

ICTF Michaelmas Term 2014

IT Services Report

- **IT Services Integration Phase of Restructure** - IT Services is undergoing a further round of organisational changes, aimed at improving the integration of teams following the formation of the department in August 2012 through the merger of three previous central IT departments. The moves this time are generally fewer, and reflect changes in our commitments, experience gained over the last two years, and opportunities that have arisen through other staff movements. The main changes at a high level are:
 - Creation of new roles "Chief Data Architect" (Sebastian Rahtz) and Head of Strategy, Policy and Case work (TBC) in the Office of the CIO;
 - Deputy CIO "focus areas" - Stuart Lee will lead work on capital planning and innovation, Darrell Sturley will take forward service delivery and operational excellence;
 - Appointment (TBC) of a single Director of Academic IT, following Sebastian's move above and Melissa Highton having taken a new post at Edinburgh;
 - Separating the Portfolio & Service Management Office out, with the PMO element reporting into the Programme and Project Delivery Group and the SMO reporting into Darrell Sturley;
 - Bringing support for Administrative IT systems into the Customer Services Group under John Ireland, following the retirement of Jeffrey Thomas, our Director of Administrative IT;
 - The team responsible for central University managed desktops and Sophos has joined NSMS to work alongside similar teams;
 - Development of our business relationship management activities, building on our existing ITS3 services but aligning with other stakeholder groups in the University.

Most of these changes came into effect in November 2014, whilst others will be realised in 2015. The web pages at www.it.ox.ac.uk will be updated accordingly as this progresses.

- **Service Portfolio Review:** The aim of the IT Services Portfolio Review is to better align IT Services with the needs of the University, and to ensure that services are not only good value for money but that they are also properly funded through a more rational funding model. Conversations with a wide range of stakeholders in the form of workshops and interviews, in small groups and one-to-one sessions, have taken place during Trinity term and the long vacation (including an IT Committee 'away day' in September). Feedback on the outcomes of the review is expected in the next few months.
- **IT Innovation Fund:** The IT Innovation Seed Fund (a ring-fenced portion of the University's Capital Fund) will be aimed at funding innovative new digital projects and will be available to all University staff and students in the New Year. This term we will be running a trial and will only be open to staff in IT Services and ASUC units to allow us to test the processes and methodology

and get us ready for that wider launch. It should also be noted that the Fund is targeted at getting new ideas off the ground, many of which may go on to require further funding to move to a full service. Importantly we will use an open innovation methodology, where ideas are solicited in response to a set 'challenge'. You will be invited to submit your idea to the open platform where others will be able to see your suggestion, add comments, support it, or offer to assist. If you do not wish to propose an idea yourself you can go to the site and provide suggestions for others on how to improve theirs, and offer to assist. The aim being to encourage new ideas to emerge from across the whole body of staff and to encourage collaboration. The IT Innovation Group will then manage the review, application and approval process. Further information will be available in a few weeks. Please tell your colleagues about this exciting initiative, and encourage them to participate in the process once it begins.

- **Nexus News:** The Cloud Communication and Collaboration Evaluation (C3E) project is comparing services from possible 'cloud' vendors with what we provide 'on premises' currently via the Nexus Exchange service. The Project is currently establishing a collective opinion on how important various features are for Oxford users. If you are interested in contributing contact acting project manager Mark Norman (mark.norman@it.ox.ac.uk). The SharePoint Nexus User Group (SNUG) is supported by – but independent of – IT Services. The user group meets once per term and aims to generate a hub of expertise to be called upon by fellow SharePoint users, and consulted by IT Services. The SNUG needs a new chair. Please consider this if you would like to shape the future direction of this strategic service. For more information: <https://sharepoint.nexus.ox.ac.uk/sites/snug/>
- **IT Services websites update:** IT Services has launched two new websites, one for 'discovery and engagement' (what we do) and the other relating to support documentation (help). The websites bring together materials formerly hosted on the OUCS and BSP websites. The 'Discovery and Engagement' website is at www.it.ox.ac.uk and the 'Help and Support' website at <http://help.it.ox.ac.uk>. The two new websites are based on the Drupal web platform (which will also form the basis for the upgraded Web Publishing services). Redirects from content on the former sites to the new Help and Support site are in place to minimise impact on users and support staff.
- **HR update:** The HRIS v20 Project, intended to upgrade the CoreHR system to version 20 of the software and an Oracle 11G database, is progressing through the University approval process. This project is a significant piece of work which will provide a fully supported system, some software improvements required by the HRIS user group, a standard infrastructure upon which disaster recovery plans can be built and a platform to obtain additional benefits via subsequent projects such as employee self-service and academic recruitment. The HRIS v20 Project will take a year to see through to completion. In addition, to support the growth of the Temporary Staffing Service which launched earlier this year, a project is underway to select and implement software to assist with allocation of individuals to assignments and online time-sheeting.

- **DARS update:** DARS has continued to grow, with three colleges – Wadham, Balliol, and Jesus – all joining the programme. This brings the total number of colleges and permanent private halls to 22, which is half of all colleges and halls. In parallel with their data migrations, we have also delivered BBIS websites for Wadham and Jesus, and in addition, have created a BBIS website for St Anne’s college – coincidentally bringing the number of BBIS websites to 22. As a consequence of this, the number of DARS users has reached 530. We have continued to hold advanced user workshops on Smart Fields and Smart Queries. We applied Service Pack 7 in July, and took a patch in September in order to ensure compliance with banking standards for the processing of direct debits.

- **WebLearn:** WebLearn has undergone significant face-lift with a move to WebLearn 10 (2.10-ox1) in September. As well as a new look, this release brings a wealth of new features including:
 - **Brand new modern, mobile-friendly navigation** with the ‘Sites Drawer’ offering quick links to individual tools within a site
 - **Peer marking** in Assignments tool
 - Brand **new Contact Us tool** (as recommended by the WebLearn Student Experience study)
 - Sequencing of content and other activities with the **new Lessons tool**
 - **Customisable branding for a department** (available upon request, see below)
 - **Drag-and-dropping of files into Resources** through your web browser
 - Add **Mathematical notation** to web pages
 - Support for **IMS Learning Tools Interoperability 2.0** – this allows data to be sent back to WebLearn from the 3rd party tool
 - **Updated WYSIWYG HTML editor**
 - Users can **record audio** in Resources
 - **Add movies to HTML pages** in Resources
 - Introduction of AntiSamy **HTML code filtering to enhance security** (on all tools except Resources) – you will see a warning if HTML is removed
 - Support for **IMS Common Cartridge import** (through the Lessons tool)
 - New **Web Content and Home tools**

For more visit the WebLearn blog: <https://blogs.it.ox.ac.uk/adamweblearn/>

- **Network and Communications Infrastructure Programme:** The Network and Communications Infrastructure Programme currently comprises the Integrated Communications, TONE and GOWN projects. In addition, projects within this programme are being developed for new data centre services and for a managed (local) network service.
 - a) **Integrated communications project:** The Project is delivering a new communications service to the University that will both replace the existing analogue system and integrate other forms of communications. Currently the design and build phase of the project is underway. At the beginning of 2015 the project will run a pilot with a cross-section of users to test all aspects of the new system; following that, the Chorus service will be available for early adopters, followed by a full rollout. The deployment of any new telephones required will take place during 2015–



2017. The project has released a video that introduces the functionality of the new service and ways in which it might change communications. See <http://projects.it.ox.ac.uk/icp/>

- b) **TONE backbone network replacement project:** The backbone replacement project has almost completed phase 2 with recommended suppliers for both the replacement of the core and edge network switches, and the replacement of fibre together with duct work where required. The implementation phase will commence in November 2014 with a design stage, and the implementation of the new core network is planned to be completed by October 2015. A subsequent phase will commence the migration of units to the new Odin service (the capital funding includes replacement of existing Cisco Frodos). The upgrade will enable departments and colleges to have a minimum 1Gb/s resilient connection to the backbone as standard. Options to upgrade to 2, 10 or 40Gb/s will be available as part of a cost-recovered service offering. The migration from the existing backbone service to Odin is expected to be undertaken with the minimum of, if any, disruption to departments and colleges and all FroDo's are planned to be migrated to Odin by 30th April 2016.

The project website is at <https://projects.it.ox.ac.uk/tonel/>

- c) **GOWN Oxford wireless network project (phase 1):** The Gown project aims to upgrade or replace the existing centrally-provide wireless service (eduroam, OWL, public wifi and access management). The project will develop a service delivery model that offers the best combination of service quality and consistency across the collegiate University estate whilst continuing to enable local support and management where desirable. Phase 1 is a requirements gathering and analysis phase in preparation for an upgrade project. The objectives of the initial phase are: 1) understand the University's requirements for wireless network services through a wide-ranging consultation with user representatives from the key service stakeholder groups (e.g. undergraduate and postgraduate students; research and teaching staff; college and department administration; IT support staff; units with significant visitor base (libraries, museums, college conference offices, admissions)); 2) investigate, define and consult on the service implementation and delivery options for addressing University requirements; 3) develop a plan for subsequent, implementation, phases of the project. The project has recently been initiated and the consultation phase is expected to be undertaken during Michaelmas term with a report and options analysis available in Hilary term.
- **Online Research Database Service (ORDS):** ORDS is an online relational database management system designed to support the development of research databases (and primarily developed with the requirements of humanities and social science research in mind). The service became live during the long vacation and is available to postgraduates and staff of the University (free at the point of use). Further information, including a link to the self-service interface, see <http://www.ords.ox.ac.uk/>
- **Student Systems Programme:** The Student Systems Programme (SSP) is working towards the delivery of the on-course student record (registration through to examination) on Monday 5 January 2015. Student Self Service (through eVision) will be available a day later, from 6 January 2015. User Acceptance Testing (UAT) started on 20 October and finished in late November.



More than 80 staff testers and 25 student testers (spread over 20+ colleges) are taking part in UAT. Further information, including details of roadshows: <https://www1.admin.ox.ac.uk/ac-div/studentsystems/>. The latest version of **ADSS** went live for users on 23 October in order to support the 2014/15 admissions process.

- **Out of Hours Support** - Initial steps have been taken towards 24/7 operation for our service desk. This initiative now has the support of IT Committee, and is expected to be achieved through a third-party service desk that complements our daytime teams to provide round-the-clock email and phone pick-up, logging, triage, and first-line resolution. Coverage will include evenings/overnight, weekends, bank holidays, and University closures. This will also feed into existing arrangements for providing emergency cover beyond first-line to support critical periods and during University closures. We hope to have this in place from Easter 2015, but may need to adjust this to accommodate demands on the same teams arising from other projects with go-live around that time.
- **Web publishing services upgrade project – invitation to participate:** IT Services is investigating what users need from a new service to provide better options for members of the University to build and maintain a web presence, whether personal or departmental profiles. Staff and student members of the University have completed a survey as part of our requirements gathering. If you have any questions about the project, please contact the project manager Valentina Martilotti (valentina.martilotti@it.ox.ac.uk).
- **Call for participation in IT Services projects:** IT Services has a large portfolio of projects, many of which are designed to implement new services or improve existing services used by staff and students across the University. Projects are controlled through a projects methodology that includes mechanisms for ensuring governance and user consultation. Each project usually has a project board, for example, that includes 'senior user' representation (e.g. staff drawn from academic divisions or colleges) and a growing number of projects will have a user consultation group (the chair of which will be a member of the project board). IT Services seeks academic and administrative staff to participate in projects. This term, for example, we are seeking user representatives to join projects relating to storage services (e.g. to support research data, file sharing or backup); University wireless networking; replacement of the backbone network; evaluation of 'cloud' email services; and the upgrading of web publishing services for department and personal websites. If you would be interested in participating in a project please contact Michael Fraser (mike.fraser@it.ox.ac.uk) in the first instance.
- **Eduroam:** The upgraded version was used frequently last term. Analysis shows the peak demand is caused by University residents (e.g. students in Colleges) watching TV on Demand. This is a reasonable use, so long as they are 'moderate' in their expectations on the speed; there is a limit of around 3Gbps this is both a probable hardware limit and, more pertinently, an imposed limit to prevent the 10Gbps backbone being overloaded. For full technical details see the Networks Blog <http://blogs.it.ox.ac.uk/networks/>



- **Public access to the internet over University wireless:** A user group was formed and held a number of meetings to discuss both internally and with 'The Cloud', how we might provide internet access for the general "public" over University wireless systems. It was agreed by the user group that we would only centrally support 4 options (SSIDs). Firstly, a general 'public' access SSID; we will also continue to provide [eduroam, OWL Visitor and a 'local' SSID](#) options for 'normal' use by staff, students and accredited visitors. [Eduroam is the](#) preferred access method for all University staff, students and *bona fide* visitors; [OWL Visitor is for](#) University visitors without an eduroam account; and [a 'local' SSID is the centrally managed OWL Service](#) (COWLS aka OWL Phase 2) that will provide, as before, a local SSID if desired by the Unit. Locally managed WiFi systems can deploy as many LOCAL SSID's as they wish. This was arranged by Janet to allow us to legally use the Janet network. We are also in commercial discussions to progress a framework agreement with the supplier for a "do it yourself" option for those who require a more tailored service.
- **Lecture Capture Project:** The first Lecture Capture trial project has been running during the 2014. It is an initial trial, in order for the technical team in Educational Media Services to gain an in-depth understanding of the Panopto software and to experiment with different audio-visual equipment. The envisaged follow-on Lecture Capture II project will formally pilot the Panopto software across the university, with a view to deploying a central lecture capture service in future. Lessons learned from the trial will inform the follow-on project and the development of a service and costing model. The project will specifically evaluate the current cloud-hosted solution against a locally deployed solution; evaluate how students use recorded lectures for study and revision; produce a costing model for rolling out an ongoing central service, e.g. possibility of devolving costs to departments/units; and produce a Service Level Description for an ongoing central service. For more information contact the project manager Jill Fresen jill.fresen@it.ox.ac.uk
- **Service Desk Consolidation Project:** Since October a review and re-planning exercise has reassessed the project approach, milestones and time scales. This has highlighted some significant hurdles to transition which needed to be addressed, resulting primarily from the size of the project and the importance to the department of a smooth and well-planned transition to the new processes and toolset. Following a review we have appointed a new Project Manager, Jamie Bateman, and agreed that the project will now follow an agile approach, focusing on incremental delivery and frequent stakeholder engagement. A considerable amount of re-planning has already been done and the team is reaching project deliverables for Incident Management, Change Management, Service Requests and toolset configuration. A revised governance structure including a Project Steering Group and Superuser Group has been developed to support this new agile approach – where groups of tasks are reviewed and revised as the project progresses rather than waiting to the end of the project to approve the full functionality. These regular reviews will demonstrate what has been delivered, what is planned to be delivered and request feedback to guide us to successful implementation in early 2015. The go-live date is a key area of discussion is for the project team and project steering group.



- **Windows XP Support:** IT Services purchased a year's access to Microsoft Premier Support to cover installations of XP that could not be removed immediately for operational reasons. There have been 12 patches (addressing critical security vulnerabilities) issued since April and they have been made available to the small number of ITSS that have requested them once those ITSS have provided reassurance to IT Services that they are actively planning and working to remove or isolate all installations of XP as soon as possible and certainly by April 2015.

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