

Information Systems Planning Group
10:00am, 15 April 2008
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

1.1 It was reported that Surya Somasundaram had taken up post as the new B2 IT Infrastructure team leader. An external B1 Board is required to fill 2 B1 ICTB vacancies. It is expected that this may be shared with Scottish Government Rural Affairs and GROS. It was noted that shared external recruitment boards have proved effective in the past. Keith Dargie added that the Infrastructure team vacancy is the most pressing.

1.2 Keith Dargie reported that 19 applications (from Napier business studies students) had been received for the 2 Helpdesk operator posts. Interviews will be held in April 2008, with the successful candidates expected to take up their posts in June and July 2008. A training day is being arranged to allow the present post holders to prepare their successors for their new roles and duties.

1.3 One member of the Online Resources Team has taken up the early retirement offer: there are no immediate plans to replace her.

1.4 It was reported that a full time post holder had not been identified by the recruitment board for a vacancy in the Digital Access Team.

1.5 Discussion with GROS about reciprocal arrangements to provide external members of recruitment boards is underway.

1.6 The digital imaging backshift stationed at GRH is operational. At present there are four temporary employees, which will be increased to six by June 2008. The 4pm start time has worked well despite previous concerns raised by staff.

1.7 Keith Dargie reported that staff resourcing situations in his Web and Applications Development team is impacting on the work being undertaken for the Scottish Register of Tartans project. Appropriate risk management options are under consideration. Keith added that applications prototyping was important and explained will facilitate the process of receiving comments from the Industry stakeholders. It was noted that Aileen Gardiner, B1 Applications Developer, had completed her core technical training. David Clarke has been working on the amalgamation of the existing Tartan databases.

2. Progress reports

2.1 IT Infrastructure and Web & Applications Development Team

2.1.1 Keith Dargie reported on the recent enhancements to NASnet. The desktop energy efficiency software is operating successfully, with no helpdesk calls reported to date. The facility to remotely enable CD and USB drives for the customer PCs in the search rooms has also been deployed successfully. The inter-building links have been upgraded, but statistics are not yet available to demonstrate performance levels. It was noted that staff based in WRH have reported some improvement in network performance, but the full impact of improvements will not be felt until the work to upgrade the WRH internal cabling has been completed. Work is well underway and should be completed within the next two weeks. Upgrades to the Internet connections are expected to take place once the suppliers "network freeze" ends. This work is expected to require 2-3 hours network outage. Sufficient warning will be issued to staff in order to plan for any interruptions to service, with out of hours work being considered to minimise disruption.

2.1.2 Exchange Server reconfigurations to increase server capacity and performance will be carried out during 19-20 April 2008. Remote Access to NASnet will be unavailable whilst this work is being undertaken (a user information notice will be issued).

2.1.3 The early morning rota system to check the key NASnet IT systems is proving extremely effective and is making a significant contribution to the high availability of network services. It was reiterated that this system depends upon the good will of the IT Infrastructure team volunteers who operate it. It was added that incidents identified do not necessarily result in downtime.

2.1.4 Keith Dargie explained his intention to discuss power distribution configurations in the TTH server room with Bob Phillips, in order to rectify an issue highlighted by a recent power failure.

2.1.5 The GRH server rooms require major reorganisation. Servers used for the ScotlandsPeople Centre require an additional room to be made available. This presents an opportunity to restructure the GRH server and network communications configurations to provide more effective structures overall. This will require extensive work to be undertaken by suppliers and the IT Infrastructure team, but will deliver improvements in the long term.

2.1.6 Storage of hardware equipment awaiting installation was discussed. Grayham Mount identified a room that may be used once the equipment awaiting disposal has been removed.

Action: Keith Dargie and Grayham Mount to discuss use of this room for storage.

2.1.7 Keith Dargie reported that a mobile broadband solution is being evaluated for use by the office, with the Keeper currently evaluating a T-Mobile solution that Keith has obtained on a free trial basis. This allowed the Keeper to communicate with the office whilst on official business recently in Abu Dhabi. Similar devices may be issued to colleagues issued with official business laptops and for borrowing from the Helpdesk. A formal procurement exercise will need to be undertaken as it is not possible to utilise a Scottish Government wide contract on this occasion.

2.1.8 Laptop security was discussed. Keith Dargie will investigate encryption products and solutions. Advice from the Scottish Government/Cabinet Office is anticipated.

2.1.9 The ScottishDocuments 2 website is in place incorporating online authentication solutions.

2.1.10 A paper outlining options for introducing enterprise data storage capabilities to NASnet will be submitted to ISPG in due course, as will a paper concerning server virtualisation proposals.

2.1.11 It was noted upgrades to MS Vista have been widely deferred amongst other government and corporate organisations. Microsoft has extended the support timeframes for Windows XP and will be releasing a further service pack.

2.1.12 Enhancements to the flexi and annual leave applications systems are being applied. Further considerations will be necessary in relation to the availability of the e-HR system. It was noted that e-HR is not yet available for use by NAS.

2.1.13 A Helpdesk user survey is planned. The ICT Business Activity Reviews and User Forums will continue, and will complement the communications mechanisms between ICTB and its customers.

2.1.14 David Ross will carry out a review of the NASnet IT service management systems after undergoing appropriate training.

2.1.15 It was reported that an *Innovations Theme* is being used to analyse and establish an applications development strategy and implementation plan for the next 2-3 years. Further information on these plans will be issued in due course, which will include holding extensive workshop analysis sessions.

2.2 *Digital Access Team*

2.2.1 Grayham Mount reported progress with the Digital Data Archive (DDA). Software has been tested and a Project Board meeting to be held on 28 May 2008 will consider when the DDA may go live. There are outstanding issues concerning the transformation module. The DDA can go live without resolution of those issues but the project will not be completed until delivery of transformation module.

2.2.2 Initiation of the DDA 2 phase was discussed. A scoping study will be set up. Staffing will be finalised following decisions about the applications for temporary TRS cover for the C1 position in Court and Legal Records Branch.

2.2.3 The new NAS online public catalogue was added to the NAS website from 1 April 2008 although further adjustments were required. Links were provided to both the former and replacement OPACS in tandem so that researchers could choose which one to use. The problems concerning cookies have been resolved. David Brown noted that this explanation accounted for conflicting reports received from a variety of customers who had attempted to use the new system.

2.2.4 Grayham Mount explained that a working group to test the online catalogue has been established by Online Resources Team and will report to Branch Heads. Some technical problems concerning firewalls have already been resolved. The former online catalogue will be removed from the NAS website from 30 April 2008.

2.2.5 It was noted that the replacement online catalogue presents further opportunities for more integration of records related systems.

2.2.6 The RAC search tool was discussed. It was reported that problems are being resolved for both Legal and Historical Search Rooms quicker than previously.

2.2.7 The ScotlandsImages project is on target. Positive feedback has been provided by the project manager regarding the acceleration of digital image capture for image library content.

2.2.8 Re-indexing problems with Calm have been experience for the past three consecutive Mondays. It is apparent that conflicts with other processes cause this problem.

2.2.9 Investigation of outsourcing microfilm was reported. Search room orders for microfilm copies have been made because they were cheaper for customers and not because microfilm was desired as a particular output format. No microfilm orders have been made in the past four months and the microfilm technicians have been working on digital cameras. It was noted that investigation of microfilm contractors was still underway and a company offering satisfactory service not yet been identified.

2.2.10 The practice of categorising particular copying orders as projects for historical customers was discussed. These procedures accounted for much of the microfilming requirements. Customer expectations and turnaround times were discussed. Grayham Mount explained that revision of the copying schedule was underway and that an A4 card conveying all the necessary information to search room staff and customers would be a useful product.

2.2.11 It was noted that there is a working group considering revision of all NAS fees and charges. The effect of fees and charges upon copy orders was discussed. Grayham Mount explained that copy order timescales will also be reviewed.

2.2.12 Rob Mildren suggested that charging structures be designed to recover the costs of imaging per page plus the cost of the required outcome (e.g. CD, paper copies emailed images). Grayham Mount added that the costs of curatorial and conservation processing varies.

2.2.13 Grayham Mount explained that additional facilities would enable digital imaging of 'Records at Risk' which are imaged following conservation work in order to obtain the optimal image of these documents.

2.2.14 Issues concerning Geographical Information Systems are related to proposals for a ScotlandsPlaces project. A working group to consider GIS has not yet been convened. Joint working with RCAHMS must be defined before progress with GIS is

made. It was noted that Calm is unable to incorporate GIS without a geospatial database.

2.3 Online Resources Team

2.3.1 Rob Mildren reported that ScottishDocuments 2 is being tested by Aberdeen and Perth Presbyteries. Imaging of all the church volumes has been completed and the technical solutions to provide access appear satisfactory.

2.3.2 The first indexes of Valuation Rolls are expected soon and a meeting has been held with the Director of the indexing company in Edinburgh. There are some concerns about the quality of images provided by the original microfilm copies. Many of these original volumes are already vacuum sealed and options to rectify imaging quality are under consideration.

2.3.3 Imaging of the Catholic Registers has been completed and index specifications agreed. Images of the Catholic volumes will be sold through ScotlandsPeople and the income will offset the costs of imaging and conservation work.

2.4 Calm and OPAC

2.4.1 David Brown explained that the ORT testing of new NAS OPAC will extend to consideration of future enhancements. Rob Mildren considers that the approach of separating index information from catalogue entries will improve and define both types of finding aid and allow for improved searching. It should still be possible to search all of the finding aids but searches and results are more meaningful when differentiated. David Brown endorsed this view and added that the revised NAS cataloguing standard will assist with this approach by formalising catalogue entries.

2.4.2 It was explained that many search results relate to criminal cases because the Solemn index information is included in the catalogue. With this data removed, catalogue searching will be more effective. One strength of SQL Server database is the ability to interact with other systems. Index and catalogue entries may be linked although differentiated.

2.4.3 The user-friendly aspects of the new online catalogue were discussed.

3. Information systems security

3.1 No security breaches were reported.

3.2 Dave Brownlee explained that the SG report on data handling has not been issued yet, but will require interpretation from an NAS perspective. Keith Dargie has been investigating and planning security measures. A formal security assessment of NASnet as a whole is scheduled for late 2008. While detailed analysis and further measures are required, NAS is now in a position to consider applying for Government Secure Intranet (GSI) accreditation status

3.3 The requirement to send HR forms electronically to SG HR was discussed. It was agreed that Dave Brownlee will ascertain whether it is acceptable to send HR related

documents over non-GSI connections and whether paper versions would be acceptable by HR.

4. Matters arising from ISPG Minutes of 24 January 2008 (circulated)

There were no other matters arising.

5. Any other business

5.1 Keith Dargie highlighted further delays with the completion of the ScotlandsPeople software applications that GROS are producing. He has taken over the project management for this work programme . Weekly checkpoint meetings are being held with GROS colleagues to review progress etc. Keith updates the Executive Committee each week, and will provide a revised implementation timescale through to completion shortly. NAS staff will participate with the testing of the ScotlandsPeople applications, particularly focusing on the presentation and delivery of the NAS documents and services being offered via. the ScotlandsPeople Centre.

5.2 The 52 printers and 192 PC workstations will be installed by the IT Infrastructure team to the newly refurbished ScotlandsPeople Centre accommodation by the beginning of June.

5.3 It was noted that the Joint Telephony System (JTS) requirements pose a risk in terms of server room accommodation availability and refurbishment completion.

5.4 Proposals to connect Scotland's local authorities to the ScotlandsPeople network were discussed. Keith Dargie is the project manager for this project, and will progress the initial planning considerations shortly based on a strategy paper that has been prepared by Paul Parr, GROS.

5.5 It was reported that there are over 12,000 images stored on the G: drive and a policy about image storage is required. It was noted that Branch Heads will discuss Digital Policy at a future meeting and this issue may be included in the discussion.

5.6 The Managing Our Digital Records project has been delayed due to other objectives taking precedence.

6. Date of next meeting

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

Jenny Cutts
21 May 2008