

IT Strategy Committee (ITSC)
26th January 2023 at 2 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

Minutes

Present:

Professor Simon Moore (SWM) – Chair
Dr Stewart Carswell (SC)
Professor Mateja Jamnik (MJ)
Dr Rafal Mantiuk (RM)

Daniel Porter (DP)
Dr Thomas Sauerwald (TS)
Malcolm Scott (MS)
Jo de Bono (JD) - Secretary

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Andreas Vlachos.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2022 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Actions from the Previous Meeting

(a) *GPU Resources for Teaching (Item 5a)*

GPUs report from MS

- virtual GPU cluster not on offer at HPC.
- currently monitoring GPU usage of MPhil students.
- local GPUs currently not oversubscribed for teaching. This cluster is separate to research GPUs, so unlikely to cause issues in May with MPhil deadlines.

ACTION:

- MJ to update project briefing to include estimate of reasonable expected number of hours (~300hr) to put on project proposal.
- MJ to contact Postgraduate Education Office to update webform with similar expected usage.

(b) *GDPR (Item 5b)*

There was no update.

ACTION:

- The Chair to set up a working group.

(c) *Standing Items (Item 6)*

- DP has set up emergency phone number for urgent AV issues, and a webform for reporting non-urgent AV issues. This is not yet in operation.
- DP anticipating specification document regarding LT upgrade, which will include 4 mics per LT. Work planned for the summer. Some concerns over lead times of equipment, but UIS may loan equipment in the interim. RM

suggested LED walls instead of projector. DP replied Epson demo forthcoming, will discuss range of equipment, though likely to align with what is used elsewhere in the University as better support available.

ACTION:

- DP and JD to arrange follow up meeting.

5. Standing Items

- (a) MS and DP to provide an update on improvements made and current issues.

Report from MS:

- generator point installed in GN09 for connecting generator during planned maintenance to power equipment. Cooling is not included on that circuit. GN09 is less resilient than UIS facilities. Some data (from research groups) is only stored in the department, and would be lost in case of fire. WDCD constrained by power.

ACTION:

MS to look at costs and options to improve resilience in GN09 to support research groups.

- MCS Linux has been withdrawn by UIS. Department has set up SSH servers with authentication via Blue AD. Scope for providing other undergraduate services like this. RM noted disappointing lack of exposure for undergraduates to Linux desktop environments.

ACTION:

- SM raise with Rob Harle whether this replacement is suitable for undergraduate teaching.

Report from DP:

- RT ticketing system: database has been updated, currently reviewing existing tickets and planning best way to triage them in new system
- Slack consolidation done so all licences on same invoice.
- Overleaf licence renewal in progress, to include unlimited seats. Shared with Engineering.
- Trial of DS Print on new printers. These will also support department's print server for printing from Linux.
- CCTV server decommissioned.

ACTION:

The Chair suggested that MS and DP circulate bullet points of standing items prior to the meeting.

- (b) JD to provide a report from the PSS.

There was no report from the PSS.

- (c) Report on the School's IT Strategy Committee (AV) and update from UIS (AM).

There was no report from the School's IT Strategy Committee (AV).

Report from AM:

- MFA for Raven progressing to make the University more resilient to cyberattacks. WebAuth will be retired (~2 years) as it doesn't support MFA. OSaml2 suggested replacement for use with Apache.
- Concerns about webpage accessibility raised via external reviews. Suggested a central auditing team who would improve accessibility of external public-facing pages.
- WSL available on MCS Windows machines.
- Currently trialling Tanzu VM platform with Geography.

6. IT Support for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Teaching

Discuss what facilities are required to support undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in the department (SWM/MS)

MS noted main divide is between "keep things the same because it worked last year" and "use the latest supported software". Requires further discussion.

7. Servers in GN09

What level of resilience should be provided for servers in GN09 (MS)

This item was covered in 5(a) above.

8. Any other business

There was no other business.

11. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is 4th May 2023 at 2 p.m.

The Chair recommended that future meetings would be 1.5 hrs in duration.