THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

Information Committee
Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 1 November 2007

Present: Dawn Cartwright, James Chong, Lorna Evans, Ian Jennings (Chair),
             Julie Lord, Paul Waites
Apologies: Peter Young

Action

07/09   Minutes of meeting held 24 April 2007
The minutes were accepted.

07/10   Matters arising from minutes of meeting on 24 April 2007
07/02   Bulletin
PRW reported that there has been no progress with the PHP-based Bulletin. The Bulletin has around 350 unique hits per week so it is better read than we thought. However, staff are still using global emails in addition to the Bulletin to advertise lunch clubs etc, and we may wish to discourage this practice in the future. Discussion took place about setting up Thunderbird on individual PCs to open the Bulletin automatically every Friday. It was acknowledged that this may slow down the log in process for some staff, but IJ agreed to trial it.   **IJ**

07/02   New IT post (Information Systems Developer)
IJ reported that funding has been agreed, the appointment has been approved and the new person is due to start in December.

07/02   Staff database
PRW reported that the trial has gone well and he is currently working through the resulting suggestions. One concern is to ensure the information is kept up-to-date. Only certain staff have admin rights and PRW will monitor how it is working in practice.   **PRW**

07/05   Personnel web pages
LE reported that these have been migrated.

07/07   ICDB Minutes
A site has been agreed and minutes are being transferred. DC will send LE the missing minutes.   **DC**

07/11   FOIA/DPA and minute taking procedures
DC queried the inclusion of certain items in published minutes. It was agreed that we should not omit items just because they fall under a certain title, but that genuinely exempt items should be starred and not made public, which means two versions of minutes will be necessary. DC will trial this.   **DC**

07/12   Software Audit
IJ reported that ten random machines were checked in the audit. Two of those had software for which the Department does not hold licenses but the owners may have them. IJ will follow this up.   **IJ**

Action

07/13 **Departmental IT Survey**

Sixteen responses were received which is slightly disappointing. On the whole, responses were positive.

i) AV

Many of the raised issues are in hand. MO23 is so solidly used for presentations that the data projector is wearing out and will have to be replaced sooner than expected. This will divert funds from the planned installation of a new projector in K227. However, the new K227 projector is a priority and DC stated there is probably additional funding for this. She also reported there is funding to pay for blinds in M023.

ii) Email

One response asked about the possibility of changing email addresses to be firstname.lastname@york.ac.uk instead of coded emails based on initials. This is something which the University may implement in the future but it would be a big task. Coded emails enable spam to be more easily avoided.

Another response suggested that in cases where emails are sent to undisclosed recipients, a distribution list is included to show exactly to whom they have been sent. Graduate Office do this and it was agreed that Reception should be asked to do it also in order that others will pick up on the practice.   **IJ**

iii) Outlook / Contacts / Diary

When Lotus Organiser was phased out, a suitable replacement was never found. The Sun Calendar system does not meet all needs as it must be synchronised with Outlook to enable it to be used with PDAs. The Department currently has ~2000 email accounts and it would be too difficult for IT staff to support Outlook. IJ reported that an exchange server could be set up to enable staff to share their diaries but demand must be balanced against cost. It was noted that if the system was introduced, more people would start using it. Thunderbird has a calendar extension but it is being developed very slowly and there is no indication of how long it will take to be developed to the level of our needs. IJ will investigate running an exchange server but this will be in no way a priority.   **IJ**

iv) YIMS and databases

A lot of the issues should be resolved once the new post starts in December.

v) Software

Suggestions were made for certain types of software. Ten licenses will be purchased for Photoshop to be used in the Department and should be available soon. There will be no purchase of Illustrator licenses. Discussion took place on how to create a fair charging system for concurrent licenses which would be used only by research groups. IJ agreed to write to the Chair of Research Committee to see if they can determine a suitable funding model.   **IJ**

vi) University Search Facility

Negative feedback was received about the search facility as it seems that formal University documents are found much more easily than information on departmental web pages. IJ will pass the comments to the University.   **IJ**

IJ will publish the results of this survey on the web.   **IJ**

07/14 **IT projects progress reports**

i) Network reorganisation

Half of all PCs in the Department have now been assigned with new IP addresses.

ii) Identity management synchronisation

This has been delayed somewhat as Computing Service only have one member of staff assigned to the issue and the time needed to work on the student aspect was underestimated. IJ will arrange another meeting with CS to try to move it forward.   **IJ**

                                                                                                          Action

iii) Windows Vista

Supporting Vista will be a major project requiring new software, server reconfiguration

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etc. A parallel system will be set up for Vista machines only, in order to phase it in.

iv) Enquiry Tracking System
The University is introducing a new ETS and it is hoped that Biology can link into this to operate our own ETS. This would enable Biology to work more closely with Computing Service when working on the same ticket. The ETS could hopefully be filtered down to be used with queries to Biology's Infrastructure and Facilities Management, Stores etc.

v) Web Content Management
PRW and JPJC reported they attended the four presentations which offered four very similar products which all appear to work well with the basic aim of allowing staff to easily alter web pages without the need for Dreamweaver or similar. Until the University commits itself to one of the products, there is nothing further to report.

07/15   Any other business
IJ reported that Peter Young is a new member of ICDB.

07/16   Date of next meeting:
IJ will circulate suggestions for dates to hold the next meeting mid-February 2008.   **IJ**

LE 5 November 07