Minutes

of meeting held at 10am 24/5/17 in the Turing room.

Present: Tim Colles, Bjoern Franke, Johanna Moore, Alastair Scobie, Perdita Stevens

Apologies: Jane Hillston

Minutes and matters arising

The minutes were approved.

Actions carried:

Action: TC will ensure our documentation of how to use central research data facilities is updated.

Action: AS to re-form the [web strategy] group. (MW and AS did discuss)

Action: MW to pass to Exec Group the task of identifying these individuals [who should be provided with University-owned mobile devices if their own are not suitable]

Action: TC to discuss with Barbara Webb, and feed back as appropriate.

Matters arising:

AS took an action to investigate precisely what staff are forbidden to do on non-encrypted mobile devices - e.g. is accessing Staffmail by the web interface OK, or does it involve MHR data being cached on the device in a way that counts as having that data on the device? Instead he will push IS to document this appropriately, since it isn't Informatics-specific.

From what we can gather, most of the O365 dissatisfaction stemmed from early disastrous migrations - recent ones have been smoother. IMAP interface seems to be OKish. In the long term we are still concerned about whether MS will continue to support it but there is some reason to hope MS may be coming round to open standards as a strategy so maybe it's OK. If we ran our own mail server it would cost us no more than around 0.25 FTE long term, but we would still have to manage the migration, and for us it would be the first time, so perhaps more likely to be disruptive than IS's now practiced migration to O365. Last time this possibility was raised some members of the School felt using a MS mail system was impossible given their research links with MS competitors: this is unlikely to have changed, but it's hard to say how widespread a concern it is. We may not get a choice, anyway.

Action: AS to meet with Gavin, with Stuart and/or Jane

AFS and DataStore (Tim)

We had earlier decided to pursue the option of using AFS on DataStore . However, when TC looked into it further, various disadvantages emerged. Snapshotting wouldn't work normally; backups would not work as well, because the backup software in use does not understand AFS; and AFS itself is troubled, the AFS clients for Windows and iOS not keeping up. Moreover some users are already doing their own thing with DataStore . Decision: we will give up trying to do AFS on DataStore .

Amazon Web Services (Martin)

At a Portfolio Managers' meeting the question arose of whether we should have a School account on AWS. It is being used in teaching via a free allocation and being budgeted for in some grants. There's a procurement issue: we could not just start paying for AWS, we'd have to do a proper procurement exercise which would involve identifying requirements and comparing suitable alternatives (maybe Google cloud, Azure). This is probably best done at University, not School, level, though.

Action: AS to discuss with Tony Weir

Action: MW to ask PMs for a rough order of magnitude of our paid use at present.

AOCB

This is PS's last meeting before demitting office as DoC and going on sabbatical.

Action: MW to ensure next DoC arranges the next meeting soon after starting, once that person has been identified.

-- PerditaStevens - 03 Mar 2017

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