

**University of Cambridge
University of Cambridge**

Information Strategy and Services Syndicate

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17 November 2011 in the Syndicate Room, the Old Schools.

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

In attendance: Director, UCS; Director, MISD; University Librarian, Director of Finance; Mr. Wilson.

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Carpenter and Dr Hand.

The Chairman welcomed Dr Titmus (Computer Laboratory) to his first meeting.

There were no declarations of interest.

298. Membership

The General Board had appointed Dr Graham Titmus (Computer Laboratory) for the remainder of Dr Blackwell's term of office, to 31 December 2011.

Stephen Smith, MISD Head of Business Solutions, had been elected to succeed Dr Richardson from 1 January 2011. The Syndicate recorded their thanks to the retiring members for their work.

Other appointments were in hand.

299. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the ISSS held on 20 October 2011 were circulated and approved subject to amendment at:

M285: to reflect the Syndicate's proposal that an auto-respond be introduced for leavers as soon as possible, even if the log-in arrangements enabling them to change their new address would follow (see also M300 below).

M286: to provide that after a transitional period, UCS charges would be expected to rise only in line with the guidance on Chest allocations.

M292: to record the Syndicate's congratulations on the successful introduction of the electronic lecture list.

300. Matters arising and review of action points

Action points, the annual cycle of business and the outline programme of work were circulated as ISSS 295.

M284: the University Librarian reported that a D Space meeting was being arranged.

M285: a timetable and draft budget for the leavers' auto-respond would be provided to the next Syndicate. Members hoped it could be introduced quickly (see also M 299 above).

301. Identity Management

The Syndicate received a report on Identity Management as ISSS 304.

The Director of UCS reported that a pilot giving web-based access was live, but read only. Another major read-only use would be e-mail clients. From January 2012 a production database would be introduced, with e-mail clients migrating seamlessly over the summer.

The Syndicate was concerned that the project was behind time and that the system did not yet enable identities to be added and managed, and although the ISWG had seen some explanation of the system it had not been, in their view, a full specification for discussion and approval and against which the delivered product could be assessed. Its role in authentication and authorisation was not clear.

The Syndicate agreed they should concentrate on deliverables and asked that the ISWG consider the matter and report to the Syndicate on what would be delivered and when. There should be full consultation on what was wanted – further changes would be more difficult once the directory became active.

302. Business Committee minutes

The minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on 3 October 2011 were circulated (ISSS 296). The meeting on 8 November had been cancelled.

303. Review of Information Strategy

The draft Information Strategy (ISSS 297) drawing on the responses of the working groups had been forwarded to the IT Review Group. The Syndicate would discuss the draft at a later meeting.

304. IT Review

The Business Committee had met on 1 November with the IT Review Group, who had been provided in advance with the draft Information Strategy (ISSS 297, see M303 above) and the 2011 Annual Report (ISSS 301, see M310 below). The review had been established as a response to recommendations by the PRC's VFM Working Groups.

Mr Matheson and Mr du Quesnay reported that discussions had concentrated on:

- The effectiveness of, and necessity for, the ISSS;
- The limitations of its terms of reference and relationships with other committees;
- The balance of emphasis on administrative over academic computing;
- Project development, ownership and governance.

Their premise had been to ask themselves if the review would be necessary had the ISSS been completely effective. They had said that the Syndicate's scope was restricted, with influence only in some areas. There was no requirement that it be consulted, e.g. by the PRC, nor did it have a remit to consider or deliver VFM across the broad spectrum of the University's IT and IS, including central and institutional support. But with some large expenditure on systems planned for the near future, this had been a good opportunity to raise again the proposal for a Project Office.

Syndics were reminded that they could make personal submissions to the Review Group.

305. X5 project

The Syndicate received as ISSS 305 a report on the X5 project.

Mr Dampier reported that the project was proceeding to plan and budget. PWC were providing project assurance. The pilot would be available in the New Year and open sessions with departments were being organised. It was still proving difficult to engage with sufficient PIs.

306. Software co-ordination

Following the MATLAB site licensing issue considered by the Syndicate at their meeting on 5 July 2011 (M277), the UCS had been asked to propose a more general co-ordinated software site licensing scheme. The proposal was circulated as ISSS 298; the Syndicate were asked to endorse it for the purpose of gathering feedback and support from the Schools before presentation to the RMC. The annual cost was estimated at £250k, including a 10% addition to each licence so that UCS costs under the current arrangements could continue to be covered.

The Syndicate noted that although the new cost on central budgets should deliver efficiencies, should extend the benefits of existing software more widely and should make it easier to invest in new software, there would be savings largely at departmental level which could not be recovered to offset the cost. Some savings would be realised if software costs were charged to research grants whenever possible but this might be via overheads rather than direct costs.

Concerns were expressed about the cost of operation of the scheme, and it was agreed that the ISWG should consider this further before including the scheme in the funding bid to the PRC (see M308 below).

307. Planning Returns

The Director introduced the UCS draft planning submission circulated as ISSS 299 by saying that it was a continuation of the 2010 plan with no significant change of direction.

Capital plans included £600k for the backup connection to JANET which would terminate in either the Data Centre or, if unbuilt, the Computer Laboratory.

The Data Centre would mainly house servers, not data, and replace the UCS machine room – although it could also host other's equipment. Energy efficiency should deliver £7m savings over 10 years, and more if waste heat could be used. The estimated cost did not include equipment on the grounds that most could be moved, although there would probably be some upfront costs for an initial buffer to transfer services and for upgrades.

308. ISSS Annual bid to the PRC

The Syndicate considered and approved the recommendations of the ISWG for the annual funding bid to the PRC (ISSS 300) subject to slight amendment to make the proper distinction between the GBN and CUDN and the ISWG considering the inclusion of the following:

The cost of the software co-ordination scheme, less recharge.

Mention of the Project Office(r), although a detailed proposal should wait for the conclusions of the IT Review.

309. Annual Report

The Annual Report 2011 (ISSS 301) was approved.

310. Minutes of other bodies

Received: minutes of the meetings of the ISWG held on 11 and 31 October 2011 (ISSS 302).

311. Service reports

Received: the service reports for MISD (ISSS 303).

312. Meeting dates

Noted: the remaining meetings for 2011-12.

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

This list may change and the latest version should be referred to.

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PRAO,
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