

**Minutes of the On-line Annual General Assembly of the UK Computing Research Committee held between Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March and Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2013.**

**Attendees:**

<b>Joe Sventek – JS</b>	Executive Committee Chair
Anthony Cohn – AC	Executive Committee Member
Chris Hankin – CH	Executive Committee Member
Ron Perrott – RP	Executive Committee Member
Dave Robertson – DR	Executive Committee Member
Morris Sloman – MS	Executive Committee Member
Martyn Thomas – MT	Executive Committee Member
<b>John McDermid – JMc</b>	Membership Panel Chair
Cliff Jones – SJ	Membership Panel Member
David Benyon - DB	Membership Panel Member
Ann Blandford – AB	Member
Peter Buneman – PB	Member
Muffy Calder – MC	Member
Simon Dobson – SD	Member
Jose Fiadeiro – JF	Member
Stephen Furber – SF	Member
Erol Genelbe – EG	Member
Edwin Hancock – EH	Member
Kevin Jones – KJ	Member
Mark Brian Josephs – MJ	Member
Peter Key – PK	Member
Peter Mosses – PM	Member
Fionn Murtagh – FM	Member
Andrew Pitts – AP	Member
Brian Randell – BR	Member
Ian Somerville – IS	Member
John Tait – JT	Member
Philip Wadler – PW	Member

**1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING [UKCRC/AGA12/04]**

The minutes of the AGA held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012 were presented to members via the on-line AGA and accepted as correct and so approved. These will now be transferred to the UKCRC website

**ACTION: Secretariat**

## 2. Convenor's Report

## Appendix 1

**MJ** expected to see some mention of conferences, etc, organised by, sponsored by or in cooperation with UKCRC. He felt it would have been appropriate to mention the UK Turing Centenary events in which UKCRC members were involved

**Convenors Response:** Sponsorship or cooperation of/with conferences is not a role that UKCRC has ever done. In the past, it has organised the Grand Challenge events at other meetings. There were no such activities in the past year.

Given the membership of UKCRC, the Convenor felt that if he attempted to document all "important" activities in which UKCRC members were involved, he would have documented everything that goes on. The Convenor's report is focused on UKCRC-led activities over the past year.

For the coming year, the Convenor has asked the elected Executive members to think of potential strategic initiatives that UKCRC might initiate. After they have a short list, they will be sharing this with the membership to prioritize.

**BR** welcomed the coverage of EU matters – and the fact that these are treated as being as significant as EPSRC matters.

**SF** was encouraged by the on-going engagement with EPSRC and asked if the involvement of the wider UKCRC membership with this process could be strengthened in a constructive way.

**Convenors Response:** The meetings with EPSRC over Shaping Capability were conducted under Chatham House rules. This enabled EPSRC to share with the Committee directions in which they were leaning, giving the Committee an opportunity to sense check those directions with an understanding of reality in the Computer Science research community. If the Committee wished to share any of the information that was discussed, drafts of any potential communiqué would have to be shared with Liam Blackwell and Christine Turner, such that any sensitive items could be redacted.

The discussion regarding Centres for Doctoral Training included many individuals from many disciplines, not just UKCRC elected Executive members. Thus, it is clear that EPSRC avails themselves of contributing expertise when needed; the elected Executive provides a group representing the computing science research community from which it is straightforward to solicit input/feedback.

There is no guarantee that the Committee represents all specialties in the community. Starting with the next Executive meeting, we will discuss possible mechanisms by which we might extend the involvement to the wider membership.

**EH** asked if UKCRC membership should be engaging in the funding debate at a higher level too. EPSRC and ERC are concerned with implementation and less with policy. Clearly it's important to maintain the ITC share of available funds, but additionally, we need to try to get some direct Parliamentary and ministerial lobbying underway.

**Convenors response:** We certainly expect that each member presented with the opportunity to discuss ITC with MPs and ministers will do so. If there is a need for a standard line to speak to, then the executive committee can certainly work to provide such materials.

A recent email exchange among the elected Executive concerned the setting up of a meeting with Delpy to discuss the impact of ITC on UK PLC and the need for healthy investment in the discipline. Calendars permitting, it is likely that the meeting will be arranged for early summer.

**JT** asked if Chris Hankin was the only UKCRC member of the Connect Advisory Forum, and whether the UKCRC should try to get a further member on to the panel to ensure UK representation if and when Chris wishes to step down

**Convenors Response:** We would certainly like continued UKCRC representation on the Advisory Forum. I will leave Chris to respond whether he intends to step down, and if he does, to give us plenty of time to lobby for another UKCRC member to be added in his place.

Chris Hankin has indicated that he does not intend to stand down soon and will give fair warning if he does. Since the members are appointed by the Commission, it may be difficult to ensure UKCRC representation.

**JT** suggested that it is difficult because the Commission make the decision, but his experience is that often UK people don't make sufficient effort to ensure they are in the pool the Commission looks to. This takes a while to enter, so it's important that UKCRC has a representative in waiting, and this person is known (as an individual) to the Commission.

**JMc** His concern - as it has been for a long time, is the role and remit of UKCRC vis a vis BCS Academy, etc. Whilst he is convinced that UKCRC has done some good things, he is uncertain about what it does that the BCS Academy and/or CPHC does not? This may be one of the reasons why UKCRC struggles in recruiting members.

**FM** remarked that it will be very interesting to see if the two successful FET Flagships will receive €1 billion each over 10 years.

**Convenors Response:** Indeed, I think we will all watch with interest.

**SD** thinks the engagement with EU institutions and programmes is very positive. Even though many institutions' main funders remain the UK agencies, the benefits of collaborating with colleagues around Europe are often overlooked, and we should be encouraging it strongly.

**Convenors Response:** We intend to continue to do all we can in this regard.

### 3. Consultations & Submissions Report

### Appendix 2

**PW** – could not tell how 2 differs from 4; it appears only one of 2 and 4 is posted on the web site. Consultation 5 is not yet on the web site. By 'web site' I mean:

<http://www.ukcrc.org.uk/resources/reports/index.cfm>

**MC** - These submissions have been excellent, thanks to Dave for such slick organisation. But some of them are missing from the website (I could only see 3 out of the 5). Also, I couldn't see where to make this comment, but could we have a little work on the website please? The landing page is out of date. The submissions/consultations activity is one of the major achievements of UKCRC and should maybe have more prominence? I'd be willing to talk over with someone if that helps.

**PK** - Would be helpful to have links to summaries of the responses.

### 4. Membership Panel Report

### Appendix 3

**SF** – Endorses the sentiments of the final paragraph - perhaps Exec could consider whether steps should be taken to promote the value of UKCRC and UKCRC membership, and we should have another campaign to expand the membership?

**EH** – Agrees that application rate is low. Please name new members, as in 2011 minutes. Suspect UKCRC is losing visibility among those who might apply, and this may be a factor in low application rate. Applications last year (2011) seem to come from departments which are already well represented on UKCRC. How would others know of our existence?

REF panel impact assessors could be a good starting point for pool of industrialists.

**JT** – Asks how many members UKCRC has? His recollection is that it was always intended to be a fairly exclusive club, formed to counter balance the perception that the open and inclusive

nature of CPHC was undermining that organisation's ability to speak with authority to Government (especially) on behalf of the UK's leading computing researchers.

Further, it was always clear some people would not join because they disapproved of the idea of an exclusive club. As such it is far from clear to JT that the number of new members is too low.

Given we actually may be close to saturation, what percentage of new Professors of Computing created in the past year have joined - if it is more than 50% I would suggest that is satisfactory.

**FM** – agreed with the benefits of membership being made more communicable and also seeking more members from industry (corporates and start-ups). How about an associate member status? (I seem to recall some limitation on that.), or an honorary membership category.

**KJ** – agreed with the importance of needing to be active in promotion of the value of UKCRC and getting the message out to a wider constituency could only be helpful.

**PK** – agrees that the last paragraph (on membership and promoting the value etc of membership) is very pertinent, and he would certainly like that issue to be within the scope of the panel.

## 5. A O B

**BR** – liked the way this on-line AGM was being conducted.

**AB** – suggested that she was not aware of any follow-up on the healthcare theme that was the focus last year. Was there any? Even if not, it was an interesting session (if poorly attended).

**KJ** – Commented that the on-line AGM is significantly less satisfying than the one he attended in person last year. He thinks it might be worth reconsidering the decision, and perhaps offering a hybrid with a physical venue and on-line attendance for those who can't make it.

**Convenors Response:** The attendance at the past 3 AGMs has been abysmal. As a result, those who did attend could never make any decisions at such meetings, as it was nowhere near quorate.

For an online AGM, there is always the possibility to do it synchronously, using any of a number of web vendors that enable remote participation in such meetings. The proximity of this meeting to the Easter weekend meant that we were likely to have limited attendance for such a synchronous meeting.

After the process is over, I will probably construct a survey asking for input. Thus far, you are the only person that has expressed dissatisfaction with the asynchronous meeting, although many may feel the same way and are simply being quiet. Several others have applauded the asynchronous meeting, since it allows them to participate without having to schedule a fixed time slot and/or a trip to London in order to attend.

**PK** – Agreed the online AGM is a good idea, however having part of such an AGM synchronous/online would enhance dialogue. He was a little unclear as to what this particular AGM is trying to achieve: the current agenda is primarily a review of the year, but some of the reports are skeletal.

**MC** – Commented that the online AGM was great. Well Done.

## **Convenor's Report to UKCRC**

**March 2013**

**J Sventek, Chair of UKCRC Executive Committee**  
**C Hankin, past Chair of UKCRC Executive Committee**

### **Strategy and Governance**

The primary strategy initiative during the past year has been to informally engage with the EPSRC ICT team on a number of research funding activities of importance to the UK computing research community. These are described in the Research Funding and Policy section below.

In April 2013, the Executive Committee will be soliciting the membership for suggestions of potential strategic activities to be pursued in the coming year.

Joe Sventek has taken over from Chris Hankin as Chair of the Executive Committee in November 2012. Our thanks go to Chris for effective chairmanship of the Committee since November 2010. Chris will continue to provide the Executive Committee with updates on European Matters.

The primary governance initiative during the past year has been the exploration and adoption of the ability to conduct a virtual Annual General Meeting. This is being tested this year, in which the AGM will not only be virtual, but will also be asynchronous (conducted over a period of time). Experience with this approach will be reported next year.

### **Research Funding and Policy**

#### **EPSRC**

Elected members of the UKCRC Executive Committee met several times with the EPSRC ICT team to informally discuss the Shaping Capability activity. These constructive discussions helped refine EPSRC's initial thinking about the importance of particular ICT research areas, especially with regard to funding growth/maintenance/reduction. UKCRC feels that this constructive dialogue positively benefited the UK computing research community.

Elected members of the UKCRC Executive Committee also met with the EPSRC ICT team to informally discuss the Centres for Doctoral Training call. We discussed the draft set of ICT focus areas for CDTs, suggesting consolidation of fragmented areas, as well as introducing a small set of additional focus areas that were not in the draft set. Again, UKCRC feels that this constructive dialogue positively benefited the UK computing research community.

## **European Matters**

Wendy Hall was chair and Chris Hankin was a member of the IST Advisory Group (ISTAG) for DG Information Society and Media in the European Commission until June 2012. The final report of ISTAG, which was co-edited by Chris, with substantial input from UK computer scientists, was about software technology as a key enabling technology (<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/docs/istag-soft-tech-wgreport2012.pdf>)

This is already influencing the Commission's thinking about the initial work programme for Horizon 2020. DG INFSO ceased to exist at the beginning of July 2012 and was replaced by DG Communication Networks, Content and Technology (CONNECT); the new CONNECT Advisory Forum, which will advise on the content of the Horizon 2020 work programme, met for the first time on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013. Chris Hankin has been appointed Vice Chair of this Forum. UKCRC will continue to monitor the activities leading up to Horizon 2020 and we will advise the membership of particular opportunities that are of UK importance. One particular point of interest is that the Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) programme is now part of the Excellence in Science pillar of Horizon 2020 and will include other disciplines apart from Computer Science/ICT.

## CONSULTATIONS AND SUBMISSIONS 2012/13

Since the last annual report we have responded to five public consultations:

1. **RCUK Capital Investment Consultation** (led by Dave Robertson)
2. **Cabinet Office consultation on Open Standards for Flexibility and Efficiency in Government IT** (led by Dave Robertson)
3. **BIS Inquiry into Government's Open Access Policy** (led by Dave Robertson)
4. **Cabinet Office Consultation on the Definition and Mandation of Open Standards for Software Interoperability, Data and Document Formats in Government IT** (led by Dave Robertson)
5. **HEFCE Consultation on Open Access and REF** (led by Morris Sloman)

**Dave Robertson, (Consultations and Submissions)**

## UKCRC Membership Committee: Report for 2012

John McDermid, 21st March 2013

The UKCRC Membership Committee has seven members, following the election of Cliff Jones. The current membership is:

John McDermid	Professor of Software Engineering, University of York
Javier Barria	Reader in the Intelligent Systems and Networks Group, Imperial College London
David Benyon	Professor of Computing, Napier University, Edinburgh
Michael Fourman	Professor of Computer Systems, University of Edinburgh
David Hutchison	Professor of Computing, University of Lancaster
Cliff Jones	Professor of Computing Science, University of Newcastle upon Tyne
Jeff Kramer	Professor of Distributed Computing, Imperial College London

The Committee works electronically, reviewing nominations and voting on-line. The system works adequately for the low volume of applications received.

Three nominations were received during 2012, and all three nominees were elected.

It is very unusual for industrialists to be nominated for UKCRC, and recently the Executive Committee suggested some modifications to the membership criteria which were intended to facilitate more industrial applications. These have been agreed by the Committee and will be acted upon shortly.

In my view, application rates will remain low unless active steps are taken to promote the value of UKCRC and UKCRC membership. I had not taken that to be within the remit of the Membership Committee, but perhaps this is an issue which should be discussed.