myUWE Management Group
Notes of the meeting of 12 January 2009
Room 4D24, Frenchay Campus

Present: Barry Cawthorne (Chair), Katy Phillips, Kath Holden, Sid Baldwin, Margaret Needles, Chris Griffiths, Nadine Fry, Sarah Hudson, Simon Ramsden, Rich Egan, Jon Hallett, Kevin Foreman, Emma Taylor (Notes).

1. Apologies
Polly Smith, Karen West.

2. Minutes of last meeting 24 November 2008
Approved.

3. Membership: Environment and Technology
Barry noted that Terry Davies had retired, so he would be contacting his School for a new representative.
ACTION: Barry to contact Environment and Technology to arrange a new MMG representative.

4. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

4.1. Fees structure
Barry advised that the December ISCG had been cancelled, so he would be taking this issue to the January meeting.
ACTION: Barry to take Fees structure issue to ISCG meeting of 23 January.

4.2. Announcements structure
Barry confirmed that Margaret and Sid's comprehensive note had been circulated to the group. Margaret noted that high-level connectivity was still maintained manually, so she would be looking with Simon Ramsden at associating staff at Field and School level in ISIS. Rich confirmed that the new Announcements and Photosets structure had gone live in December.

4.3. Agresso
Rich noted that there was a question over when this would be made a formal project as the Portal Development Team's Senior Programmer/Analyst and SSO expert is working on the Student Allocator with a target date of 28 January. Rich confirmed that, following the completion of the Student Allocator, Agresso would be the next SSO piece of work to be considered. Rich noted that it was not currently possible to single sign-on into Agresso, but it was possible to get a read-only view to show debt status.

5. Existing programme of work

5.1. Requirements elicitation channel
Rich circulated a summary of the suggestions received and noted that two consistent themes had emerged – the social aspect of myUWE, and requests for the aggregation of calendaring information. The next step will be to collate all responses into a set of themes. In response to queries by Kath and Kevin, Rich advised that most of the feedback had come from students (addressing the lack of student feedback in the previous year's elicitation process), and there hadn't been any inadvertent requests from students to replicate functionality already available, although the calendaring requests were similar to work which was

already planned. Barry noted that the new elicitation process appeared to be working well.

5.2. Examination timetables
Rich reported that the exam timetables channel had gone live in myUWE on 27 November. Sid reported that there were no problems on the portal side, but there had been some issues with the availability of data and the feed.

5.3. Student council tax certificate letters
Margaret reported that there had been no issues raised by the BBS pilot, and she had received no objections from Councils or the Academic Registry to her proposal to extend the pilot. The group approved the recommendation that this service should be taken out of pilot and made available.

5.4. Coursework submission forms
Margaret advised that a large amount of work had been done on the format and content of the forms, and the conclusion had been reached that cover sheets should be made available to students for a given work item, but a format has not yet been agreed. Nick Coates has been looking at a specification for the batch download of data to avoid hitting the live ISIS service. Margaret noted that it would be possible to give school-specific information, but difficulties had arisen because of differing practices in receipting and information handling across faculties. Margaret advised that, if it was not possible to define what a cover sheet is, and get this into myUWE, this would not be done. Barry asked Margaret to keep the group informed and for this to be kept on the agenda.
ACTION: Coursework submission forms to remain on the agenda.

6. Next tranche of work

6.1. Single sign-on into Student Allocator
Rich noted that the key date was 28 January, in preparation for BBS to place an announcement on 2 February including a link to the service. There had been issues with the student allocator product as it was new and changing, and Scientia had been involved in addressing these. Rich confirmed that he had met with CETTS in the last week and would be having a review meeting with them this week. Margaret advised that the dates for a roll-out had not yet been finalised.

6.2. Calendaring aggregator
Sid advised that a proof-of-concept had been completed and this was now work in progress. The intention is to launch the aggregator within the next couple of months, but this is dependent on the availability of calendaring data (such as term dates), the identification of data sources and owners, and the maintenance of data. Rich confirmed that a large part of the project would involve getting data in iCal format. In answer to a query by Barry, Rich confirmed that the Academic Registry would require technical advice to allow them to put term dates into iCal format. Sid noted that, initially, the focus would be on collating data from a static source. In answer to a query by Katy, Rich confirmed that students would be able to add their own data. Sid clarified that the aggregator could work in a similar way to the RSS feature in myUWE, where students can specify their own feed choices, but noted that this wouldn't include Syllabus Plus data. Rich invited suggestions of possible calendaring data from the group.

6.3. Academic record phase 3

Margaret reported that she had done some work with Patrick Nolan and the following priorities had been identified:
- A fix for the results list has been specified to make it clearer to students when changes are made.
- Presentation will be in PDF format instead of a printable view.
- The production of a GDP certificate through myUWE into PDF is being examined.

Margaret confirmed that she would resume her meetings with Patrick on his return from holiday. In answer to a suggestion by Chris, Margaret confirmed that the creation of a portal version of the current degree classification indicator was on the list of future developments. Kevin stressed that the ready reckoner could only give indicative results as the final decision was with the Award Board.

6.4. Car parking

Rich reported that conceptual research had been undertaken, but there had been no active development.

6.5. Centre for Sport membership

Rich advised that this would be taken with online registration. Margaret noted that some changes were required to online registration this year to include entry-level qualifications, and sports centre membership would be included in these.

6.6. SMS announcements

Sid noted that the announcements channel had been extended to incorporate Syllabus Plus activities and other groupings and there had been requests across the university for a facility for making SMS announcements. Work has been done on a proof-of-concept for SMS messaging through announcements. The ISCG has given agreement for an extension to the announcements channel to send SMS message to a group when an announcement is placed, but permissions and the management of accounts will be a separate project outside myUWE. Sid noted that the intention was also to make SMS announcements available in another interface outside myUWE in a third party web site. Barry agreed with Sid's assertion that this would require careful management. Kevin noted that in a pilot of SMS messaging, HSC students had expressed interest in the concept but there had not been a high level of uptake. Katy stressed that, if students were to remain engaged, there was a need to ensure that only relevant information was sent. Margaret agreed and confirmed that this would be used for communication, not advertising. In answer to a query by Simon, Sid advised that the only input required by the portal from Business Systems would be the provision of student mobile numbers in the feed, but Business Systems would also be required to get mobile numbers into MIIS, which will collate addresses and groupings for the third party service. Rich noted that Business Systems may also be required to provide access control. Sid stressed that SMS was a third party, not a myUWE initiative. In answer to a comment by Sarah, Margaret confirmed that a mechanism for allowing students to opt in or out would be looked at.

6.7 Photos Upload

Margaret noted that the Photos Upload channel had gone live, and requested that this remain on the agenda as there had been some business issues and she was not happy with the way in which the approvals interface was being used.
ACTION: Photos Upload to remain on the agenda.

7. Upgrade to uPortal 3.0

Sid advised that an upgrade would give a number of advantages such as user-configurable layouts and, as the majority of the uPortal community have switched their focus to uPortal 3.0, peer support for previous versions was disappearing. Sid noted that an upgrade should be considered for the near future, but stressed that this would have an impact on what could be delivered, so he would be cautious about taking on new developments in the next six months. In answer to a query by Barry about the possible timing of an upgrade, Sid advised that this was hard to estimate as a huge amount of work would be required to move from fixed to user-configured layouts. Sid advised that he would like to work on developing a prototype by Easter 2009 for a summer upgrade, but stressed the need to consider online registration. It was agreed that the strategy should be changed from an upgrade to uPortal 2.6 to an upgrade to uPortal 3 and that this should remain on the agenda.

ACTION: Upgrade to uPortal 3.0 to remain on the agenda.

8. System and performance report

Sid circulated usage statistics and reported that systems had remained available throughout the Christmas break. There had been some problems affecting one of the timetabling services outside myUWE from 27 December onwards, which had caused issues with the timetable tab, so steps had been taken to give users direct access to these services. Barry requested copies of access statistics to take to the ISCG meeting of 23rd January.

9. Dates of meetings for 2009

2 March 2009; 27 April 2009; 8 June 2009. All scheduled from 11:00-12:30 in 4D24.

10. Any other business

10.1.   Developer vacancy

Sid advised that the vacant post caused by the one year leave of absence taken by one of the Portal Developers had been filled.

10.2.   Barry's new role

In answer to a query by Kevin, Barry confirmed that his new role in the review of ISIS may affect his role as chair of the MMG, but he would continue to chair the group until advised otherwise.