

Notes, ICT Strategy open meeting, 18 May 2006

Ref: CHE/24/42

Paul Jeffrey's presentation

1. What is 'local'? – Anything not funded centrally.
2. How will the 3 layers be defined in practice? – Don't want to predetermine but e.g. there are 10 email servers across the University and it ought to be possible to address the question of whether in the round this is the best number. But no-one can be forced to relinquish a local service against their wish.
3. Level of budget for the ICT Forum? – Table 6 quotes £250k from outside sources but this is illustrative only – don't want to try to predict this.
4. Single sign-on should be extended to a single directory of systems, etc., to avoid current discrepancies between e.g. colleges and departments. – Agreed; needs to be developed via liaison between departments and colleges, and ICT Forum should help with this.
5. Replicate the same model within divisions and departments, where need is arguably greater? – Possibly, but who has the right to say what happens within divisions and departments? (??) The plan has drawn on the Manchester model of a single person within a large unit to co-ordinate support.
6. How will project management/control relate to the structure? – Paper to GPC with an identified need and supporting case. GPC may fund a pilot study. Then project board set up, led by the sponsoring department(s) – they would also own the process, not the project board.
7. User Forum? – Yes, separate from the ICT Forum, intended to ensure that the structure provides what users want.
8. Ownership: who would own projects such as Osiris? – For Osiris, finance departments both centrally and locally, i.e. not owned by central admin or business systems. Similarly, Isidore should be owned by those responsible for the admissions processes.
9. Seems to be systems-based. – Identity management and data sets are part of phase 2 (implementation) rather than of the strategic plan. The outcome of implementing the plan is likely to be a call for an Information Strategy.
10. In practice there will be other channels of communication than those identified in the triangle e.g. divisional and college committees. – Agreed.

Panel discussion

11. (AT) Must have a good definition of user requirements – underpins the whole exercise. Also need better governance structures/ mechanisms to support good decision-making. Also, must have on-going input on user requirements – constantly evolving, not static.
12. (DP) Sense of isolation in the divisions, hard to communicate ideas to 'central' University. Common problem of management of information. Need an information strategy

and clarification on ownership of data. Key elements of the plan for delivering the strategy will be budgets, co-ordinated decision-making and the appointment of an ICT Director.

13. Say more about the role of the ICT Director? – Agreed to add more.

14. Osiris, Isidore: goalposts moved during roll-out; any checks and balances for the future? – Yes, see Appendix B. In the past, too much focus on the project board; new model is more devolved. The sponsoring department must be able to insist on customisation of the system to fit the process (rather than the other way round) as long as they can make a reasonable case.

15. Have SUMS been used to provide an external assessment? – Not yet, though external input from Reading, Manchester, Warwick, Chicago, Cornell, industry. Also, a member of the internal auditors is on the SSG.

16. To whom does the ICT Director report? – Will chair the GPC which reports up to the ICT Sub-Committee of PRAC.

17. Information Strategy? – Yes, agreed, needed, but not encouraged to develop one by the previous V-C.

18. Is the number of ICT staff really 600? – Yes, appears to be so (after checking carefully).

19. Is the estimated level of expenditure high enough, e.g. with regard to (i) new buildings and (ii) research groups? – Good point, tried to be realistic on both of these but possibly still too low.

Conclusion

General support for the draft but must have more detail of the ICT Director.