Implementation of a new OHS Risk management database: UQSafe-Risk – Communiqué 1

The purpose of this memo is to inform you that a new system will be implemented to replace the existing UQ OHS Risk management database. The new database will be known as UQSafe-Risk.

The implementation of UQSafe-Risk is the second component of a two-phase process, the first phase being the implementation of UQ’s new incident reporting system - UQSafe-Incident. UQSafe-Incident went live across UQ on 1 July.

UQSafe-Risk, the risk management module from the same software developers (RiskCloud) was purchased at the same time, with the intention of going “live” in early 2017.

Rationale
For the rationale of the move to a new risk management database, please refer to the last section of this communiqué.

Progress to date
As with the implementation of UQSafe-Incident, as small project team has been established to commence the process of implementation of UQSafe-Risk. The project team consists of Maria Somodevilla Torres (AIBN), Libby Humphries (QAAFI), Marshall Butterworth (Faculty of Science), and Fiona Coulthard, Jim Carmichael and Amanda Jones from the OHS Division.

The project team have already met a number of times and the initial configuration of the system has been determined. As the new system runs on the same platform and dashboard set up as UQSafe-Incident, many of the business rules and workflow considerations will be consistent with those established in UQSafe-Incident, ensuring the two new databases easy interactions.

More details on time frames for transitioning to the new UQSafe-Risk management system will be provided in the near future. A detailed information session is planned for early September – watch the OHS Division webpage or subscribe to the OHS mailing list for more details.

If you would like to be involved in piloting the new system before it goes live, or have any queries, please contact the Project Manager – Amanda Jones ohs@uq.edu.au.

Rationale for the project and the process for determining the new new systems
UQ has used an electronic risk management/assessment database since 2002 after transitioning from a paper-based system. At the time the OHS Division moved to electronic databases, there were no off-the-shelf or commercial systems available for either incident or risk management purposes, except for those with very basic capabilities such as Microsoft Excel or Access. Therefore after some market appraisal, Coral C was chosen to build the risk management system. Coral C was the preferred choice in 2002 as they were determined at the time to be cost-effective, they were a local IT business, and at the time employed two very experienced developers to build the incident and risk databases. Since 2002 however, the business has reduced to just the owner-operator.
Coral C built the risk database in a platform known as ASP.Classic. At the time, this was a stable platform in common use and ideal for the OHS databases.

Both the incident and risk databases have been substantially modified over time, partially due to user and reporting requirements, and partially to improve security and functionality. In 2010 the risk management database was rebuilt by Coral C and transferred from ASP.Classic to ASP.net. A continual reliance on the developer is costly and poses an unacceptable operational risk to the databases if the developer were to become suddenly unavailable. UQ ITS does not support the current databases.

In March 2014, the OHS Division established the UQ Database Governance group, consisting of representative OHS Advisors and UQ Safety Managers. The intent of the group was to assess and prioritise requested systems enhancements. It became clear to the group that the databases required significant upgrade to enhance usability, functionality, security, and to control the organisational risk posed by over-reliance on a sole-operator micro-business for the on-going operations of these databases. UQ ITS (while not actively involved in the current maintenance or use of the current system) was also consulted and requested to advise on alternative solutions that would be compatible with the overall UQ IT approach.

In November 2014, the developer agreed to provide ITS with all the data and IP of the incident and risk management systems. This would allow UQ ITS to administer both databases if the Coral C developer was no longer available. ITS indicated that the incident database should be reviewed as the ASP.classic platform was no longer manageable in the current IT environment. Coral C indicated that upgrading the current incident database from ASP.classic to ASP.net would take a few months and cost at least $80,000. This would not allow for any improvements or changes to the system except for transferring of the code.

In December 2014, the Database Governance Group agreed that commercial off-the-shelf systems should be investigated as alternatives to the bespoke systems built by Coral C. A number of incident and risk management systems are now available on the market, some of which are being used by other universities nationally and internationally. With the uncertainty of future support from Coral C and the advice from ITS, it was recognised that UQ would need to upgrade to a commercial system at some point within the next five years.

Advantages of transferring to a commercial system include:

- Previous experience already inbuilt and incorporated from the University sector
- Continual improvements of the system and platform included as standard, avoiding the cyclical rebuild bubbles
- Less administrative load on database custodians
- Business continuity improved with large professional experienced ITS business provider
- Improved and streamlined workflow processes
- Improved notification of key persons (e.g. supervisors, safety managers)
- Professional presentation
- User friendly and intuitive function
- Advanced reporting capabilities
- Ease of integration with other systems (org. contacts, Archibus etc.)
- Security against internet hacks etc
- Speed improvement with cloud-based storage of data
- Full disclosure and co-operation with UQ ITS
- Retention of historical electronic data
- Future expansion capabilities with other available modules e.g. claim management, auditing, enterprise risk and corporate governance.

Concurrently, the OHS Division was receiving a stream of feedback regarding operational and usability issues around the databases. Earlier in 2015 formal feedback was sought as part of the Enhancing Services and Systems project for possible improvement activities. Streamlining the on-line OHS databases was raised by a number of respondents.
In 2015 an investigation into a range of systems occurred to determine the best fit for purpose system for UQ. The consensus of the project control group was to propose the procurement of the Pan-RiskWare system. This system provided both incident reporting and risk management options. It was determined that there was a distinct advantage of being involved with an Australian based provider that has extensive local experience with Australian universities and Australian legislative requirements. The inclusion of UQ on the PAN University sector user group is a marked advantage that would allow UQ, with its experience in online incident reporting and risk management systems, to inform and influence the future direction of software improvements by PAN.

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