

EDUCAUSE 2000
CIO Constituent Group meeting notes
10/10/00 1:30 – 4:30 PM

First half: Approximately 70 attendees (12 standing room)

- Presentation by CAIS CIO, will be available on-line.

Second half attendees: 54

Facilitator queries:

How many of the attendees are CIOs in the sense that they sit at the management decision-making table? (around 50%)

Most attendees (15) were from public 4-year; second most represented group (6) came from two-year public institutions.

ISSUES RAISED BY DISCUSSION

- **Strategic Planning Issues**

- How to align information technology strategic planning with institutional planning (part of having a seat at the table)
- Convincing management that infrastructure, although not visible, is essential investment, in order to make the visible things they want to happen, happen (\$2.5 M for enterprise security that they won't ever see, e-mail system); using utility analogy without understanding initial huge subsidized capital investment that utilities made (to make possible only \$29/mo bill)
- Problem with consensus decision making – takes so long is incompatible with the technology cycle; by the time decision is made, it is irrelevant
- How to determine when to adopt emerging technologies (e.g., wireless)
- How to keep on top of what the core institutional business is, and address strategic issues when all of resources are devoted to “putting out fires.”
- “Fire prevention” – how to put the decisions in the hands of customers
Andrea Stern (Australia-University of Sydney) suggests shifting investment slightly to look at help desk calls for the underlying patterns of causes and address those root causes. This decreases the number of fires. Then, what you save with prevention is freed for enhancement – which means use for aligning with organizational goals.
Another participant noted the theory that you should use the “smart and lazy “ as strategic planners, the dumb and active for your front lines, and the smart and active for your shock troops.
Another strongly suggested segmenting responsibilities (separate people who do planning from firefighters)
- Classroom/lab of future – learning environment and related infrastructure (many facing crumbling of physical plant, and also convergence of communication infrastructure, e.g., video, etc.); how engage executives and faculty to understand how technology enables what they want so that they make decisions (about brick and mortar) in this context

- **Resource Issues**

- Lifecycle funding for hardware
One CIO from Missouri reported on an effort to convince legislature that technology infrastructure is necessity, and a utility, by approaching legislature as a group of higher education institutions for lifecycle funding (instructional technologies and network infrastructure; institutions responsible for administrative systems)
- Very short life cycle for software
- Migration from legacy enterprise systems to next generation
How much \$ and resources to put into web-enabling legacy systems when life span is only 20 months until replaced by new systems?
- Leasing equipment (move some cost into operational budget, and also support lifecycle replacement) – University of Sydney (trying to get organization to stop investing in IT as capital expenditure, which enabled thinking about these costs as operational)
- Transferring technology costs to students-charging technology fee, requiring that students purchase and bring computer to campus (have responsibility to provide support model), or providing campus-organized leasing programs.
Advantage of student ownership is that they take the old technology away with them when they graduate.
One public university has had 15 year requirement for student computers; evolved into low-interest loans; benefit is the uniformity, especially of laptops, for simplifying support
One campus is not requiring students to bring computers, but providing them to all students (funded with tuition increase).
Equity issue? Complex and bundled.
University of Delaware moving to study areas with places where laptops can be plugged in (instead of computer labs)
University of Toronto – 95% of students had access to computer; 80-85% had access to the Internet – problem is solving itself faster than can solve; want to turn attention and resources to leveraging student access to Internet and web-based access; laptops justifiable in niche programs
Urban, relatively poor student population: 1.4% said they didn't have access to Internet; Virginia Commonwealth
Working adults – 96% have access to computers
Not true for community college
Maryland – legislature mandated must provide students 24 hr access to appropriate computers and software, funding to address digital divide, 24/7 access for faculty – PeoplePC for \$25/mo get web-enabled machine with Internet access; free mail and other services; make better deals and pass on to students.
- Grant-related activities and other sources of funding for mediated classrooms (can't rely on state money); one-time money doesn't solve problem of how to maintain, replace, support

- **Appropriate Roles of CIO?**

- CIO's as risk-takers and lightning rods. Their job to communicate with other C's; be lightning rods for negative energy from the top to deflect from staff; takes initiative not to be servant to all, and master of nothing
- CIO's as educators. Must do better job educating the senior staff about potential impact of decisions (e.g., standardization of support, can have 3 course management systems, but this is what it will cost). make aware of potential impact. Some attendees argued that it may not be the CIO's job to say no, but to offer choices of course of action; others argued that CIO's, as senior officers with ultimate responsibility for the business of technology, retain ultimate accountability and must say no sometimes.
- CIO's as reality checkers. CIO's responsibility to bring reality to discussion and negotiation; and help executive staff make informed choice in the context of "the big picture."
- CIO's as relationship managers. Work with users as customers vs adversaries
- CIO's as institutional leaders. What contributions should CIO's make to the leadership of their institutions (e.g., student access, classroom, research lab)
- CIO's as consensus builders: "If can't build and manage consensus, not doing job as CIO".
- CIO's role in defining institution's approach to teaching and learning?

- **Tactical Issues**

- Use commercial off-the-shelf software, or develop internally?
- What if modifications to COS are so extensive that it might as well be totally customized in terms of maintenance and upgrades?
Suggestion – customer who asks for modification, pays for it; or have the senior executive committee prioritize; (make the decision-maker feel the pain)
Note: presenter suggests that there are three aspects to any business, and there are good rules of thumb about the make/buy question:
 - Gettin (sales and marketing) – buy systems(generic)
 - Countin (billing, finance, accounting) – buy systems(generic)
 - Doin (order fulfillment and maintenance) – put focus here, not generic, core to business; build custom systems to leverage unique, differentiating aspects of the business

- **Evolving Technologies**

- Integrated course management systems (with back office systems such as registration, etc.)
Faculty development is essential (partnership between IT, planners and faculty in design; Staffing (recruiting and retention)
- When to adopt emerging technologies (e.g., wireless)

Second session held Thursday, October 12, 2000, at lunch.

