

## From talk to action: identifying and overcoming the obstacles of shared services

# Obstacles and Opportunities

- Background
- Barriers & Obstacles
- People
- Opportunities & Experience

# Background

- JANET(UK)
  - National Research and Education Network
  - Mission critical for research and knowledge economy
  - Delivering leading network enabled shared services for 25+ years
- Data centres and Cloud
  - Shared data centre work
  - Data centre strategy for HEFCE
  - Universities Modernisation Fund
    - JANET Brokerage

# Barriers and Obstacles

# Accepted Barriers

## Unclear Finance

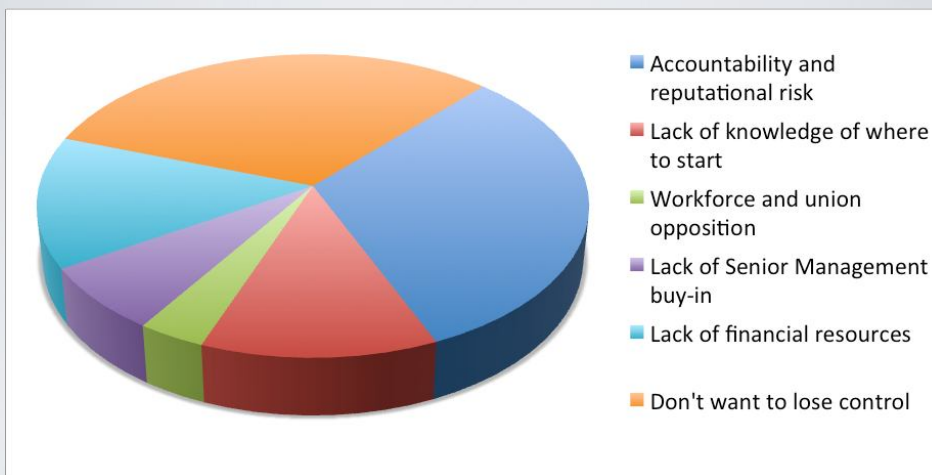
- Total Cost of Ownership
- Unclear budgets
- Comparing like for like
- VAT...

## Unclear Mandate

- Organisational imperative?
- Top Management buy in?
- Can the organisation do this?



# Cloud Survey Results



Source: JISC Cloud Survey 2011

The main  
obstacle to  
shared  
services...

...people.



## Risk

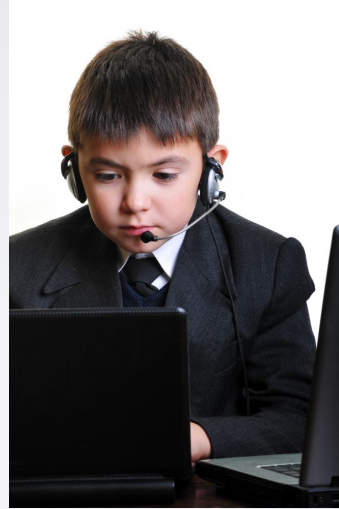
- Are the partners risk profiles compatible?
- Is there a common way of understanding the risks?
- Are risks mitigated by instruments such as SLA's?
- Services depend upon people and often...

*"we don't trust them..."*



# Uncertainty

- Deskillling – will moving to a shared service diminish in-house expertise or will it free up people to do more valuable work?
- Service Quality – Will this service deliver? Who is running the service? What mitigation is possible? Can we adapt our business processes?
- Sharing – is there clarity on what financial/sensitive information can be shared in the process?



We love a shared service...

...as long as we provide it.

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# Personal

Messy, difficult challenges

- Disruption and loss of focus
- Changing 'my' role
- Changing other people's jobs
- Losing people
- Support from HR & Management



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# Invisible Barriers

- Unclear (or un-communicated) rationale & responsibility
  - Why are we doing this? Does everyone know?
  - Is that mirrored in area objectives?
- Conflicting Timescales & moving goal posts
  - *"Oh, our priority this month is disaster recovery..."*
- Silos, conflicting interests & senior management with unstated intentions
- Lack of clarity regarding competitive differentiators
  - Is that why students really choose to study here?
  - Is that why research bids are successful?

...and now some good news!

# Shared Services can deliver

## Organisational Benefits:

- Efficiencies and savings
- Service improvements
- Catch up with market leaders
- Open organisation to new opportunities (better placed to adopt)

## Collective Benefits:

- Aggregated purchasing– balancing customer and supplier, especially with large incumbent suppliers
- Behaviour change – creating standards & interoperability, changing buying options

# Sharing Experience

## Clarity of provision

- Standard contract terms
- Clear agreed SLA's
- Agreed governance
- Clear service menu
- Clarity on offering and compromises
- Unambiguous expansion provision rather than waiting for all

## The human touch

- FD, COO, VC level management buy-in and find the key sponsors
- Establish agreed position on total investment and ROI
- Set expectations and clarity on risks
- Build the support mechanisms for everyone
- Treat as a change management process (e.g. Kotter)



## It can be the simple things...

- If there is a choice of location, service provider or team a neutral third party can be useful.



*“Not my data centre or your data centre, but their data centre is now our base...”*

## Opportunities

- Identify the key imperatives and ‘know your numbers’
- Compare your needs with similar organisations
- Look at joining with existing initiatives
  - Inside the education sector - e.g. UMF Projects, JANET Brokerage, Norman Out of Hours Helpline etc
  - Beyond the sector - e.g. WPM Payments portal
- For new initiatives look at scale
  - Small can be lower risk, large can have critical mass
- Talk to sector organisations – e.g. other universities and colleges, existing shared services as well as UCISA, HEFCE, BUFDG, JISC & JANET



# Thank You

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*"It seems that perfection is reached not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away"*

Antoine de Saint Exupéry

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