

Information Systems Planning Group
10:00am, 24 January 2007
Robertson Wing Meeting Room, General Register House

Present: Dave Brownlee (chair); David Brown; Keith Dargie; Rob Mildren; Grayham Mount, Jenny Cutts (secretary).

Apologies: None.

1. Staffing issues

It was reported that the closing date for advertised B2 Network and Communications Manager vacancy is 30 January 2008 and several expressions of interest have been received. Paul Riley took up post as DIU Digital Services Manager on 3 January 2008. A further vacancy will be created when a current Digital Imaging Technician takes up promoted post shortly at GROS. The GRH digital imaging backshift is expected to start around the end of February 2008, the exact date is not yet determined [subsequently confirmed as 25 February]. Health and Safety and Security issues concerning the new unit are being addressed. It was noted that the GRH tea room is a long way from the office space where they will be working and is also awkwardly located. It was suggested that members of the TTH digital imaging backshift may be attracted to joining the unit based in GRH.

2. Progress reports

2.1 IT Infrastructure and Web & Applications Development Team

2.1.1 Keith Dargie reported that the ScotlandsPeople Project Plan had been revised following reassessment of the GROS applications issues by the Executive Board. Keith has established more effective project management mechanisms, which includes publishing an updated IT Work Schedule Document on a weekly basis and to hold more frequent checkpoint meetings with the Executive Board to review and monitor progress.

2.1.2 A list of NASnet enhancements has been published. The upgrade of the inter-building links by THUS is provisionally scheduled for 29 January 2008. The work would ideally be undertaken out of hours, but will be commenced from 5:30pm as a compromise with the supplier. This will mean that the network will be closed at 5:30pm. Advance notification messages will be issued to all staff. Network services will be operational by 7:00am the next morning.

2.1.3 The WRH cabling upgrade technical analysis and technical drawings are due to be signed off shortly, with work on schedule to be completed by 31 March 2008.

2.1.4 The NASnet Internet bandwidth connections are also due to be upgraded from 2 to 10 MB. Additional failover resilience will be established as part of this solution. It is hoped to complete this work in February.

2.1.5 Recent enhancements to the NASnet Remote Access System have been well received. System logs shows that around 15 members of staff regularly use this system.

2.1.6 Power management software will be introduced at the end of January 2008 to deliver improved energy efficiency of the NASnet desktop PC systems.

2.1.7 USB management software will also be implemented, enabling remote de/activation of USB drives on public machines on request to the Helpdesk.

2.1.8 The project to deploy the multifunctional network printers has been scheduled for early February to avoid conflict with the Away Days. Positive feedback from the ICT User Forum indicates that the new desktop printers are operating successfully and that users are pleased. The new double-sided print facility and faster output is particularly appreciated. The User Forum representatives will receive training in use of the new multifunctional network printers to allow them to cascade guidance to their colleagues. Guidance for using the new equipment will also be published on *theOracle* and in printed form by each machine. Movement of existing printing and copying equipment has been scheduled. Any interim arrangements for the use of printer/copiers during the transition will be circulated to everyone.

2.1.9 Internet services will be improved during February/March 2008, which will include introducing failover contingencies and upgrading to the latest versions of software on the Internet proxy servers.

2.1.10 File and print server functions will also be improved by the addition of further servers to deliver resilience and capacity benefits.

2.1.11 The success of the ICT – Infrastructure team volunteers carrying out early morning checks (by 07:00hrs) remotely on our key IT systems was acknowledged. This has contributed to 100% availability of key network services during core business hours over a number of months. Keith reported that some issues were discovered but were fixed before 8:00am in each case, either remotely or by the Infrastructure team volunteers travelling to the relevant location. Continued success in this respect relies upon the three volunteers who operate the rota. It was added that they will also become responsible for checking the ScotlandsPeople network once it is established. New mobile telephones have been supplied along with taxi slips to support staff to travel as quickly as possible to deal with any problems. These support procedures and the support staff working arrangements will be reviewed regularly.

2.1.12 The planned ICT User Survey will be held during February or March 2008.

2.1.13 All ICT Business Activity Reviews have been held. Most branches have requested that two of these reviews are undertaken per annum, often to be coordinated around the annual corporate planning cycles and to build on the existing bi-lateral meetings. Key outcomes of the reviews includes the deployment of PCs to all CSB staff, and a thorough review of the IT systems in place within FAB.

2.1.14 A Dell network storage solution is now in place to meet the requirements of ScottishDocuments2. Difficulties were experienced with the delivery and installation of this system with the supplier, which Keith plans to follow up in due course. . The transfer of data to the new storage environments has been arranged. Keith also highlighted some issues around the installation of a clustered solution for this system,

which is likely to require a domain controller to be installed in the DMZ to facilitate authentication.

2.1.15 A specification has been agreed for the design of new Change and Version Control system, which will formalise the approval and recording processes for making changes to the NASnet IT systems.

2.1.16 It was reported that the Tartan Register Project Management documents have been signed off by the Project Board, which reflected the key outcomes from a project analysis workshop held last November. Work continues on the legislative programme and with the amalgamation of the existing tartan datasets. Keith will also work with his Web & Applications Development team colleagues to finalise the technical design of the new Registers.. He will also meet again with the Keeper and the lead archivists to further progress the operational and accessioning aspects for the Register. Keith is aiming for all requirements and procedural components to be signed off by 31 March 2008, which will allow formal development work to commence in April 2008.

2.1.17 New helpdesk software is being investigated and requirements and products researched. The possibility of including FAB within the Helpdesk system was raised. Although ICTB is responsible for the Helpdesk, it is a business system covering services from other service branches, e.g. ASB. The inclusion of FAB may deliver further standardisation and service delivery benefits to customers.

2.2 Digital Access Team

2.2.1 Grayham Mount reported on Digital Data Archive (DDA) progress. Testing using detailed Test scripts will start from week commencing 11 February 2008. It is expected the system will go live by Spring 2008.

2.2.2 Meetings of the replacement OPAC working group focussed on curatorial concerns such as the context of the wording displayed rather than technical functions. It is thought that a smaller more focused group maybe the way forward to consider and agree future technical aspects in version 2. It was noted that agreed system specifications include online NAS library catalogue but that this is not now seen as a requirement. David Brown confirmed the reasons why the library catalogue should not be made available online. NAS OPAC version 1 must be in place when contract with DS to host the current OPAC (online catalogue) expires on 31 March 2008. A second version of NAS OPAC incorporating additional requirements may be developed by the end of 2008/9. Further policy direction will be required for version 2 as will corporate planning. It was noted that Ian Hill is reviewing internal cataloguing standards in relation to this project. A discussion of the different types of system users was held and suggestions regarding public feedback were made. It was further noted that OPAC deployment procedures also affect infrastructure, web and applications team.

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| Action: Grayham Mount to discuss future OPAC technical developments with Ian Hill. [Subsequently it has been agreed that Rob Mildren will take this forward]. |
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2.2.3 It was reported that the RAC search tool had stabilised in performance. ICTB-DAT will consider an objective for 2008-09 to develop a bespoke search tool to make it more user friendly for the genealogical tourists.

2.2.4 ScotlandsImages software has been agreed and procurement going ahead and a website provider appointed. The project is on target although efforts are required in image optimisation. Grayham Mount has offered resources to advance this element of the project. It is hoped that the established service will be marketed at a trade fair in London in May 2008.

2.3 Online Resources Team

Rob Mildren reported that ScottishDocuments2 testing is expected to take place during February 2008 with participation of the Presbytery Clerks. The first batch of valuation rolls have been returned for quality auditing of the images which will be sent on for indexing once approved. A meeting with the Scottish Catholic Archivist has been held to discuss usage of digitised Catholic Registers. It was noted that GROS will implement the telephony system initially for both them and *ScotlandsPeople*, with NAS implementing the system in phase 2 later in year 2008.

2.4 Calm and OPAC

David Brown explained that two incidents of 'silly searches' in Calm had disrupted operation of the system during the last quarter. The data optimisation exercise has been successful. Helen Bull and Iain Moffat had discussed upgrading to Calm version 8. It was considered that upgrading from version 7 directly to version 9 would not be possible. In the light of past experience, it was agreed that waiting and moving to version 8.1 or 8.2 rather than 8.0 would be sensible. This would allow DS to identify and remove any defects in v.8.0. In this way NAs would avoid the labour of a second upgrade. Rob Mildren mentioned open source software for archival cataloguing being developed by the International Council on Archives (ICA) using international standards. It was not known when this software (Atom) would be made available for use by ICA members. It was noted that DS Calm may be considered to be the standard archival software used in Great Britain and that NAS' adoption of this system has inspired other Scottish archives to install it. It was asserted that the investment is in the cataloguing data rather than in particular software.

3. Future Production of Microfilm

3.1 A paper circulated by Grayham Mount was considered. Good systems and suppliers have been identified for the conversion of digital images to microfilm output. Advantages of outsourcing microfilm production were noted with regard to staff time, accommodation space, equipment replacement, health & safety issues such as chemicals handling and the increase of in NAS digital imaging capacity. It was agreed that copying documents digitally regardless of output media options is imperative for efficient reuse of the surrogate images. The availability of microfilm technicians to work on other imaging projects would be advantageous to many branches of NAS. The redeployment of these individuals to digital technology would also be of benefit to their skills sets. The concern that outsourcing may result in making microfilm orders more expensive than currently was expressed. Dave Brownlee observed that Management Board approval is required and noted the intention to discuss the proposal with the Local Partnership Board.

Action: Grayham Mount to investigate the need for production of microfiche copies of existing deeds microfiche and whether this can be outsourced.

3.2 It was further noted that the microfilm laboratory in room 21, GRH, would need to be emptied for re-use if in-house microfilm service is terminated, as it is currently fitted out with built-in furniture as well as a sink. The potential availability of that room may inform relocation of GRH transmission facilities. Use of the James Craig Walk entrance for document delivery is under consideration. It was noted that demolition of the adjacent building (the former New St andrews House) is scheduled to begin in 2010.

4. Geographical Information Systems

4.1 A paper circulated by Grayham Mount was discussed. It was acknowledged that Calm may not be linked to a GIS system as there are no compatible fields. It was noted that consultants would be required to identify a GIS solution as the choice of products offered by ESRI is complex. Concerns were raised with regard to the amount of work involved in the inclusion of geographical information within NAS catalogues. It is not possible to automate geographical location inclusion due to the complex relationship of historical documents to geographical places. The problem of raising expectations was discussed with reference to the possibility that GIS data may be added to some but not all catalogue entries. The feasibility of Registers of Scotland producing GIS entries for valuation rolls was suggested. It was recommended that the GIS working party be reconvened to consider the issue further.

Action: Grayham Mount to contact the chairman of GIS working party with this recommendation.

5. Information Systems security

5.1 Keith Dargie reported on the Scottish Government survey on data handling. It was noted that NAS holds personal but not restricted data. David Brown commented that government records files may theoretically include information enabling the reconstruction of data about individuals. A notice regarding password protection and use of laptops will be issued. It was explained that there are around 20 laptops in use within NAS.

Action: Keith Dargie to consider laptop and data security options and report to Dave Brownlee.

5.2 No security breaches were experienced since the last meeting.

6. Matters arising from ISPG Minutes of 26 October 2007(circulated)

[2.4] Dave Brownlee reported success in interim solution concerning DS OPAC failure. It was noted that the system will be replaced by an in-house OPAC in April 2008. [5] It was reported that the DVD corruption complaint had been resolved satisfactorily

7. Any other business

No other business was raised.

8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is due to be held in April 2008. Jenny Cutts will canvass for dates nearer the time.

Jenny Cutts
7 February 2007