Hosted Library Services: Clouds Do Have Silver Linings

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Background

• Legacy hardware

• Staff struggling to cope with technology

• Manual processes

• Less than optimal services
Student Staff Record Integration: Autumn 2012

- Infrequent manual import to LMS
- Mary Immaculate College students not regularly included
- Staff records created manually at desk
- From public perspective, an incoherent service
Shifting Services at the UL Library

• Increased emphasis on new services
• Key staff changes
• Reduced staff numbers
• Process review, January 2012
Forging a New Service

• Emphasis on value added activities, not transactionally-oriented processes

• Reduce costs and staff time

• Integrate systems and services
Project Timeline

• Dec. 2012: Signoff on new services

• Late January 2013: Project Kick-off

• January to February 2013: System/ Cron review, servers built, OS installation, 3rd Party Packages, Secure VPN

• February to March 2013: UAT

• 25 March 2013: Go Live
Migration Path
Change Management in the Library

- Series of Town Hall-style meetings held to detail project
- Team of Library staff responsible for UAT
- Small project team convened to conduct testing and provide feedback for Capita
Infrastructural Changes

UL network
- Deployed LMS Clients
- Self service
- Other

Firewall

AES 256/bit encrypted VPN

Capita Data Centres
- LMS Servers
IT Library Collaboration

- UL ITD supported legacy infrastructure and advised on systems
- ITD engaged early in Chorus/AWS project
- Comnet, the networks team, was integral to the success of the project
- Comnet collaborated with Capita in creating the AES 256-bit encrypted VPN
- Creation of separate Library subnet to isolate VPN traffic
Chorus/ AMS Infrastructure
Providing Service in a New Way

• Change in infrastructure heralded a change in the way the service was provided

• Capita undertook many aspects of the day to day work formerly completed by Library staff

• This meant rethinking services at front-of-house and redirecting systems services
Roll Out

• UAT transpired during a 1-month period

• Utilising the test LMS we confirmed different aspects of the LMS worked as expected

• 10 staff rigorously tested the system during a 10 day period in March 2013

• The system went live over 2 days in late March 2013 (25th – 27th)
Staff/ User Observations

• Somewhat tellingly, there was little to indicate that we had moved to a cloud-based system

• There was a 2.5hr outage the morning of March 25th when staff LMS clients and self-service machines were transitioned to the hosted system.

• The most immediate impact was for systems staff – no backups, loading of student files, etc.!
Benefits

• The most immediate impact could be felt by systems staff and staff responsible for the front-of-house.

• From Spring 2014, systems staff could focus on planning for the identity management web service.

• The managed service aspect of the arrangement with Capita allowed circulation staff to plan for a new borrower notification scheme.
Network Implications

• There were some initial bumps...

• In the first six-months of service, there were short-term outages (< hour), originating at the Capita data centres.

• The presence of the VPN does mean that new systems and services need sufficient plan to ensure their unimpeded presence on the network.
Financial Implications

- 7% cost savings for the LMS subscription over 3 years.

- However, the additional managed services did come at a premium.

- The initial bundling of hosted and managed services meant that some potential costs related to projects were waived (IDM web service, e-payments for catalogue).
Impact on Systems Staff

• Shift to hosted/ manage services provoked a short-lived identity crisis for systems staff.

• Immediate refocus on digital services.

• Allowed for more effective support and development of front-of-house.
Effect on Technical Services Staff

- Facilitated major organisational changes during the summer of 2013
  - OCLC downloading integrated to assist in shelf-ready library processes
- More day-to-day reliable service in the office
- Full support of EDI functionality
Effect on Services

- Summon rolled-out as primary discovery tool for students
- Streamlined approach to front-of-house services
- LibQual scores will be analysed to measure impact
Projects Directly Enabled by the Move

• Identity Management Web service
• Access Gates
• Agresso/ finance integration
Identity Management Project

- Project started Summer 2013, launched November 2013
- Web service communicates between student registry and LMS – 2 hour update cycle
- Coincided with installation of 4 new self-issue machines
- Library interacts as a consumer of information only
IDM Web Service Workflow

1. Start
2. Get Students
3. Student details
   - Transform Student data
4. Invoke service with updated details
5. Web Service response
   - Updated details
   - Updated details
{For all borrowers returned}
Student/ Staff Record Integration – Summer 2014

- Real-time integration (2 hour cycle) of staff/student records, including all MIC records

- Seamless integration at service level (full staff/student use of access gates and self-issues)

- Implementation of web service prompted changes in the SIS (impetus for better record keeping practices, former MIC/current UL students)
Library Entryway Redesign

• Summer 2014 – Complete redesign of Library entrance

• Access gates deployed

• Ultimate test of hosted services/web service
Agresso LMS Finance Integration

• Web server used for IDM web service integrates all transactions received from vendors via EDI directly into Agresso

• When deployed will free .5 FTE

• Scheduled for deployment early 2015
Conclusions

• Hosted solution/ Managed Services has profoundly affected Library services

• Focus on new and strategic services in age of declining FTE count

• Supports notion of decoupled, modular services

• Future potential to engage different vendors for different elements of service
Thank you

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