



Computing Strategy Group Minutes

17th May 2018, 11 am, Room 1.15

Present: Stuart Anderson (Chair), Alastair Scobie, Martin Wright, Johanna Moore, Ian Simpson (Deputy of Director of Research), Tim Colles, Angela Sturniolo (Secretary)

Apologies: Jane Hillston

	Summary	ACTION
1.	PREVIOUS MEETING	
	Approval of previous minutes and matters arising	
	<p>This was the first meeting of CSG after May 2017. It was agreed that the actions from the minutes of that meeting were no longer valid.</p> <p>SOA chaired the meeting via video skype call.</p> <p>It was noted that the current group will be focused more on actions and on setting up of working groups.</p>	
2.	Strategy for improving efficiency of teaching admin support	
	<p>There will be a change in the system used by the students from Theon to Edinburgh University corporate systems (e.g. reporting will be via BI).</p> <p>It was agreed that we need to develop a strategy. This strategy should cover the effective use of central systems, identifying which of our remaining manual processes can be automated and how we might support the admin processes for online teaching. The strategy would produce a short term plan (identifying low hanging fruit) and a long term plan.</p> <p>A small working group of Tim Colles, Vicky MacTaggart, Gillian Bell and an academic with good knowledge of ITO functioning will be formed to develop the strategy.</p> <p>ACTION: Tim Colles to form the working group.</p>	TC
3.	Strategy for supporting transition to use of VLE (and other tools)	
	<p>Webpages for courses in the School will be migrated to LEARN shortly therefore action to understand what is going to happen is required soon.</p> <p>It was agreed that we need to develop a strategy to promote the use of the VLE (and other related tools) and to support the transition of courses to the VLE. This strategy will, at least, define the scope of our Learn pilot, identify potential tools (other than Learn) and consider whether we have good reason not to use Learn as a "home" for teaching related systems (as done in other Schools).</p>	

	<p>Martin Wright suggested that our Learning Technologist who is working on the project to transfer materials to LEARN should be part of this group and should also work in collaboration with an academic champion.</p> <p>A small working group of Alex Burford, an academic champion, an academic critic, Tim Colles and our distance learning coordinator will be formed to develop the strategy (and a short term plan for 18/19).</p> <p>ACTION: As Nigel Goddard has participated in the training courses, it was suggested that he should be a member of this working group?</p> <p>ACTION: Tim Colles to form the working group</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>TC</p>
4.	Strategy for supporting possible on-line 2 year MSc	
	<p>The current University model is for 180 point MScs that mirror our face-to-face 1 year degrees. Issues have been identified with the administration of online courses, as there are problems with students accessing Informatics computing resources. The School is considering introducing a 2-year, 240 point, MSc programme - 1 yr online, and 1 yr onsite, with possibly a remotely supervised project for students who wish to take a 180 point MSc entirely remotely. Likely issues with such a programme include resourcing compute provision and administration (might end up being out of line with the existing cycle of work within ITO)</p> <p>ACTION: Stuart to produce a detailed proposal and circulate to CSG</p>	SOA
5.	Plan for resourcing compute and data intensive courses of 2018/2019	
	<p>The demand for compute resources from compute and data-intensive courses continues to grow. There is also increasing demand for such resources from the research postgraduate community. We need a plan for addressing these needs for AY 2018/2019. It was confirmed that the 200 GPU cluster, bought for MLP, can be used for MSc projects over the summer.</p> <p>ACTION: Alastair to consult with Steve Renals/Volker Seeker/Pramod Bhatotia/ Pavlos Andreadis in order to identify what additional resources are required for AY 18/19</p>	AS
6.	Strategy for resourcing compute and data intensive courses	
	<p>The demand for compute resources from compute and data-intensive courses continues to grow, particularly with increasing interest in machine learning. There is also increasing demand for compute resources from the research postgraduate community. We are currently projecting that undergraduate and taught postgraduate numbers will continue to rise over the next few years. We agreed that a working group should be formed to develop a strategy for resourcing the compute and data intensive needs of the School. This strategy would cover both teaching and research. It should include consideration of an appropriate balance between physical and cloud provision, the procurement of physical compute, infrastructure required for supporting physical compute, how we might resource the requirements of online courses and a possible return to an SRF scheme. Projecting demand over the next two to five years would be an important first step before developing any strategy.</p> <p>The working group would consist of Alastair Scobie, Iain Rae, Ian Simpson and a number of academics with an interest in compute intensive teaching and research.</p> <p>ACTION: AS to form the working group</p>	AS

7.	Office migration 365	
	<p>We are the sole remaining School not to have committed to migrate off Staffmail to Office365. It is clear that remaining on Staffmail is not an option - it is running on elderly hardware and has seen no significant investment in recent years. Our only options are to migrate to Office365 or introduce our own email service. Running our own email service could be considered to be inappropriate use of our computing staff resources. It was agreed that we should migrate to Office365. A small number of staff will take part in a pilot migration and present on their experiences at a School meeting. The University CIO (Gavin McLahlan) will also attend this meeting to address any concerns that School members may have. IS have agreed to provide substantial on-site post migration support.</p> <p>ACTION: Alastair will speak with Kasia Kokowaska from comms to prepare communication by the end of July</p>	AS
8.	GDPR update	
	<p>Stuart raised concerns that academics haven't yet been trained re GDPR and is worried that we haven't identified all systems in use. Martin reassured the meeting that there has been a lot of activity (particularly with respect to student data). It was concluded that many of the concerns are related to data security, so we should remind people of their obligations and best practice.</p> <p>ACTION: Martin will update Strategy Committee on the GDPR activity so far</p> <p>ACTION: Alastair Scobie to arrange the production of a half page summary to send to academics reminding them about data security.</p>	MW AS
9.	School access to self-managed compute resources	
	<p>Currently projects and plans stored in a University laptop are not accessible by other people other than the owner. In the instance of someone leaving the University it is not possible to access computers and files stored as they are encrypted. This issue will be discussed at the next Strategy Committee.</p> <p>ACTION: Alastair to produce an options proposal to be discussed at Strategy Committee</p> <p>ACTION: Everybody in the Committee to read computing plan and then feedback to AS before next Strategy Committee</p>	AS All
10.	Any other business	
	<p>MW suggested that the strategic issues raised in the meeting should be added to the Computing Plan. AS asked that committee members read and comment on the Computing plan.</p> <p>ACTION: Alastair to amend the Computing plan</p> <p>ACTION: Everybody in the Committee to read computing plan and then feedback to Alastair Scobie before next Strategy Committee</p>	AS All
11.	Date of next meeting: Mid-November – date will be confirmed according to group members availability	