



UNIVERSITY
OF TASMANIA

Commerce IT Infrastructure Renewal Project

The Story So Far...

Introduction

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Faculty of Commerce and IT Desktop & Client Services endeavours to deliver specific support services, at specific levels of support, and at an agreed upon cost. As acknowledged in the SLA, the agreement will evolve over time, with the additional knowledge of the client requirements, as well as the introduction of new applications and services.

Discussions began in late 2000 between the former Dean, Dr Bruce Felmingham, and the former Director of ITS, Mr John Jauncey. These discussions continued with the Acting Dean Dr. Jim Garnham and have taken the form of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) since the arrival of the present Dean, Professor Peter Carroll.

Background

Four weeks prior to the beginning of Semester 2, 2001, IT Desktop & Client Services was requested to provide the Faculty with a new lab of 24 leased Dell PC's. This was achieved with an 'upgraded' version of the current NT lab being developed with implementation by the second week of semester.

During this time IT Desktop & Client Services was also asked provide advice, assistance and guidance to the Faculty IT Support Officer in the deployment of new server hardware with a look to rationalising the amount of hardware required to service the Faculty at the same or even higher level.

IT Desktop & Client Services have been providing direct technical and support assistance to the Faculty for approximately six months, well prior to the establishment of the formal SLA. More direct involvement occurred when the Faculty's offshore web/notes server became unavailable due to a major hardware failure. Within a single working day all services from this failed hardware had been transferred to an IT Desktop & Client Services centrally managed server offering high levels of hardware redundancy and maximum availability, at no cost to the Faculty.

Subsequently, IT Desktop & Client Services staff have had continued involvement with Faculty IT support, at the request of the Faculty Executive, primarily to cover staff absences. Much of this support has been provided to the Faculty gratis by IT Desktop & Client Services, reinforcing the co-operative nature of the relationship.

We intend to produce these newsletters on a monthly basis to keep you abreast of the progress of the project(s) and any relevant issues that need to be brought to the attention of Faculty staff.

Current Projects

The Dean requested that IT Desktop & Client Services provide the Faculty with a draft SLA for IT Infrastructure Management, a draft of which was subsequently provided. After several meetings with the Dean and Faculty Executive Office, it was agreed to present the SLA for comment at the Faculty IT Committee. The meeting was very positive and the feedback from

Contact details Adrian Dillon
Jack Potter

Project Manager
Senior Project Officer
Website

Adrian.Dillon@utas.edu.au 2232
Jack.Potter@utas.edu.au 5567
<http://www.its.utas.edu.au/dms/comm-SLA>
Postal Box 69

that meeting was incorporated into a revised draft of the SLA.

The SLA was then presented to the Faculty Executive Meeting held on the 14th December, 2001, further discussion ensued and the agreement was signed several days later.

The Service Definitions provided in the SLA are:

- Student lab desktop infrastructure & management;
- Staff desktop infrastructure & management;
- Server infrastructure & management.

These definitions are currently being undertaken by IT Desktop & Client Services in the form of two specific projects.

Student Lab Project

The first project, currently two-thirds complete, is to provide Commerce students with a standard operating environment (SOE) consistent with current IT Desktop & Client Services managed General Access Labs, while also providing current versions of specific course software.

Due to the age of some of the existing desktop hardware, it was necessary to look at a new approach to delivering the SOE. This will be via Microsoft Terminal Services – basically using the existing hardware as Windows terminals that receive only screen updates, while all processing is carried out on a powerful back-end server. This approach can provide performance improvements for the students while also providing ease of management by IT staff, and prolonging the life of ageing lab computer hardware.

Progress to Date:

The default lab images are nearing completion with testing having already commenced on test PC's within the Hobart labs. We will be asking an appropriate Faculty staff member to provide final

feedback on the content and performance of the lab images prior to deployment. It is envisaged that the labs, North and South, will be cutover during the week commencing 11th February.

Forthcoming Implementations:

1. Student Home Drives:

An additional service to be provided early Semester 1 is the provisioning of student home drives. It is intended that this service will eventually be extended to all undergraduate students however it will first be introduced to Commerce students.

IT Desktop & Client Services will be providing students with up to 40Mb of storage space that will be automatically connected when a Commerce student logs into a lab PC using their own unique Novell Directory Service (NDS) password. This will be accessible from either Commerce or Central IT lab PCs. Students will now have a reliable and secure environment on which to store assignments. These personal drives will be backed up centrally with restore facilities available in the event of corruption or accidental deletion. Students' Netscape bookmarks and IE favourites will also be resident on this personal (P:\) drive which will be automatically accessible from any Commerce Lab PC.

2. New Printing System:

To be introduced at the beginning of Semester 1, 2002 will be a new student printing system to replace SAPS. This new system, known as PUP (Pharos University Printing) will be introduced as the default printing system in parallel with the existing SAPS system. It is proposed that the SAPS system will be decommissioned by the end of the year.

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Staff Project

Commencing the week of 11th February, the Senior Project Officer for this project, Jack Potter will begin an audit of all staff hardware and software to enable a recommendation to be made to the Faculty regarding a replacement schedule for the older computer equipment. This process will also ensure that the Faculty has the requisite software licences for currently utilised staff applications.

As part of this process Jack will also brief staff on the outcomes of this project. The first change staff will notice is that they will be prompted by a Novell Logon screen to enter a username and password. Staff will be provided with this information and training which will allow them to authenticate against the University's new authentication or Directory service: Novell Directory Service (NDS). As with the student population, when staff authenticate they will also be automatically provided with a home drive (P:\) and access to a shared school drive (N:\), the structure of which will be defined in consultation with representatives of all major areas.

Rather than storing all corporate information on a local PC or Mac hard drive, it will be recommended and encouraged that this data be stored on either of these centrally backed up network drives. Usage of these new drives will be explained in detail to staff as they are moved to the new system.

All staff desktop computers will be upgraded over a 3 year period, to new lease PC's with IT Desktop & Client Services standard image loaded and any additional requisite licensed software applications installed.

Jack will provide additional briefing information once he has scheduled times to discuss the project and conduct the audit with individual staff.

Staff involved in the Project

Jack Potter is Senior Project Officer. Jack's responsibility includes handling the day-to-day co-ordination of all aspects of the Project. He will be based in the Faculty building in Hobart, but will be travelling to Launceston on a regular basis. Jack has extensive experience in the Tasmanian, NSW and NT State Governments in Educational Project Management, Policy and IT areas.

Adam Mason is employed on a short term contract and he will also be assisting Jack over the next six to eight weeks, primarily in the task of server deployment and commissioning. Adam has extensive experience in IT service provision for a major UK IT organisation.

Adrian Dillon, Acting Manager, Desktop Management Systems is the Project Manager. Adrian is well known at the University having worked for several years in the Vice-Chancellor's office. Adrian also has extensive experience of IT in the State Government.

Overall responsibility for the SLA is Alistair Roberts, Acting Manager, IT Desktop & Client Services. Alistair's IT background includes the State Government and a US securities trading bank based in London and Tokyo.

Additionally, a pool of IT Desktop & Client Services staff will be utilised, as demand requires, to ensure that support, as defined by the SLA, is consistently achieved.

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Please Phone

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**and state that you are from the Faculty of
Commerce**

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