Higher Education Information Directors in Scotland (HEIDS)

Approved Minutes

Wednesday 3rd September 2008
University of St Andrews

Present:

Chair

Andrew McCreath	Robert Gordon University	AM

Minutes

Heidi Fraser-Krauss	University of St Andrews	HFK
Karen Anderson	APUC	KA
Malcolm Bain	University of St Andrews	MB
David Beards	Scottish Funding Council	DB
Stuart Gardner	University of Abertay	SG
Alun Hughes	UHI Millennium Institute	AH
Margaret Macleod	Universities Scotland	MM
John Maher	UHI Millennium Institute	JM
Brian Mullins	University of the West of Scotland	BM
Ray Murphy	Glasgow Caledonian University	RM
Gordon Neill	Procurement Scotland	GN

1. Apologies were received from the following:

Stuart Brough	University of Strathclyde	SB
Caroline Cochrane	RSAMD	CC
Paul Dean	Napier University	PD
Brian Gilmore	University of Edinburgh	BG
Sandy MacDonald	University of Glasgow	SMacD
Garry Main	UHI Millennium Institute	GM
Simon Marsden	University of Edinburgh	SM
Kathy McCabe	University of Stirling	KM
Sean McDonald	Heriot-Watt University	SMcD
Catherine McMillan	University of Strathclyde	CM
Graham Millar	University of Stirling	GM
Tom Mortimer	University of Dundee	TM
Fraser Muir	Queen Margaret University	FM
Moriamo Oduyemi	University of Abertay Dundee	MO
David Rundell	Heriot-Watt University	DR
Colin Watson	Glasgow School of Art	CW

Action

AM welcomed John Maher, Head of MIS at UHI, to his first HEIDS meeting.

AM also noted that the Scottish Agricultural College now has HE status and asked for them to be added to the HEIDS mailing list. **KM**

2. Minutes of the previous meeting:
The minutes of the meeting held in Stirling on May 29th 2008 were approved with the following corrections: **KM**

at 5 the reference to the event be changed to : Subsequently AM and PK had been asked to speak at the forthcoming US/SFC event

in 7.6, SCURL is talking to SLIC, not SCET

second sentence of para 7.3 to read '...because these particular calls are funded with additional funding provided by HEFCE, which SFC had not matched.'

the last sentence of para 7.3 to read 'There was currently no appetite from Scottish principals to increase the level of the core JISC budget'.

3.   Matters arising:

HEIDS website
A decision was made to accept the proposed logo without the crown.   RM

Framework issues
Under framework issues AM noted that PD's survey on the various remuneration arrangements was not yet ready for circulation.

4.   Shared services
AM noted that his paper to the joint SFC/US shared services event on June 2nd had been well received and that the meeting had come to similar conclusions as the discussions held at the HEIDS meeting in Stirling.

MM commented that US reps had been asked follow up with their constituents on a three-monthly and six-monthly basis to see what ideas had emerged about how to take shared services forward. She also noted that US still had an efficient government group chaired by Sir Muir Russell and that a sub group on shared services existed, chaired by Gerry Webber.

AM reported that a video conference had taken place between representatives from UHI, Glasgow Caledonian and RGU to discuss sharing out of hours support and campus networks. All participants had come to the conclusion that there would need to be more technology convergence for this to be a useful development.

After lively discussion and debate on the topic of pooling and sharing expertise between institutions on a credit basis, it was agreed by all that this idea had considerable merit and should be developed further. It was suggested that two areas of work were needed, firstly a register of expertise, ie specialist skills, that institutions would be willing to share and secondly a list of areas where institutions lacked specialist skills and bought them in from external sources. HFK suggested an away day in December to gather this information and discuss the idea further. AM suggested that a small working group of AH, RM and HFK organise the away day and coordinate the necessary pre work with HEIDS   HFK, AH, RM members.

DB highlighted that the SFC was willing to provide limited funds to explore emerging shared services ideas further.

The topic of shared data centres was also discussed and it was noted that BG had been tasked with taking this forward. AM noted that there were a number of discussions taking place between individual institutions and other public bodies, for example South Lanarkshire council were providing services to the University of the West of Scotland. Members expressed interested in hearing more about the South Lanarkshire offering. AM suggested that they be invited to give a short presentation on the morning of the planned away day in December if that could be held in Glasgow/Paisley. BM agreed to investigate whether this was   BM

possible.

HFK raised the issue of research pooling and shared data centres and MM and DB agreed to raise this within their organisations to ensure that there was no duplication of effort.

MM, DB

AM suggested that Jean Sykes should be invited to the next HEIDS meeting to talk about the shared research data centre project as this might offer a model for Scotland.

KM

MB raised the issue of shared helpdesk software and informed the group that St Andrews, Edinburgh and Abertay were in discussions about a joint procurement, with the system being hosted in Edinburgh.

5   Green ICT

DB reported that at a recent workshop on sustainable IT held at QMU, he had seen a demonstration of a tool produced as part of the JISC funded Suste IT project to monitor ICT energy and carbon footprint . The SFC had subsequently commissioned a project via EAUC for two Universities and two Colleges to implement this tool and feedback their results to the community. DB also noted that the tool was able to provide information on available computing power and this might lead to a situation where this could be sold on for us to grid computing.

More information about the tool and the Suste IT project can be found at http://www.susteit.org.uk/

KA reported that Nortel had also produced a tool for measuring energy consumption in VOIP systems.

6   IT hardware contract from Procurement Scotland

GN gave a useful presentation about the process used to procure the IT hardware contract for PCs, screens and laptops for the public sector in Scotland. He noted that a decision had been taken to go for a specification that would cater for about 80% of users and that a four year replacement schedule had been assumed. All hardware had been rigorously examined and benchmarked against environmental and performance standards. Lenovo had won the contract for complete units and for laptops, and Fujitsu had won the contract for base units only. To date 36,000 pieces of equipment had been supplied via this contract to organisations in all parts of the public sector in Scotland .

GN also highlighted that Procurement Scotland were looking at a PC and white goods disposal contract.

In the discussion that followed, members expressed their satisfaction at the quality of the kit supplied under these contracts, but their dissatisfaction in terms of delivery time and customer service. KA and GN stressed that members must escalate any dissatisfaction to them directly as they were in a better position to ensure these problems do not arise again.

All HEIDS

Members also expressed concerns over the potential for frequent changes in supplier and the difficulties this would be present in managing a greater diversity of hardware.

7. Reports

7.1 SFC (DB)

Handled under item 5.

7.2 Universities Scotland (MM)

MM said that AM had covered shared services at item 4 and thanked HEIDS members for their interest and progress in identifying potential initiatives. She said that Universities Scotland officers would be contacting the other sector network groups to ascertain progress now that three months has elapsed since the 2 June SFC/US shared services seminar and again in December after six months. The SFC shared services sub-group, chaired by Dr Gerry Webber of Napier will meet at the end of September. The New Horizons interim report from the Joint Future Thinking Taskforce on Universities had been published in June, with a stakeholder summit held in August. Universities Scotland continues to advise Scottish Government officials to investigate whether SAAS could provide a single source of students' personal data they have requested be shared with various third parties, rather than require 20 university systems to be altered to accommodate the proposed data sharing, for various research purposes. She responded to a query about new reporting requirements in respect of students who are visa nationals. She said that she works closely with the Universities UK officer who deals with the complex emerging policies of the Home Office on immigration matters.

7.3 JISC (DB)

It was noted that Tim O'Shea had been appointed as the new chair of JISC. HEIDS members welcomed this.

DB reported that, following the Duke and Jordan study, JISC sees the development of shared IT services as being quite a long term development. This is seen as depending on sectoral moves towards service-oriented architecture and so it was likely that SOA would become an increasingly explicit aspect of JISC's strategy.

7.4 JCN/JANET UK (AM)

AM noted that a new JANET SLA had been published, and that a number of RNOs and Institutions were now being assessed for rates on their dark fibre. It was agreed that an early meeting of the SMCG would now be useful.   MB

In terms of items from the last meeting of the JCN, AM stated that the best advice from JANET was that where Halls of Residence were let for holiday accommodation, a commercial ISP should be provided in preference to JANET. Work was continuing with the NHS/HE Forum with further funding committed by JANET to support this initiative. The JANET Roaming Service had had a poor takeup and JANET (UK) planned to work with UCISA to understand the reasons behind this.

7.5 RSCs (DB)

It was noted that Fionnuala Carmichael had succeeded Charles Sweeney as the Head of the RSC South & West Scotland. The Scottish Agricultural College (which recently became a SFC-funded HEI) would be supported by RSC North and East Scotland.

7.6 SCURL/SCONUL (FM)

SCONUL

Discussion of the future of the LMS continues to feature heavily in this group. Current recommendation to those thinking of procuring a new system is: don't,

wait as long as you can as suppliers are working on major system updates. If you can't, strong recommendation is to latch on to a consortium deal, e.g. SDLC. Use of social networking tools and the dreaded "Library 2.0" also. Interesting to combine the two and introduce social networking as part of the LMS, discussion of books recently borrowed etc, those who borrowed this DVD also borrowed the following etc.

New CLA licence is now split into a comprehensive and standard version, the former giving the ability to copy digital originals. The consensus within SCONUL libraries is that this is not worth the additional cost and most (if not all) will be retaining the standard licence allowing copying and scanning of hard copy originals.

SCURL
There is a great deal of discussion at the moment on the future direction of SCURL and where members see the benefit of the group. Major areas concern how the group relates to others; SCONUL, M25, HEIDS, UCISA for example.

SHEDL continues to develop with all Scottish HEIs signing a letter of intent to progress with the first phase to centrally procure electronic journals for all from a small number of suppliers. JISC collections are brokering the deal. Scottish Government taking an active interest in this shared service with Fiona Hyslop requesting (and will now have received) a briefing paper from the chair.

7.7   UCISA CISG (HFK)

Nothing to report, since HFK had had to leave the meeting early.

7.8   UCISA Executive (TM)

Nothing to report in TM's absence.

8   AOCB
There was discussion about the 2.00 presentation slot where the hosting institution has the opportunity to demonstrate or present on a topic of interest to the wider community. It was agreed that this remained a useful feature of HEIDS meetings and should remain on the agenda.

Despite the recent difficulties in using the JISCMail Make a Meeting feature, it was agreed that we should continue to use it.

(*Secretary's note: anyone who finds this unsatisfactory may continue to notify their meeting availability to KM by email.*)

10   Date and agenda for next meeting
AM expressed the group's thanks to the University of St Andrews for hosting the visit, for lunch, for the facilities and for the subsequent presentation.

The next meeting would take place in January. KM will co-ordinate the date and venue by email. HEIDS should note that this will incorporate the AGM.   KM

11   Presentation
St Andrews gave a presentation on their 'PC Clinic', outlining their approach to desk-top support.

H Fraser Krauss
A McCreath
K McCabe