Services Unit Activities April - June 2009

The second quarter of 2009 saw the Services Unit at full strength for the first time in over a year with Roger Burroughes fully integrated into the unit and another member of the unit returning to full time work after a prolonged period affected by personal circumstances. Unfortunately, this additional effort did not lead to a corresponding rise in project work due to an exceptional amount of effort needed supporting services.

Total effort by Unit members this quarter amounted to 4.02 FTE. The spilt between categories was:

Services – 1.7 FTE
Projects – 0.64 FTE
Other – 1.28 FTE

During this period, work carried out by members of other Units on Services Unit areas of responsibility amounted to (FTE):

Project-afs	0.23	Ross/Stephen	User Support/
Managed Platform			
project-tibs	0.06	Chris	Managed Platform
External operational effort	0.8	Lindsay	User Support

The figures quoted in the remainder of this report do not include the work done by members of other Units.

Total leave taken this quarter amounted to 0.40 FTE.

In this quarter, the effort spent on services support rose by 1.21 FTE. Work on projects dropped by 0.31 FTE and work on other activities rose by 0.42 FTE.

Services work
This quarter saw a substantial rise in effort in 4 out of the 6 service categories. In every case it seems likely that this rise is a blip which will not be repeated in future quarters. Effort on File Services and Backups

both rose by 0.19 FTE. This was due to a series of disk failures which resulted in numerous file system partitions and the new TiBS backup system needing to be restored from backups. Though the backup did concern TiBS, it was not related to the introduction of TiBS into service and so is counted as services rather than project work.

Work on printing rose by 0.44FTE. This was caused by a concerted effort to address issues with printing which had cropped up since the introduction of CUPS. Once again, it could be argued (with perhaps more justification this time) that at least some of this effort should be attributed to the CUPS project.

Web work rose by 0.24 FTE. Part of this is accounted for by knowledge transfer between two members of the unit.

Project work
The projects worked on by the members of the Unit this quarter were:

- 2   AFS file system
- 4   Review of backup technology
- 93   Future Direction of the Main Informatics Web Service
- 11   Publication and Discussion Media Survey Paper
- 46   Replacement of LPRng with CUPS
- 48   Transition of Informatics mail services to Staffmail
- 97   Informatics Commercialisation Website
- 106   Final Stages of Commodity CMS work
- 121   Upgrade Twiki
- 122   Progress TiBS to Full Service

Full details of these projects can be found at

http://devproj.inf.ed.ac.uk.

The last three are new for this quarter. Two further project categories, Redeployment and SL5 are concerned with the relocation of server kit to server rooms in the Forum, Appleton Tower and JCMB and the deployment of SL5 on unit servers. Though overall project effort fell by 0.31 FTE this quarter, this fall is more than accounted for by a drop in internal effort on the AFS project (0.15 FTE), the staffmail project (0.17)

and redeployment (0.18) In the first case, the bulk of the project work was done by non unit members, in the second, the project is approaching a natural end and in the third, no activity other than some planning work took place.

Other work

Time spent attending meetings and preparing for meetings rose by 0.2 FTE this quarter caused by the two technical strategy meetings held during this quarter and the resumption of Unit meetings. Misc work also rose by 0.2 FTE to 0.64. there seems to be no clear reason why this should be the case and this will be investigated further.

Activities next quarter

Had it not been for the exceptional circumstances which caused such a large rise in service related work, I feel confident that there would have been a satisfactory rise in project work accomplished this quarter. Hopefully this rise will actually occur in the next quarter.