ICTF Hilary Term 2014
IT Services Report

- **IT Strategic Plan:** The consultation on the IT Strategic Plan was completed in Michaelmas Term. The consultation gathered feedback from a series of presentations to key committees and groups in the University and was mentioned in the Vice-Chancellor's update and an article placed in the Gazette and Staff Gateway. Some 240 individual points were extracted from over 70 pages of feedback received from committees, departments, divisions, groups and individuals. A revised IT Strategic Plan has been presented to IT Committee, with the aim of taking a final version to Council at the end of this term and developing an associated implementation plan. Feedback to departments on how the consultation recommendations have been taken forwards is also planned for this term.

- **Freshers' Survey Report 2013:** The 2013 Freshers' Survey report is published at http://www.it.ox.ac.uk/publicity/. Freshers' Surveys have been run since 2004 and provide a snapshot of the prior experiences, and more recently, wishes of freshers, which in turn may inform IT Services strategy. The survey also includes data at divisional level. Highlights this year include: 92% of students bought laptops in 2012 and 2013; Wifi everywhere is the most desired IT facility ; the percentage of Windows computers continues to fall and is at its lowest ever level (53% – mainly replaced by Apple or Android computers); and the majority of students arrive with a smartphone (81%).

- **Integrated Communications Project:** The Integrated Communications Project is a complex infrastructure project that touches all elements of the University and has the potential for transforming the way people within the University communicate. It both replaces the existing telephony system and allows integration with other communications technologies that offer new ways of working. The procurement exercise, carried out in conjunction with the Finance Division Purchasing Department is nearing completion and the project has selected a Preferred Supplier. The project is proposing a phased approach to delivery., as follows (but partly dependent on outcome of phase 0):

    o Phase 0: (Jan to Feb 2014) – Pre-contract systems design and Project Initiation
    o Phase 1: (Mar to Jun 2014) – Detailed design & build
    o Phase 2: (Jun to Jul 2014) – Test & pilot
    o Phase 3: (Aug to Dec 2014) – Unified communications rollout
    o Phase 4+: (Jan 2015 onwards) Telephony rollouts

  The project is running a series of stakeholder presentations during Hilary Term. Notifications have been sent to divisional secretaries for onward distribution. Further information is also available from icp@it.ox.ac.uk.

- **Student Systems Programme:** The first phase of the Student Systems Programme (SSP) is focused on replacing the current student record system - the Oracle Student System (OSS) - with the new SITS:Vision and eVision (web access). We have implemented SITS to support degree ceremony administration, and the next phase will involve transferring the main student record

(from registration to examination) from OSS to SITS. We then plan to tackle graduate and undergraduate admissions, followed by the development of better functionality in other areas (including graduate and undergraduate student reporting).

Change in timings

Work has progressed well and in early January, as part of an important Programme assessment milestone, the overall Programme plan and expected go-live dates were reviewed. The aim now is to deliver the new student record system for staff and students for testing in Michaelmas term 2014, in anticipation for live use at the beginning of January 2015.

Student Systems Programme governance bodies, including representatives from colleges, departments, and divisions have agreed that we should aim for a January 2015 go-live even though this is midway through the next academic year, because we do not wish to delay until later in 2015. We have agreed to utilise the September - December period to fully engage key users with the system and fix issues following testing. Data migration from OSS to SITS will thus take place over the Christmas 2014 period, and the switch-over from OSS to SITS in support of the on-course student record will happen in January 2015.

Whilst it would have been possible to achieve delivery earlier than January 2015, this would not have allowed time for sufficient staff and student engagement for testing and new system familiarization activities. Having learnt lessons from previous large IT system roll-outs we do not want to compromise on this or on training. In addition, the University calendar of student administration activities, including undergraduate admissions, would mean that delivering the replacement student record in the middle of Michaelmas term could risk being too disruptive. Any questions, please contact ssp@admin.ox.ac.uk.

- **HRIS Programme:** The final deliverables of the programme – introduction of an absence recording service and decommissioning of the OPENdoor system – are now underway with completion planned by March. Work had been deferred owing to the need to amend HRIS to meet the requirements of the new coding structures on Oracle Financials.

- **TONE backbone network upgrade project:** The TONE Project has completed the first round of user consultation led by the TONE User Group. The User Survey findings have been analysed and shared at a number of meetings prior to more general publication. In total, 64 responses to the survey were received from departments and colleges. Key themes included: resilience, bandwidth and particular functionality or services (e.g. QoS, IPv6, 'dark' fibre and 24/7 support). The Project issued a request for expressions of interest and are currently evaluating responses from suppliers. The formal invitation to tender is expected to be issued in March 2014 with the aim to place contracts and commence implementation from October 2014. The new backbone service is expected to be in operation from Summer 2015. A recent update for ITSS (Dec 13) is available via http://www.ictf.ox.ac.uk/meetings/papers/MT13_TONE.pdf.

- **Maillist upgrade project:** The Maillist project has completed a requirements analysis and an evaluation of a number of software products. The Project Board has agreed with the project's recommendation to implement the Sympa application to replace Ezmlm. The project is now commencing the design and implementation phase based around Sympa. An update will be sent to existing Maillist owners as well as to the wider IT Support Staff community. Project outputs are available at https://sharepoint.nexus.ox.ac.uk/maillist_update.

- **Nexus SharePoint:** We had a successful SharePoint Nexus User Group (SNUG) on Monday 13th January. Please consider joining: details in SharePoint itself (go to the root page https://sharepoint.nexus.ox.ac.uk/ and look for "SNUG") or watch out for it in the ITLP Courses Database (the place to book).

  As part of the IT Services Advent Calendar initiative (but it was actually planned a while ago) we changed the system of giving out SharePoint My Sites: now everyone gets them automatically, without having to request them. They can be used in a DropBox-alternative kind of way, but they also give people lots of other functionality including a private sandpit to create and experiment with SharePoint sites and libraries etc. etc. before making them somewhere more public.

  We have rolled out a more recent version of the SharePoint Committee Site template and improved the documentation for users to implement these kinds of sites.

  We have developed a Leave Management Toolkit in order for units to be able to build their own Annual Leave system, rather like the one that recently went live for IT Services, but tailored for the needs of each individual unit/dept/college.

- **DARS Migration and Upgrade:** The ongoing programme of technical work to support DARS (see https://www.darscentral.ox.ac.uk/ for details) continues in 2013-14 with a major upgrade planned for HT 2014 and further college migrations planned. Over half of all colleges and department have now committed to joining DARS.

- **Service Desk Consolidation Project:** Contracts have been signed for the implementation and licencing of our new ITSM toolset which will be based on FrontRange HEAT Cloud. Work to define and refine how teams within IT Services will work together to provide a consistent and coherent support experience is now largely complete, and planning is underway for putting this all together and moving to the new processes and tools. Karen Wells (Worcester) and Gerard Robinson (MSD IT Services) are the distributed ITSS who sit on the project board and have been keeping an eye on our work.

- **Whole Disk Encryption:** The Whole Disk Encryption service is available for University-owned laptops. Users are authorised to use the service via divisional authorisers and are supported by trained IT Support Staff. Further information from http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/wde/.

- **Windows 7:** The upgrade of c. 2,700 desktops within UAS and the Bodleian Libraries began roll-out on March 3rd, with 650 PCs now completed. The third week of roll-out has just started, and should see the last "phase 1" deployments which are the least complex in terms of additional software packages. Roll-out makes use of a combination of local and remote deployment techniques in order to reduce network bandwidth consumption (at 90 PCs+ per day and an image size of several GB this is considerable when other staff need to carry on working).

  Roll-out is expected to continue at the current intensity for a further 8 weeks after which all machines that can sensibly be upgraded to Windows 7 will have been covered, and mitigations put in place for the remainder.

- **IT Services Web Consolidation Project:** work to review content in the old central IT web sites and plan to migrate this into a new structure under www.it.ox.ac.uk is now established.

4

"Wireframes" have been developed to start developing ideas around what content items will be associated into web pages, how these items will be related, and how they might be navigated. We have agreed to approach this in two distinct activities, one covering the "discovery and engagement" material such as who / where / what, and another for the "help and support" information relating to our services.

John Ireland, 2014-03-17