

Information Strategy

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Information Strategy

- a) This Information Strategy is intended to promote a set of attitudes towards information use which ensures that:
- information for sharing is well-defined and accessible
 - the quality of information is fit for its purpose
 - all staff know their responsibilities as regards information
 - there is a mechanism for identifying priorities
- b) The Information Strategy is presented here as a statement of principles and goals with an associated implementation plan that outlines projects undertaken in support of those principles and goals. However, it is recognised that the strategy is constantly evolving through the process of implementation and cannot be constrained within a static written framework. The project-based approach to implementation is designed to allow a flexible response to issues arising out of the annual monitoring procedure.

1.2 Scope of the Information Strategy

This strategy aims to cover all areas of the College's work where information is handled, such as:

Learning and Teaching:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student learning Ways of organising and presenting knowledge (i.e. the balance between lectures, tutorials, study packs, etc.) Future developments in the education process Widening access to HE Academic collaboration with other institutions
Performance and Research:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities Inter-disciplinary research Network facilities Marketing and publicity
Management and administration:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff training The decision-making process Prioritisation Monitoring, reporting and evaluation Support of information resources and services

1.3 Monitoring, review and evaluation

- a) The Information Strategy Committee (ISC) was created to formulate an information strategy, to oversee its operation and to monitor and review progress. This it achieves by convening Information Strategy Working Parties (ISWPs) to undertake research, make recommendations, and oversee and report on the implementation of particular projects.
- b) The ISC reports to the College Executive which has sole authority for approving expenditure on information projects, on the basis of the ISC's recommendations.
- c) The Deputy Principal, as the officer with overall responsibility for the College administration and Chair of the ISC, has management oversight of information matters.

- d) Evaluation of the Information Strategy is based on:
- the achievement of targets set for individual projects carried out under its auspices
 - staff and student feedback through the committee, annual monitoring surveys and specific consultation exercises
 - other appropriate performance indicators which reflect the success of the College in communicating its mission and exploiting information (e.g. application rates, financial performance, no. of successful funding bids)
- e) The implementation plan for the Information Strategy is considered annually. The full strategy is due for its next review in October 2005.

2. CONTEXT

2.1 External context

In 1994 the Joint Information Systems Committee¹ (JISC) established an Information Strategy Steering Group, marking a shift in emphasis from a narrowly technological view of its remit to a more holistic approach to the information needs of Higher Education institutions (HEIs). Using a group of exemplar institutions, it explored the potential for HEIs to produce information strategies which could promote and direct the better exploitation of information. This project led to the publication of JISC guidelines (1995, revised version 1998) for developing an information strategy and a recommendation that all HEIs establish an Information Strategy Committee.

Reinforcing JISC's work, in 1997 the report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education chaired by Sir Ron Dearing recommended that all institutions should have an information strategy to address the fundamental changes it identified in the Higher Education environment and the technology revolution.

2.2 Internal context

a) Institutional change

The period since 1994 has been, for Trinity, one of extensive and rapid development, much of which has been in areas which impact most directly on information management. The most significant changes have been:

➤ **Relocation to Greenwich**

Planning for and achieving (in 2001) the relocation of the College has dominated institutional thinking over the past decade, during which time the project placed a major demand on the College's information gathering and dissemination capacity, internally and externally. Moreover, the altered physical situation of the institution has been of obvious relevance when attempting to define an information strategy.

➤ **Expanding student numbers**

While Trinity remains among the smallest HEIs in terms of student numbers, percentage growth has been marked. The headcount has increased by nearly 50% since 1994.

➤ **Expanding and changing course provision**

Both the number and nature of the courses offered has altered. In particular, the move from exclusively internal diplomas to a more diverse provision including externally validated degree programmes has led to more complex documentation and reporting requirements.

➤ **Increasing external demands**

In common with the rest of the sector, Trinity has faced ever-growing accountability demands and statistical obligations from government and its agencies (e.g. HESA and HESES returns, QAA documentation).

¹ The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) is a sub-division of the Funding Councils ('joint' because it works to all three Funding Councils - England, Scotland and Wales, as well as advising the Department of Education in Northern Ireland (DENI). JISC was originally concerned with information technology and the setting up of local, regional and national networks, but it has developed its remit to consider information as a whole.

➤ **Management/organisational restructuring**

The College has undergone wholesale management restructuring in the past five years, partly in response to advice from external auditors. The committee structure has also been transformed to take account of the new academic offerings and organisational configuration.

b) **Current delivery mechanisms**

The College currently uses predominantly the following vehicles for the delivery of information:

Internally: E-mail, noticeboards, personal meetings
Externally: Publications – magazine, prospectus (including CD-Rom), diary of events
Website

c) **Strengths**

As a small monotechnic, Trinity has some advantages in the communication and management of information when compared to its university colleagues. It has a total student population of only around 600, all of whom are currently based at a single site; are studying within the same subject area; and are receiving a weekly one-to-one lesson. It is thus able to maintain a strong collegiate identity and close links between staff and students. Informal communication channels have traditionally been strong and, in recent years, staff and student representation has been reinforced on all committees to provide a commensurately solid official network for information flow.

Its size and specialism also reduces to some extent the volume of relevant external information and simplifies certain sector returns (for example, HESA and HESSES).

d) **Challenges**

Against this, there are institutional factors which have had an adverse impact on the effective use of information, most notably:

➤ **Under-resourcing**

The College has only recently been accorded a funding-level equal to that of the other HEFCE-funded conservatoires and limited resources have necessarily been targeted directly at the learning and teaching experience (one-to-one tuition, performance and faculty studies etc.). This has led until recently to a degree of under-investment in ICT infrastructure and staffing.

➤ **Professorial staff employment patterns**

The predominance of hourly-paid professorial staff, the majority of whom are pursuing performance careers as their major employment, can be a barrier to successful communication. Such staff have neither office facilities at College with personal telephone and IT equipment nor regular hours of attendance, and are therefore not easily contactable by the standard communication routes used by administrative staff (e-mail and internal phone and postal systems).

2.3 **Benefits of an information strategy**

Every facet of a college's life involves information, so an information strategy can be an all-encompassing *modus operandi* for an institution, or a way of remedying specific defects. JISC see the benefits of an information strategy as enabling an institution to:

- avoid fragmentation within the academic community
- develop student-centred learning
- prevent misuse of IT systems
- change attitudes
- make efficient use of resources and space
- provide guidelines for the use of IT
- make cost savings

3. DEVELOPMENT OF TRINITY'S INFORMATION STRATEGY

- 3.1 The College began work on the consideration and production of an information strategy at the start of the 1998-1999 academic year when an Information Strategy Working Group (ISWG) was constituted. The group was chaired by the Deputy Principal and had representation from all areas of the College, including the student body. The terms of reference for the group were:
- a) To consider and determine the information needs of the College, with particular regard to:
 - The College's mission
 - Teaching and learning
 - Information technology
 - Human resources
 - Administration
 - 'The student experience'
 - b) To review the College's internal and external communications mechanisms and strategies, and to identify best practice in these areas.
 - c) To identify and recommend responsibility for information and communication matters.
 - d) To draft an information strategy reflecting the areas above which will be of benefit in the efficient management of the College.
 - e) To report on matters relating to information and communication which are in need of urgent attention, with recommendations for action, by 30 June 1999.
 - f) To produce a final report by 31 January 2000.
- 3.2 The group approached its task by focussing principally on two pieces of work: the production of a 'vision statement' which sought to encapsulate the ideal state to which the College should aspire; and the analysis of the 'lifecycle' of a typical student to identify the information and communication processes and needs.
- 3.3 A management re-organisation in the summer of 1999 resulted in the working group being placed in abeyance before it had completed its programme of work. However, it did formulate the vision statement which was eventually adopted by the Information Strategy Committee and is reprinted as section 5.
- 3.4 A full Information Strategy Committee (ISC) succeeded the working group during 1999-2000 (current terms of reference and membership can be seen in Appendix A). During this and the 2000-2001 academic year, the College was preoccupied with the relocation project, and discussion and determination of infrastructural ICT needs were prominent in the work of the Relocation Steering Group, Executive and Relocation Forum. It was deemed impractical to produce a documented information strategy in advance of the move since the College's estate and equipment situation were crucial to the strategy's operation and could not be fully anticipated before occupation. Thus the Committee met infrequently and concentrated on input to relocation planning in respect of information needs.
- 3.5 In 2001-2002, with relocation achieved, the Committee adopted a more active role and reconvened a streamlined version of the ISWG (now including a Board member) to undertake further consultation and research into the information practice and requirements of staff and students in the College's new home. It also delegated the Planning Manager and College Secretary to draft this strategy, drawing on all the findings of the ISWG since its inception.
- 3.6 The strategy was approved by the Information Strategy Committee and Executive in November 2002.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4.1 The College aims to promote effective information management through the adoption and dissemination of the following guiding principles which draw on recognised best practice.

4.2 Accuracy

Information should be accurate, complete and fit for its purpose. To minimise the risk of inconsistency, data should as far as possible be stored in a single location under the ownership of a named postholder. Duplication of records should be avoided and authority for updating should be clearly defined.

4.3 Timeliness

Information should be provided to those who require it, internally and externally, in good time, through the most appropriate media and in the right format.

4.4 Accessibility

Information should be freely available within the organisation via defined and easily accessed routes. Where information is restricted for reasons of security or confidentiality, the basis for such decisions should be transparent and fully explained to interested parties.

4.5 Accountability

Staff and students should take responsibility for information under their control and be able to account, where required, for its use, alteration and dissemination.

4.6 Legal and ethical standards

All information processing should be undertaken in compliance with the legal requirements set out in the following acts:

- The Data Protection Act (1998)
- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Copyright, Design and Patents Act (1988)
- The Computer Misuse Act (1990)

In addition to the legislative requirements, all members of the College community should observe any internal guidelines and codes of practice and be encouraged to exercise the highest ethical standards in relation to information creation and communication.

4.7 Information and communication technology (ICT)

ICT should be adequate to the College's information needs and, as far as possible, match current sector standards. Systems should be subject to on-going evaluation which takes account of user feedback. Appropriate training should be provided to staff and students in the efficient use of electronic means of information research, storage, manipulation and communication.

4.8 Culture

Information should be valued as a corporate resource and asset, and all members of the College community should actively seek out, share and protect information relevant to the performance of their duties.

5. INFORMATION GOALS: THE VISION STATEMENT

5.1 Through the application of the above principles, the College seeks to achieve the operational state described in this vision statement:

The College internally

- Trinity's mission, strategic aims and objectives are clearly stated and readily available to, and understood by, staff and students
- The structures and processes by which Trinity operates, and the roles and objectives of individuals and individual departments are open, transparent and understood by all
- Good communication, amongst and between staff and students, is recognised as crucial to the successful function of the College and is given due priority
- Data on student numbers, student choice, recruitment, resource requirements and allocation, course costing, spending and the use of space is available as appropriate
- The Information Strategy Committee continually monitors and reviews the information needs of the College

The College externally

- The distinctive mission and achievements of Trinity are presented to prospective students and their advisors, opinion formers, policy makers, funding bodies, the press, friends, alumni and the local community
- Comprehensive, accurate and compellingly presented information is readily available in printed and/or electronic media to prospective students and their advisors
- All external documents conform to the Trinity house style and are of good quality
- All staff are properly briefed to enable them to promote Trinity to external audiences
- A regularly updated database of PR and press contacts, alumni and donors is maintained
- The information needs of visitors and telephone and e-mail enquirers are efficiently met

Learning and teaching

- Students and staff are confident and independent in handling information, in electronic and other forms
- Students and staff have ready access to information on courses, curricula, and other learning and development opportunities, both internal and external; and habitually seek out such information
- The library serves to provide information, knowledge and resources to support principal study, performance and academic studies across the College
- Mechanisms exist to enable standards to be compared within and between courses, and with comparable institutions
- Students and teaching staff contribute fully to course monitoring and development

Performance and research

- Information and data on performance and composition opportunities, events and achievements is widely available
- The College fosters a culture in which research, whether through performance, composition or academic work, and teaching go hand in hand
- Information on the research output of Trinity staff; the current work of individuals; and collaborative projects and opportunities is available

Administration

- There is a clear understanding and realisation of information needs, ownership and responsibilities; and minimal duplication of data
- Timetable and room-booking information is readily available and accessible
- Appropriate ICT systems are in place and e-mail and use of an Intranet are standard methods of communication
- It is easy to meet internal and external information requirements efficiently

6. LINKS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

6.1 Strategic Plan and mission

The College's ability to collate, analyse, connect and communicate information efficiently is a key factor in the successful delivery of all elements of the Strategic Plan. The Information Strategy is intended to ensure that corporate priorities are fully understood and supported throughout the organisation; that the information necessary to make informed strategic choices is readily available; and that the presentation of the College to external stakeholders is convincing. The Information Strategy Committee provides a point of intersection for the various College strategies which facilitates a coherent approach to institutional management in which the wider implications of initiatives are appreciated and accommodated.

6.2 Learning and teaching strategy

a) Trinity is a learning and teaching community and, as such, the transfer of information between learners, their peers and their teachers is integral to its purpose. Many of the initiatives undertaken or planned under the auspices of this strategy, therefore, directly support the College's learning and teaching objectives as outlined in the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2002-2005. These include projects relating to:

- Library provision
- ICT for use in teaching and in learner support, including provision for e-learning
- Student and course handbooks
- Staff and student IT training

b) One of the aims of the Learning and Teaching Strategy is to produce graduates who are practised in the use of ICT and confident in the presentation of information to diverse audiences.

6.3 Human resources strategy

a) The Information Strategy supports the Human Resources Strategy by:

- promoting a consultative and inclusive culture within the staff community
- ensuring fit for purpose management information is available to enable staff to fulfil their duties efficiently
- ensuring the availability of relevant contextual information and encouraging awareness of external benchmarks in respect of staffing levels, salaries, terms and conditions etc.;

b) The Human Resources Strategy enables the implementation of the Information Strategy by:

- prioritising staff development including training in ICT use
- introducing mechanisms to improve communication and generate identification with the institution so that staff willingly share information with their colleagues

6.4 Widening participation strategy

The Information Strategy will advance the aims of the College's Widening Participation Strategy to create a diverse student population; improve retention and success rates; and enhance student employability by enabling:

a) the development of innovative methods of teaching and of learning support which attract new constituencies of students and help them succeed e.g. web-based support for distance learners;

- b) the convincing presentation of the benefits of higher education, and of study at Trinity in particular, to under-represented groups, including clear information about available support, financial matters etc.;
- c) the co-ordination of the various strategies and activities within the College which seek to widen participation.

6.5 Research strategy

Trinity is at an early stage in the formal documentation and co-ordinated oversight of what has always been considerable research activity undertaken by staff and students. As such, the Information Strategy is a key change mechanism to facilitate the creation of a research culture and to ensure that appropriate organisational structures and systems are in place to support research. The strategy will seek to:

- provide easy access to the necessary data sources (electronic and physical) for researchers
- collate information regarding current and planned research work of staff
- establish internal communication networks for research staff and students

6.6 Financial and estates strategies

The financial and estates strategies are premised on accurate management information being available in a timely manner and on the identification and analysis of relevant contextual data. The Information Strategy helps to achieve these aims.

6.7 Equal opportunities and associated policies

- a) The Information Strategy assists in the successful operation of the Equal Opportunities and associated policies (e.g. Race Equality policy, harassment policy, staff and student recruitment policies) by:
 - ensuring that appropriate systems are in place for the collection, analysis and dissemination of monitoring data;
 - ensuring the availability of relevant contextual information and encouraging awareness of external benchmarks in respect of equal opportunities;
 - guaranteeing that the legal requirements are known and observed in relation to equal opportunities;
 - promoting understanding and support of equal opportunities aims within the College community.
- b) The College's commitment to equal opportunities in turn informs its thinking in respect of the Information Strategy, particularly when determining appropriate communication routes and mechanisms (internally and externally) and shaping the image the College presents.

7. 2002-03 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: INFORMATION PROJECTS

7.1 Completed projects

As may be discerned from the description of its development in section 2, the College's Information Strategy has operated in practice in advance of its formal documentation. Thus, a number of information-related projects have already been undertaken, some under the direct auspices of the Information Strategy Committee and others informed by its deliberations, most significant of which have been:

a) Creation of Jerwood Library of the Performing Arts

The importance of the College library as the major information resource for both learning and teaching and research has been recognised through targeted investment over the past decade. More recently, in planning the relocation, the aim was to create a facility which would bring together the College's various research collections and curricular material as well as improve the provision of study space and computer workstations. This was achieved through the creation of the Jerwood Library of the Performing Arts in 2001 which incorporates both Trinity's collections and the Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection.

b) ICT plan (phase one)

The first phase of the College's current ICT plan, completed by the start of the 2002-2003 academic year, has been to establish an acceptable base-level position, post-relocation. This has involved:

- the appointment of a full-time IT Manager
- the replacement of the College's PC stock with new equipment
- the reconfiguration of the College's network servers and migration of individual users to the new network
- the installation of a firewall and establishment of appropriate network security protocols
- the re-launch of the College's website with the facility to update the site internally
- the installation of plasma screen noticeboards around the College
- the installation of a new accounting software package
- the installation of a new telephone system with the necessary equipment upgrades
- the transfer from Pegasus to the Microsoft Outlook e-mail system

c) Committee review and re-organisation

The Board representative on the Information Strategy Committee completed a review of committee operations and structure and recommended amendments to practice which were approved by both the ISC and Executive in June 2002, and will be adopted for the 2002-2003 academic year. An updated guidance booklet has been produced for all staff and student representatives outlining the new structure, committee memberships and terms of reference. The booklet also gives advice on good practice in the conduct of meeting, covering the role of the chair and the secretary.

d) Information survey/research exercise

A major research project was instigated by the Information Strategy Committee in the 2001-2002 academic year to investigate staff and student information needs and use in the College's new environment. The Information Strategy Working Party (ISWP) conducted both a paper-based survey of a diverse representative group of staff and students (past and present) and follow-up interviews with respondents. Findings and associated recommendations were reported to the ISC in June 2002 and informed future and on-going implementation projects as described below.

e) Staff handbook

A new staff handbook has been produced, bringing together relevant policies and procedures as well as guidance on terms and conditions in a single, user-friendly document. As at September 2002, the handbook has been approved by Executive and is in the consultation process with staff representatives. It is scheduled for issue early in the new academic year.

f) Communication meetings

A programme of all staff communication meetings has been initiated and members of Executive have been required to hold regular meetings with teams under their management.

7.2 Current projects

The following are Information Strategy projects currently in progress or due to commence shortly.

7.2.1 Data systems project

a) Background

The College currently uses a number of different software packages for the storage and manipulation of electronic data (e.g. MS Access, Raisers Edge, Scala, Celcat), some shared between departments, some specific to a particular area of work. It is clear that:

- there is much duplication of information across the systems but data is separately entered and updated in most instances, leading to potential inconsistencies;
- there is a widespread requirement for staff to access information beyond their 'home' departmental systems but the current configurations do not facilitate this;
- some of the packages, as presently used and configured, do not easily provide necessary management information with the speed and accuracy required.

This project has therefore been instigated for an external consultant to consider the College's needs in terms of data systems.

b) Aims

- To establish current practice in respect of the use of electronic data systems and identify shortcomings in either procedures or technological specifications
- To assess the benefits of replacing some of the present systems, in particular whether it would be desirable to purchase a proven student records or management information package
- To make recommendations as to the reconfiguration of current systems and desirable changes to working practice in the use of data systems
- To draw up technical specifications as necessary

c) Project management and timescale

- Project manager - external IT/business systems analyst
- Timescale – August 2001 to December 2002

d) Targets

- Initial business analysis and positioning of user requirements completed by June 2002 (*achieved*)
- Complete technical and operational analysis produced by December 2002 with recommendations for action
- Assuming recommendations accepted, implementation to start January 2003 with complete functionality by commencement of 2003-2004 academic year

7.2.2 Widening Participation data project

a) Background

Although undertaken under the auspices of the Widening Participation Group, this is an information-related project and thus relevant both to the Widening Participation and Information Strategies.

b) Aims

- To identify the data requirements which ideally should be met to enable the formulation, implementation and monitoring of an effective Widening Participation Strategy
- To collate the information relevant to the College's widening participation objectives which is currently held on applicants, students and staff
- To advise the WPG as to where gaps exist in knowledge and recommend revisions to administrative systems to address these gaps
- To research what data is available from external sources (e.g. central and local government bodies, commercial research organisations, charities) which could support the WP Strategy

c) Project management and timescale

- Project manager – Planning Manager
- Timescale – March 2002 to December 2002

d) Targets

- Complete locality and ward deprivation analysis of current English undergraduate student population and of applicants for entry in September 2002 by July 2002 (*achieved*)
- Produce monitoring form (social class, school of origin and ethnicity) for use at enrolment in September 2002 and for applicants for entry in September 2003
- Submit final report with recommendations to WP Group by December 2002

7.2.3 ICT plan phase two

a) Background

Following the establishment under phase one of a stable and up to date baseline ICT infrastructure (i.e. hardware, network, software) and appropriate technical maintenance systems, the need now is to assess how this provision can be developed and utilised most effectively to support the College's wider strategic goals. The information research exercise identified some feeling that ICT development took place in isolation and was not yet fully addressing the priorities of staff and students. It was therefore recommended that the ISWP should work with the IT Manager to ensure IT plans appropriately reflect both corporate objectives and staff and student demands.

b) Aims

- To establish through consultation between academic, administrative and technical staff the priorities for ICT development in the short to medium term
- To address particularly the creation of a College intranet and its potential use for staff and student communications and for learning and teaching, including distance and e-learning (drawing on earlier work on the TRILZ website)
- To confirm staff and student training requirements in relation to current and planned ICT developments

c) Project management and timescale

- Project management: IT Manager
- Timescale: on-going

d) Targets

- Preliminary intranet design to be presented in November 2002
- Other targets will be established on an on-going basis according to priorities identified

7.2.4 College bulletin

a) Background and aims

The desirability of a regular College bulletin which could act as a key communication tool for staff was noted almost from the inception of the Information Strategy Working Group and an internal newsletter was produced for a brief period before relocation. However, its production ceased following the departure of the member of staff responsible and subsequent re-organisation of departmental responsibilities. Widespread support for the reintroduction of the bulletin was expressed during the information research exercise and the ISC agreed this as a priority in June 2002.

It was agreed that the bulletin should focus on the dissemination of essential information such as:

- College policies and procedure
- new appointments and staff changes
- committee decisions
- student concert/performance information

b) Project management

Responsibility for the production of the bulletin has been assigned to the College Secretary.

c) Targets

To publish the first bulletin in November 2002 and termly thereafter at the mid-term point.

7.2.5 Student Services Forum

a) Background and aims

The Board review of committee structures concluded that the Welfare Committee was not operating effectively and it was decided to discontinue its operation. However, a need was identified for a forum at which student views on student services could be expressed and addressed.

b) Project management

Project manager – Warden
Reporting line – via course committees to Academic Board

c) Targets

Termly meetings from 2002-2003 academic year

7.2.6 Video conferencing

a) Background and aims

This is a CADISE collaborative project to install video conferencing equipment in all of the partner institutions. Initially the facility is envisioned as a management tool to enhance institutional collaboration. However, it is intended to develop its use in learning and teaching and joint academic ventures.

b) Project management and target

Project manager – Lance Wicks (CADISE)/IT Manager (TCM)
Target date for functionality – December 2002

Appendix A: Information Strategy Committee Terms of Reference and Membership

Reporting to Executive

Chair: Deputy Principal
Secretary: College Secretary

Terms of reference

- To formulate and recommend to the Executive Committee an information and communications strategy.
- To monitor and review the effectiveness of how information about Trinity is communicated both internally and externally.
- To make recommendations to the Executive Committee on the allocation of resources for information and communications purposes.
- To oversee the communications and information technology needs of the College and make recommendations to the Executive Committee on communications and information technology matters.
- To promote good practice in management of information and communications across the institution.

Membership

Academic Registrar
Assistant Principal (Academic)
Assistant Principal (External Relations)
Assistant Principal (Resources)
Chief Librarian
College Secretary
Deputy Principal
Director of Development
Director of Junior Department
Director of Performance
Independent Board Member
IT Manager
HR Manager
Marketing & Press Manager
Planning Manager
Student Union representative
Teaching Staff Assoc representative

(Committee members may send alternates)

Quorum

A minimum of one half of the membership

Appendix B: Data Protection guidelines

Introduction

The Data Protection Act 1998 came into force on 1st March 2000. The importance of the general principles of the "Act" cannot be over-stressed as it has a potentially far-reaching effect on all departments within the College. It is, therefore, important that all staff are aware of the effect of the principles of the Act, which govern the collection, retention and transmission of information held about living persons and the rights of access by such persons to this information.

The Act concerns personal privacy and regulates how personal data (i.e. information about individuals) may be collected, retained, stored and disclosed.

The Data Protection Act 1998 applies to all personal information, whether it be held in manual files or on computer. Individuals will be entitled to see all information about them.

Members of staff should be open with individuals about information held about them and exercise extreme caution about passing on such information to third parties.

Principles of Data Protection

Personal data covers both facts and opinions about the individual. It also includes information regarding the intentions of the data controller toward the individual. With processing, the definition is now far wider than in the previous 1984 Act

All processing of personal data must be notified to the Data Protection Commissioner. Anyone processing personal data must comply with the eight enforceable principles of good practice. Staff must comply with the rules on how data can be legally processed. "**Processing**" can be taken to mean; obtaining, recording, holding or storing information and carrying out any work on the data, including adaptation, alteration, use, disclosure, transfer, erasure and destruction.

The eight Data Protection Principles can be summarised as follows:

1. Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully.
2. Personal data shall be held only for one or more specified and lawful purposes and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or purposes.
3. Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is processed.
4. Personal data shall be accurate and where necessary kept up to date.
5. Personal data processed for any purpose shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose. (see section 25 on Document Retention)
6. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subject under the Data Protection Act 1998
7. Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of the data.
8. Personal data shall not be transferred to a country outside of the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedom of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

Guidelines for Application of Data Protection Principles

Principle 1 No personal data should be obtained or held unless the individual has given consent. In the case of sensitive data (e.g. concerning race, criminal offences, sexuality, physical or mental health, political opinion, religious belief, trade union membership) specific consent must be obtained i.e. the individual must be informed that this information is being held, be told the reason for it and give specific consent.

Photographs count as sensitive data as they may reveal information about an individual's race. Permission should always be obtained to keep a copy or use a photograph.

- Principle 2** Data obtained for one purpose must not be used for another purpose (e.g. Staff/student lists may not be used for commercial mail shots)
- Principle 3** Data about an individual should not be collected if it is irrelevant or not particularly necessary for the particular purpose for which it was obtained. Any such information that is excessive to the purposes it was obtained should be either deleted or destroyed.
- Principle 4** Data kept for a significant time period must be reviewed and, if necessary, updated. No data should be kept unless it is reasonable to assume its accuracy.
- Principle 5** Regular reviews of data should take place in order to ensure that it is not kept for longer than required. Section 25 contains guidelines on time periods for document and data retention.
- Principle 6** The rights of individuals must always be a primary consideration in respect of their data. Consent should be obtained if data is to be kept and used for any purposes. Individuals are entitled to know what data is being kept about them and that such data is never disclosed to anyone outside or inside the College who does not require to know that data for their job without the individual's specific consent.
- Principle 7** Security of data must be foremost in the minds of staff at all times. Trinity College of Music is reviewing the security of data on its computers and will take steps to initiate procedures to protect the security of such data should the current methods prove insufficient. Staff should at all times seek to prevent unauthorised access to such data by such means necessary (e.g. passwords, lock and key etc).
- Principle 8** No data can be transferred outside the European Economic Agreement (i.e. most of Europe) without the specific consent of the individual. This is particularly important when putting information on the worldwide web. Consent must therefore first be obtained.
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Rights of the Individual

All individuals have the right to see personal information kept about them, whether in computer or manual form. This includes student files, staff files, student lists, staff lists. The information kept might also cover former staff, former students, job applicants, consultants, members of the public etc.

Two general rules to follow when compiling information for retention are:

- 1. Never give out or transfer to anyone else data about an individual unless there is a very good reason to do so and the recipient is authorised to receive it**
- 2. Never write anything about anyone that is to be retained in College files and that you might be embarrassed for them to read.**

Appendix C: Joint Academic Network (JANET) - Acceptable Use Policy

Scope

This policy applies to all staff employed by Trinity College of Music.

Background and definitions

- a) 'JANET' (the Joint Academic Network) is the name given to the collection of networking services and facilities that support the communication requirements of the UK education and research community.
 - b) 'UKERNA' (the UK Education and Research Networking Association) is the trading name of the company contracted by the Higher Education Funding Council for England for the provision of the JANET service.
 - c) All User Organizations have a responsibility to ensure that members of their own user communities use JANET services in an acceptable manner and in accordance with current legislation. Trinity College of Music is a User Organization
 - d) The definitions of what is acceptable and unacceptable use below are exactly as laid down by the Higher Education Funding Council for England.
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Acceptable Use

- a) A User Organization may use JANET for the purpose of interworking with other User Organizations, and with organizations attached to networks that are reachable via interworking agreements operated by UKERNA. All use of JANET is subject to payment of the appropriate charges in force during the period of service. Any provision of service must be authorized in advance.
 - b) Subject to the following paragraphs, JANET may be used for any legal activity that is in furtherance of the aims and policies of the User Organization.
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Unacceptable Use

JANET may not be used for any of the following:

- a) The creation or transmission (other than for properly supervised and lawful research purposes) of any offensive, obscene or indecent images, data or other material, or any data capable of being resolved into obscene or indecent images or material;
- b) The creation or transmission of material which is designed or likely to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety;
- c) The creation or transmission of defamatory material;
- d) The transmission of material such that this infringes the copyright of another person;
- e) The transmission of unsolicited commercial or advertising material either to other User Organizations or to organizations connected to other networks;
- f) Deliberate unauthorized access to facilities or services accessible via JANET;
- g) Deliberate activities with any of the following characteristics:

- wasting staff effort or networked resources, including time on end systems accessible via JANET and the effort of staff involved in the support of those systems
- corrupting or destroying other users' data
- violating the privacy of other users
- disrupting the work of other users
- using JANET in a way that denies service to other users (for example, deliberate or reckless overloading of access links or of switching equipment)
- continuing to use an item of networking software or hardware after UKERNA has requested that use cease because it is causing disruption to the correct functioning of JANET
- other misuse of JANET or networked resources, such as the introduction of "viruses"

Where JANET is being used to access another network, any abuse of the acceptable use policy of that network will be regarded as unacceptable use of JANET.

Warning

Any infringement of this policy may be regarded as a disciplinary matter.

Further information

This document is based on the full JANET Acceptable Use Policy, published by UKERNA at:
<http://www.ja.net/documents/use.html>