Higher Education Information Directors in Scotland (HEIDS)

Approved minutes

Thursday, 13th February 2014
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

Present:

Vice-Chair

Brian Mullins	University of the West of Scotland	BM

Secretary

Fraser Muir	University of Edinburgh	FM
Alan Doyle	APUC	AD
Andy McCreath	RGU	AMcC
Brian Gilmore	University of Edinburgh	BG
Brian Robertson	University of Aberdeen	BR
Dave Graham	Queen Margaret University	DG
David Beards	SFC	DB
David Telford	Edinburgh Napier University	DT
Frances Neilson	JANET UK	FN
Gerry Dougan	Scotland's Colleges	GD
Graham Miller	University of Stirling	GM
Jean Keighren	University of Dundee	JK
Jem Taylor	University of the Highlands & Islands	JT
Mark Cockshoot	Heriot-Watt University	MC
Matthew Alexander	Glasgow Caledonian University	MA
Sandy McDonald	Glasgow University	SMcD
Simon Marsden	University of Edinburgh	SM

In attendance

Louise Kerr	Universities Scotland	LK
Anna Matthews	UCISA	AM
Vicky Fraser (Notetaker)	QMU	

1. **Apologies were received from the following:**

Steve Watt	University of St Andrews
Alun Hughes	University of the Highlands & Islands
Caroline Cochrane	RCS
Catherine McMillan	University of Strathclyde
Colin Watt	Glasgow School of Art
David Hall	RGU
Dean Drew	University of St Andrews
Dean Phillips	University of Aberdeen
Fraser Ross	RCS
Gordon McLoughlin	Glasgow School of Art
John Maher	University of the Highlands & Islands
Kathy McCabe	University of Stirling

Paul Saunders	University of Dundee
Paul Hopkins	Glasgow Caledonian University

2.   Minutes of the previous meeting: **Action**

The minutes of the meeting held at Robert Gordon University on 18th November 2013 were approved subject to the following changes:
- Amendment to 6.1 Carbon footprint returns.

3.   Reports from shared services report progress groups

The Chair asked each of the sub-group convenors to report on any progress with their relevant shared services work.

3a. IT Continuity and Storage; focussing on Research Data

BM suggested changing the title to 'Research Data Management'.

SM concluded that there is an appetite to share best practice, data policies and processes, with less emphasis on physical services or combined services. University of Dundee have offered to host an event. Discussion with Paul Saunders to be progressed.   SM

There was some discussion about the role of the Pure system – currently in place at St Andrew's. SM expressed concern regarding the system ability to manage storage of research data – possibility of business intelligence, but not to manage research. Good as a record of research outputs. BM suggested that there is an appetite for sharing expertise.

JK will take comments and discussion back to Paul Saunders, although not felt   JK
to be viable at moment. It was acknowledged that research data should be shared – although some concern about commercially sensitive data. SM confirmed that the majority is public data and publicly funded. Difficult to mandate as some data is not shareable. BG suggested that governance should enable sharing whilst not increasing risk. Requires buy-in from lead institution. Discussions are being carried out at a UK-level. BG reported that the 'Shed' has encountered problems with governance and investment

FM suggested that Research Data should be kept on agenda to build up conversations re timing, governance and sharing information. APUC service to be shared, with the purpose of understanding and canvasing opinion, not just hosting service.

SMcD commented on using the cloud environment using another company e.g. Amazon. The user pays per click, which could possibly be cheaper? Benefit from profile of Cloud not cost saving. In-house would offer poorer quality, but greater consistency. Microsoft would offer considerably more than individual organisations. Actual costs over 4-5 years with Amazon would come into line. Issues highlighted include space costs issues; costs for storage of S3; pay for data going out. BG commented that it is costly to manipulate data with charges for data transferred in and out.

DT suggested that problems include upload time, and although upfront costs appear relatively inexpensive, once you add in usage the costs increase. Current service is not sufficient. Use of Amazon-type vendors presents considerable challenges.

3b. Collaboration tools

AMcC expressed thanks to BG and SM's involvement. There was a suggestion of an event to share/promote good practice. A questionnaire has been sent out to gauge a) interest in event, and b) what areas to be explored further.

SM to analyse feedback – there have been seven responses, and others have shown interest – so far around 9-10 interested in event. Interest has filtered down to Office 365. University of Aberdeen have deployed 365 to all staff and students. University of Edinburgh is migrating to some staff – some are using for diary only and not email. There are plans to roll out further.

There was some discussion about migration, and what others have done.

DT expressed interest in an event. MA informed that Glasgow Caledonian University have not yet responded, but Paul Hopkins has strong ideas – PH will be in touch.

MA/PH

No response from University of Dundee yet re event. BG suggested that Microsoft will support and give a presentation at event if asked.

GD informed that Glow intend to implement 365 in Autumn this year – interesting potential of exchange of info with school sector. GD contact is Stephen Grier

FN informed gropup of Nottingham Trent University offering support for Office 365. DG commented on performance issues, and Microsoft support inconsistent – others are experiencing the same.

There was a suggestion of a national 365 group, with a regional focus – there was agreement to take forward. It was felt that 365 is a hot topic, with a short life span – therefore good to include in event.

DT mentioned Jabber v Lync, and has research that he is willing to share.

DT

SM concluded that interest in the event is positive, and will go ahead.

SM

3c&d. Blackboard; licensing and hosting

BM recommended removing item from agenda in future.

SM queried whether a report would be required to close work. Everyone has taken up Blackboard and feedback has been positive. FM to email around to gather feedback. FM/AD to produce a short report (for internal consumption).

FM/AD

3e. Moodle

DT has circulated papers since meeting in November. Progress has been enhanced by FE colleagues; limited HE support on group.

DT updated the group and summarised the papers previously circulated.

Drive forward link to Catalyst. HE members feel that there is a lack of critical mass to deliver – currently Napier, UWS, GCU, Strathclyde. There is a need for greater engagement from HE institutions.

GD discussed impact of regionalisation – suggestion is to wait 12-18 months before sharing services. Some colleges hosted service elsewhere. FE have

significant investment in Moodle. GD aims to persuade sector to engage.

RGU and Glasgow plan to engage with group. AMcC congratulated group on progress so far and commented on need to share expertise/develop resource. However it was felt that progress would be limited until the group had greater clarity on requirements of the sector and that needed input from more institutions

AMcC & SMcD

DT recommended that group need come to shared understanding in order to support Catalyst. Plan to meet more regularly – DT to circulate dates of upcoming meetings. All representatives of Moodle institutions are strongly encouraged to engage with the group.

DT

Discussion on shared service strands
DB informed meeting that Government have requested sector response, and will be guided by discussion today. Universities are leading public sector.

DB will respond to Government re regional possibilities on behalf of HEIDS.

DB

Aberdeen award re exemplary Regional Data Centre. Concerns were expressed re the potential drive towards national data centre if regional is successful.

Aspiration for Public Sector appears to be 6 data centres - 3x2 tiers. The group expressed some doubt at the prospect of 6.

BR mentioned the possibility of achieving Regional centres for public services – different drive/funding streams. Aberdeen had a number of common aims/needs, timescale and trust, and seized the opportunity.

JT commented that UHI could not use the same model, and felt that a regional centre couldn't work everywhere, as regions will only be able to take advantage of opportunities if/when possible.

It was felt that organisations will make changes at different times and will take the most appropriate action at the time, sharing where possible to save money. People are willing, but will not share if it will cost more or cannot due to neighbouring organisations not being ready. Universities are charities and therefore different to other public sector organisations. Can encourage, but cannot insist or impose changes. Demand is greater and needs are different in Public Sector.

4. **USET forward plan for efficiencies**
    BM circulated papers prior to meeting and summarised the request for members. Deadline for HEIDS response is 21/2/14.

    The group discussed various initiatives and strands on this topic. Members were asked to feed back to BM any initiatives that were considered relevant for forwarding to USET on behalf of HEIDS.

BM/All

5   **IT security; data loss from within**
    JK informed meeting that Paul Saunders is involved in a week of events re information security at the University of Dundee. JK sought input on the following issues:
    1. Security threat re increasing use of email for business, and the use of email to store info. Issues of encrypting; separate addresses for staff/students to prevent accidental emails; thoughts on use of own devices.

2. Security event management.

BG described the need to accept that people will use their own devices. Organisations can attempt to advise staff not to send personal information, but cannot stop.

MC commented that we cannot stop BYOD, all that organisations can do is implement policies and guidance and provide equipment if staff are expected to work away from institution. If staff use their own then institution can wipe if compromised – there is a need to make people more aware of risks. Concerns exist over the ability to wipe computers by accident.

The group discussed experiences at their own institutions and the need to work with staff to help them understand the risks and issues in this area. Discussion continued on technologies used or being investigated by members. The group concluded that a blended approach of "hearts and minds" and technology offers the best chance of success.

JK update the group on a regional initiative – 'stealth watch'. Share experience and ideas, but perhaps not services. AD updated the group on a possible shared procurement for security event management. BM to add to USET return.

JK/All

DT sought advice regarding a recent change of auditors, and their advice to scan devices and change passwords every 3 months Recommendation to look at JANET password advice.

It was agreed that security is an ongoing thread and should be included on Agenda in future.

FM

6. Reports from groups
6.1 SFC

DB updated the group on MOOCs and funding for projects with OU, Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. Plans for all Universities to engage over next 3 years. Online learning scheduled for delivery May 2014.

6.2 UNIVERSITIES SCOTLAND

LK updated the group on USET meeting – agreed priorities. New network, SHEIN – collaboration of lean management, to coordinate mapping. Establish advisory network. SFC meeting EAUC – carbon footprint.

FM briefed members on a meeting hosted by US on behalf of HEIDS also attended by representatives for Estates and HR.

6.3 JISC

DB reported on recent consultation. No response from Scottish Universities. Representative of institution should be aware and able to engage and give views re JISC. Start discussions internally regarding awareness and finance.

AM gave feedback on response to consultation with Executive Committee. Scotland well represented.

An official correspondent for Jisc matters will be required for future meetings.

6.4 JANET UK

FN updated the group on relevant initiatives within Janet UK. FN asked feedback on topics of interest for the strategic/technical day in June.

All

The recent Aberdeen event is available on website, within the JANET events page.

6.5 SMCG/SWAN

FN updated the group regarding SWAN noting that deployment had been delayed due to an issue with procurement.

6.6 RSCs

There was no update from the RSC representative.

6.7 SCURL/SCONUL

There was a request for any volunteers to take forward. FM to discuss with colleagues.

FM

6.8 UCISA

AM updated the group on relevant activities within UCISA. The annual conference will be held in Brighton. An update to the Information Security toolkit was being developed. Guidelines around use of social media for UCISA members were in progress.

6.9 APUC/Procurement Scotland

AD is looking for volunteers for procurement and technical representation around two activities; MC and SM to advise re participation.

AD/MC/SM

Shared LMS is undergoing consultancy with constituents. There appears to be a change of approach towards shared procurement rather than shared service.

6.10 FE/HE ICT Sector oversight

There was no update from the FE/HE ICT Sector oversight representative on this item. However the group discussed a number of relevant items under this heading including updates from FE sector regarding student records.

7 AOCB

As there was no other competent business the vice-Chair concluded the meeting. The Secretary advised the group that the next meeting will take place at the University of Aberdeen on 29 May.

Other dates to be confirmed soon: September; UHI, Inverness and November; University of Strathclyde.