



**Minnesota**  
STATE COLLEGES  
& UNIVERSITIES

## **Infrastructure Steering Committee**

### **MEETING NOTES**

**September 10, 2008**

**1:00 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.**

**Conference Room 3362 Wells Fargo Place, St. Paul**

**NEXT MEETING: Date: October 8, 2008**

**Time: 1:00 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.**

**Location: Room 3362, Wells Fargo Place, St. Paul**

**ATTENDEES:** Ross Berndt, Penny Dickhudt, Mohammad Elhindi, Ken Ries, Dan Harbor, Jim Dierich

**ITV:** Phil Thorson, Tim Furr, Scott Streed, Steve Richards

**Approval of Meeting Notes from August 13, 2008 Meeting** – Dan may have changes and will talk to Ross about them.

#### **Introductions/Review Minutes -Ross Berndt**

- ISC Website is down; Ross will speak with staff about getting it updated to include new charter with Dan as co-chair.

#### **D2L Fall Update- Penny Dickhudt**

- Joseph did a count for 9/8. The database service was very busy; total login attempts were 402,273. The busiest hour was between 12-1 p.m. with 29,041 login attempts. Michael Janke said that on typically busy days they were getting 27+ million hits. We surpassed our hits goal last year.
- Things are going very smoothly. We're dealing with higher numbers than ever before and haven't heard any complaints across the board. Overall it was a fantastic start-up. We've moving into resolving the purge issue now.
- It is agreed that this has been the best fall-start up so far. Thanks to all for the hard work.
- St. Cloud noted that feedback was very good there; everything went smooth. A few reports of faculty being inconvenienced because they were told not to upload their classes as fall start-up approached.
  - o The reason that was done was because of the pressure we expected and to prevent it from totally falling off; it may have been an inconvenience but hopefully helped in the long run. Faculty awareness training might help in the future; Penny spoke with Karen Wentz about going around to the campuses and doing some usage training.
- Mohammad shared that the communication between his staff and the system office seems to have greatly approved, and they are very appreciative of that. Penny will share this feedback with her team.
- Shortest discussion we've ever had on D2L; purge issue is the next target.

#### **Microsoft Contract- Ken Ries**

- Support contract available to all campuses for Microsoft premium support. Previously all campuses did not have access to this level of support; OOC, SCSU, and Winona State had a schedule of services available and campuses had to rely on incident-based services. This limited the hours that support was available to business hours. Premium contract will give 24/7 support to all campuses.

- We've created a schedule under the contract held by the OOC seeded with roughly \$50,000 in services. Campuses can now have named contacts that will be able to draw upon that pool of available funds. OOC will pass along the costs of the actual incidences to the campuses.
  - o The bill rate out to the campuses is roughly \$230/hr. Historically nearly half of the support that we've needed over the years has been due to Microsoft bugs or issues, which is billed back to Microsoft internally, not the campuses.
  - o Ken sent an email to all campuses with contact info for getting this set up. After the CIO meeting, Ken will be collecting main contacts from all campuses and submitting them to Microsoft for future issues.
  - o Beyond the break-fix services, Microsoft also has a full catalogue of proactive products that can be used through this contract. They're actually sending out a few of their top SQL engineers at no charge to help us with some D2L issues.
  - o The goal with the pool we have seeded is to continue bill out to the campuses for services actually used. This should work much better for institution budgeting as well. At the end of the year we'll have a group that gets together and looks at which proactive service(s) will best benefit all campuses and we'll use the pool that is left to purchase those services. Next fall we'll start the same process again.
- Questions: Is there a limit on the number of users that can be listed as a contact?
  - o No, but practically we should do this. You will be charged for each ticket created, so you want to make sure the person opening the ticket has the knowledge and authority to know when to call Microsoft and when to deal with it internally. If it is a smaller incident, there are other, more cost-effective, options.
- Question from Bill: Down the road, is there a possibility of converting the old Novell money into campus Microsoft support instead of the schedule from the OOC?
  - o Ken: At this point is not aware of any discussions along those lines. Right now it is a budget savings for the OOC so they can further develop some other projects.
- Is there a username or password for accessing the Microsoft Support?
  - o For now, call 1-800-GOMNSCU number, this will get you to Mike Janke who will set you up with Microsoft.
- Tim: in the past we have had access through a username and password to the Microsoft Knowledge base, which saved us from opening up an actual ticket.

## **System Steering Committee**

### **RdB – Oracle update- Ken Ries**

- We are still looking at moving from RdB to Oracle in October. We are currently working with Uniface; we've received patches for testing and feel fairly confident. We now have a patch that will work and will be rolling Uniface8 out to the institutions.
- Rollout has been engineered so that we can make the move institution by institution rather than by region. First few institutions, including Moorhead, have already moved to Uniface8 as pilots. The goal is to start rolling out to all institutions by the end of September and finish this by the first week of October; this needs to be complete before we do anything else with the conversion process. After this, they'll begin to start moving the data in the back-end.
- We are no longer looking at shutting down the system down and migrating all of the data at the same time. We still plan to begin the process Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>, but instead there will be a series of milestones to complete and data will be migrated piece by piece until everything is eventually merged together. Many applications and interfaces will be migrated prior to merging the database.
- There is a big push to be complete by the end of October. By the time November starts, things are very busy and don't taper off again until January and February. Timetable is fairly aggressive; if we miss October, we will be waiting for months for usage to calm down.
- Ross: Glen Guida and Mark Malacek are looking for campuses to volunteer for a date to cutover to Uniface8. They will also bring this up again at the next CIO meeting. Accuplacers will have to be migrated individually to Uniface8.

- Penny: Is October realistic?
  - o Ken: Yes, but only if nothing goes wrong.
- Mohammad: Will there be an impact on D2L?
  - o Penny: Unsure of whether this will have an impact. We've tried to work with them and keep in touch, but she is currently unaware of a possible impact. Haven't heard any big concerns yet.
  - o Ken: believes the info we're dumping into D2L is already on Oracle. The reads are already redirecting to Oracle; it's a matter of moving the write transactions.
  - o Jim: All of the read-only programs have been converted to Oracle already. The extracts from ISRS to feed D2L are already coming from the Oracle database.
  - o Ken: Only two systems that do not have a resolution are the Accuplacer issue and ID card issue. They're building a set of soap-based interfaces to Oracle that will allow the ID card software to write back through a soap-based interface. There are campuses that have gotten the new B works driver to work. We'll have to upgrade the ID card software.
- Ross: we can always ask Glen. He will follow up.
- Steve: Do we know the extent of the Accuplacer issues?
  - o Ross: Unsure of the details, but will obtain them and let the group know. He will need to talk to Glen specifically about them. We should have a better understanding of this.
  - o Every campus is currently on Accuplacer
- Ken: Reminder that there is a group that gets together on the first Wednesday of the month at 11:00 a.m. that just focuses on the RdB to Oracle conversion. This would be the place to discuss and get information on that project. Glen will speak about the conversion at the CIO meeting on Friday.

### **iAM Update- Al Essa**

- Some of the opportunities for what we're trying to do/ end deliverables:
  - o Simplifying access to computer resources through initiatives such as single sign-on, or reduced sign-on.
  - o Modification to the iAM approach from the original roadmap was to incorporate the importance of support for campus provisioning: the ability to create user accounts automatically, provision account creation and deletion. This is a big part of the value of iAM.
  - o Strengthening security, including authentication. The regime of single authentication through user id's and passwords is not strong enough; we need stronger forms of authentication.
  - o We have fragmented identity stores. We need identity data and attributes to be able to provide access to computing resources; what I need to know about you to give you access to various resources. Currently in our environments this is very fragmented which makes it difficult to keep track of and leads to security issues.
  - o Ability to have audit trails about who is accessing which resources, and if they are the right resources and the right people.
- This fiscal year we have identified the following high-level deliverables:
  - o Concrete architecture and design around three areas:
    - One: standing up an enterprise iAM management including directory services that will provide an authentication services. A consumer authentication services would be a set of web applications.
    - Second is wireless network at the OOC, potentially at the enterprise level.
    - Third would be a campus provisioning pilot.
- Deliverables have four target areas, or work streams:

- 1) Infrastructure for supporting directory services/ authentication services in a secure environment
  - 2) Enabling at least one or two web applications that will consume the authentication services
  - 3) Wireless authentication service
  - 4) Campus provisioning pilot.
- In the handout, deliverables are broken up into the following milestones:
    - 1) Design architecture and design documents. This is essentially complete. Six set of highly detailed architectural and technical documents that describe how we're going to build those forward streams.
    - 2) Detailed Implementations plan that includes resources and execution. This should be completed early October. Taking the buildable documents we have and mapping that to resources and timetables.
    - 3) Install enterprise iAM servers and environment, including directory services. 90% of this work has been done; target completion date is November.
    - 4) Enabling authentication service for web applications.
      - a. Web app will be ClearSpace, a wiki-collaborating software. This will consume the authentication service.
    - 5) Enabling authentication services for wireless.
    - 6) Still intend to do an RFP— the Sun tool set is not a final choice. We will redo this RFP and it could turn out that Sun is not the tool that we end up using. We would have to rip out a lot if this happens, but a lot of the design and architectural documents have been vendor and tool independent when possible.
    - 7) Business analysis for managing student identities. This has already been done for faculty and staff employees, but the student area is very different. This will take a minimum of four-six months of business analysis to track student life cycle, etc. Target date for completion is June.
    - 8) Implement ISRS integration layer. The architecture and design have been specified and laid out. Implementation will be done by ISRS team; we can't necessarily count on those resources but projection is April
    - 9) Campus provisioning pilot. Inver Hills is the candidate school for this project; the pilot will be for employees only. Inver hills will have integration from our iAM infrastructure to their active directory and they would take that information to create automatically provisioned accounts for faculty and staff. May 2009
  - Mohammad: Question about using the application only for employee directory?
  - Al: We wanted to choose something that was non-critical so if something went wrong people it wouldn't be as vital. We didn't want to start with D2L or an application that people count on.
  - Dan: Do you have a vision of what you want to put on ClearSpace? Are you looking for people to throw real stuff on there?
  - Al: Hope is that this will become an enterprise wiki service. However, the beginning will be a very modest app with modest pilot groups.
  - Phil: This is a great idea but thinks it smart not to jump the gun on trying to name what enterprise wiki would be implemented in.
  - Al: The ClearSpace part of it is outside the scope of iAM. The scope of iAM is to stand up an authentication service that can be consumed by any number of web apps. We need a wiki-type application within the OOC to store technical documentation, etc. The scope of this project will be very, very modest— within the Office of the Chancellor plus CIO family only. As we move toward this enterprise wiki concept, it will not be shared with students. This leads us to a whole other dimension of privacy issues, etc. We will have to frame the

ClearSpace rollout carefully. Right now it is just an administrative application that will be used in a pilot mode.

### **System Infrastructure Roadmap -James Dierich**

- This document takes the development roadmap that Glen Guida had put together and trying to put the hardware/software effect of the infrastructure network response to the development roadmap.
- Ross distributed the draft portion, as it is a work in progress that started about three weeks ago. We are attempting to put some language in the front of it. The key components of it are in the guiding principles.
- Looking at system administrators and managers on page two, we're trying to target an adequate number of support staff for each area. We want to make sure we have enough system administrators for each project; we are listing the minimum number for people for each system.
- Page three is a list of the current supported infrastructure components, both hardware and software. This is not complete, just a work in progress; we are still gathering information and making additions. It is predominantly within the Office of the Chancellor ITS group budget; not a system-wide or enterprise-wide basis.
- Other areas to address are the year goals; for example, in 2009 (bottom of page 4) we're saying that we should have a proof of concept about moving ISRS from HP output to Itanium technology.
  - o The lease on the GS 1280 server that ISRS runs on right now runs out in October. We have quotes from HP to purchase or to continue the lease for one year. We're working through the Attorney General's office to make sure we can do either. It is getting to be an antiquated technology; not sure when HP's support stops on that, but it is probably down the road a few years.
  - o Jim recommends that they continue the lease on the 1280 for one additional year and then test porting ISRS alpha technology over to Itanium blades. Quite frankly that server will end up being way too large once we do the RDB to Oracle conversion and if we are successful doing some other things we are talking about in proof of concept.
- Also talking about porting Uniface from VMS. In our former infrastructure, both VMS and the database ran on the Alpha servers. Under the new architecture of ISRS the database has been moved over to Oracle which has its own server that is driven by an E25K.
  - o In the new structure, Uniface and the application cobalt components will run on the GS1280; all the data will run off the E25K. The 1280 is sending requests to the E25K Oracle database server and giving the data back. We're talking about moving over a UNIX server.
  - o Uniface folks have been telling us that it really runs better on a UNIX server than on an open VMS server. Compuware said our support mechanism is better on UNIX than it is on VMS.
  - o We should do a proof of concept when we talk internally of porting Uniface from open VSM to UNIX in FY09 as well. Then the only thing that will be running on that huge server is ISRS. If the proof of concept were successful this year we would move Uniface over to UNIX server in 2010.
- Feedback is appreciated, looking at the goals specifically. In 2010 you can see we're talking about deploying the titanium technology for ISRS. That is a decision that has yet to be mad; whether we are going to continue lease of GS1280 or purchase it outright.
  - o The purchase price is attractive, but the difficulty with purchasing Alpha technology is that it's an antiquated technology.
  - o A lot of ISRS architecture software architecture is anchored on VMS and it would be very difficult to move ISRS from VMS to UNIX. There is discussion of doing this as well; it is a proof of concept in 2010 or 2011.
  - o In discussing with Glen and Mark, both agree that it would be more difficult to move it from Alpha to Itanium technology. This would be a recompile and it should run.

- VMS to UNIX would be much more difficult; we would have to deal with data exchanges from Oracle to VMS from all of your interfaces and changing all of the “handshakes” between interfaces.
- In 2010 we talk about proof of concept of making our first attempt at porting ISRS from an open VMS environment to a UNIX environment. As the document states, getting beyond two years in a technological prediction is extremely difficult. Need more iAM subsidence in this document, which is not here yet.
- Other objectives are the tendencies on the back-end to try and show all of the application software and what phase of technology it is running on.
  - Appendix B talks about what platforms or OS’s and utility software we’re using and supporting. The Appendices will change quite a bit as we evolve this.
- Ross: Recommends that everyone email Jim with any questions and/or suggestions.
- Mohammad—what is the future of this document?
  - ISC asked for a Technology Roadmap to parallel the Systems Development Roadmap.
- Ken: These are working documents; just supposed to be roadmaps. The word “draft” might never come off of them. It’s for the development of the ISC and SDSC, to make sure they’re going down the same path at the same rate. It may be used and referred to in planning discussions by Al and/or Joanne in the future.
- Jim: The documents are for internal alignment and getting the internal vertical silos working together, which is the main point.

### **WAN Update-Mike Janke**

- Mike is out of the office and Ross has not touched base with him. He is unaware of status so we will skip this for now.

### **WBOB & COB Status-Ross Berndt / Mike Janke**

- Ross met with staff at WBOB, where our primary enterprise site is 35W bridge opening next week. Al also met with them to discuss any issues that have occurred. They are bringing in electrical engineers, etc. evaluate where we’re at and to make it as redundant and sturdy as possible. They will include us on the teams and discussions as they move forward.
- Data center evaluation is beginning to wrap up and should be getting final report within the next few weeks. The report will arrive within 3-4 weeks and we will share it with the U of M because it gets into the details of their electrical systems, heating and cooling, etc.
- Jim: We did not have to participate in the state’s study, but Ken Nieme thought it would be important. The U of M did not want to participate, so the building is included in the study but U of M’s servers are not.
- Preliminary discussion has shown that they are aware of our issues. The U of M is now on board with NIMS, and we are working on how to better communicate if there is an incident.
- Outage and communications: we found a typepad site where we have been able to build out a web page that is not hosted locally; it will have status updates and contact information. It is a blogging software site that we have built templates on top of it. It is in its very infant stage right now. It is an alternate site to go to for information in the event of an outage.
  - Looking for staff to be responsible for keeping it updated. Because it’s hosted by a third-party we’ll be able to keep it updated if our systems go down.
- Dan: question about offsite web page: what about Lyris?
  - Penny: there have been issues with Lyris, and it is not as dependable.
  - Ross: The Lyris site allows us to blast out information. It’s a “shotgun” approach and needs to be kept updated with different groups, etc. Typepad site will be more functional than Lyris. Individuals without access to email can access the site, get more detailed updates, and check history as well.
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**Central Backup Pilot Project-Ross Berndt / Mike Janke**

- Ross has no status today, and does not know of any project manager that has been assigned. He will keep this on the agenda going forward.

**Next meeting - October 8, 2008**

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m. Meeting notes submitted by Erin Meyer, [erin.meyer@csu.mnscu.edu](mailto:erin.meyer@csu.mnscu.edu).