

SUMMARY FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PORTFOLIO MEETING

DATE: March 11, 2015

TIME: 2-3:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Eccles Executive Boardroom, Marriott Library

IN ATTENDANCE:

Rick Anderson	Nelson Beebe	Dan Bowden	Steven Corbató
Steven Dean	Mike Ekstrom	Rick Forster	Cynthia Furse
Dan Hutten	Jim Livingston	Caprice Post	

COMMITTEE SUPPORT: Anita Sjoblom

UNABLE TO ATTEND:

Mark Beekhuizen	David Blackburn	Stephen Hess	Sylvia Torti
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ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Tom Cheatham, Director, Center for High Performance Computing (CHPC)

AGENDA ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- Research computing and power costs – data center policies
- Replacement of Sympa lists
- Google Apps
- Office 365
- NextNet update
- Risk management and security rules

Research computing and power costs – data center policies

Mike Ekstrom presents the group with charts showing power costs and consumption at the Downtown Data Center (DDC), a Gold-LEED certified facility designed to maximize computing output and efficiency. Data centers' efficiency is measured in Power Utilization Effectiveness, or PUE, and a typical PUE is about 2.0 or greater. That means one watt of computing power requires two watts of power consumption, taking into account the cooling, monitoring and other systems that must function to allow that computing to happen. Small on-campus data centers average around 2.3 to 2.6 PUE, according to historical data available to UIT staff. The Downtown Data Center averages about 1.2 PUE, making it much more efficient than a typical on-campus facility.

The power at the DDC is charged at a higher rate than on-campus power, but UIT would like to investigate adding a transformer or substation to drive that cost down to be in line with the rate on campus. Despite that rate difference, powering devices at the DDC is still more cost effective than housing them on campus. Moving data centers from on-campus sites to the DDC would realize a cost savings for the University even at present, and more so if the cost of power is lowered in the future. However, Ekstrom said one deterrent for departments or researchers to move their computing to the

DDC is that while campus power is paid for by Facilities Management — meaning no one else gets a power bill — the power for the DDC is paid by UIT, CHPC and ITS, which would want to recoup the cost.

Ekstrom asked for guidance on how to address that issue to incentivize those who have data centers on campus to shift them to the DDC. It was suggested that the Operational IT Committee could consider the matter, perhaps moving to support seeking that the DDC power be accounted for the same way as other campus buildings. Ekstrom was urged to discuss the topic with some members of the OITC first to ensure he has the correct understanding of the campuswide issues before taking the matter before the entire group. Ekstrom asked whether a steering committee should be formed to tackle these types of issues coming out of the DDC. It was agreed that could be a valuable group to determine how to address questions about the data center. The portfolio moved to send the issue to OITC, with the understanding Ekstrom would talk with others to get more details first.

Replacement of Sympa lists

Caprice Post said Unified Communications is looking to move the University's list service functions away from Sympa to a more modern service. There are more than 4,500 lists between lists.utah.edu and hsc.utah.edu. She wants to send a survey to list owners to find out how they use the list service and what features they would like to see in the future before choosing a new service. Several suggestions were made regarding what approach to take with the survey, as well as how to communicate "which tool is right for the job." The group approved sending out a survey.

Google Apps

The University has established a site to host Google Apps for Education with single sign-on authentication. Unified Communications is still working out how email might work, so that piece is not turned on at this point. This will give users access to things like shared calendars, Drive unlimited storage, Google Docs/Slides/Sheets, etc. at no cost to the University. The University is working to get a signed Business Associates Agreement, which means Google couldn't use the data from University-affiliated accounts for its own purposes. The biggest downside to moving email services to Gmail would be that the legal discovery tool is not included. That would be necessary to pull emails for public information requests. There is still work to be done on how potentially widespread to make Gmail an available option. Regarding the health sciences portions of campus, right now there is no desire to have health information being distributed or stored on Google accounts. Any effort like that would have a major communication plan behind it.

One member brought up the difficulty in reining in campus users' behavior by offering so many ways to do similar things (Box vs. Google Drive, for example). The reality is users are migrating to these platforms whether they're sanctioned or not, so the IT teams have determined it's better to deal with the big ones and get agreements and guidelines in place where possible rather than ignore the usage.

It’s also difficult to discourage usage through blocking because people may have personal uses for the programs. Another question was whether offering a solution to campus users made the university more vulnerable in the case of employee misuse, by putting protected health information on an account that is approved by the University but not for PHI. Post said she would come back with an opinion on that matter from the legal team, as well as a copy of the business case for Google Apps.

Office 365

Office 365 is another area the University is exploring. It, too, has a single sign-on function. There is a Business Associates Agreement in place, which limits Microsoft’s ability to see or use University data. Departmental instances of SharePoint are included as part of the agreement. Again, the email portion of the suite is not being turned on, but other tools that don’t require the email ability are. It was suggested a good communication plan be put in place to advertise this availability. Post noted that she wanted to allow both Google and Microsoft mail options for users to gauge based on data whether one is more preferable than the other, rather than choosing from the outset.

NextNet update

The NextNet final report is still undergoing editing, but is getting closer to completion. Generally, it will say that a unified network is a good idea, and there are many other pressing issues regarding policies and procedures that need to be worked out. The next phase will be a design phase, but it will involve more than hardware and infrastructure. An IP address pilot project in the health sciences area is testing how IP governance might stretch out throughout the rest of the network in the future.

Risk management and security rules

Dan Bowden is finalizing his efforts with the Academic Senate executive committee to present the updated risk management and security rules to the full Senate in April. Once the rule are adopted, the Information Security Office intends to quickly make available its internal procedures for meeting the new rules, which would act as an example for others looking to draft their own. Bowden was asked to check whether the rules had been shared broadly with the IT professionals community.

Action summary			
Action	Topic	Person/Group	Next step
Approved	Research computing power costs	Portfolio	Mike Ekstrom will discuss how power is paid for at the Downtown Data Center with others before bringing the matter to the attention of the Operational IT Committee.
Approved	Replacement of Sympa lists	Portfolio	Caprice Post will send a survey to Sympa list owners asking how they use the list service and what features are most important.