Computer Laboratory IT Strategy Group

Chairman: Anuj Dawar
Secretary: Graham Titmus

Minutes of the meeting convened on May 1st 2008 in GC22 at the William gates Building


1. Apologies for absence
   Peter Sewell

2. Group membership
   Anuj Dawar has replaced Peter Robinson as chairman of the committee and Lise Gough has been replaced by Graham Titmus as secretary. Larry Paulson has been replaced by Peter Sewell.

3. Minutes of last meeting
   were accepted as a true record.

4. Matters arising
   2.i  The rack accounting system measures usage but there is as yet no charging in place. The possibility of making this a charge on research grants needs to be investigated

   2.ii  Has been completed without any difficulties.

   2.iii  The new telephone system installation is now making progress, we are awaiting test phones and dates for installation but the possibility of major network upgrades may delay the deployment slightly. Parts of the system such as devolved administration may not be available whilst the project is concentrating on putting phones on desks.

   2.iv  Request for new need was rejected and the temporary post terminated.

5  A report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Hartley review will be prepared for the next meeting

5. Budget
   The budget for 2008/09 was presented. It was observed that an obvious omission was telephone costs and it was agreed to include those in future budgets (estimated cost on being £15861 per year following replacement). The purpose of the budget was thought to be unclear since much of the expenditure on IT equipment was not included such as that through grants etc. It served some use to identify what provision was made by the department so that people were aware of what needed to be funded by research grants.
Provision of a sinking fund to cover major costs such as a new router or file server was discussed as was the lack of any link between our identifiable overheads and the figures used by PFACT.

6. Additional Research Capital
Two allocations of HEFCE additional research capital are available for spending this financial year. A call was made to the research groups to suggest suitable purchases. A significant number of replies identified additional filespace or additional processors as a requirement. General resources such as these were deemed to be a more appropriate way of spending the funds than to buy items of limited usage across groups. A suggestion to recirculate the list to the groups to gauge demand was rejected because of the tight timescales.

After discussion the priorities were agreed as follows: switches to support VoIP deployment, router upgrade, UPSs for the new switches (the value of these was discussed), upgrade filespace available to users and additional computer servers. The other remaining item of shared use was a multi-processor SUN UltraSPARC T2. It was expected that the combined cost of these items would be slightly above the funds available.

The need to consider additional maintenance costs when planning capital expenditure was stated.

7. Research Group Needs
The various functional and financial needs for equipment for various research groups should be explored as part of the groups remit, it was proposed to cycle around the groups inviting them to present their views of how they expect their requirements to change in the next 3 years covering both the general resources they might need and also any specific items that they require. The groups could be encouraged to use a WiKi page to record items they would find helpful.

8. Web site
The web site is again in minimal maintenance mode since losing the member of staff who maintained it. However, thanks to changes made by Markus Kuhn the administrative staff now have better access and the basic mechanisms that have been put in place to manage the site are working well.

9. Date of next meeting
Thursday 23rd October 2008 in GC22 at 14:15.