

HEIDS
Higher Education Information Directors in Scotland
Minutes of HEIDS Meeting
Held on Friday 13 September 2002
Heriot Watt University

Present:-

Chair		
Tom Mortimer	Glasgow School of Art (GSoA)	TM
Secretary		
Paul Dean	Napier University (NU)	PD
Malcolm Bain	University of St Andrews (UoStA)	MB
Stuart Brough	University of Strathclyde (UoSe)	SB
Martin Forte	Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU)	MF
Brian Gilmore	University of Edinburgh (UoE)	BG
Fraser Greig	University of Abertay (UoAy)	FG
Gerry McCauley	University of Paisley (UoP)	GM
Richard Murphy	University of Dundee (UoD)	RM
Tony Osborne	University of Stirling (UoSg)	TO
David Rundell	Heriot Watt University (HWU)	DR

1. Apologies

David Beards	SHEFC	DB
Morag Carnall	Queen Margaret Univ. Coll. (QMUC)	MC
Bill Harvey	SHEFC	BH
Alun Hughes	UHI Millennium Institute (UHI)	AH
Gordon Hunt	RSAMD	GH
Linda McCormick	University of Glasgow (UoG)	LM
Andrew McCreath	Robert Gordon University (RGU)	AM
Jim Mather	Robert Gordon University (RGU)	JM
Graham Prior	University of Aberdeen (UoAn)	GP
Tony Shaw	University of Paisley (UoP)	TS

2. Special Item

Tom Mortimer noted the recent and sudden death of Ian White of Glasgow Caledonian University and recognised his contribution to HEIDS over the last 10 years. Tony Shaw had written to Ian's family on behalf of HEIDS and several members had attended the funeral.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Accepted as a correct record.

4. Matters arising not elsewhere in agenda

Section 3 PD provided RM with a copy of the now updated JISCMAIL list to

allow the updating of the HEIDS web site list.

Section 3 MB has circulated members a report of a meeting hosted by UoStA to discuss a scheme to purchase laptops for students, other institutions present had included RSAMD, UoD, UoSe, UoAy, and UoAn. It was also noted that attempts to obtain commercial sponsorship had not been successful. GSA is also looking at a scheme and it is thought RGU are doing similar. UoSe are now coming to the end of a major pilot scheme using laptops and a wireless LAN within their business school that has been very successful.

5. Setting up an Information Security Policy at Heriot Watt University

DR explained to the meeting how HWU had tackled a project to set up such a policy in a way so that the whole University would accept it. There are 3 levels to this policy each with a related document covering: -

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Corporate IT Security Policy | - The Why (Now ready for endorsement) |
| Corporate Standards Manual | - The What (1 st draft complete) |
| Corporate Procedures Manual | - The How (Structure outlined) |

The standards manual is system independent but the procedures manual will contain specific details for specific operating systems and equipment.

An open forum had carried out most of the work and it was felt that there was around another 6 months work to do. Senior management and the auditors are supporting the project, and this support is key. The policy is already being applied and it allows the central service to protect the core network from problems within individual schools that operate devolved networks at HWU.

SB explained how the UoSe policy works with the central service responsible for the network up to the 'point on the wall' throughout the University. From time to time the central service runs tests of the whole network to identify possible problems with departmental servers which if found are notified to the responsible departments.

TM had recently attended a commercial presentation on related topics and distributed copies a booklet titled 'Cyberliability – An employer's guide to legal liability arising from business use of e-mail and the Internet' that had been prepared for Iomart by Theodore Goddard. It seems to be an extremely useful document. (TM may still have some more copies if any other members wish to contact him)

6. MAN Re-procurement/Scottish MANs Video Conferencing Network

The projects are now almost complete. GSA is already running training courses for users on the use of the new video conferencing service.

7. Reports from Other Groups

a) SMCG

The group is due to meet in w/c 16 September. The agenda is not extensive.

b) SHEFC

Unfortunately SHEFC had not been able to be represented at the meeting but BH had reported that he had no particular input at this time.

The meeting discussed the 2 recent requests for updates from institutions on projects, i.e. video conferencing (SMVCN) and the knowledge economy (KETF). This led to a

discussion as to where HEIDS thought it would be appropriate for future central funding to be provided. One area discussed was to recreate the MAN and JANET resilience that had existed previously. It was noted that although MTBFs are increasing, the times to fix are also increasing possibly due to the reducing number of staff employed by telecom suppliers. TM will write to SHEFC outlining the views of the meeting on resilience

Action: - TM

c) JCN

BG reported on the recent meeting of the JCN. There was some discussion about the current financial situation of WorldCom (they provide the core of SuperJANET 4). The possibility of supplier as well as technical resilience was discussed as an option for the procurement of SuperJANET 5.

Future network charging will be based on total institution income as reported to HESA. BG commented that this would be beneficial for most Scottish institutions although not for the UoE. The assumptions that the network charging would continue to increase by 35% a year may now be in doubt. It was felt HEIDS should remind SHEFC that if this subject was being discussed it was the opinion of HEIDS that as the charge no longer includes any incentive to control traffic the whole charge should be top sliced, TM will include this point in his letter to SHEFC.

Action: - TM

It has also been agreed that MANs can host Sponsored Connections and could charge for this service. The Pathfinder project of Digital Scotland may impact on this and BG would like any feedback on this before November.

Action: - All involved in Pathfinder

The UK 'Chairs of MANs' group is to look at long term financing of MANs.

d) EUNIS

MB reported on this European conference. The agenda had contained items both for computing academics and computing service providers hence there were probably too many papers making it difficult to select the best sessions to attend.

8. Any Other Competent Business

a) Sharing Services

A group of 6 institutions (thought to be UoE, UoG, GCU, GSA, HWU, UoSe) are, with SHEFC funding, looking at whether there would be benefits in sharing support services, including IT. The meeting was cautious about this initiative considering the problems with the MAC initiative and recent out-sourcing projects. It was thought that there might be potential benefits in the joint provision of services such as payroll that are fairly standard. (Since the meeting it has become clear there are 2 such groups as NU is also involved in a SE Scotland group)

The members were not aware of any recent progress in the joint working project between UoStA and UoD. It was also noted that there had been discussions between the UoAn and RGU but no one present at the meeting was aware of progress.

b) UK Computing Plus

There was little knowledge of this project but it was felt it might be of interest to members.

9. AGM

a) Chairman's Report

TM had hoped to present a chairman's report but time did not allow for this.

b) Election of Officers

Neither TM nor PD was willing to continue in their current posts.

PD had indicated that he was willing to stand for the post of Chair and GH (who had not been able to attend this meeting) had indicated that he was willing to stand for the post of Secretary. As there were no other proposals PD and GH were duly elected.

c) Vote of Thanks

RM proposed a vote of thanks to TM and PD for their 3 years service.

10. Dates of Next Meetings

GH had proposed that meeting dates should be set for a whole year and this was agreed. All the following dates are Wednesdays.

20 November	2002	University of Dundee
26 February	2003	University of Strathclyde
4 June	2003	University of Stirling
3 September	2003	University of Edinburgh

Part 2 Presentation by Lawrie Phipps of TechDis

LP explained that TechDis, based in York, is a JISC funded service to help staff of institutions to provide the required services to be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act. He made a wide ranging and interesting presentation, a few pertinent points are: -

- It is important to understand what the law requires rather than what is desired by some lobby groups. On occasions an assessment of cost versus risk may be appropriate.
- There is no UK case law yet but it is expected that some disability charities will want to force early cases to set precedent and publicise the requirement.
- Institutions should be careful not to over draw attention to special facilities for disabled students as this 'over labelling' itself could be seen as discrimination.

More details about TechDis can be found at: - <http://techdis.ac.uk/>