RMAS

UCISA CISG
Research Management Systems Seminar

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17 June 2010
What will I cover?

- What is the project?
- Why was it set up?
- What did we do?
- What did we find?
- Current position
What is the project?

HEFCE Shared Services Project

‘To investigate the demand and potential development of a ‘cradle to grave’ research Management and Administration system (RMAS) which would embody the best processes for research management and administration, whilst maintaining the capability (through open systems architecture) to interface with the universities’ existing corporate and other administrative systems’
Why was the project set up?

- Specific problems at Exeter
- Potential for improved efficiencies
- No obvious solution on the market
- Not the only institution investigating options
What were the activities?

- Academic Expertise
- Pre-application funding source identification and dissemination
- Costing of grant applications
- Internal peer review
- Status tracking of applications and awards
- Workflow management of applications and awards
- Contract management including IP and Patents
- Ethics Review
- Post award financial management
- Budget profiling
- Budget/actual/commitment management
- Post award report management
- Alerts for milestones and reporting
- Research publications management
- Research Outputs
What did we do?

November 2008 – Issued on-line survey to HEIs

Asked:

- About current provision
- Software used and whether it met the need
- Other activities requiring an IT solution
- Interfaces
- Rekeying and other inefficiencies
What did we do?

January 2009 – Issued questionnaire to suppliers

Asked:
- Could they provide the required functionality?
- What developments were planned?
- What would be the costs to deliver the solution?
- A suggested business model
What else did we do?

Spoke to other bodies

- British Library
- RCUK re Je-S and Outputs and Outcomes project
- HEFCE Bibliographics Team re REF
- JISC
What did we find out?

- 60 responses from 58 institutions;
- Support varied widely between central and departmental;
- Varying use of commercial packages;
- On average 45% of respondees relied on Access databases and spreadsheets for core activity;
- Performance of commercial products varied widely;
- Complex interface requirements;
- Bespoke developments for specific activities were common;
- Some complete bespoke developments;
- 57 out 58 institutions rekeyed data
JISC RIM Project Findings

http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/research/ref
What did we find out?

Academic Expertise - to include esteem indicators
Pre-application funding source identification and dissemination
Costing of grant applications
Internal peer review
Status tracking of applications and awards
Workflow management of applications and awards
Contract management including IP and Patents
Ethics Review
Post award financial management
Budget profiling
Budget/actual/commitment management
Post award report management
Alerts for milestones and reporting
Research publications management + links to other outputs
Research Outputs
And…

Electronic submission to GABs  C
Electronic document management  C
Insurance review  D
Governance of clinical trials  D
Management of complex grants  D
PGR management  D
What were the benefits?

- Cashable benefits but difficult to quantify
- Free up research active staff
- Allow for growth of research support
- Better integration of data = cleaner data
- Improved information = better decision making
- Procurement savings potential
- Improved staff retention
- More streamlined data exchange with GABs
What did the suppliers say?

- Low response rate
- Few companies covering more than a very limited area
- Difficult to identify the costs for delivering a solution
Conclusions

- Clear business case for an RMAS
- Piecemeal development across the sector was not cost effective
- Many HEIs wished to retain some current software
- Most HEIs were looking for additional functionality from systems
Part 1 Recommendations

- Develop a shared services solution
- Establish a pathfinder group
- Expand SOUR to a full ITT
- Seek to take advantage of SOA
- Explore options for delivery via SaaS
- Identify full costs and funding options
- Use a framework purchasing consortium
- Progress to Phase 2
Phase 2

- To develop the SOUR further
- Invite suppliers to tender
- Identify costs to progress
- Then move to Phase 3 – build and implementation
What happened in Phase 2?

- July – Sept 2009 started to develop ITT
- Concerned about the formal requirements of an ITT
- Decided to downgrade to market research
- Undertook more detailed work with a range of suppliers
- Clarified the fundamental requirements:
  - Specific functional processes
  - Pick and mix to meet institutional need
  - Workflow to link, track and provide alerts
  - Address complex interface requirements
  - Manage direct data transfer to and from sponsor
The interface problem
Solution centred around middleware
What business model?

- Bespoke
- Open source delivered under governance of a non for profit organisation
- Commercial off the shelf deployed in-house
- Commercial solution delivered in multiple models
- Supplier working with an HEI to bring an institution solution to the market
Part 2 Recommendations

- 3 pathfinders to develop and pilot an RMAS
- Commercial or HEI/commercial solution to be selected
- Chosen supplier to have part solution in use
- System to be capable of integrating with an ESB
- System to be delivered in modular form
- Funding support was necessary
# Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Task Name</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Finish</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Phase 1 - Demand and Supplier Survey</td>
<td>73 days</td>
<td>Mon 06/04/09</td>
<td>Wed 15/07/09</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>ITT Pre Issue</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>Set up Framework Agreement</td>
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<td>Pathfinder HEIs Call off from Framework</td>
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<td>Implementation in Pathfinder Institutions</td>
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<td>Implementation</td>
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<td>Phase 4 - Development &amp; Roll Out To Wider Community</td>
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Current position

- Part 2 report submitted Jan 2010
- Well received by HEFCE and JISC
- Pathfinders identified
- Discussion about procurement coordination progressing
- Outline ITT produced
- Bid to JISC for baselining exercise
- We await a funding decision
The solution for the future
How can I find out more?

http://as.exeter.ac.uk/rmas/

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