AT UHI : IT can be a challenge ....

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LIS Customer Services Manager

Our unique partnership

- We have 85 campus sites
- Covering 1/6 of the UK land mass
- From Shetland to the Borders, Hebrides to Moray and pretty much everything in between
- 13 Academic Partners
- Over 40,000 users
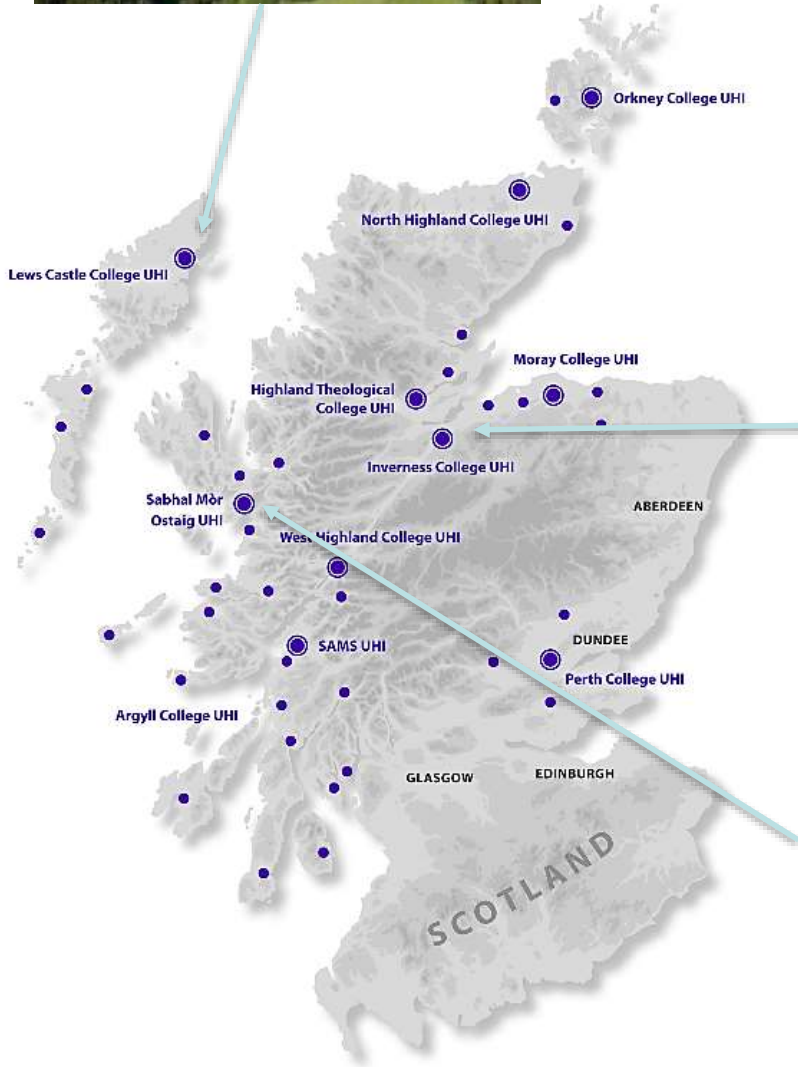- Our users range from School Link, FE, HE to Research

In BBC language ...

- That's a Belgium or nearly 2 Wales(s)!

NAFC Marine Centre UHI   Shetland College UHI

Orkney College UHI

North Highland College UHI

Lews Castle College UHI

Moray College UHI

Highland Theological College UHI

Inverness College UHI

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI

West Highland College UHI

ABERDEEN

SAMS UHI

DUNDEE

Perth College UHI

Argyll College UHI

GLASGOW   EDINBURGH

SCOTLAND

Learning and information services

- Comprises of 9 departments, 7 of which provide core ICT and Library services to our partnership
- LIS Customer Services runs UHI Servicedesk, 2nd Line ICT Support of UHI School of Health and Executive Office
- Business relationship management
- Incident and problem management
- Consolidated services …..

How not to do it, 5 years ago!

- A user called to say they could not get JAWS working on the thin client environment
- This wasn't unexpected, but what was the solution
- The response from ICT was blank, with no communication from the team to the user
- The new CSM manager found the call and contacted the user to get an update to find no contact had been made for 8 months
- The Core ICT said, in their own words, we didn't have a clue what they were on about, so we ignored it

Passing the buck

- Core ICT said it was a local ICT Support issue
- Local ICT said they had little involvement due to the work of the student support teams
- Student support teams were all working independently across the partnership
- Costs were rising due to lack of joined up thinking
- UHI Servicedesk were bearing the brunt of it with increasing numbers of support calls for multiple bits of AT software
- So it became in the Servicedesk interest to help find a solution

What's Servicedesk got to do with it?

- Honestly, on the face of it, not a lot …
- Our users increasingly do not distinguish between our academic partners
- Equivalence of experience for users
- Simplify our software offering
- Simplify our support
- Upskill our staff
- We're good eggs really!

Defining our role

- 2 years ago, UHI Servicedesk made a significant cultural shift from reactive ICT problem handling to proactivity
- Trend analysis and problem management became one of the mainstays of how the Servicedesk operated
- Equivalence of Experience drives everything we now do
- We proved our worth with the Global print project at UHI, which was born out of UHI Servicedesk trend analysis
- This simplified support, experience and saved significant money
- Our next stop was assistive and inclusive technology

So why the challenge ....
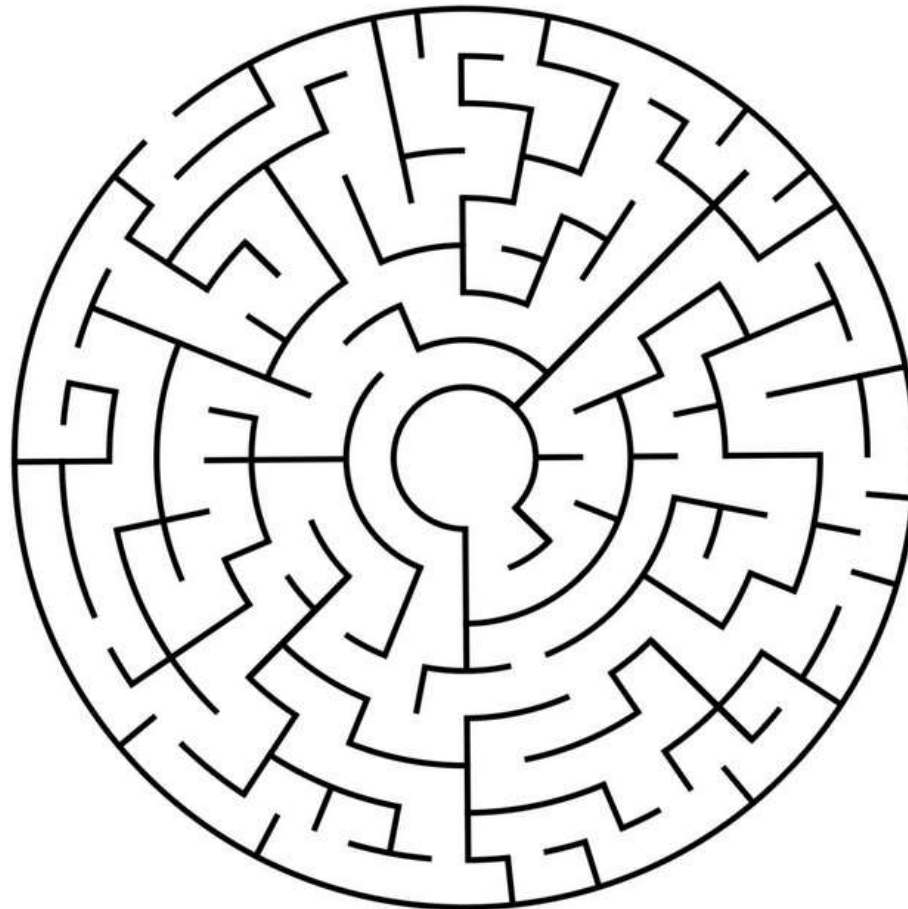
The rule of 14

- With 14 different organisations, we have multiple approaches to the same problems
- 14 2nd Line ICT teams
- 14 Library Teams
- 14 Disability Practitioners
- 14 Student Support Services
- This creates our unique support challenge

Who are assistive technology users?

- We got very focused on our student support, rightly so
- But our employees are just as important
- On campus, off campus
- Mobile devices, fixed devices
- So, time for a new approach
- And how to simplify

Evidence please ....

Behind the trap door …

- Read / Write Gold was used at 1 Academic Partner, with 4 campus sites

- 15 students had been designated as requiring the software

- For desktop simplicity, we had made it available to all desktops, approx 500 machines

- It transpired over 100 staff were also using the software

- And not one member of staff had declared a requirement to HR

But was it all as it seemed …

- We couldn't ask the staff outright why they were using it
- So we raised it as a general topic at an ICT user group for feedback
- And also spoke to HR …
- Staff were not willing to admit they needed assistance
- Staff were testing it to ensure they understood it for their students
- Staff found it was actually just helpful to use it and didn't have a specific assistive need.

Finding the entry point to facilitate

- 2nd Line ICT Teams could tell us what they were aware of

- Disability Practitioners Group could tell us what they wanted

- Suppliers were lobbying to promote their wares

- Servicedesk could tell us of the reality of the problems

- Servicedesk became 'The natural born facilitators'

Actions we took

- Servicedesk gained permanent representation on the partnership disability practitioners group.

- Servicedesk staff gathered licence information, software versions, renewal dates to produce consolidation proposals

- Customer Services working with APUC to help develop frameworks.

- Customer Services started engaging with suppliers who, surprisingly, had better information on our licences than we did!

- We started investing in training for Servicedesk staff on common assistive technology.

How did that all help then?

- The disability practitioners group allowed Customer services to lead on ICT framework development on their behalf.

- Customer services realised one size couldn't fit all, so proposed a 3 tier model to identify common software from specialist requirements arising from DSA and PLSP

- Servicedesk became a lending library for trial hardware and software for the partnership

Even procurement changed ...

- Assistive and inclusive technology requirements were written into new procurements to ensure that our suppliers were keeping up
- Enhanced accessibility testing as well, working with our marketing teams and student support services for new products

And the future ...

- We still have a long way to go ....
- Formalise our lending library approach
- Encourage use of the new frameworks when they are published
- Standardise our desktop builds further
- Creating our Service catalogue so people know what they can get
- The BYOD environment changes how we can offer support too
- But so far, we're on the right track!

What's the takeaway?

- How can you improve your understanding of requirements across your institutions?

- Do groups already exists you can tap into to understand your users?

- What can you gather from SCCM and your Servicedesk?

- Have you thought about your staff as well?

- Being inclusive as well as assistive

Any questions?