

# IT User Experience Governance Group Meeting: April 18, 2016

**In attendance:** Holly Ashbourne; Sarah Bernardi; Jordan Carlson; Martin de Bernardo; James Duncan; Michael Evans; Ian Fisher; Brent Furneaux; Trevor Hanekamp; James Humpfreys; Paul Khangura; Julia Kraveca (Chair); Wes Mathieu; Derrick Millard; Bryan MacFarlane; Ausim Mobeen; Usama Pervaiz; Howard Simkins; Rod Stewart (Minutes); Brandon To

**Regrets:** Vito Picicci; Wes Tanney; Joseph Varrasso

Julia welcomed the assembled members to the inaugural meeting and informed the group that she had set up a SharePoint site for this committee where they could access the terms of reference. She urged members to review the terms of reference and to submit any comments or suggestions for improvement her way.

Julia stated that the purpose of this group was to address the technology needs of end-users in both academic and administrative environments by researching, championing and recommending emerging technologies based on user requirements and informed opinions.

Further, Julia reminded members that this group is only making recommendations, not decisions. Decision making bodies will be discussed further at the time recommendations are made.

Julia concluded her opening remarks by stating that committee members should be as collaborative and respectful of one another as possible.

The members in attendance introduced themselves and stated their areas of representation and their roles.

## Agenda

### **End User Technology – Methodology, Assessment, Recommendations and Formation of Working Group** *Presented by Julia Kraveca*

Julia stated that up until this time, IT has done an informal review of hardware standards and has made recommendations for baseline technology standards for hardware (desktop computers; laptops; tablets; thin clients). She said she was looking for volunteers to form a working group (5-6 people) who will convene to propose a methodology for assessing hardware requirements for academic and administrative end-users and bring their recommendations back to the group within two weeks (ideally).

Julia was asked if recommendations are to be made in regard to spaces in general or as it applies to curriculum. Julia said the recommendations should apply to standards in spaces as they apply to all users. She added that discussions about defining standards based on curriculum (e.g. mobile computing requirements) may evolve as a result of the proposals of this working group.

It was stressed that this working group would need to come to resolution quickly as there is hardware soon coming of lease that will need replacing.

Julia asked any members who were interested in participating on this working group to email her directly.

## **VDI: Today and Near Future – Capabilities and Features**

*Presented by James Duncan*

*“VDI is a shadow copy of the desktop including its OS, installed applications and documents, which are stored and executed entirely from the server hosting it. VDI provides users the ability to access their desktop remotely, often even from a handheld device because the entire process of executing the interface is done at the central server.*

*VDI operates by storing OS preferences, software applications, document and other customized data on a server in the cloud. In theory, or ideally, the user experience is the same as on a physical desktop.”*

*– Techopedia*

James provided the group with an overview of VDI and what it can do, noting the benefits it offers in regard to mobility; security; management; and operational efficiency.

James highlighted the areas where Sheridan is employing VDI today, including:

- Mobile Computing
- Distance Education
- Academic Computing
- Administrative Computing

James went through a brief demonstration highlighting how a user would access a VDI desktop (from both a computer and mobile device), mentioning the various desktops available (e.g. academic; administrative; program-specific) and noting that desktops can be tailored for specific uses and/or audiences.

James also mentioned that our existing VDI infrastructure is coming off lease at the end of 2016 and will need to be replaced. He highlighted some of the improvements that the new infrastructure tools offer, including:

- Windows 10 support for the Horizon View client
- VM access will be browser based (any HTML 5 compliant browser)
- Better access control (e.g. can control access to an app that should only be accessed while on-campus)
- Can deliver individual applications to users rather than entire desktops
- Workspace provides an app-store like experience where users can pick and choose the apps they want

James said that currently, our VDI capacity is fully utilized and future expansion is on hold until such time as a need for expansion can be identified and justified. He said he was looking to this group to help provide guidance regarding the future of VDI at Sheridan and was looking for suggestions from members about additional use cases/areas where VDI could be employed.

Julia asked members if they wanted to see more applications of VDI in the future or if they were happy with the current situation. The discussion generated the following comments:

- If the recommendation were to come from the group to expand the use of VDI, who would the decision makers would be? Julia stated that in this case it would be the Deans Council. Concern was expressed about the absence of faculty representation on decision making bodies.
- A recommendation was made that an environmental scan be done within each area to assess need, but each area would need to know what VDI can do and how it could be applied in their areas.

- Delivery of VDI will be based on individual use cases and not necessarily a commitment to go all-in on VDI.

Julia said she would make James' presentation available on the committee's SharePoint site. Julia asked that users to talk to their constituents about the need/desire for VDI in their area and to gather their feedback moving forward.

Some faculty reps felt that with the semester coming to a close and faculty leaving for vacation, it will be a challenge to get input from them before September.

Julia said that "Understanding Academic Timeframes" will be an agenda item for next meeting. She asked members to bring forward critical dates from each of their areas so we can come up with some sort of consensus around deadlines.

### **Office 2016 (Windows)**

*Presented by Sarah Bernardi/James Duncan*

The purpose of Sarah's presentation was to gauge desire/feasibility of Sheridan's academic faculties to move to Office 2016 for the 2016-2017 academic year that begins in September.

Sarah opened her presentation by explaining that Sheridan's Microsoft agreement is obtained via partnerships with other public sector institutions via OECM.

*OECM is a Broader Public Sector (BPS), not-for-profit group procurement organization, offering a marketplace of competitively-sourced and priced products and services that deliver savings and efficiencies to publicly funded organizations.*

She stated that Softchoice won the RFP as the provider for Microsoft products and that we are entering year two of a three-year agreement, which is broken into two parts:

- College framework bundle (Windows, Office and Enterprise CAL - exclusive to staff/faculty)
- Individual College enrolment (student licensing, additional server licenses, etc.)
  - Dreamspark\* is included at \$0 as a part of this agreement

*\* Dreamspark provides a cost-effective way to put Microsoft developer tools, platforms and servers in labs and classrooms, and on their students' and faculty's computers for learning and research purposes*

James Duncan said that from an implementation perspective, it would be a one week of effort to make Office 2016 available, but stressed that rigorous testing would be required by the academic faculties. He also stressed that Office 2013 and Office 2016 cannot coexist on the same desktop so there would be no option to install both and use one or another. Specifically, deployment would encompass the following:

- Develop a rollout strategy
- Build
- Test
- Proceed to CAB for approval
- Deploy to VDI
- Update academic images
- Release packages on AccessSheridan
- Communications to mobile students on upgrade steps

It seemed to be the feeling of the faculty members in attendance that it wasn't feasible to do the testing required or implement the curriculum changes required to introduce Office 2016 for the September semester.

James said we also have the option to move to Microsoft Office 365—the cloud-based, web accessible version of Office, noting the following features/advantages:

- Cloud-based Office apps are continuously patched and upgraded – there no longer 'versions'
- No compatibility issues with Cloud based offerings
- Users still have the option to install desktop apps directly from Office 365

James said that the only features of Office 365 currently employed for students are email and calendar.

It was mentioned that CTL (Centre for Teaching & Learning) was exploring the integration of Office 365 with SLATE and that Google's cloud-based product offerings were also being considered.

Julia again stated she would make today's presentations and other relevant documents available on the team SharePoint site. A few users expressed their distaste for SharePoint and asked if another platform could be utilized. Julia asked that if anyone had a recommendation for another collaboration tool to provide her with their suggestion(s).