

Quality Review

Audio Visual Department
St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra
(a College of Dublin City University)

May 2007
Peer Review Group Report



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INTRODUCTION

This Peer Review Group (PRG) Report forms part of the Quality Review Process of the I.T. Services Unit at St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra conducted in accordance with "A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities" (CHIU 2003) and complying with the provisions of Section 35 of the Universities Act (1997).

This is the first such Quality Review to be undertaken by the IT Services unit.

The Peer Review Visit took place on 19th and 20th April 2007 in conjunction with a quality review of IT Service Unit.

The members of the Peer Review Group are:

- Brian Carolan, Director, Computer Centre, NUI Maynooth (Chair)
- Marian Lyons, History Lecturer, St Patrick's College (Rapporteur)
- Charlie Reid, IT Services Manager, Stranmillis University College, Belfast
- Helen Guerin, Director, Audio Visual Centre, University College Dublin

The core objective of the PRG Report is to assist St. Patrick's College Drumcondra to achieve its desired goals of delivering a high quality, student-centred educational experience and to "enhance the physical and social environment for students and staff" (Strategic Plan, 2006-2010, p.6). To this end, the critical analysis of current facilities and procedures is intended to be informative, highlighting specific development needs and suggesting potential opportunities and threats going forward.

It is recognized that the inflexibility of St. Patrick's College Drumcondra's (SPD) resourcing model, in contrast with other institutions, makes strategic financial planning difficult and strategic human resource planning problematic.

Therefore, it is timely to review the Audio Visual Department and the provision of educational technology and media services and suggest improvements in the area that will enable the College benchmark itself with other institutions competing for the best students and preparing students (the majority of whom will become future teachers) to work in a 21st Century knowledge society where information and communication technology skills are prerequisites.

A number of prioritized recommendations are provided at the end of the PRG Report, which will require investment and need to be resourced in the immediate future, either by reallocating existing resources or requesting additional resources from the Department of Education and/or developing other funding streams.

REVIEW OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

The self-assessment report was well structured, reflective, frank, clear and concise. The survey sample was sufficiently significant to make the findings worthwhile and informative, thereby enabling the PRG to confirm aspects of the Department's performance. The responses to the surveys showed the Senior Technical Officer to be customer-focused, helpful and flexible.

As documented by the Senior Technical Officer we recognise the particular challenges associated with conducting a quality review assessment on a one-person Department for the individual himself, and also for those surveyed and for the PRG. This is an issue that the college Quality Promotion Committee ought to reflect upon for future reference.

The self-assessment report does not present a list of defined objectives for the Audio Visual Department. It was, therefore, very difficult for the PRG to ascertain whether the department is, in fact, achieving targeted objectives. The manner in which the self-assessment report has been compiled, with its emphasis on current practices, activities, demands and challenges, reflects the fact that this Department is entirely reliant upon one member of staff who is, as a consequence, primarily and necessarily preoccupied with reacting to the demands made upon him on a day-to-day basis.

We would have liked to see a strategic plan with more ideas for innovative developments for the Department being formulated and a related indication of how the budgetary needs of the Department could be developed. Also, it would have been useful to have had a wider range of feedback from staff and student surveys integrated into the self-assessment report, especially some of the recommendations for enhancing the service going forward (subject to resource allocation), such as:

'more integration across Support Services';

'searchable digital media archive';

'assistance with integrating media in PowerPoint presentations'.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS ANALYSIS

The Senior Technical Officer clearly demonstrates a commendable capacity for single-handedly running the College's Audio Visual Department in a professional manner. The staff member had a strong user-focused ethic. The staff member is clearly multi-skilled and has demonstrated his ongoing interest and commitment through his engagement in professional training (albeit limited by virtue of his being the sole member of the department). There is constant reiteration of satisfaction (in staff questionnaires featured in the self-assessment report and in interviews with staff representatives) with the Senior Technical Officer's helpfulness, dedication, flexibility and problem solving capabilities.

It is clear that the staff member has a very good working relationship with College staff, students and management. There was a demonstrable expertise in the field of media and educational technology. Sensitivity to adherence to a code of ethics and his insistence on adhering to copyright regulations are especially praiseworthy. The use of the Department's website to deal with audio visual problems is a practical strategy which ought to be continued and developed in future.

The College's continued reliance upon one individual single-handedly staffing the Audio Visual Department is very problematic. This represents a serious matter in the College's risk management. The Senior Technical Officer's skills, both technological and interpersonal, have masked this very serious underlying structural problem.

The development and operation of the Audio Visual Department's service to staff and students is seriously hamstrung in a variety of ways by the institution's reliance on a single individual to run a department. These include:

- ❑ staff cannot avail of adequate professional training and development in a rapidly changing educational technology and media environment;
- ❑ in the event of unforeseen absence from work, these service would be nonexistent;
- ❑ staff do not have sufficient time or resources to provide training for groups of College staff in the use of audio visual equipment;
- ❑ unrealistic expectations and demands being placed on one member of staff to service the needs of College and external conference personnel during and outside regular college hours and days. The demands associated with conference hosting are particularly onerous and unreasonable and should be outsourced where possible, at least until sufficient staffing levels are put in place;
- ❑ staff are obliged to deal with queries on a first come first served basis, rather than in a strategic manner, with clear targets set and activities prioritised and goals achieved;

The mission of the Department was formulated when it was first set up in the 1970s and needs to be reviewed in light of emerging educational technologies and new media. Moreover, since staff are constantly reacting to requests and problem-solving, there is little or no time to engage in long-term strategic planning for the Audio Visual Department. In that context, the Head of Service needs to be

freed up by College Management to formulate a strategic plan for advancing audio visual service provision for the future, in consultation with Senior Management and in line with the College's Strategic Plan. Furthermore, the Audio Visual Department has not taken full advantage of the potential synergies with its equivalent in DCU. This will become increasingly important as the use of elearning increases throughout the College.

In conclusion the Audio Visual Department is currently inadequately served in terms of space, staffing and equipment allocation. The PRG strongly recommend that the Senior Management Team allocate the necessary resources, either new or through the reallocation of existing resources, to address this deficit as a matter of some urgency. Alternative, a re-think of the current service delivery model needs to be prioritized in light of potential synergies and opportunities offered by the development of media rich elearning content going forward.

AUDIO VISUAL DEPARTMENT SITE VISIT

Working Environment

The PRG were brought on a short tour of some lecture halls and tutorial rooms and also the College Learning Resource Centre by Dr Dáire Keogh. The range of Audio Visual equipment in the various rooms was noted. Concern was expressed about health and safety issues arising from multiple cables from Audio Visual (and IT equipment), which are largely unmanaged on the ground in lecture halls. Also, the lack of adequate media production and equipment storage space within the Audio Visual Department was noted by the PRG.

Most of our tour of the Audio Visual Department was spent in the editing suite/production room. The Senior Technical Officer's conscientiousness, professionalism and competence, as he outlined the nature of his activities in detail was noted by the PRG. His relatively unusual and acute sensitivity to the peculiarities of producing audio visual material within the Irish educational context was particularly impressive. His considered opinions on appropriate video recording of pupils, his prioritisation of authenticity over appearance, and other issues, demonstrated the wealth of his experience in the field of education and his adherence to ethical standards.

The staff member's responses to questions regarding: the technology used; the reasons for selecting the equipment; the variety of demands placed upon him; the challenges associated with working with staff who have varied levels of competence and experience in use of audio visual equipment; etc. were comprehensive and reflected a thoughtful, open minded approach on his part. The staff member showed a very good understanding of the pedagogical needs of College teaching staff and of students, and a concomitant ability to match those needs with appropriate technology. His genuinely supportive, affirmative and realistic attitude towards staff and students using audio visual equipment was also very apparent.

MEETING WITH STAFF, MANAGEMENT & STUDENTS

SENIOR TECHNICAL OFFICER

The PRG met with the Senior Technical Officer and discussed the Self-Assessment Report and clarified a number of issues as outlined below.

Organisation & Staffing

The Senior Technical Officer stated that there was an increasing need for an Audio Visual Helpdesk. He wishes to see a Technical Officer appointed before the new College building programme comes on stream. He indicated that he had, in the past, been offered and declined the prospect of having a person without technical expertise to assist him. He declined this offer as he believed this would negatively impact the work of the Department. He stated that he was told two years ago by Senior Management that the next person appointed as a Technical Officer would be assigned to the Audio Visual Department. He interpreted the delay in having a Technical Officer appointed in the wider context of the College's Human Resources structures, citing the fact that the College has only recently appointed a permanent HR Manager. He stated that he is aware that he now needs to lobby for the appointment of a Technical Officer.

The staff member stressed the onerous nature of all demands (however basic) being directed solely to him. A two-person Department would, in his estimation, free him up to work in the area of production. He acknowledged that the growing number of staff and courses is increasing the pressure on him in meeting the needs of staff who are developing a greater appreciation for the value of audio visual materials in teaching. This demand will almost certainly grow as the integration of elearning increases and the move to blended learning takes place, as outlined in the College's Strategic Plan.

Budget

The staff member stated that the budget for the department is very modest and that he has found Senior Management to be very positively disposed towards him when he requests funding for specific activities. However, there is no annual budget allocation and no projected multi-annual funding. It appears that this situation is largely due to the uncertainty associated with the annual funding allocation from the Department of Education.

Resources

The staff member stated that resource constraints cause him to be unable to undertake work which he knows he would not be in a position to deliver on. Whilst he uses the website to inform the college community regarding audio visual service and facilities, he is conscious of its limitations in achieving that end. He stated that every lecture hall has DVD/VHS replay facility and that there is a move towards LCDs in the smaller rooms. He explained that security has been a priority and all audio visual equipment is secured. While the college has a darkroom, it is no longer as such (it is now used as a store room for IT Services), and the Audio Visual Department has moved to digital photography, to the limited extent possible.

Collaborative work

The staff member indicated that he is positively disposed towards developing media-rich elearning content, etc. However, there has as yet been no collaboration with the EOLAS project.

In conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Committee, he has been involved in giving one-hour workshops and training sessions for staff in order to brief them on the use of equipment, etc. He also acknowledged the value of developing and sharing media resources with other colleges.

Professional technical competencies

The staff member has extensive expertise in videography and editing, specifically developing location recordings in schools to document teaching and learning best practice. These recordings provide relevant, authentic examples of good teaching practice and innovative techniques, and are developed in such a way that they may be incorporated into interesting and stimulating video programmes, which are often used in microteaching, H.Dip evaluation, etc. It was noted that good working relationships have been built with teachers and school principals over the years.

The staff member has an expertise in photography and takes photographs on a very regular basis for College events, etc. He stated that he has relatively little experience in graphic design but that he has a modest competency in this area (e.g. he designs some headed notepaper, DVD graphics, etc.).

Future Developments

The staff member stated that, to a large extent, the future development of the Audio Visual Department would be reliant upon the facilities within the new building. **While this proposed building will be welcome from an AV point of view, and would solve some of the present difficulties, nevertheless the expected completion of this building is simply too far into the future to be regarded as a potential solution to present problems, particularly in relation to current demands on staff.**

The staff member stated that he is aware that he cannot drive audio visual service provision forward in the College in the long-term without adequate resources. He knows that the service is reliant upon users' experience of using the service and on positive word of mouth. His sense of Management's view on the Audio Visual Department is that the service is adequate and he should continue doing as he is now. He would welcome the opportunity to expand his role in the area of training students and staff in the use of educational technology and media.

ACADEMIC, ADMINISTRATIVE & LIBRARY STAFF

The PRG met with five members of academic, administrative and library staff, one of whom is a member of the ICT Committee. There was unanimous agreement that the staff member was excellent in dealing with queries or problems in a prompt, professional and courteous manner. However, in terms of adequate service provision, there was a significant level of dissatisfaction,

especially among the academic staff, with availability of adequate support services in relation to a number of areas, including:

- ❑ inadequate levels of support in teaching spaces;
- ❑ outdated equipment in lecture halls;
- ❑ insufficient availability of user support outside hours;
- ❑ inappropriate, uncomfortable viewing conditions for students (obstructions of screens having to be removed by lecturers);
- ❑ small screen in the auditorium making visibility for large groups very difficult if not impossible.

Specific positive features of the Audio Visual Department

The recent improvement in the quality of audio visual provision owing to the College being more extensively networked than before was noted.

Specific weaknesses associated with staff experience of the Audio Visual Department

Communication about what the Department does and services offered to staff and students was said to be ineffective. Many staff have a very limited knowledge or understanding of what the Audio Visual Department does. Although the Senior Technical Officer occasionally circulates emails notifying the staff of developments/services, it fails to impact on staff thinking. However, given the current lack of resources, it would not make sense to market a service that is already over-burdened with work.

The fact that there is no support for staff use of audio visual equipment after 6 o'clock in the evening and on Saturdays is a source of serious concern for academic staff. The current separation between IT and Audio Visual facilities and responsibility for the maintenance of the two was identified as problematic. This separation is believed to complicate the task of overcoming problems when using Audio Visual (and IT) resources in teaching spaces. Academic staff expressed their ongoing frustration with the effort, time wasting, etc. associated with having to set up a laptop in lecture halls instead of being able to walk into all lecture halls which should be SMART rooms, equipped with fixed computers and data projectors as standard. Achieving this and maintaining it require adequate and on-going investment in resources. Perhaps the provision of training for academic staff in the set-up of personal laptops (to connect to a 'smart' plug-in-and-play AV/IT system) could help elevate this frustration in the short-term.

PRESIDENT, REGISTRAR, SECRETARY.

The PRG met with the College President, Acting Registrar and College Secretary/Bursar as a group and the following points were made.

It was acknowledged that the staff member was enormously helpful to individual members of staff who seek his assistance, acknowledging that Mr Murphy is in an extremely difficulty position as the only person in the Audio Visual Department. It was stated by the Senior Management Team that there was no awareness of a strategic plan for integrating the work of the Audio Visual Department into teaching and learning in the College. Senior Management stated that it was the role to the Education Department to submit such a proposal to

Senior Management, if it was thought to be appropriate. Attention was drawn to the role of the College's Learning Resource Centre in meeting the needs of staff and students in this area.

It was acknowledged that there is a multiplicity of units with responsibility for provision of various aspects of educational technology and digital media and it was stated that a plan for the development of this entire area is desirable.

In relation to staffing, it was stated that the Department of Education held a tight control of human resource matters, such as re-grading and staffing levels. In response to further questioning about current and future staffing arrangements, it was explained that College Management would have to make a submission to the Department of Education in order to get approval for changing current staffing levels, promotions and grading.

STUDENTS

Students perceived facilities within the College to be below average. They were not aware of media-rich elearning content, had some awareness of Bebo, but were not greatly involved in online social networking, had not come across Flickr (online photographic sharing portal), had heard of YouTube (online video sharing portal), but had not engaged with the creation of digital media and did not possess camera phones or other media capture devices.

It appeared that the level of engagement with elearning content was minimal and mostly used for general administration of notices, etc. and email. It appeared that the students had not been exposed to Blogging, Podcasting or other new media. While these are only emerging educational technologies and have yet to be rolled out substantially across institutions of higher education, it would be expected that there would be some awareness of Web 2.0 technologies amongst students who undertake modules/courses in digital learning.

It is recognized that the on-going problems with the laser link with DCU affected the experience students had of the online learning environment.

In conclusion, throughout the interviews some questions were raised in relation to an apparent two-tier system of AV/IT service provision between the Department of Education and the Department of the Humanities. This may need further review.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The PRG has serious concerns about the fact that the Audio Visual Department is a one person unit. The evidence from the questionnaires demonstrates a level of demand of audio visual support and media production services, which far outstrip existing provision. The PRG believe that a service cannot be effectively operated and developed in a situation where there is insufficient critical mass of audio visual staff to engage in strategic level thinking and to operate that service. We therefore strongly recommend that St Patrick's College review this situation as a matter of urgency.
- The PRG does not believe that the addition of a single member of staff within the existing College structure would resolve the issues, in relation to adequate levels of audio visual service and media production provision. Therefore other options and alternative models need to be considered, including the relationship between the EOLAS Unit, Digital Learning Unit, etc. in relation to the development of teaching materials (digital videos, photography, etc.) and teaching media courses.
- If the institution allows a single member of staff to run a discrete department single-handedly, that member of staff needs to convey to the college management, staff and student body that resources are finite and that within the existing constraints, services cannot be guaranteed
- Providing the appropriate audio visual service requires the allocation of more resources (space, staff, equipment, etc.).
- The College is not tackling audio visual provision effectively. This in turn is resulting in opportunities for greater collaboration, both within the College and outside, not being availed of.
- The PRG has concerns about the audio visual equipment in lecture halls and tutorial rooms. We note the requests from staff for SMART rooms and fixed audio visual facilities. We also have concerns regarding health and safety issues associated with trolleys, loose cables, and so on.
- The PRG has concerns in relation to the College's Risk Management given that the Senior Technical Officer is the sole member of staff in the Department.
- The PRG recommends that the College consider putting in place a structure, which facilitates the embedding of media-rich content in the existing elearning objectives, as set out in the College's Strategic Plan, and that this new structure should maximize the potential of the Audio Visual Department going forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATIONS

College Recommendations

1. Review Strategic Plan.

"The College is and will continue to be actively engaged in the promotion of innovative use of digital technologies in Education... ..A project team charged with facilitating digital teaching and learning through a combination of infra-structural and pedagogical supports will move this area from its current project base to a closely integrated function of the College (Strategic Plan, 2005 p.17)." The PRG is very pleased to see this high level strategic thinking and the desire to integrate the various units engaged in the creation of digital media teaching and learning content and those delivering educational technology and media courses.

It is noted that an ICT Committee was established in December 1999 under the aegis of the Academic Council, with the following remit. "To promote Information Technology and to enhance IT awareness and cooperation throughout the College."

It is also noted that there is a Teaching and Learning Committee which has the following remit. "To promote innovation in learning and teaching."

However, it is very unclear how either of these committees relate to or interact with the eLearning Project Team referred to in the current Strategic Plan. Also, the PRG was unable to establish who exactly was on this team, which of the eLearning Actions, as stated on p.23 and p.24 of the Strategic Plan had in fact been accomplished, or who had overall responsibility for leading this team and reporting back to the Governing Authority. This matter needs to be addressed as a matter of some urgency, given that six of the nine Actions identified are required to be completed in 2007 and the remaining three in 2008.

It is therefore, recommended that the College be requested to review this relationship and advise on the appropriate structure and strategy going forward to achieve this important goal.

It is also noted that the post of Registrar has been vacant for over a year and only filled on an acting basis. It is suggested that the incoming Registrar be responsible for the oversight of the eLearning Project Team and monitor progress to ensure the successful completion of this strategic project. It would be important that all stakeholders be represented on the eLearning Project Team.

It is also recommended that an audit of Campus Developments (p.28) be carried out, specifically with regard to (1) Enhancing teaching and laboratory facilities; and (2) Develop Library and IT facilities.

2. Devise an Organizational Chart needs to be developed that reflects the Strategic Development Plan of the College and advantage needs to be taken of the potential synergies between the Audio Visual Department, Digital Learning Unit, EOLAS, the Learning Resource Centre, the

Teaching and Learning Committee and the Information and Communication Technologies Committee. This should inform resource allocation going forward.

3. The equipment in teaching spaces (IT and AV) in its entirety should fall under the remit of one unit, and where possible equipment should be fixed, user-friendly integrated plug-and-play systems. Having this said, the relevant unit needs to be adequately resourced and possess the necessary technical competency to trouble-shoot common problems. Back-up kit should be available, so as not to disrupt lectures when problems arise.
4. It is recommended that investment be made in a start-of-the-art technology enhances classroom (equipped with a wide range of facilities, including video streaming, podcasting, video conferencing multicasting, etc.) to support the innovation use of educational technology by staff and students.
5. The eLearning Objectives in the Strategic Plan should be reviewed to assess progress and the role of the various contributors and units charted to inform strategies and structures going forward. It is considered that middle management could contribute much to the realization of the excellent objectives outlined in the College's Strategic Plan.
6. Greater advantage could be taken of the organizational linkages with Dublin City University (DCU).
7. A review of the role of College's Porters in relation to supporting teaching spaces could be helpful.

Audio Visual Department Recommendations

1. A Mission Statement needs to be developed by Audio Visual Services in consultation with management and approved by the Governing Authority, which is aligned to the College's Strategic Plan.
2. A job tracking system needs to be put in place to monitor resource allocation and record job requests and actual jobs completed. This should aid decision making regarding resource allocation.
3. An Asset Disposal procedure needs to be developed to facilitate equipment replacement and maintenance schedules.
4. A Health & Safety Statement needs to be developed, an audit of hazards undertaken and procedures put in place to minimize exposure to risk.
5. Training opportunities in New Media should be requested and undertaken.

Funding

The Senior Management Team needs to invest in the necessary resources to enable them to maximise the potential of media and educational technology within the College and provide a high quality blended learning environment for staff and students. Addition funding needs to be made available in order to successfully achieve this.

The current Strategic Plan (p. 28) identifies the need to diversify sources of funding in order to meet the needs of the College going forward. Addition funding may be tapped into through a range of development initiatives, such as Alumni activities, corporate sponsorship, etc. This could possibly be undertaken with the support of, and/or in collaboration with, DCU.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Peer Review Group Members

Chair:

Brian Carolan is Director – Computer Centre at NUI Maynooth. Holding a BSc (Computer Science) and an MA from the University of Dublin, Trinity College, he is also an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. Brian has 29 years experience in the IT industry and has worked in Higher Education for 14 years. He has particular interests in IT Infrastructure and database. He is currently chair of the Irish Universities Information Services Colloquium and is a member of the Irish Universities Council of Computer Centre Directors.

Rapporteur:

Dr. Marian Lyons is a lecturer in the Department of History, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra. A specialist in early modern Irish and French history, she has published widely on Franco-Irish relations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and on the Kildare dynasty in Ireland. She is co-director of the Irish in Europe Project and joint editor of *Irish Historical Studies*. She is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society (London).

Charles Reid is the IT Services manager at Stranmillis University College, Belfast. He is a member of the Northern Ireland Regional Area Network management advisory committee. Before entering IT management he worked as a programmer/analyst in the field of educational software development. His particular interests include the educational applications of computer networking and user focused service provision.

Helen Guerin is the Director of the UCD Audio Visual Centre and is the National Nominee to the European Commission Information Society Technologies Programme - Technology Enhanced Learning. She has been a member of the UCD President's Awards and Grants Committee, the University Teaching Committee, the Board of Studies for the Graduate Diploma in University Teaching and Learning, Adult Education and Film Studies. She is on the Executive Committee of the All Ireland Society for Higher Education, and a member of Irish Management Institute, the Educational Association of Ireland and Screen Producers Ireland.

LIST OF THANKS

The Peer Review Group wish to express their gratitude to the Quality Promotion Staff of St Patrick's College, particularly Dr Dáire Keogh for his invitation to participate in the review process and to Ms Sharon King for her role in facilitating the organisation and smooth running of the exercise. We also wish to thank the Mr. Paul Murphy , Senior Technical Officer, Audio Visual Department, for his willingness to participate in this process in a meaningful fashion and for the very considerably effort and time he invested in preparing the self-assessment report.

Our thanks to the academic, administrative and library staff, to the students and to the President, the Secretary Bursar and the Registrar for their valuable contributions and for giving so generously of their time.

CLARIFICATIONS SOUGHT

(a) Specific issues

Arising from our review of the self-assessment report, we requested clarification on specific issues that we believed were either insufficiently clear or not adequately addressed in the report. These were

- The brief of the Teaching and Learning Committee
- The brief of the Information and Communication Technologies Committee
- The nature of the Digital Learning Unit's activities (courses, etc.)
- Reporting structures regarding the Audio Visual Department
- The operational budgets for Audio Visual Department
- Boundaries regarding IT/AV support in teaching spaces
- Responsibility for elearning content development and new media.

(b) Supplementary contextual documentation

In addition we requested the College's Strategic Plan 2006-2010 to enable us to understand more fully the environment in which the Audio Visual Department currently operates.

References:

A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities (CHIU 2003)

The Irish Universities Act , Section 35 (1997).

Strategic Plan 2006-2010, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra.

EXIT PRESENTAION

EXIT PRESENTAION

Introduction

- Good afternoon & thanks
- What I propose to do this afternoon is....
- Talk a little about the Quality Review process
- Make a number of general comments covering both AV & IT
- The make some specific comments about
 - AV
 - IT
- As defined by the process, the formal report will follow in about as soon as possible.
- This presentation is therefore somewhat informal. I'd like it to be interactive & would welcome questions as I go along

Quality Review Process

- Firstly I would like to thank the AV and IT units for
- Making us very welcome and assisting us throughout this process. The "thanks" is not just a platitude; Ireland has not adopted an "externally-driven QA model" but an "autonomous, improvement-oriented" model which cannot operate successfully without the full support of those being reviewed.
- Preparing excellent self-assessment reports
- Also the management, staff and students for their very valuable input which was very positive in relation to both units
- And particularly Dáire and Sharon for all their assistance.
- We are conscious the SPD is a college of education with a particular student body associated institutional constraints

General comments

e-learning, rich digital media, technology in the classroom (both in SPD and in primary schools)

- The world is changing very rapidly. In the college we have moodle.
- In our homes we have digital video cameras, bebo etc.
- We feel that SPD should seize the opportunity to embrace these exciting opportunities (which span academic and service units) by developing organisational structures to exploit this

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Management Information Systems

- MIS are vital to the operation of any institution of this size. We would recommend that they be reviewed and an information systems strategy be developed and the responsibility for all aspects of these systems be more clearly defined.

AV

Review of the self-assessment report

- As documented by Paul we Recognise the difficulty caused by 1 person unit this also gives rise to challenges for those surveyed & PRG)
- Well-structured, reflective, frank, clear and concise

- We would have liked to see a policy & clear set of objectives and more ideas for the development of the area.
- The responses to the surveys showed Paul to be customer-focused, helpful, flexible

Visit to department

- We were very impressed with Paul's professionalism. We were particularly taken by Paul's insight into the classroom and his sensitivity when dealing with children in the creation of video content.
- His general expertise in video content creation is also very impressive
- We note his strong commitment to the general AV operation
- The feedback from staff during our meetings was excellent

Findings and Conclusions

- We would have concerns around the fact that the AV service is a 1 person operation. We feel that a service cannot be effectively operated & developed where there isn't a critical mass of staff to operate the service. We feel that SPD should review this as a matter of urgency
- We have concerns re the AV equipment in the lecture halls and tutorial rooms. We note the requests from staff for "smart" rooms and fixed AV facilities. We also note the concerns re health and safety associated with trolleys, cables etc

IT

Review of the self-assessment report

- Well-structured, clear and concise
- The definition of services and users was helpful to us in understanding
- We note the very broad range of services being supported.
- The questionnaires were comprehensive & I will return to that
- The responses to the surveys showed IT services to be customer-focused, helpful, flexible
- An age analysis of the IT asset base would have been very helpful

Visit to department & Meetings with staff, students and management

- We noted the acute lack of staff space available to IT services
- Student PCs too few, too slow, too old also would like longer opening hours
- Also noted the very positive feedback from students regarding the support services provided
- Staff: The support services provided are excellent during business hours some staff would like extended support hours
- Academic staff using the lecture halls & tutorial rooms do not differentiate between IT support & AV support
- Returning to the SAR - analysis could have been more probing in relation to questionnaire findings – particularly relating to lack of PCs

Findings and Conclusions

We would have concerns about

- Server room

- Datacomms link to DCU
- Exposure should John Hammond be unavailable