

ISC14D013

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Issue

The paper outlines progress on the programme of development activity undertaken by ITCS during the academic year 2014/15.

Recommendation

The recipients are asked to note the report.

Resource Implications

With exceptions that are noted in the paper the proposed programme can be delivered within allocated ISD budgets.

Risk Implications

Significant developments will be managed using a predefined project management methodology which includes an assessment of risk at the development level.

Equality and Diversity

We do not believe that the proposed programme has an impact on specific groups with protected characteristics.

Timing of decisions

Work in a number of areas has already commenced. This report provides an update of mid-year progress.

Further Information

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Background

On an annual basis, ISD prepares a programme of development activity for approval by ISSC. The programme has been developed in conjunction with the IT Forum, Library Forum, ISD Education Board and ISD Research Board and is informed by the current Library and IT Strategies. The attached report covers activity in ICT, CIS, FITS and SPC. A separate report covering the Library activity is also provided.

Discussion

This paper provides a summary of the progress in the programme of work for ISD during academic year 2014/15. The programme of work is comprised of a number of projects and a number of departmental level developments.

ISD POW 2014-15 – ICT Systems developments

The majority of the work undertaken by the infrastructure teams on an on-going basis is to ensure the reliability, resilience, security and service continuity of the universities IT infrastructure. Specific tasks being undertaken this year include:

- Network infrastructure installations for new and refurbished university buildings
- Rolling replacement of end of life servers (virtualising servers where possible), network switches and storage subsystems
- Regular server driver, firmware and patch upgrades
- Continued development of the IT infrastructure monitoring system
- Desktop software application packaging and deployment as requested
- Implementation of disk encryption on new Windows, Mac and Linux mobile devices.
- A number of tenders, including HPC, storage, servers, network cabling and telephone exchange/bearers.
- Continue HPC and Linux training programmes with CSED and SCI PGR PPD
- Supporting research groups by replacement of end of life servers

Status: The majority of work is progressing as planned however staff vacancies within the Data Centre team are causing some delays.

Projects

Cloud Tools (office 365)

Originally the plan was to migrate staff and students over summer however this was postponed due to limited resources on the IT helpdesk, resulting in them not being able to support the moves. In reviewing the situation we also felt that it would be less disruptive to users to undertake the migrations at a time when they are more likely to be on campus. A revised migration schedule has been created and signed off with the project board. This will result in migrations taking place from January to the end of August, with no migrations taking place during the clearing period and only visitor accounts being migrated during congregation week. The schedule is as follows:

- Students (UG & PGT): 26th Jan 2015 until 17th April 2015
- Academic Staff & PGR: 20th April 2015 until 26th June 2015
- Partners & Associates: 30th March 2015 until 10th April 2015
- Professional Services: 29th June until 31st August 2015

Research storage

In July a number of service disruptions were experienced with the service and at the time urgent work was undertaken to stabilise the service, in order to provide the time to investigate the underlying problem. It has been established the problem is associated with the operating system kernel on the file serving servers and the supplier Redhat has indicated that the issue is likely to be resolved in a later release.

As the supplier has not been able to provide us with a definitive resolution a six stage plan has been developed to upgrade the research storage infrastructure to the latest supported versions and to resume the data migrations. To minimise the risk of disruption the plan includes a number of two week change freezes between changes, in addition to the usual robust testing processes. Communications will be sent out on a regular basis to all users likely to be impacted.

Stage 1 (5/1/15 - 20/2/15) – Operating system (Linux), file management software (GPFS) upgrades and re-enable snapshots

Stage 2 (23/2/15 - 10/3/15) – File system upgrades

Stage 3 (11/3/15 - 3/4/15) - File serving software upgrades

Stage 4 (12/1/15 - 3/4/15) - ASCII file name issues

Stage 5 (2/3/15 - 3/4/15) - Review archiving policies

Stage 6 (5/1/15 – 10/7/15) - Data migrations (user migrations will resume after stage 4 has been completed)

UEA London disengagement

This project covers the decommissioning of the IT equipment supporting UEA London. Work is currently on hold until the end of February, pending installations that need to take place by INTO IT staff.

Key POW items

- Procure and implement new network firewall infrastructure
Status: The perimeter firewalls have been replaced and are live. Campus firewalls will be deployed in February.
- Evaluate options for replacing the end-of-life VPN solution used by staff and students for remote access to University IT systems
Status: Not started
- Implement externally hosted authentication to allow clients to continue to authenticate in the unlikely event of lack of service on campus
Status: Not started
- Creation of a support infrastructure to enable more effective use of Mac computers
Status: Software has been developed and training has been provided to the IT Technicians
- Pilot of a remote desktop service for students (This is something that has been implemented at many HEI's)
Status: Work is progressing as planned
- Development and rollout of the latest UEA Linux desktop
Status: Work is progressing as planned
- Migrate remaining Mailman email distribution lists to a new virtual server.
Status: All of the lists have been migrated. The remaining task is on hold due to staff illness.

ISD POW 2014-15 – Faculty IT Support developments

PC and Laptop tender

The existing PC and Laptop contract expires on the 31st May 2015. In spring 2015 ISD will be developing a set of requirements before going out to tender to secure the most effective contract. Particular focus will be placed on the ordering and procurement process, service options available and opening up the benefits of the service to UEA students.

ITIL implementation project

ISD is embarking on a project to introduce a framework to help deliver IT services which will improve the long-term operational efficiency and effectiveness of ISD. Working with consultants a series of changes will be implemented to improve the quality of service delivery. Work is expected to start in February.

ISD POW 2014-15 – Strategy, policy and compliance

- New online training courses on information compliance are available covering DPA, FOI, Records Management and Copyright. Details on how to access them are available from <https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/is/strategies/infregs/training>.
- The copyright guidance pages on the ISD web site have been reviewed and completely rewritten, and are expected to be live in the next month.
- In 2015, we will look at taking a different approach to departmental liaison on information compliance matters. The exact form of this liaison is to be determined in collaboration with departments.
- The Information Security Manager appointed last May has undertaken a review of the current state of our IT services in the light of recent audits and particular cybersecurity threats facing organisations and defences against those threats. He will be presenting on his findings, and has provided a separate report.
- As a matter of urgency we have initiated a project to address key IT Security issues, in order to keep other projects on track we have appointed an additional project manager, for 8 months, (increasing the team to three staff) to look after the project management of the assessments and feedback project and bring the Office 365 migration work to a close.

ISD POW 2014-15 – Corporate Information Services

Over the last three months, the CIS teams have completed or been working on the following major items of work:

Student Systems

- Development of the existing e:Vision based electronic marking functionality to allow for wider rollout.
- Developments relating to PGR student management.
- Development and maintenance of MED systems (Rogo and MED Absence).
- An upgrade of the SITS software to a newer version.

WEB

- We have been working on server and software stability – leading to several system upgrades and patches to Liferay
- We have been working on the next stage of portal development which will enable us to rollout authenticated access (intranet content)
- We have been doing a significant amount of work on developing delivery methods for old web content, and decommission old services and new systems come on line.

Other areas

- Tendering and supplier selection for a range of projects including Enterprise Reporting, Online Payments and Identity Management
- Completion of several data cubes required for reporting including the development of a new Library Loan cube which is now in use.
- Upgrades to the payroll system and MyView services in preparation for deploying web recruitment and an enhanced portal that will enable staff to view and amend their personal details.
- Automation of library processes including: Aleph feeds to EDS; SFX CKB Exports for Browzine.
- Migration of PDS from Primo to Aleph.
- Continued development and upgrade of our Linux Web platform.
- Continued development of the ABW to Pure data feeds.
- Decommission of PMA and PFACT frontend servers
- Decommission of Primo servers
- Migration of services to manage Linux web service like car parking.
- SSO link to Netcommunity allowing students to continue to access Evision after graduation

Future Work

Over the coming three months, the CIS team intend to carry out the following major items of work:

Student Systems

- Developments to allow summative assessments to be marked in Blackboard.
- Further developments relating to PGR student management.
- An upgrade of the SITS software to a newer version.
- Completion of Extenuating Circumstances developments.

WEB

- Rollout of authenticated Intranet content
- Decommission of flat file and migration of personal web content
- Decommission old Polopoly web content system
- Integration of Liferay with the new Pure Advanced Portal.
- Migration of journal database to Liferay.

Other Areas

- Implementation of the Tableau reporting system
- Implementation of WPM online store and payment gateway
- Initiation of the SPOT replacement project
- Implementation of the Talis reading list software
- Data warehouse development to support new reporting tool
- Aleph server refresh and upgrade
- Payroll upgrade
- ABW upgrade to Milestone 4 release

- Upgrade Pure to version 5
- Deploy the Pure Advanced Portal
- Tharstens print management system upgrade
- Server refresh for windows application platform