Stakeholder Forum – 27 January 2015

The Royal Society, London

Welcome

Chair Paul Layzell, Jisc trustee and principal of Royal Holloway, University of London, welcomed everyone to the forum. The forum is an important part of Jisc’s governance arrangements and will continue to evolve as a format as a key part of our overall engagement approach; there is more about the aims and objectives of the stakeholder forum here. Paul Layzell invited participants to help shape Jisc’s future developments through round table discussions, lunchtime networking opportunities, and breakout group sessions. There would also be more informal opportunities to continue talking to Jisc executive staff and trustees on a one-to-one basis after the formal event.

117 people registered for the event, of which 94 people attended on the day. This is a breakdown of registrations by background of participant:

- Owners (UUK, AoC), 4
- FE, 26
- Sixth Form Colleges, 4
- Specialist Colleges, 1
- Other stakeholder groups, 17
- Jisc exec, 8
- Jisc trustees, 4
- Funders (DELNI, HEFCE, Welsh Gov, BIS), 5
- HE, 48
- Other stakeholder groups, 17
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- Funders (DELNI, HEFCE, Welsh Gov, BIS), 5
- FE, 26
- Sixth Form Colleges, 4
- Specialist Colleges, 1
- Other stakeholder groups, 17

How have we done?

Participants had been invited to reflect on what Jisc meant to their organisation prior to the event and to bring to the forum ‘an example of a Jisc solution that has helped your organisation over the past year’, and ‘information about something that you wish Jisc could have done for you over the past year, or that you would like Jisc to do for you in the future’. They were invited to record their responses and then discuss them with their neighbours. Responses have been collated and analysed and a ‘you said, we’re doing’ conclusions report produced. The feedback has been shared with relevant colleagues in the organisation in order that follow up actions can be taken accordingly.
Chief executive Martyn Harrow began by introducing Jisc’s annual review film. During his annual review presentation he reminded participants that Jisc is wholly biased to the sector’s needs, dedicating our funds to working with the sector, for the sector’s benefit. Initially, Jisc was fragmented, committee based and executed its work through numerous organisations. This model wouldn’t work, and we needed to become more focussed and more efficient. We have been working to get Jisc to the right size, scale, skills and shape to deliver what’s needed. Through turbulent times: we have brought together numerous services without their own finance or other systems, during which we had to maintain very tight financial control. We have continued to focus on, and optimise, the services themselves, asking:

- Are we doing the right things?
- Can we do them better?
- Can we do them more effectively?

Martyn Harrow emphasised that Jisc will continue to address these questions and transform, focussing in 2015 on:

- Making sure we get engagement with our stakeholders right
- Demonstrating our value and efficiency
- Expanding and developing our technology presence to ensure continued value to the community
- Continuing to shape Jisc to ensure that we do what we do better, and for less.

He concluded the session by showing Jisc’s key achievements film. A short Q&A session followed: a question was asked regarding where the staff and resources costs were in the financial information shown. Martyn Harrow explained that these costs were included within the figures shown. The intention was to show the overall financial picture rather than staffing costs, particularly because of the reorganisation that has recently taken place, i.e. going from a large number of hosts to Jisc employing all the staff. However, he agreed that this was an important point and one which will be addressed going forward. A further question was regarding what would be replacing the regional support centres. This would be covered in the following session.

Where are we now?

Heather MacDonald, Jisc trustee and chief executive of The Sheffield College, chaired this session. She outlined that its purpose was for participants to hear about Jisc’s customer and stakeholder engagement plans and for Jisc to hear from participants about how we can work in partnership to ensure that their universities and colleges get the most from what we offer.

Martyn Harrow showed participants a diagrammatic representation of Jisc’s new engagement architecture. There are many interactions on many different levels: at the operational level we are trying to ensure that there is a single point of contact for every single college and university. He emphasised the governance layer, which ensures that Jisc is owned by the sector.

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1 See the outcomes and resources from our last meeting section on the stakeholder forum page on our website for the films and presentations shown on the day.
Robert Haymon Collins, Jisc’s executive director customer experience, then gave his presentation, engaging across the UK. He showed that a key component of Jisc’s engagement is the shaping of our customer services into one customer services base, a complex process owing to the number of different employing organisations involved. He explained that the new Jisc is led by our customers and our need to understand them, saying:

- These changes all centre around ensuring that Jisc is one organisation that is easier for you to do business with and can better understand your challenges
- Across the UK there are six different regions and nations, each of which is led by a head of region supported by three groups of people: account managers, subject specialists and community engagement managers
- There will also be a single customer contact number and unified web presence, enabling you to quickly get to the people who can help you
- At the base of our engagement approach are our individual relationships with you and how we work with you in this architecture. You need to see how your views feed through this architecture and shape the services that we offer
- We want to help you to advocate the benefits of Jisc across your organisations, so that you can act as a champion for Jisc and so that your views and concerns are heard at the national level.

A short Q&A session followed: the first welcomed the new account management structure but asked that stakeholders be involved in the development of products and services, emphasising that these will be stronger and more likely to be used if customers drive their development. Martyn Harrow fully concurred with this and that it should be a measure of success. He also suggested, however, that there were a few occasions when Jisc would want to act on behalf of the sector.

A further question was regarding the role of the London Metropolitan Network (LMN). It was made clear that the LMN no longer runs a network but provides training and professional development services.

**Round table discussions: how can we work better with universities and colleges to ensure they really do get the benefit from Jisc?**

In this session, people discussed the following two questions with the others on their tables:

- What do you need from Jisc to ensure that you get the most value from what we offer?
- How can we work together, in partnership, to ensure that you get the best from us?

The feedback from each twelve tables is summarised below.

**First table (mainly FE):**
- We need increased broadband / bandwidth
- How can Jisc help deliver FELTAG (the Further Education Learning Technology Action Group)?
• We want tools and mechanisms to inform pedagogy, and can these be simplified and shared?

Second table (mainly HE):
• We would like a clearer, simpler, more focussed account of Jisc’s portfolio of services and how they are being used by the community
• We want information about analytics and their potential for the community
• Jisc should build on its potential for leveraging suppliers.

Third table (mainly FE)
• We need a simple, clearer set of communications regarding what Jisc has to offer
• We would like health checks – so that organisations can see where they are in order to help them develop
• We need more communication regarding what’s on offer from Jisc
• We need to see how we can use the Jisc offer to benefit students.

Fourth table (mainly FE)
• We need Jisc to be aware of its disparate stakeholders and we need to know what is going on in these disparate groups. We need to be kept abreast of what each other are doing – and not to lose this knowledge sharing about other stakeholders
• We recognise the account managers are an important communication link: we would like clarity regarding their role, and echo others’ comments regarding clarity about Jisc itself

Fifth table (mainly HE):
• Some of our issues have already been mentioned
• Jisc needs to recognise that in institutions, everything we do is driven by the student experience. So, a better way forward for Jisc could be to engage with students rather than vice chancellors, directors of finance etc.

Sixth table (mainly HE)
• We strongly support the plans for engaging with Jisc’s customers. This is key, but this needs to be at the right levels and with the right people in the organisation
• Jisc needs to engage with the full breadth of the sectors
• We urge Jisc to get on with this; it doesn’t have to be perfect.

Seventh table (mainly FE)
• We want the same level of service as we experienced in the past.

Eighth table (mainly HE)
• Engagement and the ability to have an informed conversation with us will be key going forward.
• It’s important that we understand what Jisc can offer in all functions of the organisation. We don’t think Jisc is currently understood across the whole institution
• How can organisations engage with Jisc’s strategy?
• We need clarity about the subscription and what we’re paying for.

Ninth table (mainly HE)
• We would like more information regarding how Jisc is working and engaging with other stakeholders e.g. the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and research councils etc
• We need a greater awareness of what Jisc is doing and more communication about this.

Tenth table (mainly HE)
• How we can engage to help set the agenda? There needs to be wider consultation and it needs to be more transparent
• Key points for Jisc are:
  o Need a process for prioritisation
  o Need planning and communication
  o And we need to know how we can engage in these two things.

Eleventh table (mainly HE):
• Finance directors need clear costing information and data
• Universities need to be able to evaluate Jisc services and to benchmark them against other providers
• Unpack the £200 million savings figure and enable us to influence and defend it
• Influence the people signing the cheques.

Twelfth table (mainly FE):
• FELTAG is important for the future and Jisc should have a voice on FELTAG developments. Tell us what is important in terms of FELTAG
• We would like to see all services listed into a toolkit: an aide-mémoire to ensure we are benefitting from everything on offer.

The way forward together

This session was chaired by Paul Layzell, who outlined the purpose of the session: for participants to hear about Jisc’s research and development work, new activity and services on the horizon, as well as to work with Jisc to prioritise what it needs to address.

Phil Richards introduced Jisc’s research and development work, and began by showing the coming soon film. In his the way forward together presentation he showcased:

• specific tools such as Call for Participants which is helping to match researchers with volunteers for their research, and Kit catalogue, an online system that can help any organisation effectively catalogue, record and locate their kit, which could be laboratory equipment, workshop machines, ICT and specialist tools

• the ‘research data spring’ which aims to help compliance with the various research data policies, including the ESRC mandate which comes into force from 1 May 2015. Jisc is inviting people to propose small ideas that can be implemented locally to solve problems associated with these mandates

• some key trends identified through Jisc’s horizon scanning activities, including personalised big data / learning sets which follow the learner through education and into training, and a radical digital only model of academic publishing

• current work in the research and development pipeline especially related to the five identified challenges: Research at risk; From prospect to alumnus; Effective learner analytics; Building capability for new digital leadership, pedagogy and efficiency; Implementing the FELTAG recommendations.
Phil Richard’s explained that Jisc has worked hard to make information about our research and development work clearer on our website and welcomed any feedback on this.

The event then divided into five breakout sessions to discuss particular aspects of Jisc and its products and services. Participants had had the opportunity to choose one of the five ahead of the meeting. Here is a summary of the outcomes of each session:

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<th>Session</th>
<th>Feedback from discussion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Breakout group 1: shaping Jisc impact areas</td>
<td>This session was intended to give participants the chance to have a say in the way Jisc plans, manages and reports its impact for customers and the sectors we serve. The participants provided a great deal of valuable contextual information about the factors that they considered important in assessing Jisc’s value and performance. This was more important than any specific suggestions for actual indicators of impact, which proved hard to generate in a small workshop setting. Much of the discussion echoed contributions made to the morning plenary session on the need for Jisc to report clearly. Feedback and data collected from the session will inform the development of Jisc’ impact indicators.</td>
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<td>Breakout group 2: improving Jisc’s student competition to find digital solutions</td>
<td>Jisc has run the summer of student innovation competition for the last two years. The competition has been successful but there are areas we want to improve. This session sought input on how to improve the competition. The session provided valuable feedback and ideas which will be used in developing and improving the student competition process, including ideas about how to ‘get the message out’, ‘engage more students and address the gender balance’ and ‘provide an ‘ideas bank’ to collate ideas submitted and the proposed solution. Ideas will be fed into the next set of learner challenge competitions. In particular, there will be a new competition focussed on ideas only and the feedback from the group was very useful in helping to shape this new competition. We shall also be looking at how we engage institutions and promote the competition using the suggestions from the group.</td>
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| Breakout group 3: shaping the co-design approach for 2016 | For the past two years Jisc has used an approach called co-design to work with representatives from the HE, FE and skills sectors to decide how we allocate our research and development resources. The aim of this session was to address some of the current problem areas with the process. Feedback on this process was:  
  - Co-design needs to move faster from idea to usable product  
  - Jisc needs to ensure that all projects are producing useful services for the Jisc service catalogue  
  - There should be an appropriate balance between services developed quickly that are useful right now and those that take on the big problems that are faced across the sectors and may take more time to address. An appropriate balance may be that the |
Session | Feedback from discussion
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majority effort focuses on immediately useful services and a smaller portion on long term problems  
- Communication needs to be improved to make it easier for people to find the projects relevant to them and get involved  
- Jisc need to do fewer projects. The 34 listed on the website is still too many  
- Account managers should be firmly embedded in the co-design process and should ensure needs and ideas are fed in directly from customers.

Breakout group 4: scenario planning | The session looked at a 'near future' scenario planning to help us think strategically about what issues we need to address to enable Jisc to help universities and colleges meet their future challenges and priorities.  
One key comment was that this kind of thinking needs to happen in the sector as well as at Jisc. The structure of the session elicited data on a range of activities in institutions including individual management responsibilities, faculty/departmental change and wholesale strategic shifts.  
This data will be used to help Jisc's research and development team identify gaps and opportunities to provide products and services to the sector.

Breakout group 5: reviewing Jisc’s draft technology horizon scan | The session introduced the horizon scan synthesis that Jisc has been developing in response to stakeholder feedback, and solicited the group's input into its future direction. Key feedback from the group was that:  
- Institutions would value insights into emerging technologies and socio-technical trends that will help with medium to long term planning and institutional strategies  
- Jisc should strive to achieve a balance between coverage of broad trends such as open data and in-depth analysis of specific ones  
- Stakeholders need to validate the horizon scan, to ensure it is useful  
Information gleaned from this activity will be fed into the next iteration of the horizon scan.

Wrap up and conclusions
Martyn Harrow concluded with his 2015 and beyond presentation. He began by thanking everyone for their valuable input and dialogue before going on to highlight that:

- We live in times of unprecedented change but there is a significant opportunity for us to work together to ensure that we are using the power of digital technology to best effect  
- There is enormous potential for technology, but are we being ambitious enough?  
- Jisc has the expertise and track record to work with the sector to embrace these opportunities – giving unique advance to the sector now and in the future.
Heather MacDonald then also thanked participants for their input and highlighted the key messages from the day:

- Jisc’s portfolio of services needs clarity and simplicity
- Subscription costs should be more transparent, with accompanying information and data
- Jisc’s new account management and engagement approach was largely welcomed, and people also emphasised the need for an inclusive approach across multiple stakeholders
- Jisc should strive for simplicity in everything it does
- Jisc can help the FE sector deliver the recommendations of FELTAG, including connectivity, use of analytics and health checks, to enable benchmarking across nations and regions
- Jisc should give a greater voice to students to enhance their experience.

In conclusion, she invited participants to provide feedback on their experience in order to build on and improve the forum.