



**Maintaining a sustainable Future  
for IT in Higher Education**

**Thursday 16th June 2011**

**Time: 11:00 - 11:30**

## **From Camels to Critical Friends: Intervention Strategies for Sustainable Innovation**

**Speaker: Gill Ferrell, JISC InfoNet**

### **Abstract:**

Managing and embedding large-scale innovation in a university environment is complex. Stakeholder engagement and change management are often the most challenging aspects and it is often difficult for project teams to assess progress whilst in the midst of a demanding schedule. EUNIS aims to help members share experience hence successful models for knowledge transfer within communities are of interest. One model of practitioners supporting one another in effecting innovation was presented to EUNIS 2005. The model, known as CAMEL (JISC infoNet 2006), has since been widely adopted in the UK and further developed across a range of innovation programmes. Another increasingly popular approach is the use of a 'Critical Friend', often (but not exclusively) associated with projects working in CAMEL groups. This paper will describe the role of Critical Friend in facilitating sustainable innovation/change and explore the developing evidence base on its effectiveness - drawing on experiences from the UK. We will look at what effective Critical Friends do and their key skills; the potential benefits of this role; how the use of Critical Friends compares with other support methods e.g. in terms of value-added/cost-effectiveness and potential disadvantages or issues. EUNIS members will be invited to consider the possibilities for member organisations to provide Critical Friends to projects and to undertake CAMEL activities (both within their own universities and with others) as well as to contribute to the ongoing development of a community of practice around the use of Critical Friends ([www.critical-friends.org](http://www.critical-friends.org)).