Institute of Advanced Legal Studies
School of Advanced Study
University of London

INFORMATION SYSTEMS STRATEGY

1. Introduction

1.a IALS recognises that there is an essential IT element in most areas of its activity and attaches a high priority to appropriate investments in the continued development and support of computing capabilities.

1.b Since the advent of the web, IALS has been actively involved in innovative legal information delivery - developing and promoting public access to materials capable of supporting legal research on the Internet. Through the ongoing work of IALS Information Projects, the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, is committed to extending the reach of digital provision of legal information by delivering specialist legal research tools and niche web services - maximising access to key or hard to find information to facilitate legal research, public understanding, and promote justice and the rule of law.

1.c This document outlines strategic approaches to such development, providing a framework with which the Institute and its Library can identify and review operations, aspirations and progress in the field of information systems and technology. This document was last revised 1/2012. It will be revised on a regular basis.

1.d The document should be read in conjunction with the current IALS Mission Statement and Strategic Development Plan. It proceeds from broad aims and system requirements to consideration of the specific means by which targets might be successfully reached.

2. Information Systems

2.a Aims

The Institute has defined the following strategic aims in information systems policy:

2.a.i The Institute aims to establish and maintain critical and supplementary computer-based systems to support the Institute's pursuit of its academic mission. Such systems facilitate the acquisition, organisation and delivery of a full range of information sources for research, teaching, learning, library, administrative and management purposes.

2.a.ii IALS aims to make full use of information technology resources and opportunities in support of legal scholarship, in particular responding to the needs of a client community embracing, academic research staff, academic visitors, postgraduate research students, library and administrative staff, academic library users and members of the legal profession.

2.a.iii IALS aims to provide its staff and users with access to reliable and up-to-date electronic office systems, electronic information services and electronic research and publication facilities, integrating new technology into Institute working practices.

2.a.iv The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies website, www.ials.sas.ac.uk, has been in operation and continuous development since 1995. IALS aims to continue to develop the website and a portfolio of national online services for law and publicly available legal research tools, including appropriate digitisation of rare and unusual print

sources in the IALS collections. Each project is designed to best meet the needs of a distinct legal information purpose and address the requirements of legal researchers.

2.a.v IALS aims to facilitate the convergence of more traditional library services and electronic information services in the Institute's leading legal research library, including the integrated acquisition of traditional and electronic information resources through onsite collections and remote access.

2.a.vi IALS aims to develop policy and practice to ensure effective and efficient management of records held electronically.

2.a.vii IALS aims to provide an onsite staff team dedicated to developing, supporting and promoting use of information systems for legal research including the integrated library system, electronic information services, in-house databases, CD databases and web-based resources.

2.a.viii IALS aims to maintain awareness of national IT initiatives for higher education, respond to potential funding opportunities and employ effective project management skills in the introduction of new technologies, procedures and services. It aims to take advantage of new media and emerging information environments.

2.a.ix IALS aims to enable its employees and users to participate in co-operative electronic legal research projects at School, University, national and international levels and seek representation at these levels.

2.a.x IALS aims to adopt informed computing procurement policies, reviewing quality and seeking discounts or taking advantage of negotiated educational deals.

2.a.xi IALS will meet its legal obligations regarding health and safety, accessibility requirements, software licences, copyright matters and data protection issues.

2.a.xii The Institute aims to follow relevant national and international standards in the development of its information systems and services such as MARC record standards, Z39.50 standards, openURL, HTML + meta data standards.

2.b Library Automated Management System – Innovative Millennium

2.b.i IALS requires a sophisticated system suitable for world class research.

2.b.ii IALS participates in the management of the SHLS shared the Innovative Millennium Library automated management system (from Innovative Interfaces Inc.). The Institute aims, in co-operation with its partners, to develop the system to full capacity, employing relevant available features and pursuing and implementing product enhancements.

2.b.iii The system facilitates the input and import of quality controlled bibliographic records, presenting Library holdings in a comprehensive manner with ease of onsite and remote access. The system supports data extraction, manipulation and full management and statistical information facilities. The system also provides integrated authenticated access to electronic information resources.

2.b. IALS will work with SHLs to maintain continuous development of the system to comply with developing international standards, proven developments in technology and additional features expected by researchers.

2.b.iv IALS Library will seek to convert all remaining appropriate manual records to online

data so the system represents the full extent of the collection and employ system capabilities for digitised resource delivery.

2.b.v The Library plans, with its partners, to develop the system's capabilities as an information gateway to material within the library and information held remotely. Portal capabilities will be exploited to ensure researchers have access to essential information tools, including resource discovery and delivery, cross-searching, context-linking, authentication and personalization facilities. The webOPAC and portal will offer users a single integrated information access tool.

<u>2.c IALS Website, national online service for law and digital information delivery</u>

2.c.i The Institute seeks to develop and maintain its web site as a frontline interface between its own facilities and the world-wide legal research community.

2.c.ii IALS attaches great importance to the maintenance and expansion of the site's role as a promotional tool, as a means of electronic publication and as an electronic information gateway to global materials for law. Whenever possible web elements will be introduced into, and derived from, appropriate areas of Institute work. Creative input and involvement will be encouraged across the staff.

2.c.iii IALS aims to develop and host a range of legal information web databases, including services resulting from national collaborative projects such as: CLRT (Current legal research Topics database), Eagle-I Internet Portal for Law, FLAG Foreign Law Guide, FLARE Index to Treaties and IALS SKiLLS (Sources + Know-how in legal literacy skills) database.

2.c.iv IALS aims to develop open access digital collections derived from its own rare and historic collections through onsite digitisation, appropriate outsourcing and participation in collaborative digitisation ventures, taking account of international preservation and access standards.

2.c.v IALS aims to develop online training resources derived from IALS staff skills and capabilities, IALS events, onsite training sessions and online open source delivery systems such as Moodle VLE, Xertes interactive tutorial software and subscribed specialist applications and platforms such as LibGuides service. IALS will develop lecture capture and live streaming facilities to create videos and podcasts from selected lectures and conferences held at the Institute.

2.c.vi IALS aims to provide web site hosting facilities for related organisations such as our Society for Advanced legal Studies (SALS) and FLARE the Foreign Law Research group of libraries.

<u>2.d Law databases and electronic data source subscriptions</u>

2.d.i The Library aims to acquire and deliver a full range of electronic sources including specialist commercial online legal databases (such as Lexis and WestLaw full text legal databases), open and commercial web services, CD/DVD materials and materials in other emerging formats.

2.d.ii Assessment and acquisition policies for electronic materials will be integrated with the Library's Collection Development policies, taking full account of the research benefits offered by both the content and medium and the balance of provision and accommodation in the Library.

2.d.iii In addition to onsite access in the Institute, controlled remote access to CD and other databases will continue to be developed in co-ordination with the Library System's

web access management capabilities, to make services available to eligible members wherever located (subject to licence agreements and user authorization).

2.d.iv Priority is attached to achieving effective and efficient electronic resource management, providing integrated access to electronic subscription services and legal research resources on the global Internet via an evolving gateway service.

2.d.v IALS participates as a service developer, project partner and content provider for a number of national and international services including: BAILII, CommonLII, EuroLII, WorldLII and LLMC-Digital.

2.e IALS Intranet

The Institute aims to develop and maintain a local Intranet, addressing the needs of specific areas of operation and facilitating the effective sharing between staff of Institute documentation, guidelines and procedural information.

2.f Accounts System

IALS requires interactive access to the central University accounts system. Systems should support rapid and reliable financial accountability and efficiency in processing payments and collecting monies due and reporting on transactions at all stages.

2.g E-repository and Open Journals System

2.g.i IALS aims to continue development and maintenance of a scholarly E-repository as a distinct community section with the School of Advanced Study's SAS-SPACE E-repository – making research papers and materials written by IALS staff, students and academic visitors available freely on the web under creative commons licences.

2.g.ii IALS aims to continue free open access publication of the IALS/SALS journal Amicus Curiae.

2.h Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

IALS aims to continue development and maintenance of a Virtual Learning Environment e-learning facilities in support of learning and teaching on the Institute's law degree courses, short-term course, distance learning courses and other programmes through the School of Advanced Study's shared VLE Study-Online.

2.i Social Network services

IALS aims to development a social network presence through popular Facebook and Twitter services to assist with outreach, user interaction, promotion and marketing. Additionally IALS aims to develop Blog and forum facilities to further specialist international discussion and sharing and testing of ideas in legal education and research.

2.j IALS Management databases

2.j.i The Institute will continue to develop in-house databases established in MS Access, planning others where automated approaches will be beneficial. The performance, integrity and potential enhancement of systems will be regularly reviewed.

2.j.ii Admissions System + Library Entry gate system.

User records and Sentry System providing statistical information on Library usage in co-ordination with Library Automated System

2.j.iii Library Subscription Scheme - Document Delivery System.
Corporate membership records, enquiries, transactions and billing in co-ordination with Secure Electronic Document delivery facilities.

2.j.iv LLM database
Records of courses and tutors from the University of London inter-collegiate LLM programme.

2.j.v Conference room bookings system.
IALS Room letting, services, catering and billing.

2.j.vi Computing Services database
Hardware inventory, record of software licences, network settings, user locations, maintenance and repair history.

2.k Electronic mail systems

2.k.i   IALS requires, effective, reliable and up-to-date 24/7 e-mail services to support inter-office communication, work and information flows, and scholarship in general services. Such services will be sought through liaison with the School's email service providers.

2.k.ii   Remote login, web interface and transparent handling of file attachment and transfer features are essential requirements sought from service providers.

2.k.iii The IALS network will continue to develop access and interaction with accounts held on remote systems by visitors from around the world.

2.l Computing network infrastructure

2.l.i   IALS aims to establish essential up-to-date and well-maintained networked computing facilities in sufficient numbers and in a user-friendly environment to support the Institute's pursuit of its academic mission.

2.l.ii   IALS will establish and review target provision figures [Current targets: for staff members in 1:1 ratio, for Institute Research Students in 1:4 ratio and for Library users in 1:15 ratio].

2.l.iii IALS will deliver Wireless Internet access facilities throughout the Institute and its library in collaboration with University of London Computer Centre (ULCC).

2.l.iv   IALS will provide audio-visual presentation facilities in its lecture theatre, seminar rooms, library and public rooms to facilitate research, teaching and professional events.

2.l.v   IALS will seek, through representation in the central University, to ensure a computing network infrastructure that is capable of supporting and furthering collaborative initiatives.

3.Computing and Communications Environment

3.a Workstation PCs and terminals

3.a.i   IALS aims, through co-ordination with ULCC, to provide computers with sufficient processor power, memory and hard disk capacity to ensure reasonable operational longevity. Such high performance networked computers must be capable of offering the latest applications and networked services in a multi-tasking environment.

3.a.ii   Investments in equipment should be protected by extended onsite maintenance warranties.

3.a.iii IALS, through co-ordination with ULCC, operates a rolling program of equipment replacement and renewal on a 4-5 year cycle to ensure currency and productivity.

3.b Software

3.b.i   IALS aims to fully exploit the multi-functionality and multi-tasking environment offered by evolving MS Windows operating systems and will continue to develop a standard web-based user interface.

3.b.ii   IALS will operate an applications software strategy to deliver a full range of integrated programs to users. MS Office 2007 and subsequent updates will form the centre of word processing, data processing, spreadsheet and presentation software provision. More specialist programs will be employed for statistical analysis and graphics work. Internet tools including the latest web browsers (Internet Explorer + Firefox), e-mail clients, file compression and transfer applications will be made available to facilitate data extraction and manipulation.

3.b.iii Careful consideration will be given to the benefits of updates to stable new versions of key programs supported by necessary funding for licences, media, manuals and training.

3.c Printers

IALS will provide a full range of networked laser printers, desktop lasers, inkjet printers including colour printing, protected where possible by extended on site maintenance arrangements.

3.d Scanners

3.d.i   IALS operates networked scanning facilities providing the capability to digitise documents, including some materials supplied to library subscribers, and generate images to further develop Institute presentations, publications and web services.

3.d.ii   IALS will monitor opportunities for involvement in digitisation projects - particularly in relation to document delivery services and archive facilities.

3.e Network Servers

IALS will maintain and develop the following essential equipment:
Windows 2003 servers – hosting in-house databases, IALS website and web databases, IALS Intranet, Sentry entry system, and currently user space, shared directories, and network printing.
CD servers - providing web access to CD services cached to hard disk.
Consultation on maintenance and development of Library System server – SHLS Innovative Millennium System

3.f.i   IALS will seek reliable and accountable wide area network access from its service providers. The service should support transparent handling of relevant network protocols, developing coherent and costed plans for the expansion of connectivity and performance, accountable management, usage control and charging mechanisms.

3.f.ii   IALS, through representation in the central University, will promote the use of a renewal strategy - informed by regular review of network demand and capacity and developments with SuperJanet, global academic networks, national funding arrangements and network communications technology. Future requirements may arise for video conferencing, digital document delivery services, and rapid access to Internet resources.

3.f.iii   IALS, through its service providers (Estates + ULCC) will maintain and renew the network cabling infrastructure and vital onsite networking equipment such as Switches, Hubs / Repeaters and Terminal Servers and systematically upgrade PCs to take advantage of faster network speeds as they become available.

3.f.iv   The Institute aims to fully document its local network topography and configuration.

3.f.v   IALS will monitor and aim to participate in opportunities offered by further LAN/WAN initiatives in co-ordination with our service providers.

3.g Information Systems staff + support

3.g.i   IALS library manages computing activity for the Institute as a whole through the work of its Information Systems section. IALS aims to develop and maintain local systems expertise to manage and co-ordinate use and provide liaison with system suppliers and other partners.

3.g.ii   IALS aims to develop and retain computing skills via its full time onsite information systems team - sharing and transferring skills across the full Institute staff.

3.g.iii   IALS aims to work closely in collaboration with colleagues in ULCC and SHLS to maintain and develop essential systems and IT capability.

3.g.iv   The Library will continue to develop expertise in handling electronic information services and problem solving skills channelled through the work of its enquiry desk.

3.h Education and training

3.h.i   IALS will provide advice and documentation to assist in the acquisition of skills in using networked computer equipment and applications.

3.h.ii   IALS aims to provide access to specialist computing help and professional applications training, including placements on external courses and in-house video training facilities.

3.h.iii   IALS aims to adopt an inclusive approach to managing and implementing change, investing in training, stimulating participation and employing constructive staff innovations.

3.h.iv   IALS provides a dedicated legal information training suite, capable of supporting presentations and inter-active hand-on work within the library.

3.i. Space implications

3.i.i   Within budgetary constraints IALS will give full consideration to space requirements for system servers and workstation PCs to meet the growing needs of Library users and Institute staff and students.

3.i.ii   Plans for building work and refurbishment at the Institute will consider the expansion of provision in the Library and the creation of accommodation providing card-controlled 24 hour access to computing facilities for eligible research students.

3.j. System Security

3.j.i   IALS will install and maintain anti-virus protection software on servers and workstation PCs to ensure the security and viability of facilities, working in collaboration with the University's network support team.

3.j.ii   IALS will work with the University's network support team to define effective Firewall policies.

3.j.iii   IALS will maintain a daily tape backup of central server data, stored in a fireproof safe.

3.j.iv   IALS will foster best practice on password security, shared file management and individual data backup procedures, documented in a staff manual and in line with University guidance.

3.j.v   IALS will apply appropriate security policies and system image facilities and disaster recovery procedures to protect system settings, minimise misuse, reduce malfunctions and aid system restores.

3.j.vi   IALS will draft, institute and enforce such Regulations and Conditions of Use as are necessary to safeguard resources and highlight user responsibilities, in line with JANET acceptable use requirements and application licence agreements.

3.k. Records management

3.k.i   IALS will develop and employ effective records management policies for its electronic records, determining retention and disposal guidelines for the Institute's information systems.

3.l. Review procedures

3.l.i   IALS encourages continuous informal review of its IT facilities and services, focused through regular management and staff meetings and user feedback via the Library enquiry desk, webOPAC suggestions feature, and regular user survey.

3.l.ii   IALS will seek to provide, via formal questionnaire, an annual staff review of computing facilities, to gauge user satisfaction, assess performance and requirements and identify future needs as part of the annual budgetary exercise.

3.l.iii   IALS seeks to maintain a high level of current awareness in the field of information technology, matched by appropriate investment to safeguard the currency of IALS facilities and services.

3.l.iv   Such review will inform the Institute's evolving information strategy, presented in this document.