

IT at the Robert Gordon University

HEIDS

26th November 2003

RGU at a glance

- 10,000 students
- 1,300 members of staff
- Moved to 2 Campuses over last 10 years
- 2,500 desktops
- Turnover of around £70m
- Key strengths:
 - Engineering (oil & gas & renewables) & Computing
 - Health and Welfare (nursing, pharmacy, social care)
 - Business School
 - Architecture, construction
 - Design – Grays School of Art

Campus Map



Topics

- Key IT Developments over past 4 years
- Current IT priorities
- IT staffing and expenditure

At the turn of the Millenium

- Significant IT service performance issues.
- Dated systems (e-mail, web, library).
- Fragmented Campus.
- But good commitment from Executive Group to resolve these issues.
- And groundwork laid for some key improvements.

Strategic Priorities 2000-2004

- Expand the use of multimedia technologies in teaching and learning.
- Expand virtual learning environments for distance and on-campus students. Teach to a global audience.
- Improve online presence on the web, course information, online enrolment. "Shop Window"
- Improve information flow.
- Use technology to improve efficiency of administrative services.



To achieve these priorities

- Invest in underlying infrastructure.
- Staff development to improve IT skills.
- Radically improve quality of delivery of IT Services (→ Mission Critical).
- Increase levels of remote access.
- Work across the University to common standards and approaches.
- Invest in key systems.



1999 - 2000

- Launch of the Virtual Campus.
- Publication of 5 year IT Strategy.
- Restructuring of IT Department (IT and Network Services merged with Business Information Systems).



2000 - 2001

- Web Team formed, new web site launched Sept 2001.
- First BPR Initiatives started, focussing on enquiries, applications and admissions.
- New e-mail system implemented (Exchange 2000).
- Faculty of Management Intranet implemented and wins UCISA national award.
- New central computer room commissioned.



2001 - 2002

- Web site now includes online prospectus, course and module database.
- Long standing start of term issues with Novell resolved.
- First phase of online matriculation implemented.
- Faculty of Management Intranet rolled out across University – “iNET”
- Commendation received at Scottish Enterprise “Winners on the Web”
- New Library System selected, and project commenced.
- Firewall security system and remote access facility implemented.
- Faculty of Health and Social Care building commissioned, with new integrated voice and data network.



2002 - 2003

- New Library System successfully implemented.
- Second phase of matriculation process implemented bringing full online enrolment to all students.
- Apply online, and online review for direct applicants implemented. Direct link from online prospectus on web site.
- Desktop modernisation process implemented to upgrade Novell network and put Windows XP on all desktops across the University.
- Major upgrade to Arelon finance system completed.
- GPAS Printing Accounting System implemented across the University.
- New video conferencing suite implemented with additional SHEFC funding.
- Improvements to communications network in School of Engineering.
- Web blocking software implemented to prevent access to inappropriate sites.
- Online electronic course and module questionnaires implemented.



ISO 9001 Accreditation

- Achieved this year.
- Covers service delivery.



it's for you.

it's installation

it's maintenance

it's administration

it's consultation

it's support



Key Achievements

- Performance issues resolved.
- Senior Management confidence in IT Services.
- Service delivery and project delivery major improvements.
- Huge improvements to networks on the back of 2 major buildings projects.
- Funding arrangements improved.



Challenges

- Huge expectations and demands on resources and funds – prioritisation is key.
- Supporting growing installation of systems and services with a fixed budget.
- Keeping pace, in an affordable way, with advances in technology.
- A relatively “corporate” University, but still a few “Fiefdoms” who like to do things differently.



Technology Snapshot

- Novell network base & ZENworks for application delivery.
- Exchange e-mail System.
- Windows XP on most desktops, MAC’s in Grays School of Art.
- School of Computing is same but different.
- Home-grown Virtual Campus and web environment (Windows servers, Oracle and Cold Fusion).



MIS Applications

- Rebus HR System.
- Arelon Finance System.
- Sirsi Unicorn Library System.
- SITS student records system, with significant add-ons.
- Outsourced payroll
- Bespoke systems for enrolment, accommodation management.



Key Priorities looking Forward

- Risk management and Disaster Recovery.
- Server and network capacity.
- Greater access for students to web-based services (Portal)
- Remote access, wireless, student using their own equipment. Thin Client?
- Improvements to business processes.



2003-2004

- Network Halls of Residence + IP Telephony
- SITS e-Vision.
- Student Portal.
- Performance Management System (data warehouse).
- HR e-enablement (recruitment, contract management, application processing).
- Communication network upgrades, including a “proper” wireless implementation.



2004 - 2005

- Major server upgrade / SAN to establish second data centre & DR capability.
- Document Management System?
- Major upgrade to Aberdeen Business School Comms network
- Further HR e-enablement



2005 and beyond

- Digital signature/encryption
- Upgrade to financial systems, e-procurement and streamlining of processes.
- Upgrade to virtual learning environments.
- Move towards more remote/flexible access.
- Rollout of thin client, if business case established.
- Upgrade to e-mail system – text messaging? Integrated Fax? Instant Messaging? Desktop video-conferencing? What will be state of the art?
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2005 and Beyond

- . . .
- Ongoing server and network upgrades.
- Possible complete switchover to IP telephony, depending on lifetime of PBX.
- Enhanced data warehouse
- Replace HR/Payroll system?



Staffing and Finance

- I'll talk around this.
 - IT Services
 - Faculty based IT Technicians
 - Revenue Budget
 - Capital Budget
 - Estates work
 - Desktop Replacement



End of presentation