

Minutes of the Computer Committee meeting held on 12th-October 2020 at 13:00pm via Teams

Present: Jason Randall, Allison Lewis, Ian Elliott, Charlie Weiss, Catherine Reid, Jason Carroll, Aylmer Johnson, Qi Guo, Ignas Budvytis, Larry Paulson, Max Lycke (MCR)

Apologies: Ben Cole (UCS)

1. Declarations of Interest

None

2. MMA

None

3. IT Department Update

JR reported that over the latter part of the summer he had completed risk assessments designed to assess how we could safely run the department and also manage the services we provide.

The department is now manning the office on a three week rota basis with just one person in although we could potentially have two in at the same time by utilising our workroom as a desk space should it be required.

The start of term is upon us and is busy as always. We are seeing the usual requests for help from students such as setting up Eduroam on their devices and various laptop issues. The high usage levels of wi-fi seem to be causing speed issues so some students are opting to use the wired connection in their rooms which is recommended anyway.

Sporadic issues with Eduroam are being reported across the whole University where students can see the networks but cannot authenticate to them. These issues are being investigated by UIS.

Over the summer we purchased 12 new laptops for staff to use whilst working from home and we also borrowed 7 conference laptops from Support Services. The new laptops were basic but perfectly good enough to be used at home to VPN into their college PCs. In total we configured 43 laptops for home use. The VPN itself has held up very well considering it was originally set up to handle just 10 connections at a time but has since been configured for greater use.

During lockdown we only attended site if required and then only one at a time. During this period IE remoted into every college PC and laptop on the Clare network to ensure that they were fully patched and updated with the latest OS.

There have been no major security issues during this period although the college was the target of a fairly large phishing attack directed by a botnet. Other University departments were also targeted and this lasted for around two weeks. One person fell victim to this and their email account was compromised so we helped them to change their passwords and clean up their machine

We have created two new CCTV servers which are in place and ready for use. The third party who maintain our current CCTV servers will be liaising with the Porters to migrate from the old to the new.

JR tested the new version of SALTO which is our door access control software. This has been completed and we now need to organise a date to implement the new system possibly early November.

It is now around a year since we started to use the job ticketing system (osTicket) which AL implemented. It has been working very well and over the last year we have resolved 1,176 job tickets at an approximate rate of 23 per week. The last month has been very busy and we have resolved 166 job tickets at a rate of about 7 per day.

AL upgraded osTicket a few weeks ago which went smoothly.

The building work at St Regis is approaching completion so we have been planning wi-fi provision by having a survey carried out by UIS. The number of access points that they recommended tallied with our own estimate and they also gave us recommended locations. The handover date for the building is late December/early January so we need to find 3-4 days in which to carry out the access point installations potentially in late November.

We have been adapting the MCS rooms for use with social distancing. This has in some cases reduced the number of available machines from 10 to around 3. Unfortunately we have also had two floods in the Castle House MCS room at the Colony which damaged power supplies and a printer which were on the floor. JR presumes an insurance claim will be made by the college to replace any damaged equipment.

The new MFD copier in the FML appeared to be working well and CR agreed. Students can now send prints to the copier and collect them by using their University card on the attached reader. We had budgeted for a similar device to be installed at the Colony but finances dictate that this may not be possible at the present time. It's probable location would be the dining room at Castle End which we have temporarily commandeered for MCS use in the absence of the Castle House facility.

The Bursar has given JR an IT security policy document which he obtained from the Cambridge in America fund raising organisation. This document was written for them by one of their lawyers and the Bursar wondered if we could implement it here at Clare. JR has started to examine it and initial viewing shows it to be quite intense and not necessarily in line with the academic side of our business but may have some good principles which can be used in conjunction with the office/admin side of things along with data management. JR is to complete a Gap analysis to determine where we currently sit with our level of security and where the expectation lies. JR also predicts that we would need a full time employee (IT security officer) to realise this. Once the analysis has been completed JR will write a report for the Bursar and circulate it to the committee for comment.

JC mentioned the recent phishing attack and asked for clarification on infection methods i.e. is opening the email enough to be infected? JR explained that simply opening/reading the text of an email would not put you at any risk but opening the attachment would. The virus is macro based so will prompt you to enable restricted content and if you do this then that is when you become infected. JR stated that the University had been monitoring the traffic from McAfee and confirmed that it had been taking care of most of the issues.

CR asked if we had received any enquiries or complaints about the lack of FML facilities at weekends. JR, AL and IE all said that they had not heard of any issues from students regarding this.

AJ asked if there was more demand for scanners at the moment as he thought that students might be scanning supervision work to hand in. JR said he had seen no tickets related to scanning and AL confirmed that all of our scanners are still available even where we have thinned out facilities.

LP asked if many people use scanners anymore when mobile phone apps are so good at it. AJ said that his phone can't create a pdf of several pages but LP stated that you could with the right app (Scannable being a good example).

4. UCS Report

The UCS rep was not present.

5. MCR Report

ML said that there was little to report other than the setting up of accounts for MCR members and slight amendments to the website logo.

JR asked how the collaboration with Kings was going with regard to the update of the MCR website. ML said that he had asked Rouchelle for an update but had not yet heard back from her so will chase up. JR said that he could provide contact details for the IT Manager and developer at Kings if needed.

6. AOB

JC mentioned that one of his students was having issues running the R Stats package on his Chromebook as it will not run on Android. Although some research by IE had confirmed that there might be a potential workaround for this it would be much simpler to lend the student one of our spare MCS machines to use in their room. This would only be needed if the student had to isolate for any reason.

JR asked all present for any thoughts/content/updates which could be added to the annual report to the Fellowship.

Date of next meeting

Monday 23rd November 2020 at 13:00