

University of Cambridge

Information Strategy and Services Syndicate

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 January 2012 in the Syndicate Room, the Old Schools.

Present: Professor Oliver (in the Chair), Mr. Du Quesnay, Dr Alexander, Dr Carpenter, Dr Hand, Mr King, Mr Matheson, Mr Norman, Dr Smith, Dr Titmus, Dr Walker, 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 Dörrzapf, Professor Howe, Mrs Jarvis and Sir David Wallace.

The Chairman welcomed Mr King and Dr Smith to their first meeting.

There were no declarations of interest.

313. Membership

The Syndicate noted that since the last meeting the General Board had reappointed Dr Titmus, Dr Carpenter and Dr Alexander, the Council had reappointed Mr Matheson and Mr Norman, and the Colleges Committee had reappointed Sir David Wallace and Mr du Quesnay, all to serve from 1 January 2012 until 31 December 2015.

Mr Julian King and Dr Stephen Smith had been elected by UCS and MISD staff respectively to serve for two years from 1 January 2012.

Dr Hand and Dr Walker had been co-opted for two years from 1 January 2012.

There were two student vacancies.

314. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the ISSS held on 17 November 2011 were approved.

315. Matters arising and review of action points

Action points had been circulated with the annual cycle of business and the outline programme of work as ISSS 306.

Regulations could not be comprehensively reviewed until the legislative position has settled in some key areas.

It was agreed to include a review of sub-committees on the annual cycle of business.

Members again noted that although a report on "information compliance" was expected annually, none had ever been made and it was unclear what it should cover, although it was presumed to be legislative compliance. Officers were asked to investigate.

Members noted that if the current pattern of meetings was repeated for a further year the regular conflict with another commitment for some would also be repeated, and asked for this to be considered when preparing the next schedule.

316. Information Strategy

The revised draft Information Strategy was circulated as ISSS 308. The Syndicate agreed that the Strategy must emphasise the fundamental requirement of usability and should be clear in distinguishing aims and principles.

Further amendments should be sent to Dr Hand or the Secretary. Meanwhile the current draft had been sent to the Review for their information and consideration. A final version would be considered by the ISWG before returning to the Syndicate, and then being proposed for publication as a Notice.

Action: members to forward any further comments.

317. Teaching and Learning Services Steering Group (TLSSG)

The minutes of the TLSSG meeting held on 8 December 2011 were circulated as ISSS 309; the draft Information Strategy (ISSS 308; see M 316) had been amended to reflect the TLSSG's suggestion that "*low priority*" should be removed in relation to *mobile technologies*. In agreeing the amendment, the Syndicate recognised new advanced use by students but agreed that it was important that students were not disadvantaged by not owning a particular device or indeed any suitable device. The lack of compatibility between different manufacturers' devices was a further difficulty.

Current PWF technology was near the end of its life; questions of upgrading or providing an alternative perhaps within a new VLE were imminent. The UCS had invested considerable time in investigating the use of PWFs and the next stages in their evolution. They considered it likely that the standard platform for many years would be Windows. There would be more use of wireless and probably of applications that could be run without installation, but there were licencing issues to be overcome.

There might be slow migration to tablets, with simultaneous running for a proving period but the technology was not mature and it was too early to move in that direction. For example, although it was likely in future it was not yet reliable enough to combine electronic teaching material with real time recording of handwritten notes.

The Syndicate agreed that it was for the TLSSG to develop the strategy and for the ISWG to review the technology that would support that strategy. Members were therefore puzzled at the TLSSG's suggestion that the ISSS "...consult on issues that relate to teaching and learning". They noted the need for a shared agenda with the TLSSG on key developments, such as tablets, streaming media, recorded lectures and electronic notes. Those with membership of both would be able to facilitate this process.

318. X5 review

A report on the X5 project was circulated as ISSS 310, including the PWC Assurance Review which had identified a few minor issues but no major failings. The fourth quarter was on plan; Oxford had begun testing.

Theme 5 of the PWC report identified a few areas for improvement. Oxford and Cambridge accepted the comments and the Project Board now had them in hand.

Involvement by PIs in X5 remained disappointingly low. Roadshows might help to raise the project's profile but the Syndicate also advocated provision of a play system with the opportunity of feeding back comments.

319. **CamSIS Project**

The CamSIS Project Board before its discharge had reviewed a draft of the CamSIS Post Project Report. The new Student Information System Committee which succeeded the Board had agreed at their first meeting to forward to the Syndicate the final report circulated as ISSS 311.

Former members of the Project Board said that important experience was gained during the project. The lessons had to be applied to later projects so that similar problems could be avoided. The Syndicate were reminded that was the case with X5: there was a single supplier, better engagement, and a focus on usability. If there was a problem it was that the Board was not constituted early enough.

Difficulties with CamSIS were expected in what was planned to be a very widely used system whose basic design was based on different American practice.

A significant issue, again, had been the lack of dedicated full time project support of the kind advocated by the Syndicate.

However, CamSIS was now in widespread satisfactory use and fulfilling its purpose.

The ISSS accepted the report as the final stage of closure of CamSIS as a project.

320. **“Rook” Proposal**

The Syndicate was asked for its agreement to precede with the authentication system (Rook) necessary to allow for end-user administration of email forwarding notification by ex-staff and students of the University as set out in ISSS 312.

The original intention had been to reply to e-mails with a standard wording explaining the person had left and providing a new address, with Rook providing the opportunity to edit that address. Members emphasised this must be a personal responsibility – the duty to keep addresses up to date should not fall on departments although some additional support estimated at 0.5FTE might be required in UCS.

It was suggested that the message could also be copied to the departed member, or might perhaps instead involve the forwarding of the initial e-mail for a limited period. That presented different issues in different circumstances. The Syndicate reiterated its concern that the new system should not allow, and should be proof against, the . unintended release outside the University of confidential material.

Rook authentication might be useful for other purposes, for alumni record management or examining a personal record on CamSIS and the ISWG should review the opportunities.

The Syndicate approved the proposal, subject to further consideration of its comments; some members pointed out the unattractive connotations of this particular name.

321. **Workstreams**

(1) *Identity management*

ISWG would be giving further consideration to identity management at their next meeting.

(2) *Content management*

A report was circulated as ISSS 317 describing the commitment by MISD to Drupal as the content management system for the University website, whereas the UCS report (ISSS 316) identified Wordpress as their preference in addition to Falcon (Plone). The Syndicate had previously reluctantly agreed that two systems were needed

because they served different needs, but that distinction seemed no longer apparent. The choice users would now have to make would be based on preference. In members' view the guidance required to help choose between, to support and provide training in two overlapping systems would only add to costs and it was difficult to see this as part of a coherent strategy.

(3) *Electronic Document Management (EDM)*

The Syndicate received for information an update on EDM circulated as ISSS 313. EDM was being piloted in the centre on a number of projects and would be extended as experience was gained; a number of legal and licencing issues had been identified. There had been expressions of interest from a range of University institutions and Colleges. EDM needed to be coupled with a retention policy, on which MISD was working. This was essential. Search functions also needed to be developed.

(4) *Availability of Eduroam*

The JNMC was keeping the availability of wireless under review. Lapwing was still essential for visitors although visitor access to Eduroam was also possible if the appropriate temporary credentials were generated. Anybody other than a student could request visitor access.

UCS was collaborating with Cambridge City's plans for public wireless access.

(5) *Software co-ordination*

ISWG had this under review.

322. ISSS Annual bid to the PRC

The ISSS at their last meeting referred some issues on the bid to the ISWG for further consideration; the final document for forwarding to the PRC was circulated as ISSS 314.

The Syndicate supported the inclusion of the £250k cost for software co-ordination as enabling a cost effective approach which would deliver distributed savings.

The Syndicate approved the report and recommendations for forwarding to the PRC.

Action: Secretary

323. Any other business

The Syndicate at a future meeting should consider: what is meant by "the cloud"; and the management and oversight of the new data centre.

324. Student Information Systems Committee

The Chairman had appointed Dr Sandra Fulton (College Teaching Officer and Admissions Tutor at Girton College, and Assistant Director of Teaching at the Department of Biochemistry) as the Syndicate's representative on the Student Information System Committee.

325. Service reports

Service reports were received as follows:

- (1) MISD: ISSS 315
- (2) UCS: ISSS 316

Members noted that no report was received from CARET and suggested that the services consider together what they regarded as important for these regular reports, with a view to reporting termly in a standard form.

UCS were congratulated on the success of the Training Room Booking System. The extension of the network emphasised the importance of access to the CUDN.

326. Meeting dates

Noted: the remaining meetings for 2011-12.

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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Information Strategy and Services Syndicate contact:

Nick Wilson:

njw40@admin.cam.ac.uk

01223 332250

Planning and Resource Allocation Office, The Old Schools, Trinity Lane, Cambridge, CB2 1TS

PRAO,
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