

RESEARCH COMPUTING WORKING GROUP (RCWG)

NOTES

Date: Friday 27th April 2012
Time: 12:00 – 14:00
Venue: South Wing Committee Room

Members Present:

1. John Brodholt [JBr] – Chair
2. Ben Slater [BS] – Chemistry (representing Richard Catlow – Executive Dean, MAPS)
3. Nick Achilleos [NA] – Astrophysics Miracle Consortium
4. Mat Disney [MD] – Geography
5. David Jones [DJ] – Bioinformatics
6. Angelos Michaelides [AM] – Thomas Young Centre
7. Jacky Pallas [JP] – Platform Technologies
8. Clare Gryce [CG] – ISD Research Computing
9. Bruno Silva [BCS] – ISD Research Computing
10. Nik Kaltsoyannis [NK] – Chair of the CRAG

Apologies:

11. Peter Coveney [PV] – Computational Life and Medical Sciences (CLMS)
12. Thomas Jones [TJ] – ISD Research Computing
13. Eric Fraga [EF] – Engineering
14. Nora H De Leeuw [NL] – Thomas Young Centre
15. Christine Orenco [CO] – Structural and Molecular Biology

Outline Minutes, items decisions taken and Actions agreed are provided below. For additional detail see slides also presented (RCWG_27April12.pdf)

Matters Discussed

1. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting (6th February)

The draft Minutes of the previous meetings of the group held on 6th Feb were approved.

2. Update on status of Actions from previous meetings

The list of current actions from previous meetings was reviewed and updated (see below).

3. Membership and Terms of Reference of the CRAG

- 3.1. The Group reviewed a document previously circulated by CG (See RCWG_27April12_CRAG_ToRs_and_Membership).
A number of suggested changes to the proposed ToRs were agreed, clarifying that the CRAG would be responsible for the detailed allocation policy and its implementation, in accordance with the Resource Allocation Framework, which was previously discussed by the RCWG and would be owned by that Group.
- 3.2. JB reported that NK has recently agreed to take over from him as Chair of the CRAG, and asked him to review membership of that group and report back (see new Action 16 below). It was noted that the current membership of the CRAG does not include representatives from all key user domains.
- 3.3. It was agreed that a verbal report from the CRAG should be included in the agenda for each meeting of the RCWG.

4. Report on Legion IV Project

- 4.1. CG gave a verbal report on the Legion IV project and explained that the first Phase of the project, as previously agreed by the RCWG and the RIISG – was in progress. This phase will replace the high-performance (Lustre) filesystem backend. Technical design work is in hand and a Project Board is being convened, to include Prof David Jones and Prof Angelos Michaelides.
- 4.2. JP queried whether the Research Computing team was engaged with the Research Data team with regard to large scale data handling, to ensure that the resultant services were aligned from a researcher point of view. CG confirmed that this was the case; i.e. the two service teams were in regular dialogue and would be formalising this in the coming months.

5. Report on Centre for Innovation Facilities and Developments

- 5.1. CG gave a verbal report on Centre for Innovation (Cfi) development. Both facilities are now being commissioned and are expected to be ready for production use later in May. Each partner institution will be 'allocated; 15% of each facility on a flexible basis. While the Centre is in 'start up' phase access will be restricted to experienced HPC users with mature code. Within UCL, the Deans have been asked to nominate pilot users.
- 5.2. It was noted that longer term arrangements for access and resource allocation will need to be considered and agreed within UCL. CG suggested that these should be integrated with the allocation of resources for local services such as Legion.

6. Legion Resource Allocation Policy Framework

6.1. CG reported that the RIISG has advised that the RCWG should be delegated full authority with regard to the proposed changes to allocation policy previously discussed by the Group at its February meeting, while advising that the RCWG would be held accountable for ensuring any changes to the current policy resulted in increased levels of user satisfaction and met the needs of researchers.

(See [Legion_ResourceAllocation_Framework_v0.1.pdf](#))

6.2. NK raised a query as to whether projects that do not have direct funding for compute resources but nonetheless bring in large overhead income should be given access to dedicated or 'priority' resources; the group agreed that this would need to be considered in due course (see Action 17 below).

6.3. It was noted that Research Services should be consulted to confirm what costs can actually be put on grants, also the need to align allocation periods and processes with the research services costing cycle (see Action 18 below).

6.4. CG suggested that the ISD team consider what steps would be needed to implement the revised policy with a view to reporting back to the Group at its next meeting. This was agreed by (see Action 14 below)

7. Review of Proposed 2012/13 Budget Bids and 'Strawman' Programme

7.1. CG presented the bids and associated projects that have been proposed by the Research Computing Group for financial year 12/13.

7.2. Concern was expressed regarding the lack of transparency regarding the bid process to date; CG explained that the main input to the proposed bids has been the informal feedback received on services from current service users and key stakeholders, but owing to the late establishment of the RIISG and reporting working groups, it had not been possible to work with the RCWG to develop a set of bids for 12/13, though this would happen next financial cycle with the Group holding initial discussions around project and service development ideas and priorities in Autumn term 12/13.

7.3. JP queried how the ISD bid process was aligned to the Research Equipment Funding round; it was suggested that this should be raised at the RIISG (see new Action 19 below).

7.4. The group discussed the proposed bids and agreed the following prioritisation:

- i. Legion Component Replacement and/or Warranty Extensions
- ii. Legion IV
- iii. Off-site HPC Pilot
- iv. e-Infrastructure South Cfl
- v. RC Platforms Research and Development

- vi. Software Development Environment
- vii. HPC Service for Students and Teaching
- viii. Cloud and Virtualisation for HPC, Research and Development

7.5. It was queried where space and electricity costs for the off-site datacentre would be paid from (see new Action 20 below)

8. AOB

8.1. CG queried whether the Grouped wished to continue receiving papers in hard-copy form. It was agreed that electronic copies of all papers would be acceptable in future, provided that they can be provided as a single file containing all documents, concatenated.

9. Next Meeting Date

9.1. It was agreed that the next meeting should be two hours long and should ideally be held in the week before the next RIISG, scheduled for 2nd July

List of Current Actions

Shaded Actions will be deleted after next meeting.

No	Date	Minute	Owner	Action	Status and Notes
5	18/11/11	1.6.1	LRAW (Legion Resource Allocation Group, precursor to RCWG)	Establish policy for cluster/consortia leaders.	OPEN 6/2 – no progress 27/4 – no progress. Need to consider which group should own this action (CRAG or RCWG)
6	18/11/11	1.7.1	CG	Progress discussions within ISD regarding research computing use of Desktops.	OPEN 6/2 – this is in progress within ISD 27/4 – still in progress with ISD; ISD to report when significant progress has been made
10	06/02/12	4.1	NK	CRAG to discuss handling of 'large users; set appropriate threshold above which a report on usage will be required. Design report.	OPEN 27/4 – referred back to the CRAG for recommendation Ownership changed to NK as new Chair or CRAG
11	06/02/12	4.2	NK	CRAG to give further consideration to allowing users to monitor their own usage and raise actions as appropriate.	OPEN 27/4 – ownership changed to NK as new Chair or CRAG
12	06/02/12	4.3	NK	CRAG to give further consideration to how researchers can be encouraged to make proposals for ambitious use of Legion, how this might be managed, and report back.	OPEN 27/4 – ownership changed to NK as new Chair or CRAG
13	06/02/12	4.4	NK	To provide data regarding use of Legion by taught students.	OPEN 27/4 – ownership changed to NK as new Chair or CRAG. Need for policy regarding use of Legion by taught students agreed.

14	06/02/12	4.5	CG	To further develop Resource Allocation Framework proposal: detail steps for implementation, communication to CRAG, confirm whether sign-off by RIISG is required.	OPEN 27/4 – RIISG have agreed no further sign-off needed. ISD to report back on considerations for implementation (see Minutes 6.1 and 6.2 above)
15	27/04/12	2.1	CG	Legion account application form to be amended to indicate whether applicant is taught student or not.	27/4 – action opened
16	27/04/12	3.2	NK	Review membership of CRAG and report back	27/4 – action opened
17	27/04/12	6.2	RCWG	To consider at future meeting; whether projects that do not have direct funding for compute resources but bring in large overhead income should be given access to dedicated or 'priority' resources.	27/4 – action opened
18	27/04/12	6.3	CG	Consult Research Services to confirm what costs can actually be put on grants, also with regard to need to align allocation periods and processes with the research services costing.	27/4 – action opened
19	27/04/12	7.3	CG	To seek clarification from RIISG regarding relationship of ISD bid process to Research Equipment Funding round.	27/4 – action opened
20	27/04/12	7.5	CG	To seek clarification where infrastructural operating costs for the offsite HPC would be met from in long term.	27/4 – action opened

