

**GOLDSMITHS  
University of London**

**ITS USER GROUP  
Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2009**

**Present:** Dr Basem El-Haddadeh (in the chair), Ms Angela Bibby, Ms Patsy Carter, Ms Ann Marie Coady (*vice Vicky Annand*), Ms Bernadette Buckley, Ms Sarah Gibbon, Mr Ian Hannel, Ms Lesley Hewings, Ms Rachael Johnson, Ms Tanith McCrindle, Ms Jane Offerman, Mr John Phelps, Ms Lisa Rabanal, Dr Jacqueline Rattray, Mr Mike Riley, Mr Pete Rogers, Ms Vivienne Rose, Mr Richard Welch, Ms Katie Yates, Ms Kate Fisher (Secretary).

**Apologies:** Ms Linda Agili, Dr Jacqueline Cooke, Mrs Marl 'ene Edwin, Mr Jim Rowland, Ms Vanessa Smith, Ms Sue Tarhan, Ms Amie Ouzman.

**OPEN BUSINESS**

**1 MINUTES**

**Resolved:**

to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2009.

**2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**(i) College IT Strategy Implementation Plan**

Noted:

that a draft of the implementation plan had been circulated to the Information Management and Systems Committee, and that a copy of this would reach User Group members over the next few days. Feedback from the group was requested; this was to be sent to Kate Fisher (in time for report to Information Management and Systems Committee). Once the plan had been updated using any feedback it would be passed to SMT and then Academic Board for approval.

**(ii) Bulk Order System**

Noted:

- (a) that, based on the feedback from the committee, the bulk ordering system had been redesigned since the last meeting;
- (b) that the purchasing of Macs was still to take place under a rolling system;

- (c) that apologies were made for the delays that were experienced by some users during the June/ July 2009 bulk order. These had been due to significant issues at Dell's end relating to the new asset tagging system;
- (d) that, providing there were no problems, Dell would deliver goods within 10 working days of receiving a order. ITS would aim to deliver PC's to the user within a week of their arrival at the College;
- (e) that the idea of keeping a stock of PC's in the College had raised concerns in the Finance Department as both the warranty period and value of the machines would decrease over the time the machines were being kept in storage;
- (f) that although in special circumstance one off orders could be placed the bulk order system must be used as far as possible.

**Resolved:**

- (a) to revisit the idea of keeping a optimum number of machines in stock;
- (b) that ITS would always try to supply customers with an estimated delivery date.

**(iii) Disposal Procedure**

Noted:

- (a) that a possible problem with the system designed to automatically generate emails to request collections by the porters was to be investigated.
- (b) that colleagues had been advised to use the "back" button on their web browser when using the disposals form to enable them to copy information from one form to the next.
- (c) that, while it was appreciated that a lot of information was requested on the disposals form, it was all necessary for the College's Asset Management Inventory (AMI) which was audited;
- (d) that all new equipment was now automatically entered on the AMI and that items on this could be disposed of with the click of a button. Therefore it was anticipated that the disposal forms would eventually become obsolete. Items registered on the AMI display green asset number stickers.

**Resolved:**

- (a) that ITS would send out an email reissuing instructions on how to dispose of items both on and off the AMI;
- (b) that the Web Team would update the disposals form so that users would be redirected to the AMI system if the goods that they were trying to dispose of were registered on it.

#### **(iv) Google Apps Education/Microsoft Live@edu email for students and staff**

Noted:

- (a) that research on other institutions' experiences with Google Apps Education and Microsoft Live@Edu was still being carried out. A business case for or against moving over to one of these systems would be made. Once completed the business case would be open for discussion and review by the User Group;
- (b) that, if it were to be decided to move over to one of these new systems, implementation would start to take place in 2010.

### **3 ITS SUMMARY SERVICES REPORT 2008-09**

Noted:

- (i) that User Services had completed the second phase of the Rutherford Building refurbishment project. Two of the main aims of this projects had been; to create more space in which students could use their own laptops and also for group work and activities without cutting down on other space and secondly, to zone the building in to different areas dependant on the level of noise and the types of food and drink allowed. Both these aims were felt to have been met. If anyone wanted a tour of the new building they were to contact Rachael Johnson;
- (ii) that since its creation the Digital Media Suite had proved extremely popular. It was advised to book as early as possible if the services of the DMS were to be required for classes;
- (iii) that audio visual upgrades had been made in over 20 teaching rooms across the campus. The Great Hall was a particular progression in this area and had been updated with new sound equipment;
- (iv) that concern was expressed that upgrading twenty teaching rooms across the whole College was not enough given the frequency of problems being experienced by users with the current A/V equipment. It was stressed that users felt that this issue should be prioritised;
- (v) that problems with the current equipment included:
  - Technicians not having admin rights on the equipment in all teaching rooms
  - Teaching staff (particularly non permanent members) not knowing who to ask for help
  - Visiting Staff had often needed to use Vista which was difficult and time consuming to set up
  - Complications were caused when the machines automatically diverted to using Firefox; this caused issues with showing videos
- (vi) that the problems with the equipment in teaching rooms had been noted and had already been recognised as a priority. A dedicated budget had been applied for in this area for 2009-10 and £25,000 had been granted. ITS would also review their resources to see if they had anything further that they could spend in this area.

- (vii) that additional funding for the MEC had been secured. The new funding would be used to recruit a new member of staff to concentrate purely on the support of equipment in teaching rooms; this would lead to a significant improvement in the level of support given to teaching staff.
- (viii) that it had been recognised that a desktop layout universal across teaching room screens would be beneficial and that there was a need for an increase in the variety of software on each machine.
- (ix) that members of staff on the Help Desk had been crossed trained so that ITS staff were better able to deal with basic library related queries and vice versa. Help Desk staff had taken on a roaming function so that they were available to help users away from the desk itself. Instant messaging functionality was also under investigation for use in the open access machines so users could contact staff remotely.
- (x) that the Web Team had redesigned the website and online facilities last year. The roll out of CMS had very nearly been completed. Training to department on the CMS was ongoing and classroom training was to be introduced in November 2009.
- (xi) that the Web team and User Services were developing a live streaming service for the website and had installed a new server dedicated to this function.
- (xii) that the tender, implementation and support of the new Student Record System had taken up many of the resources of the Application Services Team and that this would continue to be the case.
- (xiii) that finalists had been able to access their results on-line this year for the first time. Online Clearing and Enrolment services had been improved and this had helped to cut down on queues at the beginning of the new year.
- (xiv) that the new Scientia software had been installed and would be accessible from January/ February 2010. This software would enable Departmental Administrators to upload their requirements directly to the room booking system via the web. It would also cater for one off bookings and help to flag up room clashes and issues very early on.
- (xv) that the Eprints system was being developed which would allow research to be stored and shared on line.
- (xvi) that the Systems and Networking Team had been upgrading the campus network, in order to future proof the network. They had also finished the networking of Surrey House, to be ready shortly when building works are completed.
- (xvii) that the new Storage Area Network (SAN) phase I had been completed and would be launched once the new backup system had been set up. Phase II of the SAN would provide user with more file storage and all drives were to be moved to the new SAN.
- (xviii) that wireless provision across the campus had been increased. Eduroam had been introduced. This would mean that users would only be required to set up their laptops to make a connection once to then be able to pick up a wireless connection

in any educational institutions throughout the UK, Europe and the USA that were also part of the scheme.

- (xix) that Altiris was going to be introduced across the College. This software would enable ITS to provide desktop support remotely.
- (xx) that the access management system Shibboleth had now replaced Athens.
- (xxi) that the Reprographics department had undergone a service review and a staff re-organisation was taking place. The department was to be re-launched under the new name Design and Print Services.
- (xxii) that it had been decided that the College would not be moving over to use Vista. A switch to Office 7 was more likely. but before this could take place filter would need to be installed on open access and staff machines which did not already have it, to enable documents to be converted and read.

**Resolved:**

- (i) that if any teaching rooms were especially desperate for an A/V upgrade users were to inform David Riddle.
- (ii) that an estimated date by which the universal desk top layout on teaching room machines would be achieved by was to be given.

**4 REPROGRAPHICS REORGANISATION**

See 5 (xxi) above.

**5 ITS PLANNING CONSULTATIONS UPDATE**

Received:

A slide show showing the main themes identified from the consultations.

Noted:

- (i) that a number of common themes had been identified from the consultations and steps were being put in place to address any negative issues raised. Many of these steps were covered under the 2008-09 summary report.
- (ii) that new online systems were being looked at for the Help Desk which would streamline the service, help to manage where requests were sent and allow jobs to be monitored and marked as urgent etc
- (iii) that when up and running the SAN would address many of the storage issues raised at DLO meetings. Store issues were to be further remedied by renaming storage drives (currently just named with a letter) to something more descriptive and logical.

- (iv) that the longevity of email accounts was being considered when researching the case for or against Google Apps Education and Microsoft Live@Edu.
- (v) that Blackberries could now connect to anything stored on the network.
- (vi) that the following the Reprographics reorganisation the system of ordering printers/ photocopiers would become faster.

**Resolved:**

that the minutes and progress reports from the last set of the ITS Planning Consultations would be sent out over the next few days and that the next set of meetings were to be arranged for over the next few weeks.

**6 ITS PLANS FOR 2009-10**

Noted:

- (i) that 70% of ITS's time was taken up with 'business as usual' activities. A reduction in this time was being aimed for so the department could become even more proactive.
- (ii) the campus network was to be re-zoned in 2009-10 so that if one part of the network failed this could be isolated while the rest of the network was kept running.
- (iii) that Voice Over IP was to be installed in the New Academic Building. This would mean that telephone calls would be made via the network resulting in greater sharing and communication. Eventually this would be rolled out across the College in place of the old telephone system.
- (iv) that a bid for the money to complete phase three of the Rutherford Building refurbishment was to be submitted.
- (v) that the PCounter system was to be rolled out to departments which would enable students to purchase a variety of products using web payments. The Art department was to be the pilot department for this new system.
- (vi) that there was to be a new machine room in the New Academic building. This would mean that all servers that were currently in the College could be racked. A break in some services was to be expected in July 2010 while servers were relocated to this new room.
- (vii) that all Multi Functional Devices were to be moved to a centralised College wide contract making it possible to print anywhere on the campus. This would result in a reduction of unnecessary 'minimum charge' costs and an improvement in services.

**7 STUDENT RECORDS SYSTEM UPDATE**

Noted:

- (i) that the project team and those who had been seconded from other departments were to attend a five day training programme at the College. An advert had gone out to departments to seek an expression of interest in secondments.
- (ii) that the mapping process for the project was currently taking place and each section was being mapped in order of the priority of installation.
- (iii) that, as this new system was crucial for the future of the College, every care would be taken to ensure that all key area needs were met.

## **8 REPORT ON LAST MONTH'S EMAIL PROBLEMS**

Noted:

- (i) that ITS had learnt from the recent the mail failure and begun to put checks in place to ensure could not happen again. The system took an unusually long time to restore due to the restore system failing twice and as a result more resilient hardware was now being used.
- (ii) that any email sent between Saturday 5 September 2009 and Monday 6 September 2009 to the 220 users whose email were stored on the partition that malfunctioned would have bounced. The sender would have received an email informing them that the email failed. This hopefully meant that any important emails would have been resent.
- (iii) that one of the issues in rebuilding the system was that some mailboxes were huge. In order to combat this problem, and to prepare for the possible move to an external email provider who would not allow such for mailboxes to be so large, ITS were exploring ways in which users could be trained to manage their email more effectively and, as attachments were the bulk of the issue, to encourage them to move these to file storage elsewhere. Archive training was also to be offered.
- (iv) that it was suggested that a messaging service be installed on the Help Desk phone system so, that in the event of another exceptionally busy period, users could hear a recorded message providing updates rather than just receiving no answer or an engaged tone.
- (v) that some users were using their emails to store documents as attachments thinking that they were unable to access drive storage remotely. This was not the case.
- (vi) that the College would be reviewing the legal implications of storing items to hard drives and the c:drive.
- (vii) that concern was raised that if all documents were stored on the network drives and the network subsequently failed all documents would become inaccessible, however, the new set up of the network meant that this issue is unlikely to arise.
- (viii) that doubts were raised about there being enough space on the drives for the huge amount of data that would be moved over to them if all items on computer hard drives could no longer be used. The amount of space that was needed would continue to increase over time.

- (ix) that there would be numerous copyright issues if all the artwork on the system had to be moved to shared drives.

**Resolved:**

- (i) that ITS would look at why the ability to auto archive emails was reported to be disabled on some staff machines. It was also agreed that how users of Mulberry could archive would be explored.
- (ii) that when reviewing the legal implications of document storage the needs of users would be the priority.

## **9 IT AUDITOR'S REPORT 2009**

**Noted:**

- (i) that the auditor's report had found the ITS department to be satisfactory.
- (ii) that the report had made key recommendations relating to access management for ex staff, enforcing regular password updates, creating a clearer change management system for audit trail purposes, and fault tracking/logging at the Help Desk.

## **10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Resolved:**

That, as users could only be a member of a limited number of groups, it was necessary to ensure that groups were closed when the projects related to them had finished.