

**Service Level Agreement
Between
The Faculty of Commerce
And
IT Services
2002**

Mid Year Progress Report

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Contents

Introduction	3
Student Laboratory upgrades:.....	3
Staff IT Hardware & Software Audit:.....	3
Results by School:.....	4
Hardware Replacement ‘roll-out’	4
Surplus IT Tender and Disposal:	4
Ongoing Maintenance of Servers.....	4
Problem Resolution and the University HelpDesk	5
Response times.....	6
Sandy Bay Computer Support	6
Newnham Computer Support	7
Streaming Media Server.....	7
Future Developments	7

INTRODUCTION.

In the first six months of the SLA's implementation, IT Services efforts were concentrated on increasing service provision to end-users, increasing infrastructure available, improving desktop hardware provisions, disposing of obsolete equipment and increasing overall Commerce/IT Services relationships.

To this end, increases in efficiency have been realised with the availability of timely responses from a broader bases of knowledge through the use of communications with IT Services systems and support specialists.

This is not to say that further efficiencies can be realised but can, as a result of the groundwork put in place over the six months to June 30, lead to quantifiable outcomes with increased productivity and efficiencies to the Faculty of Commerce.

Several key objectives underpinned the implementation of the SLA in the first half of the year:

- Student Laboratory upgrades
- Software Audit
- Staff Hardware Review
- Staff Desktop systems upgrades
- Server optimisation and maintenance
- Increase in response performance from Helpdesk
- Increase Computer/Customer support
- Implementation and management of Commerce IT projects

This Report outlines the various tasks and processes undertaken by IT Services staff with the view of establishing a solid platform on which to base best practice quality services and support.

STUDENT LABORATORY UPGRADES:

The student computers labs required 're-imaging' for first semester 2002. When this process was undertaken, it was found that two of the three laboratories were populated with machines with high hardware failure rates. To combat this, a new operating system was installed, a new server deployed, and a new method of delivering software applications to students initiated. While there were some initial problems with the system, it proved successful overall; proving as an operational pilot that utilising Terminal Services software is a viable option to combat certain situations, particularly in a high-use environment such as a student computer lab.

While the system proved successful, however, the inherent faults of the hardware continued to lower the efficiency of the system, resulted in high maintenance by support staff. The two labs in question have been replaced: the one in Launceston with 24 high-end high-quality machines, which required a quick turnaround time and extensive out-of-hours effort to implement. The Sandy Bay lab has been redeployed with ex- IT Services lab machines, which have a proven track record of reliability as short-term solution. This lab is expected to be replaced before first semester 2003 with the appropriate level of equipment.

In addition, there have been three software upgrades for student machines since January.

STAFF IT HARDWARE & SOFTWARE AUDIT:

An audit of the current IT equipment holdings of the various Schools of the Faculty was undertaken in February-March. The report resulting from the audit recommended the replacement of approximately 30 desktop machines as well as the updating of the

operating systems on the remaining computers. The printers in the Faculty are deemed adequate for current usage.

Results by School:

- Accounting & Finance: (owned by School) replace all desktop machines except the multi-media computer. Install Standard Operating Environment (SOE)
- Economics: (leased machines) upgrade SOE. Replace computer in Newnham.
- Faculty Office: (owned by Faculty) replace staff machines. Retain and re-image Dean's computers
- Information Systems: replace machines*
- Management: replace one machine. Re-image Windows-based machine with SOE.
- Postgraduate Machines: All to be replaced.

Hardware Replacement 'roll-out'

Staff Machines:

- Accounting & Finance leased the required 14 replacement staff computers in April.
- Faculty Office leased 3 new staff computers in February and re-deployed one from Newnham in May.
- Information Systems leased the required computers in May.
- Management leased one machine in June.

Postgraduate Machines:

- Accounting & Finance: all 3 replaced by lease machines in April.
- Economics: all 4 replaced in May.
- Information Systems: all replaced April-May
- Management: preferred not to replace their post-grad computers. However, hardware from IT Services was deployed to ensure students had access to University systems and more resilient hardware. The IT Services assets will be removed at the end of the 2nd Semester examination period. Replacement machines are now expected to be leased at the end of the year and deployed prior to first semester 2003.

SURPLUS IT TENDER AND DISPOSAL:

IT equipment identified as surplus to requirements was collected, identified and external tenders called for. Five computer resellers were contacted, resulting in only two bids.

As the quality of the equipment was poor, owing to its age, state of repair, and performance, the tender did not realise a large sum. However, it did rid the Faculty of equipment up to eleven years old and clear up much needed storage space.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE OF SERVERS

At the beginning of January, reliability problems were identified with the five Domain Controllers utilised by the Faculty of Commerce. Ongoing proactive and reactive maintenance failed to keep all the services running until the new servers could be deployed.

"Hiroshima", the Backup Domain Controller (BDC) for the commerce students was made redundant first, owing to the implementation of a new University-wide

authentication system. “Kyoto”, the BDC running the backup software, continued to fail and a fix was implemented in late March to ensure that staff files continued to be backed up. Some staff still remained not backed up until May, while the multitude of backup services previously deployed by the Faculty as a whole were replaced. It should be noted that the SLA excludes backup of client machines, includes server backups only as this is University policy.

“Berlin”, the BDC based in Launceston failed 3 times in February and several times since. It required a replacement hard drive in late February but constant monitoring and advice by IT Services staff to ensure Newnham staff did not rely on it failed to stop a major hardware failure of the northern system. Three days of IT Services staff working collaboratively between the northern and southern campuses finally restored over five Gigabytes worth of corporate data that had been stored on the hard drives. This data is currently stored on the new server. Work is required to identify and backup Macintosh data to a permanent form of storage, possibly DVDs, each of which has a capacity of 4.7Gb. “Manhattan”, the BDC in Information Systems still requires maintenance but, as IS staff moves to NDS, the reliance on this aging server is reducing. “Tokyo” the Primary Domain Controller fails weekly. Contingencies are in place to ensure no loss of data will ensue if it fails during business hours, with the role of this machine being transferred to central systems as Commerce staff are transferred to NDS authentication and the new file server (on which resides a replica of all data on Tokyo and Berlin), comes on line.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION AND THE UNIVERSITY HELPDESK

Prior to the signing of the SLA in December 2001, the IT Services HelpDesk was being severely under utilised by the Commerce Faculty, with Faculty computer support staff being contacted directly by those Commerce staff requiring assistance. There were three staff employed to support the Faculty at the time of signing: one based full-time in Sandy Bay, one based full-time in Newnham and the third travelling between the two campuses.

To provide statistical information, Commerce staff were requested to contact the ITS Services HelpDesk in the first instance. Problems were to be logged and assigned to a revamped “Commerce” assignment group created using the specialist software utilised by the HelpDesk.

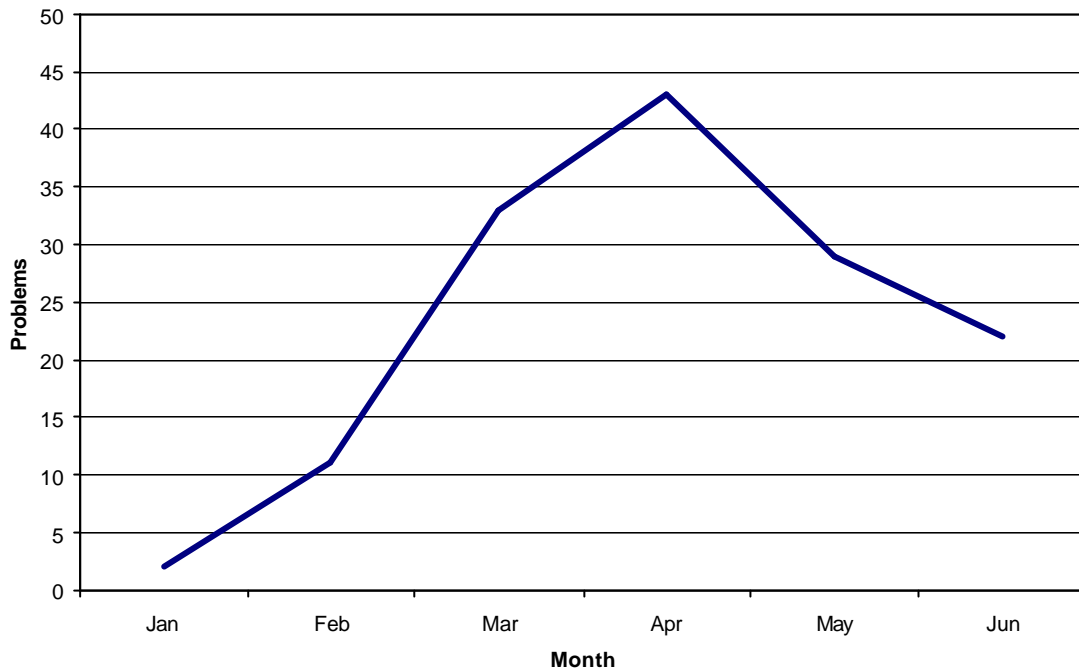
The uptake to utilizing the HelpDesk was slow but, as the Faculty computer support staff were transferred to IT Services, the use of the HelpDesk became more pronounced.

IT Services staff were relocated to the Faculty Building in Sandy Bay with faculty on-site staff remaining in the northern offices until March. An ITS staff member was transferred from Sandy Bay to Newnham to fill this role after the Easter break.

Over time, the HelpDesk became more widely used and is now being utilised as the only contact for IT support.

Priority groupings are to be defined in the future as, currently, the default priority of any job logged by Commerce staff is 2, denoting a response time within 4 business hours and resolution within one working day.

HelpDesk Problems Logged by Commerce Staff 1Jan02 - 30Jun02



RESPONSE TIMES

It is difficult to accurately gauge the response times but anecdotal evidence has proven that through feedback mechanisms and changes in Helpdesk operations instigated by Commerce-based IT Services staff, response times to high-priority problems have dropped considerably. Through change management, IT Services staff will be utilising the problem management system “ServiceCenter” more effectively with regard to ‘closing’ jobs when completed. The Senior Project Officer deemed that client satisfaction, i.e. the end-user, required a faster response time to calls and ensuring HelpDesk staff were assigning jobs correctly than the ‘closing’ of jobs through the software. Negotiations are currently underway with the newly appointed statewide HelpDesk manager to increase the functionality of ServiceCenter to provide increased reporting functions. The second SLA progress report, due in December 2002, should reflect the changes and illustrate benchmarks for continuing service delivery.

SANDY BAY COMPUTER SUPPORT

In the initial period of the SLA implementation, the Senior Project Officer (Commerce IT Infrastructure Renewal Project) undertook an in depth analysis of the current computer support levels and efficiencies.

As a result, Commerce academic and general staff were requested to utilise the IT Services HelpDesk as the first point of contact rather than to contact Commerce-based IT support staff directly. While in some Schools this had a quick uptake, some areas responded less enthusiastically.

As a result, the metrics for number of problems logged with the helpdesk are to be taken lightly. However, the trends shown in the first six months do show how the introduction of lease scheme machines in Accounting provided a peak in calls –

usually as a result of requests for software installations on the new machines or minor requests such as requests for purchase of old machines.

There has been a marked increase in the number of calls from the School of Management, predominantly requesting virus and/or Internet browser updates.

A new full-time, on-site, IT Services computer support officer, Hoang Le, will start in the Faculty building in the first week of July.

NEWNHAM COMPUTER SUPPORT

Due to lower staff numbers, the amount of calls from the northern campus is far lower. The part-time computer support officer resigned from his position in March. Newnham-based IT Services provided support initially, in as timely response as possible, to the needs of the Newnham Commerce staff. In the week following Easter, a Sandy Bay-based staff member, Thi Thi Khin, transferred to Newnham to fill the role vacated a month previously. The lack of calls from Newnham since this appointment may also be influenced by the availability of a technically skilled staff member based in the School of Management.

STREAMING MEDIA SERVER

At the end of June, suitable hardware became available to run a streaming media server for the Faculty, a project instigated by the School of Accounting as a pilot. The server software was installed, tested and has had a basic trial prior to a more widely-available pilot expected to begin by the end of July, when more efficient server software has been fully tested by IT Services staff.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

In the beginning of the second half of the SLA period, all staff will authenticate via NDS, "Tokyo" will be decommissioned and the new Dell fileserver "COMFS1" will come on-line. All staff machines will have the Standard Operating Environment (SOE) installed and the media server will be available for the submission of real-time streaming video and audio files for access by staff and students.

Metrics for 'closing' jobs will be tabulated and increased communication between HelpDesk staff and Commerce-based IT Services staff will be evident.

FACULTY OF COMMERCE IT COMMITTEE

The Faculty IT Committee, formed in March 2002 has facilitated oversight of the SLA through its monthly meetings.