information strategy
very interim context update
june 2005
Aim is to give a flavour

- Work in progress
  - but it’s a long time to November
- Visits to Heads of School and others
- Context in which students work radically changed
- Context in which staff work slightly changed
My garden 7.30pm Tuesday 7 June 2005

What's the weirdest thing here?
Teaching & assessment

- Asynchronicity
  - can I have 9am lectures on-line?
- Controlling access
  - staff drowned in incremental e-mail
- Plagiarism
  - do we know what we mean? group work?
- Is teaching in ‘PC labs’ silly? own m/cs?
- and how about lecture rooms?
- Increased need for f-to-f and cohorts?
Learning

• Ownership of PC and sub-PC
  – 90% yes, 5% don’t want, 5% can’t afford

• Mobility
  – anytime-anywhere-anyplace like everyone

• Multi-tasking
  – RUSU-agree to Halls cabling if can use socially

• Social needs, project needs, group spaces
Student academic information

- Want it all on-line
  - Xmas eve e-mail ‘I can’t find it on google’

- But demand for textbooks not lessened
  - but buying them has

- Want to live in world where can get it anywhere as suits them
  - eg results, timetable, interaction with cohort
Student administration

• Registering etc
  - much queuing still – no need
  - why can’t student choose all their own modules etc and do all the input and checking for it
• Expert advice only in exceptions
• Every single group/department has own systems
• But there is some basic standard ‘free’ IS
  – (Blackboard, RISIS, coming up timetabling…)
Staff academic information

- How do/should we feel about open access publishing institutional repositories?
- How best to optimise access?
  - geography/on-line/central library/department?
  - purchase/licence personal/department/central?
- How best to have technology supplied?
  - personal purchase/School or group/central?
  - shared services eg grid computing/central filstore?
Staff: administration-behaviour-life

• ‘Our staff work tremendously hard
  – that is the problem’

• ‘For team work and getting ideas
  – best technology is a coffee machine’

• ‘As hunter-gatherers for millennia we worked in groups of 20’
  – how do we adjust to Schools?

• ‘My staff cope by not taking holidays’

• ‘I dread return because of e-mail backlog’

• ‘There are several things/day from Wks Hs’
Other context bits

- Student as customer
  - rather than at-knee-of-master sitter – or both?
- Bulmershe/London Road etc uncertainties
- What differentiates Reading?
  - place, ‘real stuff’, CETLs.. not IT unless don’t have
  - what will ‘branding’ recommend?
- Spread of subject areas
- Consortia national sticking together
- Funding – >capital activity – how balance?
- etc
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I think the weirdest thing here is the exam paper – 1940s technology – biro nothing to do with how the student normally works (PC/mobile/online/long thought processes/multi-tasking/working in a group.) What are we trying to do here? Needs radical rethink, and why not lectures on-line? Can do well enough with technology as here. Then use face to face for real interaction and learning/teaching excitement.
Conclusion

Of course every generation thinks it’s at some crossroads but we do genuinely seem to at one with the student information context.

everyone has always felt overburdened by admin but we do genuinely seem to have the basis of infrastructure to get a better grip alongside our other restructuring.

Reading is special in ways we hitherto haven’t much exploited like where we are, what we have collected, masses of space

This was an interim zoom through some general context For the IS Directorate in particular our top pauses for thought are on paper – please let us know of any others