

# IT User Experience Governance Group Meeting: September 19, 2016

**In attendance:** Vito Picicci; Ian Fisher; Trevor Hanekamp; Howard Simkins; James Humphreys; Rod Stewart (meeting minutes); Paul Khangura; Bruce Smith (chair); Sarah Bernardi; Wes Mathieu; Brian Smith; James Duncan; Michael Evans; Martin de Bernardo

## WebEx Issues

Several committee members tried and were unable to connect to the meeting via WebEx, and, consequently, were unable to participate. Our sincere apologies for the technical difficulties. We will take steps to ensure WebEx sessions are configured properly for future meetings.

## Action Items Review

### End User Technology Requirements: Establishing Administrative Computing Standards (Paul Khangura/Rod Stewart)

Rod and Paul presented a summary of their findings, based on the results of their meetings with administrative areas across the college during July and August. They reported the following:

- most administrative users run standard software suites (e.g. Microsoft Office; Adobe CC) and could be accommodated by a 'mainstream' computer configuration.
- there is a need for a 'performance' computer model for users that utilize software with more demanding requirements (e.g. Autodesk software)
- an exception policy that works within the established guidelines is recommended for users who have unique requirements
- tablets are becoming increasingly important in areas that support student interactions outside of normal office settings

The following laptop features were noted as being important to users:

- Light, thin form factor
- HDMI compatibility
- Good battery life
- Good warranty/serviceability
- Sufficient RAM & HD space

It was also noted that users felt that desktop systems should be provisioned with web cams as we are becoming increasingly reliant on video conferencing.

Based on the findings of these meetings, along with an analysis of the hardware requirements of the software included on our administrative disk images, the following specifications were provided to purchasing so that they may be considered in the RFP process:

### **Minimum Standard for Windows Hardware**

- Memory: 4 Gb RAM
- Processor: i5
- Space: 500Gb or SSD 128GB
- Video: DirectX 10 video card

### **Recommended Standard for Windows Hardware**

- Memory: 8 GB
- Processor: i7
- Space: SSD 256GB
- Video: DirectX 10 video card
- Integrated camera, mic and speaker

### **Specialized Standard for Windows Hardware**

- Memory: 16 GB
- Processor: at least i7
- Space: at least 1TB
- Video: certified video card to work with Autodesk and Adobe products
- Integrated camera, mic and speaker

Michael Evans said that he would like to see published standards for use cases. For example, in what instance could a user request dual monitors or request a monitor of a specific size?

**Action Item:** Bruce asked the group to forward him their thoughts on what size of laptop screen users would like to see as standard and what display resolution is desired.

### **Implementing a Multi-Browser Strategy (Brian Smith)**

Brian kicked off the discussion by suggesting that Sheridan consider deploying a number of different web browsers in their standard academic and administrative disk images as some browsers are better suited for some websites/web applications as opposed to others.

Although, generally, the group felt this was a good idea, there were a number of factors to be considered before rolling this out:

- Need to define browser standards
- What is the level of support that would be required for each browser?
- What system(s) would we test browsers on and to what degree?
- What browsers would we deploy?
- Updates – browser updates occur frequently. How do we deal with these changes and when?

**Action Item:** Bruce Smith and Brian Smith to discuss this further.

### **Laptop Technology Replacement for HMC Flip-up Labs (Don McCulloch)**

There is a teaching/learning space at the HMC campus that features 'flip desks' where laptops that are used with these desks can be 'flipped' and hidden away in the desk's underside when use of the entire surface area of the desk is required. These laptops have reached the end of their life and a suitable replacement is being sought.

Don said that he has been working with Julia to find an appropriate replacement for these machines but thus far have been unable to find something that could 'flip' into these specialized desks. He asked the group for their opinion about whether or not Chromebooks might be a suitable replacement.

Michael Evans stated that it would depend on what the usage requirements would be. He said that Chromebooks are better suited for cloud-based applications and had limitations in terms of what software could be installed. James replied that apps could be delivered to Chromebooks via a VDI app (e.g. VM Horizon client).

Don said he would do some more investigation into specific use cases and requirements for these machines.

Bruce added that he had previous (positive) experience deploying Chromebooks en masse and said they can be very good if utilized properly.

**Action item:** Bruce/Don to discuss further with Julia.

### **Pre-Tender Testing of Academic Computing Hardware (Vito Picicci)**

Inspired by a recent visit to a Microsoft retail store Vito wondered about the possibility of field testing hardware loaners for assessing academic hardware standards.

Bruce said he liked the idea of putting equipment in front of the people that will be using it but cited the following concerns:

- How long do users need to properly assess hardware?
- How often would we have to do this given the frequency of model changes?

Howard suggested approaching vendors/companies directly. James cautioned that an evaluation mechanism may already be connected to Purchasing procurement process. Vito said that he would like the group to see a process chart of the assessment/procurement process.

**Action item:** Bruce to bring back details around the assessment/procurement process to the group.

### **Office 365 Project Update (Bruce Smith)**

Bruce announced that there was a project underway to introduce the cloud based version of Office to Sheridan employees, citing the following features and advantages:

- available to Sheridan with unlimited online storage (10 GB file size limit)
- tools can be accessed by almost any device using a web browser
- provides collaboration tools and version control
- no need to send attachments - you send links to documents

- includes survey tools, a planner, and Office Mix (a plug-in that turns PowerPoint presentations into interactive online presentations)

Bruce also highlighted the fact that the Ontario Ministry of Education has vetted the Office 365 agreement for any security and privacy concerns (they have none).

Because Office 365 is cloud-based, the drawbacks of moving to it would be the impact on bandwidth and issues related to back-up and recovery.

Bruce concluded by saying the implementation of Office 365 has already been approved under the Sheridan Business Plan (this was done prior to the formation of the IT User Experience Governance Group). The next step will be to hire a dedicated individual who will be charged with championing and implementing Office 365 across the college.