

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Information Policy and Strategy Committee
held on 27 February 2013

Present: Professor T Jones (Chair),
Professor M Knights,
Dr K Leppard,
Ms T MacKinnon,
Dr S Mann
Professor M Rodger,
Professor J Smith,
Professor S Swain,
Professor P Thomas,
Deputy Registrar,
Director of Campus Services.

Apologies: Mr J Entwistle,
Professor C Hughes,
Professor D Singer,
University Librarian,
Professor P Winstanley.

In Attendance: Ms J Findlay (Secretary), Head of Platform Engineering & Deputy
Director of IT Services, Service Owner: Academic Technology Support
and the Creative Digital Communications Manager (for item 28/12-13).

23/12-13 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 8 January 2013 be approved.

24/12-13 Proposed Revisions to the Terms of Reference of E-Learning Steering Group
(minute 22/12-13 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

- (a) That members of ISPC had considered and approved the proposed revisions to the terms of reference of E-Learning Steering Group by correspondence subsequent to the previous meeting held on 8 January 2013.
- (b) That subsequently, the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, to which the E-Learning Steering Group also reported, had considered and approved the proposed revisions at its meeting held on 31 January 2013.

25/12-13 Virtual Learning Environment (minute 6/12-13 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Director of Campus Services)

- (a) That the Warwick Moodle went live in November 2012 and was being piloted by the School of Life Sciences and the Department of

Chemistry, with positive feedback received to date from both staff and students.

- (b) That an understanding of how Moodle and the other VLE systems could be used was growing within the academic community and that the support team with IT Services was now fully resourced with key relationships with teams across the University beginning to develop.
- (c) That there was, as previously reported, no University requirement for all departments to use Moodle in order that departments be able to choose the 'best fit' solution for their teaching and learning needs from a range of supported tools.

(By the Deputy Registrar)

- (d) That careful consideration should be given to implementation decisions being taken at this early stage to ensure that these would not cause undesirable consequences once the technology matured or so that any legacy issues could be identified and accepted as appropriate.

(By Ms T Mackinnon)

- (e) That attention should be paid to the student experience for those students undertaking study across a number of departments, particularly those on joint degrees, to ensure that their holistic online learning experience was as seamless as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairs of the Faculties be encouraged to raise the issue around joint degrees with the Faculty Joint Degrees Working Groups to facilitate discussion in how as seamless an online learning experience as possible might be provided to students studying across one or more departments.

26/12-13 E-Publishing (minute21/12-13 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

- (a) That subsequent to the strategic discussion at the previous meeting of IPSC, he had met with the Registrar and other senior colleagues to consider next steps with regards to e-publishing at Warwick.
- (b) That consultation was due to begin with the Faculties of Science and Medicine to engage their support in the proposed e-publishing initiatives, noting that the Faculty of Science had raised a number of concerns which were to be addressed prior to the consultation.
- (c) That Professor Knights and the University Librarian would be engaging academic colleagues and others already active in the e-publishing area to inform development of initiative, to communicate messages within their Faculties and to pool and promote existing best practice.
- (d) That IPSC would be updated as developments required.

CONSIDERED:

A memo from the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science, Professor P Thomas, and the Chair of the Faculty of Science IT Committee, Dr K Leppard, summarising concerns raised at the recent Board of the Faculty of Science meeting regarding the roll out of Windows 7 across campus and highlighting specific issues for users within experimental disciplines (IPSC.18/12-13).

REPORTED: (by Dr K Leppard)

- (a) That colleagues within the Faculty of Science had raised significant concerns around the Windows 7 offering in a variety of fora and that despite the range of different service offerings, none appeared to meet the requirements of research science, particularly in terms of the need for a high degree of user flexibility.

(By Professor M Knights)

- (b) That a tangential issue should be recorded around the increased slowness of machines within teaching rooms since the Windows 7 rollout, which was affecting teaching practices.

(By the Director of Campus Services)

- (c) That teaching rooms were a separate issue related to the old Windows XP machines which was exacerbated when a migrated Windows 7 user attempted to log-on to an XP machine, noting that a solution had been identified and was in the process of testing prior to deployment.
- (d) That IT Services acknowledged in December 2012 that the envisaged simplified standard desktop for many more users across campus was unachievable as a result of user feedback and had returned to a more flexible desktop set-up for users.
- (e) That, contrary to the perception in some areas, the ITS support levels remained at the same level and on the same basis as previously provided because it was difficult to provide efficient support for those users with the more flexible set-up as this could have many different configurations and combinations.
- (f) That he remained open to the possibility of providing a full support model for user-defined desktops but noted that the practicality and likelihood of being able to do so was low.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science and the Chair of the Faculty of Science IT Committee communicate the points of clarification set out above to colleagues.
- (b) That the Director of Campus Services and other ITS colleagues continue to engage with the Boards of the Faculty to consider any possible other means to resolve or clarify any additional issues related

to the migration to Windows 7.

28/12-13 FutureLearn Capability

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Service Owner: Academic Technology Support (IT Services) and the Creative Digital Communications Manager setting out proposals as to how the University might scale up its capability via the FutureLearn initiative to ensure that Warwick's digital course offerings were high-quality, distinctive and world-leading (IPSC.16/12-13).

REPORTED: (by the Service Owner: Academic Technology Support (IT Services))

- (a) That the University was committed to online course release via the FutureLearn initiative led by the Open University, it being noted that this offered the University to build its capacity for an enhanced on campus (blended) learning experience as well as pure online offerings.
- (b) That it was important to provide appropriate and adequate support to academic colleagues wishing to develop Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) under the FutureLearn initiative as well as any other digital offering in order to continue Warwick's reputation for high-quality and world-leading teaching and learning.
- (c) That the proposed quality framework would facilitate effective cross-departmental consideration and working in the area of quality content creation on a larger scale than currently possible within existing structures and resources.

(By Professor M Rodger)

- (d) That although the proposals focussed on how the University might resource and organise support of MOOCs, the overall purpose and strategy for the University's engagement in MOOCs remained unclear.

(By Professor M Knights)

- (e) That there was a need for greater communication with the academic community to fully explain what was involved in designing and providing a MOOC in terms of their engagement and other infrastructure.

(By Professor P Thomas)

- (f) That the Department of Physics was producing a pre-entry MOOC as part of its outreach agenda and that this approach appeared to add more value than replicating successful and unique on-campus offerings online.

(By Ms T MacKinnon)

- (g) That the online experience was about connection and she welcomed the idea of connecting across the University to generate an innovative

culture, particularly as this could result in a positive impact on the University's teaching and learning practices more generally.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the broad support for the proposals set out within IPSC.16/12-13 be recorded with regards to a quality framework and corresponding support services for Warwick MOOCs.
- (b) That it was recommended that the proposed MOOCs Operations Group be established as an informal "community of best practice" in the first instance taking a steer from the E-Learning Steering Group, with a view to formalising it within the University committee structure as and when appropriate.
- (c) That the Chair take forward discussions with the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellors to clarify the purpose of Warwick's engagement with FutureLearn and MOOCs more generally.
- (d) That the Secretary facilitate contact between the Assistant Registrars (Teaching and Learning) and the Service Owner: Academic Technology Support (IT Services) and the Creative Digital Communications Manager in order that the views of the Boards of the Faculties be sought on the potential direction and approach with respect to MOOCs.
- (e) That the Service Owner: Academic Technology Support (IT Services) clarify the parameters around, if any, the WBS support for other departments wishing to engage with the first tranche of Warwick MOOCs, as communicated by the Registrar and to communicate the arrangements to the Chairs of the Boards of the Faculties.

29/12-13

Strategic Discussion Topic: Cloud Storage – Opportunities and Risks

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A paper setting out the discussion topic as following, together with a briefing paper from JISC certis 'Cloud Computing in Institutions' (IPSC.17/12-13):
"Use of Cloud services is an inevitable consequence to changes in research, teaching and administrative working practices – in developing appropriate services and policies, what aspects must be taken in to account in order to ensure an appropriately secure, cost effective but practical solution for an academic community?"
- (b) A contextual presentation from the Director of Campus Services and the Assistant Registrar (Risk, Continuity and Information Security) and Secretary to IPSC with a focus on the applicability of Cloud storage to the University environment.

Note: The presentation is available to IPSC members at <https://files.warwick.ac.uk/ipsc/browse#2012-13+Meeting+Packs/2013+02+27>

REPORTED: (by the Director of Campus Services)

- (a) That the University was considering cloud services within the selection of potential IT solutions.
- (b) That it was important to recognise that there were many instances of cloud and a range of service and security offerings, each of which would require assessment to ensure 'best fit' for University needs.
- (c) That the cloud offered the University options to tackle emerging issues such as the increasing cost of providing large storage facilities and the requirement to set up, and close down, services more easily.
- (d) That there were some issues to be carefully considered around data location, data privacy, availability and comprehensiveness of audit and evidence materials and potential limitations in being able to move between vendors in evaluating any cloud solution.

(By Professor M Rodger)

- (e) That data retention, regardless of where and how data was stored, would always be problematic as the University routinely filled to capacity and that any future storage arrangements should build in mechanisms to encourage colleagues to work smarter with their data for example, making data more discoverable to avoid duplication.
- (f) That the cloud did offer options for standard services and requirements but would not be able to provide cutting-edge, high-performance computing demanded by some Warwick disciplines.
- (g) That additionally, the University needed to be mindful that it was in some quarters becoming a cloud provider for others and should explore what that role means for the institution.
- (h) That better publicity of the University stance on cloud storage was needed, as there were colleagues already using unapproved public cloud storage to conduct University business.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That support be recorded for the following proposals:
 - (i) Adopt 'private' cloud as an option to be considered for IT solutions and this stance to be publicised along with guidelines
 - (ii) Encourage use of 'private' cloud amongst the University community and discourage use of 'public' cloud for University data
 - (iii) Adopt and encourage use of SkyDrive for personal storage once contract in place
 - (iv) Encourage adoption of specialist storage services for academic disciplines

- (b) That the Secretary and the Director of Campus Services consult with relevant colleagues on the draft guidelines for the use of cloud services for University data.

30/12-13 Strategic Discussion Items

RESOLVED:

That members put forward any additional strategic discussion items to the Secretary or any comments as to the priority of the forthcoming items set out below (in no particular order):

- (a) Research Data Management and Intellectual Property
- (b) Staff and Student Mobile Working
- (c) Potential Strategies for the Development and Management of Teaching and Learning Information

31/12-13 Minutes of the E-Learning Steering Group

RECEIVED:

The unconfirmed minutes from the meeting of the e-Learning Steering Group held on 17 January 2013 (IPSC.19/12-13).

32/12-13 Minutes from the Faculty IT Committees

RECEIVED:

The unconfirmed minutes of the Faculties of Medicine, Science and Social Sciences IT Committees (IPSC.20/12-13).

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