LMIS Meeting Minutes 1/31

In Attendance:

Lisa Fortlouis Wood
Mike Benveniste
Wade Hands
Xaixin Hong
Jane Carlin
Jeremy Cucco
Andrew McPherran
Kate Cohn
Sara Freeman

At 8:16 The meeting was called to order by James Bernhard

James motioned for the approval of the previous meeting's minutes. All approved.

Jeremy commenced his presentation on the current role and future of Cloud computing at UPS, planning to address the following:
    Defining Cloud computing
    What is UPS currently doing?
    What do we plan to do in the future?

Jeremy outlined the basic concepts of Cloud computing, drawing from the definitions of Cloud Computing offered in the NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) documentation: 5-3-4 (5 Essential Characteristics; 3 Service Models; 4 Deployment Models)
                He outlined IaaS, PaaS; SaaS, XaaS (Infrastructure, Platform, Service and X
                "as a service"), explaining that most users have the highest exposure
                to/familiarity with Software as a Service (SaaS). The most tangible benefit
                of Saas is the ubiquity of data (application data).

Here, Lisa asked about the requirements and standards for security of data when using applications that involve student information, citing HIPAA and FERPA concerns. This turned us to a broad discussion of security/Cloud security. Jeremy stated that the odds of data breach are high, and his job it to manage to potential scope. (e.g., Palo Alto Box trial, which recorded 2.4 million malicious attacks on campus assets in a single week.) Most of our current security contravenes malicious attempts via best-practices implementation, rather than targeted counter-action.

This led to a discussion of the relative merits and detractions in using either Google or Microsoft for Cloud data storage/software services. It was noted that Microsoft offers a 3rd party user agreement on data security, while Google does not.

Jeremy returned to a general discussion of Cloud Computing (with the expectation of treating security, specifically, later), looking at the 'levels' of Cloud Computing:

        Infrastructure (material computing infrastructure)
        Platform (Operating System)
        Software (the top level of user interaction)

He then shifted to discussing the multiple types of 'Tennancy' in the Cloud:

        Public
        Private
        Community
        Hybrid

        He noted that the most common configuration is SaaS within a Public Cloud environment (e.g. Amazon Market Place). He also mentioned that some at UPS have looked into producing Private or Community Cloud environments.

Lisa asked about data encryption/protection/purging in public storage. She suggested that faculty be better educated on the longevity of data storage, and receive security training to increase awareness of the limitations of online data security. Jane seconded the notion of security training.

Wade then asked for clarification on the trade-offs for faculty between embracing technology, versus taking a skeptical approach, highlighting the increased effort and worry accompanied by some contemporary technologies/applications. Lisa and Jeremy commented on the fundamental problem (individually and institutionally) of liability in the case of mismanaged data. This raised the issue of personal culpability for the accidental disclosure of sensitive/private information. Jeremy pointed out that this is high concern, and, *in re* this issue, some departments/domains are required to encrypt their data/computers.

Jeremy then backed the discussion out to more general Cloud issues, citing a future meeting focused on security in computing. He focused on specific examples of services that are and aren't amenable to Cloud-implementation, in order to exemplify some of the benefits and detractions of adopting cloud services. He noted that PeopleSoft is not Cloud-based, and likely won't be in the future, due the difficulty of customizing our institution's particular implementation in the Cloud. This example highlighted that, in some cases, a shift into the cloud reduces our ability to easily customize applications and services.

On the other hand, he informed us that Parking Management is now Cloud-based, and that this works superbly. A general discussion of the drawbacks and advantages of subscribing to pre-built, cloud-based services is discussed.

Jeremy then explained that a current point of deliberation within technology services is whether or not to move the MS Office Suite into the cloud, or perhaps shift to Google's cloud-based software and storage.

James asked where most faculty data is located, in particular in web-hosted applications. Jeremy responds that some is local, and some on UPS owned servers. Moodle is cloud-ish: it is web-based, but UPS owns the servers.

Wade enquired about the tangible end-user benefits of shifts to the cloud: how will it improve our work? Jeremy answers that, in the end, it offers ubiquity of data, as well as better scalability.

At 9:15 James motions that we adjourn. The motion is carried.