COUNCIL OF PROFESSORS AND HEADS OF COMPUTING
c/o BCS, First Floor, Block D, North Star House,
North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1FA

DATE: Monday 7th July 2014

CPHC Executive Committee.
Report on UKCRCEC meeting 9th June 2014

This was a short meeting.

The UKCRC chair is changing (again). Prof Sventek (Glasgow) has stepped down and Prof Robertson (Edinburgh) has taken over.

Responses to consultations are available on the UKCRC website, last three are:
Inquiry into business university collaboration (BIS)
Social Media Data and Real-Time Analytics (House of Commons Science and Technology Committee)
Immigration rules and international students (House of Lords Science and Technology Committee)

There were no developments reported for UK or European research strategy and policy.

EPSRC: Liam Blackwell (EPSRC) attended and gave a comprehensive update. Key points:

- EPSRC will be hosting ICT theme workshops on
  1. Big data
  2. Robotics
  3. The creative industries

My understanding of the purpose of these is to help EPSRC develop its strategy for supporting these areas. The areas are deliberately supposed to be broadly interpreted, and we are advised not to underestimate the level of interest from outside Computer Science in getting support.

- There is some news on the new Turing Institute. It is to be structured as a joint venture with EPSRC as lead (for the government) and several other universities (and perhaps other bodies) as partners. There will be an open bidding process for partnerships and the Institute will, perhaps controversially, focus on algorithms. Funding is £42m over 5 years, but EPSRC recognise it will have to be part of their baseline funding for c20 years.

- EPSRC also wants to be involved in a number of new data analytics centres being set up.
- There is a new framework for responsibility in research and innovation on the EPSRC website. We are asked to approach this positively. The key point is not to consider this as a constraint on what we do, but to use consideration of possible ethical issues in our research as a way of improving the positive impact on society.
- The govt funding review is about to take place and EPSRC is keen to have support from the community.

REF: Morris Sloman reported. The panel has finished consideration of outputs and is now considering impact statements. He would like to be able to use the area data provided for outputs to report on the state of different areas. He would also like to be able to use the impact statements to provide data on UK CS research impact. However there are issues of timing (submissions will not be made public before govt spending review) and detail (statements take very different approaches).
He also explained why Google Scholar was not being used by the REF panel. Apparently Google was not prepared to provide an API, and HEFCE viewed it as important that a snapshot of the data should be obtainable at a particular time. Google were not prepared to facilitate this.

IET: has a new CASE report on evidence of benefit to UK of research funding (ref). It is also producing a code of practice in cybersecurity intended to be applicable to eg building management systems. This is currently being cut down in length (current version supposedly good but much too long to be practical). One of their members is now on IP version 6 and there was some discussion about this relating to lack of take-up (summary: although IPv6 is a technical improvement, the move to it might exclude people, at least initially, and therefore ISP's and businesses have no financial incentive to push it through). The IET's open access Journal of Engineering reports increased submission rates.

Edmund Robinson
June 2014