UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Information Services

agenda

Date	Tuesday, 17/05/2016
Time	2.15-4.15pm
Location	General Board Office, Old Schools
Subject	User Needs Committee
Ref	UNC.160517 Agenda

User Needs Committee

Dr Rachael Padman (Chair), Mr Andrew Aldridge, Dr Alan Blackwell, Prof P John Clarkson, Mr Chris Edwards, Ms Priscilla Mensah, Mr John Norman, Ms Emma Rampton

In attendance: Dr Mark Ferrar (for item 6), Dr Ian Cooper (Secretary)

Apologies: Dr Martin Bellamy

AGENDA

1. Welcome, apologies for absence

2. Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2016 were circulated (UNC-17)

3. Actions from previous meetings

4. Considering user needs in project activity
Update on action 4.1 regarding the revision of project board constitution documentation to ensure that user needs are heard and considered.

5. Review of UNC activity (UNC-18)
A review of the Committee's activity during its first year of operation, considering the activity that has taken place, to understand which activity(ies) might not have received sufficient discussion to date. Also to identify whether there are additional areas that the Committee would usefully cover that are not currently included in the Terms of Reference.

6. Progress on addressing "minimum standards of IT" from the IT Review (UNC-19)
For discussion and agreement of a way forward to ensure that the minimum standards proposed in Recommendation D1 of the Review of IT Infrastructure and Support are defined.

7. Progress report on survey activity (UNC-20)
An update from Mr Norman on the progress of survey activity.

8. Any Other Business

Dates of future meetings
Dates for meetings in 2016/17 are to be confirmed.

Monday 8 February 2016, 2.30pm Thetford Room, Roger Needham Building

Present: Dr Rachael Padman (Chair), Prof P John Clarkson, Prof Graham Virgo, Dr Alan Blackwell, Mr John Norman, Dr Martin Bellamy, Mr Chad Allen

Apologies: Mr Chris Edwards, Ms Priscilla Mensah, Mr Andrew Aldridge

In Attendance: Dr Mark Ferrar, Dr Ian Cooper (secretary)

USER NEEDS COMMITTEE

1. Welcome and apologies
Dr Padman welcomed Prof Clarkson, attending his first meeting, Mr Allen who was representing Ms Mensah and Dr Ferrar, Chief Architect UIA. Apologies had been received from Mr Edwards, Ms Mensah and Mr Aldridge; Dr Blackwell had sent his apologies and was unable to join the first part of the meeting but joined as User survey activity was being discussed

2. Minutes of previous meeting
The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2015 (UNC-14) were accepted with a minor amendment: Mr Aldridge had been present at the meeting.

3. Actions and matters arising
Action point 2.4 (ongoing) – Mr Norman reported that discussions were ongoing regarding staff roles within UIS following the withdrawal of the UIS's bid for additional funds in the 2015 Planning Round.

Action point 2.5 (update given) – Paul Heath from Modern Human had been appointed to conduct work with the UIS one day per week for a period of 3 months. Some of the materials developed through this work had been published on the stairwells in the Roger Needham Building and members were encouraged to take a look.

Action point 4.1 (ongoing) – Dr Bellamy reported that Chris MacLeod had recently joined the UIS in the role of Head of Project and Programme Office and would be leading on the revision of documentation outlining project board constitution.

Action point 4.2 (closed; on agenda) – The Committee's membership was considered under item 4 on the agenda.

Action point 4.3 (ongoing; on agenda) – A discussion on the schedule and scope for events took place under item 5 on the agenda.

Action points 4.4 & 4.5 (closed; on agenda) – A discussion on user satisfaction metrics and user survey took place under item 6 on the agenda.

Action point 4.6 (ongoing) – Dr Padman reported that preliminary discussions on the possible formation of a Digital Advisory Board had taken place with the Registrary.

4. Committee Membership

Prof Prager had agreed to be nominated as a Class ii Member. Prof Virgo indicated that he would be standing down and that Ms Rampton would be nominated to replace him. Dr Cooper was asked to ensure that the ISC was asked to consider these nominations at its next meeting.

Action point 5.1 – IC

Dr Padman thanked Prof Virgo for his work on the Committee.

There was still an option to co-opt a further Member to the Committee under Class vi.

5. User Centric Design events (UNC-15)

Mr Norman provided feedback on the event on 4 December 2015 when Tom Loosemore had presented a colloquium. Around half of the 80 attendees had been non-UIS staff and there had 22 views of the event recording. The main message was to think about users from the start. Dr Ferrar indicated that it would be helpful to extract the action points from the video.

Members held a discussion comparing the GDS environment to that of the University. It was agreed that there were differences and applying the same principles would not result in the same end result at the University. One of the main focuses of the GDS was an understanding of who the user was. Within the University there was a tendency to speak with heavy users of systems as the key engagement community; reference was made to Dr Blackwell's perspective of designing for occasional users.

For future events a lecture series model appeared appropriate, helping internal work by exposing good and best practice from other areas. Members agreed that the activity should proceed with one event per term. Expenses of around £1,000 per speaker were considered appropriate, which would come from Mr Norman's budget if required. Members agreed that it was important to gain the maximum benefit from any visits.

6. User satisfaction metrics & user survey (UNC-16)

User Satisfaction metrics (UNC-16a)

Mr Norman provided a brief overview of activity on user satisfaction metrics using the "Site Intercept" product from Qualtrics, which would maintain records to ensure that individual users were not continually prompted for feedback. A proof-of-concept had been demonstrated on one of the University's business systems by inserting the appropriate code using the load balancer. The actual question to be used would need to be carefully chosen and Members agreed that they should jointly work on this.

Prof Virgo indicated that the previous concerns he had raised about the potential for over-surveying students did not relate to such a simple feedback measure.

Mr Norman was asked to provide a list of services on which the feedback question could be inserted.

Action point 5.2 – JN

The existence of feedback data was understood to have consequences and clarity would be needed about what the data would be used for. The Committee agreed that Mr Norman should proceed with the activity.

User survey (UNC-16b)
There had been some progress but plans were behind schedule owing to staff turnover. There was a need for the survey activity to be conducted in the Easter Term in order for the findings to be incorporated into the 2016 Planning Round submission.

Mr Norman reported that the intention was to complete exploratory work in Lent Term and that the design needed to have longevity to enable a longitudinal study to be possible.

Dr Blackwell noted the comparable work being conducted by the Joint Schools Computing Service (JCSC) and recommended that Mr Norman speak with Mr Bartlett at the Clinical School Computing Service in the first instance.

Action point 5.3 – JN

7. Chief Architect
Dr Ferrar spoke to his presentation which covered three broad themes: the development of the UIS Architecture team; identity and access management; and the rollout of services available from the Microsoft EES deal.

The Architecture team would have five roles reporting to Dr Ferrar. There was some concern over the team looking like a business but Members were assured that external review had been received from analysts involved in education practice; the "Business Analyst" would ideally be recruited from an administrative role at a university. The use of the word "business" was a concern to some.

The team would have a busy programme, including the sizeable work around the development of the Information Services Strategy; Dr Ferrar outlined his role as lead to coach UIS staff in the Service Owner role. The End User Computing strategy would include "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) and Dr Ferrar noted that the University is the richest BYOD environment in which he has worked. The team would also be reviewing and extending the identity and access management technology, which needed to be dealt with cautiously given the University's culture of being an open organisation.

Dr Ferrar provided an overview of the software and services that were available through the Microsoft EES agreement. Further work on the communications strategy was needed, including clarity about what was available for work/home use. Skype for Business would be reviewed, and was identified having lots of overlap with the Cisco Jabber system that was already available. Concerns about data storage on OneDrive for Business were addressed by the location of

Microsoft's data centres in Europe and their certification up to and including Government Official Sensitive (the same level as patient identifying data).

8. Any other business
There was no further business.

Dates of future meetings
All meetings will be held in the Huntingdon Room at the Roger Needham Building unless otherwise indicated:
- Tuesday, 29 March 2016, 10.00-12.00
- Tuesday, 17 May 2016, 2.00-4.00

Summary of action points

Ref.	Action	Who	Status
Actions from previous meetings			
1.6	Determine appropriate next steps for the User Experience Portal – assigned to Dr Ferrar, Chief Architect	MB	On hold
2.2	Review benefit of engagement with users of the finance system in designing a system considering users' needs	CE	Ongoing
2.4	Draft PD33 for the user experience specialist to be provided to the Committee prior to being raised and advertised.	CE	Ongoing
2.5	Provide a paper to the Committee to give an update on the library of resources, and data-driven design, being developed within the UIS	CE, JN	On hold
4.1	Include the Committee in consultation while UIS reviews and revises project board constitution documentation	CE	Ongoing
4.2	Identify an appropriate individual to serve on the Committee under Class ii following Prof Leslie's term	RP, GV	Closed
4.3	Identify a schedule and scope for user centric design events and the facilitation resource required to plan and book them.	MB JN	Ongoing
4.4	Table a paper with proposals on an initial user survey	JN	Closed
4.5	Circulate proposed initial survey questions to the committee by correspondence and identify one college and one department to pilot the initial survey	JN	Closed
4.6	Discuss the proposed formation of a Digital Advisory Board with the Registrary	RP	Ongoing
New actions from 8 February 2016 meeting			
5.1	Ask ISC to consider nominations of Prof Prager and Ms Rampton under Class ii	IC	

Ref.	Action	Who	Status
5.2	Provide the list of services on which the feedback question can be inserted	JN	
5.3	Share planned user survey work with the JSCS to identify any lessons learned or commonality	JN	

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Information Services

User Needs Committee business in its first year of activity

Author(s): Ian Cooper   Date: 13 May 2016   Version 2

	Ref	Description	ToR #
27 February 2015	UNC-1	Terms of reference	-
	UNC-2	Committee Constitution	-
	UNC-3	How UIS organisation design will enable user engagement • Discussion on the UIS divisional structure • Desire to survey user community • Discussion on user/advisory panels to support specific activity	2 3 4
	UNC-4	UIS User Experience Platform Update • Presentation of initial platform findings, including the need for API-based services to consume information	1 2
2 June 2015	UNC-5	(minutes)	-
	UNC-6	ISC IT Governance: Minimum standards of IT provision • Reviewed and revised document to define the role of the Committee	-
	UNC-7	Terms of reference	-
	UNC-8	Committee Constitution	-
		Interaction with UIS Service Operations • Presentation from Steve Riley ○ "moving to a services-oriented way of working; ensuring staff are provided with appropriate tools (e.g. helpdesk); instilling best practice and empowering staff to make decisions; ensuring appropriate pay and conditions are in place to deliver operational support; developing staff to respond to the needs of users" • Discussion on future deployment plans of Service Catalogue	2 4
		User Panels discussion • Suggested inclusion of domain consultation forums members on user panels • Simple poll for "systems that waste time" • Engagement with users for the finance system development	2 3
		User needs in service development • Use of personas in project work • Learning from roles played in the Room Booking System project	1 2
		User centred design seminars • Recommendation to sponsor seminars to spread expertise	(1) 3

8 September 2015	UNC-9	(minutes)	-
		User needs in service development	2
		• User experience roles within UIS Build & Development	3
		• Projects under way with particular emphasis on considering user needs	
		• Desire to spread understanding of user centric design across a wider group of UIS staff and the wider University	
		Interaction with UIS Education, Administration & Student Services division	
		• Including the proposed move to "vanilla" functionality in ERP systems, and the involvement of business analysts to support the changes	
		Digital Transformation Consultancy	(1)
		• Organisation and scope of the team, including how it would interact with the UIS Build & Development division	
		User Panels	
		• Discussion on the types of people needed from panels in order to help guide future development	
		• Suggestion to explore a user survey	
		The Committee's role in the development of an Information Services Strategy for the University	2
			(4)
		• Preliminary overview of the process to gather information to develop the strategy, within which Committee should be involved to ensure benefits to "little users" and the balance against other priorities	
3 November 2015	UNC-10	(minutes)	-
	UNC-11	Creating a listening organisation	2
		• Four channels of communication:	3
		1. User satisfaction metrics	
		2. Regular and ad-hoc surveys	
		3. Representative groups	
		4. Relationship management	
		• The need for UIS to be a communicating organisation	
	UNC-12	Funding for user needs activity	(2)
		• Discussion of funding for activity within the UIS, particularly the Digital Transformation Consultancy	
	UNC-13	Digital Advisory Board	4
		• Proposal to form the Board	
		Out of hours cover	2

8 February 2016	UNC-14	(minutes)	-
		Committee membership	-
	UNC-15	User centric design events	(1)
		• Feedback from the event held on 4 December 2015	(2)
		• Discussion of compares and contrasts with other agencies, such as GDS	3 (4)
	UNC-16	User satisfaction metrics & user survey	3
		• Update on activity to develop satisfaction metrics and a user survey	
		Chief Architect	1
		• Role of the Architecture division	4
		• Role of Bring Your Own Device within the End User Computing strategy	
		• Review of services that will be made available through the Microsoft EES deal	

The Committee is invited to consider its activity to determine whether it has spent the appropriate amount of time covering the individual parts of its remit as set out in the Terms of Reference, and whether there are additional areas that it would usefully cover that are not currently included in the ToRs.

Minutes from the Committee's meetings are available at:
http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/committee/is/subcommittees/user-needs/

User Needs Committee

Terms of Reference

The User Needs Committee is constituted by the Information Services Committee (ISC) to ensure that the IT needs and experience of the staff and students of the University are given high priority at every stage of the IT lifecycle, from procurement through retirement. It will take a particular interest in the standards for usability and system integration necessary to provide an exemplary well designed end-user IT experience. It will ensure that users' expectations are raised and that it will engage directly with users to raise expectations and ensure that user feedback is solicited and acted upon. Acting with the primary IT providers across the University it will advise and guide them on the concerns and requirements of the IT users of the University and work with them to help improve the services and systems provided, to the benefit of all.

It will:

1. Be responsible for assuring that design for usability is given a high priority in the procurement of systems and services provided by the primary IT service providers, to ensure they represent a quality well integrated user experience, commensurate with the standing of the University. IT services should be consistent in design, have an intuitive look and feel, require minimal initial learning and have efficient easy-to-use interfaces.

2. Engage with University Information Services (UIS), and more widely as necessary, to ensure that the users' needs, and those of the wider-university community, are taken account of in developing IT services, particularly where these are not addressed by current provision.

3. Make recommendations for and comment on investigations and/or surveys into matters of particular concern within the IT user community as deemed appropriate; report its findings to the central IT providers, the ISC and/or its sub-committees as appropriate.

4. Foster dialogue, discussion and engagement with the user community concerning the systems provided by the UIS and similar IT providers, ensuring that feedback is properly considered and responded to. Oversee and coordinate channels established by the UIS through which the University community's strategic issues and requirements are relayed to the ISC, and establish others where necessary.

5. Provide the ISC with an annual report on its activities.

Constitution:

i. Chairman, appointed by the ISC from amongst its membership
ii. Two members appointed by the ISC as representative of the constituency of IT users across the University and Colleges
iii. Two members appointed by the ISC to provide specialist insight, knowledge or experience relevant to the provision of exemplary IT services, usability design or communications
iv. Two members of UIS staff nominated by the Director of the UIS
v. One student representative co-opted by the Committee
vi. Up to three additional members co-opted by the Committee.

The appointment of members in classes (ii) and (iv) will be made for periods of three years. Members co-opted by the Committee will serve until 31 December of the year following that in which they are co-opted, provided that if a member in class (v) ceases to be in *statu pupillarii* he or she shall thereupon cease to be a member of that class.

Secretariat: Provided by the UIS

Progress on addressing "minimum standards of IT" from the IT Review

Author(s): Rachael Padman & Ian Cooper   Date: 13 May 2016   Version 1

1   Context

The Committee has, to date, had little discussion on the "minimum standards of IT" recommended in the Review of IT Infrastructure and Support[1].

In summary:

> A3. Every member of staff whose role requires access to information technology should have, at minimum, access to a system providing an appropriate level of service.

> A4. Every student should have access to the computing facilities and network services necessary for their course.

> Recommendation D1.

> Schools and non-School Institutions should have responsibility for ensuring that their staff and students have access to the levels of service set by the ISC and referred to in A3 and A4. Schools, Departments and other Institutions should consider whether this can most effectively be done by local provision, at School level, or by use of a centrally provided service.

Members are invited to review activities, including the minimum standards policy published by the Clinical School Computing Service[2], in order to help define the work required to define suitable standards.

An excerpt of the IT Review is included at Appendix 1 for reference.

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[1] http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2012-13/weekly/6302/Revised-IT-Review-Report.pdf

[2] http://cscs.medschl.cam.ac.uk/about-us/policies/minimum-standards-policy/

46. Although these principles should not be contentious, it is worth explaining some of the underlying thinking. Two of the principles below (A3 and A4) propose the introduction of minimum standards of service for staff and students. With the raising of student fees, and with increasing competition to attract the world's top academics, it is essential that the diversity and innovation which are inherent advantages of the Cambridge structure be underpinned by some clear minimum standards of service.

47. The levels of service needed to fulfil A3 and A4 should be revised and updated as technology develops. At the present time, these service levels might incorporate the following requirements:

Staff and all students should have:
   i.   a unique identifier and straightforward means of authentication for all services;
   ii.   direct access to a secure University–wide (i.e. including the Colleges) wireless network, with connection via eduroam, to allow for mobile working;
   iii.   a configurable web portal providing access to email, internet and relevant university information services;
   iv.   user-friendly, web-based services for research, teaching, and administration appropriate to their needs;
   v.   high-quality help-desk support.

Staff and PhD students should have in addition:

   i.   access to personal computing facilities and on-line services in a secure environment provided by either a supported desktop or a network connection that, in combination with an appropriate personal computing device, can provide the same core services as a supported desktop;
   ii.   access to a reliable fully backed-up central file-store sufficient for all normal working needs;
   iii.   access to high performance computing, charged appropriately.

[The term 'desktop' is used in the generic sense to denote a display and input device giving access to a common set of personal computing functions (e.g. word processor, spreadsheet, mail client, etc.) plus browser access to university-wide information services.]

48. The delivery of the best IT services is a matter of having the right people with the right skills as much as having the right equipment, so the IT strategy needs to include the development and management of the University's IT staff.

49. Similarly, with the use of IT, and particularly high performance computing, being increasingly important across a wider range of disciplines, there will be a need to ensure that the increasing demand for computation is met in a way that minimises energy use. This consideration needs to be at the heart of the IT strategy itself, and not simply seen as the responsibility of some other part of the University.

Statement of Principles

A1. The aim of this Review has been to make proposals to help the University obtain the best value from its considerable investment in IT, not to cut costs, and in doing so to provide as well as possible what users need. There is absolutely no intention that this review will lead to redundancies.

A2. As a leading University, in the UK and the world, we should expect the quality of our information services and systems to be commensurate with our standing. The strategy for the management and delivery of those services must be driven by the needs of our users for support of their teaching, research, learning or administration.

A3. Every member of staff whose role requires access to information technology should have, at minimum, access to a system providing an appropriate level of service.

A4. Every student should have access to the computing facilities and network services necessary for their course.

A5. The University needs information systems that support its central objectives of teaching and research, as well as promoting efficient and effective administration, and supporting its statutory reporting requirements.

A6. The governance and organisation of information services and systems should be driven by a strategy that is based on a clear understanding of user needs. The strategy needs to respond to and exploit the opportunities provided by technological developments.

A7. In order to provide world-class information services and systems, high priority should be given to the support, development, and retention of talented and

committed computing support staff.   The University should provide these staff with high-quality career opportunities, and make the best use of their skills.

A8. In Cambridge's devolved structure, there should be space for innovation in service provision, and different Institutional needs should drive the design and delivery of the services that are provided. Schools and Institutions must accept joint responsibility with the University for delivering the minimum levels of service referred to in A3 and A4.

A9. The governance structure should ensure that the University's needs for information systems and services are met in a way that reduces carbon dioxide emissions as much as is practicable.

50. The panel believes firmly that these principles, and the detailed recommendations set out later in this report are vital for the University at the present time. In particular, it would stress that it sees the key benefits as being:
- Clarity on the standard of service that people, staff and students, can expect, alongside clear accountability for delivering services to an agreed standard;
- A strategy and process to determine which services should be provided, and the investments to be made in them;
- Systems that will allow for the user voice, from every part of the University, to be clearly heard at every stage of development of provision;
- Better conditions and opportunities for IT staff;
- Better overall service resulting from better investment of our resources.

51. The rest of the report consists of discussions and recommendations in each of the key areas considered by the Review.

SECTION B - GOVERNANCE

52. The panel received a large amount of evidence relevant to the strategy for, and governance of, the University's IT provision. In many cases the points made described, for instance, the lack of, or quality of, a particular service. However the panel felt the underlying issue often concerned the strategic direction of the University's IT, and the way decisions were taken, as much as the specifics of the service or system in question.

53. On Enterprise and Information systems, the panel formed views and took evidence on services that are not provided, either by one of the central organisations, or elsewhere. For example simple, user-oriented, systems for recruitment, claiming and payment of expenses, or room booking across the University either do not exist, or are weak. There is no system which can give Principal Investigators instant access to the up-to-date information they need to manage research grants. It is unsatisfactory that students were not able to access all the services they needed through one, easy-to-use web portal and that new students

cannot access Raven-protected services and information until they actually arrive, something which was said to compare badly with other Universities. The difficulties caused by the diversity of e-mail systems and the weakness of web search functionality across the University, were mentioned, as were the challenges for consistent branding caused by a variety of systems supporting websites. The organisation for the central purchasing of software licenses was another area that attracted some adverse comment, although the panel was pleased to see recent developments from the UCS which aim to address this, at least in respect of software for teaching and learning.

54. It was also far from clear that the prioritisation of investments in these systems was driven by a co-ordinated overview of the needs of users from all parts of the University, academic and administrative.

55. Moving to standard provision of machines and networks, there was adverse comment on the lack of easily available and large-scale file storage and back-up services which could meet the growing needs of Departments. Related to this, the actual standard of service provided to staff and students varies from department to department, and leads in some cases to a poor user experience. The departmentally focussed system of decision taking cannot ensure that there is a minimum standard of service, and also leads to additional expenditure on multiple small-scale implementations, with Departments duplicating work.

56. Departmental responsibility for IT provision means that it is difficult to steer the total IT spend across the University, but the lack of a single body with a clear oversight and control over the budgets of the central organisations makes it difficult to ensure that even the central spend is allocated to best effect.

57. As well as the duplication of work between Departments and Institutions, the panel saw a risk of duplication between UCS and MISD, as there were no clear dividing lines between their responsibilities. The most cited example was the way both organisations provide Content Management Systems for websites, but the panel felt the key point was not the duplication *per se* but that it did not appear to have been the result of a clear decision that two systems were needed and was symptomatic of a wider problem of a lack of strategic oversight of the priorities of the two organisations.

58. The UCS, in its submission to the panel, argued for a strengthening of the central strategic function. The UCS considered that the ISSS had produced a strategy with good high-level objectives, but did not have the levers required to implement it. In particular the UCS felt the ISSS was in an unclear position with respect to the work of MISD. Furthermore, the UCS submission argued that the remit of the ISSS should be extended to include not just the expenditure of MISD, but also that of CARET, the High Performance Computing Service (HPCS), and Schools and Departments.

59. Material from MISD made similar points about how the ISSS had struggled to operate strategically, and had become too involved in the detail of operational

matters. The comment was made that the strategic review of the HR and Finance Systems was in fact driven from within the Unified Administrative Service, rather than by ISSS. MISD argued that the ISSS should become a smaller body with a clearer focus on strategy, leaving the details of information systems to specific committees with the necessary expertise. The MISD submission also argued for a strengthening of School involvement in IT, so that the ISSS could include in its membership Heads of School and School IT leaders, as well as PVCs and central service providers.

SECTION D - SCHOOLS, DEPARTMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS

100. The panel received evidence from people from Faculties and Departments, across all the Schools. Inevitably the situation varied between different Schools and Departments. Larger Departments tended to be fairly satisfied with their service provision. Typically these Departments had teams of Computer staff, who were able to take responsibility for different aspects of the service; provision in these Departments was planned, and there was a systematic approach to managing requests for help. These Departments tended to be able to innovate, and develop (for instance) local front-end modules for centrally provided Information Systems with the result that their users had a system which was well matched to their needs.

101. Against that, the situation in smaller institutions was sometimes less positive. The panel heard worrying accounts of severe difficulties in some smaller institutions. In one case, a power surge had brought down servers, and the resulting problems had not been resolved for several weeks at a very busy time of year. The impact had been severe, particularly on administrators, who, unlike some academic staff, did not have the option of using College systems, and who did not know, from day to day, whether they would have a workable system. The situation had led to real problems for the institutions' small teams of Computer staff, who felt that it had not been

possible to get urgent practical help from experts elsewhere in the University, perhaps because it was seen as a local problem. More detailed investigation indicated that the system had simply been stretched well beyond what it was designed to cope with. This suggests, perhaps, a lack of time for strategic planning, and lack of resources for the system's development.

102. Although the views from Departments differed, there was no indication of widespread dissatisfaction with the underlying model in which decisions about service provision are taken locally rather than centrally, and central services are offered rather than imposed. There was also no widespread dissatisfaction with the services provided, although some individuals felt their services were not as good as they might be. The panel felt that the professed satisfaction of many staff with their local provision might, at least in part, be the product of ignorance of the types of facilities that could be made available in a modern well-managed university.

103. Another common theme across Departments large and small was the value placed by users on having local, responsive, and expert support from dedicated IT staff who understood the needs of the institution. That said, there was also evidence of the problems which resulted from those local IT staff having to provide and manage everything from the point of presence onwards, including networks, servers and desktop machines, as well as local information systems and websites, alongside some local training requirements and technical support for audio-visual systems. Local staff might also need to support research computing. In some cases local provision depends on just one individual, with a single point of failure posing an obvious risk to the operations of the institution.

104. The panel felt that local provision of those service elements which are generic across many departments (networks, servers and standard desktops) is inherently inefficient, leading to duplication of the work in other institutions, taking local staff away from tasks where their specific local knowledge and particular skills could be more profitably applied.

105. There was some suggestion that local provision of basic computing in some smaller departments was less up to date or effective than it might be, perhaps as a result of local staff not having the time, amongst all the other pressures, to plan strategically how the local provision should be developed and updated. There was also a risk of lone Computer Officers operating in isolation, despite the provisions for information sharing with colleagues, and being unaware of solutions and new developments elsewhere in the University, which they might be able to adopt. Such staff were often managed by people who had no particular technical knowledge, and who as a result were unable to provide either support or constructive challenge to the local IT staff.

106. Uncertainty of funding was also cited as a contributory factor to the lack of strategic planning, particularly in smaller institutions, where there is unlikely to be the flexibility to smooth fluctuations in funding sources to manage IT investments. It was also clear that there were many instances of grant-funded Computer Officers or

Post-Doctoral Associates spending time on routine desktop support or systems administration. Apart from the impact on the individual, where there can be benefits as well as costs, this can pose real risks for Departments' ability to retain and manage continuity of expertise.

107. The panel received evidence on departmental computing from the Head of the Clinical School Computing Service (CSCS), which is a large provider of utility computing to about 2200 users in the School of Clinical Medicine, through a charged-for generic service to many smaller Departments, using industry standard and mature products. More sophisticated "academic" IT is the responsibility of Departments. The CSCS provides a network to each desktop, supporting devices running Windows, Mac-OS or Linux, and they run an Exchange server for e-mail and calendars as well as a help desk, which operates largely by telephone or e-mail. The charges made include provision for a sinking fund for replacement of network equipment, but not individuals' desktops, although they are happy to procure devices for individuals. The result is that CSCS recovers costs for the network, data, storage, helpdesk and support.

108. The CSCS has had to address the question of local versus central service as it has expanded its operation across the School (moving from supporting about 650 desktops in 2007 to around 2200 now). Their experience has been that Departments have been happy with the remote help-desk support model, backed by a strong service culture. The comment was also made, after the experience of migrating many departments and users onto the service, that customer requirements tend to be more similar than departments themselves sometimes believe.

109. Particular advantages of this approach were: greater clarity about the total costs; more opportunities and variety for staff, as a result of working in a larger IT organisation; a consistent approach that simplified the overall network, making it easier to solve problems when they occurred, and allowing the retention of a small stock of spares in house which could be used to fix very quickly and easily a large proportion of the problems which arose; there were also economies of scale in purchasing. Above all, the CSCS has been successful in driving a service culture, in which there was a sense of accountability to the users.

110. The panel met a representative of Zoology, a Department that was in the process of migrating its basic IT desktop provision to the CSCS system, following a review of its existing internal provision. Although the migration was not complete at the time of the discussion and was taking longer than originally planned, the impressions of CSCS had been extremely positive, and fears about the quality of support had not been realised.

Conclusions and Recommendations

111. In the light of the evidence from larger and smaller Departments, a number of points are clear about the future of provision in institutions. First, decision taking and budget management, in a devolved structure such as the University, need to

remain devolved. Second, while there was obviously a great deal of informal networking and mutual support, there was a need to strengthen collaboration between institutions so that decision taking could reflect mutual experiences across Departments, sharing of best practice could be improved, and more effective cover could be provided for IT staff. The panel therefore felt that Schools would usually be the right level at which to take decisions about provision and how it would be organised to meet the University's minimum standards, within available resources. The panel was also mindful that some larger Departments were very successfully operating their own provision, and would see little to be gained by having decisions taken at the School level. There must be flexibility for responsibility to remain with Departments, subject to the minimum standards being delivered.

112. It is clear the University should promote opportunities for a wider range of Departments, especially the smaller ones, to purchase from the centre their essential "utility" computing, such as provision of desktops, file storage and back-up, and the operation of the local network. This is in line with recommendation C4 about the need for an affordable central service. Evidence suggests that support for routine computing operations can successfully be provided remotely, despite the initial fears of staff in Departments that this would cause problems. It is also likely that many Departments will wish to retain some local support, to handle matters other the basic provision of networks and desktop services. If that local support team is relieved of the day-to-day maintenance, it will be more able to undertake specific activities which add more value to the Department.

Recommendation D1.
Schools and non-School Institutions should have responsibility for ensuring that their staff and students have access to the levels of service set by the ISC and referred to in A3 and A4. Schools, Departments and other Institutions should consider whether this can most effectively be done by local provision, at School level, or by use of a centrally provided service.

113. The work at School level will require some expertise and resource in IT matters at thatlevel. The panel is convinced there is a need at School level for both an academic "user" lead and a leader among the School's IT staff (an IT Co-ordinator). The details of these roles will differ between Schools. If, for instance, in a School with large Departments, those Departments retain complete responsibility for delivery, the role of the IT Co-ordinator within the School will obviously differ from a case where the School is taking on delivery and the IT staff are employed at School level where the role will be mush more managerial. But in any case, close co-operation between the academic and IT Co-ordinators leads is key, and both roles will need to be well integrated with the School's own internal decision taking processes. Between the two roles, they will need to ensure that the following three key tasks are covered:

- actively managing IT provision across the School;
- co-ordinating across the School to advise Heads, support local staff and ensure standards are met;

- influencing the centre to ensure that centrally managed services meet the needs of the School.

The panel would expect that many IT Co-ordinators and academic leads would also be involved in the sub-committees of the ISC.

Recommendation D2. Each School and non-School Institution should identify or appoint one or more IT Co-ordinators from among the IT staff in the School. Each School and non-School Institution should also appoint a senior academic (or equivalent) as the user lead.

Progress report on survey activity

Author(s): John Norman   Date: 11 May 2016   Version 1

Summary

Survey work has slowed down following the departure of Danika Morris. However, some surveys are in preparation and some survey testing has been completed for a survey of 'user needs'.

1   User needs survey

A first test of an open-ended, simple survey was distributed by email to 20 known respondents on Feb 05, 2016. The email was from the Chair of User Needs Committee and contained the following question:

> "Thinking about your interaction with the IT systems of the University - what change would you most like to see?
>
> It may be a new service, a change to an existing service, or even a service closedown. It would be helpful if you can describe how the change will improve your life and tell us anything that helps quantify the benefits."

Of the 20 emails sent, 12 emails were opened, 7 respondents followed the link to the survey and 4 completed the survey (20%). Encouraged by this response rate the same question was distributed to a random sample of 200 entries from the 'Lookup' directory – including both staff and students – on 17 March, 2016. Only 171 entries included email addresses, of which 1 bounced. 37 respondents clicked on the link to the survey and 18 'completed' the survey. Of the 18, only 11 were valid responses. 6 were blank. This is a response rate of 6.5%.

The data collected is presented in Appendix 1, but further experimentation to get a higher response rate seems to be needed. One possible improvement would be to relay emails through the Hermes email service so they come from a cam.ac.uk email address. Another might be to put an 'Active Surveys' link on the UIS website to indicate which are 'official' surveys.

2   UAS IT Satisfaction survey

This is at an early stage of preparation. A staff list has been supplied with 1,254 entries of which 1,138 have email addresses. This has been loaded into Qualtrics and is awaiting final text for the questions.

3   University IT Satisfaction Survey

We have an intention to carry out a comprehensive IT satisfaction survey by the summer. Yale offer a comprehensive model[1] that has an impressive response rate. Oxford have expressed some interest in adopting/adapting the survey. Since that would offer real advantages in terms of benchmarking, we are awaiting further information on the timing of decisions from Oxford before considering next steps.

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[1] http://its.yale.edu/about/reports-and-surveys/yale-technology-survey/2015-yale-technology-survey

Appendix 1: Responses collected in Survey testing (18)

I tried to take a course to learn a new programme but found no computer I had access to had the software. I would like to be able to use any of the software you offer courses for in a central 'computer lab' or at the UL.

I can't think of any problem with the IT systems of the university. I'm quite satisfied.

No doubt this is partly me, but I feel pretty remote from the University IT systems in my day to day work. My needs are catered for well locally. On the few occasions that I've visited in person with an issue I've been extremely impressed with the attention and time staff spent with me. I've heard this from other people too.
One thing that has been raised with me by staff is the need to have a PRINTED IT training calendar, as this seems rather wasteful.

I find the UIS website daunting - it can be difficult to find what you are looking for.

A more powerful version of Hermes Webmail and a greater e-mail quota

What a vague question!

Well, the new version of CamCors is awful is many ways. I'd personally like to return to the previous version, which was nice and easy to use.

We could do with having new machines, our computers in the control room are out of date and run slow.

My experiences IT system have generally been painfree.

My major complaint is about the poor internet speed of eduroam.

The current webmail interface is now very outdated in many ways, and not terribly user friendly. It could be greatly improved. Even more pressing than that for me, however, is the quota of storage we are allowed in our webmail. As a person with several roles in the university, it is important for me to store a lot of email for record-keeping, and I am constantly having to deal with quota warnings.

A road map with delivery dates for the new services we've heard been told are coming. It would also be better if a delivery was delayed if it then means the instruction and information are clear i.e. one drive was rushed out.

A link between UIS and other offices, a key contact who can be contacted locally and who would then liaise with UIS on issues encountered whether hardware or software.

The change I would most like to see is that the university's Information Technology academics and staff should be left to get on with their work as they deem best, rather than continually pressed to think about how to 'change' what they provide. The premiss of the question is wrong, the premiss that each of us as academics at the University must wish for 'change'. What I wish is for the excellent service which I currently receive from the ISC -- a service conspicuous hitherto for its independence and its freedom from commercial and managerial interference -- to remain in place undamaged by surveys and initiatives and bright ideas for improvement.

No particular changes, happy with the interactions I have had.

UniOfCam wifi should not require Raven login all the time. Eduroam doesn't have to be renewed all the time, and sometimes I have to log in to UniOfCam multiple times a day.

Please switch fully to Google Apps: Gmail, Google Calendar, Google Drive. It would make everything so much easier!

To be able to get someone actually to come to my room for about 45 mins and help sort out my computer: check for infections, improve speed etc. No more than once per year.
The phone-up service is pretty good, and has been helpful on several occasions, but it would really help to have a person to talk to in the flesh - about once every 2 years

Larger inbox on Hermes! This would allow me to store useful documents instead of having to keep deleting emails with attachments...automatic archiving of labelled items would also be good.

One IT organisation to support the whole university - I work in two locations, one supported by MISD and one by UCS, and it is incredibly difficult to manage diaries and access.

It would save at least 30 minutes a week or me and 30 minutes a week for another member of my team as I would no longer have to keep two diaries, and also time for lots of other people. Sometimes staff from the two organisations have to talk to each other about specific problems I or the others in similar situations have, and paying IT support staff to talk to a separate group of IT support staff seems like a poor use of resources.