

Risk analysis for assessing third-party IT services

This document contains a series of questions that should be asked before using third-party or external 'Web 2.0' IT services.

Is the service already provided by the University?

The University currently provides –

- Virtual Learning Environment
- Blogs
- Wikis
- Podcasting Server
- Media Streaming Server
- Online Survey Tool

If you have any questions about this document or require guidance in using third-party software, please contact ISS.

Accessibility

Is the service accessible for users with disabilities? Are all users aware of the ISS guidelines for Web 2.0 accessibility?

JISC have some useful resources around accessibility and inclusion:

[https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides?f\[\]=field_project_topics:569](https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides?f[]=field_project_topics:569)

Is the service intended to be used for assessment?

Has your school agreed that the service can be used for assessment?

If the service is to be used for student assessment, will the data be kept for a long enough period and is there an adequate audit trail on submitted work?

Availability and reliability

What guarantees are provided about support or level of service? Are they adequate for the intended use? For example, if the service is unavailable for an extended period of time, how seriously would this affect the School or Department's activities?

Continuity of service

Is there any agreement concerning continuity of the service? How serious is the risk that the service might change its policies, or prices, or go out of business? For example, does the School or Department care if a free service becomes a paying one, or one subsidised by advertising? Does the School or Department have an alternative or exit strategy in such an eventuality?

Support issues

What level of support activity will be needed? Is the service widely used by comparable Schools or Departments outside Swansea University? What is its public perception? Is there a strong community of existing users who can provide peer support, or will the School or Department need to seek or provide specialist training? Does the service provide a hotline for academic or

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technical support issues beyond the run of the mill? Is it likely that existing IT support networks (e.g. ISS) would be able to provide first-line support?

Migration issues

If the proposed service overlaps wholly or in part with a service already used by the School or Department, what will the support costs be in moving existing users? Is moving to another service without loss of information simple, technically feasible, or impossible? Does the proposed new service have all the functionality of the existing one (for example, does it provide the same or enhanced levels of security, backup, etc.)?

Domino effects

Will introduction of the new service affect other existing services, for example by reducing or increasing their importance or requiring changes in them? Is there a risk that the service would increase for example network traffic or spam beyond currently acceptable thresholds?

Duplication effects

Is the service (or something analogous) already being used by some other School or Department? If so, is there scope for co-operation e.g. in licensing or in pooling of support activities? Alternatively, is there a risk of confusion or lack of data integrity if the same service is provided under different brandings within the University?

Strategic and legal considerations

How well does the new service conform to established University strategic priorities or practice? For example, can it take advantage of current university-wide authentication and identification systems such as the username and password for the University network? Is it equally usable in all hardware and software environments of importance to the School or Department? Does the new service open the School or Department to possible additional risk with respect to its legal obligations, e.g. disability and privacy legislation, or contracts, e.g. Janet regulations? Is the service provided under terms specified by an enforceable contract between the service provider and the University?

Links to strategy documents

[ISS Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019](#)

[ICT Strategy](#)

[JISC Legal](#)

Rights issues

Are the terms and conditions appropriate for the intended use? For example, if the service will store or manage material in which the School or Department has rights, do the Terms & Conditions adequately protect those rights?

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Privacy and confidentiality

Are the terms and conditions adequate for the intended use? For example, who may access the School or Department's data and in what circumstances? Is usage of the service auditable by the School or Department (for example to track any alleged abuse)? Will personal information of students and staff be stored on the system and if so what use is made of that information? Will users have to set up accounts to access the service?

Intellectual Property Rights

[Staff IP Policy](#)

[Student IP Policy](#)

Cost implications

What are the cost-benefit implications of using the new service? What is the total cost (or saving), taking into account all the above considerations, of using this service as opposed to expanding (or continuing with) an existing internal service -- or doing without? How will that cost be met?

If you have any further questions, please contact the ISS Project Office: iss-projects@swansea.ac.uk