

Portal Management Group

Notes of the meeting of 25th April 2005, 4D24, Bolland Library

Present: Barry Cawthorne (Chair), Rich Egan, Helen Cole, Margaret Needles, Karen West, Leon Smith, Sid Baldwin, Jenny Wills, Emma Taylor (notes).

1. Apologies: Mike Garnier, Kevin Foreman.

Barry welcomed Leon back to the Group.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 17th March 2005

Approved.

3. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

Barry noted that there were no actions outstanding from the previous meeting not elsewhere on the agenda.

4. The pilot

Barry requested a formal record of thanks to Rich, Sid and the Portal team for their excellent work on the Portal system and its supporting infrastructure. Rich noted the significant contributions of others, including Helen Cole's team and systems teams in IT Services.

4.1. Progress since launch on 18 April

Rich reported that 31 users had activated their accounts by lunch time on 18 April. Fifteen users had completed the feedback form by 22 April, and a further six users had submitted feedback since. The feedback received to 22 April is reported under Item 4.3.

Rich noted that, during a pre-pilot demonstration of the system to Health and Social Care staff on Thursday 14 April, he had been informed that address changes made on the existing paper-based system were sent to Bursaries and Grants. This requirement had not been within the original scope of the myAddresses portal channel, but had been accommodated by Helen and the Business Systems Team.

Rich reported that a number of ongoing issues are being addressed in the two-week post-pilot period identified in the Project Plan. In addition:

- The module marks channel is slow to load, and requires further work.
- Work is underway to allow the monitoring of myUWE usage statistics via Sawmill.

4.2. HSC data and scalability

Barry sought comments from the group on how increases in the scale of the pilot in October 2005 might be identified and managed, including the decision whether to extend the pilot within HSC, or to involve other faculties. Margaret noted that student data for the pilot had been provided via a snapshot, which produced a static list. As HSC timetables in a different way to other faculties, Margaret had undertaken two days' work to record both the ISIS student numbers and timetable numbers of the students taking part in the pilot. Sid warned that scaling up the pilot within HSC would increase the scale of this problem, and noted that, while investigating ways of making changes to HSC student and timetabling data, he had experienced difficulties in establishing the ownership of this data. Karen and Leon confirmed that the problems experienced within HSC would not occur if the pilot was extended to include faculties which timetable at student level.

Leon suggested that criteria for access to each area of the portal pilot should be developed. Rich confirmed the need to consult faculties on a per-component basis to ensure awareness of the business practices involved and their potential impact on the Portal. It was agreed that sufficient time should be allowed to enable any faculties participating in the 2005/06 pilot to put the necessary working practices and infrastructure in place.

Barry stressed that the proposal for the 2005/06 academic year was to increase the scale of the existing pilot, rather than to develop a full production model. Funding is available to October 2006, at which point the decision will be made whether to release a production module of the Portal.

ACTIONS:

- **Rich to write up the processes and implications identified from the pilot.**
- **Rich to demonstrate these to faculty administrators to inform working practices with a view to forming a group to develop these.**
- **Karen and Leon to identify the requirements to engage with the timetable channel and to identify which faculties currently meet these requirements, and the progress of other faculties towards meeting them.**

4.3. Evaluation

Rich reported that a 'Contact Us' form and Feedback tab are now in place, and that a request form is under development. Fifteen feedback responses had been received by 22 April. Rich circulated a summary of this feedback, and noted that early indications were positive.

5. Groups

Rich reported that a meeting with Oxford Computing had taken place. Helen confirmed the intention of IT Services to work in-house to integrate Syllabus Plus data into MIIS and from MIIS into ISIS, with advice from Oxford Computing as necessary. Rich noted that, in the course of their discussions, he and Sid had become aware of the complexity of groups and of their effect on both student photo sets and announcements. Rich expressed concern that, in Mike Garnier's absence, a Business Analyst was not available to give advice on this issue. Barry noted that this was a risk issue, and should be raised at the Project Board.

ACTION: Barry, Sid, Rich, Leon, Karen and Margaret to meet to discuss groups.

6. Announcements channel

Rich noted that the functionality of the announcements channel was derived from groups, and so was dependent on the resolution of this issue.

7. Student photosets

7.1. Progress

Barry has held a meeting with Rich, Karen and Margaret, and has advised Alistair Sandford of the need for data in MIIS.

7.2. Proposal for pilot

Barry proposed a pilot of the student photoset facility within a sub-set of BBS, as Karen has control over this data. He has met Sharon Bohin to discuss the pilot, and will be meeting Jane Harrington, Associate Dean, to identify an appropriate range of modules for inclusion. In making this selection, Barry stressed the need

for feedback from participating academics, and the need to exclude very large modules from the initial pilot.

8. Update on re-enrolment project

Margaret reported that the Management Group had agreed that the proposed extension to Phase 1 of the project would represent too great a risk. The Project Board have accepted this decision, and have asked Margaret to put together a project plan for Phase 2 as soon as possible. Phase 1 of the project (to be completed by July 2005) will involve getting students to EN in ISIS, and will be piloted with all returning FAS students. Sid noted that access by these students would have an impact on the design of the Portal.

9. Dates of next meetings

26 May 2005, 11:00 – 12:15, Room 4D24.

10. Any other business

10.1. Scientia conference

Leon reported that, at the recent Scientia conference, he had attended a demonstration of a student allocator, which works on a credit-based system to allow module enrolment. Leon noted that there may be scope to integrate this functionality with the Portal.

10.2. Encryption of data

Rich noted that he would be raising a proposal with IT Services to allow the encryption of data in the Portal and re-enrolment.