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Managing access in a complex information environment

Keynote Item

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Managing access in a complex information environment

Jean Sykes, Librarian & Director of Information Services
Portals… lots of portals

• Presenting a wide spectrum of information resources
  – institutional and third party, commercial and open source
  – stored locally and stored remotely (anywhere in the world)
  – quality assured and not, primary and secondary
  – in digest form and full text

• …to a wide spectrum of users
  – students, staff, researchers, alumni, media, …
  – on-campus and remote (anywhere in the world)
  – using different presentation channels: Web, PDA, WAP

• Solution: A portal for every purpose?
  – with alternative entry points, e.g. “for…”, “from…”, “about…”
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LSE background & prior work

- LSE for You
- Electronic Library
- Learning resources and VLE (WebCT)

- Middleware architecture (ANGEL Project)
- VLE-Library integration (DELIVER Project)
- Access management (SECURe Project)

- MIKE: a Managed Information & Knowledge Environment
Traditional portal architecture

- Portal
- SITS
  - student data
  + other databases
LSE MIKE architecture

Organisational Domain

 CLR

 CLR

 CLR

 YaleCAS

 EDMS
 committee docs

 SITS
 student data

 CMS
 content

 CMS

 Unicorn
 library data

 Shibboleth

 Jstor
 E-journals

 Supported std protocols; Custom proprietary interfaces

 CLR = Collection-Level Registry

 CMS = Content Management System
Managing access: the SECURe Project

- Cross-domain authorisation: Shibboleth
- Internal directory structure: eduPerson
- Authentication: end-user certificates
- Management: PKI and certificate-server
Accessibility in practice

- The vision for the future
- Today’s problems
- The visiting professor
- Part-time students & distance learners
- UK Computing Plus – different approaches
- Secure and managed access for everyone
- Those who “belong” somewhere and those who don’t
The MIKE project

- Information services collaboration: IT Services, Library, MIS, Website Services, Centre for Learning Technology
- Portals were evaluated – U-Portal was chosen
- Some user needs were canvassed through focus groups – students, alumni, admin. staff
The MIKE project continued

- 18 month project timetable drawn up
- Project bid prepared
- We would start with a pilot department
- There would be ongoing evaluation of portal technology
- Much more consultation on content
- Evaluation of pilot
- Launch of full service
Project staffing

- Project manager
- Project officer ITS for tech. architecture, infrastructure deployment, conversion of key IT services
- Project officer MIS to convert LSE for YOU services
- Project officer Library for content analysis, metadata creation, and user liaison
- 0.5 post in CLT to integrate existing e-courses
Project costs

- Total over 18 months: £272k
- Staff £185k
- Hardware: £40k
- Software: £35k
- Other costs: £12k
- Recurrent costs post-project: £98k p.a.
Selling MIKE to the LSE

- We started at the top: deputy directors, finance director, chair of information services committee
- The concept was ill understood
- They could not see the benefits
- They thought it was technology-led
- The new mantra is “Substitution not additionality”
So what next?

• We decided to put the project on hold
• The LSE has other strategic priorities at present
• The information service providers will work at it as part of normal development
• The principle of working together is established
• MIKE’s time will come some day