



**Delivering a decentralised, block structure timetable: a change management challenge**



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**Why was change management critical to the Common Timetable Project?**

- Enormous risk to UCL if the new system could not deliver or was not used. **How was risk managed?**
- The block structure has meant getting all Departments to use one schema of timetabling. **How was this possible?**
- The data in two key systems, SITS and CMIS, has to be detailed and accurate. **What has been done to make this so?**




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**A Brief History of Timetabling**


In 2005 the Provost Malcolm Grant mandated that a single timetable be in place before 2010

- Success in some HEIs, though political fallout in others over privacy...



SMT appointed a timetabling Steering group, chaired by Vice-Provost Michael Worton

- A UCL-wide scheme for timetabling required for the 2007/08 session
- A pilot or proof-of-concept required for 2006/07 session.



*But*

- Go-live was in mid 2009...

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### A Brief History of Timetabling

Formal Board established in 2006/07 with Dean of Engineering, Bernard Buxton, as Chair.



The Board includes three Deans, Registry, and timetabling representatives. Cross-functional representation is key at UCL

*Plus*

- Full-time Project Manager
- Full-time Change Manager
- Full-time data-integrity analyst
- Dedicated development resource
- Temps as required for data entry

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### A Brief History of Timetabling

Primary Business Case

- To facilitate interdisciplinary study
- To simplify the structure and bring clarity to the agendas of students and staff
- To provide up-to-date IT facilities for timetabling

Secondary Business Case

- More efficient use of teaching spaces
- More efficient use of modules and resources
- Provision of management data

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### A Brief History of Timetabling



**The Block Structure**

*BUT!*

- Some courses did not fit: e.g. Labs could not be contained within an afternoon
- We had stand-offs with Departments who had course structures approved by external authorities
- Conflict led to granting of 'derogation' – all must be signed off by the Vice Provost Academic
- 'Clash resolution protocol' introduced to arbitrate

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### Risk Management – Plan C

**Challenges**

- Many very strong independent Departments – with their own pre-existing timetabling systems – Excel, Word, CELCAT
- Inconsistencies in teaching terms and hours
- Many Depts suffering ‘new system fatigue’
- Some Depts insufficiently resourced – one admin officer etc
- Data quality in SITS – particularly the lateness of data input
  - Module approvals in October rather than in March!
  - Lack of visible rooming data and requirements in CMIS
- Timetablers not a recognisable group – had to be tracked down – sometimes academic, sometimes administrative

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### Risk Management – Plan C

In 2007-08 the project had to be re-scheduled because initial parallel running was only partially successful:

- *Ghost* exercise – 5/8 of Faculties engaged, 30/46 Depts
- 7 Depts refused to engage with mandatory Block structure

So - A new *Shadow* parallel run was introduced and derogations allowed

**And!**

- In 2008-09, 100% Depts engaged
- We now have a draft timetable two months earlier in the annual cycle, and far more complete.

	Initial Plan	Revised
2007-08	Ghost	Ghost
2008-09	Live	Shadow
2009	Web interface	Live
		Web interface

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### Essentials: Change Management

- Portico Awards & Assessment in 2007 led to appreciation that change management is critical.
- Initially sought a retired Academic to lead change: no-one would take the job... considered a ‘poisoned chalice’.
- Used PwC - based on Bristol University recommendation...but academics allergic to consultants.
- External recruitment proved that embedding non-academic change managers could deliver results




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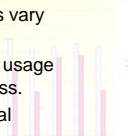
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### Access to Timetables: Own and others'

- Diary visibility remains a political issue – with @Live and Common Timetabling
  - UCL still to set a policy on this and practices vary across the institution
  - Management information showing resource usage for teaching and Estate usage are in progress.
- Synchronising Teaching timetables with personal timetables is possible with client Outlook
  - But, cannot subscribe to iCal teaching timetable @Live via webmail
- oMbiel app developed for students to view their teaching timetable via a PDA/iPhone



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### Learning points for Change Initiative success

- Strong, high-level sponsorship
- Rigorous risk analysis and planning for alternatives
- Measurable benefits statement
- Readiness assessments
- *Face-to-face* communications
- Hand-holding: workshops, training *and* data entry
- Single project staffing ...enough staffing
- Dedicated staff and temps for data hygiene



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### Where to next?

- Online reporting tools were invaluable to Timetablers – next is BI tools for senior managers:
  - Rooming and staffing profile for different modules
  - Efficient use of estate
- Work with EventMap auto-scheduling software to:
  - improve use of estate - pilot
  - Admissions modelling e.g. Impact of oversupply
  - Potentially improve exam timetabling experience



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Questions....

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