Higher Education Information Directors in Scotland (HEIDS)

Approved Minutes

Thursday September 9th 2010
University of Strathclyde

Present:

Chair

Alun Hughes	UHI Millennium Institute	AH

Secretary

Fraser Muir	Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	FM
Moriamo Oduyemi	University of Abertay	MO
Malcolm Bain	St Andrews University	MB
David Beards	Scottish Funding Council	DB
Stuart Brough	Strathclyde University	SB
Caroline Cochrane	RSAMD	CC
Gerry Costello	SAC	GC
Paul Dean	Edinburgh Napier University	PD
Gerry Dougan	SFEU	GD
Heidi Fraser-Krauss	St Andrews University	HFK
Brian Gilmore	University of Edinburgh	BG
Sandy MacDonald	University of Glasgow	SaM
John Maher	UHI Millennium Institute	JM
Simon Marsden	University of Edinburgh	SM
Kathleen Maurer	Glasgow Caledonian University	KM
Stephen McAinsh	Procurement Scotland	SMcA
Sean McDonald	Heriot-Watt University	SMcD
Kathy McCabe	University of Stirling	KM
Catherine McMillan	University of Strathclyde	CM
Tom Mortimer	University of Dundee	TM
Stuart McFarlane	Edinburgh College of Art	SMcF
Brian Mullins	University of the West of Scotland	BM
Frances Neilson	JANET UK	FN
Matt Prowd	APUC	MP
Brian Robertson	University of Aberdeen	BR
David Rundell	Heriot-Watt University	DR
Darren Thompson	Universities Scotland	DT
Mark Toole	University of Stirling	MT

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

Darren Gibb	APUC
Frazer Greig	Abertay University
Peter Glennie	The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen
Paul Healey	University of Aberdeen
Kathy McCabe	University of Stirling
Dean Phillips	University of Aberdeen

Andrew McCreath   The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen

The chair welcomed new members to the group and to their first meeting of HEIDS.

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

The minutes of the meeting held at University of Aberdeen on Friday 14th May 2010 were approved.

3.   **Matters arising:**

HFK gave an update on the extended characters (Unicode) issues and changes reported at the previous meeting.

4.   **Shared Services**

MT introduced the shared services paper from the working group circulated previously. In particular highlighting the following points and questions: is the level of FE involvement appropriate? Is the level of funding appropriate?

The chair asked for Universities Scotland viewpoint. DT reported that US is compiling submission to the Scottish Government later this week on efficiencies in sector. Radical options should be considered on restructuring. DT drew reference to a paper by Professor David Bell at Stirling University. Within the IT context, US is looking for examples of planned activity; they are aware of some, e.g. SHEDL. Specifically in terms of cost saving measures.

AH reported that he is representing HEIDS on the US group producing the document. There is a willingness of the sector to look at radical alternatives but there is a danger of complacency.

DB reported that SFC would class this as a small grant and would therefore likely avoid full horizon funding. However the paper was missing reference to green issues, e.g. green ICT.

The group then discussed specific example of shared datacentres, the feasibility study put forward by St Andrews and Abertay. SMcA reported that a shared Scottish datacentre is a hot topic within Procurement Scotland. The group discussed several existing shared datacentres; Eduserv as an example and the relative lack of take-up of this service.

TM reported that the UCISA exec is engaging with the BUFDG and it was suggested that HEIDS should do the same with SUFDG through the chair. The secretary and chair had already received a communication from the SUFDG chair looking to engage the group. The secretary would invite the chair of SUFDG to attend a meeting to discuss options. VAT was still an issue for the sector and a barrier to take up. From 2011 the savings would have to be greater than 20% to offset VAT.   **FM**

The group then discussed likely candidates for the consultancy and it was hoped that a retired/ex-IT Director would be the a good candidate to undertake the work.

MT reported on the parallels with the SCONUL shared LMS work. This work would now concentrate on ERM specifically. The larger project was rejected on the basis of requiring cash up front to fund the work. However, could the use of cloud services, e.g. G-Cloud, be used to avoid up front infrastructure costs.

The group then discussed how JANET UK could and should be the enabler in any shared services since this is what connects us. It would be raised in the

afternoon session with JANET UK representatives.

CM suggested that the IT sector needed to be in a position to give a solution to our Finance colleagues, rather than have one pushed upon us.

GD spoke on the position on FE sector. In particular highlighting their possible involvement in GLOW2 as a shared VLE. Driving force is better learning applications and business need, however colleges as a sector are more similar than HE institutions, therefore perhaps easier to progress.

MT agreed to revise the paper ASAP for submission to SFC.   MT

5.   **JANET update**
        5.1 Report from HEIDS SLA group
        BG reported back on behalf of the group and introduced the report previously circulated to the group. In particular highlighting the relative importance of the JANET SLA in light of current discussions regarding the RNOs. It was noted that the SLA is actually between JANET UK and JISC, not with institutions. It was calculate that the SLA would allow up to 2.5 days of downtime without breaking the agreement and that this was considered unacceptable.

The group discussed resilience and the importance of multiple diverse connections into their institutions. In particular, the impact of any shared services would demand resilient robust connections between institutions. It was feared that in constrained times JANET would deliver to the SLA and not above as it does now.

MT reported the perspective of the JIR group, in particular highlighting the move to SuperJANET 6 and that all non-IP services would stop.

FN reported that v4 of the JANET SLA is currently on the website and welcomed feedback. JANET would be receptive to receiving a list of what we want as a sector and a view would be taken on whether it can be afforded. FN also highlighted the reality and how this differs from the SLA in a very positive way. FN also stated that JANET would not remove existing resilient connections however the JISC currently sets the minimum standards with the RNO delivering above and beyond that standard to what it can afford.

The group then discussed and agreed on the importance of local knowledge residing in the MANs and this results in understanding of local needs and delivery of appropriate services.

AH then concluded that there was consensus amongst the group that the SLA   FN
proposed in the paper circulated by BG is appropriate and should be considered by JANET UK.

5.2 Consultation of changes to the JANET connection policy and terms
MT introduced the information circulated previously, in particular drawing the groups attention to paragraphs 31 and 32. The group was also invited to consider the changes in terms of Business and Community Engagement (BCE) and in particular that reuse of the connection should be charged appropriately to avoid challenges on "state aid".

FN reported that JANET is looking closely at the BCE agenda, recognising the demands being placed on the sector to commercialise. There was a change in ethos, placing emphasis on the institution to decide on appropriate use as long as changes were reflecting the market rate correctly.

5.3 AbMAN progress report
BR reported on progress with AbMAN. In particular expressing that it had been an overall positive experience so far and that, perhaps due to the fact that it was one of the first to move, JANET were being particularly flexible in the transition, however there was a learning curve for JANET in dealing with institutions directly.

BR reported that on first analysis it seems to represent good value however this needs to be monitored. One potential sticking point was the initial need for JANET to require unlimited liability from the sponsored connections. Something which institutions would not be able to commit to.

Overall it was felt to be a painless and worthwhile process.

6   Update on current procurement activities
Representatives from APUC and Procurement Scotland presented on current activities. The group was updated on the IT Managed Services framework procurement.

The group was invited to participate on relevant steering groups to ensure   DG/AH
representation and were invited to contact SMcA/DG if interested. In particular there is currently no representation on the NCF. It was agreed that this should be rectified and representatives would be sought if none were forthcoming.

7   N/A
The secretary apologises for the lack of item 7 due to Microsoft Word auto numbering.

8.   Reports

8.1   SFC (DB)
MT would be attending the JANET stakeholder meeting.

8.2   Universities Scotland (DT)
Darren Thompson has taken over the liaison role within US.

8.3   JISC (AH/MT)
No report.

8.4   JCN/JANET UK (AH/MT)
This was handled elsewhere in the meeting

8.5   RSCs (CC)
It was reported that the Scotland RSCs are currently out to tender.

8.6   SCURL/SCONUL (FM/MT)
The group was updated on the progress with the latest round of SHEDL negotiations and were notified of the SCURL walk in access to e-resources project.

MT reported on the SCONUL LMS project which was now going to concentrate on electronic resource management (ERM).

8.7   UCISA CISG
The group received a report on the current CISG activities, in particular the

Business Process Review event and the next CISG conference to be held in Brighton.

8.8   UCISA Executive
The group was informed that the next UCISA conference would be held in Edinburgh at the EICC.

9   N/A
The secretary apologises for the lack of item 9 due to Microsoft Word auto numbering.

10   Round table
The round table update was postponed due to lack of time.

11   AOCB
MB and DR both announced that they would be retiring and the group formally thanked them for their contribution to HEIDS over the years.

12   Venue and Agenda for the next meeting
The next meeting would be held in St Andrews in Jan/Feb 2011. Dates to be circulated.

Agenda items would be carried over from previous meetings, however it would be the group AGM.

Presentation
Colleagues from the University of Strathclyde presented on their Moodle implementation project.

Fraser Muir
21/10/10