

University of Cambridge

Planning and Resources Committee

Teaching Space Utilisation Working Group

A meeting of the Group was held on Monday 22 October in the Old Schools.

Present: Professor Young (in the Chair); Dr Cowley, Mr Edwards, Mr Norman, Mr Peet, Mr Walston and Mr Wilson (Secretary).

Apologies: Dr Edwards.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Norman and Mr Peet.

Minutes

1. Note of the first meeting

1. A note of the meeting held on 4 July 2012 was received.
2. The Group had agreed a three stage strategy:
 - (1) To introduce a University wide room booking system that all would wish to participate in, leading eventually to every bookable room being included and much more sharing;
 - (2) Extensive monitoring of actual usage;
 - (3) Lastly: incentives and penalties.

2. Principal business

1. Following the discussion at the last meeting on strategy aims (1) and (2), the Group:
 - (1) Wished to understand the alternatives to Micad room booking;
 - (2) Wished to understand the limitations of Micad and whether they could be fixed;
 - (3) Asked that usability tests be performed on the room booking module before rolling it out any further;
 - (4) Asked that electronic entrance/exit counters should be installed at a large lecture theatre and a small seminar room and their accuracy assessed.
2. A paper by Estate Management addressing these several points was circulated as **TSUWG 2**.

3. Micad – and alternatives

1. Planon, as a system, had not penetrated far and nor had its room booking module. Micad provided the functionality Estate Management needed and had been compared with other systems, although there were some development issues (it was compatible with only one browser) and the ISSS had asked that security of the data be addressed. The Group was not proposing a delay in the introduction of the main system pending decisions on room booking.
2. Feedback on the Micad room booking module was positive but it had not yet been compared against other options. Mr Norman explained that some of the alternatives had been reviewed as part of a JISC study into timetabling software and undertook to circulate some information after the meeting. Mr Edwards reported on a March 2012 MISD study of timetabling and resource management including lecture scheduling, room booking and space management which he would also circulate.
3. The Group agreed that at present their focus was on room booking; *timetabling* functionality might be of interest one day but it was unlikely that administrative systems could be developed quickly to satisfy systems whose aim was a personalised timetable for every student at the start of term. However, mere room booking would not deliver the space efficiencies effective timetabling could deliver.
4. The Group agreed to establish themselves as a Project Board. The documents mentioned by Mr Norman and Mr Edwards could provide the basis of the user requirements and the ISWG should be approached at their December meeting for the release of funding already earmarked from the Technology Development Fund to purchase a consultancy. Mr Edwards would consider who might be approached, given the Group's insistence that good knowledge of relevant systems was a fundamental requirement, and he would discuss the preparation of the project proposal with Mr Norman.
5. The aim was for the project proposal to be considered by the Information Strategy Working Group (ISWG) meeting on 18 December 2012 (**Mr Edwards**).

4. Utilisation

1. The circulated paper contained a considerable amount of usage data provided by pilot installations of two different sensors monitoring one room each. The automated measurements had not yet been validated by independent counts, or using both together, but the first impression was that the manufacturer's claims for a high degree of accuracy were borne out. The Group agreed that it would be useful to extend the pilot to more of the Mill Lane Lecture rooms. The devices seemed to offer the solution the Group was hoping for: they could be freestanding or networked so that they reported back for central recording and

analysis - but they did require about a day each for initial setting up and their serviceable life was unknown. This seemed a successful outcome.

2. One of the devices was video enabled raising possible privacy issues. The Data Protection Officer should be consulted, but with a view to their method of use not requiring any amendment to the current registrations under the DPA.

Action: Mr Walston

5. Next meeting

The Group agreed it would be useful to meet again before the project proposal was considered by the ISWG.

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