Minutes
Kansas State University Faculty Senate Committee on Technology
October 7, 2003 - 1:30 PM - K-State Union 204

Members present: Fritz, Haddock, Knapp, Murray, Rintoul, Ross, Selfridge, Simmonds, Warren

Guests: John Struve, Aimee Cabrera, Rebecca Gould, Roberta Johnson, Harvard Townsend, David Allen, Charlene Simser

John Struve, LASER Project Coordinator, presented a project overview. LASER stands for Legacy Application Systems Empowered Replacement. Planning for the project began in September of 2001 and the official project kick-off was held in April of 2003. LASER is part of K-State's Integrated Information Initiative. The objective of the project is to replace K-State's existing financial accounting and student information systems with new Oracle applications. Many of the currently used systems are becoming increasingly out-dated. The LASER project will streamline business processes, reduce paperwork, automate workflows, and utilize more modern object/relational database technologies. This approximately $12 million project will take five years to complete. There are currently 18 FTE working on the project, with another 18 who will be brought in from other units on a part-time basis as the project proceeds. The personnel are housed on the 4th Floor of the Foundation Building. K-State is working with Oracle in a limited mentoring relationship rather than having a full consulting agreement. The LASER Steering Committee meets once per month and reports to the University Executive Computer Committee, which is composed of Provost Jim Coffman, Vice President Tom Rawson, Vice President Bob Kruse, and Vice Provost Beth Unger. The project has six functional teams: Admissions and Financial Aid, Registration and Records, Financials and Accounting, Student Systems, Financial Systems, and Technology and Systems. As the project proceeds, they will also be looking at reducing the number of "shadow systems" on campus. There is also intent to implement the Oracle advanced recruiting system. Financials are scheduled to go live July 1, 2005. The Student Information System will likely not be completed until later, due in part to the current system's homegrown nature. At this point in time, the project is in what is referred to as the "conference room pilot" (CRP) stage. This "discovery period" for Financials will end in November and the SIS pilots will run through February. CRP2 will continue for a year and CRP3 will involve fine-tuning and end user training. Aimee Cabrera is the Communications Coordinator for the LASER Project. She explained the various methods that are being used to communicate the project to the campus community. A LASER project web site is available at: http://laser.k-state.edu/

Rebecca Gould, Director of the Information Technology Assistance Center, introduced Roberta Johnson, Computing and Network Services Assistant Director for Business Operations. Roberta described the three levels of involvement that CNS has in regard to university software purchases. At the first level, they coordinate purchases in those cases where the vendor requires a single contract rather than having contracts with individual departments. CNS does not buy or

resell, bur instead act as a "facilitator". As an example, they negotiated with Microsoft so that students could receive a considerable discount on MS Office Suite. Secondly, they negotiate with vendors on university-wide site licenses. An example of this would be the Norton Anti-virus software used by the university. CNS currently has about 60 such contracts. The contracts are usually negotiated on a "points" basis, usually one for one. For example, one copy of MS Word would equal one point. Adobe bids are still in progress, and should be complete in the next 30 days. When complete, there will be a considerable discount on Adobe products for faculty and departments (not students). She asked that anyone interested in obtaining Adobe products please contact her office at 532-4928, rather than buying them on their own. This will ensure that K-State meets the necessary point level to receive the deep discounts. On October 20th, there will be a meeting about the new university-wide contract on Microsoft products. Departments that will be purchasing Microsoft products should plan to attend. Microsoft and Software Plus representatives will be available to provide overviews and answer questions. The third area of software purchase involvement is when CNS serves as a central unit to purchase blocks of software licenses. An example would be the 100 licenses the university has for the SAS program. Some products, such as those from Macromedia, are arranged first through ITAC before going to CNS. Roberta pointed out that because our Novell software is centralized, it is critical that the Novell audit surveys that are sent out to department heads be filled-out and returned. Lastly, she asked that faculty communicate any special software needs to Kathy Leonard, the CNS Contracts/Licenses Coordinator, at 532-4926.

Harvard Townsend, Director of Computing & Network Services, presented a security update. More than 4 million Sobig.F infected e-mail messages were rejected between August 19 and September 18th. The central e-mail server's anti-virus capabilities don't catch everything, so it is essential that individual machines have the most up-to-date anti-virus definitions installed. The Sobig.F worm had a September 11th expiration date in the code, and since that time the number of infected messages has decreased dramatically. However, the Welchia and Blaster worms continue to be problems. K-State was fortunate to have recommended the establishment of a Security Incident Response Team last winter, and to have had an interim SIRT in place when these attacks occurred. Harvard stressed the critical need to be able to respond quickly to these types of attacks. In September, the Deans agreed to make the SIRT permanent. Each college and the major administrative units on campus are represented on the SIRT. Harvard asked if there was interest on the part of FSCOT to have a representative on the SIRT. Mary Knapp volunteered to represent FSCOT at this year's SIRT meetings. Harvard also brought up that there are still a number of computers on campus that have not been patched for the Welchia and Blaster worms. It is taking up considerable CNS resources to deal with these machines on a piecemeal basis. CNS is scanning the network to determine which machines need fixed, and will soon block any un-patched machines. Any blocked machine will no longer have access to the K-State network until patched. FSCOT agreed that this was necessary, but asked that adequate warning be given to the campus community prior to blocking the offending machines.

David Allen, Director of KSU Libraries Digital Library Department, and Charlene Simser, KSU Libraries Interim Assistant Dean, reported on the K-State Digital Library Interface project. The project began in November of 2002, and involved close collaboration with a Web design firm called Zentropy Partners. The new K-State Digital Library interface is called "CATnet", and it was implemented at the start of the fall semester. CATnet is an information discovery portal that

integrates familiar resources such as the library catalog, databases and e-journals with locally created content being developed through the K-State Digital Library. A prominent feature of the CATnet site is a search box for a new search engine that enables CATnet users to survey many different sources at once. This "simul-search" system allows one to search simultaneously across multiple resources. There are two modes, "basic" and "customize". The basic option, (the default choice), searches a limited set of the most heavily used general-focus resources. Customize allows one to create a personal list of resources to be searched simultaneously. For those who prefer to search the library catalog, individual databases, or e-journals directly, convenient quick links on the tool bar at the top of each page can be utilized. With the introduction of CATnet, the KSU Libraries web site also took on a new look. Its pages now focus on important help information on using the libraries and how to contact library staff.

Due to a scheduling conflict between FSCOT and the university technology Cooperating Team, the dates and times for the remaining FSCOT meetings were changed to the first Thursday of the month at 2:00 PM.