UNIVERSITY OF KENT
Information Services Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2007

Present: Professor J Baldock (Chairman), Professor D Chadwick, Mrs C Pickaver, Mr J Pink, Mr PV Slater, Mr J Sotillo, Mr S Thornton, Dr AH Ward, Mrs JC Hornsby (Secretary).

In attendance: Ms KM Doyle, Ms G Woodhams.

Apologies: Professor A Chadwick, Mr NSR Jackson, Dr A Klevan, Dr K Leydecker,

29/06-07 MINUTES
The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2007 were approved.

30/06-07 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE
It was reported that the revisions to the membership of the committee agreed at the meeting on 8 March 2007 would be reported to Senate at its meeting on 20 June.

ACTION: SECRETARY

31/06-07 MATTERS ARISING

(a) Library Regulations (25/06-07)
It was noted that the General Regulations for students will shortly be revised, following the commissioning of a SUMS report by the University; IS regulations are also under review; any changes to the Library Regulations will therefore need to take account of, and tie in with, any changes to the General and IS regulations; consequently, no action will be taken at present.

32/06-07 COMPUTER USER PANEL
The Committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2007 for information (Paper ISC 24/06-07).

33/06-07 LIBRARY USER PANEL
The Committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2007 for information (Paper ISC 25/06-07).

34/06-07 MEDWAY DRILL HALL LIBRARY USER GROUP
The Committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2007 for information (Paper ISC 26/06-07). Dr Ward commented on these minutes:
Under Minute 5: to endorse the recommendation that students be encouraged to provide positive feedback as well as complaints;

Under Minute 6iv: there is uncertainty about which procedures are to be used in cases where disciplinary action needs to be taken. All parties are grappling with this problem, but the aim is to work towards the establishment of DHL specific procedures in all cases, and for all students.

35/06-07 WEB STRATEGY & STEERING GROUP REPORT

The report of the WSSG was not received, and will be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

36/06-07 REPORTS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES


The Director of Information Services spoke to his report (ISC 27/06-07), and the following points in were highlighted in particular:

A Services

In the reporting period, services had run smoothly and with minimal interruptions.

B1 Central Machine Room

Funding has been obtained for this upgrade, with two locations identified for the move. A tabled paper (ISC 38/06-07) outlined the systems and services to be moved to Medway, and the plans to ensure proper continuing support of these systems. The moves are scheduled for completion in December 2007/January 2008; principal users of the systems in question will be kept abreast of any developments, but it is anticipated that downtime for individual systems should not exceed 1 day, to allow for dismantling, transportation and rebuild. Systems will be moved piecemeal, for security and minimum disruption.

B2 MARVIN/HERCULES

The Committee noted that the move to HERCULES as the data transfer system for UCAS ties in with the plans for new admissions and CRM systems.

B4 Content Management System (CMS)

Funding has been secured for this project.

B6 Classification

The adoption of the Standard Library of Congress Classification system is being considered. Should this go ahead, it will require the re-classification of some of Kent Stock and involve careful planning with users, the priority being transparency and ease of use.

D1 Wye
A Service Level Agreement is close to being signed off for IT services at Wye, in addition to the IS SLA already in place.

*El Budget Bids*

Indications are that it has been a relatively successful year for IS Budget bids, with a number of key bids receiving approval:

- Departmental Materials Fund
- Most of the funds for JANET/KENTMAN
- Content Management System
- Admissions/CRM
- Central Machine Room Upgrade
- Library Re-classification
- Extended Library Hours

The outcome of the bid relating to E-environment is not known to date.

It was reported additionally, that there is provision of 2.5m in the budget for the Admissions/CRM project, though detailed proposals remain to be presented to Executive Group. Plans for the system to be in place for Christmas 2008 are thought to be unrealistic. The Committee supported the funding of the new systems.

**37/06-07 Information Literacy Strategy 2007-2009**

The Committee received paper ISC 28/06-07. The Head of Library Services spoke to the paper. It builds on a need identified by both students and academics for a strengthening, and bringing together in a more formalised way, the facilities already in place for training and education in the use of library and information resources. Although at present there is no intention to offer this as a credit bearing module, the work is being undertaken in consultation with UELT, and will seek to encourage students particularly to take advantage of the full range of services on offer to them. It was noted that at other Universities, initiatives of this kind work in conjunction with Personal Development Plans (PDPs); PDPs have not of course been adopted to any large extent at Kent.

The Committee agreed to commend the paper to Learning and Teaching Board, with a recommendation that they consider the paper together with an accompanying draft action plan.

**ACTION: HEAD OF LIBRARY SERVICES**

**38/06-07 Identities for Life**

The Committee received paper ISC 29/06-07. The Director of Information Services spoke to this paper which explains the background to the potential development of a project to bring together the many disparate systems in use across the University, in terms of their identifiers. In an age of CRM, it is critical that the user’s experience of a large, many faceted organisation is as seamless as possible, and so there is a need to link up the systems which have arisen periodically and piecemeal over time, which currently require different logins/passwords and identifiers from users.

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During discussion of this item the following points were made:

- Any project aiming to link systems and offer a lifelong identity needs to ensure that it applies offline as well as online, and that there are opportunities for capturing data obtained outside web and electronic systems;
- Careful consideration needs to be given to the threshold for inclusion and exclusion – for example, a person making an enquiry about a course will not need an email account;
- A high priority should be given to mechanisms to enable record linking, in order to minimise multiple identities and possible fraud through identity theft;
- Record linking between current systems should be the first priority, before introducing CRM; but any work done on this should be ensure compatibility with CRM.
- *Identity Vault* was not considered to be an appropriate label for the function it described, since this term implied that there is some security attached. An alternative might be *metadirectory*.
- There are some overlaps between this proposal and other projects in the pipeline, and there should be communication between those interested parties to ensure that all future developments are fully conversant and do not duplicate work.

It was agreed after discussion that an updated proposal should be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee, together with some points for action, and that the Committee should be kept informed of any updates.

**ACTION: DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES**

39/06-07 Maintaining Systems during Extended Closure

This issue has arisen out of the increased expectations of staff and students, that systems will be available during periods of University closure. The Head of Business Systems spoke to the paper *ISC 30/06-07*, and outlined the possible future scenarios.

During discussion, it was confirmed that some systems do remain open 365 days: these are the corporate website, email and the network. These operations are maintained during periods of closure through a ‘best efforts’ arrangement with staff willing to undertake this responsibility. Closure generally affects central services: HR, Student Data System, Agresso etc.

The Committee agreed that they would want to revisit this issue at the next meeting, and that a paper should be prepared, giving a menu of the possibilities, ranging from the minimum coverage to the maximum potential service, together with a risk and cost/benefit analysis in each case.

**ACTION: HEAD OF BUSINESS SYSTEMS**

40/06-07 Student Satisfaction Survey

The Committee received 3 papers relating to the recent Student Satisfaction Survey *ISC 31/06-07*, *ISC 32/06-07*, *ISC 33/06-07*, including a detailed analysis and action plan to address many of the issues identified.
Two points were discussed briefly:
- the software used for the survey is not a standard one, and indeed there were three separate survey software packages identified as in use by members of the Committee;
- the timing of the survey coincided with that of the National Student Survey, some concern being expressed that students may experience survey fatigue if presented with too much at any one time. Although this was not considered to be a major issue, it was agreed that those responsible for the two surveys should consult in time for the 2008 round.

The Committee were very impressed by the analysis and plans for action and commended those who input to these, and encouraged the following up of the issues via the action plan.

**ACTION: DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES/SECRETARY**

**41/06-07 Results of the Business Systems Survey 2006**

This survey was re-opened following discussion at the last meeting of the Committee. Paper ISC 34/06-07 analysed the results from the 30 respondents. The Head of Business Systems reported that the survey was worthwhile: while it contained no surprises it formalised the general impressions held within the section of their performance and working ties with colleagues in the central administration and Faculties. The only real issue of immediate concern is the user-unfriendliness of the BS website, but for the survey next year, it was agreed that the questions should be revised, in order to obtain information which can lead to improvements and development where appropriate.

**ACTION: HEAD OF BUSINESS SYSTEMS**

**42/06-07 On Campus Remote Storage Project**

The Head of Library Services introduced this paper ISC 35/06-07. Library stock acquisition is at a current annual rate of 600m, while stock reduction is happening at a rate of c.50m. Shelf space is at a premium, and a solution is required urgently. The proposal here is that for those items which are available electronically, the hard copy should be moved to a separate on-campus storage facility.

The view of the Committee was that given the dire need for shelf space in the Library, there is no alternative to a removal of stock, and endorsed this proposal, subject to the provision of good quality, reliable printers being available (a need also identified via the Student Satisfaction Survey).

**ACTION: HEAD OF LIBRARY SERVICES**

**43/06-07 Report from the Director of Communications & Marketing**

The Director of Communications and Marketing spoke to this paper ISC 36/06-07. The Committee were invited to comment raise any queries/comments directly with her.

**ACTION: ALL**
44/06-07 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 15 November 2007 in Senate Committee Room 1