

Minutes of FASIG 15TH April 2010

1. Minutes of previous meeting

2. Matters arising

Client Side Reporting (CSR) update – meetings have taken place with positive feedback. CSR ensures information required on a regular basis is easily available. With the transition to colleges there may be a need to get some small groups together to produce specialist reports. Again for Aptos patches your help as volunteer testers would be much appreciated nearer the time.

3. Mid Cube Reporting Demonstration

Reporting is always developing, from EAS2 for raw data extracts and CSR for publishable versions of the reports. All Aptos users have got access to this web-based reporting tool, either via the Finance Services webpages:-

http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/finance/aptos/aptos_reporting.shtml where there is some useful guidance on running these reports or via Aptos Web Services:-

<https://aptosalia.exeter.ac.uk/alia/wrd/run/aws1001> directly.

Access to these web based reports are via your usual Aptos User ID and password.

Anne described Mid Cube (also accessible from the above links) as an analytical tool with great potential for future use. Selected user access has provided excellent feedback. Dan Isaac has also been working on summarising and grouping data for reports. This is continuing work in progress.

Client reporting and analytics are available for the same areas as for EAS2; balances reports; budget v's actual; transaction reports etc.

Mid Cube is similar to CSR and works on data extracts. The University has design licences so that we can design reports off the core underlining data. There is a mass of data but the advantage is that you can high level manage eg. temporary staff spend – but can then also drill down into the detail to analyse spend by category. It is a very useful tool for analysing and manipulating data. Anne demonstrated looking at office administration, by changing some of the parameters could eg. see spend by period and even drill down to spend by supplier in the same way that you would use a pivot table on some excel data except that this is much more user friendly. The data can then be printed, exported and saved as a local copy. (Nb. live data now gone until you run the report again).

Pat Curgenvan remarked that she uses EAS2 and excel pivots but Mid Cube reduces the level of difficulty. The advantage is that all the data is available and you can pick and choose the elements that you need. It is primarily due to the new segmented code structure that this sort of reporting is now available. Reports can also be personalised eg. some people prefer to have descriptions on their reports and some prefer a code format, with mid Cube you can have either.

Mid Cube is currently on Live but has not been rolled out yet as there are one or two issues to resolve before it is made more widely accessible.

CSR

CSR formatted reports are already available. These follow the same structure as the EAS reports which you will be familiar with; balances, BvA, transaction and research reports. These are static reports called at a point in time. Mid Cube calls from live data and you can change the parameters at any time, the organisation code, cost code, subunit etc. The only limitation is that we may not yet be providing the report you need – let us know if that is the case. The reports should provide what you need to manage your areas and can be structured so that they are most useful to you.

Anne advised to spend some time just having a look at what was available. In future it is envisaged that all end-users can retrieve their own reports from a standard set.

Future functionality is intended to provide report scheduling and report subscription where monthly reports would be generated and sent out automatically. Anyone wanting access to reports needs to be registered on Aptos, but does not need access to core Aptos.

4. Hints and Tips with Aptos

James Bingham told the meeting the outcomes of a B plan health check who visited recently to report on improved use of the system via improved user training.

James demonstrated searches on Accounts Payable for Vendor/Invoice Enquiry and Customer/Invoice Enquiry, using wildcard and Find for eg. dates, types, reference/trx amount etc. for more details see:-

http://groups.exeter.ac.uk/fasig/supporting_doc_2010.shtml

He also demonstrated dragging these folders to your personal menu if frequently used. All hints and tips will be included in updated training guides which will be available shortly.

5. e-procurement

Sally Phillips gave the meeting an update on e-procurement or Parabilis. The facts and figures can be found:-

http://groups.exeter.ac.uk/fasig/supporting_doc_2010.shtml

Many suppliers now have on-line catalogues and "punch out connections" which operate in a similar way to internet shopping.

Greater use of e-procurement was encouraged (currently 40% of orders). Users are currently not able to order Dell products due to current internal processing procedures and we are still unable to process VAT exempt orders. Ways to overcome both of these difficulties are being investigated and we hope to find a resolution shortly. The inability to have multiple invoice addresses also poses a problem and again this is being investigated by IT Helpdesk.

Sally outlined the clear advantages of using e-procurement - prices are up to date, more cost effective in terms of time and paper and postage etc.

For the future it is hoped EDS and Property Services staff will be able to use this system; more online catalogues and punch-outs will be created for food suppliers; e-Invoicing will be a great advantage and work on this is due to commence shortly.

The new version of Parabilis now sends an acknowledgement back to users; a PDF copy of the order is sent with every e-mail; saved baskets now continually updated for new prices; failed XML orders now automatically re-sent by the system; line numbering amended to facilitate e-Invoicing; system will now be able to populate an invoice ready for payment automatically.

Sally asked if all users could log problems with Helpdesk whether it is a training issue or system problem. Also if you are regularly using a supplier let Sally know and she will set them up for you. S.J.Phillips@exeter.ac.uk

Sally closed her talk by asking all Aptos users to make for greater use of e-procurement.

6. In tend

Richard Price outlined this electronic communications of the tendering process. It is used in procurement services and it is hoped to extend its use. One of the main advantages is the cost savings eg. contracts are created from tender data already held on the system; it makes auditing easy. Project set up and then various building blocks come into play. See powerpoint presentation:-

http://groups.exeter.ac.uk/fasig/supporting_doc_2010.shtml

There is also a comprehensive guide at:-

<http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/corporate/procurement/downloads/In-Tend.shtml> where you can also find templates and procurement tender documents.

Richard took us into the website and showed us some current projects, many of which have to be put on there for freedom of information requirements.

There is a facility to get quick quotes for colleges and services under £25k but anything over £25k must be made public (EU requirement) and suppliers who have registered with us will automatically receive an e-mail when a contract in their specific area comes up.

The timescale for rollout of in-Tend is dependent on resources and support, so initially larger users will get access first. Richard will keep FASIG posted.

7. General update on Systems Development and New College Structure

Purchase card module – Discussions are ongoing and there are some issues as to whether it will work for us, in particular the system providing default codes which we would not find acceptable. BPlan is to investigate but in the meantime we if Aptos is not going to meet our needs we may have to look to improving the current manual process. Status – on-going.

e-invoicing – still on course

Internal trading - want to improve our processes here and this project may go up the list if others don't progress.

Multicurrency – this is the ability to make payments etc. in another currency. Aptos has this functionality and we need to provide training to use it.

E-mail remittance advices - to suppliers and staff (expenses). Just a few technical issues to tie up and this will be in place shortly.

Patch 21 – has been received. This is a large patch and will need user volunteer testers.

Aptos V10 – being released on a modular basis.

Reporting – as above, good progress is being made.

New College Structure

Where there is a merger there will be no need to change the underlining codes but where a school is splitting eg HUSS then only one set of codes will be changed probably to a new organisation code eg. SY but the aim is to keep disruption to a minimum.

8. Topics for Next Meeting

Any issues arising.

New college structure.

9. AOB

None

Year end meeting will be on Tuesday 29th June at 11.00 in Newman C