

## **Minutes of the Computer Committee meeting held on 24th January 2022 at 13:00pm via Teams**

**Present:** Jason Randall, Ian Elliott, Charlie Weiss, Catherine Reid, Qi Guo, Aylmer Johnson, Larry Paulson, Saul Samuels Moselle (UCS), Bjarne Bergh (MCR)

Apologies: Allison Lewis, Jason Carroll, David Ball

### **1. Declarations of Interest**

None

### **2. MMA**

None

### **3. Draft Budget Proposals**

JR has sent out the budget to give everyone an idea of the basic running costs and he doesn't anticipate that there will be too many changes but there is always a little manoeuvring. JR will start to work on this in the coming months and it should be finalised by May.

We have now received the report from the penetration testing which took place last autumn and it has highlighted some of our older MCS printers where the firmware is potentially vulnerable. They also use Telnet instead of SSH so ought to be replaced. JR would be looking to replace them with MFDs which would also entail lower running costs as well. JR will be pricing these options.

### **4. IT Dept Update**

Our core switch upgrade in Old Court took place over the Christmas period but we experienced some issues in Memorial Court which caused us to halt that upgrade as we ran out of time.

Some reconfiguration work needs to take place at WCDC but this will take place at the end of the month after Phil Ward has arrived.

JR has temporarily moved into O4 to give AL the space she needs to carry out the handover to PW.

The first meeting took place with Network Design who were awarded the website contract. It was purely to discuss the basics plus a few contractual matters and the working group will get involved to discuss the detail at a later date. This will be led by Annie Muston and Jonathan Goodman with ourselves providing support as we go along.

JR told the Committee that as this will be the last meeting with AL still working at Clare he wanted to put on record everyone's gratitude for all of the hard work she has done over the years. Phil Ward is to be her replacement and is currently a Computer Officer at Queens College.

JR attended the CITMG last Thursday where a UIS representation announced that the MCS service is to be shut down due to lack of use which means they are unable to meet costs. They have lost two thirds of their clients during the pandemic and the service is no longer viable. UIS are giving an approximate 12-18 month notice period and we now need to try and glean more information.

JR said that our MCS rooms are currently running at about one third of usage pre-pandemic but it is still very early days following the recent relaxation of restrictions. The loss of this service will create a big hole in our provision especially for those who utilise the numerous software packages that are available on these platforms.

CR expressed both shock and surprise at this news.

JR will wait for the minutes to be released from the meeting and will then hopefully be able to report more information back to the committee. He has also written to our UIS relations manager to ask what exactly is going on. We need to start collating opinion from the student/graduate communities as to how this will affect them and we also need to know what alternative arrangements have been in place during the pandemic to enable them to access facilities.

JR produced the stats for the Michaelmas terms of 2019 and 2021 as a comparison to highlight the decline in usage. Individual users had dropped from 424 to 108 respectively. UIS have also cited the loss of skill sets within their organisation (along with hardware architecture) as the reason for the impending loss of dual boot Windows/Linux PCs from around the middle of this year.

SM asked what would happen to the hardware in our MCS rooms and JR stated that as it belongs to us we could potentially use them as part of any potential solution but that raises other issues such as financing the purchase of software currently supplied by UIS along with lack of skill sets/time here in Clare.

SM asked if we had the capacity to deliver something similar. JR said we do not at present.

SM also asked how much we currently spend on MCS provision. JR said that the figure is around £10k/year.

AJ asked what the response had been so far from other IT officers. JR was unaware of anything yet as the news is so fresh but he will report back when he finds out. AJ suggested getting senior college officers involved (the Master/Senior Tutor).

LP expressed concern about how UIS skill sets have been so badly depleted.

IE stated how vital the MCS facilities were as a backup for when student's own hardware fails at critical moments.

JR will report back to the committee once more information has been gathered.

#### **4. UCS Report**

SM had nothing else to report other than complete shock at the news about the loss of the MCS service.

#### **5. MCR Report**

BB reported that the Graduate properties were not well catered for in the rooms database and has discussed this with Housekeeping.

There seems to be a bug which stops people using Raven to register for a wired connection. JR is aware of this and has raised the issue with the people who support our Firerack. The problem has been caused by UIS making a configuration change within Raven but this should be resolved soon. Until this has been done though anyone having issues registering can contact us and we can do it manually.

The clare-mcr lookup group is not up to date which is causing problems. JR believes it is managed through the Central Administration Office at UIS so he will email the service desk to try and resolve this.

BB asked again if there could be a printer in St Regis. JR is still very keen for an MFD to be provided there and also at Clare Court.

#### **6. AOB**

CR asked if the new archive management system could be mentioned in the annual report and JR confirmed that it was already included.

#### **Date of next meeting**

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022