

**Portal Project Board**  
**Notes of the meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2006, 4D24**

**Present:** Barry Cawthorne (Chairing the meeting in the absence of Steve West), Warwick Jones, Rich Egan, Margaret Needles, Emma Taylor (Notes).

**1. Apologies**

Steve West, Steve Grive, Steph Keeble.

**2. Minutes of the meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> December**

Approved.

In response to Item 2, Minutes of the meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2005 (Item 7, High Level Plan, Para. 4, line 6), Rich confirmed that the addition of BBS undergraduates to the Portal pilot had provided an adequate user base from which to test system performance, and had resulted in a significant increase in Portal usage. Rich noted that, on 1<sup>st</sup> February, there were over 800 logins to the Portal from a user base of 5,000. Barry thanked Rich for providing this information.

**3. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**

**3.1. Reporting framework for website management**

Barry confirmed that he had raised this issue at the IS Project Co-ordination Group meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> February, and that Steve West would be discussing website management with Tessa Harrison and Keith Hicks.

**4. Transition from Pilot system to Production version in 2006-2007**

**4.1. Status of project funding**

Barry reported that the rollout plan had been approved by the CPE, but was awaiting a formal sign-off.

**4.2. Planning and intended outcomes of awayday on 24<sup>th</sup> February**

Barry informed the Board that the purpose of the awayday would be to consider the preparations needed now for a production roll-out of the Portal in February 2007. Barry stressed that the consistency of data in component systems was a significant issue, and that data would need to be organised in a consistent way by October 2006 to allow a February 2007 launch. In the first half of the awayday, each Portal channel will be examined to determine the actions needed to allow university-wide use. The second half of the day will be used to identify the work needed to manage the impact of channels on component systems (for example, ISIS), and to determine the actions needed to make the use of these systems possible within the Portal.

**5. Review of progress with High Level Plan for 2005-2006**

**5.1. Announcements**

Rich confirmed that the announcements channel was in place with groupings for module run, module, field, level and faculty. Rich noted that administrative staff in BBS had raised the need to develop policies to determine the use of announcements, and had also requested more flexible publishing to diverse groups. This request had challenged some of the precepts in place for groups, and Mike Garnier had developed a revised specification in response. Rich noted that the groups picker had been improved, and a new iteration of the channel would bring further improvements in functionality.

## **5.2. Bookmarks**

Rich reported that the Bookmarks channel had been released in January, ahead of the March target. The channel contains pre-set bookmarks for staff and students which can be removed, and the channel populated with bookmarks of the user's choice, introducing an element of personalisation into the Portal.

## **5.3. Online submission of coursework**

Rich noted that there had been changes to the original specification to draw ISIS data to attach the submission of work to a work item in ISIS. Rich confirmed that the revised specification had been completed by Mike Garnier in the last two weeks, and work on the Portal side had commenced. Rich confirmed that the intention was to try to meet the original Easter deadline, which was ambitious but achievable. Margaret confirmed that the ISIS specification only required the addition of two fields to the existing infrastructure, but noted that the establishment of protocols of use would be important. Rich noted that this channel was particularly challenging as it was the first time that portal availability would become critical due to submission deadlines.

Barry stressed that this was a submission system, and not a forwarding or marking system. Margaret enquired whether online submission could be developed into a forwarding system. Barry confirmed that this may be possible, but noted that the online submission, forwarding and marking system used by the Open University had taken approximately 12 person years to develop. Rich noted that there was potentially a large amount of data of value already in ISIS, which could be made available.

## **6. Phase 2 of the Re-enrolment Project**

Margaret reported that the WPM system used by Finance was being joined with the student record in ISIS and with information from the Student Loans Company. Margaret noted that there had been good progress, but there was a need to determine what would be accepted as commitment to pay, as enrolment records are currently turned to 'ON' on receipt of paperwork. Margaret noted that there was a risk of competition between the resources needed for other ISIS development, such as online submission of coursework, which may result in the need to prioritise, although this risk has diminished slightly. Rich expressed confidence that the July delivery date could be met.

## **7. Risk register**

Rich highlighted four risks, three of which were un-changed.

0102 – Competing demands on development staff.

The IRIS replacement project, HSC's ARC placement software, changes to Blackboard, the Bursaries Project and Online Re-enrolment are all issues for the ISIS team and competing projects for the portal team. The risk level has therefore been kept at 9.

0202 – Inadequate resources available to adopt project for production purposes.

Rich noted that this risk was still ongoing, and remained at 9.

0603 – Testing fails to identify user or system issues.

Rich noted that the level of this risk had been increased to 4, in acknowledgement of a problem with the Portal in early January. A process of stress testing has been introduced, and the current hardware has been tested successfully with up to 250 logins in the same minute. Rich noted that this risk would be addressed by the

appointment of a system administrator, and the use of more resilient hardware by the production portal.

0604 – Lack of proof-of-concept for groups, role and permissions undermines pilot. Rich noted that this risk had actually occurred as evidenced by the requirement to change the announcements specification.

**8. Date of next meeting**

09:30-10:30, Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April, Room 4D24, Bolland Library, Frenchay Campus.

**9. Any other business**

None.