UCL INFORMATION SERVICES DIVISION

RESEARCH SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT GOVERNANCE GROUP

MINUTES

Date: Monday 24th March 2014

Time: 10.00am – 12.00pm

Venue: Room 103, Podium Building, 1 Eversholt Street, London NW1 2DN

Chair:
Anthony Finkelstein **(AF)**

Present:
Simon Arridge **(SA)**
Erik Burman **(EB)**
Richard Catlow **(RC)**
Matt Clarkson **(MC)**
Clare Gryce **(CG)**
James Hetherington **(JH)**

Apologies:
Peter Coveney **(PC)**
John Shawe-Taylor (**JST**)

In attendance:
Corrinne Frazzoni **(CF)** (Minutes)

1.   Welcome and introductions

MC was introduced as the new Chair of the Software Development Resource Allocation Group (SDRAG), replacing Andrew Smith, and CF as on-going administrative cover for the Research IT domain governance meetings.

2.   Approval of Minutes of last meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5th December 2013 were approved.

3.   Update on current Actions

The table of current Actions was updated (see end for detail).

4.   Report from Research IT Services

CG and JH presented the latest report on Research IT Services.

- Recruitment: an income pipeline model had been established and a principle for future recruitment agreed with Finance. Recruitment for two Research Software Developer roles had recently taken place: 25 applications had been received, out of which 5 were interviewed and 2 were found to be appointable. One of these candidates had now been appointed and the other had been made a provisional offer.

- National visibility of UCL initiative
    - EPSRC
    - 'Project Directors' Group'
    - www.rse.ac.uk

- Exploring new vehicles for training delivery
    - Grad School
    - Taught module

- KPIs being developed

- Capital allocations for in-year projects increased
    - Overall IT budget increased from 6.6m to 11m

- GitHub Software User report by Faculty
    - Significant usage across UCL
    - Highest usage in MAPS, ISD and non-UCL
    - Surprisingly low usage in Medical Sciences and Population Health Sciences

- Termly Call for Free Software Development Applicants by Faculty
    - Highest in MAPS, Life Sciences and Engineering Science
    - Surprisingly low usage in Brain Sciences, Arts & Humanities and Population Health Sciences

- Project Highlights

    Free:
    - Elatik-Wave: C++ implementation of Ben Cox k-wave propagation.
    - Purify: Integration into Common Astronomy Applications of Jason McEwen C imaging cleanup code.
    Paid:
    - Abysis: Various improvements to protein bioinformatics tool. (Sold through e-Lucid)

Upcoming:
- ORACC: Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus
- ARCHER eCSE projects

- Training Highlights

  - Software Carpentry delivered 3 times
  - C++ course
  - New "Research software engineering" course

- Operational Highlights

  GitHub service now has:
  - 218 members in 72 teams
  - 163 repositories of which 114 private
    Current payment tier takes us to 300 private

  Automated testing service:
  - In private beta with 6 research groups
  - Now running on production infrastructure
  - OSX, Redhat, Legion slaves operating
  - Windows slaves coming soon
  - New and more compute types coming in current capital project

5. Report from Chair of Software Development Resource Allocation Group [SDRAG]

MC presented his first report as the new Chair of the SDRAG.

- Meetings now rescheduled to Fridays to enable MC to attend.

- New Members
  - Francis Li (UCL Energy Institute)
  - David Beavan (UCL Digital Humanities)

- Leaving
  - Andrew Smith

- Policy
  - Reminder of publication policy regarding RSD minutes: Agendas, minutes, selected/unselected proposals, short listing results
  - NOT published: reasons for acceptance/rejection
  - A new clause has been added to T&C for proposals submitted to RSD-RAG : submitters agree that successful proposals can be published within UCL.

- Project Selection

  2014 first call for proposals:
  6 proposals, short-listed 3.
  - Accepted: "RAPID-R GUI and results database development"
  - Accepted + delayed: "Radiance Monte Carlo Model of Light Transport for Application in Biomedical Optical"

- Actions on the new Chair (within SDRAG)
  - Email current members who do not regularly attend, asking if they want to nominate new representation
  - Email Departments/IT Managers' forums (copy to Deans) for the names of people who may be interested in joining the Group
  - Review criteria for writing a good application

6.   Finance Report

a. Research Software Development Infrastructure Year 13/14 [JH]

Update

- Objectives: expand GitHub, complete Continuous Integration (CI) service
- Progress:
  - GitHub well embedded, expanding fast, significant usage, moved to annual billing by purchase order
  - Mac slaves commissioned, windows slave commissioning in progress, running on production VMs
  - Terms of access being designed (advice sought)
- Budget
  - Total budget = £48k, increased from £24k
- Spent Forecast
  - Spend to date = 0k
  - Forecast end July 2014 = £48k

Proposed Spend Detail

- Expand dedicated Legion compute to allow for automated testing at higher core counts: £12k
- Additional OSs (Fedora, Ubuntu): £14k
- Additional compute for existing OSs: £14k
- Additional storage across all VM compute: £4k
- Experimental use of EC2 for extra compute: £4k

b. Research IT Domain 3 Year Investment Plan [CG]

ISD have asked the SMT to support a long term IT Capital Investment Plan, discussed and agreed by SMT in late 2013 and built on a 3-year strategy discussed at RIISG during 2013. A total investment of £10.14m across the domain is planned over the three years. Currently £250k is earmarked for Research Software Development over the period.

c. Proposal for 14/15 capital project 'Research Software Dashboard' [JH]

Proposal
- GitHub
  - UCL account
  - Individual accounts (also BitBucket, Sourceforge)
- Jenkins
- eLucid
- IRIS
- UCL organisational structure
  - All of these are being used, no integration

Research Software Dashboard features
- IRIS profile shows software projects
  - Download analytics
  - Test dashboard status
- Ease of management
  - Code flows directly Github->Jenkins->Legion & e-Lucid
  - Access managed via UCL identity and org chart Moonshot?
  - Software project management
- 2014-15 work is prototype/beta
- Preparatory work building towards REF2020

Decision: The group approved the Proposal

7.   Report on Seminar Series [EB]

EB presented an update on the seminar series.

One seminar had taken place so far, with the next one due in a couple of weeks. There was some concern over the marketing and preparation for the upcoming event and it had been agreed in the SDRAG meeting that CG, JH and EB would meet with Suzanne, the administrative assistant handling the organisation of the series, to discuss future planning.

8.   Agenda and date for next meeting

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for **Wednesday 7th May 2014**.

It was agreed that CF would work with CG and AF to schedule the remaining dates for the rest of the year.

Actions

Closed actions will be deleted after next meeting

No	Date	Minute	Owner	Action	Status	Notes
1	25.9.13	1.3.2	JH, AS	**First year's activity Report –** Design of report to be worked up for distribution to a wider audience.	Ongoing	CG is speaking with ISD Illustration about design. **24/3/14** Working up to 18-month report in time for June forum. Report could possibly take the form of a video, interviewing group leads using set of agreed questions, plus short downloadable report. CG/JH to talk to UCL Media Services.
2	25.9.13	1.3.4	CG, JH	**EPSRC document –** write 2 page document highlighting future work, collaborative engagement, strategies for scaling etc.	Ongoing	Pending. JH conversations with US funding bodies at Super Computing. Large difference between National labs and universities. **24/3/14** Document needs to cover career path, investment, infrastructure, training etc. To be ready by next meeting (7 May)
3	4.12.13	4(b)	JST	**Brainstorming group for Masters program –** Set up a group to brainstorm on and discuss the new Masters program.	Ongoing	**24/3/14** Awaiting JST's lead on this. Possible target for 15/16 academic year but will need to move quickly in order to produce proposal and take it through the teaching committees. Perhaps a 3-strand masters covering specialism, research and professional services. RITS keen to be involved.