Portal Management Group
Notes of the meeting of 22nd January 2007, Room 4D24

Present: Barry Cawthorne (Chair), Kevin Foreman, Debra Campbell, Nick Coates, Helen Cole, Rich Egan, Sid Baldwin, Karen West, Emma Taylor (Notes).

1. Apologies
Margaret Needles.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 11th December
Approved.

3. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

3.1. Recommendation regarding Hartpury
Rich reported that he had met with Jeni Smith, administrator with responsibility for HE students at Hartpury. Jeni had agreed that the portal would be valuable to Hartpury students, particularly access to online re-enrolment, but noted that students would be more likely to access myUWE via a link on the Hartpury home page. Jeni also expressed reservations about allowing access from February. Margaret has spoken to Bryan Mitchell about means by which Hartpury students could be excluded from the portal and discussions are ongoing to determine what Hartpury will need to do to have access to the portal. Rich confirmed that he, Barry and Margaret would be meeting Pauline Williams, Associate Dean of Hartpury.

3.2. Announcements policy
Prior to the meeting, a paper by Margaret was circulated to the group clarifying the means by which announcements will be managed. Rich noted the following key points:
-   Up to 10 announcers will be attached per faculty.
-   Attachment will be managed manually within ATG. Faculty administrators should inform Margaret of the staff they wish to attach as announcers.
-   Attachment at a particular level will give access to all levels below.
-   Announcements at University level will be managed entirely within ATG.

Karen noted that only Education had attached a timetabler as an announcer and suggested that it would be useful for other faculties to do this. Barry agreed and thanked Karen for her suggestion.

3.3. Changes to the method of release of the portal
Rich circulated a copy of the roll-out schedule and advised that a SQL stored procedure written by Sid would be used to manage the release of the portal. Rich confirmed that a prominent link to the schedule would be placed on the myUWE home page on 1st February.

3.4. Announcing the launch: Bulletin; email to Deans; meeting with senior administrators in faculties
Rich confirmed the following planned announcements:
-   An article will appear in the UWE Bulletin published on 25th February.
-   All Deans have been e-mailed the text of the bulletin article.
-   A snippet will be placed on the UWE front page.
-   Senior Faculty Administrators and Associate Deans will be invited to a briefing prior to the portal launch.
-   Derek Norris will e-mail all staff and students with an announcement.

- A new UWE home page will be made live on 1st February, containing a prominent link to myUWE.

3.5. Publicity and support: video presentations; viewlets; support website

Rich noted that the portal interface was largely intuitive, but guidance would be provided where it was not. In addition to the existing support web site, a series of video presentations are being developed on the project history, purpose, and future plans. A number of simple animated viewlets are also being developed. Barry noted that the video presentations had been developed to allow access by a larger audience than could be reached by live events.

4. High Level Plan 2006/07

Rich reported the following:
- Item 9. Production hardware has been deployed and the pilot portal was locked down on Monday 15th January. The portal is now being deployed to the live production hardware. Sid confirmed that this work was on target.
- Items 13 & 14, ISIS Services. Now completed through the help of the Business Systems Team.
- Item 16. There has been a noticeable improvement in the speed of deployment of the Academic Record channel.
- Item 21. Work on the Online Re-enrolment Channel will be prioritised following the launch.
- Item 22, Marks Checker/Academic Record. This work has been postponed until post-production and the introduction of sub-tabs. The myMarks tab has been re-labelled Marks Checker for clarity.
- Item 25. The myCourse tab is now live and contains online coursework submission and UWEonline courses. Rich confirmed that coursework submission would remain in pilot throughout February and March.
- Items 27 & 28. Work is currently focused on preparation for the portal roll-out and the Landing channel.

4.1. Item 31: reconstitution of the Portal Management Group

Barry confirmed that, following the portal launch, the group would be re-constituted as the myUWE Management Group. The Project Board would stand down in June/July 2007. Barry noted that the Terms of Reference for the Management Group were not yet confirmed, but would include the following membership:
- One representative from each of the four new faculties, plus the Bristol Business School. Executive Deans will be approached to request suggestions for representatives.
- Representatives from Timetabling, Library Services, CSA, Academic Registry and Students' Union.

A remit of the reconstituted Management Group would be to prioritise new requirements emerging from the Student Forum, Academic Group and Business Group. In order to manage this process effectively, Barry proposed that a smaller prioritisation sub-group be formed, comprising one faculty, service and Students' Union representative, himself, Rich and Margaret.

ACTION: Barry to submit proposal to the Project Board

5. Readiness for February launch

Rich noted that the portal was a sophisticated system developed from scratch for approximately 30,000 users and stressed that everything possible had been done to

ensure that the launch went smoothly. Throughout the development of the portal, February and March had been identified as a period of stabilisation.

5.1. Portal framework
Sid reported that the pilot portal had been locked down on Monday 15th January, and that only one or two minor changes would be required.

5.2. Hardware
Sid confirmed that it was his understanding that this was now complete, apart from the mirroring of databases on the test site. The portal is currently reliant on a single database server, and will be unavailable if this fails. Sid noted that it had always been the intention to introduce database resilience and that this would be completed as soon as was technically possible. It was agreed to notify the Project Board of this risk under Item 7.

5.3. The feed
Helen confirmed that it was her understanding that the feed had been completed on Tuesday 16th January. Sid confirmed that the staging server had been upgraded and was receiving a full feed.

5.4. ISIS2
Helen reported that the intention is to upgrade the old ISIS2 UNIX servers during the March 30th shutdown weekend. Helen advised that, if back-end problems are detected, it may be necessary to make a decision in consultation to take the ISIS channels off-line or make them read-only. Rich noted that this mitigation had been taken to the Project Board. It was agreed that this should be added to Item 7.

5.5. Syllabus Plus
Karen confirmed that the availability of the Timetable channel was un-changed apart from BBS Postgraduates, who would not now have access. Margaret reported that problems with the live Syllabus Plus feed had been identified. Sid confirmed that the 90% success rate of class photos seen in the pilot had dropped last week to approximately 10%. Bryan Mitchell has looked into this problem and the success rate has been restored to 90%. Sid reported that the largest activity found had 255 students and that a caveat had been implemented for staff wishing to print photosets.

5.6. UWEonline
Rich confirmed that UWEonline was ready for the launch, as reported at the last meeting.

5.7. Channels

5.7.1. Online Coursework Submission
Rich reported that four modules had been identified for inclusion in a further pilot of online coursework submission in late February/early March. Sid confirmed that the channel would be presented to all students (who will see no items to submit unless they are part of the extended pilot) and to all staff marked as collectors.

5.7.2. Bookmarks
Sid confirmed that an issue with nesting sub-folders had been identified and fixed. Bookmarks are quite heavily used but little user feedback has been received.

5.7.3. News
Sid advised that the Students' Union Events feed would be removed from the suggested news links as the reliability of their service had affected portal performance. It was agreed that the SU would be informed of the reason for this decision.

6. Access statistics
Sid noted that there had been a significant increase in levels of access, which may be due to the start of Teaching Block 2. Sid circulated current counts for the portal feed and noted the following:
- The feed shows 40,916 student users and 4,757 staff. Helen advised that the staff figure seemed correct, but the student figure was 10-15K higher than she would have expected. This figure may include students whose records have not been closed down.
- The feed shows 1,580 student activities. Photo Attachments contain approximately 10% of the user table. 208 staff are attached to activities. Barry noted that this figure seemed very low and asked Karen to check this.
- Timetable attachments contain 2,239 student numbers not in the user table. These student numbers need to be checked and, if necessary, removed.
- Sid has raised the duplication of two announcement groups with Bryan Mitchell, who will correct this.
- Within the announcements rows, 10,293 announcement groups and 38,707 distinct consumers have been identified. Sid noted that the consumer figure represents current live attachments to current live module runs and supports the 40,916 student figure.

Rich noted that this was very useful and asked Sid to produce this information at the next PMG meeting.
ACTIONS:
- **Helen, Margaret and Bryan Mitchell to look at user data.**
- **Karen to check staff photo attachment numbers.**
- **Sid to produce a web page containing current feed counts.**

7. Business for the final Project Board before launch
It was agreed to take the following to the Project Board meeting of 31st January:
- Database resilience.
- ISIS migration.
- The re-constitution of the Management Group.
- Access to the timetable channel.

ACTIONS:
- **Karen to provide a summary of access to the timetable channel.**
- **ATG to place this information on the myUWE Support Site.**

8. Dates of next meetings
5th March 2007 (4D24); 30th April 2007 (5D6); 11th June 2007 (4D24).
All from 11:00-12:15.

9. Any other business

9.1. Helen Cole leaving
Barry congratulated Helen on her new job, wished her well, and thanked her for her valuable contribution to the group.

9.2. Internal auditors
Rich noted that internal auditors had been looking at how the portal project had been overseen.

9.3. Requirements elicitation: the Web Management Group
Rich reported that a Web Management Group had now been established, and that issues arising from the requirements elicitation process relating to the UWE web site could be reported here. The Group is chaired by John Rushforth and will meet for the first time on 1st February.

9.4. Student Reps
Kevin enquired whether the portal could be used to facilitate communication between students and student reps. Rich confirmed that this may be managed through announcements, but that this would need to be co-ordinated through nominated announcers. Rich noted that ATG were currently considering a request by the Students' Union to publish Student Rep information on the UWE web site.

9.5. Thanks
Barry offered thanks and congratulations to everybody who has put such a large amount of work into the development of the portal over such a long time.