The Report on IT Purchasing Group activities for the year 2010-11 was received as ISSS 291.

The Syndicate noted the Group maintained a valuable role in, for example, recommending standard boxes and in policing agreements that had gone wrong.

The Syndicate has already identified the job to be done in identifying software requests that could be applied to the University as a whole, and now also uncovering multiple site-wide licences, but it was not clear to the Syndicate that these should fall to the IT Purchasing Group. It may be more sensible to convene a small academic-led group using the network of Computer Officers as the contact list.

294. Minutes of other bodies

- (1) Joint Network Management Committee minutes of 23 June 2011 were at:
<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/committee/jnmc/minutes/>
- (2) Minutes of the Finance Systems Committee (18 February 2011) were received as ISSS 292
- (3) The first meeting of the Student Information Systems Committee would be held on 10 November 2011.

295. Service reports

Received: reports on UCS (ISSS 293) and MISD (ISSS 294).

The reports demonstrated to the Syndicate the very large volume of work undertaken by both organisations with very low rates of down-time; they asked that suitable reference be included in the Annual Report. "Open calls" simply reflected the fact that the rate they were made exceeded the capacity to deal with them at the time of arrival and some needed to be carried over.

The Chairman congratulated CARET on the very successful introduction of the electronic lecture list.

296. Capital Projects

The Planning and Resources Committee at their meeting on 12 October had approved two projects under the Capital Projects Process:

Computing Service Relocation (Registration)
University Data Centre Replacement (Concept)

297. Meeting dates

Noted: the remaining meetings for 2011-12.

BC	Tuesday 8 November 2011	12.00 pm	Treasurer's Room
ISSS	Thursday 17 November 2011	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room
BC	Tuesday 20 December 2011	12.00 pm	Treasurer's Room
ISSS	Thursday 19 January 2012	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room
BC	Tuesday 28 February 2012	12.00 pm	Treasurer's Room
ISSS	Thursday 15 March 2012	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room
BC	Tuesday 24 April 2012	12.00 pm	Treasurer's Room
ISSS	Thursday 17 May 2012	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room
BC	Tuesday 19 June 2012	12.00 pm	Treasurer's Room
ISSS	Thursday 5 July 2012	2.15 pm	Syndicate Room

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PRAO, November 2011