ICTF Trinity Term 2015
IT Services Report

- **Service Transformation Programme:** The Service Transformation Programme is building on the feedback obtained from our customers last year by managing a number of initiatives aimed at improving the services offered by IT Services. Exploration of cloud storage, software asset lifecycle (and licence) management, extended support hours, and more cost-effective printing solutions are all improvement initiatives which are being investigated currently, amongst many others.

  Additionally, the Programme will deliver a definitive customer facing Service Catalogue, later this year, from which all service reporting will be based.

  Questions about the Service Transformation Programme may be addressed to Denise Conway (denise.conway@it.ox.ac.uk).

- **IT Innovation Fund:** The Hilary Term challenges attracted 45 ideas for staff projects and 16 ideas for student projects from which the following were selected for funding:

Staff Projects	Student Projects
Computer-marked free text and algebra for improving feedback to students – Medical Sciences office	Bibliotech – Spotify for e-Textbooks
	Collaborate App
Easy sign-up and attendance tracking using University cards – Medical Sciences Office and IT Services	Decoding Programming – Engineers Without Borders
	Evershelf
Frameworks: the Oxford Mobile Career Planner – Humanities Division	First Response App
	MoLexia
OxReach Crowdfunding Platform – Isis Innovation	OxChange
GoGirl: Code and Create – Department of Education	Putting the Alternative Oxford Prospectus On-line
	Research Recipes
Zooniverse + Facebook: Bringing citizen science to a younger audience – Department of Physics	

Further information about these projects and the IT Innovation Seed Fund in general and can be found at: https://sharepoint.nexus.ox.ac.uk/sites/itservices/innovation/SitePages/Home.aspx

The Trinity Term challenge was opened to University staff on 23rd March, the theme - innovation in the curriculum, student engagement, facilitating excellent research and management of research projects. The challenge closed for submissions on 8th May, with a further week for discussion and comment on the 29 ideas submitted. 10 ideas were shortlisted for the proposal

stage, applicants will present on their ideas on 25th June. Award offers will be made the week commencing 29th June.

- **Nexus News:** The Nexus team are proposing a programme of work for the SharePoint service over the coming 6 months including: an upgrade to SharePoint 2013 (from SharePoint 2010); improvements to the Site Owner support element of the SharePoint service and the potential creation of an outreach/consultancy capability for colleges and departments. A further update is planned for the next ICTF termly report.

  The team are also working on the next steps to take forward the recommendation of the C3E project, to move Exchange to Office 365. We have engaged external consultants to advise on implementation and technical issues which could be encountered during a move to Office 365, the outcome will inform the decision as to whether to proceed. SharePoint will remain on premise.

- **Data Centres:** The feasibility study into the development of new data centre facilities for IT Services, the Big Data Institute and other participating departments has been completed and is awaiting sign-off from the Project Sponsor Group. The report assesses requirements for a new data centre on the Harwell Innovation Campus (October 2016) together with an expansion of the Shared Data Centre (March 2016) and dedicated network connectivity between the sites.

  Funding has been recommended for the next stage of the project -- a detailed design leading to the procurement of data centre modules or infrastructure (anticipated to be completed by Oct 2015). The team has also gained useful information from discussions with the Jisc-Infinity Data Centre at Slough (and is also visiting the West Cambridge Data Centre at the University of Cambridge (a presentation about which members may recall at the last ICTF Conference).

- **Student Systems Programme:** The programme is prioritising the phased delivery of graduate and undergraduate admissions functionality in SITS:Vision and eVision, in support of the 2015/16 admissions cycle. This will complete the replacement of activities that are currently undertaken within the Oracle Student System (OSS).

  - **Admissions project -** We recently developed a new phased project plan for the delivery of graduate and undergraduate admissions functionality in SITS:Vision and eVision. The re-planning has been necessary because it became clear in March that the original plan to deliver the full admissions functionality by 1 September 2015 was not achievable. It will deliver undergraduate and graduate admissions functionality in multiple releases in support of the 2015/16 admissions cycle (for entry 2016/17). The phased plan has been discussed with key stakeholders and is authorised by the University's IT Committee. A full schedule and further information is available from the AAD website.

  - **SITS:Vision for Colleges -** This is a feasibility study, initiated at the request of several colleges, to assess whether SITS:Vision can be developed to support colleges and permanent private halls (PPHs) in managing their local academic records. This could benefit colleges by reducing duplication of data entry for students and staff, and by generating IT cost savings.The feasibility phase runs until the end of September and involves interested colleges who will work with the project team to produce a *joint statement of requirements*, and estimate the costs of development work required. After three briefing sessions in March, attended by 94 people from 34 colleges and PPHs, 26 colleges subsequently expressed an interest. They were sent a survey to gather more detailed requirements, which are currently being discussed as part of requirement sessions. If, at the end of the feasibility study, participating colleges agree that SITS:Vision would meet their requirements, and that

the projected costs per college are acceptable, a full project will be initiated to develop the changes required.

- **HESA / HESES -** The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) project started in August 2014 to deliver the statutory annual return for 2014/15 from SITS:Vision, rather than OSS. This return (over 150 fields of data for each student) dictates the amount of money each University receives from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The HESA project also includes:
  - ➢ Delivery of data from Continuing Education;
  - ➢ The 2015/16 Higher Education Students Early Statistics Survey (HESES) through the Planning and Resource Allocation snapshot, and;
  - ➢ HESA Initial Teacher Training In-Year Record Collection returns from SITS:Vision.

  The final HESA return for 2014/15 must be submitted in October 2015. In order to achieve this, work is ongoing throughout the year to ensure that the data returned is as complete and accurate as possible.
- **Record Funding –** this gathers requirements for capturing information about students' sources of funding. This data is required to improve the quality and completeness of data that the University holds about its students, and to support new statutory reporting requirements from HEFCE.

  We will give a programme update at the 7 July ICTF Conference, to cover the admissions project (with a focus on interfaces) and the SITS:Vision for Colleges feasibility study.
  W: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/aad/studentsystems/programme
  E: ssp@admin.ox.ac.uk

- **DARS:** On April 21st the Service Pack 10 was applied. Although this brought a number of benefits, includes some bug fixes, it also introduced a significant problem for key areas of DARS, most notably Marketing and Communications. This was raised to the status of a Major Incident; the Incident was resolved, and a Major Incident review was conducted on 17th June in order to see what lessons could be learned.

  The Development Office provided significant extra funds, so we could employ extra staff to work on removing 10,000 duplicate constituent records. This work started in mid-May, and so far has resulted in the removal of over 4,000 duplicate records.

- **Finance:** The Financials programme has successfully completed 7 projects and 13 more projects are at various stages from initial analysis to delivery. Benefits received to date are a patched and stabilised system; standardised and streamlined consolidation process for subsidiary and foreign financial reporting; FTE headcount within General Ledger; automated and streamlined new supplier request process; over 240 new and updated training materials; and many reports developed and improved following the R12 implementation. The FSSC has completed a series of departmental visits which is proving mutually beneficial to all parties and is now working closely with the Financial User Advisory Group.

- **Weblearn:** The team are engaged in various activities at present:
  - Developing an Online Reading List Management System (ORLiMS) at the Bodleian Social Science Library - Major improvements to the design, functionality and user interface of WebLearn's Reading List tool.
  - Researcher Training Tool Improvement Exercise (RATTIE) - Numerous improvements to the user experience plus big fixes.
  - WebLearn will switch over to using the IT Services Group Store as the provider of

institutional groups (unit and course groups) in July.

- Education IT Board has approved the Mobile Learning with WebLearn (MOLE) project brief. This project will transform WebLearn into a fully responsive service meaning a much-improved user experience on a mobile phone. In addition, the project will develop a handful of 'Learning App's and map out exactly what Apps will be developed.
- WebLearn will also be providing the back-end to the Humanities Division's 'Frameworks: The Oxford Mobile Career Planner'. The project is in its very early stages but it is currently planned that WebLearn will act as a data store and present anonymised skills audit data to skills training officers who will be able to assess the effectiveness of Research Training at Oxford University. The project will also develop an App for students to record and reflect upon researcher career development in terms of skills accrued.
- Over the summer, it will be necessary to rewrite the integration code that links WebLearn and TurnItIn (the plagiarism awareness service).

https://blogs.it.ox.ac.uk/adamweblearn/2015/06/weblearn-plans-for-the-next-few-months/

- **Web CMS DRUPAL Project:** The project aims to provide an opt-in, self-service Drupal web publishing platform with a user-friendly interface in order to improve website provisioning for individuals and groups across the University. Using automated provisioning to deploy template sites, this aims to make it easier and quicker to create engaging websites, without recourse to technical experts, and will also provide better maintenance, support and security than the existing central web provisioning services.

  The pilot of 14 sites, representing a wide range of stakeholder groups from the Collegiate University, and including the new site for the ICT Forum, has provided very positive and helpful feedback, which would be incorporated in the next version of the service.

  The project team now hopes to increase the pilot to 100 websites, to include individual academics and/or research students. The focus is on testing the basic flexible template version that is pre-designed, but allows for some customisation, so all pilot sites will be utilising this. The project team is also working to define the governance and service model for the new web offering and to develop a system of basic support for these early adopters (the pilot sites owners). The provision of a specialised and bespoke web service through Drupal will be offered later in the year.

  If you have any queries or would like to take part in the pilot by having becoming a site owner, please contact valentina.martilotti@it.ox.ac.uk

- **The Oxford Network Evolution (TONE) Project:** The SLD and charging model has now been published. The baseline service will provide units with a resilient 2Gb/s connection. For an additional charge (a one off connection charge and an annual support cost), units can also choose to take higher bandwidth (10Gb/s or 40Gb/s) and / or additional resilience. A test bed for the new backbone network (Odin) is now in place and is being used to confirm the detailed design of Odin. From July until the end of September work will take place to implement the new core and to migrate some pilot sites onto the core. The migration of all units to the new network will start in November and complete by April 2016. As part of the migration to Odin we also need to migrate our Janet connection which links the University to the 'outside world'. We will do this during a network at-risk period and keep any outage to an absolute minimum. There is also a rollback plan in the unlikely event of encountering problems during the migration. Originally the Janet migration was planned for in the summer but following design discussions with the supplier the decision was made to postpone this migration until later in the project. This enables the use of some new functionality that will be available later in the year. A new

date will shortly be agreed with the supplier, taking into account critical dates in the University's calendar. An update on the migration date will be given within the next month. The TONE website is at http://projects.it.ox.ac.uk/tone/ and the project team can be contacted at tone@it.ox.ac.uk

- **GOWN:** The following task have been completed: student and staff surveys and workshops held and user requirements have been gathered; team visit to Cambridge University; and IT Services Subject Matter Experts selected. Where is the project now?

  - Project was suspended from the end of March until now to allow staff to focus on the TONE project in particular
  - Project Board membership being agreed
  - Project Initiation Document to be developed in parallel with technical analysis
  - GOWN User Group to be formed with representatives from ITSS
  - GOWN Project Board to decide options by the end of Sep 2015, and we hope that the implementation phase will commence pending approvals for funding

- **ICP/ Chorus:** During the recent Chorus pilot, feedback has highlighted gaps in communication, documentation and training. As a result the pilot is in a re-planning phase. The ICP team are working with departmental administrators, college bursars and IT Support staff to address these concerns and ensure that pilot users and IT support staff have everything required to have the best possible experience during the pilot.

  A number of actions are already being taken:
  - Technical specialists have been appointed to act as a point of contact between IT SS and the Chorus team. This will enable the project to confirm the preparation required prior to implementation and how we will work with you during the pilot.
  - New Q & A briefings have been scheduled for ITSS involved in the pilot. These will be attended by technical specialists and project staff.
  - New training sessions are being developed that are shorter, more interactive and scenario based, with members of the Chorus technical team available to assist you with specific queries. These will be delivered in a new training lab using preconfigured Windows and Mac laptops. There will be a selection of headsets, handsets and an Ubuntu Linux laptop available to test.
  - Drop-in web-based collaboration 'surgeries' staffed by members of the help desk and technical teams will also be offered to help users work through scenarios at a place of their choice.
  - A website has been created (http://help.it.ox.ac.uk/chorus/index) providing a single point of reference, including the links to the video training, frequently asked questions, technical and set-up documentation, a list of all the communications scheduled from the project, and planned migration dates. Shortly there will be similar information for each of the ongoing migration tranches.

  The ICP team will continue to provide regular updates and welcomes all feedback via icp@it.ox.ac.uk at any stage during the pilot and for any technical queries please log a ticket using help@it.ox.ac.uk with Chorus in the subject line.

- **Lecture Capture Project II:** The Replay pilot project is running during the calendar year 2015, with a view to rolling the technology out as a service from Hilary Term 2016. Service design,

deployment and cost-sharing models are under discussion. Law, Classics, Statistics and Biomedical Sciences have recently joined the pilot, making a total of 25 participating departments. A student intern, Matthew Gracey-McMinn, will work with the Replay team, focusing on writing case studies of Replay use at Oxford to support teaching and learning, collating and reporting student feedback, and assisting with development of the Replay Help website.

Working with Legal Services, the team has finalised licence agreements for presenters and end users and notices to display in venues and on WebLearn sites. The Disability Service is providing disability guidance and tips for presenters regarding audio and video considerations. The tender process is being planned - we intend to invite tenders from four suppliers, with supplier presentations scheduled for September 2015.

An overview of Lecture Capture was presented on request to both the Digital Education Strategy Group in April and the UG Panel in June. Both presentations were favourably received. We continue to work closely with the UG panel on a Lecture Capture policy, training for academics about embedding recordings in their teaching practice, and detailed guidance to users.

Contact replay@it.ox.ac.uk for more information.

- **Service Desk Consolidation Project:** On April 20th IT Services switched to our new service desk arrangements including standard ways of handling support calls and a new supporting toolset. We have seen the implementation of 4 processes (Incident, Request, Problem, and Change) across some 350 members of staff in 40 teams covering around 80 services. We have had a few teething issues to deal with, but overall this has been a very smooth transition given the scale of it.

  In addition to the project itself we have secured and appointed some additional posts within the service desk team, which is now also responsible for CONNECT desktop first-line support.

  Over the summer we expect to make further changes, opening up our service desk approach for other teams to join into, introducing a single direct phone number that can be used for all support calls, and extending our first-line operation to 24/7 including weekends, bank holidays, and University closures.

- **HRIS V20 project**: This is a system upgrade project both of the CoreHR system (from v16 to v20) and upgrading the Oracle database and system infrastructure. The go live date is 26th October 2015. The remaining phases of the project are UAT, Non Functional and Integration Testing and Cutover activities. In addition, an upgrade to Java 1.8 is required to run V20 of the application and rolling it out to a wider University set of users is being reviewed.

- **University Card replacement Projects:** A University Card System Replacement Project was initiated in 2014. In light of the close relationship between the existing Card system and Identity Management processes, a feasibility project was run in 2015 to understand how Card and IdM developments could be progressed within a 12 month period. This was to ensure that options for mitigation of immediate issues with Card could be prepared with a longer-term strategy in mind.
  The feasibility work has recommended that an IdM system architectural vision and strategy be developed and implemented, but that this should run alongside (rather than as a pre-requisite to) a series of tactical maintenance activities to keep the existing Card solution running.

- **JRE Upgrade:** Currently the Oracle Financials System, Oracle Student System, and HRIS V16 are using an outdated version of JRE and this is causing difficulties for the implementation of the new version of HRIS (V20). Therefore an upgrade is required. As this will affect multiple systems and users a project has been requested to manage the roll-out. Initial testing has begun with a planned go live date of 26th October 2015 in mind. Once the project is formally underway IT staff will be contacted with further plans, but in the meantime if you have any questions please contact sam.newman@it.ox.ac.uk

- **WISE project:** The WebLearn team is inviting participation in the WebLearn Improved Student Experience (WISE) Project, offering a limited amount of customised WebLearn design and development support free of charge. The aim of the project is to support departments, faculties, colleges and units to fast-track the development and improvement of their WebLearn presence in order to deliver an enhanced (and consistent) student digital experience, as well as an efficient and satisfying experience for staff.

  Learning technologists in the central WebLearn team are offering a package of dedicated support to improve (or re-design) WebLearn areas and produce template sites, particularly for teaching and learning purposes. The suggested package is flexible and open to suggestion, depending on needs.

  The team is available to give a 15-min overview of the project and the support offered at Teaching & Learning or other departmental committee meetings, and to set up a presence at student induction sessions or other events to engage directly with WebLearn users.

  More information about the project: http://blogs.it.ox.ac.uk/adamweblearn/wise-project/ Contact: jill.fresen@it.ox.ac.uk to arrange an initial exploratory meeting with the WISE team.

  John Ireland, TT 2015