HEIDS

Higher Education Information Directors in Scotland

Minutes of HEIDS Meeting
Held on Wednesday 20 November 2002
University of Dundee

Present:

Chair		
Paul Dean	Napier University (NU)	PD
Secretary		
Gordon Hunt	RSAMD	GH
Malcolm Bain	University of St Andrews (UoStA)	MB
David Beards	SHEFC	DB
Stuart Brough	University of Strathclyde (UoSe)	SB
Louise Garden	Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU)	LG
Brian Gilmore	University of Edinburgh (UoE)	BG
Fraser Greig	University of Abertay (UoAy)	FG
Alun Hughes	UHI Millennium Institute (UHI)	AH
Linda McCormick	University of Glasgow (UoG)	LM
Andrew McCreath	Robert Gordon University (RGU)	AM
Tom Mortimer	Glasgow School of Art (GSoA)	TM
Richard Murphy	University of Dundee (UoD)	RM
Graham Pryor	University of Aberdeen (UoAn)	GP
Alan Richardson	University of Stirling (UoSg)	AR
Tony Shaw	University of Paisley (UoP)	TS

1. Apologies

Jim Buchan	UKERNA	JB
Morag Carnall	Queen Margaret University College (QMUC)	MC
Tony Osborne	University of Stirling (UoSg)	TO
David Rundell	Heriot Watt University (HWU)	DR

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Spelling of Graham Pryor's name corrected.

Item 9 (b) amended to read "TM and PD felt that after three years it was time for some new blood and they were therefore standing down from their posts".

With these corrections the minutes were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

Section 4   RM circulated a copy of the contact information from the website for updating.

Section 7c   TM wrote to DB and will circulate a copy of the letter. BG has received no feedback on Pathfinder but would still welcome comments.

4. MAN Reprocurement/SMVCN

a. Requirements Analysis (Resilience)

MB reported on a discussion led by Chris Rusbridge at SMCG about potential disruption from faults given that resilience has been reduced in the reprocurement. SMCG wants to know from institutions what they want in terms of resilience.

AM commented that connectivity is absolutely critical where institutions are delivering external services.

It was agreed that the removal of the Glasgow-Edinburgh link had substantially reduced resilience. DB said that it was discontinued rather than removed, the decision having been taken to optimise bandwidth. It is open to the MANs to pay for extra links if they wish.

The reactivation of the Glasgow-Edinburgh link was thought to be a good idea. DB said that there was no money available for the current year but that the MANs should consider putting a proposal to SHEFC. Institutions may have to fund it themselves if they want it. The SPARC network procurement may provide a way forward via collaboration in two years' time.

There was general agreement that a risk management exercise should be undertaken. The MANs have to provide risk assessments to UKERNA in any case. LM agreed to co-ordinate a technical group made up of one technical and one 'political' representative from each MAN to undertake the risk assessment exercise. A report should be produced by early February with a view to putting a proposal to SHEFC by April. DB emphasised the importance of doing a good job rather than rushing to meet deadlines when money may not be available.

Action: LM

b. Pathfinder Projects

A press release on the two Pathfinder Projects was circulated for information.

5. Reports from other groups

a. SHEFC

DB reported that indemnities for FE Colleges in MAN contracts had been agreed. A joint e-learning working group has been formed by SHEFC and SFEFC to report by March 2003 on what is being done to encourage e-learning approaches.

DB had received most of the requested reports on the SMVCN reprocurement and KETF funding from institutions – three were still outstanding. It is clear that the sector has made substantial advances in video-conferencing. In the KETF area projects have included the

networking of student residences and firewall upgrades. DB will circulate his report to the list when complete.

Action: DB

b. JISC

A meeting has been held of all the Scottish members of JISC committees and another will be held soon.

c. JNUG

BG reported on a meeting that considered the effectiveness of the user groups – some are working better than others. A paper on possible ways forward will be submitted to JCN. There is not much time left to comment on the latest JANET SLA.

d. UKERNA/JCN

It was agreed that LM's risk assessment working group should consider what would happen should the main network supplier cease to trade at any time.

BG reported on network charging. JISC needs to collect £5 million and there will be no rebate. Institutions where the charge would go down under the new mechanism will be kept at their current level of charging in order to subsidise those institutions whose charges will increase in the first year. The increases are capped at 68%. A letter should be coming out soon to confirm this.

JCN also discussed UKERNA's development activities. Sponsored connections are a possibility but institutions will need agreement from their MAN before agreeing to such a connection. The MAN may wish to make an additional charge. MANs will assess the potential impact of institutions taking on high bandwidth connections that may affect the MAN.

e. RSCs

RSCs are facing a financial shortfall owing to the capping of funding. It is unfortunate that this affects institutions who still have staff to pay even if the funding is reduced.

f. SCURL/SCONUL

GH reported that the SCURL Business Committee is eager to explore links between the two groups. It was agreed to invite the SCURL Development Director to make a presentation to a HEIDS meeting on potential synergies.

Action: GH

6. Reports from meetings attended

a. JANET Networks Launch

MB reported on this event, organised by the SFC and UKERNA. There was a good mix of talks from HE, FE and schools. Of particular interest was the SPARC project, a Scottish Executive project to create a schools network, possibly using the MANs' infrastructure.

b. UCISA MISG Conference

LM and TS both found the MISG conference at Dunblane useful. The format allows plenty of time to talk to exhibitors in detail.

PD asked for everyone to reply to the UCISA groups survey to ensure that the groups develop as the members wish.

7. Shared Security Services

TS introduced his paper on the problems for institutions in handling incidents of alleged computer misuse. These need to be dealt with by senior staff who often don't have the time or specialist knowledge. TS suggested that there may be scope for collaboration between institutions in the external provision of skills that we don't have and don't have the time or inclination to obtain ourselves. There was general agreement that this is a problem area. BG commented that UKERNA do not wish to get involved in this area. The cost of outsourcing could be significant. There is not a high incidence of these problems but they are time consuming. TS said that Paisley will keep looking for an external audit service. TM suggested that services offered by iomart may be worth investigating. Napier has had a "raid" exercise from Deloitte Touche and PD would be interested in working with two other institutions on a reciprocal "raid".

8. Engagement with FE ICT Managers

RM reported on a fledgling FE ICT managers' group chaired by Mike Turpie of Perth College. PD agreed to invite Mike Turpie to come to a HEIDS meeting and discuss how we might engage with the FE ICT Managers. DB agreed to pursue this via SFEU. LM noted that similar attempts by UCISA had been unsuccessful in the past.

Action: PD

9. Any Other Competent Business

a. Requests for supplier presentations

PD suggested that supplier presentations at HEIDS meetings should continue to be separate from the main meeting and organised by the host institution not HEIDS. In order to avoid apparent HEIDS endorsement of products it is probably best not to have the supplier sponsor lunch. There was general agreement that this was the best way to proceed.

b.   MS Campus 3.1

SB asked what other members were doing about MS Campus 3.1. Strathclyde are currently passing the cost on to departments. There were various approaches in different institutions.

c.   Payment Protection

MB asked if members were interested in a workshop on what St Andrew's are doing with online payment protection. Several members were interested in such a workshop.

d.   Freedom of Information Act

GH drew members' attention to the JISC senior management briefing paper on the FoI Act. This refers to the English Act but is still useful as the Scottish Act will not differ substantially.

10. Portals

TS gave a well-received presentation on Paisley's introduction of student and staff portals. The PowerPoint slides from the presentation will be placed on the HEIDS website.

11. Dates of future meetings

5 March 2003	University of Strathclyde
4 June 2003	University of Stirling
3 September 2003	University of Edinburgh