

Minutes of GO4 Meeting: 17/1/97  
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(1) Because of the holidays, it was decided that there will be no progress review meeting for last month. The next progress review meeting will be on 31st which will cover two months, excluding holidays.

ACTION - Mentors to talk to sysies and get figures for 31st.

(2) The following room moves are planned:

lmb, rs -> 1603  
jst -> 2417 (lmb's old room)  
cc -> 1611 (jst's old room)  
samo -> 2418 (cc's old room)  
gary -> 2406 (with rwt)  
new CO -> somewhere on 16 corridor

ACTION - Everyone to move

(3) gary and gdmr to continue supporting backups in the short term. In the medium-long term, someone needs to investigate possible alternatives to Amanda.

ACTION - gdmr to help gary to set up tape stacker with a view to going live on Cul ASAP.

(4) Another database meeting is needed to check progress on database project, so that we know when we are likely to have a system that we can use for application development (in particular, inventory & student records).

ACTION - gdmr to call database meeting.

(5) Interview procedures for the new CO post were discussed. It was decided that candidates should be asked to make a short presentation. This is in line with the presentation required from lectureship candidates, and may help to discourage non-serious applicants. Other interview arrangements to be decided later.

ACTION - jhb to talk with grd and arrange for this requirement to be distributed with the "further particulars".

(6) Linux/CS2 lab. A final decision on this does not have to be made until it is time to purchase equipment in the summer. It was decided to continue gearing up for this anyway.

ACTION - ajs to produce a list of technical requirements that we need to sort out before we can run a live Linux lab.

(7) NT/CS1 - the decision to use NT managed by EUCS for CS1 requires decisions from the academic staff, and discussions with EUCS.

ACTION - paul to talk to LFCS about purchase of NTrigue server for LFCS use and evaluation. If this works it would provide staff with a way to try out NT without extra hardware.

ACTION ajs/jhb to talk to helen Talbot (EUCS) to find out what EUCS could provide and the last possible date that they would need a decision in time for a 1997 start.

(8) PC hardware.

ACTION - ajs to order new PCs for paul and ajs for linux/NT development.

Paul - 17/1/97

# Agenda for "Syssies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday January 20, 1997

2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/01/09), and matters arising.
4. Deferred actions:

What	Who
Kit buying	Go4
Root password random salts	gdmr
Cut-down Solaris clients	dwb
Technotes & documentation	cc, samo

5. Go4 (see attached minutes).
6. Quick (30 second) status updates:

What	Who
WWW	rs, paul

7. Agenda items:

What	Raised by
IRC (see attached proposal)	jcb <i>via</i> ajs

8. AOCB.
9. Date and time of next meeting.

## **0.1 front desk**

Other front desk services include issuing of user accounts, photocopier and electronic accounts, file restorations (via 'support') and hard-copy documentation.

### **Information**

Local information and help about the systems is available via a set of technical notes (both in hard copy or, preferably, through the Web). All supported and maintained information is available from the Departmental home page.

### **Platforms**

Computer Science subject-related computing traditionally takes place on Unix machines for which a rich variety of applications has been acquired or developed. The main supported Unix variant is Sun Solaris 2.x but Silicon Graphics and DEC Ultrix machines are maintained as turnkey systems for particular applications.

General office IT requires more conventional applications and is increasingly being handled on Macs or PCs.

Engineering-style applications and project work takes place on all available platforms but principally PC/Windows 3.11. Windows-NT is being evaluated and Linux is supported to a limited extent, principally for student use at home.

### **Network services**

All machines and services are attached to and accessed via the Department's Ethernets. This means that a single home directory may be maintained yet accessed from all machines of all platforms within the Department.

Standard network services (Web, USENET news, mail, telnet and Internet FTP) are all available. Every staff/PG user (\*) has a Web home page, initialised with basic contact information and a photograph where possible. This may be extended very simply under the control of the user. All network services are integral parts of the environment and are extensively used.

### **Web**

Netscape 2.x is the supported Web browser though copies of Mosaic are still present. The department runs the CERN Web server.

## **USENET News**

xrn, rn, .... are all available on the Unix machines. .. is the preferred News reader on the Macs and there is no fixed standard reader on the PCS (copies of Trumpet are available however).

## **Mail**

The PP mail agent is used here. Mail user agents in use include xmh, ... and GNU-rmail. Eudora is supported on the Macs and no mailer is currently supported on PCs.

## **Text manipulation**

GNU Emacs is available in several variants on most platforms and the majority of Computer Science text manipulation takes place between Emacs and the  $\text{\LaTeX}$ text markup language system.

ed, vi and numerous other editors are present on the system but not necessarily supported.

Microsoft Office is available on most Macs and some 'public' PCs within the department. Microsoft Access and FoxPro are available on some machines but FileMaker Pro is the preferred database package. Excel 5.0 is available for both Macs and PCs.

## **Hardware**

The pattern of hardware availability varies across the department. Full-time staff will generally have exclusive use of a Unix workstation or PowerMac of some kind. Provision for RAs will to some extent depend on the nature of associated grants but will vary from exclusive use of an X-terminal up to having a full workstation. Postgraduate students can expect a share of an X-terminal or Workstation depending on individual accomodation arrangements. The target for PGs is currently one bitmap screen / 1.5 people (??).

## **Software**

The 'listpacks' command lists over 300 service accounts covering most supported packages and information 'dummy' accounts. You are referred to the listpacks command for up-to-date information. Each package has its own account, a mail forwarding address and a service support category.

## Minutes of the Sysgies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 21 January 1997

Present: GDMR (chair), SAMO, LMB, GARY, JHB, DWB, RS, RWT, CC,  
DCH, AJS, JST, ARCH  
Apologies: PAUL

### 1 Minutes & Matters Arising

#### HP24 replacement

Now on order. AJS pointed out that it isn't necessary (and may be more expensive) to route orders through Procurement.

#### Anonymous ftp

GDMR will set up the separate anonymous ftp service.

Action - GDMR

#### Host Names

ARCH reported a problem with some PCs after the hostname change; they've been changed back pending investigation. CC and JST still to do the Macs.

Action - ARCH & JHB, JST & CC

#### Software Licences and Audit

CC doesn't expect to have time to attend to this before his holiday. Deferred.

#### Technotes

The technote reorganisation is progressing well, but isn't complete yet.

Action - CC, SAMO

#### Power-down lessons: dependencies

GDMR needs to look further at the question of home directories.

Action - GDMR

### 2 G4

GDMR ran through the latest G4 meeting, whose minutes were circulated with the agenda. Attention was drawn to the room moves.

Action - LMB, RS, GARY, JST, CC, SAMO

and to the fact that the next progress review would be at the end of January and would cover the past two months.

### 3 Status Updates

**WWW** RS hopes to put the new WWW server in next week, but wants to speak to Paul first. All users will need to change their Netscape preferences when this is done—we can't do it for them. There are some security worries related to CGI scripts, so RS should talk to GDMR as well.

Action - RS

**Technicians' work** DCH reported that there is about another two weeks worth (relaxed time) of work to be done on 2501. Adding new wires is no longer easy for non-technicians. If a wire needs to be added in a hurry, sysgies can add a temporary patch; the techs will tidy up later. However, the lists must be marked up whenever a change is made.

The machine halls wiring is now complete, and the books are being redone. Extra mains connections are being laid to the rack.

A steady stream of Maxtor discs have been sent to Access under the maintenance agreement. Conor 200MB replacements are being supplied. This raised some worry about what would happen if a replacement failed, since the maintenance agreement refers to Maxtor drives explicitly.

It was noted that some LFCS Sparcs are not under maintenance. Workstations and servers should be maintained, but xterms needn't. (RWT later explained, off-line, that this is because software licensing is tied to maintenance: a machine which has been taken off maintenance is not licensed to run any subsequent release of Solaris, which effectively relegates it to use as an xterm.)

#### Service Description

There was some discussion about the need for a service description, and what form it should take. JHB will circulate the existing document as a starting point.

Action - JHB

#### Servers Boot List

RWT has written the servers boot list, which is now with AJS for proofreading.

Action - AJS

#### Project plans (arose from status update on printing)

CC has been looking at the project mechanism. AJS explained that only a simple document was needed, explaining technical issues. SAMO was fingered to chase project progress, after discussion with CC.

Action - SAMO, CC

#### Mac spec list

CC reported that this is well in hand.

Action - CC to complete

#### Obsolete Emacs versions

Deferred until Chris returns from holiday.

#### Power-down lessons: patches

The patch team have not met since the last sysgies' meeting.

Action - PATCHTEAM

2

There are still some Wren discs on maintenance, but the contract won't be renewed when it runs out (February for the Department, July for the Lab); Exabytes can be dropped as well.

In general, the maintenance schedules could do with being audited. LMB to discuss this with RWT. AJS has some records of purchases which may be of help; he'll pass these to Lindsay.

Action - AJS, LMB

We still have (in store) an Exabyte which Phoenix supplied as a replacement and never retrieved.

Security labelling of kit is very time-consuming, and has ground to a halt. The most vulnerable machines have now been done, so from now on only new kit will be labelled. DCH to tell Jack McAulay (EUCS) of the difficulties encountered, so that other departments can be forewarned.

Action - DCH

There was some discussion of current needs for root access, and the need to check that there were no "leftover" entries in the nsu list.

Action - GDMR

### 4 Agenda items

#### IRC

JCB's paper on IRC (circulated with the agenda) was discussed. It was felt that there was a clear demand for this sort of facility, though there were worries about what would happen if JCB found he could not continue to support it. Paul was nominated to oversee the setting up of the service.

Action - PAUL

### 5 AOCB

None

### 6 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 4th February at 10.30 a.m. subject to room availability.

Action - SAMO

3

4

Group of four meeting 24/1/92

Apache

The imminent arrival of Apache prompted several questions:

- What do cgi binaries run as?
- What new requirements are there for preferences?
- Are there new security problems or new manifestations of existing ones?
- What will the performance be like?
- How robust is it?

It was agreed that:

- A watch should be kept on security [ GDMR ]
- File performance [ RWR ]

Trane

Trane is still sick. Work has to proceed therefore the SS/4 in her office should be reclaimed and allocated to DWB/Gary for the rebuild then DJR [ AJS ]

Actions

- Database meeting (GDMR) Done
- Room moves Initiated
- Tape stacker moved Done

CG post

JHB to find out how other firms conduct interviews [ JHB ]  
 Requirement for presentation to be added to further particulars [ JHB ]

Unixification

AJS to collate list of technical requirements [ AJS ]  
 Unixification project to be created [ ? ]

Paul reported that the LFCS had agreed in principle to put #7K towards an NT/Inque server and half the cost of a new mail server. Some of the investment might be (?supplied) (?recovered) in the form of movement and upgrade of SS/5s.

AJS and JHB had spoken to Helen Talbot and agreed that a go/no go decision would be made by "Easter" if EDCS were to maintain an NT lab for us.

AJS agreed to provide a document describing what we mean by "support" in this context. [ AJS ]

JHB would distribute his "questions" document to go4 [ JHB ]  
 Others would supply the figures he was asking for [ All ]

AJS would research prices for himself and Paul and purchase as soon as a satisfactory quote had been obtained [ AJS ]

Agenda items

Exabytes: 2 were still in use (1 LFCS, 1 Dept). The LFCS one was being used to back up an odd assortment of stuff.

It was decided to drop the Exabytes off maintenance then investigate DATs and buy additional ones if necessary to remove dependance on Exabytes.

An audit would be made of our disks to ensure the maintenance contract was accurately covering what was needed. All Wrens should be dropped for instance. This should be completed by 1 February, when the contracts renewed.

X Terms

The LFCS was looking at X terms and may look to 'lose' some. As the LFCS was supporting many students and departmental clients then the Department may need to support some of these. An X term audit should be carried out first though as it was suspected that the servers were still notionally supporting 'dusused' or 'ghost' Xterms. If this were the case then the refugee Xterms could well be supportable. If not, then the LFCS had problems which it had to offload and it was not clear the Department had capacity to handle them.

The situation was messy and required a spring-clean. [ CSOS ]  
 An audit was required [ G04 ]  
 Some policy laid down once we could assess the situation [ CSOS ]  
 The LFCS maps should be brought up to date and differences noted

A second issue to be discussed was who/what does a machine 'belong' to? If clients and X terms were allocated to rooms rather than people then the situation became easier.

Equipment purchase round

Nigel should be approached to agree that proposals would be invited via Nigel; some structure involving a public meeting would be set up.

G04 propose that a cs.strategy newsgroup be set up and the input presented there used to drive the discussion process for the next spending round.

Previous Actions

Apache :DMK is keeping a watch on apache security and raising issues with RS. RMT is monitoring performance. Action all to help RS firefight problems with the new server. [ ALL ]

IRO's SS4 :this has still to be reallocated. The plan is to give it to Michael Boyle. IRO can be given a replacement machine when she returns. Action AJS to chase RMT. [ AJS ]

CO post :JHB spoke to firms re interviews. Panels were not widely used. One attractive idea was overlapping interviews. Requirement for presentation had not been added to the further particulars .. it can go in the letter to shortlisted candidates. [ JHB ]

Linux project : AJS is writing the project document.

EUFS NT support : AJS had decided to defer writing a "support" document outlining what NT support we required from EUFS until we had actually decided to go down this route. [ deferred - AJS ]

JHB has distributed his "questions" document to G04 for comment. He is still awaiting figures (eg costings) from some people.

PCs : AJS has purchased PCs for himself and PAUL. LCTR: Paul has discussed the LTRG audit with the CSOs

Agenda Items

Resource figures : the figures for Dec and Jan were discussed. Nothing really surprising was noted.

Project page - CU has completed the framework for the project page, but there hasn't been a rush of project documentation to put up. This should be raised at the next systems meeting. [ GDMR ]

CSI M1 : PAUL has been talking to SOA about the use of NT and JAVA in CSI. SOA was now aware of the easter deadline for a move this year. He had raised two concerns ::

- a) who was going to evaluate which Java development tool was best,
  - b) NT access for staff (possibly satisfied by LFGS intrigue server ?)
- PAUL offered to write up a project plan and drive the investigations. [ PAUL ]

DMK is still documenting the QI/account-generation etc code. This is holding back progress on several fronts. It was agreed that DDR should be asked to make a clean break and handover what he has done so far. JHB offered to talk to DDR. [ JHB ]

It was agreed at the previous meeting that it might be a good idea to create a education strategy newsgroup to discuss the Linux/NT/etc issues. It might also be useful for collecting ideas for the yearly spends. AJS offered to discuss this with DMB. [ AJS ]

A suggestion for fast communication to people present in the Dept.

The irritating lacuna in departmental communication methods that there is no way to communicate quickly with everybody currently present and logged on, for messages such as "food in the coffee room", "Seminar starting now", "Mail server going down", etc. Mail to lists is too slow for this purpose. In addition, it would be nice to have a fast and light weight means of person to person group communication, for those Friday afternoon arguments about which film to go to, and other trivial and ephemeral messages which really irritate me by arriving as mail...

Both of these purposes could, I suggest, be served by using an IRC based mechanism. The idea is that the standard environment runs a (modified) irc client, which connects to a local server and joins the appropriate channels (#cs4, #staff, etc). Then to notify all staff, one need simply send an IRC message on the #staff channel.

Of course, the client could be hacked about to present a sugared interface, and could do things like changing its icon when messages arrive, etc., etc. (I'd propose the sirc client running in an xterm - as it's written in Perl, it's easy to modify and adapt, and the occasional X function can be achieved by calling standalone programs on the xterm window. Crude, but easy.) Somebody else would doubtless write an Emacs interface.

There are some questions:

IRC requires, unfortunately, the server network to be a tree, so there must be a root server. This would require a little thought if multiple servers are run, although I think it may be possible to fiddle configuration files to achieve some robustness. I need to think about that.

Each client-server connection holds open a TCP connection. Hence one server process can only manage about 50 clients. Therefore, we would have to run multiple servers. The obvious possibilities are: run a server on every sun-client/xterm sun-server (I presume nothing serves more than 40 or so sun-clients or xterms?), in a fixed topology. (Not totally fixed: I'd have to think what can be done.); or run multiple instances of a server on one machine.

Machine resource: I would expect the clients to place little extra load on user machines. I have no idea how expensive IRC servers are to run, but I wouldn't have thought it was very significant, unless people start making intensive use of the facility. I can do some experiments. Network load should be negligible, although a message will be passed around all clients every time anybody logs on anywhere.

Human resource: this being my idea, if it's adopted, I'd do most the work. The bit I wouldn't want to do is the integration into lcfg etc; it'd take me quite a while to understand the ins and outs of your amazing system enough to write an object correctly.

Authentication and security: authentication is not an issue, since IRC users identify as shipped. Security is, since IRC is not written with the intent of having the network based authorization we'd want. In increasing order of difficulty, the options are:

(1) no security: the #staff etc channels are special only by convention, and anybody \*can\* join any channel--so they should be treated on a par with the newsgroups. Disadvantages: sooner or later one of my colleagues will assume that "tell staff" doesn't tell any students...; the first person to join a channel controls it.

Advantages: no work.

(2) half-hearted security: have a bot that immediately ejects any stranger joining the #staff channel, etc. Disadvantage: doesn't work "immediately", requires a bit of work.

(3) full security: insist that only staff can join #staff (channel)

etc. (and, if desired, that only staff can send to the #staff channel). This could be done (a) by having a slightly more sophisticated bot running the channels, and some small hacks in the client to talk to the bot (disadvantage: if the bot fails, everything gets stuck...) or (b) hacking the server (disadvantage: the ircd code is not an outstanding example of easily maintainable and modifiable code, and I'd rather not mess with it).

People not using Unix workstations: well, that's their problem... No doubt clients could be made for Macs, and, God forbid, windows, but I wouldn't know how to do it.

Dependency: would people start depending on it? Would it matter?

Coverage: I'd assume that by default the client would only run for people running X sessions on local machines. There'd be no difficulty in making a client suitable for terminals, but one probably doesn't want, e.g., rlogins running a client unless the user actually asks for it. How many people still connect through terminals as their main access?



# Agenda for "Syssies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday February 4, 1997

2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/01/21), and matters arising.
4. Deferred actions:

What	Who
Eliminate mail loops	dwb
Install SDK	dwb

5. Go4 (17/01 and 31/01).

6. Agenda items:

What	Raised by
Package home directories and backups	gdmr
Report on Database Project meeting "Linux project"	dwb <i>et al</i> ajs
Last two months' "workload figures"	Go4
Project web pages	Go4

7. AOCB.

8. Date and time of next meeting.

## Syssies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 4th February 1997

### MINUTES

Present: GDMR(chair), SAMO, LMB, DWB, ARCH, RWT, RS, DCH, AJS, PAUL, JHB  
Apologies: JST, GARY

#### Minutes & Matters Arising

- (1) **FTP server**  
GDMR is installing a test version of the new server. *(Action: GDMR)*
- (2) **Colour printer**  
Has arrived and is waiting to be installed. *(Action: JST)*
- (3) **Host names**  
Some PC host names still contain invalid characters. *(Action: ARCH/JHB)*
- (4) **Netgroup**  
The PCs need removing from some netgroups and netgroups need a general hoovering. *(Action: RWT)*
- (5) **Technotes**  
Thanks to CC for creating a really nice new documentation structure on the Web. SAMO to chase all technote authors to convert their technotes to the new style file and PDF. *(Action: SAMO)*
- (6) **Service description**  
This is still to be updated/circulated. *(Action: JHB)*
- (7) **IRC**  
PAUL has spoken to JCB who is installing a test server.

#### GO4 Minutes

- (1) **LCFG audit**  
Support to perform a audit of machine owners and locations in the LCFG. *(Action: LMB/SAMO/GARY)*
- (2) **Equipment purchasing**  
GO4 to decide procedure for equipment ordering. *(Action: GO4)*

#### Agenda Items

- (1) **Backups**  
GDMR to call meeting of interested people to discuss location of package directories and backups. *(Action: GDMR)*
- (2) **Database project**  
DWB reported on the database project meeting. Full minutes are available online. Test versions of MySQL (Unix) and SQL Server (NT) are up and running.
- (3) **Linux project**  
This now exists.
- (4) **Workload figures**  
Workload figures were presented and appeared reasonable.
- (5) **Project web pages**  
All "significant" activities - ie. those showing a significant amount of resource in the workload figures should have a "project" page on the Web to describe the activity, both to syssies and users. This should be free-format initially, but may develop a stricter format later. SAMO to chase people up to produce these pages. *(Action: SAMO)*

#### Any Other Business

- (1) **Pagemail**  
CHEST do not even answer the phone. JHB to complain about (lack of) CHEST response. RS to order 10 pack of Pagemill from elsewhere. *(Action: RS/JHB)*
- (2) **Meal**  
AJS to poll around for a syssies meal on 20th February. *(Action: AJS)*
- (3) **Bar Codes**  
GI is attempting to create a database in Filemaker Pro on a portable Mac and wants to interface the bar code reader. This might not be easy and alternatives were suggested. AJS/PAUL to discuss alternatives with GI. *(Action: AJS/PAUL)*
- (4) **Machine hall door lock**  
The PIN number on the machine hall door gets reset periodically. JHB to look at fixing this. *(Action: JHB)*
- (5) **Pete Taffy**  
Pete Taffy (Physics) should have a card for the machine hall door. *(Action: DCH/SUPPORT)*
- (6) **Disk testing**  
Technicians now have usu access, but need training in disk testing. AJS to arrange. *(Action: AJS/DCH)*

**(7) Disk power supplies**

*(Action: DCH)*

Several disk power supplies are now outside warranty. It was agreed that we should buy replacements if possible, rather than attempting to service these in-house. DCH to investigate availability/cost, even if it involves buying new enclosures as well.

**Deferred Actions**

(1) 11/3/97 - Software licence update

*(Action: CC)*

(2) 11/3/97 - Mail loop prevention

*(Action: DWB)*

(3) 11/3/97 - SDK installation

*(Action: DWB)*

**Date of Next Meeting**

Next progress meeting on 18th February at 10.30. This will be in 2511. An alternate meeting on 11th at 10.30 (2509) to include the postponed talk on YP by AJS.



effort.31.1.97

Fri Jan 31 11:02:21 1997

1

	RWT	CC	AJS	GARY	PAUL	LMB	RS	DWB	GDMR	JST	SAMO	ARCH	JHB
Management		5/0	20/20		20/20			10/10	15/20				30/
Teaching					15/5							80/	20/
Teaching Support		10/0	5/0	0/10	5/20								50/
External					10/15	10/10	5/5						
Internal admin			10/10		0/10			5/5	65/55				
Infra glue			10/5		5/5	20/30		5/5					
Infra macs		30/0			5/5							20/	
Infra unix	55/40		5/0	10/15				15/10	10/10				
Infra microsoft			5/5										
Infra services					10/5		25/30	20/15	10/5				
Infra packages									0/10				
Infra databases													
Documentation													
Support	10/10	50/0		5/0		50/50	5/5						
Major Projects		5/0		45/45									
- Solaris													
- Linux			35/40										
- Databases													
- Net Monitor	0/25												
Development	25/15		0/10	20/20	0/10	10/10							
Hols/Illness				10/0	25/0	10/0							
Misfits	10/10	10/0	10/10	10/10	10/10		10/5						
Spare Effort													

5/5  
5/5

30/  
20/ 5/

# Agenda for “Syssies Progress Meeting”

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday February 18, 1997

2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/02/04), and matters arising.
4. Deferred actions:

What	Who
Kit buying	Go4
Cut-down Solaris clients	dwb
Root password salts	gdmr

5. Go4 (07/02—short meeting with no minutes; and 14/02—see over).
6. Agenda items:

What	Raised by
Technician liaison	dch
Solaris 2.6	gdmr, ajs
WWW	paul, rs

7. AOCB.
8. Date and time of next meeting.

Return-Path: <paul@dcs.ed.ac.uk>  
Delivery-Date: Fri, 14 Feb 1997 14:14:47 +0000  
Received: from cul.dcs.ed.ac.uk by rainich.dcs.ed.ac.uk with SMTP (PP);  
Fri, 14 Feb 1997 14:13:53 +0000  
Date: Fri, 14 Feb 1997 14:12:44 GMT  
X-Sender: paul@fcsppop.dcs.ed.ac.uk  
Message-Id: <v03007803af2a1f8ca1bc@DialupEudora>  
To: John Butler <jhb@dcs.ed.ac.uk>, Alastair Scobie <ajs@dcs.ed.ac.uk>,  
George Ross <gdmr@dcs.ed.ac.uk>  
From: Paul Anderson <paul@dcs.ed.ac.uk>  
Subject: Minutes  
MIME-Version: 1.0  
Content-type: text/enriched; charset="us-ascii"

Experiment: This has richtext MIME content. If your mailer pukes on it,  
I'll send you a plain copy.

P

<center><b><bigger><bigger>Minutes of the GO4 Meeting: 12/2/97

</bigger></bigger></bold></center>

<bold>carried forward

</bold>

QI: jhb to talk to ddr re handover and documentation for QI.

[Action JHB]

cs.strategy: ajs to prompt discussion on Linux/strategy by posting  
something controversial to cs.strategy (and mailing staff to remind  
them it is there?)

[Action ajs]

<bold>Agenda

</bold>VLSI: We cannot support large application programs like Cadence.  
These should probably be user-supported like theory applications. This  
might need a dedicated machine because these things are so awful to  
install. ajs to remind djr that he was to survey the research and  
teaching needs for VSLI.

[Action ajs]

P&R: The document describing the "new" CO structure has still not been  
presented at P&R. To be discussed at next GO4 when jhb is present.

[Action GO4]

Strategy: The move to Linux for CS2 starting next year has been  
approved in principle by P&R. Debate should continue on cs.strategy &  
sysies should be prepared to implement this for next session.  
CSI/NT/Java had some support but it seems unlikely that it will take  
place for next session. We should continue to investigate with a  
possibility of moving the following year.

CSO: gdmr to call CSO rebview meeting.

[Action gdmr]

Apache: Many people are finding the cache too slow. We suspect that  
lots of people weren't using the cache before (not that the new cache  
is too slow).

Maybe we should tell people they don't have to use it. Paul to ask rs  
for a Web update at next sysies.

[Action paul]

IPU Review: IPU review may lead to closer collaboration between  
departments. We need to make sure that the problems of intergating  
computing support is fully considered if/when this is being  
investigated.

2.6: We need to decide soon whether we are going to move to Solaris 2.6  
during the summer. This is a lot of effort and looks likely to involve  
the elimination of dataless machines. ajs to chase Sun for an NDA to  
see if new hardware is likely to require 2.6.

[Action ajs]

## Syssies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 18th February 1997

### MINUTES

Present: GDMR(chair), SAMO, LMB, DWB, ARCH, RWT, RS, DCH, AJS, PAUL, JHB, JST, GARY

### Minutes & Matters Arising

- (1) **FTP server**  
GDMR reported that the new ftp servers are up and running.
- (2) **Colour printer**  
JST reported that the colour printer cl16 is now available as a Mac printer. It should be available from the Unix systems in the next few days. Running costs are 8p per page for black and white and 30p per page for colour. JHB suggested that there should be a 6 month free trial period and this was agreed. The HP24 replacement printer has arrived and will be installed as soon as possible.  
(Action: JST)
- (3) **Host names**  
Only RNP's video.1 and video.2 remain. AJS will talk to RNP about them.  
(Action: AJS)
- (4) **Netgroup**  
RWT has finished the netgroup hoovering.
- (5) **Technotes**  
SAMO to chase all technote authors to convert their technotes to the new style file and PDF. Deferred for 2 months to give everyone time to comply.  
(Action: SAMO/ALL)
- (6) **Service description**  
This is still to be updated/circulated. Deferred for 6 weeks.  
(Action: JHB)
- (7) **LCFG audit**  
LMB reported that this was now completed.
- (8) **Equipment purchasing**  
GO4 to decide procedure for equipment ordering.
- (9) **Backups**  
GDMR reported that a meeting is being arranged and that the tape stacker is now in service.
- (10) **Project web pages**  
All "significant" activities - ie. those showing a significant amount of resource in the workload figures should have a "project" page on the Web to describe the activity, both to sysssies and users. This should be free-format initially, but may develop a stricter format later. SAMO to chase people up to produce these pages.  
(Action: SAMO/ALL)

### (11) Pagemill

A 10 pack of 2.0 has been ordered. In the meantime JHB suggested that the 10 pack of 1.0 be installed anyway as there was a single copy of 2.0 being used by at least 3 users.

### (12) Meal

AJS to poll around for a sysssies meal during the week beginning 24th February.  
(Action: AJS)

### (13) Bar Codes

AJS/PAUL still to speak with GI.  
(Action: AJS/PAUL)

### (14) Machine hall door lock

JHB will fix this at the next opportunity.  
(Action: JHB)

### (15) Pete Tuffy

Pete Tuffy (Physics) now has a card for the machine hall door.

### (16) Disk testing

AJS to arrange training in disk testing for the technicians.  
(Action: AJS)

### (17) Disk power supplies

It was decided that these should just be bought from Access.

### (18) Root password salts

Deferred for a month.  
(Action: GDMR)

### GO4 Minutes

#### (1) QI support

RWT has been waiting on DDR for the handover to take place. JHB had spoken with DDR and had suggested that DDR just hands everything over to RWT as it is now. RWT will progress this.  
(Action: RWT)

#### (2) VLSI support

DJR and DKA have been made aware by JHB of the support situation. AJS suggested that it affected other teaching staff as well. The GO4 will raise the issue with NPT.  
(Action: GO4)

#### (3) IPU review

This will need monitoring as it could affect the service provision.

### Agenda Items

#### (1) Technician liaison

DCH reported that the technicians felt that they had no interesting jobs to do, only routine ones. The GO4 will see if anything can be done about this. DCH also requested that sysssies identify any equipment that needs PAT testing and inform the technicians. Some equipment is being used in the Department which has not been tested or which needs



testing again. DCH also reported that there were some personal items in offices that had failed the tests and had not been removed.

**(2) Solaris 2.6**

AJS reported that he and representatives from other Departments had met with SUN last week and lodged complaints about various matters. As a result discussions will be held with SUN concerning the dropping of software maintenance and also SUN will give a presentation on their plans for the next 6-12 months. This will be given under a non disclosure agreement. Solaris 2.6 will not be shipping until at least the summer of 1997. This would give us very little time to do the work necessary to upgrade from 2.5.1 to 2.6 in time for the start of the 97/98 academic year. However not upgrading to 2.6 could lead to hardware/software compatibility problems with new equipment purchases. DWB reported that he had tried out a "thin" standalone client configuration for the current 200Mb dataless clients. If the clients are to carry cached local binaries the configuration results in a small cache size and limited swap space. If the local binaries are NFS mounted from the server then the swap space can be increased. It was generally felt that making greater use NFS mounted partitions was a retrograde step. If the the 200Mb disks could be used in pairs on the clients, for example by making use of the disks released by a CS2 lab upgrade, the "thin" standalone client would be a viable option. JHB raised the question of whether the late release of 2.6 could cause licensing problems for any ELCs dropped off maintenance at the next renewal.

**(3) WWW**

Some performance problems had been reported since moving to the squid cache. However there was no hard evidence for this and the problems could equally have been caused by router problems in the USA. The cache will be moving shortly onto mousa and once in use some statistics can be gathered to determine whether there is a problem or not.

**Any Other Business**

There was none.

**Deferred Actions**

**(1) 18/3/97 – Software licence update**

*(Action: CC)*

**(2) 18/3/97 – Mail loop prevention**

*(Action: DWB)*

**(3) 18/3/97 – SDK installation**

*(Action: DWB)*

**(4) 18/3/97 – Root password salts**

*(Action: GDMR)*

**(5) 1/4/97 – Service description**

*(Action: JHB)*

**(6) 15/4/97 – Technotes**

*(Action: SAMO/ALL)*

**Date of Next Meeting**

Next progress meeting on 4th March at 10.30 in 2509. An informal meeting on 25th February at 10.30 in 2509 to include the postponed talk on YP by AJS.

# Agenda for "Syssies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday March 4, 1997

2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/02/18), and matters arising.
4. Deferred actions:

What	Who
Inventory database	paul, lmb
5. Go4 (1997/02/21—see over; and 1997/02/28—no meeting).
6. Agenda items:

What	Raised by
Projects	samo
Personal WWW pages	rs
7. AOCB.
8. Date and time of next meeting.

Subject: GO4 minutes 21/2/1997  
Date: Mon, 24 Feb 1997 11:04:18 +0000  
From: Alastair Scobie <ajs@dcs.ed.ac.uk>

Minutes of the GO4 meeting: 21/2/97

Carried forward

QI: JHB has spoken to DDR and RWT re handover and documentation for QI

cs.strategy: AJS has still to prompt discussion on Linux/strategy by posting something controversial to cs.strategy (and mailing staff to remind them it is there)  
[Action AJS]

VLSI: JHB has been speaking to DJR and NPT re VLSI support - in particular which parts of the VLSI software are in current use.  
[Action JHB]

VLSI: GARY is working on a standalone VLSI machine for DJR to test the latest VLSI software on. AJS to check progress on this.  
[Action AJS]

VLSI: The immediate problem of Christos Sotiriou will be resolved by GDMR asking SAMO to find the missing file from some source (eg CD, or FTP from EE's VLSI m/cs)  
[Action GDMR]

P&R: It was agreed (again) that the "new" CO structure should be presented at P&R.  
[Action JHB]

Support meeting: GDMR is still trying to timetable a Support review meeting.  
[Action GDMR]

Apache: RS provided a Web update at the last syssies.

Solaris 2.6: Sun are giving an NDA presentation on Wednesday 26th. The syssies meeting of 18/2/1997 decided not to move to Solaris 2.6, primarily because 2.6 won't ship until mid-summer at the earliest.

## Agenda

Equipment Purchase: It was felt that we should make use of NPT (as infrastructure convenor) to collate top-down teaching and research requirements. A syssies working party will consider both how to implement these requirements and requirements from the systems side. This working party will make recommendations for ratification by syssies. These recommendations will then be passed to NPT for ratification/amendment by the department, with the (veiled?) threat that we will implement the recommendations if the department hasn't considered and responded to the recommendations in good time. AJS will discuss these ideas with NPT.  
[Action AJS]

Technicians: The discussions to improve technician's lives had died a death. DCH had asked about progress - so he will be invited along to the next GO4 to discuss what things need to be improved and ways of doing so.  
[Action AJS]

## Syssies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 4th March 1997

### MINUTES

Present: GDMR(chair), SAMO, LMB, DWB, RWT, RS, TSW, AJS, PAUL, JST, GARY

#### Minutes & Matters Arising

- (1) **New printers**  
JST reported that the HP24 replacement printer is waiting on a new shelf as it is too big for the old one. Both the new printers, cl16 and the hp24 replacement have a multi-purpose tray that can be used for slides. JST will implement a -Z option that will enable this.  
(Action: JST)
- (2) **Host names**  
AJS has not seen RNP. AJS will check if video.1 and video.2 are still connected to the network and remove the names from the hosts map if they are not.  
(Action: AJS)
- (3) **Equipment purchasing**  
NPT will organise a definition of requirements and then a syssies working party will consider how the requirements can be met and will submit a proposal to syssies for ratification before it is presented to the Department. The GO4 will see Nigel and all syssies should start thinking about equipment needs.  
(Action: GO4,All)
- (4) **Meal**  
AJS had organised this and it has taken place.
- (5) **Bar Codes**  
AJS has spoken to GI about this. GI will do an implementation based around text files and Perl while awaiting the results of the Database Technology project for a more permanent solution.
- (6) **Machine hall door lock**  
This has been done.
- (7) **Disk testing**  
AJS to arrange training in disk testing for the technicians.  
(Action: AJS)
- (8) **QI support**  
RWT hasn't seen DDR. A meeting will be called within the next week or so involving RWT,RS,PAUL and any other interested parties to discuss the QI. RWT will give an informal talk about the QI to syssies in the near future.  
(Action: RWT,RS)
- (9) **VLSI support**  
GO4 are progressing this.  
(Action: GO4)
- (10) **Technician liaison**  
Carried forward.

#### Deferred actions

- (1) **Inventory Database**  
Waiting on the results of the Database Technology project. Deferred for a further 2 months.  
(Action: paul,lmb)

#### GO4 Minutes

- (1) **IPU review**  
MIKEF has asked the senior COs from within the IPU to look at integrating the systems and systems support in particular integrating the teaching systems by the summer of 1998. MIKEF is meeting with the GO4 and a summary of this meeting will be circulated.  
(Action: GO4)
- (2) **Support meeting**  
GDMR has organised this meeting for Thursday 6th March.
- (3) **SUN NDA meeting**  
AJS to produce notes of the meeting. SUN have donated a Solaris X86 licence to the Tardis project.  
(Action: AJS)

#### Agenda Items

- (1) **Personal WWW pages**  
Deferred for 1 month.  
(Action: RS)
- (2) **Projects**  
SAMO requested a better definition of what constituted a "project". One proposal was "work that has a fixed end point and/or consumes a significant resource". Work that is open ended and consumes significant resource might be better labelled as an "Activity". SAMO will use the monthly "effort" figures to define a Web page structure in terms of "projects" and "activities".  
(Action: SAMO)

#### Any Other Business

- (1) Alternative meetings PAUL volunteered to give a talk at the next (11th March) alternative meeting on "ifu, updateif and related technologies" and also to give one on the lcfg at a future date. SAMO is still looking for more speakers.

## Deferred Actions

- (1) 18/3/97 – Software licence update (Action: CC)
- (2) 18/3/97 – Mail loop prevention (Action: DWB)
- (3) 18/3/97 – SDK installation (Action: DWB)
- (4) 18/3/97 – Root password salts (Action: GDMR)
- (5) 1/4/97 – Service description (Action: JHB)
- (6) 1/4/97 – Personal WWW pages (Action: RS)
- (7) 15/4/97 – Technotes (Action: SAMO/ALL)
- (8) 29/4/97 – Inventory Database (Action: PAUL/LMB)

## Date of Next Meeting

Next progress meeting on 18th March at 10.30 in 2509. An informal meeting on 11th March including PAUL's talk on *ftu/updates*.

# Agenda for "Syssies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday March 18, 1997

2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/03/04), and matters arising.
4. Deferred actions:

What	Who
Software licence update	cc
Mail loop prevention	dwb
SDK	dwb
Root password salts	gdmr

5. Go4:
  - no "ordinary" meetings;
  - one discussion meeting with DCH *re* techs.

6. Quick status reports:

What	Raised by
CSO/support review meeting	gdmr
Linux project	ajs <i>et al</i>
User environment project	jst, <i>linux project</i>

7. Agenda items:

What	Raised by
Holiday plans	gdmr
Activity/project pages again	paul
New user accounts	<i>support</i>
Authorised users of staff machines	paul

8. AOCB.
9. Moderatorship of "progress meetings."
10. Date and time of next meeting.

Present: gdmr, ajs, paul, gary, lmb, samo; apologies: jhb

Office hours: seem to be working pretty well. The support/non-support load is balancing up. There are still people banging on personal office doors if they don't find anyone in the support office -- Gary finishing moving should help, and a big "open/closed" sign on the support office door would make it clearer to callers whether the office was open or not.

[Action: Gary to finish moving; Support to make up an "open/closed/whatever" sign and display it prominently.]

[Aside: not just a big "office hours" sign. It has to be something that you change as you go on-duty/off-duty/whatever. If it doesn't change it'll just get ignored.]

Visitors, moving rooms: this still wasn't working at all well. Visitors appeared and their hosts expected them to have machines. People moved into rooms and just took over whatever kit was in there.

One solution might be to restrict the auth entries of machines so that only those people named in the lcfg could use them, rather than all staff as at present. Enforcing this restriction would give us a better handle on who really used what. Paul would implement something to make this possible.

It was important that all visitors had the relevant paperwork filled in and \*signed\* before accounts were issued (not least the Computing Regulations).

[Action: Paul to hack gengroup to know about lcfg "ownership".]

Shelving & cupboards: "support" will think some more about what's really needed, though it wasn't clear that anything really was. There are still some more books and manuals on personal office shelves that might usefully be in the support library. Perhaps things in that library need to be well labelled to help stop things going astray. It was generally felt that it wasn't useful to try to keep a detailed track of books that were bought "for" people as in general it was usually fairly easy to guess who might have something; but if we really did need such a thing then a vacation slave would be a more appropriate person to do the work.

[Action: support to think about shelving; and to label the library stuff]

Faults/support software: put on hold for now, and think about looking at it again over the Summer.

Start of next academic year (!): it would be a \*very\* good idea to start planning for next year well in advance (e.g. June). Checklists and dry runs were a couple of suggestions. Make sure course organisers know what they're supposed to do too.

[Deferred action: all]

--

Dr George D M Ross, Department of Computer Science, University of Edinburgh  
Kings Buildings, Mayfield Road, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH9 3JZ  
Mail: gdmr@dcs.ed.ac.uk Voice: +44 131 650 5147 Fax: +44 131 667 7209  
PGP: 1024/B74A4F7D 14 E8 B3 00 20 04 68 F8 95 40 CB 36 A4 D4 FA 90

# Syssies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 18th March 1997

## MINUTES

Present: GDMR(chair), SAMO, LMB, DWB, RWT, RS, DCH, CC, AJS, PAUL, JST, GARY, ARCH

### Minutes & Matters Arising

- (1) **New printers**  
JST reported that the HP24 replacement printer LJ24 is now in service. CL16 is not working properly, JST has been in contact with the suppliers and is not happy with their response. SAMO will liaise with the suppliers in JST's absence. JST still has to implement a -Z option that will enable use of the slides facility.  
*(Action: SAMO, JST)*
- (2) **Host names**  
Done.
- (3) **Equipment purchasing**  
AJS will talk to NPT about this.  
*(Action: AJS)*
- (4) **Disk testing**  
AJS to arrange training in disk testing for the technicians.  
*(Action: AJS)*
- (5) **QI support**  
A meeting was held to discuss the QI support and RWT will be taking this forward.  
*(Action: GO4)*
- (6) **VLSI support**  
GO4 are progressing this.  
*(Action: GO4)*
- (7) **Technician liaison**  
Following a meeting between GO4 and DCH the technical staff were added to the "syssies" list. It was also agreed that there should be technical staff involvement in the IPU review.  
*(Action: PAUL)*
- (8) **IPU review meeting**  
PAUL will circulate the address of Ken Dawson's paper for the IPU review meeting.  
*(Action: PAUL)*

### Deferred actions

- (1) **Software licence update**  
Deferred until next meeting.

### (2) Mail loop prevention

Dropped as nothing was likely to be done before the summer when mail service provision may be reviewed in the context of the IPU review.

### (3) SDK installation

DWB reported some progress on this and will report back in another month.

### (4) Root password salts

Deferred for another 6 weeks.

## GO4 Minutes

There had only been the meeting with the technical staff reported above. The shortlist for the CO post is being prepared.

## Quick status reports

### (1) Support

A review meeting has been held. The review of the faults and support software has been deferred until June as has the "Start of Year" checklists and dry runs.

### (2) Linux Project

The automounter, DNS and Mail are all OK. Work on machine installation is in progress but going slowly. AJS will give a talk on the Linux project at some point.

### (3) User Environment Project

This is getting under way. It is currently Sun based but should probably move to Linux. JST is considering organising a Web based questionnaire as a way of canvassing Departmental opinion. JST will give a talk on the Environment project at some point. The CSI environment will be remaining the same for the next academic year.

## Agenda Items

- (1) **Holiday Plans**  
Everyone should mail the syssies mailing list to let everyone know of holiday plans. CC will update the syssies calendar and let WJO know about it.  
*(Action: ALL)*
- (2) **Project and Activity pages**  
RS and RWT will organise an extra disk for the Web server and get an account set up for the project and activity pages. SAMO will then move the project pages to the new account. Everyone should prepare their project and activity pages in time for the next meeting.  
*(Action: RWT, RS, SAMO, ALL)*



- (3) **New user accounts**  
When visitors arrive no advance warning is usually given so that accounts can be set up. A more "official" process is needed to issue account, new users should have to sign a "new users form" before getting their password and they should be issued with (or have to sign that they have read) the Computing Regulations and the Safety Handbook.

- (4) **Authorised users of staff machines** *(Action: RWT)*  
In order to better control the use of office machines access to an office machine should be restricted to the designated owner(s). Where the owner is a visitor or other user with a set leaving date an expiry date can be set after which access will be disabled. This should allow better control over machine use and allocation. Xterms could be a problem under this scheme though some mechanism by which an Xterm was uninstalled at an expiry date could be employed. RWT will experiment with the access control mechanisms.

### Any Other Business

- (1) **Safety handbook**  
The Safety Handbook is now available on line and, as of the start of the current academic year, has not been distributed in printed form. This means that there is no way of checking who has and who has not (claimed to have) read it. Links should be provided to it from the Departmental home page and any "New User" page.
- (2) **Eating and Drinking in the machine halls and labs** *(Action: DWB)*  
It was noted that there was a problem with students eating and drinking in the machine halls and lab areas. DWB will ask MIKEF to send out a malshot to the individual years at the start of term.
- (3) **Name of "sysies" mailing list** *(Action: ALL)*  
Everyone should try and come up with a better name for this.
- (4) **Style writers** *(Action: SAMO)*  
There had been problems with the siting of the "secure" printer. MIKEF had suggested getting some styelwriters for handing out to people for printing drafts. It was agreed that a styewriter should be ordered.
- (5) **Documentation** *(Action: SAMO)*  
Some documentation left over from JTB is still to be disposed of. SAMO will advertise this to the students.
- (6) **Newsletter** *(Action: ALL)*  
CC will be looking for articles for the newsletter in the next couple of weeks.
- (7) **Moderatorship of Progress Meeting**  
PAUL will act as moderator of the next progress meeting as GDMR will be on holiday. GDMR is happy to carry on as moderator but if it is felt that a rotating moderatorship is a "good thing" and there is a volunteer to be the next moderator now would be a good time to do the change. Anyone who would like to volunteer to take this on should let GDMR know.

### Deferred Actions

- (1) 1/4/97 - Software licence update *(Action: CC)*
- (2) 1/4/97 - Service description *(Action: JHB)*
- (3) 1/4/97 - Personal WWW pages *(Action: RS)*
- (4) 15/4/97 - Technotes *(Action: SAMO/ALL)*
- (5) 29/4/97 - Inventory Database *(Action: PAUL/LMB)*
- (6) 29/4/97 - SDK Installation *(Action: DWB)*
- (7) 13/5/97 - Root password salts *(Action: GDMR)*
- (8) 24/6/97 - support/faults software review *(Action: SUPPORT)*
- (9) 24/6/97 - start of year checklists and dry runs *(Action: SUPPORT)*

### Date of Next Meeting

Next progress meeting on 1st April at 10.30 in 2509.

# Agenda for "Syssies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday April 15, 1997

2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/03/18), and matters arising.
4. Deferred actions:

What	Who
Software licence update	cc
Service description	jhb
QI, personal WWW pages	rwt, rs
Technotes	samo

5. Staffing news
6. Go4 (1997/04/10)
7. Agenda items:

What	Raised by
Equipment spend	Go4

8. AOCB.
9. Date and time of next meeting.

GO3 (gdmr,ajs,paul) 1997/04/10  
-----

Interviews  
=====

We need 3 hosts for Friday's interviews.

Julian and Dave are free. Chris and Rosemary aren't. Archie needs to be approached...

Action: PAUL to approach Archie

Support (Gary) have been asked to show round the candidates during the panel interviews (11-12.30).

We should find out whether Mike Keightley's post at AI was refilled.

Action: AJS

Informatics Reading Party  
=====

Someone should go to keep an eye on what's going on. GDMR will consider going, otherwise we'll ask Ken..

Action: GDMR

NTrigue  
=====

PAUL reminded AJS that he has still to put together an order for the LFCS's NTrigue machine.

Action: AJS

FIS  
===

AJS reported that he had been contacted by MIS re the dept moving on to the new FIS system. The transfer date is set to be May 28th. Access to the system is fine via telnet (with a few key-bindings perhaps to be sorted out...) but printing from the FIS system was to Novell queues only. Whoever in the dept had agreed to the move had obviously not considered the technical implications of this :- (

AJS reckons that fighting MIS over this is not worth the effort and that the easiest solution is to buy a couple of cheap laser printers with Novell print boxes and let MIS manage them. He will mail JHB and GRD to this effect.

Action: AJS

Equipment spend  
=====

AJS reported that he had discussed our equipment spend plans with NPT. NPT was happy, but suggested that the best time to get a response out of the teaching staff was during the first few weeks of the third term (ie next week...). We should accelerate our discussions.

Action: GDMR to raise this as a major item for next week's syssies.

The new Sun maintenance deal needs to be carefully looked at to see how much money we're going to save. We need to start thinking of firming up the case of suns vs PCs so we can make our final decision.

Action: ?

Personnel  
=====

Action: AJS to tidy up the figures already collected (and pester folk for missing figures).

Action: GO3 to write a CO resourcing paper (along the lines of last year's paper by PAUL/JTB)

[ A couple of other personnel things snipped by gdmr for now ... ]

Action: all to pester Mike

## Syssies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 15th April 1997

### MINUTES

Present: CC, SAMO, GARY, AJS, JST, RWT, DWB, RS, DCH, LMB, PAUL, GDMR (chair), ARCH

#### Minutes & Matters Arising

- (1) **cl16 errors**  
CL16 doesn't work to the standard we expect of it (it falls over unless it's given at least 20 seconds to recover at the end of a job, before the next job is submitted). It has been examined by Scotsys and they're happy that it's working to spec. The problem has been passed on to Apple. Julian will hopefully hear back from them soon.  
*(Action: JST)*
- (2) **hp24**  
Paper jam. HP are coming to see the problem for themselves.
- (3) **Slides for cl16**  
We need a good supply of slides for cl16's second paper tray. JST will make sure that they're ordered, and will investigate providing a command switch to make the printer use them.  
*(Action: JST)*
- (4) **A3 in hp24**  
JST will look into having a tray of A3 paper available for hp24.  
*(Action: JST)*
- (5) **Disk testing**  
AJS to arrange training in disk testing for the technicians. DCH to poster AJS about it.  
*(Action: AJS, DCH)*
- (6) **Project & Activity Pages**  
The "infrastructure" pages should be moved to mouse. In fact, all the pages for which syssies are responsible should be in a "syssies" account on mouse. A meeting will be held to discuss the details, then the pages will be moved.  
*(Action: SAMO, RS, PAUL, CC)*
- (7) **Authorised Users of Staff Machines**  
RWT will experiment with mechanisms allowing access to staff machines to be restricted to designated user(s).  
*(Action: RWT)*
- (8) **Eating & Drinking in Machine Halls**  
DWB will take action to remind people not to eat or drink in the machine halls.  
*(Action: DWB)*
- (9) **Stylerwriter**  
The Stylerwriter printer has been bought, and is available from the support office for lending out to Mac users in temporary need of a secure printer.
- (10) **Old Documentation**  
SAMO is getting rid of old documentation left over from JTB.  
*(Action: SAMO)*

#### Deferred Actions

- (1) **Software licence update**  
We've made a provisional list of Mac software licences. Lindsey is now writing cgi scripts which local web users will be able to use to get information on which software is licenced for their Mac, whether there are any spare licences available, where the software is installed, whether we need more licences, and so on.  
*(Action: LMB, CC)*
- (2) **Service Description**  
Passed to the Gang of *n* to deal with.  
*(Action: Go4)*
- (3) **Personal Web Pages**  
RS has done this.
- (4) **QI**  
RWT to understand QI.  
*(Action: RWT)*
- (5) **Technotes**  
SAMO has been updating the technotes and learning more about the *estn* style.

#### Staffing News

- (1) **Departure...**  
Julian is leaving in July. (Action: everybody else, to panic.) He's going to work in Quality Assurance at Harlequin. Julian's departure highlights the importance of the activity figures which we've been collecting: we need them to be accurate to help support our case for replacing him.  
*(Action: ALL)*
- (2) **... and Arrival**  
Simon Wilkinson (sww) will be joining us soon as a new CO.

#### GO4 Minutes

- (1) **Informatics Reading Party**  
The Informatics Reading Party is happening at Furbush, the University's field centre, where one can go canoeing, mountaineering and so on. It's been organised by Mike (head of the Informatics Planning Unit) as a brainstorming session for the merger of IPU departments into a new Informatics Institute. The Go4 think that we should send along a delegate to keep their systems-related ideas vaguely realistic.

## Agenda Items

### (1) Equipment Spend

We still have about £100k of this year's equipment money. In addition, we should receive a total of about £150k in August.

*(Action: AJS, ALL)*

The only big spending commitment which we have so far is £60k - £70k for PCs for a new CS2 lab. We will seek (and are optimistic about getting) permission to hold back on spending this year's money until August, so as to get the best possible PCs for the money. August's equipment money can then be held for a while longer.

There are a number of upgrade options for our existing equipment which we should consider. For example, upgrading all our servers to just two big ones, and upgrading the departmental backbone to 100BaseT. AJS will organise a "blackboard meeting" to explore our options. Anyone with ideas or interest should contact AJS.

While on the subject of upgrading equipment, LFCS are willing to finance half the cost of a new mail machine. In practice, this means that they'd be happy to buy one outright in return for the current mail machine.

## Any Other Business

### (1) Printing A5 PDF documents

JST will make sure that A5 PDF documents can be printed OK. Perhaps they can't at present.

*(Action: JST)*

## Deferred Actions

### (1) 29/4/97 – Inventory Database

*(Action: PAUL/LMB)*

### (2) 29/4/97 – SDK Installation

*(Action: DWB)*

### (3) 13/5/97 – Root password salts

*(Action: GDMR)*

### (4) 13/5/97 – Software licence update

*(Action: LMB, CC)*

### (5) 24/6/97 – support/faults software review

*(Action: SUPPORT)*

### (6) 24/6/97 – start of year checklists and dry runs

*(Action: SUPPORT)*

## Date of Next Meeting

Next progress meeting on 29th April at 10.30 in 2509.

# Agenda for "Syssies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday April 29, 1997

2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/04/15), and matters arising.
4. Deferred actions:

What	Who
Inventory database	paul, lmb
SDK	dwb
5. Go4 (1997/04/17)
6. Staffing news
7. Reports and updates:

What	Who
Database project	dwb
Sun meeting	ajs
8. AOCB.
9. Date and time of next meeting.

Notes of Gang-of-four meeting, 17/4/97, 11:15

Present: jhb,ajs, paul, gdmr

Agenda: Matters arising

Julian  
Money and budgets  
FIS

Matters arising

Posts.

Simon Wilkinson had been offered the CO post and had accepted.

AI had permission to replace Mike Keightly and are advertising. This was seen to offer a precedent and strengthened the case, should it be required for JSP's replacement to be appointed within CS rather than at IPU level.

NT-rigue server

Money was now available for this but WinCenter had been flagged as a possibly cheaper alternative.

[Action: AJS to speak to Paul]

Portables

The recent purchase of a LEGO portable raised several issues to do with the use of recharging money and whether the concept of a central pool of resource for purchasing departmental equipment to support projects still existed. If not then we faced fragmentation of the equipment base with potentially serious implications for support.

Conversely, there was a clear need and wish for portables in various locations and we could not continue to oppose purchase of such machines without alienating people.

A meeting should be held to air the issues

[Action: Paul?]

If laptops were to propagate then we need to learn more about installation and ongoing support of NT on such machines which would require resource to be withdrawn from elsewhere.

A related point was that research generally was under-resourced in terms of directly attributable CO time. This needed to be examined but again clearly any extra resource devoted to research would be have to be withdrawn from elsewhere.

A meeting should be scheduled to discuss current projects in general and maybe some re-prioritising would be needed.

[Action: ???]

Equipment spend

It was noted that Nigel was polling for equipment spending ideas and had received a short wish-list including several familiar effort-restricted ideas such as a networked fax.

Julian Turnbull

Mike would need to be lobbied hard to ensure Julian was replaced. It was expected that this would be supported from elsewhere but figures should be prepared to add weight.

Figures for JHB and Archie were still awaited

[Action: JHB]

JHB indicated that his position should become clearer in the next couple of weeks and that it should result in a significant amount of time returning to the department in lieu of his SELLIC commitment (a major fraction of one AD5-year). JHB noted that even if a lower figure came about his departmental duties would likely centre round graduate placement and commercial interests and that it was unlikely he would return to the service in any significant capacity.

Money and budgets

The 'special purchases' budget had been reduced at some point from #30k to #10k, had several signatories and was now overspent. Nigel was responsible for the budget and asked for a protocol to ensure he was properly notified of intended purchases against that budget.

[Action: ???]

It was agreed that in the light of the wish-list, an item could go in the next sysies' newsletter highlighting the effort limit as a factor.

FIS

JHB reported that a move to FIS ordering was now underway with a target of early summer. Until we had a better idea of how it would actually work it was difficult to assess the implications. One that had to be considered was that the Telnet mechanism would prove unworkable and that Windows PCs would have to be purchased for the small number of FIS-trained staff.

It was considered highly regrettable that this function would be concentrated in so few people.

The problem of printing from Novell print queues might be alleviated by printing direct to our new printers which had Novell support as standard. These would need to be shifted to wire A and this was in hand.

JHB would attend the training course and report back from a systems perspective.

[Action: JHB]

The meeting adjourned around 12:20

JHB

ARCH

SAMO

JST

GDMR

DWB

RS

LMB

PAUL

GARY

AJS

CC

RWT

	RWT	CC	AJS	GARY	PAUL	LMB	RS	DWB	GDMR	JST	SAMO	JHB
Management		0/5	25/20		20/20			5/5	30/25		10/5	
Teaching Support		15/5	5/15		15/5		0/20	15/10	5/0			
External		5/25	5/5		10/10	10/10	5/0	0/0	15/10			
Internal admin		20/15	5/0		5/5	30/15		10/5	10/10			
Infra glue												
Infra macs	60/40											
Infra unix												
Infra microsoft												
Infra services					5/0	0/5	35/10	10/5	15/5			
Infra packages								5/5	5/5			
Infra databases	10/25											
Documentation		0/25	0/10					5/5	5/10		20/30	
Support		5/15		65/45		50/35					65/65	
Major Projects												
- Solaris			35/40					5/0				
- Linux												
- Databases					5/5		5/0	30/30				
- Net Monitor	10/15											
- Java					10/10							
Development				20/45	15/30	10/10						
Hols/Illness	10/10	50/0	15/0	5/0	0/25	0/25	0/15	5/25	5/25		5/0	
Misfits	10/10	5/10	10/10	10/10	10/10		5/5	15/15	10/10			
Spare Effort												

CO part - still no view panel  
 poster market

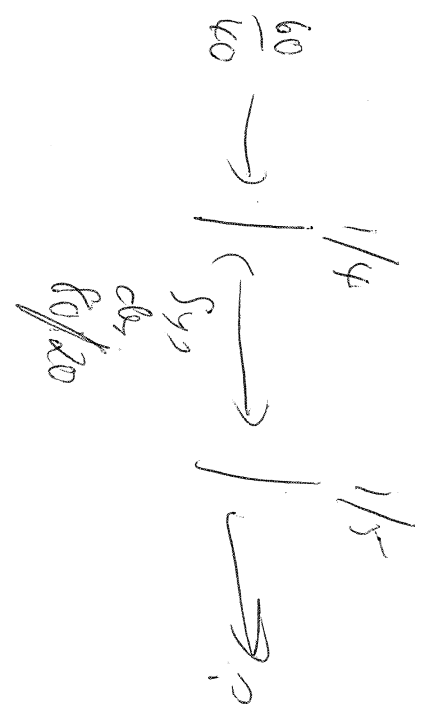
discussed who & how long  
 mentors collate 1 monthly (2 months back maybe less)  
 Paul working on WWW technology  
 descriptions - badge people.  
 once central location for them (RS & Lewis working on)  
 discuss categories & match with  
 WWW categories.



NT - am lunch

Sub Design

Re AD staff.  
Re support.



Trade Support  
Team Support

Jhb

## Syssies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 29th April 1997

### MINUTES

Present: CG, SAMO, GARY, AJS, JST, RWT, DWB, RS, DCH, LMB, JHB GDMR (chair), ARCH

Apologies: PAUL

### Minutes & Matters Arising

- (1) **cll6** *(Action: JST)*  
Scotsys will be talking to Apple about our troublesome printer. Procurement will be chasing them up
- (2) **hp24**  
HP have fixed the problem
- (3) **Slides for cll6** *(Action: JST)*  
JST has ordered slides from Scotsys, they are waiting for them to be delivered from Apple.
- (4) **Printing A5 PDF documents** *(Action: JST)*  
The problems printing A5 PDF documents still exist. JST is looking at ppd files.
- (5) **Project & Activity Pages** *(Action: SAMO, JHB)*  
Most of these are done and are already on the web. SAMO will chase up the few people who still need to write up their project pages.  
JHB will have a look at collecting access stats for these pages.
- (6) **Authorised Users of Staff Machines** *(Action: RWT)*  
A mechanism to restrict access to staff machines to their designated users will be implemented shortly. A warning will be printed in the next Newsletter to let people know that this will be coming into effect.
- (7) **Eating & Drinking in Machine Halls** *(Action: DWB)*  
Notices have now been put up in the machine halls. Did hod mail the students to warn them that eating in the machine halls is unacceptable?
- (8) **Equipment spend** *(Action: AJS)*  
The "what-can-we-spend-our-money-on" blackboard meeting went ahead, there was only £18K worth of spending suggested. AJS will write up the notes from his blackboard.  
Nigel Topham is collating a list of requirements from the academic staff which he will pass on to us.  
It was also revealed that we only have £66K left, instead of the anticipated £100K.

### Reports and Updates

- (1) **Database Project** *(Action: DWB)*  
DWB and GDMR visited the AI department to investigate their database. They were quite impressed, especially with the user interface. DWB will organise a meeting to discuss proposals on how to progress and report back.
- (2) **Sun meeting**  
AJS attended, though was not very impressed by the format. Sun made it clear that they were not interested in the workstation market, it was felt that this was to avoid direct competition with PCs. They also made it clear that Java was the answer to everything, this was received with much skepticism.

### Staffing News

- (1) **New CO**  
Simon Wilkinson (sxw) will be joining us as a new CO on 14th July.
- (2) **SELLIC** *(Action: JHB)*  
JHB has returned from his MBA, however he may be seconded to SELLIC. JHB to keep us informed.

### Any Other Business

- (1) **Machine Halls** *(Action: JHB)*  
The machine halls have gotten very dirty, JHB to speak to John Dow about getting them cleaned.
- (2) **Junk Clearout** *(Action: JHB, MAINT)*  
2904 has become overrun with equipment we will probably never use again. MAINT to do an inventory and see what we can get rid of.  
We have quite a lot of old monitors. JHB to advertise, and see if anyone else wants them.
- (3) **Missing Books** *(Action: JHB)*  
Some text books have gone missing from the hardware lab, JHB will have a look at logging locks. The master PIN has also become known, JHB to change it.
- (4) **Support Library** *(Action: Support)*  
The support page should contain a list of books/manuals that are available from the support office.

## Deferred Actions

- (1) 13/5/97 – Root password salts *(Action: GDMR)*
- (2) 13/5/97 – Software licence update *(Action: LMB, CC)*
- (3) 24/6/97 – support/faults software review *(Action: SUPPORT)*
- (4) 24/6/97 – start of year checklists and dry runs *(Action: SUPPORT)*
- (5) 24/6/97 – Inventory Database *(Action: PAUL/LMB)*
- (6) 24/6/97 – SDK Installation *(Action: DWB)*

## Date of Next Meeting

Next progress meeting on 13th MAY at 10.30 in 2509.

Matters Arising

(1) We would like to appoint one of the candidates from the recent CO interview as Julian's replacement. We are quite hopeful that we will be able to do this without a further interview. We are still waiting for official confirmation from faculty.

(2) It seems the the current version of NTrigue is designed for NT 3.5, rather than NT 4.0. There is also some doubt as to whether this is the best option.

\*\* Action: gdmr to put this on the deferred actions of the sysies minutes for one month ahead so it doesn't get lost.

(3) The summary of the regular sysies figures which ajs presented to P&R was well received. We will collect updated figures for next Friday.

\*\* Action: All to think about what they have ben doing. GO4 to collect figures.

(4) There is a training course on the new financial systems on monday.

\*\* Action: jhb to go on course.

(5) jhb is now officially seconded to SELIC for 50% of his time and involved with graduate placement and other duties for another 30%. This leaves around one day per week for involvement with sysies.

(6) Now that we are getting close to the summer, we should have a "support" meeting to set up some mechanisms for the support staff to be more heavily involved with project work over the summer.

\*\* Action: gdmr to set up support meeting.

Agenda

=====  
ajs proposed a mechanism for guiding the prioritisation and allocation of CO work in the future:

1) Regular summaries of the figures are presented to P&R, together with an interpretation prepared by the GO4.

2) P&R are to be asked for guidance on policy issues. For example "The figures show a high proportion of CO time being spend on direct teaching activities, and very little on direct research support - does the department want to continue this balance?".

3) The GO decide on the priorities of proposed and current projects, by considering the following:

- (a) Policy guidance from P&R
- (b) A departmental "wish list", co-ordinated by npt
- (c) Technical strategy, co-ordinated by GO4
- (d) Preferences and skills of the sysies

4) Major issues are presented as recommendations to P&R. Smaller issues are simply implemented.

5) Allocations are discussed among GO4 and sysies using the mentoring scheme and the open sysies meetings.

\*\* Aside to GO4: Should we present this to Mike as a formal mechanism?

The following action plan was suggested:

(1) A more carefully-designed set of categories should be developed. This should go on the web page, and be used for collecting figures.

\*\* Action: paul to post around a first pass at the categories in time to refine them for collecting next week's figures.

(2) Figures to be collected under these categories next week.

(3) "Interpretation" document to be prepared for P&R.

(4) GO4 to meet and discuss technical strategy.

(5) Feedback from P&R, npt, and sysies to be obtained in time to decide on priorities and allocations for the new members of staff when they start.



Present: gdmr, ajs, paul

Matters arising

JHB didn't go on the FIS course. (See also FCC below.)

The calendar was looking rather crowded, so the support review meeting was postponed. We'll try again in a couple of weeks. [action: gdmr]

Jobs and categories

Paul's revised categories were discussed and generally agreed. Splitting and aggregating might be required in the light of experience. It did seem to make more sense for "application support" to be the top-level heading with sub-categories by system if necessary, rather than the other way up; but the important thing was to be consistent.

Paul will put the definitive list somewhere central for reference. [done: paul]

Alastair will back-convert the historical figures for comparison. [action: ajs]

In future John will be counted as 20% part-time, as it doesn't make sense to try to include his non-team jobs only to immediately factor them out again. This will make the bottom-line available effort clearer.

The interpretation document for P&R will be held off pending the categories settling down and another lot of figures being collected. [DEFERRED action: June]

The most important thing meantime is to try to get a handle on our future technical strategy. A brainstorming session at next week's systems meeting sounded like a good place to start. [action: gdmr]

At the same time, the arrival of two new COS would give us a rare chance to do a jobs reshuffle if we wanted. Everyone should think about areas they might want to take over or hand on. [action: ALL]

Go3.2 will review the options at next week's meeting. [action: Go3.2]

Support responsibilities

Gary has taken over responsibility for staff clients, under Rainer's direction. They still have to finalise a remit.

Julian replacement

We're still waiting for written confirmation from Faculty. It's likely that it'll be the end of July before we get anyone in place.

Faculty Computing Committee

The new FIS system sounds a real mess. It's not performing properly and they don't understand why, but they're continuing to roll it out anyway. AJS to recommend to Mike and Gordon that we shouldn't go live on it this year after all. [action: ajs]



# Agenda for "Syssies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday May 13, 1997

2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/04/29), and matters arising.
4. Deferred actions:

What	Who
Software licence update	lmb, cc
Root password salts	gdmr

5. Go3.2 (1997/05/02 and 1997/05/09)
6. Staffing news
7. Reports and updates:
8. Agenda items:

What	Raised by
Physical security, door locks	arch, jhb
Colour laser transparencies	<i>support</i>
Future technical strategy	<i>Go3.2</i>

9. AOCB.
10. Date and time of next meeting.





## Syssies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 13 May 1997

### MINUTES

Present: CC, SAMO, AIS, JSF, RWT, DWB, RS, DCH, LMB, GDMR (char), ARCH, PAUL

Apologies: JHB, GARY

#### Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

#### Matters Arising

- (1) **cl16**  
jst is still not happy with the outcome from Apple/Scotsys - they point the finger at our software. Definitive case to be put together.  
*(Action: JST)*
- (2) **Slides for cl16**  
The slides have arrived but have been used up for CS3 System Design Practical - more to be ordered.  
*(Action: JST)*
- (3) **Printing A5 PDF documents**  
No resolution yet.  
*(Action: JST)*
- (4) **Project & Activity Pages**  
Item now dropped. Information to be updated.  
*(Action: ARCH, AIS)*
- (5) **Access stats of Project & Activity Pages**  
Has JHB looked at collecting access stats for these pages?  
*(Action: JHB)*
- (6) **Authorised Users of Staff Machines**  
There has been a lot of fuss over this, due to the Newsletter article. However, it will go ahead next week.  
*(Action: RWT)*
- (7) **Eating & Drinking in Machine Halls**  
Eating and drinking still going on in machine halls and labs. Discussion required with HOD about the situation.  
*(Action: DWB)*
- (8) **Equipment spend**  
ajs has a list of equipment requirements - to be circulated. It includes things like: CS2 replacements, Firewalls, Compute Servers etc.  
*(Action: AIS, PAUL)*  
Irene will require a colour MAC for PhotoShop - paul will talk to grd.

- (9) **Database Project**  
See Reports and Updates.

- (10) **SELLIC**  
Awaiting report.

*(Action: JHB)*

- (11) **Machine Halls**  
Awaiting report.

*(Action: JHB)*

However, the machine halls have still not been cleaned. arch came in the night before CS3 System Design Practical presentations and cleaned part of the floor. This is not acceptable.

- (12) **Junk**  
Inventory done, no result from advert, Access to be contacted to see if they want any of it.  
*(Action: DCH)*

- (13) **Missing Books**  
See Items / Physical Security, Door Locks.

- (14) **Support Library**  
There is now a Support Library Page listing all the books/manuals available from the support office - thanks to all in the Support Team.

#### Go3.2 (2/5/1997 & 9/5/1997)

- (1) **Minutes of Two Meetings**  
The minutes of two Go4 minutes were presented and discussed.

#### Staffing News

- (1) **New Co**  
Neil Clifford have given a verbal acceptance of our job offer.

#### Reports and Updates

- (1) **Database Project**  
People to be talked to again. Decisions have to be made as to what we can use, if anything, from the AI department's database. A report will be issued in a week or so to identify technologies available etc.  
We should press ahead with the SQL development.  
paul was concerned with UNIX connectivity. dwb said he was trying to sort out products and how they work.  
*(Action: DWB)*

## Items

- (1) **Physical Security, Door Locks**  
(Action: JHB, ARCH)  
The master pin number should be removed from the lock file. The Technicians still require to have a Pass pin number. All locks information to be passed on to the support team.  
General Security matter to be raised at next departmental meeting.
- (2) **Colour Laser Transparencies**  
(Action: JST)  
We are using a lot of colour slides and toner. Logs to be studied and report issued on usage and costs.
- (3) **HP Paint Jet**  
(Action: ARCH)  
When this can be removed from 24xx print room it will be installed in the Project lab connected to a PC.
- (4) **Future Technical Strategy**  
(Action: AJS)  
ajs used black board to jot down his view of things we should be addressing they were:  
NT  
Mobile Computing  
Management Boundaries  
Security -Secure NFS, Firewalls etc.  
Performance -Network technologies  
Group Working -Electronic white boards etc.  
MACs -Future of  
Misc -Fax, CD-Writers  
ajs went on to summarise future technical strategies and said he would prepare a paper at some time in the future  
paul suggested another area was Applications - here students should support things like VLSI, ML, SGI.  
jst said that did not work since he had to take up ML support for teaching.  
gdnr asked "Are we support or academic related staff"? This opened up a debate with lots of ideas - everyone would like to be more involved in research.

## Any Other Business

- (1) **c116 Printing from Project Lab**  
(Action: AJS)  
Still no printing from Project lab NT machines - this will be looked into.
- (2) **Licences**  
paul reported that there was now five licences for MAC Secure Shell.
- (3) **Disk Testing**  
(Action: Volunteers please!)  
dch can now test disks with new software. He asked if there was any possibility of getting faster hardware for this test bed.

## Deferred Actions

- (1) **10/6/97 - Software license update**  
(Action: LMB, CC)
- (2) **24/6/97 - support/fauls software review**  
(Action: SUPPORT)
- (3) **24/6/97 - start of year checklists and dry runs**  
(Action: SUPPORT)
- (4) **24/6/97 - Inventory Database**  
(Action: PAUL/LMB)
- (5) **24/6/97 - SDK Installation**  
(Action: DWB)

## Date of Next Meeting

Next progress meeting on 27 MAY at 10.30 in 2509.

GO3.2 minutes for 16th May 1997  
=====

Present: gdmr, ajs, paul

Matters arising  
-----

Alastair has still to back-convert the historical CO resource figures for comparison.

[action: ajs]

GDMR has still to present the most recent CO resources for DMB and JSM.

[action: gdmr]

The recent CO meeting was discussed, in particular the feelings expressed by several COs about the range of work COs undertake. We agreed that this should be included in the pending CO resources paper for PRK. In the meantime it was decided that we should have a meeting of GO3.2 do discuss possible people/activity pairings (to be scheduled week beginning 26th May).

[action: ajs]

Lindsey has taken over front-line support of macs.

JHB's recent problems with HOD and STG over the replacement Culh powerbook were discussed - STG purchasing a more expensive replacement without consulting JHB and expecting JHB to persuade the insurers to accept this. This is another example of non-CO staff purchasing equipment without taking advice and expecting COs to pick up the pieces when things go wrong.

Lack of consultation over proposed MSC and CS4 projects was also giving difficulties.

We agreed to address these issues in the pending PRK paper.

Technicians  
-----

The meeting of GO4 with DCH in March had agreed to reassess progress at regular intervals. We propose to meet with DCH again next week. We discussed various areas in which technicians could contribute. Possibilities are :-

- o PC hardware (linux and solaris)
- o networking technologies.
- o video conferencing
- o foyer display
- o locks software

Equipment  
-----

The equipment-bid round appears to have recently stalled. NPT has not received a great deal of proposals. He intends to call a meeting soon of the area coordinators to discuss the proposals. We agreed to comment on each proposal \*before\* the meeting - AJS to collate. AJS will flesh-out the recent "whiteboard" proposals.

[action: ajs, npt]

IPU  
-----

The senior COs of the IPU had recently met to discuss how to make progress on the IPU reorganisation. The meeting didn't achieve much, being too unfocused. GO3 felt that we should discuss the IPU issue at the next sysiss (GDMR to add to next agenda).

[action: gdmr]

Locks (from "sysiss")  
-----

Some aspects of the locks are currently administered only by JHB. This

was felt to be causing some problems as JHB is now part-time. JHB would hand over locks (and copiers?) to support.

Some concern was expressed at the maintainability of the lock software - this will possibly need addressing in the medium-long term.

Minutes of GO4 meeting: 22/5/97  
=====

Present: ajs, gdmr, jhb, paul + dch

Matters Arising  
-----

(\*) ajs still to convert historical figures. Will do when he gets back from holiday (6/6-24/6). ACTION: ajs.

(\*) gdmr still to present latest figures for dwb & jst. ACTION: gdmr.

(\*) GO3 Meeting arranged for next wednesday (2.00pm) to discuss activities & possible allocations.

(\*) ajs in process of fleshing out equipment proposals. If possible, equipment meeting to be arranged before ajs goes on holiday. ACTION: ajs.

Agenda  
-----

(\*) We considered the call for proposals for JISC grants. Two areas initially seemed relevant: "Authentication" and "Affordable provision of computing facilities for students". However, proposals have to be in by today (!) and projects should be prepared to submit results by mid 1998. We don't believe that we can meet either of these deadlines. Since these calls frequently require response at short notice, we decided that we should try to prepare outlines for a few possible projects that could be massaged into a suitable format at short notice in future. ACTION: GO4.

(\*) We discussed possible projects for technicians with dch and decided to proceed with:

- PC hardware - Technicians to install NT/linux dual-boot PC
- Video-conferencing (in conjunction with ajs)
- Foyer display (in conjunction with paul)

Other candidate projects were postponed because they required more CO support, or were not clearly enough defined:

- Networking technology investigation
- Software & hardware for locks & copiers
- Inventory

ACTION: dch to initiate

# Agenda for "Syssties Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday May 27, 1997

2. Apologies.

3. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/04/13), and matters arising.

4. Deferred actions:

What

NTriqne

ajs, paul

5. G03.2 (1997/05/16 and 1997/05/23)

6. Reports and updates:

7. Agenda items:

What

Holiday plans

IPU merger

G03.2

G03.2

Raised by

8. AOCB.

9. Date and time of next meeting.

## Syssies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 27 May 1997

### MINUTES

Present: GDMR (chair), JST, DWB, AJS, GARY, ARCH, RWT, LMB, DCH, CC, RS, PAUL, SAMO

Apologies: JHB

### Minutes & Matters Arising

- (1) **cl16** *(Action: JST)*  
Procurement to jump on Scotsys about cl16. JST may be able to produce a software solution if he has time.

The summary figures indicate that the costs are not as high as first appeared. 30p per sheet of which 11p is toner. We may be replacing photoconductor earlier than the documentation suggested. Warning light at 3500 sheets not the 5000 to 25000 quoted in manual.

- (2) **Printing A5 PDF Documents** *(Action: JST)*  
No resolution yet.

- (3) **Paintjet** *(Action: ARCH)*  
Now out of service. Ready to move to project lab. New ink cartridges available in the Support Office.

- (4) **Authorised Users of Staff Machines** *(Action: RWT)*  
RWT making announcement. Owners can request access for others.

- (5) **Eating and Drinking in Machine Halls** *(Action: All)*  
Jump on anyone seen doing this.

- (6) **Equipment Spend** *(Action: AJS, PAUL)*  
AJS has initial draft. There will be a meeting this week or next.  
Apple Mac Pluses may be useful as trade-ins.

- (7) **Database Project** *(Action: DWB)*  
DWB has almost finished proposal for hardware and software.

- (8) **Junk**  
Access do not want any junk.

- (9) **Machine Halls** *(Action: DCH)*  
DCH to speak to John Dow as the cleaning of the machine halls is his responsibility. The buckets have been removed from outside the NMH doors and cigarette ends are being left here.

- (10) **Locks** *(Action: Support)*  
Make sure SUPPORT has received all information from JHB.

- (11) **Printing from Project Lab.** *(Action: ARCH)*  
Not yet part of the service. Files are shipped to unix and printed. ARCH to investigate.

- (12) **Disk Testing**  
DCH now has ELC for disk testing.

### Deferred Actions

- (1) **NTTrigue** *(Action: AJS, PAUL)*  
Deferred until late summer when NT v4.0 is expected.

### Go3.2 16/5/1997 & Go4 22/5/1997

- (1) **Minutes of Two Meetings**  
After a meeting with some of the senior CO's in other IPU departments the Go4 felt a wider discussion at the sysies meeting would be helpful.

### Staffing News

- (1) **Support Meeting** *(Action: GDMR)*  
This is now due.

- (2) **New CO**  
Neil Clifford will start on September 1st.  
Simon Wilkinson will start on July 14th.

- (3) **TeX Support**  
Steven Haeck (a postgrad) will provide some TeX support.

## Agenda Items

### (1) Holiday Plans

Mail holiday dates to sysssies and CC will prepare holiday schedule.

### (2) IPU Merger

The structure of the new IPU will be a teaching organisation and a number of research groups. At the moment we have no idea how the CO's are to be distributed. The two extremes are:

- Managed centrally over the IPU.
- Distributed but with co-operation.

Each has its own merits. Centrally managed staff may bring more specialisation, while distributed staff may each have multiple skills.

A middle ground may be one global specialist and a local expert with other responsibilities. What is the role of the CO's. Is it purely system admin or is teaching and research important also? What will be role of the CSO's and Technicians?

Subjects for discussion:-

- Security issues.
- At present our system is integrated over teaching and research. Do we use the setup from AI or CS?
- The split sites may cause management problems. Staff from KB may not want to work in town and vice versa.
- Benefits from sharing resources eg Latex and the Web. We need to find out which are common services accross unit.

We may need to have a phased approach to deal with the changing circumstances. Next summer (1998) likely to be goal for Teaching Organisation. No new building possible for 5 years.

## Any Other Business

### (1) Services to EPCC

EPCC take sevice "as is."

## Deferred Actions

(1) 10/6/97 – Software license update

(Action: LMB, CC)

(2) 24/6/97 – support/faults software review

(Action: SUPPORT)

(3) 24/6/97 – start of year checklists and dry runs

(Action: SUPPORT)

(4) 24/6/97 – Inventory Database

(Action: PAUL/LMB)

(5) 24/6/97 – SDK Installation

(Action: DWB)

(6) ??/9/97 – NTrigue

(Action: AJS/PAUL)

## Date of Next Meeting

Next progress meeting on 10 June at 10.30 in 2509.

Notes of Gang-of-four meeting, 29/5/97, 11:15

Present: jhb, ajs, paul, gdmr

Matters arising

CO time figures were due for next week

Go4 would hold a meeting to discuss possible work allocation for the new COs and the implications and opportunities for alterations in the work profile of existing COs.

AJS has documented the current proposals for equipment purchase and this is being finalised before being circulated.

The database server would go ahead but the replacement van and the multi-processor PC were well down the list.

GDMR will cover this aspect of AJS's duties while he is on holiday

The previous proposals for technician work had been discussed with the technicians. Tom Whigham was taking over additional aspects of video support and ?gilbert was already looking at touch sensitive screens.

Irene

Louise's Mac had been reallocated to Irene. Paul was liaising with GRD about technical background to her activities. She was currently looking at putting more of the content of ~dept on the Web in a manageable fashion.

JHB

JHB brought the group up to date on current activities. It was accepted that though he would take an interest in the sysies meetings such a small amount of his new duties were concerned with technical service issues that there was little point in him attending every meeting. He would continue to attend Go4 meetings though and would act as a 'default' member to attend P&R and inform on P&R activities.

P&R

JHB reported that GORDON was sorting the currently chaotic situation concerning budget signatories and that for now at least the only signatory to the capital budget was Nigel.

Go4 reiterated their call for a working cash account and that the #5k currently allocated to this purpose (originally #30k) was insufficient. GORDON should be lobbied to increase this to at least #15k.

Action JHB

JHB also reported that there were possibilities of a major injection of funds to the department with an upper bound of 3 or 4 new staff per year to a total additional complement of 14 bodies [in the department or IPU was not clear]. It was agreed that the point should be made that this figure should include a suitable proportion support staff, especially as the new members would require support during the effort hump needed to achieve IPU integration

Action JHB

portable PC support and support of group working were mentioned as possible new areas of work.

To: sysies@dc.ed.ac.uk  
Subject: Suggested CO duty allocations  
Date: Thu, 05 Jun 1997 11:56:24 +0000  
From: Alastair Scobie <ajs@dc.ed.ac.uk>

GO4 met last week to discuss \*possible\* CO <-> duty allocations. Here is our provisional list. Any duties not listed below are considered as staying with the existing CO.

rsxw Printing, LaTeX, (plus later - WWW technology + Java + fax)  
rs WWW -> database apps and design  
cc NT Infrastructure and applications  
lmb Macs (front-line) + support  
samo NT (front-line) + support  
dwb CS2 Linux lab + Database technology  
neil Teaching Suns + mail (sendmail) + Backups  
rwt Staff Suns + network monitoring  
arch CS3/CS4/Msc hardware labs + NT applications (program development etc)  
gary UNIX (front-line) + SGIs + support  
paul perl lcfd  
paul linux infrastructure (->mbone)  
ajs user environment (short term, back to security after)  
gdmr

We also thought it time to ask if anybody wanted to change their mentor. Of course we need to spread the mentoring load equally across the GO4, so it's maybe best to leave things as they are unless folk really have gripes with their current mentor.

A



# Agenda for "Syssies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2511

10:30, Tuesday June 10, 1997

2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/05/27), and matters arising.
4. Deferred actions:

What	Who
Software licence update	lmb, cc
5. Go3.2 (1997/05/29)
6. Reports and updates:

What	Who
SciCo	paul + ??
7. Agenda items:

What	Raised by
"Jobs"	<i>Go3.2</i>
Book buying	paul, lmb
8. AOCB.
9. Date and time of next meeting.

## Syssies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 10 June 1997

### MINUTES

Present: GDMR (chair), JST, ARCH, RWT, LMB, DCH, CC, RS, PAUL, SAMO

Apologies: JHB, AJS, DWB, GARY

### Minutes & Matters Arising

- (1) **cli6**  
No further progress. JST will keep nagging. *(Action: JST)*
- (2) **Printing A5 PDF Documents**  
This is now working. JST to post an announcement to eduni.dcs.sys. *(Action: JST)*
- (3) **Paintjet**  
This has been moved to the project lab. ARCH will connect it to a Windows NT machine. *(Action: ARCH)*
- (4) **Equipment Spend**  
AJS to report on meeting with NPT. We have the go ahead to purchase the equipment needed for the database project. *(Action: AJS)*
- (5) **Database Project**  
DWB is to order the hardware and software required. *(Action: DWB)*
- (6) **Machine Halls**  
JCD has spoken to the cleaners. The machine halls have been cleaned and the waste buckets are back.
- (7) **Locks**  
SUPPORT now has all the information required from JHB. LMB may be able to find out more about the new Bank of Scotland/Edinburgh University smart card. *(Action: LMB)*
- (8) **Support Meeting**  
Deferred until after 14th July.

### Deferred Actions

- (1) **Software Licence Update**  
This is progressing slowly; deferred until end of August

### Go3.2 Minutes 29/5/1997

- (1) **Allocation of Macs** *(Action: CC)*  
CC was concerned that new Macs will not be bought in time for the arrival of new secretaries. He will talk to GRD about this.
- (2) **JHB**  
ARCH was concerned that JHB was not now sufficiently involved with syssies' activities to attend P&R. PAUL assured him that the relevant syssie would attend P&R when there was something specific to syssies on the agenda.

### Reports and Updates

- (1) **SciCo**  
PAUL reported that the idea of making public lab PCs dual bootable between Windows and Linux was complicated due to different departments having different Linux configurations. However, Paul Haldane thought it would eventually be feasible to boot departments' own Linux systems in the public labs.

### Agenda Items

- (1) **Jobs** *(Action: All, PAUL, SUPPORT)*  
AJS has mailed everyone with the duties' allocation list. This is still open, until the middle of July, if anyone wants to change to something different. Similarly, mentors can still be changed.
- Steven Haeck will be starting latex support, for 6 hours/week, the week beginning the 16th June. After PAUL has spoken to him, SUPPORT will route latex queries to him.
- (2) **Book Buying** *(Action: All, SUPPORT)*  
The support library should have some more useful books. SUPPORT will co-ordinate a 'shopping list'. Everyone is to mail SUPPORT with their book requirements.
- The 'Support Office Library' web page, which lists available books, should eventually be updated to include the borrower's name against a borrowed book.

## Any Other Business

- (1) IPU Merger  
DCH attended a meeting of the 'Systems Infrastructure Working Group'.

## Deferred Actions

- (1) 24/6/97 – support/faults software review  
*(Action: SUPPORT)*
- (2) 24/6/97 – start of year checklists and dry runs  
*(Action: SUPPORT)*
- (3) 24/6/97 – Inventory Database  
*(Action: PAUL/LMB)*
- (4) 24/6/97 – SDK Installation  
*(Action: DWB)*
- (5) ??/7/97 – Support Meeting  
*(Action: GDMR)*
- (6) ??/9/97 – NTrigue  
*(Action: AJS/PAUL)*
- (7) ??/9/97 – Software license update  
*(Action: LMB, CC)*

## Date of Next Meeting

Next progress meeting on 24 June at 10.30 in 2509.

# Syssies Meeting

Tuesday, 24th June 1997

## MINUTES

Present: GDMR (chair), SAMO, DWB, DCH, ARCH, PAUL, RS, RWT (minutes), GARY, SXW (as guest), CC, JST, AJS.

Apologies: LMB.

### Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

- (1) **ch16**  
 Scoosys are still trying to deny there's a problem, time is needed to put together a "reliably faulty" demonstration from Macs, as they seem unable to work with problems generated from Suns. Noted we still retain the option to reject the printer and go for the HP originally considered as an alternative, should pressure on JST's time make it impractical for us to help Scoosys diagnose the problem.  
 (Action: JST)

While on printing, ARCH reported problems with hp16, in connection with printing certain types of documentation distributed in HTML format. This was thought not to be the fault of the printer, but of the ill-advised decision of suppliers to use HTML as distribution vehicle for their documentation because it does not lend itself well to printing, however good it might be for browsing.

- (2) **Equipment spend**  
 NPT has failed to call a meeting with other coordinators to comment on and add to our spending bids. AJS to complain formally to MIKEF via G4. The delay is scuppering our efforts to avoid repeating the mistake of last year in delaying the finalisation of the bidding, thereby pushing the equipment installation too close to start of term.  
 (Action: AJS)
- (3) **Database project**  
 Software in hand, hardware still to be ordered.  
 (Action: DWB)

- (4) **Allocation of Macs**  
 CC is continuing discussions with GRD about purchase of Macs for new secretaries.  
 (Action: CC)
- (5) **Jobs**  
 No comments having been received, the duties list circulated by AJS was thereby agreed as acceptable. Likewise, no strong feelings had been expressed requesting change of mentors.

- (6) **Book buying**  
 Requests had been pouring in to SUPPORT and LMB has been coordinating these. Since she is expected to be on jury duty for the next 2 months but had nonetheless indicated  
 (Action: CC,AJS)

willingness to come in at weekends or other spare moments to keep in touch with developments, it was suggested that some provision be made to allow her to read mail from home. CC to organise a suitable Mac and modem.  
 Apparently SAMSON controls the book budget, said to stand at £1k5. Some disquiet was expressed about a perceived over-rationalisation in this respect, a syssies-specific budget having been agreed in the past as a sort of cash-back from consultancy income earned for the department by syssies. AJS to take steps towards regaining control, so that a syssie could sign book orders.

### Deferred Actions

- (1) **Inventory Database**  
 PAUL reported that LMB had been putting together a simple Perl-based system for controlling the inventory of licenced software. He was planning to look at the hardware inventory himself, some sort of successor to lcfg, but was waiting on the technology from the Database Project becoming available and stable. DWB had had a look at the way the AI dept had been tackling this and would circulate some information about this to interested parties.  
 (Action: DWB)
- (2) **SDK**  
 All on-line now, but DWB still to canvass users to assess requirements about which parts are to be widely installed. Deferred.

### Agenda Items

- (1) **Maintenance Weekend**  
 This is imminent. RWT to repeat warning to users. DWB/RWT to coordinate shutdown and restarting arrangements. DWB has convened a Patches Meeting which will review which patches we should install on this occasion. Care to be taken that patches aren't linked to iona as some were last time.  
 (Action: DWB,RWT)
- (2) **Checklists and dry runs**  
 Deferred.
- (3) **Review of support/faults software**  
 Deferred, to include another look at foreign software for this type of thing, e.g. Gnats. Noted that a lot of our software generally is potentially liable to break as a result of Perl upgrades. PAUL to trawl /usr/local/etc and such places to compile a list.  
 (Action: PAUL)
- (4) **Modems (dial-in lines)**  
 It was confirmed that 667 8171 is for the exclusive use of syssies, and that 650 6560 is restricted to staff, including visitors, and PG students. UG and MSc students cannot use these and should come in via EUOS instead (466 7112). ARCH reported that, this being a cluster of Telewest lines, there are cost advantages (free local calls between 2000 and 0800

and all weekend) to Telewest subscribers who dial in to this number. Although Telewest has revised its contract to exclude calls to Internet Service Providers from eligibility for free calls, apparently the University has negotiated not to be classed as an ISP.

### **Any Other Business**

- (1) **Student records database**  
PAUL reported that in connection with the politics associated with the proposed new IPU Teaching Organisation, GORDON had been pressing for an all singing all dancing student records database system to be provided and up and running by start of term, and had threatened to write one himself in a weekend in the absence of a commitment from us. PAUL to meet with GORDON to try to persuade him of the error of his ways, and to point out that it would be difficult for any of us to take over the maintenance of such a system if we had not been closely involved in its design.  
*(Action: PAUL)*
- (2) **Syssies' lunch**  
Syssies' Lunch to be arranged for Thursday or Friday this week, deferred from the last attempt which failed due to too many conflicting commitments.  
*(Action: GARY)*

### **Deferred Actions**

- (1) **22/07/97 – Support meeting**  
*(Action: GDMR)*
- (2) **22/07/97 – Checklists, dry runs**  
*(Action: SUPPORT)*
- (3) **22/07/97 – Support/Faults software review**  
*(Action: SUPPORT/PAUL)*
- (4) **05/08/97 – SDK**  
*(Action: DWB)*
- (5) **19/08/97 – lcfgNG**  
*(Action: PAUL)*
- (6) **19/08/97 – BoS/EU Multifunction card**  
*(Action: LMB)*
- (7) **16/09/97 – NTrigue**  
*(Action: AJS, PAUL)*
- (8) **16/09/97 – Software licence update**  
*(Action: LMB, CC)*

### **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 8th July at 10.30 at venue to be confirmed, probably 2509.

# Agenda for “Syssies Progress Meeting”

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday July 22, 1997

2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/07/08), and matters arising.
4. Deferred actions

What	Who
Support meeting	gdmr
Checklists & dry runs	<i>support</i>
Support/faults software review	<i>support</i>

5. Go3.2
6. Reports and updates
7. Agenda items (none notified)
8. AOCB.
9. Date and time of next meeting.



# Agenda for "Syssies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday August 5, 1997

2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/07/22), and matters arising.
4. Deferred actions

<u>What</u>	<u>Who</u>
SDK	dwb

5. Go3.2  
1997/07/25 (minutes attached)  
1997/08/01 (→ agenda item)

6. Staffing news
7. Reports and updates

<u>What</u>	<u>Who</u>
Support review meeting	gdmr

8. Agenda items

<u>What</u>	<u>Raised by</u>
Maintenance & warranties	Go3.2

9. AOCB.
10. Date and time of next meeting.



Minutes of the Support Review meeting of 19970724  
-----

Present: gdmr, ajjs, paul, lmb, gary  
Not present: samo

1. The minutes of the previous meeting (19970306) were found and read, and all the actions seemed to have been taken care of.

2. The agenda and remit of the meeting were considered, and it was unanimously agreed that while the meetings once served a useful purpose, things had now settled down such that any business could just as well (if not better) be dealt with by the "sysgies" meetings; and it was therefore resolved to discontinue the support review meetings.

3. Notwithstanding 2 above, the issue of dry runs and general preparation for the new academic year had been specifically remitted from the last "sysgies" meeting, so we though we'd better discuss it anyway...

The following points emerged:

Given the number of people and mechanisms involved in the start-of-year user setup, it was really essential that this should not be allowed to drop in priority. The support team (whoever wasn't on holiday, at any rate) would keep up the pressure on all concerned to get things moving.

[Action: support team]

Rosemary should be involved, with specific reference to the first-year key-in and database mechanisms and their interface to the user accreditation.

Rainer is supposed to understand how it all works, and should be pestered for documentation and information.

The role of the secretaries and course organisers needs to be clarified, and we have to be sure that they know what they're doing and that they're doing the Right Thing as far as we're concerned.

[Aside: this is scheduled to return to "sysgies" on 19th August, by which time there should be good progress to report...]

The "year move-ons" also need to be done, but there are fewer constraints on this year as we aren't doing (m)any system upgrades.

# Sysies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 5th August 1997

## MINUTES

Present: GDMIR (chair), SAMO (minutes), DWB, TSW, ARCH, PAUL, RS, GARY, SXW, CC, AJS.

Apologies: LMB, DCH, RWT

### Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

#### (1) Printers

(Action: SXW)

Simon is fast on the trail of discovering the sins of our printers and their networking. Anyone in the world can print to our printers as long as they know the domain and queue names. We are unlikely to use much effort trying to eliminate this, since judging by the accounting logs it's not currently a big problem; but we are now fortunate to be aware of the situation.

hp14 has been working since last week. It will be joined in the 14 corridor eventually by lw14 (which in the meantime is being used by secretaries whose laserwriter is being repaired).

el16 seems to be the victim of a power supply fault as diagnosed by an engineer visiting here yesterday. He will fix it here or take it away for the repair sometime this week.

#### (2) NT Printing

(Action: AJS)

AJS to sort out/update NT printing things.

#### (3) Books

(Action: SAMO, ALL)

Some books have arrived and others are on the way. Some have yet to be ordered. If books are to be for staff-only or sysies-only lending they will be affixed with a coloured dot on the spine to indicate this. SAMO to continue with book ordering, ALL to bring books to the Support Office that you wouldn't mind having live there.

#### (4) Database

(Action: RS)

Rosemary to report at next meeting re talking to GORDON about what's going to be going on for next term. It needs to be clear to him not to expect 4D or anything else. More comprehensive report deferred for 2 months.

#### (5) Macs

(Action: CC)

CC to prod Mac Maintenance about this "contract" of theirs that says "We'll give you another machine \*if\* we happen to have one around \*and\* we feel like getting it to you." Let's not sign anything until we are happy with ALL of the terms.

#### (6) Checklists & Dry Runs

(Action: Support)

With the new term looming on the horizon Support needs to get cracking on this even though we don't have our full complement at present.

### Deferred Actions

#### (1) SDK

Dropped.

### GO3 Minutes

#### (1) Workload Figures

(Action: ALL)

Everyone to keep an idea of their workload figures for collection at the first Friday of every month.

### Staffing News

Neil Clifford may be coming to Edinburgh for a few days this month and may come to see us. Mark your calendars.

### Reports & Updates

#### Support Review Meeting

This happened but it was decided that it was no longer useful to have these meetings so they have been terminated. Again though, the Support team does need to get on top of the "Checklists & Dry Runs" project.

### Agenda Items

#### (1) Maintenance & Warranties

This section of our effort appears to have "rotted badly". We have some kit on duplicate maintenance, a printer was bought with a warranty and since we didn't send back the registration card the money spent for the warranty is lost, machines which were decided to get off maintenance years ago are still on maintenance. All of these things bring our maintenance bill to over £45k per year, which is roughly one-third of our entire spend.

In order to pare down this figure we are going to use on-site warranties with Sun which will bring us down to about £14k from £35k for them. We will use on-site warranties wherever we can since manufacturer warranties are no better than on-site. Responsibility

for contracts, etc for maintenance of kit is to be devolved from GO3 members to the people that are actually working with it and looking after it. LMB will still take responsibility for necessary paperwork and GO3 will hold the budget.

A proposed system to keep better track of things is to keep a paper form for each piece of kit that contains relevant information such as serial numbers and maintenance contract, etc. TSW will draw up a draft for this to get us started.

**Note on Procurement:** Don't buy anything through them EVER unless you absolutely have to. Printers can be bought from whomever we choose as can Mac and PC iservers. Mac and PC clients and workstations have restrictions as to where we can buy but since we do this through procurement-approved vendors we don't need to deal with procurement directly.

### **Any Other Business**

**(1) Solaris 2.6**

PAUL asked about 2.6 and AJS said it's not shipping until mid-August. So he and GDMR concurred that there ain't no way we'll be installing it before term starts this year. CC really wants to have it installed though because the Sun file servers will now be able to speak AppleTalk and Novell. Stay tuned...

### **Deferred Actions**

**(1) 19/8/97 – lcfng**

*(Action: PAUL)*

**(2) 16/9/97 – NTrigue**

*(Action: AJS)*

**(3) 16/9/97 – Software license update**

*(Action: LMB)*

**(4) 14/10/97 – Database**

*(Action: RS)*

### **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 19th August at 10.30 in room 2509.

Fun Meetings to resume 23rd September!

### **Minute Taker for Next Meeting**

AJS :)

### **Acknowledgements**

The author gratefully acknowledges CC and RWT for helpful input and suggestions in the preparation of this document. She also apologises to all for being incorrigably cheeky.

GO4 - 8/8/1997 - Present: AJS, GDMR, PAUL  
=====

Resource Figures  
=====

Resource figures for July and June still need to be collected and collated. It was agreed that AJS, because of the urgency of the Linux project, could collect figures retrospectively once he has handed over more of the Linux development to others. PAUL, GDMR and JHB to collect as usual. [Action: all]

Phone bills  
=====

It appears that Rainer is still doing the phone bills - this should be really done by admin staff. It may be that the code for producing the bills is not suitable for use by admin staff.

[Action: Paul to ask RWT / GRD ]

Linux project  
=====

The Linux project is running somewhat behind as AJS has lost a considerable amount of time chasing orders to fit into the 1996/1997 financial year. He is also having to do more hardware work than he had anticipated due to the lack of technicians (we currently only have 3 active technicians).

AJS's imminent absence means that the number one priority is to hand over work to the other COS in the Linux project team (currently GDMR and DMB). It was suggested that ARCH and/or RWT could be approached to give assistance in evaluating and assembling PC hardware. A Linux project meeting had been scheduled for Fri 8th to discuss progress so far and priorities for the next month or so.

[Action: AJS to brief GDMR/DMB ]  
[Action: to approach ARCH/RWT ]

Database project  
=====

It was felt that some clarification of roles within the project would be useful for the next stages of the project.

Action: GDMR to ask DMB to call a meeting.

Flex  
=====

Support of Flex had been one of JST's responsibilities. It was suggested that RWT might be invited to add flex to his portfolio.

[Action: AJS to speak to RWT]

Hardware lab  
=====

ARCH had recently discussed the support of the hardware lab NT machines with AJS. He had suggested that an NT server be dedicated to the hardware lab and that the lab should be run as a self-contained unit. This would be separate from any staff NT solution so that the students could still have administrator rights where necessary for their projects.

An NT server had been purchased in 1995 for a similar task, but samba had

seemed to be a better solution at the time and the server had served as a Linux multi-user machine (ray) since. There will shortly be a more powerful Linux multi-user machine in service, so the original server can revert to its original role in the hardware lab.

[ Action: AJS to free up ray ]

Jobs review  
=====

This is due at the beginning of November (being 6 months since the last review).

-----  
Jobs list for review ( to be kept at end of each minutes)

fax  
faults



# Agenda for "Syssies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday August 19, 1997

2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/08/05), and matters arising.
4. Deferred actions

What

lcfgNG

Who

paul

5. Go3.2

1997/08/08 (minutes attached)

1997/08/15 (minutes to be tabled)

6. Reports and updates

What

IPU merger

Who

ajs, gdmr, paul

7. Agenda items

What

Databases for next term

soa's planning paper

Raised by

rs

rs

8. AOCB.

9. Date and time of next meeting.



# Agenda for "Syssies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday September 2, 1997

2. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/08/19), and matters arising.

3. Go3.2

1997/08/22 (brief meeting to review actions)

1997/08/29 (mostly a discussion of the implications of the new FIS system)

4. Reports and updates

What

Database project

Who

dwb *et al*

5. Agenda items

What

Preparations for new academic year

TP lines

teTeX

Technote formats

Shadowing web sites

Minutes

Raised by

gdmr

dch

sxw

sxw & samo

*support*

gdmr

6. AOCB.

7. Date and time of next meeting.





# Syssies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 2 September 1997

## MINUTES

Present: GDMR (chair), AJS, RWT, LMB, DCH, CC, RS(minutes), SAMO, DWB, SXW, NTC

Apologies: PAUL, ARCH, GARY

### Minutes & Matters Arising

- (1) **Printing**  
CL16 should be back in service tomorrow, 3/9/97. The warranty problem is still being sorted out with Scotsys.  
LprNG is still causing print failures for clients talking to the old PLP servers, such as HP24. AJS suggested abandoning lprNG for this session, but it was decided to continue with it for now; it will be possible to back out to PLP later, if necessary.  
Msc reports are due on 16/9/97 but they are not to rely on colour printing.
- (2) **NT Printing** (Action: AJS)  
Carried forward.
- (3) **Mac maintenance**  
LMB has signed for Mac maintenance with Scotsys for this academic year.
- (4) **New Equipment Forms** (Action: DCH, AJS)  
TSW has designed a form for new hardware acquisitions. DCH has made this info available on the Web via the Technician's Web page, but this needs to be linked with purchasing info held by AJS. DCH and AJS will cooperate on sorting this out.

### Go3.2 Minutes 22/8/1997, 29/8/1997

- (1) **FIS system**  
JHB is coordinating our adoption of FIS software. There will be a paper based solution to experiment with for now, prior to moving to the FIS system. GORDON should be publishing the new procedure for ordering within the department.

### Staffing News

Neil Clifford joined us yesterday, 2/9/97.

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### Reports and Updates

- (1) **Database Meeting**  
This was held on 20/8/97. DWB reported that the SQL server was in and running and the ODBC software is in /usr/local/. DWB is looking after server admin; he will look at implementing access restrictions and backup technology. RS will look at database design tools.  
Paul's summer student has been successful in designing a Perl interface to SQL server using ODBC libraries and there is an appropriate Perl module.

### Agenda Items

- (1) **Preparation for New Academic Year**  
Checklists and Dry Runs: All the relevant scripts seem to be running ok. LMB is clearing up old accounts (deleteing those not accessed for 18 months).  
Equipment and Moving Stuff Around: NTC will take over the management of undergraduate Suns between now and Christmas. Disk moves are in progress; some are waiting until the MSCs finish, but there are no problems foreseen. The switch from Ramna to the new compute server, Canna, is in hand.  
Linux PCs: The technicians are building these, although still awaiting processors. The user environment is underway and other software, eg. xemacs, is in hand; mail is the biggest problem and DWB is looking for a solution.
- (2) **TP Lines** (Action: DCH, AJS)  
JJ has requested 9 extra lines in the 1507, 1512 & 1513 labs. This request should have come through ARCH; AJS & DCH will sort this out with RAM & ARCH.  
DCH will buy a new panel. It was noted that the hubs are quite full.
- (3) **teTeX** (Action: SXW)  
SXW reported that our TeX installation is 2 years out of date and contains a lot of local hacks/fixes which will break if upgraded. He suggested teTeX as a complete TeX distribution to replace our current setup. It could be developed on Linux as we need TeX for Linux anyway. SXW will evaluate the cost in resource for this.
- (4) **Technote Formats** (Action: SAMO)  
All technotes are being converted to pdf format; to enable web searching they will also be made available in html format.
- (5) **Shadowing Web Sites** (Action: CC)  
There has been a request to mirror a US Web site for the CL1 course. As CL1 is a service course, it would seem more appropriate for EUCS to deal with this. CC will speak to STG and John Smith (EUCS).
- (6) **Minute Taking** (Action: RWT)  
RWT will initialise a new system for minute taking.

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### Any Other Business

- (1) **Time of Meeting**  
AJS suggested this should revert back to 11am, but it was decided to leave it meantime.

### Deferred Actions

- (1) 16/9/97 - NTrigue (Action: AJS/PAUL)
- (2) 16/9/97 - Software license update (Action: LMB, CC)
- (3) 14/10/97 - Student Database (Action: RS)
- (4) 25/11/97 - LCFGng (Action: PAUL)

### Date of Next Meeting

Next progress meeting on 16 September at 10.30 in 2509. Minutes to be taken by RWT.

Fun meeting on 25 September - New PERL Installation (PAUL)

N.B. The "Java Developers' Workshop" talk will be given as a csg talk.

# Agenda for "Syssies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday September 16, 1997

2. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/09/02), and matters arising.
3. Deferred actions

What

NTrigue  
Software licence update

Who

ajs, paul  
lmb, cc

4. Go3.2  
(no meetings)
5. Reports and updates
6. Agenda items

What

Preparations for new academic year  
Locks

Raised by

gdmr  
arch

7. AOCB.
8. Date and time of next meeting.

## Sysies Meeting

Tuesday, 16th September 1997

### MINUTES

Present: GDMR (chair), SAMO, RS, AIS, DWB, SXW, PAUL, ARCH, GARY, CC, LMB, DCH, RWT (minutes), NTC.

### Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

#### (1) NT Printing

Carried forward. ARCH to pester AIS as need arises.

(Action: ARCH,AIS)

#### (2) New Equipment Forms

Carried forward. Web links to be set up.

(Action: DCH,AIS)

#### (3) teTeX

SXW's verdict: Nice, worth going for, easy to integrate our local TeX tree into. Once this is done it should be possible to make it look just like our existing LaTeX2ε setup, almost to the extent of justifying an unannounced switchover. SXW to proceed, although he expressed some concern about potential shortage of space on (particularly the teaching) local binary servers. Since these appeared still to be carrying material relating to the really old TeX, which undergraduates should really no longer be using, room can be made for teTeX by stopping these servers carrying copies of the old stuff. DWB to advise NTC on how to deal with this.

(Action: SXW,DWB/NTC)

#### (4) Shadowing/Mirroring Web Sites

Carried forward. ERCC to be asked to do this, since it was in support of teaching CLI.

(Action: CC)

### Deferred Actions

#### (1) NT:rigue

Dropped.

#### (2) Software Licence Updates

Deferred until after start of term. This is an automatic system for keeping track of licensing of Mac and PC software.

(Action: LMB,CC)

### Agenda Items

#### (1) Preparations for New Academic Year

Everything appears to be generally "on track". It was predicted that the CS2 Linux systems should be prototype-ready at the end of this week, so that the redeployment of CS2 ELCS can proceed soon.

#### (2) Locks

(Action: SUPPRT,ARCH)

Following a further round of minor thefts from 15-corridor labs and subsequent attendance by police there was some general discussion about the locks and what to do. There appears to be little evidence as to whether the thieves are authorised lab-users or not, because the doors sometimes fail to close properly. It might be worth trying to get the lock springs weakened or the door springs strengthened to combat this, and also to ensure that ex-CS4 and soon-to-be-ex-MSc students are removed from the list of authorised users asap. Since the value of stolen goods so far has been relatively small, these thefts are felt to be little more than irritating. However, the situation is to be monitored with a view to considering further measures if necessary.

### Any Other Business

#### (1) All Rhapsed-up

CC reported that Apple appear to have all but dropped Wrapsoody.

#### (2) CL16

Some minor problems were reported ("printing dots") but are being kept on top of.

### Deferred Actions

#### (1) 14/10/97 – Student Database

(Action: RS)

#### (2) 11/11/97 – Software Licence Updates

(Action: LMB,CC)

#### (3) 25/11/97 – LCFGng

(Action: PAUL)

### Dates of Next Meetings

Next Fin meeting: The 23rd Sept (10.30, 2509), PAUL on references and OO features of Perl, in preparation for a further meeting later on some of the module libraries, many of which rely on these features.

Next Fin-free meeting: The 30th Sept (10.30, 2509). Minutes: CC.

# Agenda for "Syssties Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday September 30, 1997

2. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/09/16), and matters arising
  3. Go3.2: 1997/09/19 (no meeting on 1997/09/26)
  4. Reports and updates
  5. Agenda items
- | <u>What</u>                        | <u>Raised by</u> |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Preparations for new academic year | gdmr             |
| PG machines                        | Go3.2            |
| Machine maintenance                | Go3.2            |
| Web server security                | sxw & gdmr       |
| TeX font cache                     | sxw              |
6. AOCB
  7. Date and time of next meeting

Go4 Minutes: 19/9/97  
=====

ML

Mikef wants to use the new Harlequin ML for CS2. This might require some work to install. We would like to get a PG to look after user ML queries in the same way that Steven handles user tex queries. In the meantime dwb will provide absolute minimal support for CS2 ML only. Harlequin ML is also a problem for students because they won't be able to use it on their own machines or other departmental machines.

ACTION: ajs to mail mikef to remind him of this and ask for PG support.

Database project

Paul reported on the current state of the database project and is working on a paper with Rosemary.

ACTION: paul to write paper with rs.

PC Building

Technicians are building PCs at present. The priority for having new PCs built is (1) CS2 teching, (2) Hardware lab (3) NT development.

NT Management

The demand for NT machines is increasing and we desperately need to investigate ways of managing larger numbers of these machines. SMS and other tools should be investigated. Backups will also be needed. This will probably need more effort than we have allocated (Chris). These jobs should go on the TODO jobs list.

Jobs List

The TODO jobs list should be examined and current jobs reviewed in about November.

PG Machines

There is an increasing demand for PCs to network their own (personal) machines from their offices. The "secure" wire needs sorting out.

ACTION: -> syssties

PT Machine

PT has a grant for new 4-cpu NT machine.

Budgets

Ajs explained (this week's) organization of the budgets that affect us. A small budget is available with ajs as the official signatory. ajs will ask for the signature of another Go4 member on all orders to cover himself. Some money will be transferred to this budget from the maintenance budget, since we have opted to maintain fewer machines and simply buy spares/replace other machines that break. Larger items come from equipment budgets controlled by npl.

Maintenance

It was proposed that responsibility for equipment maintenance be devolved to those people responsible for the machines, rather than all being routed through Lindsey. Suns -> rwt, Macs -> cc, Printers -> sxw, etc.

## Syssies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 30 September 1997

### MINUTES

Present: CG (minutes), GDMR (chair), RWT, SXW, AJS, GARY, RS, SAMO, ARCH, DWB, NTC, LMB

#### Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

- (1) **NT**  
The Samba file service was broken. The problem turned out to be in Service Pack 3. The printing still needs to be sorted out.
- (2) **Solaris 2.6**  
Solaris 2.6's Total Net looks really yummy: it provides file and print services for Macs, Windows NT and 95. Yes please.
- (3) **New Equipment Forms**  
The new equipment forms are on their way.
- (4) **teTeX**  
The standard tree is installed, and the local tree is in preparation.
- (5) **Web Mirror**  
EUCS have kindly agreed to mirror the HTML tutorial which STG wants. The URL is <http://www.ucs.ed.ac.uk/webdocs/HTMLdocs/NewHTML/intro.html>
- (6) **Software Licence Updates**  
ARCH and AJS are maintaining a large list of PC software details, to be put in the software licence system when it's up and running.
- (7) **Locks**  
They're being monitored, and the Gang of Four will think about them. *(Action: G04)*

#### Deferred Actions

#### G04 Minutes

##### (1) Equipment Budget

We now have a modest equipment budget of our own, for purchasing modest equipment. Orders should be signed by AJS and one of John, Paul or George. AJS has an emergency supply of order forms in the unlikely event of JCD being unavailable.

#### Agenda Items

The New Academic Year

- (1) **Neil Takes Over**  
NTC has taken over the management of the upper year teaching machines.
- (2) **Hitchless**  
The Support bods report that the preparations and dry-runs have gone without a hitch.
- (3) **Student Details On Line?** *(Action: RWT)*  
RS said that Eric had asked for students' details to be provided on-line this year, to limit duplication of secretarial effort (and hence the risk of inconsistencies resulting from typos<sup>1</sup>). RWT is updating the student entry scripts to take some input from a text file of student info produced from the MIS Wisard system.
- (4) **Self-Registration**  
AJS suggests that we should have a self-registration system for the students in future years.
- (5) **CS2 OK**  
The CS2 Linux machines are "getting there". CS2 ELCs ⇒ PGs.
- (6) **Photos** *(Action: AJS)*  
A flashy new digital camera has been bought to take pictures of the undergrads. SOA thought that the Support team had agreed to take all the pictures, but they hadn't. Neil & Kendal at the UTO should take them instead. AJS will hand over the camera to them.
- (7) **Theft** *(Action: Emergency)*  
This time of year is generally worse for theft, so everyone is advised to keep their office locked when they're not in it.

#### Machine Maintenance

- (1) **Devolution**  
The maintenance paperwork is being devolved to the system managers. CG pointed out that Mac paperwork should go to LMB.

#### Security

- (1) **Security: Web Server** *(Action: SXW)*  
Some of our CGI scripts have big security holes. This is an easy mistake to make, and the amount of user education required to make sure that all current and future CGIs are secure is probably impractical.

<sup>1</sup>Not that our excellent secretaries ever make any.

Instead, we should make our web server a standalone machine with no trusted place on our network. In addition, users should have new directories on this standalone machine, separate from their home directories, to guard against a user giving web users access to large areas of our filesystems.

SXW will assess the feasibility of turning the current web server *mousa* into a secure standalone web server in a gradual migration process.

**(2) Security: remote logins**

Despite the fact that the department in general is apathetic about security, we should tighten it up, if only to prevent our machines being used as springboards for a third party attack on other peoples' systems.

*(Action: System Managers)*

With this in mind, we should ban all incoming remote logins (*rsh, rlogin, telnet* and the rest) from outside the department, leaving only *telnet* and *ssh* to canna.

**(3) Security: finger**

NTC will investigate a secure *finger*.

*(Action: NTC)*

**TeX Font Cache**

**(1) Font Cache should be distributed**

*(Action: SXW)*

In our current TeX setup, any fonts which are not already installed are generated on the fly and inserted into a local font cache, the contents of which are periodically shifted into `/export/local`. Unfortunately the local font cache lives on a single machine (oxcars). Every time anyone runs L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X the local font cache is accessed. This places an unnecessary load on the network and on oxcars.

A better way of doing this might be to have local font caches living in `/tmp` on each machine. Once a week the contents could be collected, and the most popular fonts re-generated and installed in `/export/local`. SXW will take action.

**Any Other Business**

**(1) Greek Web Pages**

*(Action: CC)*

One of the students wants to view web pages which use the Greek alphabet. CC reported that he had previously got Netscape to display Russian web pages in Cyrillic with minimal effort, so Greek couldn't be too hard. He will help the student.

**Deferred Actions**

**(1) 14/10/97 — Student Database**

*(Action: RS)*

**(2) 11/11/97 — Software Licence Scheme**

*(Action: LMB, CC)*

**(3) LCFGng**

*(Action: 25/11/97)*

**Date of Next Meeting**

14 October 1997, 10:30, 2509. Minutes: SXW.

Go4 minutes for 1997/10/10  
=====

Present: ajs, gdmr (minutes), jhb, paul

Actions from previous meetings  
=====

Figures  
-----

Collection of these is under way.

Kit buying  
-----

Alastair will write something for a future P&R. John will try to ensure that the new accounting procedures will make it easier to pin down how money can be spent.  
[Delayed action: AJS, JHB]

CS4 projects  
-----

Carried forward.

[Action: AJS]

Lab lunch  
-----

This will happen some time before January, but there's no great rush. Interesting, the Lab users seemed to be split between those who would like speed and those for whom stability and availability of software was more important.  
[Delayed action: Paul]

Web server  
=====

Paul reported Simon's recommendations. Principal among these were: the machine needs more memory to stop it paging; the new directory structure will need more local disc space; backup strategy will need some thought, though it's possible that there might be a "spare" DAR somewhere if over-the-wire were thought not to be sensible; and the machine needs to be put on more of our wires.  
[Action: Paul to ask Simon and Rainer to specify kit needed]

A newsletter article would be written explaining what we're doing and what benefits we expect to see in exchange for the loss of some current well-loved features.  
[Action: ??]

Migrating to SSL should make access control more flexible as well as more secure.

(Harlequin) ML support  
=====

Paul and Don had been discussing versions of ML. Could we manage to settle on just Harlequin ML as a core system, with the other versions just "around" for those who wanted to use them? We should bounce this one to Nigel to get a definitive answer.  
[Action: Paul to speak to Nigel and Don]

P & R  
=====

The July minutes interpretation of what Alastair had said had caused a bit of a stushie. Generally, that all of Go4 don't get agendas and minutes isn't satisfactory.

We thought that John was to be the "default" representative, but that we would all get minutes. Gordon thought that Alastair and John were both representatives, and that only they would get minutes.  
[Action: AJS to clarify things with Gordon and Eleanor]

[Action: anyone getting minutes to make sure others have too!]

2.6  
===

Sun's new Christmas machines weren't thought to require 2.6, though they might need a later hardware-release of 2.5.1. However, there are other goodies in 2.6 that we need to investigate. We need to bring the "jobs" meeting forward so we can schedule 2.6 sensibly with the other things that need done.  
[Action: ALL to bring jobs list up-to-date]

We probably need to have the technical strategy meeting first.  
[Action: ALL to sort out a suitable date]

Database paper  
=====

Paul and Rosemary's paper was welcomed, with a few minor suggestions for clarification and impact. Paper copies would be put in relevant baskets. We should get Nigel involved too.  
[Action: Paul to speak to Nigel]

Nobody seemed to be monitoring the web data content to make sure it was still relevant, or even working at all. There were grandiose plans for the future, but meantime there was a problem. Paul would discuss this with Mike O'Boyle, in his Publicity Convener's role.  
[Action: Paul]



GO4 Minutes: 3/10/1997 (2000 safe)  
=====

Present: AJS, PAUL, GDMR

Previous Actions  
=====

Harlequin ML

AJS has spoken to Mikef about Harlequin ML. Apparently the students will be able to purchase it for \$30.

Database project

Paul has 1/2 written a report on the current state of the database project.

Agenda Items  
=====

MMW

Simon is reviewing security and performance of the MMW service with a view to improving both.

SHEFC grant proposal (from January)

SOA has pestered Paul into resubmitting the grant proposal that he worked on for SHEFC in January, to EPSRC. The expectation is that EPSRC will bounce it, thus strengthening the case for SHEFC funding.

Jobs Figures  
-----

The jobs figures system has fallen into disuse over the summer. It was agreed that we do want to continue with this. Paul's MMW interface for this is making some progress.

Action: JHB, AJS and GDMR to collect pending figures.

Kit buying (of research grants and slush money)  
-----

Increasingly folk are buying stuff of research grants without us being consulted (appropriate kit, support implications, maintenance etc..)

Even when we are consulted, if folk don't like what we're saying they just go off and buy anyway.

It was agreed that we need more teeth to ensure folk take heed of our advice.

Action: AJS to take to S&R

CS4 projects  
-----

It appears that there are several CS4 projects using unsupported kit. That's ok if it's just one student - they can just rebuild themselves - but possibly problematic if many students are using such kit.

Action: AJS (again) to check facts and bring to attention of CS4 convenor.

Machine Performance  
=====

Paul reported that the LFCS Sun clients were performing abysmally. The

LFCS have money to spend, and he wondered whether to replace the current Suns with new Suns or with PCs running Linux. AJS reckoned that if the LFCS users could live with the existing software installed on Linux (plus Simon's local additions to TeTeX), more Linux PCs could be managed without much extra effort.

Action: PAUL to call a LFCS lunch to discuss whether Linux PCs would be acceptable to the LFCS users.

As discussed previously, we really need to think about the performance of our infrastructure (file, www, mail, ecc servers + network) which is beginning(?) to creak under the strain of much faster clients.

# Agenda for "Syssies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday October 14, 1997

2. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/09/30), and matters arising

3. Deferred actions

What

Who

Student database

rs

4. Go3.2: 1997/10/03 and 1997/10/10

5. Reports and updates

6. Agenda items

What

Raised by

New academic year — lessons learned

gdmr

7. AOCB

8. Date and time of next meeting

We decided to move all web pages to disks local to the web server, and export them from the web server back to the client machines. Each user would then have a "second homedirectory" on the web server, with a number of subdirectories for web pages, cgi's etc. The rest of this directory would be free for storing data required, or produced by CGI scripts.

Need to decide where these directories will live in the current automount structure.

#### Server Things -----

Use mod\_rewrite to map /home/blob or /~blob to directories, rather than using the automounter.

Use Aliases rather than symlinks.

Look at simplifying server directory structure.

#### Security -----

Make web server an untrusted host - no filesystems exported to it, and not in hosts\_equiv

Run CGIs as user who owns them

Move over to using SSL in a two stage process.

- 1) Start using SSL to secure username / password logins
- 2) Issue SSL certificates to users to authenticate them to server

#### Caching -----

Lean on EUCS to provide a Ed Uni cache (they've currently got an experimental one)

Configure squid to integrate it with the national cache infrastructure.

#### Indexing -----

Look at running Harvest to provide a searchable index of the server.

#### Simon's WWW server notes =====

##### Hardware -----

We decided to stick with a SUN based machine, running Solaris due to concerns over the manageability of a Linux based server.

##### Add more memory

The cache could do with more memory, and the binary size of Apache is only going to increase. Mousa has currently got 96 Mbytes (according to lctg). Increase this to 196Mbytes...

##### New (faster) Sun

Replace mousa with a faster machine. I spoke to Neil about the possibility of "borrowing" muck, and using the current mousa as the mail relay. He has concerns about the scalability of doing this, and would rather keep muck...

##### Fast wide SCSI

Check that it has fast / wide SCSI - if not, replace current SCSI with fast wide SCSI.

##### New disk

We're going to need more disk space to carry the public sections of the home directories. A 9Gbyte disk was suggested - but I'll check and see how much space we're likely to need. If we move the ftp service to this machine then we'll need disk space for that too.

##### Backups

We'll need to backup all of that extra disk space locally - so a DAT drive is needed for the machine.

##### Optional Extras -----

These were discussed as possible extra hardware that might be needed at a later date

##### More SCSI

If traffic to the cache gets really heavy then having a second SCSI controller might help.

##### More Ethernet interfaces

The cache should sit on as many client wires as is possible (so as to reduce the load on wire A) - we might want to add more Ethernet cards so that it can sit on more wires.

##### Networking Configuration -----

##### Routing

Mousa shouldn't be advertising routes, or routing traffic from one wire to another. Use static routing.

##### Network wires

Need to decide which wires mousa should sit on, apart from wire A. A close look at network topology is probably tied in with this.

##### Internet Server Supplement

The Solaris ISS improves the performance of the TCP/IP stack in 2.5.1 if its available within Ed Uni (Sun have stopped shipping it in favour of 2.6), then we should think about installing it.

##### Disk arrangement -----

## Syssies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 14 October 1997

### MINUTES

Present: GDMR (chair), SXW (minutes), CC, RWT, AJS, GARY, RS, SAMO, ARCH, DWB, NTC, LMB, DCH, PAUL

#### Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

- (1) **Locks**  
Improving the locks system has been added to the Jobs List
- (2) **Student Details on Line**  
RWT has "sorted" the student entry scripts to do the necessary processing of MIS Wisard files.
- (3) **Photos**  
AJS has delivered the camera to the UTO.
- (4) **Web Server**  
*(Action: SXW)*  
SXW handwaved over his recommendations for improving the web server. mousa is to become an untrusted machine, with all web pages held on local disks. AJS pointed out the importance of quotas on those disks.
- (5) **Remote Logins**  
*(Action: System Managers)*  
rsh, rlogin and telnet from outside the department have been disabled to all machines except canna. PAUL raised the issue of travelling lab users, and we will turn ssh to all machines back on
- (6) **Finger**  
*(Action: System Managers)*  
In the absence of any decision about what information to provide, we should not allow finger requests from external machines
- (7) **TEXFont Cache**  
SXW is working on integrating the new local font caches with teTeX

#### Deferred Actions

- (1) **Student Database**  
RS is starting to put together a basic database and thinking about design tools. A database discussion document has been written by PAUL and RS and distributed to relevant members of staff. One response to it has been received so far.  
This item was deferred again for a couple of months.

#### GoW Minutes

##### Agenda Items

##### New Academic Year - Lessons Learned

- (1) **Entacards**  
Entacards that are given to the UTO to hand out to new CS2 students should be pre-allocated, rather than having to add them one at a time and having students complaining that their cards didn't work immediately.  
AJS suggested (again) that we should investigate online self-registration before next year.
- (2) **Safety Handbooks**  
*(Action: SUPPORT)*  
Undergrads haven't been being given the safety handbook. SUPPORT to mail them to get them all to read it.
- (3) **Photos**  
CS2 photographs were a bit of a nightmare, but everything is sorted now thanks to SAMO's detective work.

#### AOCB

- (1) **Sellie Hub Ports**  
*(Action: DCH)*  
The wire-P hub in 2501 has ports on it reserved for SELLIC. Their existing machines should be moved on to these ports, and we shouldn't use them for our machines.
- (2) **Solaris ISS**  
*(Action: SXW)*  
Graeme Wood is the person in EUCS to ask about the Internet Server Supplement for Solaris

#### Deferred Items

- (1) 11/11/97 - Software license update  
*(Action: LMB,CC)*
- (2) 25/11/97 - LCFGng  
*(Action: PAUL)*
- (3) 9/12/97 - Student Database  
*(Action: RS)*

#### 1 Date of Next Meeting

28 October 1997, 10:30 2059. Minutes: DWB

## Agenda for "Syssties Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday October 28, 1997

2. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/10/14), and matters arising
3. Go3: 1997/10/17  
(informal meeting on 1997/10/24)
4. Reports and updates
5. Agenda items  

<u>What</u>	<u>Raised by</u>
Air conditioning, Papers Project pages	Go3 samu (for paul)
6. AOCB
7. Date and time of next meeting

GO4 Minutes: 17/10/97  
=====

Figures: jhb and gdmr still to collect figures. Paul demonstrated web pages to provide summaries of figures. This will be available to all once we have enough data. ACTION - jhb & gdmr to collect figures, paul to complete web system. ACTION - paul to chase jhb.

Web server: Hardware upgrade needs ordering. ACTION - paul to ask sxw to order.

News Server: New machine should be purchased. ACTION - gdmr to ask dwb to specify hardware for new machine.

Harlequin ML: No response from npt. ACTION - paul to ask npt again.

Technical Strategy: GO3 have had a technical strategy meeting. ACTION - paul to write up conclusions of discussion.

Database paper: Copy has been given to npt. mic is the only person to respond.

Web Content: Iro & tlc to fix short-term problems with web data and maintain the content until some automatic system is developed. mob to direct. ACTION - paul to mail mob to confirm the arrangements in writing.

P&R: GO3 are unhappy with some ill-informed discussions which occur at P&R without consultation. GO3 to discuss role of infrastructure co-ordinator with new HOD. One of GO3 should attend P&R, probably on a rotating basis.

Faculty Computing Committee: ajs can't make it next thursday morning. Probably not worth someone else attending instead, but gdmr will think about it.

Student/Account registration system: We should consider an automatic system for next year. ACTION - ajs to talk to rwt to see if he still wants to be involved.

Y2K: Resources required to find the problems are far more than is worthwhile. We propose just picking up the pieces afterwards. ACTION - gdmr to mail HOD explaining this.

## Agenda for "Sysies Progress Meeting"

JCMB 2509

10:30, Tuesday November 11, 1997

2. Minutes of previous meeting (1997/10/28), and matters arising
3. Deferred actions
  - What Software licences
  - Who lmb
4. Go3: 1997/10/31 (informal meeting with HOD on 1997/11/07)
5. Reports and updates
  - What LISA
  - Who paul
6. Agenda items
  - What User-supported software repository
  - Raised by cc, gdmr
7. AOCB
8. Date and time of next meeting

GO4 minutes 31/10/1997  
=====

Present : ajs, gdmr

Figures

Paul has completed the web job pages and all apart from JHB and ARCH are up-to-date.

Action: JHB to enter figures for JHB and ARCH

WWW Server

AJS has persuaded RNI to lend (long term) 128Mb SSI0 memory from benbecula to the WWW server, there being little point in investing in SSI0 memory unless absolutely necessary. If RNI requires more memory for benbecula in the future, the dept will pay for it. There was some doubt as to whether a quad ether card had been requested.

News Server

There are ongoing discussions as to what platform to use for the new newsserver. Neil has suggested using nntpocache for the new server which is claimed to be much more efficient than ??? If so, a beefed up S5 might be sufficient. It may be that the news service would be a good test for a linux server.

Harlequin ML

Action carried fwd as not clear what has been agreed.

Son of QI

RWF is still interested in working on this.

Y2K

The request from Old College for a dept. response was raised at the dept. meeting of 24/10/1997. The dept. had accepted our suggestions for a response. GDMR was appointed as dept. Y2K coordinator and will produce the dept. response.

Action: GDMR to produce response for Old College

# Syssies Progress Meeting

Tuesday, 28 October 1997

## MINUTES

Present: GDMR (chair), DWB (minutes), SAMO (banana bread), CC, RWT, AJS, GARY, RS, ARCH, NTC, LMB, DCH

Apologies: PAUL

### Minutes & Matters Arising

- (1) **Web Server** *(Action: AJS)*  
SXW reported that the changes to the Web server are in progress. AJS is going to obtain some extra memory for the Web server.
- (2) **Remote Logins**  
Only canna now accepts external rsh, rlogin and telnet. ssh access has been turned back on.
- (3) **Finger**  
No external finger requests are accepted.
- (4) **Safety Handbooks** *(Action: SUPPORT)*  
SUPPORT has mailed all students to ask them all to read it. DCH requested that the students should be asked to mail back that they had indeed read it. If a user did not reply within a certain time their account would be disabled.
- (5) **Sellic Hub Ports** *(Action: DCH,AJS)*  
AJS and DCH will organise the splitting of wire P.
- (6) **Solaris ISS** *(Action: SXW)*  
SXW is still to look at the Intern Server Supplement for Solaris.

### Go3.2 Minutes

These were noted and GDMR reminded everyone about the technical strategy document.

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- (4) 20/1/97 - Pagers *(Action: AJS)*

### 1 Date of Next Meeting

Fun meeting on 4 November 1997. 10:30 2509. RWT on Network monitoring.  
Next formal meeting on 11 November 1997. 10:30 2059. Minutes: ARCH

### Agenda Items

- (1) **Project pages** *(Action: SAMO,ALL)*  
SAMO reported that the new style project pages were ready to use. Details of where everything is and instructions on what is required will be mailed round. Everyone should update their project pages.
- (2) **Air Conditioning, pagers**  
Following the air conditioning problem in the machine halls area it had been suggested by Go3.2 that some automated system could be set up that would automatically page appropriate systems staff to alert them to problems. Some concern was voiced that the pager system might be used to get assistance for non critical problems. It was felt this could be avoided by careful use of the pager codes. It was also felt that there should be some mechanism by which anyone responding to a call could page the others to let them know that they were responding. As there were no objections to the idea AJS will progress it.  
  
The current contact list held by the servitors is out of date and should be updated as information regarding the recent problem had not reached the appropriate people.

### AOCB

- (1) **3/80s**  
DCH asked how the disposal of the 3/80s was progressing. GARY reported that there were only 4 still to be disposed of at KB. There is still one 3/80 at Appleton Tower which is waiting on a replacement.
- (2) **Newsletter Articles** *(Action: ALL)*  
CC reminded everyone to submit articles by the end of the week (31st October).
- (3) **Printer hangs**  
SXW was asked about the problem with the printers hanging and reported that this appeared to be a race condition problem. It is still under investigation.

### Deferred Items

- (1) 11/11/97 - Software license update *(Action: LMB,CC)*
- (2) 25/11/97 - LCFGng *(Action: PAUL)*
- (3) 9/12/97 - Student Database *(Action: RS)*

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