

Physics Computing Meeting

16th December 2021

Minutes

Present:	David Colling (Chair)	Ruth McLachlan
	Brian Appleby	Daniel Mortlock
	Graham Axtell	Ellen Pengelly
	Richard Bantges	Arttu Rajantie
	James Dunbar	Andy Thomas
	Simon Fayer	Luke White
	Noah Fitch	Dan Whitehouse
	Robert Kingham	Gayle Baldwin (minutes)
Apologies	Jarvist Frost	

1. Welcome – David Colling

- 1.1. Minutes were approved.
- 1.2. DC discussed a repository to share the Computing Committee documents.

2. News from ICT – Ellen Pengelly

- 2.1. EP presented slides for the new ICT strategy document setting out their 5-year plan. There are 3 areas of focus: 1) operations of college; 2) teaching and learning; and 3) research. EP discussed Banner and the newly established 'Red team' who are solely dedicated to improving the situation. Andrew Richards, Head of Research Computing Services, will focus on changes to the Research side of ICT support. There will be direct involvement with Imperial X and a revamp of HPC Estate.
- 2.2. EP commented on Paul Dauncey's ongoing issues and the need to change ICT's support. A team of external consultants are reviewing the systems and will suggest ways to improve service. RB asked if there is a plan for a wider consultation and who has been approached as the needs of the researchers differ to the needs of the students and those who teach. EP will ask Baljit Dulai (lead consultant) to contact RB. The committee discussed several cases where ICT have not responded to requests. EP will share their concerns with Juan Villhim and Leigh Davenport. EP also suggested Leigh Davenport and Baljit Dulai attend a physics computing Committee meeting. **Action: DC to invite LD and BD to the next physics computing committee meeting.** DC will also invite EP to the next Faculty Computing Committee meeting. Committee members were asked to inform EP of any ICT requests that require urgent action as she will follow up on their behalf.

3. Strategy Papers – David Colling

- 3.1. Andrew Richards is the new Head of RCS, Mike Bearpark is the Director of User Engagement, Jeremy Cohen is Director of RSE Strategy and Paul Aylin and David Colling are Directors of Data Strategy. DC invited the committee to contact him with any thoughts or comments on the iterative strategy circulated prior to the meeting. DC asked how many groups pay for storage in the RCS. Colleagues would need to check although SPAT and QOLS probably pay small

amounts.

4. Gathering requirements and feeding back to ICT– Ellen Pengelly

- 4.1. DC created a (draft) wiki page to capture current and future needs for FoNS hardware. Individuals and groups will list what they are using, paying for, their requirements etc - <https://wiki.imperial.ac.uk/display/~aramasam/FoNS+Research+Computing+Information>
** committee members are invited to edit the page to include headings/data they feel will be useful. This information will be used to inform purchasing and ICT of the Department's needs.*

5. Fair Data Repositories – David Colling

- 5.1. The condition for all grants is to share data and a group has been set up to look at this college wide. In particular people who do not have community repositories, and those using it ad-hoc or not at all. SPAT NECR funded data is sent to CEDA (Centre for Environmental Data Archive) based at the Rutherford Appleton laboratory. If the data is not suitable then the group use Zenodu. PLAS use Zenodu and storage on an individual basis, similarly ASTR use an individual basis and survey data that is already public. If there was an imperial repository then this might improve the systematic levels for which we store and share data. The group's aim is to establish a suitable repository for data sharing.

6. Teaching

- 6.1. BA said there are no standout issues for first year computing. A more general matter is the teaching rooms' cameras and visualisers that can only be used for Panopto. DC mentioned Huxley 503 had a similar issue and they were shown how to change the settings in order to use Teams. The settings are quite difficult to change, and detailed guidance would be helpful. EP remarked that Leigh Davenport is open to running regular equipment checks of the lecture theatres. **Action: EP to produce instructions for 'how to change the equipment from Teams to Panopto'.** RK said the software for second year computing is fine.

7. AOB

- 7.1. RB reported the SPAT admin team's frustration with long lead time for purchasing new computing hardware through college approved suppliers. They considered the option of virtual machines through ICT although this is proving difficult. DC said the new MRes Machine Learning students were each given a laptop purchased from Dell as HP could not deliver in time. Andrew Richards will set up an open stackcloud for general use.
- 7.2. RB reported unstable Jupiter hub sessions, issues with job submissions failing on CX1 and CX2 queues and jobs disappearing. The RCS HPC is unstable and DC hopes this will improve significantly over the next 3 months. RK reported similar issues which DC will report back to Andrew Richards.

Actions for 16.12.21

Action 1: DC to invite Leigh Davenport and Baljit Dulai to the next physics computing committee meeting.

Action 2: EP to produce instructions for changing the equipment from Teams to Panopto