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Responsible Department: Information Technology

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Permanent or Temporary/Interim Policy: Permanent

Software Adoption Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Software Adoption Policy at Roanoke College is to ensure a thorough and strategic approach to selecting, evaluating, and implementing software applications that align with the college's priorities and needs. This policy aims to facilitate smooth integration, maintain data security, and support the college's long-term technology vision by involving key stakeholders in the decision-making process and ensuring comprehensive project management and training.

Definitions

“Software” Any application, program, or service, including hosted solutions and Software as a Service (SaaS), that is used for college purposes. This encompasses applications that support administrative functions, academic activities (such as ARCGis, SPSS and other software installed in classrooms and labs) and other operational needs of the college. The software must align with the college's priorities, integrate smoothly with existing systems, and meet technical standards for compatibility, security, and data management.

Policy

The process for software adoption at Roanoke College follows a well-defined policy to ensure careful consideration, evaluation, and successful implementation of any software application used for college purposes, including free applications. This policy aims to prioritize the needs of Roanoke College, align software decisions with the overall campus priorities, and ensure a smooth transition and integration of new software into our systems.

The process begins with the generation of a project idea. When someone within Roanoke College identifies a need for a new software application, they must complete a Project Request Form about the project idea. This form helps gather essential information about the proposed project's purpose, goals, and expected outcomes.

Once the project idea is submitted via the appropriate web form, it enters the evaluation phase. Steps include brainstorming sessions with our IT department to explore options and

determine the best way forward. We consider where the project falls in terms of our priorities as a College and discuss it at higher levels, such as the Technology Governance Executive Committee to ensure it aligns with our strategic objectives.

During the evaluation process, we also review the project's alignment with our Data Management Team (DMT) to ensure its coherence with our long-term technology vision. Timing is essential, and the College carefully sets a timeline for implementation to maximize its impact and minimize disruptions.

Next, conduct demos of multiple potential software applications, allowing key stakeholders, including representatives from IT and the relevant functional areas, to assess the features, functionality, and compatibility. IT will also consider developing a custom, in-house solution if the existing applications do not meet the precise needs.

To ensure that any software we adopt meets the requirements and integrates seamlessly with our existing systems, IT will thoroughly review technical standards, compatibility, single sign-on (SSO), data integrations, and security aspects during the evaluation process. While IT provides technical approval, the ultimate decision-making authority rests with the functional area primarily utilizing the software.

Before finalizing any contracts, IT conducts a comprehensive review to address data ownership and security concerns adequately. This step helps protect Roanoke College's interests and ensures safeguards are in place.

Once selected, project management becomes crucial for a successful implementation. Appointment of an IT and a functional project lead to coordinate efforts between the IT department and the relevant area. Timing is evaluated based on the system's needs to find the most opportune moment for implementation. It is imperative that the functional area take full responsibility for the operational functionality of the system. While IT assist with project management and the technical configurations.

The next step is an Internal kick-off meeting to develop Roanoke College's internal plan for the implementation, including any required adjustments, training needs, and communication strategies. We strive to involve all relevant stakeholders and ensure everyone is on the same page.

Next, the project lead will schedule a kick-off meeting with the software vendor. This meeting is crucial to establish a collaborative relationship and initiate the implementation process. The vendor provides training sessions to our staff members to ensure they can effectively utilize the software and take full advantage of its features.

By following this software adoption policy, we aim to make informed decisions, maintain data security, and effectively integrate software applications into Roanoke College's operations.