ITAC Sub-Committee

Software Licensing

Final Report January, 2014

Membership

The sub-committee regarding software licensing membership included Becky Carr, College of Education and Human Development (chair); Bill Chollett, Library; Derek Groh, College of Architecture; Jeff Skelton, College of Veterinary Medicine, Romona Stites, TAMU Software Center.

Charge

The charge of the software subcommittee is to create a plan to implement and finance software shared service for the TAMU College Station campus. The goal is to have the service substantially implemented in >85% of use cases (Initial Report December 1, 2012)

Deliverables of the committee include:

1. Recommendation of service platform, vendor or vendors (if applicable), infrastructure requirements and software including projected costs for initial implementation and maintenance for 5 years based upon current student staff and faculty growth levels.

2. Recommendation of financial plan to support the shared service including initial steps to setup fiscal controls, processes to monitor and collect revenue, and reporting. The financial plan should provide several scenarios for local groups to fund initiatives with various resources including monetary, personnel, and/or work in kind.

3. Recommendation of a governing mechanism or body to resolve issues with the shared service as needed.

4. If needed, a recommendation of local group responsibilities to administer the shared service to their customers. A quantitative value should be placed on this work which should offset the overall cost and chargeback of the service.

5. An evaluation of the overall gains and losses as a result of implementing the shared service. Metrics may include costs, personnel, efficiency, effectiveness, quality of service, or new services. The evaluation should be considered from both the local and university level. Gains and losses that cannot be objectively measured should be listed separately from those that can.

6. A recommendation for a timeline to implement the plan.

Background

ITAC has attempted on several occasions to attempt to assist with the centralization and purchase of software used by multiple units on campus. The cost center nature of the TAMU Software
Center often precludes the option of marketing a university license for specific software if it can be purchased less expensively by any customer. Given that scenario several ITAC members have joined together repeatedly to gain University licenses for software and shared the expense. The need for a centralized service to allow for electronic purchase of software is a critical need for the University community.

Recommendations

**Purchase/Negotiation** Utilize centralized negotiation and purchase of software licenses (through the TAMU Software Center). Possibilities of bulk purchases for the university and possibly the system might improve license costs.

**Automated group purchases/distribution/management** Group purchases need to be automated similar to the current purchases for individuals. This automated system would also allow for the distribution of licenses to individuals at the division, college or department level to provide for easier reporting and documenting of software on individual computers. CIS is in the planning stages of utilizing Service Now to accomplish this task. A project manager has already been established and is a top priority as soon as instances for other partners are set up. Timeline for this project is 12-18 months.

**Establish an advisory group** that would assist the TAMU Software Center in the negotiation process, the identification and prioritization of software needed as an on-going function. This group will also serve as advisory to the development project in Service Now, providing input to the needs and functionality of the product.

**Positives**
- Discounted software license prices
- Advisory group can provide information, prioritization and feedback for the centralized purchasing office
- Allows for the automation of purchase and distribution of licenses
- Allows divisions, colleges, and or departments to run reports to assist them in tracking software purchases and distribution.

**Possible concern**
- Possible difficulty in direct software support to the decentralized units