

Minutes of ICCS/HCRC Staff Meeting

26th November 2008, 1PM, 4.31/4.33

1. Attendance

Present: Mark Steedman, Bonnie Webber, Colin Matheson, Ron Petrick, Sharon Goldwater, Caroline Hastings, Victor Lavrenko, Ewan Klein, Henry Thompson, Alex Lascarides, Oliver Lemon, Hiroshi Shimodaira, Simon King, Steve Renals, Jon Oberlander, Claire Grover, Jean Carletta, Mirella Lapata.

Apologies: Frank Keller, Johanna Moore.

2. Cognitive Science at Edinburgh

It was discussed that since the Centre for Cognitive Science became part of Informatics, the label of cognitive science has been underused in the school, although the term is still used in Psychology, Linguistics and other areas of the University. John Henderson from Psychology is leading a launch of Cognitive Science and plans include a website, seminars and possibly a doctoral training centre. In some respects, this may compete with Informatics so it was thought that ICCS/HCRC should get involved and give input into this process and possibly use the initiative to feed into our programmes. It was thought that other institutes in Informatics may be involved including CISA, IANC, IPAB and LFCS.

Discussions are ongoing about the use of HCRC as a focal point for this initiative but it is thought that there are some issues with this. The meeting discussed whether it would be acceptable to try to rename the HCRC but it was thought that this might be problematic.

3. FP7 briefing London 11th December

The upcoming FP7 in London was discussed (see details in appendix A). There is a sector called ICT which has 7 challenges, one of which is cognition, language and other interfaces and robotics. This now appears to have a machine translation section so it was thought that it would be worthwhile for ICCS/HCRC to have a presence at the meeting. Oliver Lemon indicated that he will be attending the January meeting in Luxembourg as he feels that it will be more useful and that there will be a greater discussion on areas that are of interest to the work that we are doing here. It was thought that a number of people from CSTR are also planning to attend. Mark Steedman indicated that Chris Geib may be interested in attending the FP7 meeting in London.

It was generally thought that we should be going to these meetings with a statement about who we are and the work that we do to try and influence people.

ACTION: It was decided that Mark Steedman, Henry Thompson, Jean Carletta, Bonnie Webber, Oliver Lemon and Steve Renals to form a subcommittee to come out with some text that can be used by people attending the FP7 meetings. Caroline Hastings may need to assist Mark with regards to the list of grants.

ACTION: It was thought that Chris Geib should invite Nicola to the seminar series (check details with Jean C)

4. PhD administration in ICCS / New monitoring structure

Hiroshi Shimodaira raised the topic of how the current ICCS monitoring systems for PhD students, e.g. the Draft Dissertation Defence (DDD) and annual review meeting would fit in with the new milestones system that is being introduced by the Informatics Graduate School (see appendix B).

Bonnie Webber noted that the new milestones process is designed so that information about students' progress isn't lost so that the graduate school can see if things are going wrong. Concerns were raised about whether the system is designed to weed out weak students, and about how flexible the new system is. There were also concerns that the new system would entail a considerable amount of extra work and meetings for supervisors.

It was generally thought that ICCS would be able to keep the DDD which would effectively mean that ICCS students would be doing the month 10 milestone "Draft thesis and progress report" earlier than required by the IGS. It was also thought that students should be able to use a poster that they have already made for a conference to count towards their milestones so the new system shouldn't actually be adding to the student's workload.

ACTION: Hiroshi to speak to Frank Keller about updating the ICCS webpages to include the relevant changes of the new milestones timetable.

5. Funding opportunities, applications & awards

A list showing submissions and awards since the last meeting was distributed to the meeting (see appendix C)

The University-wide Digital Economy proposal that is being prepared was briefly discussed.

The meeting also discussed the apparent inconsistency in EPSRC proposals of whether RA's can be PI's. Although it was thought that this should be acceptable, and we have previously had awards where this is the case, it has been the case that some proposals have been rejected because of this.

6. Offices & Noise Levels

The issue of lack of adequate noise insulation between offices was discussed. It was noted that the Forum User Group has raised this as an issue with Gordon Duckett but haven't had a response as yet. It is thought that these kinds of building-wide issues will be dealt with as a whole rather than just dealing with individual cases where people have reported it as a problem.

7. New Staff & Visitors

New Staff:	Sep-08 Harry Halpin (Eduserve)
	Nov-08 Kate Byrne
	Dec-08 Frederick Max-Lino
	Dec-08 Abhishek Arun
	Jan-09 Jingying Chen (ECHOES)
	Apr-09 Mary Ellen Foster (ECHOES)

Current Visitors: Akira Otani (Osaka Gakuin University)
Leo Ferres (Carleton University)
Mark Buckley (Saarland University)
Olga Uryupina (Russian Academy of Science)
Antti Suni (Helsinki University of Technology)
Tuomo Raitio (Helsinki University of Technology)

Future Visitors: Alexander Gruenstein (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)
Kurt Krebsbach (Lawrence University)
Roberto Navigli (University of Rome)

It was noted that the Informatics Forum has a finite number of visitor spaces and that the procedure for the allocation of these is currently under discussion so that these spaces are allocated to those people who will have the maximum beneficial effect for the School. The meeting was reminded that all ICCS/HCRC visitors need to be approved and that we need to check whether there is office space available before they are formally invited to come. Details of any prospective visitor should be emailed to Johanna, Mark and Steve for approval in sufficient time, including the CV for the visitor, and Frederick Max-Lino should be cc'd into the email so that he can check the availability of office space, etc. It was noted that student visitors would normally be expected to be accommodated in vacant PhD office space.

8. ICCS/HCRC Christmas Student/Staff Gathering.

Mark Steedman asked the meeting whether there should be an ICCS/HCRC Christmas event this year, now that Informatics is located in the new building. It was noted that the Informatics Ceilidh is due to take place on the 18th December. The final decision was that ICCS/HCRC would be happy to have a separate event if staff felt that they wanted to have one, on the basis that it would have an open-door policy and that colleagues from other institutes would be welcome to attend.

9. AOB

Bonnie Webber commented that she receives emails from ERI regarding funding opportunities and asked whether other people were also receiving these and whether we should be directing them to find more specific opportunities that are more relevant to ICCS/HCRC. It appears that nobody else present at the meeting is receiving these emails.

10. Date of Next Meeting

It was discussed that the ICCS/HCRC Staff Meeting should be taking place on a more regular basis. It was agreed that in future, a meeting would be scheduled for week 4 of semesters 1 & 2 and then another would take place after the main examinations in "semester 3". The next meeting is therefore scheduled to take place at 1pm on Wednesday 4th February.