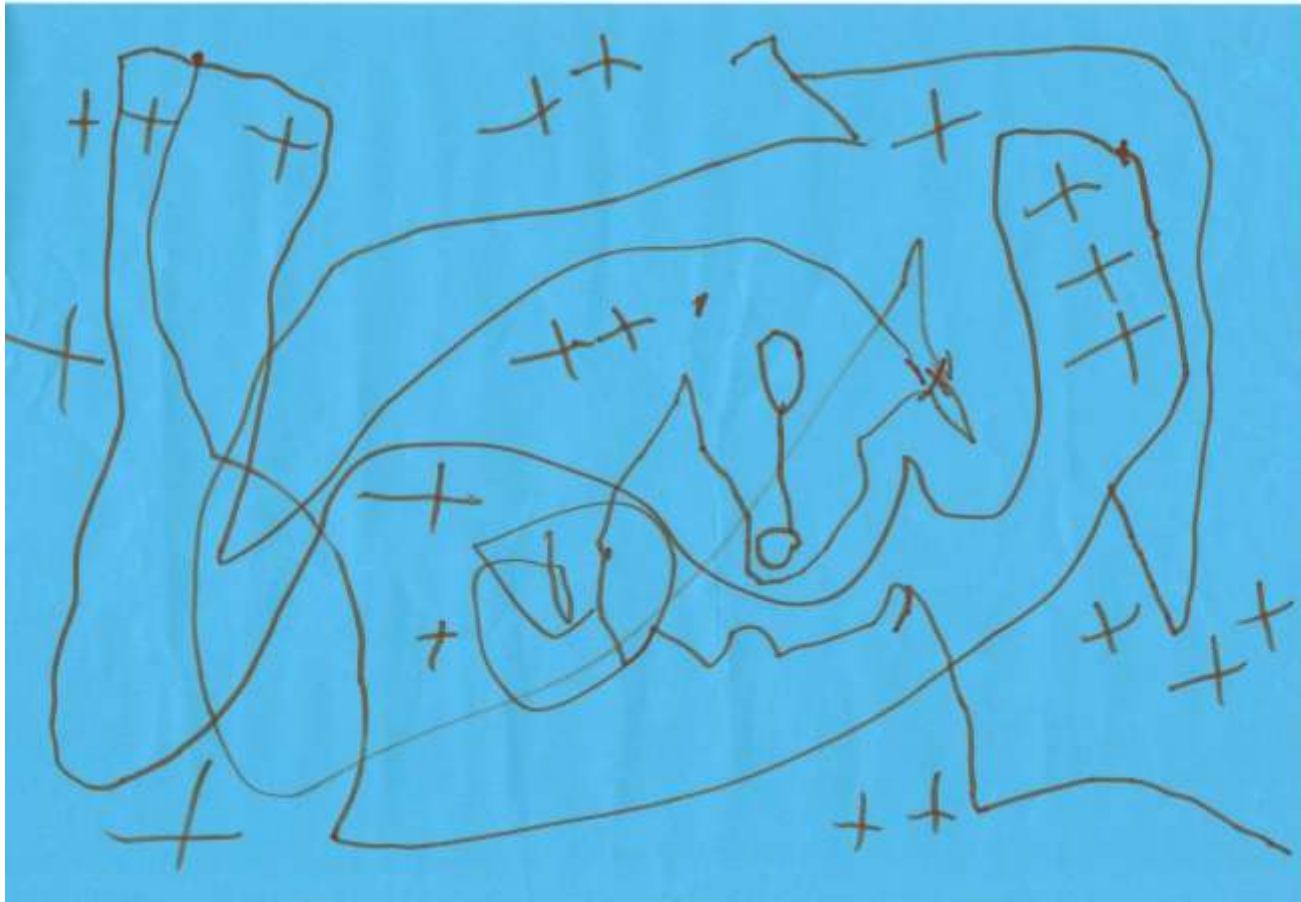


# **HESA Benchmarking project**

Graham Fice

Project Manager

# Treasure island



# Phase 1



- Report and recommendations welcomed by HEFCE – report is on HESA website
- Phase 2 started January 2011:
  - Respond to recommendations of phase 1
  - Report to UUK task group for Efficiencies and Modernisation
  - Keep in touch with JISC BI study – benchmarking interest from survey
  - Deliver InfoKit resource

# <http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/bi>

The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying the JISC InfoNet - Environment Scanning and Business Intelligence page. The address bar shows the URL <http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/infokits/strategy/environment-scanning>. The page title is "JISC InfoNet - Environment Scanning and Business Intelligence".

**Environment Scanning & BI**

Introduction  
How to use this section  
What is Business Intelligence?  
Advantages  
What do HEIs want to know?  
What are the questions that are being asked?  
Why use external data?  
Who are the main sources of external data?  
What data can external sources supply?  
What are the options? Maturity Model  
What are the options? Case Studies  
Varied Vendor Approach  
Data Warehousing  
BI as IT Project  
Data Definitions  
Single Central System  
What are the options? Vendors  
The Business Case

## Environment Scanning & Business Intelligence

The term 'Environment scanning' is often thought to only apply to external forces, to the broader political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors creating the backdrop to educational institutions. This is an important part of the equation and many of the tools, techniques and data sources covered in this section (e.g. PESTLE analysis, benchmarking, Boston Matrix) relate to this external perspective. However, it is also essential that the institution and its managers also have access to information required to accurately assess the internal environment, as well as its strengths and weaknesses and ability to meet current and future strategic challenges. 'Business Intelligence' is an agenda moving rapidly to the top of many institutions' priority lists combining, as it does, data from both within and outside the institution.

The material included within this stage is designed to help your institution to answer two main questions:

- Is our organisation currently 'fit for purpose' and in the right condition to undertake the activities planned?
- What factors may currently, or in the future, influence our chances of success?

Being able to answer the first of these questions relies heavily on having access to the right data at the right time and being able to trust its currency and accuracy. In essence, answers to these questions create a four way matrix of views of your institution:

**Tools and Techniques**

- PESTLE Analysis
- Boston Matrix

Done

Start

13:02  
24/03/2011

# As JISC says:

- **Benchmarking** is one of the most vexed issues for many institutions. In order to retain a competitive edge it is crucial to be able to gauge performance against that of peer institutions. It seems that many are able to source fairly high level data but are unable to access data at a more granular - and therefore meaningful - level. Some ask
  - *'How do I get benchmarking data across HEIs on per capita expenditure on corporate and academic services that I can rely on as reliable and consistent - and is at a more detailed level than currently available?'*
  - *'How do we benchmark against other institutions and make informative comparisons?'* Another states *'I am frequently asked about comparable data from other institutions/subjects and that is incredibly difficult, if not impossible to obtain.'* And a data management angle again: *'I want to know how (or if) other institutions are able to present "dashboard style" KPI information which is benchmarked against other HEIs or benchmark groups'*
- Benchmarking is acknowledged as one of the main challenges faced by institutions in relation to BI and is currently the subject of a HEFCE-funded [HESA initiative](#).

# Value of benchmarking: from report

- **Vice-Chancellor:**
  - Performance against benchmarks is routinely shared with Governors – a good and objective way of assuring the University keeps on track with plans and providing assurance to stakeholders
- **Planners:**
  - An important tool in evaluating institutional performance and one which given reductions in public spending is going to become increasingly important
  - By analysing, assessing and implementing actions based on examples of good practice, institutions can achieve more efficient processes and ultimately achieve higher levels of performance. Sensible benchmarking can lead to realistic target setting processes, which encourages a more efficient environment
  - Identification of key areas to focus resources
  - Building robust cases for business development
  - Better understanding of risks
- **Sector organisation:**
  - Claimed 1% saving in non-pay expenditure
  - Management for one institution of £1.9M deficit to breakeven

# Benchmarks and benchmarking

- **Benchmarks** are purely measurements used for comparison
- **Benchmarking** is the process of finding best practices and of learning from others
- **Definitions include HEFCE's own:**
  - A process through which practices are analysed to provide a standard measurement (benchmark) of effective performance within an organisation (such as a university). Benchmarks are also used to compare performance with other organisations and other sectors.
- Benchmarking is also used to *demonstrate accountability to stakeholders and to support academic quality*



# Types of benchmarking (from Jackson and Lund)

- **Implicit** (biproduct of information gathering) or **explicit** (deliberate and systematic)
- Conducted as an **independent** or a collaborative (partnership) exercise
- Confined to a single organisation (**internal**), or involves other similar or dissimilar organizations (**external** exercise)
- Focused on the whole process (**vertical** benchmarking) or part of a process as it manifests itself across different functional units (**horizontal**)
- Focused on **inputs, process or outputs** (or a combination of these)
- Based on quantitative (**metric data**) and / or qualitative (**bureaucratic information**)



## **Report's overview of activity based benchmarking (sector organisations)**

- Strategic planning (NPG and other groups)
- Student services: administration (ARC, SROC), careers (AGCAS), campus services (AMOSSHE, CUBO)
- Teaching and research (ARMA):
  - Teaching costing a key concern through JISC BI survey
- Estates (AUDE)
- Finance (BUFDG)
- HR (UHR)
- Library and IT (SCONUL, UCISA)

# The case studies

- Institutions:
  - **Greenwich:** heidi use, data warehousing
  - **Liverpool:** detailed RAE analysis
  - **Surrey:** strategic planning
  - **Cardiff:** LEAN methodology
- Others:
  - AMHEC (Association of Managers in HE Colleges) member collaborative benchmarking (quantitative and process)
  - SUMS (sector owned)
  - TRIBAL (commercial)

# Report concludes

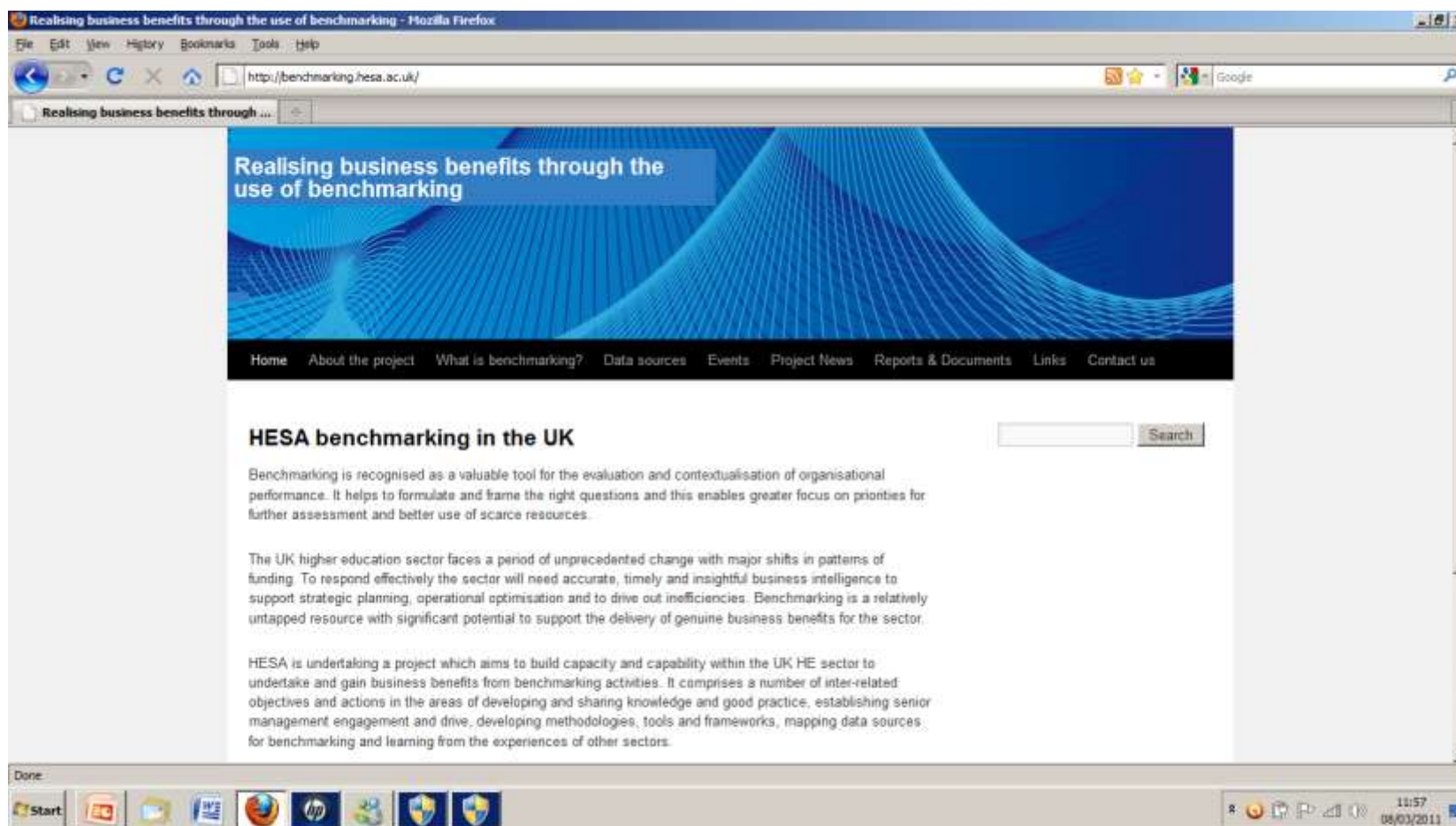
- **Benchmarking is a valuable tool** for HEIs in conducting comparative analyses of institutional and external information in order to identify efficiencies and cost reductions and to target these to best effect
- **There is evidence of extensive activity but the sector should look to greater use of benchmarks and benchmarking** in order to respond, rapidly but in an informed way, to the economic climate

# Recommendations: phase 1

- **1:** Leadership and governance for programme
- **2:** Programme of activities to share good practice and inform the sector – knowledge base/ communication/ training/ capacity
- **3:** Accessible methodologies, tools and frameworks – sharing
- **4:** Map of current information sources
- **5:** Heidi development
- **6:** Scope for benchmarking against public and private sector (especially the business areas) and transnationally

# Website now live:

<http://benchmarking.hesa.ac.uk>



# Events (see Events and news on website)

- ‘Thinktank’ : business needs
- GuildHE institutions: strategic planning and benchmarks
- Benchmarking: identifying good practice (discussion)
- Process benchmarking with SUMS Consulting
- International benchmarking:
  - Report commissioned from PA Consulting

# Deliverable: data sources map (this from JISC InfoKit)

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "JISC infolet - What data can external sources supply? - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar shows the URL "http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/infokit/strategy/environment-scanning/supply". The page has a sidebar on the left with a list of navigation links: Introduction, How to use this section, What is Business Intelligence?, Advantages, What do HEIs want to know?, What are the questions that are being asked?, Why use external data?, Who are the main sources of external data?, What data can external sources supply? (highlighted with a yellow arrow), What are the options? Maturity Model, What are the options? Case Studies, Varied Vendor Approach, Data Warehousing, BI as IT Project, Data Definitions, Single Central System, What are the options? Vendors, The Business Case, What are the challenges for HEIs?, and What are the challenges for the... The main content area has a red header "What data can external sources supply?". Below the header, there is a paragraph of text explaining the complexity of data flows and the role of HESA. Another paragraph follows, stating that the information below profiles data available from external supplies by subject categories, with "our survey" indicating institutional interest. Below this text is a list of subject categories, each with a blue arrow icon: Finance and costing, Student quantitative data, Student qualitative data, Staff data, Research data and information, Performance measurement, Benchmarking, Marketing, Strategic Planning, Business and community engagement, Estates management, and Data Management. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button, several application icons, and the system clock displaying 11:48 on 21/03/2011.

JISC infolet - What data can external sources supply? - Mozilla Firefox

http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/infokit/strategy/environment-scanning/supply

JISC infolet - What data can external sources supply?

Introduction

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What are the challenges for HEIs?

What are the challenges for the

## What data can external sources supply?

We now know what kind of questions planners and others in higher and further education are asking. In terms of the categories of subjects that these questions fall into, the greatest amount of data is available about students, and the least - if any - about strategic planning and marketing per se. The data flows between the providers are complex: more than one of them will hold the same, or similar data. (For example Unistats and HESA hold the National Student Survey). Most data is held by HESA, some of which is made available via HEIDI, but data is also available from other portals.

The information below profiles the data available from external supplies by the subject categories which **our survey** indicates that institutions are most interested in knowing information about.

Click headers to expand/collapse content.

- Finance and costing
- Student quantitative data
- Student qualitative data
- Staff data
- Research data and information
- Performance measurement
- Benchmarking
- Marketing
- Strategic Planning
- Business and community engagement
- Estates management
- Data Management



# Heidi development

- Enhance system/database server capacity
- Develop enhanced data visualisation capability
- Further enhance report generation capability
- Introduce functionality for statistical benchmarking including application of user-defined factors to allow for differing institutional characteristics
- Investigate options for additional datasets in heidi eg TRAC
- Develop training in benchmarking using heidi
- Promote interoperability of heidi by developing an Application Programming Interface (API) for the system

# Some key partners

- Universities UK/Guild HE
  - Oversight/governance
- HESA HEI User Group
  - Representing key sector organisations including:
  - National Planners Group
  - Scottish Planners Forum
- Heidi User Group
- JISC

# **HESA Benchmarking project**

**<http://benchmarking.hesa.ac.uk>**

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