Gardens & Museums IT

Issue 25
Spring 2026

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If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact us via it@museums.ox.ac.uk

Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of the Gardens & Museums IT Newsletter.

And Spring is finally, and thankfully here after what has seemed to be an incredibly long Winter. I'm not sure if this one was any colder, wetter or gloomier than previous Winters but it certainly felt slightly more so. The irony of this is that I love Winter, but I must admit I'm truly relieved to hear the birds tweeting, the flowers blooming and to see the Sun again and feel some warmth - even though it's a tad unpredictable and fleeting right now!

So, onto IT matters, and as always (I feel like a bit of a broken record here) it's been a really, really, really busy time. We touch on some of this across the newsletter, but whereas in other years we experienced a slight calming in the latter weeks of December and in early January this year this didn't transpire. And therefore, we didn't have the opportunity to catch a breath or find a moment to recuperate - and perhaps this is part of the reason why Winter has felt so long.

Anyway, in amongst the busy-ness there has been a lot accomplished and much to celebrate. We've spent a considerable amount of time working with the Ashmolean Museum on their Cyber Security posture - much of which can offer value to the other sites we support within GLAM. The Chorus to Teams Phone migration has progressed and we'll soon be at a point to carry out the implementation itself. And somehow, we've now been carrying out SinglePoint of Contact for a year!

Further information on these and more can be found in the following pages, so please do read on for more.

All the best

Carl

What's been going on? And what's coming?

Frodo Replacements

Throughout January and February Jona and Dan have been working with the Central University Networks Team in the preparations and replacements of the FRODO networking equipment at each of the Gardens & Museums sites.

The FRODO devices connect each site to the wider University networks, so are an important element of each sites network and internet connectivity. The work was organised carefully and managed incredibly well by Jona and Dan, with support from onsite colleagues and the University Networks Team, to ensure an efficient and disruption free changeover. A massive well done and thanks for their work on this.

Ashmolean Museum DLS Project

Beginning in January, and at greater pace from the end of February and throughout March we've been supporting the commencement of the Ashmolean Antiquities Department DLS Project - a 2-year audit of the museum's Antiquities collections.

This has involved assisting in the procurement and set up of equipment for 8 new starters, alongside changes and enhancements to infrastructure to facilitate the work taking place.

At points it was quite a challenge to balance the needs and to support the new members as they adjusted to University IT use, but its always fulfilling to be part of these new and important initiatives. And a special mention to Adrian, who provided a huge amount of time, patience and support to to get our new colleagues fully setup.

CrashPlan

As recently communicated, we're currently reviewing the data backup situation of those people who aren't using a CONNECT Computer. And through this exercise have identified that although the University of Oxford Data Backup solution CrashPlan is installed on devices, in some cases it's not fully setup and therefore there is a risk to the data on those machines.

Fortunately, we've been able to identify those machines which don't appearing to be backing up correctly and are contacting and meeting with the affected to resolve.

If you have been contacted by us, and are yet to respond please do so, so we can assist you with this.

And if you're worried about your status, you can open the CrashPlan Application to see if it's working.

What's been going on? And what's coming?

Adobe Renewal 2026/2027

During the Spring and Summer months we carry out the annual renewal process for two Adobe Accounts where we have licences (Gardens & Museums IT Adobe Instance and IT Services Connect Adobe Instance).

Although it's a rather straightforward process, it does involve a number of parties and therefore a fair amount of organisation and coordination which can at points lead to a small break in licence availability, or warnings that licences are due to expire, or have expired.

We'll endeavour to communicate as and when we can on this, but sadly sometimes (and often) issues relates to another part of the coordination chain. Therefore, if you do receive a licence warning or Adobe becomes unavailable to you, please don't panic, just send us a message via it@museums.ox.ac.uk and we'll advise accordingly. Though my fingers are tightly crossed for an error-free renewal this year!

Ashmolean Museum Cyber Security Scenario

We've recently been working with the Ashmolean Museum on their Cyber Security preparedness by carrying out a Cyber Security Scenario exercise.

The exercise took place across two different meetings and afforded the opportunity to collectively discuss and work through a cyber security incident and how this would affect the varying day-to-day operations of the museum, and the potential longer-term impacts.

The sessions were both enjoyable and rich-in-value and have afforded the Ashmolean a greater understanding of the potential impacts, alongside respective preparations each department can make to be better placed if a serious event was to ever occur.

Computer Replacements - Apple and Windows

During the early stages of each year, we start planning for the years computer replacements, and this year has been no different with the exception of needing to fast-track the planning and the procurement due to expected and reported rises in the cost of equipment, and anticipated issues with availability. I've provided further information on this on page 5.

So, as an update the procurement processes have been completed, and the new equipment, which is around 40 computers of various forms, have been arriving thick and fast since late January. We're now busy, configuring computers and coordinating and fulfilling the installations.

Chorus to Teams Phone

As most of you will know by now the University is in the process of changing its telephony system, moving from the Chorus system which has been in place for around 10 years to Microsoft Teams Phone.

The Pitt Rivers Museum were successfully migrated to Teams Phone in the last few months of 2025. And from January 2026 we've been assisting the other Garden & Museum locations in capturing their requirements, alongside some other network infrastructure-based preparations. And we (the Gardens & Museums IT Team) moved to Teams Phone around 8 months ago and have found the following information useful in our own individual cases, and for those who have already migrated.

Teams Phone without a Handset: Getting Started

If you're choosing to use Teams Phone without a Handset you may have some worries about the level of functionality that you'll have, but please be reassured you'll be able to make, receive and transfer calls via the Teams client on your device. The only real difference is that as opposed to making and receiving calls via a conventional, physical phone you'll be using your computer (or any other device which you have logged into teams) and utilising that devices microphone and speakers or headset if you use one.

Further information is available here: **https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/teams-phone-getting-started**

Teams Phone with a Handset: Getting Started

If you're going to be using Teams Phone with a physical handset you'll have the same functionality as Teams Phone without a Handset, but you'll making and receiving your calls in a more conventional manner.

Further information is available here, and the Poly Edge E100 is the phone which will most commonly be being deployed: **https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/teams-phone-handsets-getting-started-0**

Teams Phone: Group Working

Teams Phone offers a number of options for group working. The following webpage offers more information and guidance on this: **https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/teams-phone-group-working**

Transition to Teams Phone - Frequently Asked Questions

And if you have any lingering questions or concerns then the migration project team have put together a 'Frequently Asked Questions' page which you may find helpful.

And this can be viewed here: **https://projects.it.ox.ac.uk/telephony-replacement-faqs**

An update on IT Procurement...

At this time of year, we always see an increase in requests relating to the purchase of new equipment, and across varying technologies. This always adds a significant amount of pressure to the team, and a pressure that requires certain skills and time to fulfil.

This year the situation has been made somewhat more complex through sector-wide supply and demand issues as a result of the growth of AI and its rapidly increasing use. This has caused a surge in the need for critical computing components to service this demand, which in turn has adversely affected the availability of these components for other devices which need them - and this includes computers, phones, tablets, smart televisions - with the list going on and on due to the technical world we live in.

Right now, there is an expectation that the cost of "tech" equipment will soon increase by 20 to 30%. And one major supplier has informed us to expect availability to be as scarce as it was during Covid. And if anyone can remember the issues we faced with equipment supply then, they'll know it was an incredibly challenging time - I still have webcam related nightmares!!

So, with this in mind what can you do to help or prepare for this...

Don't panic and think ahead...

We work in quite a dynamic industry which often needs considerable agility and adaptability, and this does impact the level of effective planning that we can do.

And this can often be exacerbated further by complex funding arrangements.

Despite this, what I would say is if you have a new development on the horizon which will require equipment, be it a project, new starter, or something else then let us know as soon as possible.

This will allow us the opportunity to advise on availability, explore options with our suppliers and organise quotes for you which offer the best affordability and availability.

An update on IT Procurement...

Purchase as soon as possible...

One thing we like to do, especially when it comes to larger scale projects, is to take time considering the quote. And although this is perfectly reasonable, in times where there are supply and demand issues and rising prices this can be problematic.

Firstly, many suppliers will now only be offering short-term quotations due to the volatility in pricing, and these could be as little as a week. So, if we take longer than this to consider and raise an order, we'll likely need a new quotation and will see a higher price.

Additionally, if we leave it too late to make an order, the supply may not be available to meet the timescales of the project. And this could adversely impact the financing - especially if the money needs to be spent within a certain timeframe - which is often the case at this time of the year.

Communication, communication, communication...

We are, and will, continue to be in frequent contact with our regular suppliers to keep a track on the situation, to afford a consistent understanding of price changes and availability issues. And as and when appropriate we'll be updating you all on this - either via targeted comms or through the newsletter - so please do keep your eyes out for updates.

But equally please keep us updated as to your plans and requirements (big or small) as this will provide us the opportunity to give you the best advice and guidance possible.

GMIT Open Sessions – Spring 2026

The latest Gardens & Museums have been organised, and the details can be found below.

So, if you're new to the Gardens & Museums and would like to meet us, or have an IT, Audio Visual or security question or matter to discuss then please do come along.

And as we've been doing for the last few sessions, and until we run out of stock, we'll be giving out Multifactor Security Keys to those who need an 'enhanced' security method (see page 8).

We look forward to seeing you there!

Date	Location	Time
Wednesday 1st April	Lecture Theatre Pitt Rivers Museum	11.30AM – 1.00PM
Wednesday 6th May	Seminar Room History of Science Museum	1.30PM – 3.00PM
Wednesday 3rd June	Headley Lecture Theatre Ashmolean Museum	11.00AM – 12.30PM

The sessions will offer an opportunity….

- To meet us face-to-face in an open forum to discuss any matter.
- To discuss or get advice on any IT issues or problems which you may have, whether big or small.
- To discuss any upcoming projects or innovations within your respective departments and location.
- For new members of staff to meet with us and receive an overview of IT within the University and the Gardens & Museums.

Cyber Security - tips for staying safe!

Cyber Security is something which is very much on everyone's minds right now. And the level of information, constant reminders, news articles on the subject, and a never-ending series of updates to be done on our respective devices (work and home) can make it all seem a bit overwhelming at points.

We're incredibly conscious of this, and also of our contribution to this (though it does come with the role) so for this newsletter we're attempting to streamline things into 3 different specific points.

Do your Information Security & Data Privacy Awareness Training

So, I'll start with the one which we're regularly being asked about - has everyone done their Annual Information Security training? And this is something which has a lot of eyes on across the University right now. Put simply everyone needs to do this, and it is a really helpful course which covers a lot.

The training can be accessed from here: https://www.infosec.ox.ac.uk/do-the-online-training. So, if you haven't carried out in the last 12 months or would like a refresher, please do make time for this.

Enhance your Multi-Factor Authentication

We've been mentioning this a bit recently, and although the University are yet to make a wholesale enforcement on what MFA methods are suitable, the move in Autumn 2025 to new members only being able to use an Authentication Application (ideally Microsoft) or USB Security Key does point towards this happening sooner rather than later.

This would mean those who use Text or Phone call-based authentication needing to migrate to a new method. Therefore, if you are using either of these methods and interested in moving now please get in touch via it@museums.ox.ac.uk and we can discuss the process with you.

Update your computer when asked

The rate at which our devices need updating seems to increase all the time, and we're very mindful as to how annoying and frustrating this can be. But updating our devices is incredibly important as most updates now are to fix bugs and vulnerabilities which have either been proactively discovered or have been compromised. So, please do make the time to do updates as and when they become available.

What to do in a Cyber Security Incident…

A really good idea has recently been passed our way in respect to signage which explains what to do in the unfortunate event of facing a cyber security incident. Aidan is currently using his graphic design wizardry to put a poster together detailing the important first few steps of what to do if faced with such an event. We'll hopefully be distributing these very soon.

Single Point of Contact - a year on!

Just over a year ago we implemented Single Point of Contact across the Gardens & Museums, which saw the removal of the dual IT support methods which had been in place since the Gardens & Museums began using the Central IT Services provided CONNECT Service in 2017.

This change came about through a strengthening in our (Gardens & Museums IT Team) direct relationships with IT Services colleagues, and the forming of collective and collaborative working practices, alongside a review of the service, and the identification of service and support improvements which would arise from all requests being sent to the Gardens & Museums IT Team.

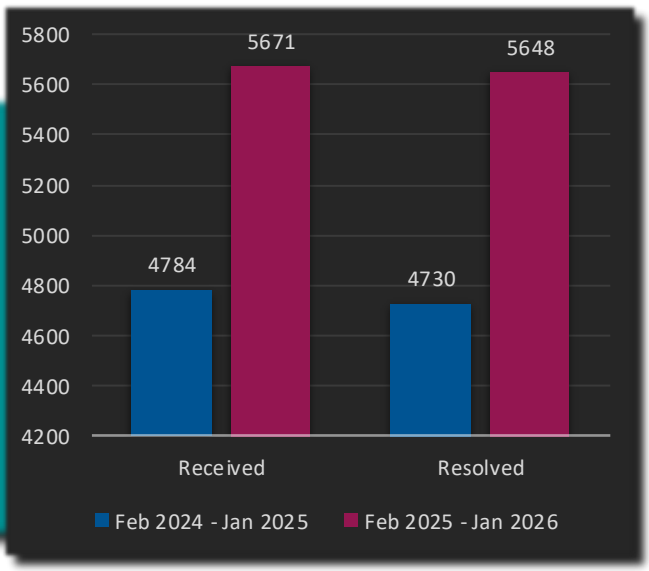
This has now been in place for a year and we have 12 months of support data, so can assess the level of demand and see how much, if any, extra work this has created for the GMIT Team.

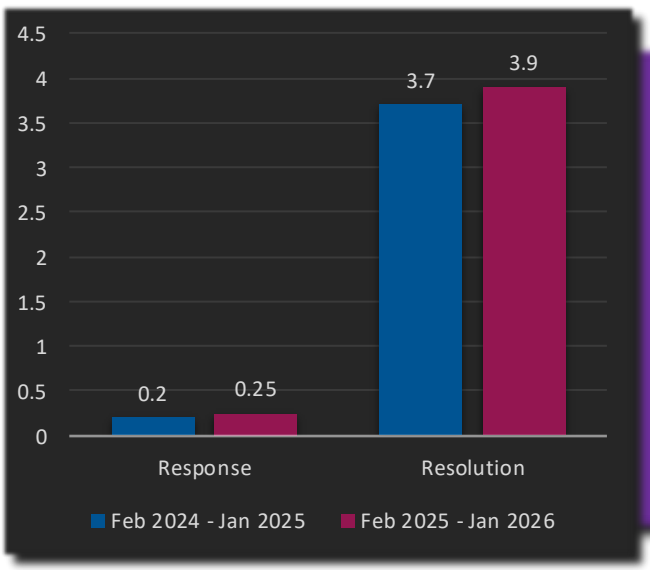
How does the data compare?

Received & Resolved...

So, as you can see the number of requests received and resolved has risen quite extensively.

We received an additional 887 requests in the 12 months post implementation when compared with the 12 months previous, which equates to a 19% increase in request numbers.





Response & Resolution

The rate at which we respond to requests has always been a key part of our service. But with taking on more work there was always the risk that this could adversely impact our speed of response.

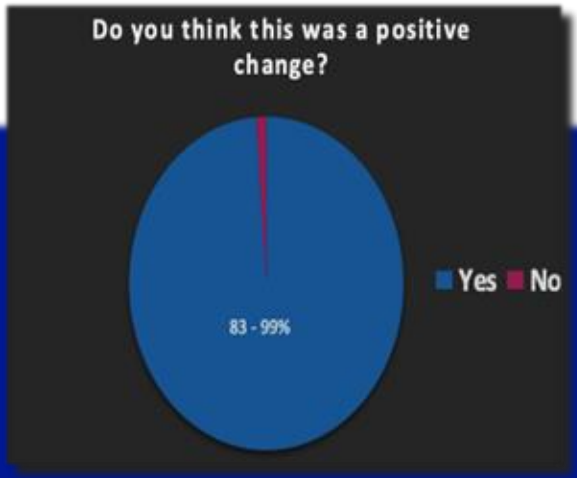
Fortunately, and not without huge effort by the team, despite the significant increase in demand there has only been a small increase in the time taken to both respond and resolve requests.

Single Point of Contact - a year on!

And how has the change been received?

In the Autumn 2025 Colleague Feedback Survey we explored whether the change had been positively received and the response was emphatically in favour with 99% of responses seeing it as an improvement.

Similarly, we got a number positive comments adding further support to the benefits afforded.



Every time I had a query I would have to dig out the email instructions - and even then, wasn't always sure who I was supposed to contact (because I was hotdesking on different computers - life much easier now I have a laptop). Much easier just to have a single email address - and the response is always speedy.

As an end-user, it's often not easy to know where the problem actually lies. It seems to work much better for the GLAM team to triage everything. I haven't noticed any delays as a result - the opposite in fact. Plus, we get help from a team who know us.

This is great from a user perspective as there's now no confusion about who to contact about what! Our local IT team will have a better understanding of how to word problems to central IT about issues we're having with our tech, which I feel has reduced the amount of time it's taken to get things resolved.

Simplification has helped enormously as I never knew which service to choose.

And what does this mean?

Well, in essence it has achieved what we hoped it would, in that it has been a positive change and that there is now a simpler and clearer route to obtain IT support.

The main unknown of this change was always how much additional demand this would place upon the Gardens & Museums IT Team. And put simply it has added considerably with an additional 887 requests being received. At this stage this hasn't adversely adjusted response and resolution times, which is credit to the hard work and commitment of the team, but this is something which we'll continue to monitor closely.

In this moment though, I think it's important to acknowledge and celebrate the benefits that this has brought. It's something that truly took considerable time and behind-the scenes efforts and engagements to negotiate and bring to life. And as such it's truly gratifying to see it so well received.

Service & Support Statistics – 1st November 2025 to 31st January 2026

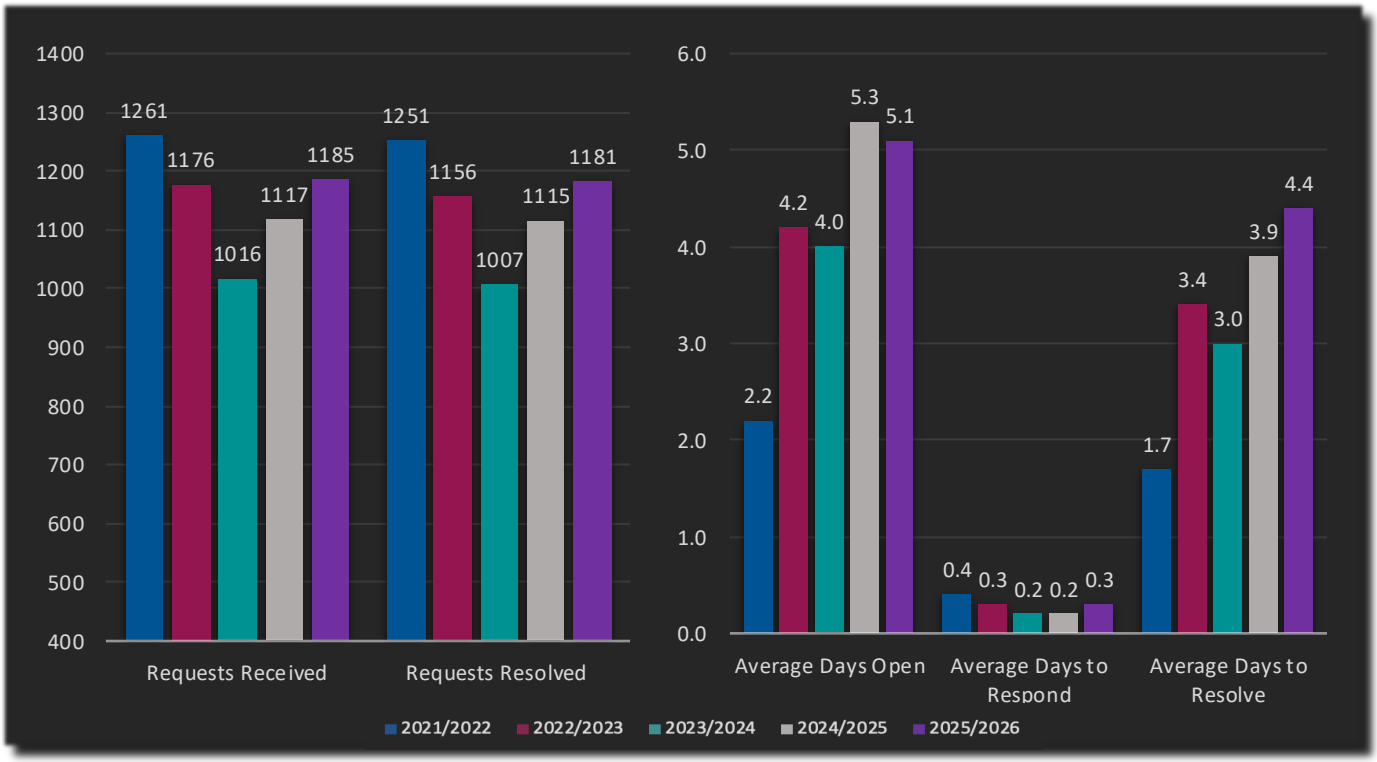
Quarter 2 of the University Academic Year, although being quieter than the preceding months, has still been a busy time. And whereas there is usually a slight lull in December as colleagues prepare for the holiday period, this year was not the case. We continued to receive plentiful requests up to, over, and immediately after the holiday season.

Requests Received
1185

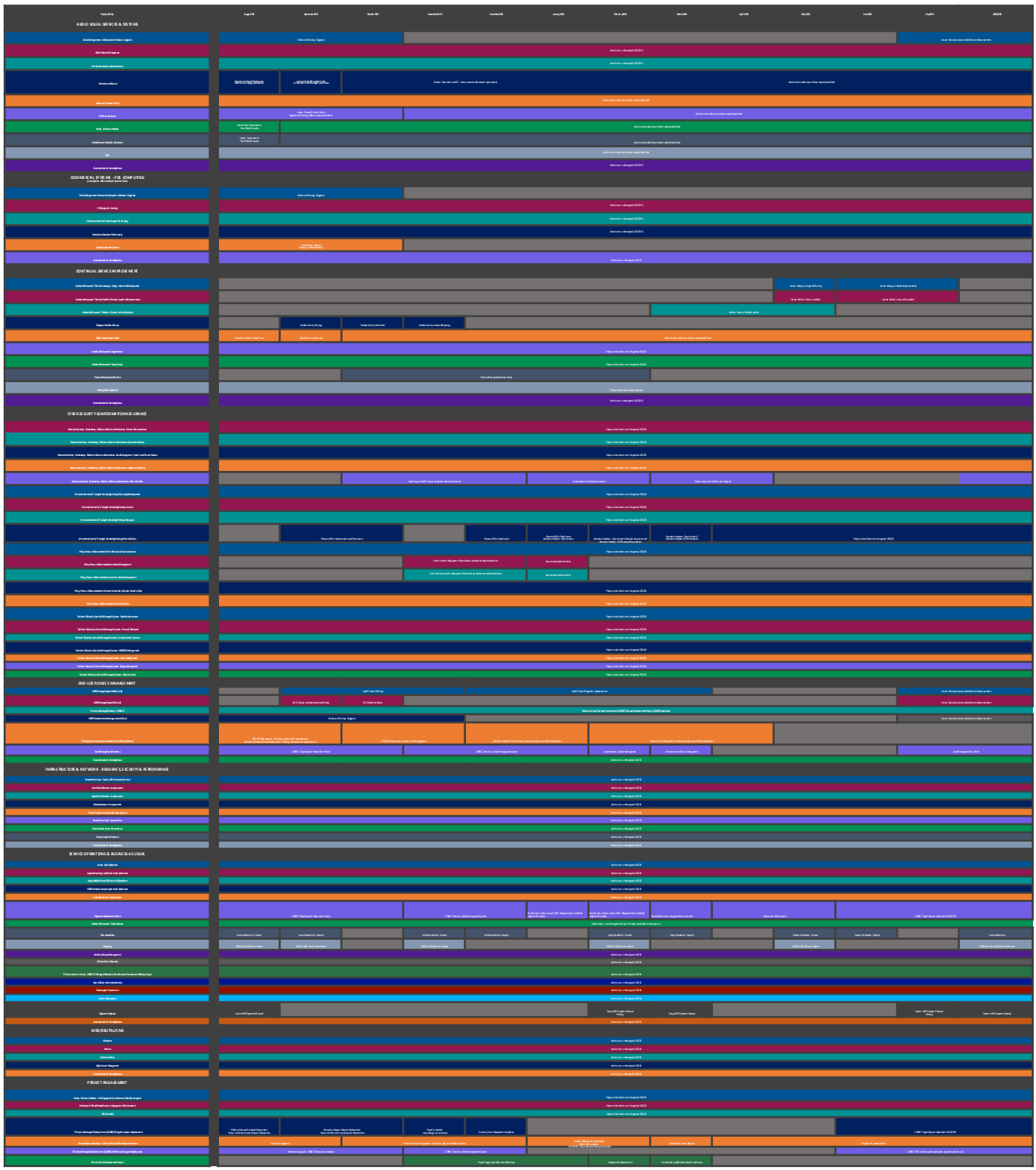
Requests Resolved
1181

Avg. Days to Respond
0.3

Avg. Days to Resolve
4.4



Location	Requests	Percentage
Ashmolean Museum	460	39%
Museum of Natural History	141	12%
Pitt Rivers Museum	139	12%
History of Science Museum	63	5%
Botanic Gardens & Arboretum	73	6%
GLAM Divisional Office	56	5%
Bodleian Libraries	21	2%
GLAM Stores	13	1%
All sites - requests and activities which benefit or impact all locations	219	18%

Full Service Reports are available on the Gardens & Museums IT Website: https://it.museums.ox.ac.uk/article/service-reports

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