UK MAN Managers Group

Notes of Meeting held on 22 April 2008 at HEFCE, London

Present:
Dave Vinograd (Convenor)
Jason Bain   NorMAN
Mike Byrne (Deputy Convenor   LeNSE
Ed Carter   YHMAN
Geoff Cooper   LMN
Neil Francis   SWERN
Ian Griffiths   EMMAN
David Hayling   Kentish MAN
Chris Kelly   NIRAN
Paul Kentish   Kentish MAN
Andrew Kerl   LMN
John Linn   AbMAN
Linda McCormick (Minute Secretary)   ClydeNET
Andy Mason   SWERN
Tim Robinson   NetNorthWest
Pete White   LMN
Mike Whitehead   FaTMAN
Present for item 6
Rolly Trice   JANET(UK)

Apologies were received from:
Joe Burns   NIRAN
Craig MacDonald   C&NLMAN
Chris Kelly   NIRAN
Chris Price   WNL
David Stedham   North Wales MAN
Ian Sugden   SWERN
Jem Taylor   UHI

1   Notes of previous meeting

1.1 Accuracy
The notes on the previous meeting held on 17 January 2008 were accepted as accurate.

1.2 Matters Arising
1.2.1 JPA issues
Linda McCormick reported that she had raised the assign/novate issue on behalf of ClydeNET. Although unwilling to change the text of the JPA at this late stage, JANET (UK) did confirm that if the occasion arose then it was their intention to draw up a tripartite agreement with the RNO and the supplier in which the agreed liabilities of all parties would be clearly defined. The meeting was content with this approach.

1.2.2 Policy paper on bandwidth

Tim Robinson had spoken to Dave Cook regarding circulation of the paper. Release of the paper is awaiting approval by the Funding Councils as it describes funding council policy. Although the bandwidth figures in Schedule 4 of the JPA do not appear sensible for many HEIs, the approach adopted by JANET (UK) is to fund bandwidth based on need. The meeting noted the anomaly that in a merger situation, funding was available for the "second" link for 12 months from the date of merger for FE and only 3 months for HE.

1.2.3 Helpdesk

Mike Whitehead had not progressed his queries as his concerns were more complex than he had first thought. It was agreed to raise Helpdesk issues with Rolly Trice later in the meeting.

1.2.4 IPv6 Multicast

Jason Bain had sent the responses that he had collected from the group to Rolly Trice. John Linn reported that he had been doing a lot of work trying to get IPv6 multicasting to work with Cisco kit to meet a requirement in AbMAN. There were still problems, not all of which he believed would be fixed in an imminent software release. It was agreed to raise this issue with Rolly Trice as the group believed that pressure from JANET (UK) would be helpful in getting a resolution from CISCO.

1.2.5 Compilation of "Near Misses"

Although he had not received any input from the group, Ian Griffiths, in his role as Chair of UCISA-NG, had taken up service quality issues with JANET (UK) as EMMAN had decided to cancel some development slots due to bad experience of near misses. One positive outcome is that JANET (UK) is happy for RNOs to raise service issues on behalf of other institutions in the MAN if that is RNO policy.

The extended outages that NIRAN had experienced on each of its backbone links were an indication of disappointing reliability.

Although it was anticipated that JANET operational reliability would be a focus of the JDT, it was agreed to keep this item on our agenda. Also all were encouraged to notify Ian of any "near misses" for collation. **[Action: All]**

2   JANET Partner Agreement

No new issues are surfacing. Of those present, 6 had signed the JPA, a further 3 were in the process of doing so and 1 was awaiting their solicitor's response.

Some RNOs were now in the process of updating their internal PoP contracts to reflect changes introduced in the JPA. PoP support would normally reflect the rack hosting charges in the JPA.

There were some concerns raised about the possibility of false positives/spurious calls e.g. unscheduled power outages at sites, raised by the JSD out of hours. It was agreed to keep a watching brief on this.

3 Report the SLA negotiation team

Jason had raised IPv6 multicast issue and had not had any response back about any change to the SLA.

4 Status of the JDT (JANET Delivery Team) and TDA (Technical Design Authority)

4.1 TDA

The first meeting of the TDA was to take place the following day. See item 6 for membership details. It was stressed that UK MMG members on the TDA were not representatives of UK MMG and liaison with us would be through Rolly Trice. It was also noted that all TDA members had signed a confidentiality agreement.

4.2 JDT

The first meeting of the "shadow" JDT was scheduled for 30 June to dovetail with the next meeting of UKMMG. All welcomed the JDT as a means of harmonising relationships and presenting a unified front to customers.

Some RNOs were still unclear whom to nominate and at least one was concerned that they may have to hire staff to fulfil this function. Since the JDT has a disparate remit from technical to customer support, it was hoped that RNOs could send different people to JDT meetings depending on the agenda. It was agreed to keep a watching brief on the development of the JDT. David Vinograd proposed that this item should remain on the agenda but under Liaison with other Groups.

5 Netflow Project

David Hayling had been invited to join the project to represent the UK MMG group. A key issue was whether RNOs would be willing to export their Netflow data to a JANET (UK) repository where it would be held in anonymised form. It was most unlikely that any RNO would want access to their data in the UK systems as it was anonymised! Some issues relating to confidentiality and Data Protection were explored. It is the intention to release some of the anonymised data to groups in Computing Science Departments that undertake network research. David welcomed the discussion that would assist him in framing questions to RNOs.

Ian Griffiths reported that EMMAN had funding from HEFCE for a network anomaly service to their members. EMMAN is requesting further funding from HEFCE to get the project off the ground from September 2008 and to consider the option of widening this service to others.

John Linn reported on the work being done by JANET (UK) and AbMAN to migrate to the new Netsight-2 service. He highlighted the considerable effort required from AbMAN staff even for a small MAN. He believed that JANET (UK) will assist RNOs with the initial migration and are developing a script so that data won't have to be entered manually into the new system. Jason Bain circulated a recent e-mail on the netsight-managers list that gave further information.

6 JANET(UK) issues

Rolly Trice was in attendance and reported.

6.1 FE Upgrade Project

The number of confirmed upgrades to 100 Mbit/s is:

Backbone   13
EMMAN   18
KentMAN: 4
LeNSE: 27
LMN   17
NNW   21
NorMAN   5
SWERN   9
WMRN   27
YHMAN   11

Total 152

LSC has asked JANET(UK) to investigate the cost of upgrading the connections to the 15 of the busiest Specialist Colleges (NOT ACL's as reported at the last meeting) from 2 Mbit/s to 10 Mbit/s. A report has been sent to the LSC.

6.2 Regional Delivery Group changes

Shaena Porter is now on maternity leave. We have recruited Doreen Bestmann to provide maternity cover and she started work in March.

Elaine Baker has moved within the company and will work in the Connections Projects Group under Heather Barwick. We have recruited Laura Fleming to replace Elaine and Laura started work last week.

6.3 Cable theft on backbone network

Verizon have investigated mechanisms to protect the fibre cables along the railway and it will be possible to bury the cable along the route between Leeds and Warrington; however in other locations this is not practical.

Global Crossing has established repair teams specifically to respond quickly to incidents of fibre vandalism and the time to repair the two most recent incidents has reduced to around six hours. However there may still be delays caused by the need for the British Transport Police to secure crime scenes to collect evidence.

6.4 MidMAN3 West Midlands Regional Network

The contract was awarded to ntl:Telewest business systems and signed on the 17th April. Network comprises a central 10 Gbit/s core based on ntl PoPs in Birmingham, Coventry, and Wolverhampton, with outer aggregation PoPs connecting at 1 Gbit/s in a number of locations. Connections to SJ5 will be upgraded to 10 Gbit/s. The group noted that JANET (UK) are closing the loop via SJ5.

Rollout and migration must be complete by the end of September.

6.5 IPv6

Following the last meeting, RNOs were asked to report the status of IPv6 and IPv6 multicast implementation. The following information has been provided.

RNO	Hardware	V6 Unicast	V6 multicast
AbMAN			
C&NLMAN			
ClydeNET	Cisco 7609 & 7604	Enabled in core. Edge router upgrades planned by the summer.	Deployment planned before the summer.
EastMAN	Cisco 6500 & 7600	Deployment planned before October 2008	Deployment planned before October 2008. There may be issues with 6500 IOS
EMMAN			
FatMAN	Cisco 7609	Enabled and successfully tested. No one is using it.	Planning to deploy by September 2008
Kentish MAN	Cisco 6509 & 7204	End Q2, 2008	End Q2, 2008
LeNSE	Juniper M120 & M10i	Enabled	Enabled
LMN	Cisco GSR	Deployment in May 2008	Deployment in May 2008
NIRAN			
NNW	Cisco 6509 & 2851	Now	August 2008
NORMAN	Cisco 7609	Now	Awaiting code
SWERN	Cisco 7609	Awaiting code	Awaiting code
YHMAN	Cisco 6509 & 4507	Enabled on backbone	Not implemented, no plans to implement at the moment.
EastNET		Enabled	Will be enabled on request, no requests.
WMRN		Awaiting new build	Enabled on request.
TVN		Enabled	Enabled on request, no requests.

Rolly said that he would appreciate the final three responses and also any updates from RNOs.

6.6 JDT and TDA

Initial JDT meeting is planned for the 30th June, a Monday. Initial business will be to check on RNO's timetable to meet JPA commitments

The TDA will hold its initial meeting tomorrow and would liaise with the UK MMG through Rolly..
Membership of the TDA is:

Bob Day (Chair)
Rolly Trice (Secretary)

Rob Evans
Duncan Rogerson
Dave Tinkler
Baoyu Wang

Ed Carter (YHMAN)
John Linn (AbMAN)
Tim Robinson (NNW)
Keith Simpkin (SWERN)
Robin Tasker (Research community)

In the ensuing general discussion, the following points were raised:

a) Helpdesk – Rolly confirmed that it will be in place by the start of the JPA contract in October and that JANET (UK) was recruiting staff. Although the Helpdesk will take calls on any issues out of hours, all calls except those relating to faults will be parked till the next business day. Helpdesk staff will investigate faults and call RNO staff as required. There will be no change from current practice in the way that the Helpdesk interacts with RNOs.

b) IPv6 – Rolly needs logs of Cisco fault calls before JANET (UK) can exert pressure on Cisco to fix problems. **[Action: all affected]** All stressed the tardy response from Cisco (Junipers are not affected). John Linn has been sent new code by Cisco and is testing next Tuesday. Will e-mail progress. **[Action: John Linn]** Rolly confirmed that IPv6 multicasting is in SLA as of 1 October 08. He believes that the Beacon service is IPv6 compliant. If IPv6 destabilises the network, then will have to re-assess.

c) Netsight-2 – All pressed for a migration timetable. An estimate of the resources required from the RNO would also be helpful. There was some confusion about when the Netsight-1 boxes would be switched off (they are out of maintenance at end of July) and how access to historical data would be provided.

d) FE Upgrade - Rolly confirmed that orders would be aggregated as far as possible for those RNOs with a number of upgrades. This depended on no late requests from FE Colleges.

e) Access to JANET (UK)'s customer database – Rolly agreed to check if RNOs would have access as some RNOs would find that helpful.

f) West Midlands Regional Network (ex MIDMAN) – Rolly's team would represent the interests of the network on the JDT and liaison on any inter RNO issues e.g. new joint Leicester/Warwick medical school should be with Rolly.

g) JDT – The meeting on 30 June was more of an initiation to determine how RNOs were progressing new issues associated with the JPA. There have been no changes to the Operations Manual published with the JPA. JANET (UK) are running the JDT with existing staff resources and expect that it will require less that 0.5 FTE resource from the RNOs. Rolly confirmed that he would expect to have 1 permanent member and A.N.Other at the meetings depending of the particular agenda items. He also confirmed that he would be happy to allow more people access to the JDT web pages depending on the staffing arrangements within individual RNOs. It would be Rolly's responsibility to arrange training, as necessary, for JDT members.

h) Branding – No-one as yet appears to have completed the Branding Document. Only when the document is approved can an RNO start to use the "JANET brand" immediately.

7 SuperJANET 5 Performance and Operation

Despite some problems and "near misses", no RNO had elected to change its peering arrangements although one had considered the option.

As RNOs were becoming much more service orientated, there is increasing hesitation about use of development slots unless the other JANET link is absolutely stable. Rolly confirmed that if a slot has to be postponed due to JANET link issues then he would still expect the full 10 Business Days of notice of development work.

Re the NIRAN problems, Rolly explained that there were negotiations on-going so that NIRAN would have a third link to JANET via HEANET.

The problems experienced with malicious damage/theft of cable, particularly in the Leeds area, were force majeur events in the contract with Verizon. All action that can be taken to resolve/mitigate this issue is being done. Unless there are major outages for long periods of time, there is no prospect of any funding being made available. The experience may well shape the plans for SJ6 although the option of burying fibre or not running along railway lines may prove expensive.

8 RN Reports

The RN reports had been collated and circulated by e-mail.

More RNOs are getting rates levied on their fibre infrastructure. Charitable bodies can expect a discount of 80%. Companies pay the full 100% - even companies set up by Universities (that are themselves charitable bodies).

There seemed to be a variety of connection mechanisms for non-University owned Halls of Residence including a Nominated Connection that had itself ordered the telecos link to the RN. Rolly stated that if processes were at fault then this was an issue for the JDT. He remarked that Hilary Baxter had left in April and that until the post was filled, staff in the Business Development group would report to Shirley Wood.

9 Liaison with other groups

9.1 Chairs of MANs Group

Ian Griffiths reported that until there was business to conduct, no meeting of the group was planned.

9.2 UCISA-NG

Ian Griffiths said that NG had not met since our last meeting. The group appreciated new members and would welcome volunteers. They were not organising workshops on their own as JANET(UK) were covering all the areas of current concern.

10 Dates of future meetings

a. Tuesday 1st July 2008, UCL, London
The first JDT meeting will be on the 30th June, London
  Minute secretary: C&NLMAN
  Lunch: FaTMAN
b. Tuesday 14 October 2008, HEFCE London (location confirmed)
  Minute secretary: EaStMAN
  Lunch: YHMAN

11 Other business

Although the procurement of a framework agreement for routers currently being undertaken by JANET (UK) does not explicitly mention Cisco 6500 series, there is a clause "including but not limited to" which will permit their purchase from the framework.

It was noted that any public sector organisation could make use of the NHS framework agreement to purchase DWDM kit.

Ian Griffiths was asked to convey the group's thanks to his PA for the arrangements. It would be useful to have a list of those that had already paid for lunch and important to ensure that Rolly Trice always got an explicit invitation.